

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 285 798

SO 018 135

**TITLE** Education of Girls in Asia and the Pacific: Report of the Regional Review Meeting on the Situation of Education of Girls for Universalization of Primary Education (Bangkok, Thailand, November 19-28, 1985).

**INSTITUTION** United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Bangkok (Thailand). Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific.

**PUB DATE** 86

**NOTE** 92p.

**AVAILABLE FROM** UNIPUB, 4611-F Assembly Drive, Lanham, MD 20706-4391.

**PUB TYPE** Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)

**EDRS PRICE** MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.

**DESCRIPTORS** \*Access to Education; Developing Nations; Dropout Prevention; Dropout Programs; Dropouts; Elementary Education; \*Females; Foreign Countries; Out of School Youth; Potential Dropouts; \*School Holding Power; \*Withdrawal (Education); \*Womens Education

**IDENTIFIERS** \*Asia; Pacific Region

**ABSTRACT**

The Regional Review Meeting on the Situation of Education of Girls was attended by participants from eight Asian countries, six of which have low female participation and retention rates. Participants from Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, and Thailand presented reports based on the findings of national studies, policies, plans, and future policy directions. These summary reports addressed access to education, factors affecting the participation and retention of girls, national programs to improve girls' participation in schools, trends, and priorities. A review and analysis of the current situation included the topics of barriers to educational opportunity, community participation, incentives, the training of teachers, and curriculum development. Some areas of concern which were addressed were access and equity, social attitudes, management, monitoring, evaluation, and resources. Specific strategies for improvement were identified, and formulated proposals for regional cooperation and collaboration were presented. (JHP)

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
\* from the original document. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

Material appearing in the publication may be translated, adapted and reproduced. The credit line should read "Reprinted (or adapted) from (specify title of publication) of the Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific specifying the date of issue". Three voucher/microfiche copies should be sent to the Assistant Director-General, Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, P.O. Box 1425, General Post Office, Bangkok 10500, Thailand. Reprints of signed articles materials must bear the author's name.

**APEID Regional Review Meeting on the Situation of Education of Girls for Universalization of Primary Education, Bangkok, 19-28 November 1985.**

*Education of girls in Asia and the Pacific.* Bangkok, Unesco, 1986.

**1 v. (Asia and the Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development)**

**1. WOMEN'S EDUCATION - ASIA/PACIFIC. 2. PRIMARY EDUCATION - ASIA/PACIFIC. 3. UNIVERSAL EDUCATION - ASIA/PACIFIC. I. Unesco. Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific. II. Title. III. Series.**

376.95

372.95



# Education of Girls in Asia and the Pacific

Report of the  
Regional Review Meeting  
on the Situation of Education of Girls  
for Universalization  
of Primary Education

Bangkok, 19 – 28 November 1985



Asia and  
the Pacific Programme  
of Educational Innovation  
for Development



Unesco Regional Office  
for Education in Asia  
and the Pacific  
Bangkok, 1986

© Unesco 1986

Published by the  
Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific  
P.O. Box 1425, General Post Office  
Bangkok 10500, Thailand

Printed in Thailand

*The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Unesco concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.*

- ii) establishment of High Level National Steering Committees for the Promotion of Girls' Education in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea which, among other initiatives, undertook preparation of national studies on the situation of girls' education; and
- iii) creation of a Regional Panel on Girls' Education consisting of chairpersons and/or senior members of the High Level National Steering Committees for the Promotion of Girls' Education from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan with the objective of promoting exchange of experiences and regional co-operation.

The national studies were received from six countries, namely: Bangladesh, China, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea. Reports of national workshops for the training of teachers organized by Bangladesh, Nepal and Papua New Guinea were also available for review by the Meeting.

The Meeting was attended by participants from Afghanistan (1), Bhutan (1), China (2), India (2), Nepal (3), Pakistan (3), Papua New Guinea (1), Thailand (2), a resource participant from Philippines and a consultant from Sri Lanka. Participants were heads or senior members of the National Steering Committees for the Promotion of Girls' Education, the co-ordinators of the national study and representatives of non-governmental Women's Organizations which are involved in the promotion of education of girls and women.

### **Conduct of the Meeting**

The following persons were elected as office bearers:

- |                  |   |                                 |
|------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Chairperson      | : | Dr. N.N. Singh (Nepal)          |
| Vice Chairperson | : | Prof. K.N. Hiriyanniah (India)  |
|                  |   | Dr. A.G. Mufti (Pakistan)       |
| Rapporteurs      | : | Dr. Lidinila Luis (Philippines) |
|                  |   | Dr. G.M. Shrestha (Nepal)       |

The work of the Meeting was sequenced as follows:

- ii) establishment of High Level National Steering Committees for the Promotion of Girls' Education in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea which, among other initiatives, undertook preparation of national studies on the situation of girls' education; and
- iii) creation of a Regional Panel on Girls' Education consisting of chairpersons and/or senior members of the High Level National Steering Committees for the Promotion of Girls' Education from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan with the objective of promoting exchange of experiences and regional co-operation.

The national studies were received from six countries, namely: Bangladesh, China, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea. Reports of national workshops for the training of teachers organized by Bangladesh, Nepal and Papua New Guinea were also available for review by the Meeting.

