

Guidelines for implementation

of

The 'National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)' as a component of the scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

1. BACKGROUND :

1.1 The Government has approved a new programme called 'National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)' as an amendment to the scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) for providing additional components for education of girls at elementary level. The NPEGEL will form part of SSA and will be implemented under the umbrella of SSA but with a distinct identity.

1.2. The scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was started in the year 2001-02 with the objective of universalisation of elementary education. It is an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to all children including the girl child, through provision of community-owned quality education in a mission mode. However, as SSA has limited financial provisions for girls' education in the form of 'innovations' at district level and free textbooks, and thus there is a need for an additional component.

1.3. Accordingly, NPEGEL has been formulated for education of under privileged / disadvantaged girls from class I to VIII as a separate and distinct gender component plan of SSA. The gender component is necessary to achieve UEE for girls in educationally backward areas.

2. SCOPE :

2.1 The scheme would be applicable in the following areas :-

(a) **Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs)** : EBB means a block where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average and the gender gap is above the national average. Also all blocks in 13 districts of Jammu & Kashmir, which qualify by this definition and were not covered by the 1991 census will be covered. A list of States with such districts/blocks is at *Appendix.-I*.

(b) **Blocks of districts** which have atleast 5% SC/ ST population and SC/ ST female literacy rate below 10% shall also be taken up under this programme

(c) **Selected urban slums.**

2.2 Once the data for 2001 Census becomes available, selection of blocks under (a), (b) and (c) above may be modified according to the new Census data. States would be competent to change the blocks in light of the 2001 Census, keeping the definition in view and after getting the consent of GOI.

3. Strategy:

- A. Mobilisation for girls education, including community, teachers, NGOs, etc. This is to be process oriented programme, where community ownership and the basket of components must evolve with local participation.
- B. A basket of components has been provided for in the scheme, however, all blocks would not take up all activities. The projects should be based on the conditions of that block and should specifically target the following:
- Out of school girls
 - Drop outs girls
 - Overage girls , who have not completed elementary education
 - Working girls
 - Girls from marginalised social groups.
 - Girls with low attendance
 - Girls with low levels of achievement
- C. Development of material including teaching learning material, CDs, films and other material, helping in the review/ development of textbooks, development of guidelines for incorporation of gender concerns, development/ compilation of supplementary reading material for girls, including life skills, which would provide the support needed for girls' e ducation.

4. OBJECTIVES :

4.1. There exists a significant gender gap in enrolment at the elementary level, which is more acute for schedule caste and scheduled tribe girls, for whom the gender gap is almost 30% at the primary level and 26% at upper primary stage. The reduction of this gender gap has now plateaued and further reduction would require a concerted focus on the hard to reach groups. Therefore, it is necessary to include certain interventions addressing the specific needs of girl children. The objectives of NPEGEL are:-

- (a) to develop and promote facilities to provide access and to facilitate retention of girls and to ensure greater participation of women and girls in the field of education
- (b) to improve the quality of education through various interventions and to stress upon the relevance and quality of girls' education for their empowerment

5. FOCUS :

5.1. The focus of NPEGEL will be as follows:

- (a) To strengthen the capacity of National, State and district institutions and organisations for planning, management and evaluation of girls' education at the elementary level, and create a dynamic management structure that will be able to respond to the challenges of girls' education;
- (b) To develop innovative gender sensitisation / training programmes, with the assistance of concerned organisations and women's groups, for teachers and administrators and create an environment whereby all the sections of the education sector will become alive and sensitive to the role of education in eliminating gender disparities;
- (c) To initiate networking between different institutions for research, extension and information dissemination to increase output of gender sensitive, quality teaching-learning material especially in regional languages, and decentralised area-specific models of intervention;
- (d) To gear the entire education system to play a positive interventionist role to enhance self-esteem and self-confidence of women and girls; build a positive image of women by recognising their contribution to the society, polity and the economy.
- (e) To break gender stereotypes, ensuring that the content and process of education is sensitive to gender concerns.
- (f) To provide co-ordinated efforts, to ensure necessary support services to enhance girls' participation and performance in elementary education.
- (g) To build community support for girls' education and provide a conducive environment for girls' education in the school, community and home; and
- (h) To ensure that girls get good quality education at the elementary level.

