

SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES FOR GENDER EQUALITY



Notes

Education offers an opportunity to work towards making the society inclusive and free from gender biases, stereotypes, and discriminations. School is the highly trusted institution after family to impart values for family life and citizenship. Another important area of contribution of Education in nation building is promotion of gender equality.

There are various schemes and policies that talk about the promotion of girls' education eventually to work towards achieving gender equality. Policies like national policy on education 1986, Plan of action 1991, National education policy 2020 and other extensively talk about girls' education with the larger aim to dismiss all kinds of stereotypes about women, their capabilities, contribution, and ability to achieve the set goals. Guided by this policy there are many government schemes that make education accessible and viable to all. NGO also have their role to play in promoting equal education to all. This lesson is dedicated to explore the present and previous schemes and programmes promoting gender equality to understand how these policies helped in bringing gender equity and empowerment. Gender diversity is the core line of understanding gender. This lesson will largely focus on the role of government schemes and programmes and role of non-government organization in promoting education and gender equality.



OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- describes the salient features of the schemes and programs of government of India for education like Samagra Siksh Abhiyaan (SMSA), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs & NPGEL) & Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (RMSA) towards gender equality;
- appreciates the role of open schooling (Particularly NIOS) in leveraging education of girls and women.

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- recognizes the role of NGOs in promoting education of women, minorities and other marginalized section;

11.1 UNDERSTANDING GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN PROMOTING EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

State has a specific and significant role to play in making education accessible, available and approachable to all. To achieve this larger aim government makes various policies, schemes, programmes and laws. These initiatives are taken to promote gender equality at larger level. The Sustainable Development Goals (2015) of United Nation also accepted and recognized that ‘gender equality is inextricably linked to the right to education.’ This aim incorporates commitment toward ensuring the quality and equitable education for all without any form of discrimination based on any gender. There are many obstacles in policy formation and its implementation due to social, cultural and economic barriers and people’s mind sets. These all collectively create exclusion and inequality in education based on gender. On the other hand, it is also important to note that government in India is committed to create opportunities to make society equal.

In India, despite the fact that we have right to education as our fundamental right under the Article 21 (a) of Indian constitution, children are easily visible outside schools for doing various kinds of work as labour. Many girls are still out of school and the situation is worse for transgenders. Women have been discriminated against education, work and carrier choices. Stereotypes in curriculum, textbooks and pedagogy, ideological barriers of male dominance in various academic and professional fields prevent women from exercising available rights to achieve equal status in society. NEP 2020 has also provided special attention to equitable education for all genders.

Various initiatives have been taken by government to promote gender equality in all sphere of life that includes social and educational equality, economic empowerment, and political participation and so on. Some of such schemes are being discussed in the next section of the chapter.

11.1.1 Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan is a government initiative launched by then Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (now Ministry of Education) in 2018. The program aims to provide quality education and enhance learning outcomes for all school-going children in India, from pre-school to higher secondary levels.

Under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, the government has merged three previously separate schemes - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), and Teacher Education (TE) - into a single, integrated scheme. The objective is to ensure a holistic approach to education and to address the shortcomings of the earlier schemes.



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Some of the key components of the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan include the provision of infrastructure and facilities in schools, the improvement of teaching and learning processes, the enhancement of teacher education, the promotion of vocational education, and the inclusion of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The program also aims to improve the education system's governance and management structures, and to strengthen the capacity of education administrators and teachers.

The SMSA recognizes the importance of educating girls in achieving gender equality and social development. The program focuses on promoting the enrollment of girls in schools, providing them with access to quality education, and ensuring their retention in schools. The SMSA has been instrumental in promoting the education of girls in India in several ways:

Promoting enrollment: SMSA has launched several initiatives to promote the enrollment of girls in schools, including setting up residential schools for girls in rural areas, providing free textbooks and uniforms to girls, offering scholarships and stipends to economically disadvantaged families to support their education and provision of Stipend to CWSN girls from class I to Class XII

Improving infrastructure: SMSA has made significant investments in improving the infrastructure of schools, including the construction of new classrooms, toilets, and boundary walls. This has led to the creation of a more conducive learning environment for girls, which has helped in promoting their education.