The Meeting was attended by participants from Afghanistan (1), Bhutan (1), China (2), India (2), Nepal (3), Pakistan (3), Papua New Guinea (1), Thailand (2), a resource participant from Philippines and a consultant from Sri Lanka. Participants were heads or senior members of the National Steering Committees for the Promotion of Girls' Education, the co-ordinators of the national study and representatives of non-governmental Women's Organizations which are involved in the promotion of education of girls and women.

### **Conduct of the Meeting**

The following persons were elected as office bearers:

- Chairperson : Dr. N.N. Singh (Nepal)
- Vice Chairperson : Prof. K.N. Hiriyanniah (India)
- Dr. A.G. Mufti (Pakistan)
- Rapporteurs : Dr. Lidinila Luis (Philippines)
- Dr. G.M. Shrestha (Nepal)

The work of the Meeting was sequenced as follows:

1. **Presentation of Summary Review of Findings of the Study on Girls' Education and Country Statements:** Participants from China, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea made country statements covering the major findings of the national studies on the situation of education of girls in primary education and the current policies and plans of their Governments for the promotion of the education of girls. The participants from Afghanistan, Bhutan and Thailand presented country papers focusing on the problems faced in the promotion of girls' education, measures taken to improve their participation and enrolment and the current national policies.

The country statements and presentation of the findings of the national studies were followed by discussion in the plenary.

2. **Analysis and Review of The Situation of Education of Girls in the Participating Member Countries:** The Meeting undertook an in-depth analysis and review of the situation of education of girls utilizing mainly information available from the following sources:
  - a) Country Statements on the situation of Education of Girls;
  - b) Findings of the Regional Panel on the Education of Girls;
  - c) Outcomes of the Sub-regional and National Workshops for Training of Educational Personnel for the Education of Girls; and
  - d) National Studies on Girls' Education.

This review focused mainly on the causes of low enrolment and participation rates girls at primary stage, and the innovative measures taken to increase their enrolment and participation rates and emerging national policies.

The analysis and review was made in two phases. Prior to the work of the sub-groups, a background paper based on the findings of the national study and other related reports was presented which outlined the major concerns and issues relating to the situation of

girls' education and the measures taken by the countries to tackle them.

3. **Formulation of Innovative Strategies and Methods for Action and Operational Schemes aimed at Improving Enrolment and Participation of Girls in Primary Education:** On completion of the in-depth analysis and review of the situation of education of girls in the participating countries, participants identified important areas needing emphasis for the promotion of girls' education and developed appropriate strategies and methods corresponding to each area of emphasis.
4. **Proposals and Recommendations for Regional Co-operation and Collaboration for Improving Education of Girls:** In the light of the areas and the innovative strategies and methods identified, the Meeting made proposals and recommendations for regional co-operation and collaboration focused on the promotion of the education of girls at the primary stage.

All the discussions relating to tasks 2, 3 and 4 took place in the sub-groups and their findings and conclusions were discussed in the plenary. The discussions and suggestions which emerged in the plenary were incorporated in the reports of the sub-groups and the final report was adopted in the plenary with necessary amendments.





## **Chapter One**

### **THE SITUATION OF GIRLS' EDUCATION**

The Regional Meeting on the Situation of Education of Girls was attended by participants from eight countries, six of which have very low female participation and retention rates. Five of these countries have already constituted national steering committees to promote the education of girls and have carried out, with UNESCO support, national studies on current problems and programmes pertaining to the education of girls. Participants were chairmen or senior members of steering committees, co-ordinators of national studies, key personnel associated with planning and implementation of educational programmes for girls, or representatives of non-governmental women's organizations.

In the first phase of the Meeting, participants presented country reports based on the findings of their national studies, national policies and plans and future policy directions. The summaries of these country statements are presented here.

#### **Afghanistan**

**Access to education.** The participation of both boys and girls in primary education has increased rapidly since the Revolutionary Government was established in April 1978.

The Government considers free education to be the right of every Afghan citizen irrespective of sex or language differences. Education is compulsory for all children and there is now no difference in the percentage enrolments of boys and girls in primary schools.

Since the successful second phase of the Saur Revolution, attempts have been made to improve both access and quality within education and a systematic review of curriculum and instructional materials has been implemented. Textbooks and teachers guides

## *Education of girls*

have been prepared and the quality of teacher training has also been improved.

Materials have been developed to cater to the needs of the country's four major language groups. This has enabled girls from minority groups who previously did not usually have the opportunity of a primary education or to be accepted into school and be educated in their own language.

In 1976-1977 only 20 per cent of primary school students were girls. Female enrolments in primary school have increased by about 70 per cent since 1976. By 1994, it is anticipated that 433,000 girls will be enrolled in schools.

**Programmes.** Because many girls did not have the opportunity to participate in primary education and were already beyond school age after the Saur Revolution, a network of literacy and complementary schools were set up with the objective of reducing the high illiteracy rate among girls and women.

**Emerging policies and plans.** The Government is committed to improving both access to education and the quality and appropriateness of education, to meet the needs of growing children.