6. IMPLEMENTATION AUTHORITY :

6.1 STATE LEVEL STRUCTURE :

6.1.1. The SSA State Implementation Society will be the implementing agency of the NPEGEL at State level. Therefore, funds for this programme will be routed through the SSA society of the State. At the State level a 'Gender Coordinator' will be appointed who will look after the NPEGEL. In States where Mahila Samakhya (MS) programme is operational, the SSA society will have NPEGEL implemented through the MS Society. In such States, the SSA society shall transfer the funds to MS Society for implementation of the programme. The monitoring and evaluation of the component will be done by the State SSA Society. In states where MS is not being implemented, the implementation of this component will be through a sub-unit called the 'Gender Unit' of SSA society and the existing mechanism used for implementation of SSA will be followed.

6.1.2 State Mahila Samakhya Societies (MSS), wherever set up under the directions of the Government of India, will provide direction and support to the programme. The MS society will ensure the representation of SC/ST women's organisation in the SRG of MSS. In States that do not have an MSS, a sub committee of the SSA society with nominees from relevant departments of the State Government, Government of India, experts in girls' education and representatives of SC/ ST women's organisations will be set up for the purpose.

6.1.3 Suitable assistance can be taken from institutions like Women's studies centres at Universities / colleges, etc. The resource centres under the Mahila Samakhya programme, at the State level, will be the nodal institution to coordinate with individuals, Government and other organisations for the development of material etc.

6.2 DISTRICT STRUCTURE :

6.2.1 Activities would include preparatory activities, including formation of core teams for girls education, training of core teams, baseline assessments and block and village mapping, and social assessments, village and block plans preparation and facilitation. Simultaneously, advocacy and communication activities, including the formation/ mobilisation of MTAs, PTAs and other core groups in the village would be included, in addition to implementation of the block plans.

6.2.2 District Gender Unit, which is a branch of the State MS Society or the State SSA Society (*in States where MS is not there*), will administer the NPEGEL at district level. A 'District Gender Co-ordinator' shall be appointed for each district. The District Gender Unit will consist of District Gender Co-ordinator, Resource persons and supporting staff. This unit will co-ordinate and supervise all aspect of the component at district level, and provide resource and training support. It will also network with the local administration, other institutions and NGOs in the district.

6.2.3 At the district level, there will be a 'District Gender Co-ordination Committee' which will ensure the implementation and monitoring of the gender component of SSA and which will meet at least twice a year. The committee will have nominees of Mother Teacher Associations (MTAs), Women Motivator Groups (WMGs), Mahila Samakhya Sanghas or Mahila Sanghas, female member of SC/ST organisations, etc. in the districts. The State level head of the Gender unit or his/her nominee will also be a member of this committee.

6.3 SUB-DISTRICT UNIT :

6.3.1 At the block level, the coordinator, will, with the help of the national, State and district level, coordinate the training of teachers and educational administrators, mobilisation of the community, regular monitoring of girls' enrolment, retention, and achievement, and work with communities to devise strategies.

6.3.2. Selection of core groups would be done at two levels:

1. Coordinator : 1 (to be selected from among the teachers)
2. Resource person : 1 (to be selected from among the teachers)
3. **Other members** of resource support group at field level. These community level activists for community mobilisation, local level monitoring, and on site resource support would be selected from among youth groups and women students.

6.3.3 The core group at the block level will be responsible for coordinating with and converging with the DGU and existing programmes. They will, with the help of students, teachers and volunteers, do surveys, and help prepare the village plans. They will also monitor and oversee the implementation of these plans. The core groups will form the major vehicle for community mobilisation, monitoring in the village the progress for enrolment, drop out, achievement of girls, facilitating with the VEC/ MTA/ village community in devising interventions for these activities in the village, and creating an environment for girls' education. They will be selected on the basis of their aptitude. They can also assist in the upgraded schools in special activities like sports, painting, computer aided education, music or as escorts.

6.3.4 At the cluster level there will be Co-ordinators (One for every 5 - 25 villages), who will work as honorary women workers and will have the assistance of a Core Group. In older MS areas, the federations or the Sanghas could takeover this role. In all project areas, efforts will be made to eventually hand over this function to such groups of activists. The coordinator would work along side the Model cluster school. At the cluster level, the coordinator, will, with the help of the national, State and district level, coordinate the mobilisation of the community, regular monitoring of girls' enrolment, retention, and achievement, and work with the core group and communities to devise strategies to achieve project goals.

6.3.5 The village level efforts will be co-ordinated by Mahila Samakhya Sanghas, core groups, VECs, Mothers Committees or Parent Teacher Associations, as the case may be. The district unit, cluster coordinators and village Sanghas will respectively, decide the prioritisation for activities and incentives to be taken up in the cluster/ village. This autonomy is vital for genuine local needs/solutions to get reflected in the programme activities/strategies.