Providing training and support: SMSA has provided training and support to teachers to help them create a gender-sensitive learning environment in schools. The program has also provided training to community members to raise awareness about the importance of girls' education and to promote their enrollment in schools.

Empowering girls: SMSA has launched several initiatives to empower girls and enable them to become self-reliant. This includes vocational training programs, life skills training, career guidance programs and provision for self-defense training for the girls from classes VI to XII

In a nutshell, SMSA has played a significant role in promoting the education of girls in India by addressing the various barriers that hinder their access to education. The program has contributed to increasing the enrollment of girls in schools, improving their learning outcomes, and promoting their overall development.

11.1.2 Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA): An Overview

Education works as a tool for the development of the nation. In this context, primary education plays a very vital and significant role to overcome the basic deprivations and secondary education works towards social and economic development which supports incorporates social justice and equality.

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To improve the quality of education for all, various recommendations were given by Education Policy 1986 and plan of action 1992. These recommendation were related to opening girls' hostels, integration of ICTs in schools, vocational education etc. to make school education accessible and approachable to all for quality education in India. RMSA was one of the schemes in this process under SSA (Sarva Sikshah Abhiyaan).

RMSA was launched to increase the enrolment in schools while considering the distance of school from residence of the child.

Objectives of the RMSA

There are various objectives with which RMSA was launched. Some of them are given here:

- To enhance enrolment ratio in schools up to 75% which was 52.26 % for class 9th and 10th. This enrolment was expected to be achieved within 5 years of the implementation of the scheme.
- It aimed to enhance the quality of education which is the prime responsibility of secondary school education.
- It aimed to make school education free from all kinds of obstacles and barriers based on gender, socio-cultural and economic, and disability.
- It aimed to provide universal access to education particularly at secondary level of school education, including secondary schools within five kilometers and senior secondary school within 7-10 kilometers.
- It also aimed to arrange effective and useable transport facilities along with residential spaces as per the need of children.
- It also aimed to work towards enrolment of the girl children in secondary schools and to reduce the dropouts of the girls.
- It aimed to provide access to secondary education to children from economically weaker section, and those from educationally deprived family backgrounds including other marginalized section such as SC/ST/OBC etc. In all, to achieve universalization of secondary education. There has been a special emphasis on promoting education of girls to ensure that they do not drop out of schools due to familial work demands.

**ACTIVITY 11.1**

Examine the achievement of RMSA against each point given in table

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RMSA aimed to	To what extent it has been achieved
1. Achieve improved and enhanced enrolment ratio in schools up to 75% which was 52.26 % for class 9th and 10 th within 5 years of its implementation.	
2. Achieve the target of opening new schools so as to provide secondary schools within 5 kilometers and senior secondary school within 7-10 kilometers.	
3. Arrange effective and useable transport facilities along with residential spaces as per the needs of children and the context.	

Many additional provisions were made under this scheme for enhancing the quality, accessibility and retention of student particularly girl child in school. Some of such provisions are discussed here:

- **Additional classrooms:** Considering that due to this scheme more students will be enrolled and hence more seating space would be required. To make appropriate provision to accommodate newly admitted students, provision for developing additional classrooms wherever needed was approved.
- **Laboratories:** Laboratories are essential for schools. These can be of various kinds. So, to enhance the quality of education, teaching learning process and providing better hands on experiences provision of developing more laboratories was accepted.
- **Libraries:** Books are the core of education. Reading books enhance our ability to comprehend. Considering reading important and understanding the values of collection of books provision was made to develop more libraries in schools.
- **Art and Craft:** Considering the important relation of art and craft and education, special provisions are made to develop art and craft room in school.
- **Toilet Block:** A child spends almost 6 hours in school every day. Therefore essential facilities are required in school. One of them is clean and hygienic toilets. Separate toilet blocks are accepted to be built in schools for girls to avoid any kind of discomfort.
- **Drinking Water:** A special emphasis was given on developing facilities of clean drinking water in schools.
- **Residential hostels for teacher in remote areas.** There are schools located in remote areas but near to students' residence, but away from teachers' homes.