The following strategies have been planned and are being implemented to meet these objectives:

- i) Data gathering and surveying of rural areas so that new schools can be appropriately sited.
- ii) Forward planning on the basis of projected enrolments to ensure adequate facilities and equipment.
- iii) Propagation programmes to ensure that all school age children avail themselves of the opportunity of free education.
- iv) Increased preparation of textbooks appropriate to the language and developmental needs of children.
- v) Improved production of educational equipment and free provision of health services and medication to all children.
- vi) Continued emphasis on literacy classes so that all Afghans will be able to read and write and contribute fully to the development of the country.

## **Bhutan**

**Access to education.** Education in Bhutan has progressed rapidly since 1960 and 142 primary schools catering to the needs of both boys and girls are functioning now in both urban and rural areas. All schools in Bhutan are co-educational. Tuition and school materials are free at all levels and it is the right of every boy and girl to avail themselves of the educational services that are available.

Parents are reluctant to send their daughters to schools that are located far away from home but are very willing to send them if the schools are within walking distance. The larger number of school buildings in rural areas has increased access and contributed to the age of entry of girls to school. The children of the first generation of Bhutan-educated Bhutanese are also now of school age and more parents are enrolling their children in school at five years of age.

Since 1974 the number of girls entering primary school has been equal to that of boys but drop-out rates of girls are relatively much higher and the majority of girls leave school before appearing for the public examination in Class V.

A survey conducted in two districts reveals that there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. The Class V examination results for the years 1980-1984 show that 49 per cent of the girls who sat for the examination have been successful.

**Factors affecting the participation and retention of girls.** Historical factors and an imbalance between the demand for and availability of schools are major factors that have limited the enrolment of girls. Some of the factors that have been identified are:

- i) The number of educated women is very limited as it has been only one generation since women began receiving education.
- ii) Education is not compulsory.
- iii) Until very recently, there were few primary schools, particularly in rural areas and primary school students had to walk long distances to attend.
- i.) There is a grave shortage of teachers.

## *Education of girls*

- v) Usually girls enter schools very late, at 9-10 years of age and drop out early, principally to get married.
- vi) As girls grow up and become older they are often required to assist in the home.
- vii) The curriculum does not meet the needs of girls, hence they become disinterested in school and leave.

**Policies and programmes.** Financial management and curriculum development are centralized. Decentralization in the establishment and management of primary schools in the 18 districts has led to an increase in the number of schools in rural areas, so that the distance from home has been reduced. Before 1965, all teachers were men, 95 per cent of whom were monks. Other teachers were recruited from India. Although there is still a shortage of national teachers for primary schools, there are now two teacher training institutes which provide training to men and women teachers.

The Five Year Plan introduced in 1981 provided for a 10 per cent increase in enrolment and it is hoped that half of this increase will be girls. The Plan also projected the building of more schools and the expansion of existing primary schools.

**Emerging policies and trends.** The revised educational policy proposes a series of important changes in primary education which is expected to have a positive effect on the enrolment of girls by providing them with meaningful experience.

The lower and upper kindergarten classes will serve as pre-primary and Classes I-V will become primary. There will be a public examination at Class VI. According to the new policy, the curriculum will be based on a study of the environment. Although English will continue to be the medium of instruction, textbooks to be used will be written in Bhutan. English, mathematics, Dzongkha and Nepali, for the Southern Bhutanese will be included as 'tool' subjects. It is also hoped that the children completing education up to Class VI will have a good base in Bhutanese culture, traditions, crafts and agriculture.

## **China**

**Access to education.** Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, great efforts have been made and much has been achieved with respect to the education of girls.

In analysing the participation rates of girls in primary schools, disparities can be noted between urban and rural areas and also between developed and less developed provinces. In 1984, the enrolment rate in Shanghai City, was 99.65 per cent while that in one of the provinces, in the same year was only 40.40 per cent. The 29 provinces and municipalities which are directly under the central government can be divided into three groups on the basis of participation rates of girls:

- i) 14 provinces which have 95-100 per cent enrolment
- ii) 8 provinces which 90-95 per cent enrolment
- iii) 7 provinces registering enrolment at lower than 90 per cent.

**Factors affecting participation/retention of girls.** The following factors are identified as constraints to the participation/retention of girls in primary education:

- i) economic factors such as general poverty in some areas, the poverty of girls' families;
- ii) social factors such as the notion that men are superior to women, or the influence of outmoded conventions and undesirable customs in some minority areas; and
- iii) religious beliefs and practices.

**Policies and programmes to improve the participation of girls.** The following strategies have been adopted to promote the participation and retention of girls in primary schools:

- i) large scale propaganda to increase public consciousness about the importance of girls' education for national development;
- ii) regulatory measures;
- ii) developing multiple patterns of schooling;

## *Education of girls*

- iv) instituting appropriate structures for the township administration, village authority, school and parents to share responsibilities for universalization of primary education for girls;
- v) provision for financial incentives and flexible approaches; and
- vi) emphasis on all-round moral, intellectual and physical development of girls as a good foundation for further learning.

**Programmes.** A national programme is being implemented, according to which it is expected that by 1995 the primary enrolment rate will have increased to 95 per cent; the annual retention rate to 97 per cent; graduation rate to above 95 per cent in the urban areas as well as to 90 per cent in the relatively developed rural areas and to 80 per cent and above in other rural areas.

