

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

A Study of Girls as Beneficiaries of School Education in Eastern Region of Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract:

Uttar Pradesh being the fourth largest and most populous State can be easily considered as the nerve center of India and all the images of India can be experienced here. There are eight Divisions in Eastern Region of Uttar Pradesh and every Division has its own peculiarity and specificity regarding geographical conditions and cultural diversity thereby influencing the enrolment trend of girl student. While a number of divisions of Uttar Pradesh are witnessing development, the eastern belt remains one of the most backward areas of the country. Hence it is necessary to find out - What are the variations in various Divisions of Eastern Region of Uttar Pradesh regarding girls' enrolment? In the present study, the researcher has thus decided to study the status of beneficiary girls of school education in the eastern region of the Uttar Pradesh State at various levels of school education. Such a study on the most representative State of the country may bring to light the true picture regarding the Universalization of School Education and the gender disparity status regarding girl's participation in school education in the eastern Uttar Pradesh. With all the limitations, the study brings together data disaggregated to the division level of eastern region of Uttar Pradesh on caste, region and level basis.

1. Introduction

Education has an intrinsic value for the development of the society, helps in the achievement of a better social order, and enables individuals to make better use of available economic opportunities whereby the State can transform its large population into an asset which can lead the entire nation on to the path of progress. In the words of **Nelson Mandela**¹ "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".

The Government is committed to achieving the national goals of universal education and has been steadily increasing the budgetary allocation for education. Focus has been on providing educational facilities to all sections of population irrespective of their caste, class, sex, or place of residence. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in the country and in many a terms the most representative of the country's status on various social factors. Almost fifty percent of the population of Uttar Pradesh is female of which a bigger ratio is the beneficiary of school education. There has been an impressive improvement in the enrolment of girls' in school education of Uttar Pradesh. With the introduction of the EFA scheme, distribution of free bags, books and uniforms to all girls and also the Mid day meal scheme, free scholarships and fee exemption to girls, enrolment percentages of girls had increased. Sahu(2006)² also found "that the contribution of free textbooks distribution scheme for enrolment as well as retention and achievement was good with a response of 3.2 on a 4 point scale". Bhatt(2000)³ in his study also found "that mid day meal provided by the U.P. Government was available to all groups of girl children and it had positive impact on attitudinal changes of parents towards education of girls". The upgrading of primary schools and upper primary schools, flexibility in passing classes 6 to 8, opening of new girls' upper primary schools and secondary schools had a remarkable effect. Sharma & Yadav(2008)⁴ analysed the impact of providing cycles to girls and found that "There has been an increase (10.4%) in enrolment of girls who were eligible for cycles". NPEGEL and KGBV schemes; the Kanya Vidya Dhan and the Savitri Bye Phule Yojna complement the provisions and efforts of SSA in persistent of larger goals of UEE. Nonetheless, female elementary and secondary enrolment rates have generally risen over time with the consistent efforts and initiatives of the State; however there is variation in the gender disparity and the speed in closing gender gaps. According to UNICEF(2003)⁵, "out of 121 million out-of school children, 65 million are girls". Social inequalities, superstitions, lack of physical facilities, impact less school atmosphere are the other reasons due to which girls remain detached from the schools. Pradhan(2001)⁶ and Shilpi & Suniti Sanwal(2002)⁷ also found in their studies regarding various levels of school education that "the main reason for low enrolment was that they were preoccupied at home with domestic work The girls were engaged in the embroidery of applique work and most of the girls were working in their agricultural or some ancestral work, working in fields, sending girls for cattle grazing, sibling care during the course of schooling". Misra & Baraj(2008)⁸ also observed that one of the reasons of dropout of girls as 'going to school is not safe for girl' and 'girl is of marriageable age'. Agriculture is the mainstay of the majority of the population of the eastern region of the State and also there are large numbers of small scale industries where these girls are absorbed and they help their families financially.