6.3.6 A Cluster Level Committee would be formed for monitoring the cluster level activities and would consist of the Presidents of VEC/SMC of the villages in the cluster. The President of the Cluster level Committee would be selected from its members by rotation every quarter. The Head Master of the 'Model Cluster School for Girls' would be the member-secretary. If number of women member is less than four, an additional member may be co-opted from the VEC/SMC to ensure that at least 4 women members are there.

6.4 NATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP :

6.4.1 The National Resource Group (NRG) already created under the Mahila Samakhya programme at the National level shall provide inputs on conceptual issues and concerns arising in the programme, and advise GOI on policy matters concerning the education of girls. This group, along with smaller sub committees for specific inputs formed through co-option of additional persons from relevant institutions or experts, will provide the interface with research and training institutions, women's movement, educationists and non-Governmental institutions and also bring in other experiences of educating girls. Eminent individuals will also be encouraged to go to the districts as role models and be part of the environment building effort.

7. COMPONENTS OF THE GIRL EDUCATION PROGRAMME :

(i) Model Cluster school (MCS) :

A Model Cluster School for Girls', as a model girl-child friendly school at cluster level will be opened in all selected districts/blocks where the scheme is operational. A cluster will be for about 5-10 villages with each block having about 8-10 clusters. This girl-child friendly infrastructure will be used by all the schools in that cluster, by rotation. It shall have facilities in terms of teaching learning equipment, books, equipment, games, etc. Facilities available, like books will also be circulated to the schools in the clusters. Facilities will be used for learning through computers, film shows, reading material, self defence, life skills, riding bicycles, reading, games etc. Instructors will be hired for the day or on contract for imparting vocational and other training. These would be aimed at improving the achievement of girls, fostering an interest in education among them, and raising the importance of girls' education in the community. The facilities will also be used for teacher training in the cluster. **Clusters will be taken up in a phased manner, and those schools will be selected which have shown the best performance for enrolment of girls over the baseline, and which are accessible to around 10 villages / schools, whose girls can use this infrastructure and which has land for additional civil works and play fields. While selecting the location of the model cluster schools, the density of SC/ ST population would also be taken into consideration.**

An existing school will be identified for opening of 'Model Cluster School for Girls' having the density of SC/ST/OBC/Minority girls. A 'model cluster school for girls' will have the provision of an additional classroom, supply of drinking water, electrification, and toilet for which one time grant upto a maximum of Rs.2.00 lakhs will be provided. To the extent of construction of such additional room/toilets, this amount would be over and above the 33% limit for Civil Works under SSA. The construction of additional classrooms, etc. will be carried out by the VEC/SMC of the cluster headquarter. The type of design for the classroom will be approved by the Executive Committee of the State SSA Society. Infrastructure development will be used for additions to schools, residential facilities, girls toilets, water supply, electrification and barrier free features etc. in the upgraded cluster schools.

A one time grant amounting to Rs.30,000/- will also be provided for teaching learning equipment, library, sports, vocational training, etc.

- (ii) For each cluster, one or more of the following interventions may be undertaken within an overall annual ceiling of Rs.60,000/- per cluster.
- (a) **Recurring Grant to Model Cluster Schools:** A maximum amount of Rs. 20,000/- per annum will be provided to each cluster to meet the requirements of expenditure on various activities for promotion of girls' education in that cluster including maintenance of the school and engagement of part time instructors for additional specified subjects provided that no instructor would be hired for more than 3 months in an academic year and he/she would not receive remuneration of more than Rs. 1,000/- per month.
 - (b) **Awards to Schools/Teachers:** One award per year @ Rs. 5,000/- (in kind) will be provided to a school/teacher at cluster level for achievements in enrolment, retention and learning outcomes of girl students.
 - (c) **Student Evaluation, Remedial Teaching, Bridge Courses, Alternative Schools:** Special models of alternative schooling catering to hard to reach groups of girls including bridge courses, flexible timings, back to school camps, remedial teaching, etc. for out of school, irregular girls will be started in such villages where this poses a serious problem. In addition to the provisions already available under the EGS & AIE component of SSA, a maximum amount of Rs.20,000/- per annum will be provided to each cluster for student evaluation, remedial teaching, bridge course and alternative schools. There may be two such centres under one cluster.
 - (d) **Learning through Open Schools:** Children at the upper primary level, even in the open schooling system, in certain special cases, require some short-term residential training at regular intervals. The scheme will provide waiver of fees of girls for courses under National Open School and State Open Schools, setting up of specially designed open learning centers. The implementing agency will devise suitable system with NOS, State Open Schools or other such organisation for this purpose. The cluster school will form the venue of the residential upper primary school / NGO Centre. This will facilitate bringing to the educational system those girls who have dropped out from regular schools for some reason. A maximum amount of Rs. 50,000/- per annum will be provided to each cluster towards the payment of fees and provision of supplementary teaching to be taken up with the help of National Open School or State Open School. Short term residential courses can also be organised. To the extent possible, the payment on this account would be made by the State Societies directly to National Open School or State Open School as the case may be.
 - (e) **Teacher Training:** Under this scheme Teachers and teacher educators will be trained for gender sensitisation. A maximum amount of Rs. 4,000/- per annum