In order to achieve these goals, all provincial authorities have formulated plans and are implementing educational programmes based on their situations unique to each province. Special schools, classes and boarding schools are being organized mainly with a view to expand educational opportunities for girls.

**Emerging policies.** The major policy now is to intensify efforts to develop primary education in rural, remote and disadvantaged areas where the participation rate of girls is low.

Legislative action is to be taken to protect the right of girls and boys to education. The formulation of the national 'Compulsory Primary Education Act' will surely pave the way for universalization of primary education among girls in China.

## **India**

**Access to education.** The prerequisite for achieving universal elementary education is the universal provision of school facilities for every child within a reasonable walking distance from home. Periodical All India Educational Surveys have assessed the availability of educational facilities in every rural habitation. According to the Fourth All India Educational Survey (1978), there were 573,842 villages with 964,664 habitations in them, and around 92.82 per cent

of the rural population covering 80.24 per cent rural habitations had primary schooling facilities either within the habitation of residence (78.53 per cent) or up to a distance of one Km. At the middle stage 78.83 per cent of the rural population covering 66.86 per cent habitations of residence have education facilities either within the habitations of residence (33.47 per cent) or up to a distance of 3 Km. These criteria are flexible and take into account hilly areas, marshy areas, rivulets or railway lines which act as obstacles to children in having easy access to school.

Co-educational schools are the norm in elementary education, but separate schools for girls can be opened according to feasibility and local demand. There were 3.2 per cent separate primary schools for girls and 92.3 per cent co-educational schools in 1978, but there is a disparity in the availability of these facilities between rural and urban areas.

Although there has been tremendous progress during the last three-and-a-half decades, the enrolment of girls has not kept pace with the enrolment of boys. Allowing for the sex difference in the country which is 943 females to 1,000 males according to 1981 census, it is observed that only 38.27 per cent of girls at the primary, 32.70 per cent at the middle and 37.11 per cent for primary and middle combined are in schools, out of the total student enrolment at each stage of education. Again, there is wide disparity in the participation rates of girls in rural and urban areas and the progress has been rather slow.

Enrolment has increased from 5,085 million in 1950-1951 to 23,985 million in 1984-1985 in Classes I-V, and from 0,534 million in 1950-1951 to 9,746 million in 1984-1985 in Classes VI-VIII, and from 5,619 million to 33,731 million in Classes I-VIII during the same period. Although the figures are quite impressive, only 51.27 per cent of girls in the age group 6 to below 11, and just 29.37 per cent of girls in the age group 11 to below 14, and about 43.38 per cent of girls in the age group 6 to below 14, are in schools.

**Factors affecting participation/retention of girls.** The factors affecting girls' education can be grouped under:

*Sociological.* (i) Inadequate number of separate schools for girls; (ii) shortage of women teachers particularly in rural areas;



## *Education of girls*

(iii) social status of women in society; (iv) early marriage amongst girls; (v) social taboos.

*Education.* (i) Dull school environment; (ii) curriculum unrelated to life; (iii) educational deficiencies such as lack of support in homes to follow up the instructions provided in schools.

*Economic reasons.* (i) Inability to meet the cost of education; (ii) helping parents in their occupation; (iii) the needs to help supplementing family income.

*Psychological.* (i) Lack of motivation both among parents and girls; (ii) adjustment problems due to age heterogeneity.

### **Programmes**

- i) Opening separate schools for girls wherever feasible;
- ii) Appointing more women teachers and providing them extra facilities in rural areas;
- iii) Increasing and improving physical facilities in schools;
- iv) Providing incentives like midday meals, free uniform, textbooks and attendance scholarships to girls;
- v) Adding such courses to the curriculum which will help girls make use of their learning in their day-to-day life;
- vi) Opening non-formal education centres exclusively for girls, appointing separate women teachers in these centres and adjusting the timings in these centres according to the local needs;
- vii) Encouraging, through awards in terms of money, the states showing best performance in promoting girls' education so that the award money is invested back in the state for furthering the cause of girls' education;
- viii) Special measures to bring girls belonging to weaker sections of the society to bring them to the schools.

**Emerging policies and plans.** The education of girls has been accorded top priority and is included in the country's 20 points Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) which the late Prime Minister

formulated and this is being pursued vigorously. Apart from education being free at the elementary stage, education is being made free for girls up to secondary stage beginning from the current financial year. In two states education is free at all stages including the university.

More open schools and open universities are being established so that those girls who cannot attend schools under the formal system can take advantage of these institutions. For those girls who have either not attended school or have dropped out but who are still in the age group 9-14, more non-formal education centres will be opened and women teachers will be appointed. Minimum educational qualification will be relaxed, particularly in rural areas for women to become teachers and pre-service and in-service training courses will be organized for teaching in the non-formal women's education centres. Suitable educational materials for students and teaching and instructional materials for teachers will also be developed and provided to these non-formal education centres.

It is the endeavour of the country to enter the 21st century with the achievement of complete universalization of elementary education and near universal literacy.