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Considering this point in mind provisions are made to build residential hostels for teachers in schools located in remote areas.

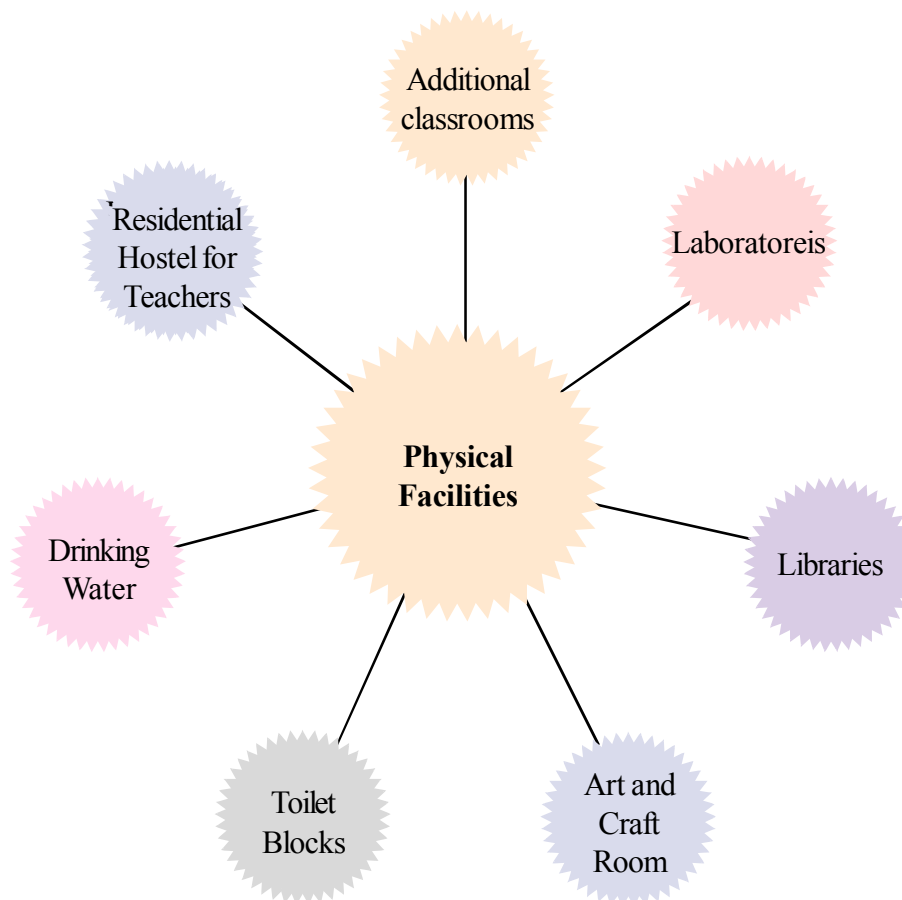


Figure 11.1: Focus on Physical Facilities under RMSA

Intervention to enhance the quality of education

Various interventions were placed by RMSA to enhance the quality of education for all. Some of them are given here:

- **Teachers' Appointment:** Lack of teachers in school has been an important problem which eventually put pressure on existing staff and that leads to poor engagement with learners. It negatively affects the quality of education. 1:30 ratio is considered ideal for teaching. To achieve this ratio provisions are made to recruit additional teachers in schools.
- **Academic Focus:** For developing scientific aptitude and thinking in students, Science and Mathematics were given special attention in school education. Along with this, English language was also promoted to meet the international standards. To promote science special science laboratories were developed in schools.