Low enrolment may also be because of wastage, dropout and migration which may have occurred or they may have enrolled in open school system. Improper functioning of schemes or inadequate educational facilities for girls and lack of awareness campaigns may be the reasons of the negative trend in girls' enrolment at these levels. Agarwal(2001)⁹ also found in her study that "*non-approachability of school reasons of low transition from class V to class VI, long distance between home and school particularly in case of girl students and lack of transport facility is one of the factors responsible for dropout*". Raji(2000)¹⁰ also found in his study that "attitude of the parents was found negative towards the education of girls".

Uttar Pradesh is divided into 18 divisions. The eastern region of Uttar Pradesh comprises of Allahbad, Azamgarh, Basti, Devipatan, Faizabad, Gorakhpur, Varanasi and Vindhiyachal divisions. A distinguishing feature of economy of Uttar Pradesh is its regional imbalances. The economy of Uttar Pradesh can be categorized into four regions; Western, Eastern, Central and Bundelkhand. Due to complete lack of economic opportunity and bad agricultural infrastructure, a huge population of the eastern regions of U.P. prefers to migrate to urban centres to earn money. These are agricultural trade centres and also there are large numbers of small scale industries where these girls are absorbed and they help their families financially to earn their livelihood. SC concentrated districts of the eight divisions; ST concentrated parts of the divisions of Azamgarh, Gorakhpur, Varanasi and Vindhiyachal Division; minority concentrated districts of these divisions; those divisions sharing international borders like Basti, Devipatan and Gorakhpur; and the Naxalite affected parts of the divisions of Varanasi and Vindhiyachal which are backward with unacceptably low levels of social economic or basic amenities indicators below National average depend on crafts and certain traditional artisanal activities, who restrict on women to be outside home, keep the participation in school education of these girls at a low. The rising communal forces in some parts of this region especially Faizabad division affect the girls enrolment. Moreover these divisions lie very close to the State of Bihar which influences the thinking of the people regarding female education. Low per capita income in the eastern parts of the State camouflages the glaring inequality between different divisions, levels, areas and categories. S.N. Mohd.(2000)¹¹ also found that "*economic backwardness was more responsible for low enrolment of girls at the primary level*". Dua(2004)¹² found in her study that "*migration of parents from one place to another in search of work is another factor that leads to non-enrolment of children (girls-20%, boys- 17%)*".

While a number of divisions of Uttar Pradesh are witnessing development, the eastern belt remains one of the most backward areas of the country. Hence it is necessary to find out - What are the variations in various Divisions of Eastern Region of Uttar Pradesh regarding girls' enrolment? In this paper different divisions of Eastern Region of Uttar Pradesh will be taken as a separate and independent entity, hence it may likely generate a comparative analysis among the eight divisions, among the various levels, and also among the different categories mentioned regarding the enrolment status of girls in these divisions.

2. Objective

To study the trend of Division wise Girls enrolment in School Education of Eastern Region of Uttar Pradesh for the last sixteen years (from the session 1994-95 to 2009- 10). With reference to the following: a) Category wise b) Area wise c) Level wise

3. Method

The researcher has employed the Descriptive Study method owing to the nature of study. The trend analysis of the data would be done qualitatively.

4. Description of the population

The entire Girl students (General, S.C. and S.T.) enrolled in School Education (Primary, Upper Primary and Secondary levels) of all the eight divisions of Eastern Region of Uttar Pradesh will constitute the population of the Study. (Here it must be noticed that the General category include the OBC category also).

5. Size of the sample

The whole population will be treated as the sample of the study.

6. Tools Used

According to the variables and objectives of the study self prepared cumulative tables will be used for collecting the secondary data from various available resources.