## **Nepal**

**Access to education.** With the rapid expansion of primary education in Nepal during the last three decades, the participation of girls in education has increased at a steady rate. Approximately 76 per cent of all primary school age children are currently enrolled in school, with girls constituting 28 per cent of the total. In terms of the relevant school age population, 42 per cent of the girls aged 6-10 years were in primary schools in 1983. The growth rate of enrolment of girls during the past five years is 9 per cent a year. However, there are wide regional as well as rural/urban variations in the enrolment and growth rate of girls in primary schools.

Not only do fewer girls participate in education, but they also tend to drop out more. A little more than 50 per cent of the girls enrolled in Grade I progress to grade II. Sample surveys indicate that the majority of the remaining students repeat grade I while the rest drop out. About 27 per cent of the girls enrolled complete the full primary school cycle.

## *Education of girls*

**Factors affecting participation.** Various studies have indicated stronger preference and higher aspirations among the rural populace for the education of boys than of girls. Moreover, in an agrarian subsistence economy, girls are engaged in many household chores, which prevent them from participating in formal education. However, it is encouraging to note that the rigid rural traditions are changing gradually. The fact that the father or other adult member in the household has been exposed to some formal education has a very strong effect in promoting the participation of girls in education. Other important factors identified are the per capita income of the family and the attitude of the head of the household toward modernity, and the availability of library facilities, qualified teachers, and teachers with the same ethnic background as that of the students.

**Programmes.** Major programmes relating to the promotion of the education of girls include the following:

- i) Girls in the remote districts (18 out of the 75 districts in the country) are provided with free textbooks up to grade V, and free education up to the secondary level. Scholarships are also provided to girls in remote areas to participate in and complete school education.
- ii) The "Education of Girls and Women in Nepal" project launched in 1971 aims at training rural girls as primary school teachers, assigning them to schools and thereby generating positive attitudes towards the education of girls among rural people. The main components of the programme are primary teacher training at the 'B' level for those who have completed their education to grade X and upgrading education facilities for those who have completed grade VII. In addition, there is provision to launch a communication support programme and to provide special assistance in the form of scholarships as well as facilities to selected primary schools to increase the participation of girls in education.
- iii) The "Cheli Beti Programme", a component of the Seti Education for Rural Development Project, is designed to provide educational opportunities to those girls who are unable to enrol in formal schools. The programme, which

### *Situation of girls' education*

includes practical skill components, is conducted at times convenient to girls by a facilitator selected from the local community.

**Emerging trends and future plans.** The strategies proposed for promoting girls' education include the following:

- i) Experimental programmes relating to girls' education will be undertaken with a view to reducing wastages occurring from school drop-outs and examination failures;
- ii) The provision of more scholarships will be made with a view to increasing female enrolment in local schools;
- iii) Preference will be given to women teachers when appointing new primary school teachers;
- iv) Part-time primary education will be made available to out-of-school girls through education centres that will be established in selected districts;
- v) A scheme of awards and incentives will be implemented for schools attaining high female enrolment rates;
- vi) Facilities will be expanded to enrol more rural girls in the upgrading and teacher training programmes;
- vii) Pre-school centres will be opened in selected districts in order to develop school-going habits at an early age.

In conclusion, it needs to be noted that the magnitude and complexity of the problem relating to the education of girls calls for multi-pronged strategies and concerted efforts. Thus, in order to effectively enhance the participation of girls in primary education, efforts should be directed toward identifying more effective strategies, initiating innovative programmes, promoting more co-ordination among related agencies and continually consolidating efforts in that direction.

### **Pakistan**

**Access to education.** The education of girls at primary level has been an area of concern since the country gained independence in 1947. This concern has been reiterated in different policies,

## *Education of girls*

development plans and programmes. The participation rate in 1983-1984 was 54 per cent with 73 per cent in the case of boys and 33 per cent in the case of girls. These figures are encouraging when compared with the 1947 statistics where the total participation rate was 17 per cent, with 30 per cent for boys and 5 per cent for girls.

The following table gives relative participation rates.

**Participation rates**

	1959-60	1964-65	1969-70	1977-78	1982-83	Projected 1987-88
<b>Total</b>	26	28	40	54	48	75
<b>Male</b>	42	44	60	73	63	90
<b>Female</b>	9	11	19	33	32	60

The enrolment ratio of girls in 1959-1960 was around 9 per cent as compared with 42 per cent for boys. The average increase in the participation rate for girls from 1947 to 1977 has been 1 per cent per year.

The disparity between the participation rates of boys and girls is further compounded by urban-rural disparities. The enrolment ratio of girls is lower than that of boys and the number of girls enrolled is about 10 as against 100 boys.

The problems of retention and drop-out are also quite serious. The drop-out rate at national level is about 50 per cent. In rural areas it is 66 per cent as compared to 34 per cent in urban areas. The drop-out rates for rural and urban girls are 78 per cent and 22 per cent respectively.

**Factors affecting participation.** Several studies have been carried out by different national and provincial agencies to identify the factors affecting participation at primary level. These studies were action-oriented researches which highlighted the following in-school and out-of-school factors.