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- **Teacher Education:** School education is directly related to teacher education, which make it necessary to do required reforms in teacher education to make school education better. It was suggested that teacher education must cater to the needs of the time and prepare teachers who can address the school concerns.
- **ICT and Education:** Considering the emerging need of ICTs in life, ICT enabled education was promoted and today one can see the role being played by ICTs in our life. This intervention was also important to develop quality education for matching the standards at the international level.
- **Reforms in Curriculum:** To enhance the quality of education curriculum reforms were suggested to make the content more critical and contemporary and application centered.
- **Pedagogical Reforms:** It was considered that rote learning does not serve the purpose of education therefore opportunities should be provided for contextual and meaningful learning.

Interventions to Promote Equity in Education

Creating equal spaces and providing equal opportunities to all has always been an important aim of different educational policies. RMSA has also contributed to the same. Some of the interventions for promoting equity in education are given here:

Focused Micro Planning: It was considered important that the broad changes are important but focusing on micro issues in schools is also essential to enhance the possibility of creating equal space for all. It is essential to focus on micro systems in school education which somehow reduce the possibility of equity in various spheres of school life. So, planning was done regarding small but crucial and earlier ignored issues in school education such as toilets and female teachers etc.

New school in special zones: Provisions were made to open new schools considering SC/ST/Minority area in focus. These schools opened new possibilities of education for all.

Enrolment Drive: Despite the fact that there are schools but enrolment is very poor, provision of special drives were placed for the enrolment of the students of weaker sections. This provision was also made to make education available to all. This was one of the most important interventions through RMSA.

More Female Teachers: The provisions were made to appoint more female teachers in school to attract the girl child to attend school. It was considered that parents will feel safer while sending their girl children to school. Special focus on recruitment of female teachers was also a great initiative for two basic reasons, it created teaching opportunities for women and enhanced the enrolment of girls in school.

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Separate Toilet Blocks: Though toilet blocks have already been discussed under physical facilities, but its mention here is also important as it was an essentially required intervention on the idea of equity. Special toilet blocks were made for girls that addressed their essential need.



ACTIVITY 11.2

Many suggestions were given by RMSA to enhance the quality and equity in education. If you were asked to add three more in each, what would they be like?

Add to enhance the quality	Add to enhance the equity
1.	
2.	
3.	

11.1.2 National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)

NPEGEL (National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level) is one of the various initiatives taken by government for providing better opportunities to girls to be educated under SSA. This programme was introduced to make education available for girls from places which are hard to reach. Its focus was to attend girls those were not in school. This programme was launched in 2003 as one of the significant component of SSA. Its objective was to provide additional support for educational access to girls.

It is important to note that the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched in the year 2001-2003 for universalization of elementary education in India. The effort was to provide education to all without any discrimination. The objective was also to enhance the capability of the children via education. There were fewer provisions for supporting girls’ education and hence NPEGEL was introduced to provide maximum support to girls’ education.

The prime objective of NPEGEL was to develop cluster wise model schools to have better community engagement and connect for enhancing the enrolment of girls in schools. The taken task was to provide all possible support to girls’ education that includes teachers’ sensitization towards gender concerns, no discrimination based on gender neither conscious nor unconscious, gender sensitive curriculum and study materials and other support to make educational access and retention convenient for girls such as books, uniform etc.

Considering the poor level of women literacy in rural areas, this scheme was implemented in identified educationally backward blocks. These blocks were identified with reference to the

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rate of literacy of the block as compared to the National literacy levels. There were also district where literacy was below 10%. These areas were also considered for intervention.

This programme was introduced in 24 states in India, these were Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Assam and one UT of Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

The Strategy adopted was to include community, school teacher, non-governmental organization, etc. to elevate the process of girls' education. It tried to make it community owned process and local participation is valued. All the identified blocks were expected to assess the ground situation and take action. The criteria included out of school girls, dropout girls, working girls, those who have completed primary education, girls of marginalized communities etc. According to the need and context, actions were expected to be taken. In all existing practices and material including pedagogy was reviewed in light of gender sensitivity for providing better educational opportunity to all girls.