will be provided to each cluster for annual training of at least 20 teachers specially on gender aspects. This amount will be in addition to the provisions under SSA for normal teacher training on subjective issues.

- (f) **Child Care Centres** : The scheme provides opening of additional Early Childhood Care centres to meet gaps in the Integrated Child Development Scheme and relieve girls from the burden of sibling care. **Two Child Care Centres per cluster run by community may be opened in the areas where there is no Child Care Centre under any scheme of the Department of Women & Child Development and/or the State Government concerned. Each centre opened under the ‘Girl Education Component’ of the SSA will receive a recurring grant of Rs.5000/- and non-recurring grant of Rs.1000/- per annum.**
- (iii) **Additional incentives** : SSA provides for free textbooks to all girl-children upto a limit of Rs.150/- per child. In addition to the existing norms, a package of incentives shall be available to the girl-child under this programme. For each school a Mother’s/ Women’s Committee would, depending upon the real needs, decide on additional incentives within the already prescribed financial ceiling of Rs. 150 per girl-child per year, under SSA. **However, if there are any savings after providing for free text books to the girls, the balance money out of this amount may be used for providing additional items such as stationery, slates, work books, uniform, providing escorts in difficult areas, etc.**

Thus, if a State is spending Rs. x per child on textbooks from SSA funds, then it would spend only an additional Rs. (Rs.150 – x) for these activities.

- (iv) **Nutrition and School Health** : Health too, remains a critical issue for girls’ education. Greater malnutrition among girls and lower family priority towards their health affects their learning capacity. School health would involve general health check up with a more intensive follow up of such girls who require special attention. On sanctioning of a ‘Model Cluster School for Girl Child’, a list of such schools mentioning the nearest Government Hospital or Referral Hospital or PHC Centre to the school will be provided to the concerned State Health Department under intimation to the Department of Elementary Education & Literacy who will request the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for providing necessary services to the Model Cluster Schools. A synergy for this would be built with the Department of Health. Similar synergy will be developed for convergence of ‘Mid-day Meal Scheme’ run by the Department of Elementary Education & Literacy.
- (v) **Community Mobilisation (Mobilisation for enrolment, retention and learning)** :

At the District and cluster (a group of about ten villages) level , mobilisation activities including the training of teachers and educational administrators, mobilisation of the community, including formation and training of resource groups (Mother Teacher

Associations (MTA), Women Motivator Groups(WMG), Mahila Samakhya (MS) Sanghas etc.), activities by resource group like enrolment, retention, talking to parents etc., training & review of resource group, community follow up of enrolment, attendance, achievement etc shall be carried out.

The key to girls' education is community mobilisation. The SSA programme already mentions mobilisation at habitation/ village / urban slum level. For this purpose, a Cluster Co-ordinator along with a core group at cluster level comprising of women workers, volunteers and mothers/ parents etc. will assist in bringing girls from the villages, as well as monitoring their achievement, attendance, retention etc. Training of the community / resource groups involving Mother-Teacher Association, Women Management Groups, Sanghas, etc. will also be taken up under this component.

At the cluster level there will be a Co-ordinator (One for every 5 - 25 villages), who will work as an honorary women worker. She will be paid TA/DA, etc..

This Core Group will play one of the most critical roles in the programme, in terms of planning, mobilisation and implementing the programmes package of activities. Therefore, its constitution, selection of members, their training and orientation will be a key input in the programme. Their role will help the programme to truly evolve and gain local context and community ownership.