### *In-school factors*

- Low starting base of female enrolment

## *Situation of girls' education*

- Poor physical facilities
- Imbalance in enrolment between boys and girls in co-educational schools
- Lack of qualified female teachers
- Absenteeism among teachers
- Inadequate learning materials
- Unattractive service conditions in rural areas for women teachers
- Irrelevant and overloaded curricula
- Rigid timetable/schedule of school
- Content of education reinforcing tradition

### *Out-of-school factors*

- High population growth rate
- General poverty of the masses
- Socio-cultural barriers/parental attitude
- Lack of awareness
- Difficulty in recruiting female teachers for rural schools
- Inadequate school-community interaction
- Lack of incentives for parents to send girls to schools
- Inadequate demand for education

**Programmes.** Teaching kits have been introduced in primary schools to increase the achievement levels and to improve the quality of education in all primary schools. Several special projects have also been launched in recent years.

The Rural Education and Development Project (READ) has been introduced in response to the challenges posed by the increasing number of illiterates and drop- A package of five components, i.e., mosque schools, women's education centres, village workshops,

## *Education of girls*

community viewing centres and adult literacy centres have been introduced and are being supervised by the village education committee constituted in each village. This has helped to make the village a more meaningful and productive unit, and has increased community involvement.

The Primary Education Project assisted by the World Bank has been developed to improve the quality of education and to increase participation and retention rates particularly in rural areas. The interventions of physical facilities, instructional material, improved supervision and added support to teachers are the major components of the project.

A special development programme of mosque schools was implemented to provide maximum access to primary school age children, particularly in rural areas. The programme provides a school in every village and the Mosque is being utilized as a venue for imparting primary and religious education. These schools are each provided with teaching materials and a trained primary school teacher. The Imam of the Mosque also shares the dual responsibility of teaching and managing the school.

The introduction of Mohalla schools has yielded encouraging results. Women who observe purdah and who can read and write, teach the Holy Quran Islamiat and home management skills such as embroidery to young girls in their homes. Such schools will gradually provide primary educational facilities of girls.

**Emerging trends.** There is an increased demand for more and improved physical facilities in primary education of girls, particularly in rural areas. Overcrowding in urban areas also necessitates the provision of additional schools and an increase in the number of classrooms and teachers in the existing schools.

As financial resources are limited in the public sector and the population growth rate is high, it is necessary to foster the active involvement of the community and the motivation of illiterate parents to send their daughters to school as an in-built component of programmes for universalization of primary education for girls. Parental attitudes towards education for girls at primary level are not necessarily negative but are affected by ignorance. Many social attitudes are gradually changing due to exposure of the village people

through mass media. These motivation campaigns and incentives are given high priority in promoting the education of girls in rural areas. Economic incentives and the award of certificates to teachers, community leaders and parents can bring about a meaningful change.

Pre-service and in-service teacher training for females needs emphasis in order to increase the women teachers in rural areas. In order to ensure availability of teachers in all the schools, some relaxations in rules and regulations for recruitment of teachers such as the maximum age limit will have to be made.

Education should be made free and compulsory through legislation if adequate facilities can be provided. As the formal system of education has not been able to cope with the situation, it is important that non-formal and informal education should be encouraged on a priority basis and the necessary personnel be trained to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate such programmes.

The management aspect has also to be improved and head teachers of schools require training in modern management techniques. Universalization of primary education for girls needs innovative programmes and new and effective techniques. The curriculum needs revision too so as to eliminate overloading and to ensure that it is relevant to the needs of the society.

### **Papua New Guinea**

**Access to education.** About 70 per cent of Papua New Guinea children have access to a primary school within 10 km or three hours' walking time. However, in 1984, only 58 per cent of 7-12 year-old girls and 70 per cent of 7-12 year-old boys were enrolled in school.

Officially, children under seven years of age may not be enrolled, but 40 per cent of children are nine or older and the actual ages range from six years to 20 years. This makes the calculation of age-specific enrolment ratios difficult.

Children in remote areas where distance, inhospitable terrain or fears for the safety of the child en route to school militate against attendance as well as children in areas with a short history of formal educational opportunities tend to be of an older average age than



## *Education of girls*

those in urban or more developed areas. An older entry age increases the likelihood of girls dropping out from school in grades IV-VI due to social pressure of marriage commitments.

A moderately steady increase has occurred in both male and female enrolments during the period 1972-1984, with female enrolments increasing by about 31 per cent compared with a 16 per cent increase in male enrolments.

There is a considerable range in the provincial participation of girls in education. Enga province, for example, enrolled only 45 per cent of 7-12 year-old girls in 1984 compared with Manus province where 83 per cent of school age girls were in school.

Disadvantaged provinces, where infrastructural development is poor and where enrolment relative to the school age population is low, have received financial incentives based on an 'Index of Disadvantageness'. As a result, several disadvantaged provinces have increased their enrolment of girls by up to 21 per cent during 1982-1984.

By 1984, about 43 per cent of all children in school were female.

**Retention.** Whilst female enrolments have improved markedly since 1972, retention rates for males and females have deteriorated, although female retention rates tend to be slightly more stable than those of males.

Overall, more than 30 per cent of boys and girls enrolled in grade I fail to complete grade VI. The two critical periods where drop-out rates are particularly marked for both boys and girls are between or within grades I and II and between or within grades IV and V.