NPEGEL was expected to develop a dynamic management structure to promote girls education at district, state and national level. Various programmes were expected to be developed to create awareness about gender concerns among various stake holders in education system including parents, administrator, and teachers and so on. The idea was to eliminate all kinds of gender disparities of, for and in education for girls. To develop gender sensitive perspective in education, special collaborative networking among various kinds of institutions (academic, research, administration etc.) were taken up. It also made effort to arrange necessary and significant support services to enhance participation of girls in elementary education.

**ACTIVITY 11.3**

Suggest three ways to make provisions of NPEGEL more effective for enhancing the girls' education in India. 1. 2. 3.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.1**

Put a tick (✓) mark against the correct options:

1. Why are the following provisions important in a school? Give answer in one line.
 - (a) Laboratory

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- (b) Library
2. NPEGEL was launched to
- Provide support to girls' education
 - Provide support to education for all
 - Develop more schools based on the idea of neighborhood schools
 - Capacity building of the school teachers
3. What was the criterion for selecting the intervention zones under NPEGEL?

11.1.3 Mahila Samakhya Programme

This programme was introduced in 1988 to achieve the objectives of the National Policy on Education 1986. The National policy on Education 1986 stated that education can be an effective and meaningful tool to empower women's agency and status in India.

“Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of woman. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favor of women. The national education system will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women.” – NPE-1986

The core focus of Mahila Samakhya was to empower women through education and awareness. Mahila Samakhya developed a collective space (Sangha) for women to discuss important issues of their lives. Trained field facilitators were also provided to rural women to help them to acquire decision making and leadership abilities. Under this programme few alternative structures like Nari Adalats, Counselling Centres, Sanjeevani Kendras/Herbal Medicine and information centers were also developed for women. This programme alone trained over six lakh women in various areas. 101 mahila shikshan kendras was also established under Mahila Samakhya programme. These shikshan kendras effectively provided quality and gender sensitive education to adolescent out of school girls.

11.1.4 Balika Samridhi Yojana

It was introduced by government of India in 1997. Under this scheme government offered financial aid to all girl children born after 15 August 1997. This scheme was especially introduced to provide support to girls of economically weaker section of both rural and urban areas.

The fundamental objectives of this scheme are to change the attitude of society towards the birth of a girl child and also the mother of a girl child. This scheme also designed to facilitate in improving the enrollment and retention of girls in primary and secondary schools.

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Two daughters from a family are eligible to avail the benefits. Financial assistance under Balika Samridhi Yojana is provided in two installments. The first installment of the financial grant is provided at the time of the birth of eligible girl child as Rs. 500 to her mother. Another installment of funds is provided at many stages of her education. It is an annual financial assistance which is divided into 6 major categories – Class 1 to Class 3 – 300 per annum, class 4 – Rs. 500 per annum, Class 5 – Rs. 600 per annum, Class 6 and Class 7 – Rs. 700 per annum, Class 8 – Rs. 800 per annum and class 9 and class 10 – Rs. 1000 per annum.

In addition, a vital characteristic of the scheme was to take care of the girls till the legal age of their marriage. This scheme also tried to provide meaningful assistance to girls in their involvement in income generating activities so that they can become financially independent.

11.1.5 KGBVs

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBVs) was introduced by government of India in 2004. This Scheme is about setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belong to disadvantaged sections of the educationally backward blocks (EBBs) in the country. Educationally backward blocks are the regions where female rural literacy is below national average and the gender gap in literacy is above the national average. This scheme provided 75% reservation for SC, ST, OBC and Minority communities.

In 2007 KGBVs programme was merged with SSA as a separate component. Now KGBV scheme falls under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan since the year 2018.