In addition to the provisions already available under SSA, an amount of Rs. 35,000/- for the first year; Rs. 20,000/- for the second and third year; and Rs. 10,000/- for the fourth and fifth year will be provided for for the purpose of community mobilisation through training, follow up of girls' enrolment, attendance, achievement etc. in each cluster: The above provision also includes the cost towards Management Information System and Documentation, honorarium & TA/DA to the coordinators and meetings of resource groups at cluster level. This amount will form part of 6% for management cost and it can be enhanced on account of expenses incurred for community mobilisation activities in the EBBs and other educationally deprived areas selected for special focus on girls' education. The 6% ceiling of a district shall not be exceeded by an amount more than 10% of the total "Girls Education Component" of its annual district plan.

(vi) **Implementation, Monitoring and Supervision :**

Programme activities at State and National level : Activities at the National and State level also include (a) Planning, (b) Training, (c) meeting, workshops evaluation and MIS, (d) Development of material including teaching learning material, CDs, films and other training material, fees & honorarium, (e) helping in the review/ development of textbooks, development of guidelines for incorporation of gender concerns, (f) development/ compilation of supplementary reading material for girls, including life skills, which would provide the support needed for girls' education etc. and (g) inter State sharing, documentation, publication, networking, Library, journal etc..

The SSA provisions will continue for carrying out **development of training modules, curriculum and pedagogy** activities, however, gender focused materials will be at the core of such activities at State level by the implementing unit of NPEGEL. These may include:

- (a) Development of material including teaching learning material, CDs, films and other training material,
- (b) Assisting the review/ development of textbooks, development of guidelines for incorporation of gender concerns,
- (c) Development/ compilation of supplementary reading material for girls, including life skills, which would provide the support needed for girls' education etc.
- (d) Development/ compilation of suitable curriculum and pedagogy including evaluation from the gender perspective etc. Material, pedagogy and modules already developed under programmes like MS, Lok Jumbish Project and District Primary Education Project, like gender review of text books, development of supplementary gender sensitive teaching learning material will also be collected and incorporated.

Funds for implementation, monitoring and supervision of NPEGEL at sub-district, district, State and central levels will provided as given below :-

- (a) Management expenses of 6 % of project cost including consultants for appraisal and monitoring and evaluation of the scheme, coordination with existing schemes, advocacy, workshops and seminars establishment and administrative expenses etc. as follows:

Funds to the extent of 1% at national level will be provided at national level to cover planning, monitoring and concurrent evaluation.

Funds to the extent of 5% of proposed expenditure at State and district level for planning and monitoring. Funds for this programme will be routed through the SSA society of the State as per mechanism mentioned in para 5 above.

- (b) The ceiling of 6% for management cost fixed under SSA can be enhanced on account of expenses incurred for community mobilisation activities in areas where this programme will be implemented upto 10% of the total amount earmarked for the district under this programme.

8. METHODOLOGY :

8.1 The separate sub- plan for 'Girls Education Component' will be prepared by the district implementation unit of the NPEGEL. As in the case of DEEP, these plans shall be scrutinized at the State level by the resource group, before being forwarded to the cell at the National level, who shall appraise the plans, with the help of external agencies/ consultants where necessary. A team constituted for the purpose will appraise the plans received. The

Project Approval Board (PAB) of SSA will approve these sub-plans. The PAB will also invite two eminent persons /NGOs with experience and expertise in girls'/women's education while approving these plans.

8.3 For the year 2003-04 the State shall prepare a supplementary Annual Plan for the year 2003-04 and get it approved by the Executive Committee of the SSA Society. Thereafter, approved Supplementary Annual Plan may be sent to the Department of Elementary Education & Literacy for approval and release of funds.

8.4 From 2004-05, the State will prepare sub-plan for NPEGEL which will be part of SSA District Elementary Education Plan but will be a distinct component of it.

9. Financial norms under the NPEGEL :

9.1 The assistance under this component will be as per the parameters of SSA i.e. 75 : 25 sharing arrangement during Xth Plan and 50 : 50 sharing thereafter between the Central Government and State Governments. Commitments regarding sharing of costs would be taken from State Governments in writing.

9.2 The provisions for NPEGEL will be in addition to the provisions already made under SSA. The SSA society will ensure that there is no duplication of activities proposed under the programme.

9.3 The Government of India would directly release funds to the SSA State Implementation Society. The State Government will also release its share to the State Implementation Society. Funds will be released thereafter to the Mahila Samakhya society wherever applicable. In States where MS is not being implemented, the implementation of this scheme will be through a sub-unit called 'Gender Unit' of SSA society and existing mechanism used for implementation of SSA will be followed.

9.4 The State society should open a separate savings bank account for operating of funds of NPEGEL. State Government should also release its matching share to the State SSA society through a separate budget head. Separate accounts will have to be maintained at district and sub-district structures, accordingly.

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