7. Sources of Data

- Report Published by National Informatics Centre on the Official Website of Uttar Pradesh (upgov.up.nic.in/spatrika/spatrika.htm).
- Records available in the Economics and Statistics Division, State Planning Institute, Uttar Pradesh.
- Census Report 2011

8. Findings and Conclusion

- Girls' enrolment figures for school education of Allahbad Division showed positive trends at the upper primary and secondary levels. The enrolment of SC/ST girls was satisfactory for almost all the levels and in both the areas. The General category girls' enrolment increased at the secondary level but was not satisfactory in the primary and upper primary level in both the urban and rural areas.
- A positive growth in girls' enrolment for both the SC/ST and General Category girls from both the rural and urban areas was found at the primary level and upper primary level and for both the category girls at secondary level in rural areas of

Azamgarh division. However, the SC/ST category girls from urban area at showed a very low positive growth and the general category girls at the secondary level recorded a high negative growth.

- Girls' enrolment figures for school education of Basti Division showed positive trends and huge growth for the rural area in all levels for both the SC/ST and General categories; for General category at the primary level and for the SC/ST category at the secondary level in the urban area. There was a very negligible positive growth for SC/ST category girls in urban area at the Primary level and General category girls in urban area at upper primary level and secondary level. However the SC/ST category girls in urban area at upper primary level recorded a huge negative growth.
- The growth in enrolment of SC/ST category and General category girls in rural area was positive and consistent at the primary level of Devipatan Division. However, in the urban area both the categories enrolment of girls' recorded a negative growth at this level. A positive growth in girls' enrolment was recorded at the upper primary level and the secondary level in Devipatan division in both the areas for both the categories.
- Enrolment figures for school education of Faizabad Division show positive trends and an average growth. The trend was positive for both the categories in rural area at all the levels of school education. However in case of urban area both the categories at upper primary level and General category at the secondary level recorded positive trend over the period whereas a negative growth was recorded for both the categories at primary level and SC/ST category at the secondary level.
- The growth in enrolment of SC/ST category in rural area and General category girls in both the areas was positive however, in the urban area the SC/ST category enrolment of girls' recorded a negative growth at the primary level in Gorakhpur Division. A positive growth in girls' enrolment was recorded at the upper primary level in Gorakhpur division for both the areas in all the categories of girls. A negative trend in girls' enrolment is noticed at the secondary level for girls of the General category both from rural and urban area and of the SC/ST category from the urban area. Only the girls of SC/ST category of the rural area at secondary level recorded an average positive growth in enrolment over the period.
- Enrolment figures of girls for school education of Varanasi Division show positive trends and a satisfactory growth. A huge positive growth is seen at all the three level in both the areas for all categories.
- Enrolment figures of girls for school education of Vindhyachal Division show positive trends and a satisfactory growth. A huge positive growth is seen at all the three level in both the areas for all categories except the girls of SC/ST category in urban area at the primary level which recorded a negative growth. There has been an impressive improvement in the enrolment of girls' in school education of Uttar Pradesh. But if the question is whether growth in girls' enrolment has reduced interdivisional differences, the answer seems to be in the negative. It may be comfortably said that in the Eastern region of Uttar Pradesh which is rising in many of the development indicators, trying to bring equal enrolment of both the gender to a fifty-fifty participation has many divisional irregularities and regional imbalances at all the levels, areas and categories. It seems there is a need of a very strong awakening campaigns which may reduce imbalances in different divisions across the region and speed up the mission of universalization of school education of Uttar Pradesh in the coming years. The results of the present study appear to be hopeful, positive and give direction to the thinking of people and redirect pre-assumptions regarding girl education.

9. Suggestions

Trend studies like the present are needed to be repeated and done in different periods, levels and other educationally backward states so as to arrive at generalizations. Community support, a vigilant administration, substantial State initiative and investment and an in- built system of monitoring and evolution of existing schemes is necessary for reducing the gap in girls and boys enrolment in school education especially the eastern region of Uttar Pradesh.

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11. Abbreviations

- EFA Education for all
- KGBV Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
- NPEGEL National Programme of Education for Girls at Elementary Level
- OBC Other Backward Classes
- SC Scheduled Caste
- ST Scheduled Tribe
- UEE Universal elementary education
- UNICEF United Nations Childeren's Fund
- U.P. Uttar Pradesh