The prime objective of KGBVs is to provide quality education to the girls of the socially and economically marginalized sections of the society. It introduced for bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of schooling. This programme encouraged the participation of girls in education by providing them appropriate opportunities. This is a residential schooling programme so it aims resolve many issues of girls drop outs like security, sanitation, nutrition etc.

This programme was implemented by states through the Mahila Samakhya (MS) society in MS States (Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Bihar, Assam, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Uttrakhand). It was introduced in other states through SSA Society.

Training of residential school teachers was also initiated under this scheme. District Institutes of Educational Training, Block Resource Centers and Mahila Samakhya Resource Groups played important role in this regard.

11.2 ROLE OF OPEN SCHOOLING (PARTICULARLY NIOS) IN LEVERAGING EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Open and distance learning (ODL)- and more particularly, open schooling-has been seen as having greater potential to provide education to those who are deprived and excluded. Women

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are considered a major segment of population who can largely benefited from the ODL system as there are unique flexibilities in terms of time, pace and anywhere learning involved in it. Further, cost involved in ODL system is also less than formal education system. Thus, open schooling is a boon for many girls and women, who are unable to access education, and those who often drop out due to multiple domestic, community and social factors. In India, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) at the national level, and various state open schools at the state level. Here, you will know some of the unique interventions by NIOS in leveraging education of girls and women.

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) was established in 1989 by the Ministry of Education (MOE) Government of India to provide Vocational, Life Enrichment and community-oriented courses, as well as Elementary level Courses through its Open Basic Education Programmes (OBE). It aims to reach a large number of learners, especially for the underprivileged, providing them with unique facilities such as rural youth, urban poor, girls and women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backward classes, Divyangjan, and ex-service personnel.

NIOS intervened through many unique initiatives including Second Chance Education (SCE), "Tejaswini: Socio-Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project" and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) scheme for education of girls in remote areas:

- **The Second Chance Education (SCE) Project**, run by NIOS with the support of UN Women, is a programme that seeks to re-integrate women and girls from marginalised communities into formal education. It is being implemented in 12 districts across 4 states (Bihar, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan) in India, covering approximately 200 villages. The SCE programme offers vocational education, entrepreneurship, digital, and professional training and skills, and finds potential employment. The major outcome of the programme is that 87 percent of women belonging to various marginalised groups such as SC, ST, OBC and minority groups are benefited from this project.
- **"Tejaswini: Socio-Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project"**. NIOS in collaboration with the Jharkhand Women Development Society (JWDS), Government of Jharkhand is implementing World Bank's Project "Tejaswini" that seeks to empower the adolescent girls, and young women in the age group of 14-24 those who drop-out from school with basic life skills and thereafter provide further opportunities to acquire market driven skill training or completion of secondary education. The project has three main components: expanding social, educational, and economic opportunities; intensive service delivery; and state capacity-building and implementation support. The project is being implemented in 17 districts

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of Jharkhand A model centre has been established at Ranchi and staff has been appointed specifically for the purpose. Time to time capacity building workshop are also held to train the functionaries to adequately train the adolescent girls in content enrichment and developing their life skills.

- **Vocational training in girls' schools.** The Kasturba GnadhiBalika Vidyalayas (KGBV) scheme was launched by the Government of India in 2004 to set up residential schools for girls belonging predominantly to the SC/ST/OBC and minority communities in India's "Educationally Backward Blocks". A hundred and fifty KGBVs in Rajasthan from 33 districts became NIOS study centres and have been offering skills-based vocational courses to girls since 2010. Two skill development courses were chosen: cutting and tailoring and beauty culture. The students are usually aged 12-16 and the training provided an opportunity for them to become productive workforce and enhance their chances of having a dignified livelihood. Collaboration between NIOS and the KGBVs for vocational training was considered a good practice, but it runs the risk of reinforcing gender stereotypes through the course it offers.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.2**