Factors affecting the participation and retention of girls. The following table indicates the major factors accounting for the poor enrolment and retention of girls:

---

<i>Out-of-school factors</i>	<i>In-school factors</i>
– Cultural/historical factors	– Age of entry
– Geographical factors	– The effect of bi- and triennial intakes
– Parents' level of education	– Differences between mission and government schools
– Attitude of parents	– Unfavourable attitude of teachers and male pupils toward girls
– Lack of perceived cost-benefits of educating girls	– Sexual harassment of girls
– Family labour requirements	– Lack of textbooks and basic materials
– Early betrothal and marriage	
– Tribal fighting	
– Restricted entry into high school	

---

Out-of-school factors tend to have greatest effect on enrolment whereas in-school factors have the greatest impact on retention. Three factors override all others. First, the attitude of parents (especially fathers) toward the status of women and their perception of the cost-effectiveness of educating girls. Secondly, the teacher's level of skill, professional commitment and ability to create a stimulating learning environment. Thirdly, the girl's vision of her role, status and potential, and her motivation to succeed.

Present policies and projects to improve girls' participation in education. The Eight Point Improvement Plan (1972) and the National Goals and Directives (1974), written to guide planning subsequent to Independence, explicate the Government's commitment to provide equal opportunities for all citizens and equal distribution of economic benefits and services. The Eight Point Plan specifically endorses a 'rapid increase in the equal and active participation of women in all forms of economic and social activity'.

However, increased female participation in education has occurred more as a function of time and because of the efforts of both Provincial and National Departments of Education to improve

## *Education of girls*

access to schools and better utilize existing educational and manpower resources, than to the implementation of policies and programmes specifically designed for girls.

Nevertheless, several initiatives have been developed with specific reference to girls and women: teachers' colleges have been directed to adopt positive discrimination policies in favour of selection of women and people from highland provinces; one teachers' college encourages the block placement of female teachers in remote areas; positive discrimination policies for high school selection in some provinces ensure the percentage of girls entering grade VI; and Community Liaison Helpers have been employed in one province to follow up absentee pupils and encourage girls to attend school.

**Emerging trends and action priorities.** The national study on factors affecting female enrolment and retention elucidates five important areas where the changes appear most necessary. First, a change in the attitude of parents and children toward the education of girls. Secondly, an improvement in the quality of the teaching/learning environment so that the interest of the pupils is maintained. Attention must also be given to the appropriateness of the curriculum, to the needs of the majority and to the discontent expressed by parents at an education system which fails to provide all children with opportunities for secondary education. Thirdly, enforced disciplinary action against male teachers and pupils for sexual harassment of female pupils. Fourthly, a reduction in absenteeism since frequent absenteeism leads to drop-out. Finally, an improvement in the efficiency of data gathering, planning and utilization of resources, particularly at provincial levels.

Strategies for improving female participation must be developed to address each of the five target areas and must consider urban/rural regional, ethnic and linguistic differences within Papua New Guinea if optimal impact is to be achieved.

### **Thailand**

**Access to education.** Primary education is compulsory for every school age child and is provided by the state and local governments free of charge to all. The duration of the primary education course is six years.

A relatively high participation rate in primary education has already been achieved, i.e. 99.42 per cent. In 1984 there were more than 33,000 primary schools throughout the country. In the Fifth National Education Development Plan (Fifth NEDP), therefore, the qualitative improvement of primary education is a more critical issue than universal access to primary education. Improvement of primary education as discussed in this report relates to the education system as a whole and not specifically to the education of girls.

Disparity between boys and girls in enrolment is narrow as can be seen below:

(1982 figures)

<i>Sex</i>	<i>School-age population</i>	<i>Primary school students</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Male	5,923,752	3,836,189	64.76
Female	5,698,283	3,577,382	62.78

The figures given above in column I represent the 6-14 age group and the percentages given in column III are relatively low as the figures in column II relate to primary school students only. These figures have been presented to illustrate the minimal disparities between the participation rates of boys and girls in Thailand.

The retention rate at present is 75 per cent. By the end of the Fifth National Education Development Plan in 1986, it is hoped that the retention rate will be increased by 10 per cent. The implementation of the Sixth National Education Development Plan (1987-1991) will result in a higher rate of retention and it is expected to achieve a rate close to 90 per cent.

Dropping out is caused mainly by economic reasons. Poverty, lack of financial support and necessity for self-support are barriers to educational participation.

**Policies and programmes.** The Government has made budgetary allocations for supportive projects, such as provision of textbooks and stationery to needy students, school uniforms, school health facilities, free midday meals, and book corners and school libraries throughout the country.

## *Education of girls*

It is believed that the teacher is the kingpin of the educational system. However brilliant or imaginative the programme of educational development may be, it cannot be implemented unless the teacher is a party to it. Thai educators realize this problem and there are consequently many projects aimed to increase the efficiency of the principals, teachers and other educational personnel. These projects deal not only with educational materials and equipment, increasing the knowledge of teaching techniques or administrative and supervisory aspects, but also with improving the status of the teaching profession.

**Emerging policies and trends.** The Sixth National Education Development Plan is presently being formulated and will focus on:

- i) developing school-based in-service training programmes using modules and other self-learning materials;
- ii) developing more effective follow-up and evaluation plans;
- iii) promoting research and development efforts for increasing participation in primary education;
- iv) seeking more co-ordination of effort between local participation and governmental support in the primary education development; and
- v) more concentration on the disadvantaged groups (learners in slums, physically handicapped children, mentally handicapped children, hilltribes).