1. What was the core focus of Mahila Samakhya Programme?
2. Various collective spaces were developed under Mahila Samakhya programme. These collective spaces are known as:
 - (a) Council
 - (b) SalhaKenderas
 - (c) Sangha
 - (d) Facilitation centre
3. State any two objectives of Balika Samaridhi Yojana.
4. KGBV is merged with which of the following programme since 2018?
 - (a) NPEGEL
 - (b) Mahila Samakhya
 - (c) SSA
 - (d) Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan.
5. In which of the following states, Tejaswini project is being implemented to improve the education of adolescent girls and women
 - a. Rajasthan

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- b. Jharkhand
- c. Chhattisgarh
- d. Odisha

6. Evaluate the potential of open schooling for education of women, particularly for marginalized group.

11.2 ROLE OF NGOs IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Along with various government initiatives different NGOs have also contributed in promoting gender equality. These organizations do not come directly under government but can seek for financial support with laid processes. Their contribution in eliminating gender inequality is noticeable. The prime objective of NGOs is to work against the deprivation of the people and provide them required support. NGOs are engaged in various kind of work to promote gender equality in society and making women empowered. Some of these works are:

- Educational support to rural women
- Organizing rural women to participate in the process of their own empowerment
- Development of different mechanisms for promoting gender equality
- Develop self-motivation in women for attaining education and economic contribution
- Ensuring women empowerment via their participation in economic activities
- Maximum use of available resources in favor of developing equal spaces for women
- Developing spaces for women leadership in rural context
- Training programmes for women to enhance their capabilities

Successful Strategies of NGOs

No doubt in the fact that various funding agencies are now favoring gender equity. It also means funding are provided to the NGOs working towards empowerment of women. NGOs provide gender perspective as they are doing lot of work in the field of women's empowerment. Some of them have long term objectives to contribute in empowerment of women in India. It is important to note that the strategies are adopted and used according to the vision, resources, organizational structures, funding etc. of the NGOs.

Education has power of empowering and therefore, lack of education certainly hinders the access of rights and recourse to women and this leads to their poor socio-economic empowerment. Considering this situation, some NGOs offer different facilitation programmes to provide basic literacy and also provide expert knowledge about certain fields. Advocacy



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and legal support/facilitation is also one of the important take ups of NGOs for promoting gender equity. It also implies that most of the NGOs work with the idea that economic instability is caused by social discrimination. NGOs use an effective way to explore and understand the concern and that is why they work with women within the community who help them to know the basic and foundation issues faced by women in the explored context.

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

- Education has great possibilities for women empowerment.
- There are various schemes and policies that talks about the promotion of girls' education which eventually leads the notion of gender equality.
- Policies like National Policy on Education 1986, Plan of action 1991, National education policy 2020 extensively talk about girls' education with the larger aim to address stereotypes about women, their capabilities, contribution, and ability to achieve the set goals.
- The Sustainable Development Goals (2015) of United Nations accepted and recognized that 'gender equality is inextricably linked to the right to education.' This aim incorporates commitment toward ensuring the quality and equitable education for all without any form of discrimination based on any gender.
- To improve the quality education for all various recommendations are given by Education Policy 1986 and plan of action 1992. The recommendations of 1986 policy and plan of action 1992 were related to girls' hostel, ICT in schools, vocational education etc. to make school education accessible and approachable to all for quality education in India. RMSA was one of the schemes in this process under SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan).
- To achieve universalization of secondary education following *guiding principles* was placed:
 - Universal Access to All
 - Equality and Social Justice
 - Relevance and Development
 - Curricular and Structural Aspect
- Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan is a government initiative launched by Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (now Ministry of Education) in 2018. The program aims to provide quality education and enhance learning outcomes for all school-going children in India, from pre-school to higher secondary levels.

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- Under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, the government has merged three previously separate schemes - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), and Teacher Education (TE) - into a single, integrated scheme. Some of the key components of the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan include the provision of infrastructure and facilities in schools, the improvement of teaching and learning processes, the enhancement of teacher education, the promotion of vocational education, and the inclusion of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Various interventions were placed by RMSA to enhance the quality of education for all. These are teachers' appointment, academic focus, teacher education, ICT and education, reforms in curriculum, pedagogical reforms etc.
- Some of the interventions for promoting equity in education under RMSA are focused micro planning, new school in special zones, more female teachers and separate toilet blocks.
- NPEGEL was introduced to make education available for girls to the places hardest to reach. Its focus was to attend girls those were not in school. This programme was launched in 2003 as one of the significant component of SSA.
- The prime objective of NPEGEL was to develop cluster wise model schools to have better community engagement and connect for enhancing the enrolment of girls in schools.
- The Strategy adopted by NPEGEL was to include community, school teacher, Non-governmental organization, etc. to elevate the process of girls' education.
- The core focus of Mahila Samakhya (introduced in 1988) was to empower women through education and awareness. Mahila Samakhya developed a collective space (Sangha) for women to discuss important issues of their life.
- Under Mahila Samkhya few alternative structures like Nari Adalats, Counselling Centres, Sanjeevani Kendras/Herbal Medicine and information centers were also developed for women.
- Balika Samridhi Yojana was introduced by the government of India in 1997. Under this scheme government offered financial aid to all girl children born after 15 August 1997.
- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBVs) was introduced by the government of India in 2004. This Scheme is about setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belong to disadvantaged sections of the educationally backward blocks (EBBs) in the country.
- KGBVS was also introduced for bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of schooling.
- Open schooling, particularly NIOS has been found to be very much beneficial for many girls and women, who are unable to access education, and those who often drop

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out due to multiple domestic, community and social factors due to flexibilities in time, pace and place. NIOS intervened through many unique initiatives including Second Chance Education (SCE), "Tejaswini: Socio-Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project" and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) scheme for education of girls in remote areas.

- Along with various government initiatives different NGOs have also contributed in creating gender equality.
- Some of the work NGOs do towards gender equality and women empowerment are educational support, organizing rural women, development of different mechanisms for promoting gender equality, develop self-motivation in women, ensuring women empowerment, maximum use of available resources, developing spaces for women leadership in rural context, training programmes for women to enhance their capabilities etc.

**TERMINAL EXERCISE**

1. Discuss the role of government in promoting gender equality via education with suitable examples. Support your answer with various policies and schemes launched by government.
2. Critically discuss the role of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) in promoting equity and quality in, of and for education with various initiatives taken by it.
3. Discuss any three objectives of RMSA toward girls' education.
4. What is the contribution of National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) in promoting and facilitating girls' education?
5. Discuss the core focus of Mahila Samkhya. Critically present the ways adopted to make this effort successful.
6. How have Balika Samridhi Yojana contributed in improving the condition of girls in India?
7. What role do NGOs play in promoting gender equality and women empowerment? Discuss with suitable examples.
8. Discuss some of the strategies adopted by NGOs to play effective role toward women education and social equality.
9. Explain the major component in Tejaswini project.
10. Describe any one of the major projects of NIOS in improving education of girls and women.

Education and
Gender

Notes

PROJECT

Identify some girls not attending schools. Discuss with them and their parents to locate the core problems regarding education and empowerment and complete the table given below:

S. No.	Name of the participant	Challenge/problem faced/ facing	Possible solution
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**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS****11.1**

- To develop reading habits and enhance the capability of comprehension along with becoming aware about the current knowledge.
 - To have a hands on experience with reference to various subject taught in school
- Provide support to girls' education
- These blocks were identified with reference to the rate of literacy as compared to national level.

11.2

- To empower women through education and awareness.
- Sangha
- The objectives were to change the mindset of society towards girl child **and** improving of the enrollment and retention of the girl in primary and secondary schools.
- d. Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan
- b. Jharkhand
- Women are considered a major segment of population who can largely benefited from the ODL system as there are unique flexibilities in terms of time, pace and anywhere learning involved in it. Further, cost involved in ODL system is also less than formal education system