As a motivational strategy, salary increments will be based upon the quality of teaching performance (merit) rather than solely on a routine scheme of annual increments.

## Chapter Two

### REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION OF EDUCATION OF GIRLS IN PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

The education of girls has emerged as a major issue in several countries and in regional programmes within the context of universalizing primary education and in response to the stimulus given by the United Nations Decade for Women to programmes directed to equity. The high incidence of illiteracy among girls and women and the fact that the low educational participation of girls is perceived to be a major obstacle to universalizing education in some countries, both focus attention on the problem of the access of girls to at least primary education.

In view of the need to give adequate priority to promoting the education of girls, national studies have been conducted, sub-regional and national workshops organized and visits made by a Regional Panel to some of the countries in which constraints are most severe. The Regional Meeting on the Situation of Education of Girls was intended to review and analyse the findings on outcomes of these activities and, on the basis of the insights gained, to identify strategies that may assist in increasing the participation and educational attainment of girls.

This chapter focuses on the review and analysis of the current situation. The first section examines the present situation and appraises policies and programmes on the basis of the findings of national studies, the observations and perceptions reflected in the reports of the visit of the Regional Panel, the reported outcomes of workshops and the country presentations and plenary discussions in the Meeting. The second section reports the identification of areas of concern and analyses the present trends and emerging needs.

## **Appraisal of the situation of education of girls**

**Current situation.** Of the nine countries represented, both China and Thailand have achieved equal educational opportunity for the majority of school age boys and girls although pockets of educational deprivation, irrespective of gender, continue to exist in socially and economically disadvantaged population groups and locations. In the other seven countries, however, gross female enrolment rates are low — Afghanistan (14 per cent), Bangladesh (49 per cent), Bhutan (10 per cent), India (70 per cent), Nepal (43 per cent), Pakistan (33 per cent), and Papua New Guinea (58 per cent). Enrolment rates would even be lower if age-specific statistics were available for all countries. It has been found, for instance, that the participation rate of primary school age girls was, in fact, 24.7 per cent in Bangladesh and 51.1 per cent in India in 1982.

Gender disparities are wide in these countries and it has been claimed that almost all boys of corresponding age are now enrolled in schools in India and Nepal. A further illustration of inequality in educational opportunity is the fact that the percentage of girls of the total student enrolment in primary school is 28 per cent in Nepal, and between 30 per cent and 40 per cent in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Phutan, India and Pakistan. It is even more significant that despite increasing enrolment in recent years, gender disparities have widened since 1970 in Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan as a result of a relatively higher increase in the participation rates of boys.

The concept of educational opportunity extends beyond access to schools, to retention in schools till the end of primary education and to outcomes or educational achievement. High drop-out rates of boys and girls are found in the majority of economically developing societies, including countries such as Thailand where gender disparities are minimal. In countries with low female enrolment rates, more girls drop out of primary schools than boys. The survival or retention rates of girls at the end of primary education are 19.9 per cent in Bhutan, 21 per cent in Bangladesh, 27 per cent in Nepal, and 33.80 per cent in India. Urban-rural and regional and district-wise statistics reflect even greater educational disadvantage as retention rates are less than 10 per cent in some districts or regions in all these countries. It is true also of all countries that girls are doubly disadvantaged by socio-economic class and gender.

Table. Gross enrolment ratios by sex at the first level of education.

COUNTRY	Gross enrolment ratios (%)				Increment between 1970-1982 (% points)			Disparities between sexes (% points)	
	1970		1982		MF	M	F	1970 (M-F)	1982 (M-F)
	MF	MF	M	F					
Afghanistan	-25	36	57	14	11	16	7	34	43
Bangladesh	52	64	78	12	12	10	15	34	29
Bhutan	6	15	19	10	9	9	9	9	9
China	102	116	127	104	14	..	..	..	23
India	73	85	100	70	12	10	14	34	30
Nepal	26	94	141	43	68	98	35	35	98
Pakistan	40	58	81	33	18	24	11	35	48
Papua New Guinea	52	66	73	58	14	9	19	25	15
Thailand	91	95	98	93	4	3	6	8	5

Source: Development of Education in Asia and the Pacific: A Statistical Review. Unesco Bangkok, March 1985.

Note: Gross enrolment ratios for a level of education are derived by dividing the total enrolment, regardless of age, by the population which, according to national regulations, should be enrolled at that level.

Repetition rates are high even in primary schools but data relating to achievement are too limited to be conclusive. A study in Nepal (CERID\*, 1980) indicated that girls performed better than boys in language but reached lower attainment levels in mathematics. In Bhutan and China, however, no significant difference has been noted in the achievement levels of boys and girls in any subject.

Barriers to educational opportunity. Many studies in the 1970s and 1980s as well as national studies and country reports have identified the causes of low female educational participation in countries in the region. It is apparent that common problems exist in these countries, stemming from the travails of economically developing societies, the cultural norms of traditional societies and the shortcomings of educational systems.

Economic constraints in these countries affect adversely both educational provision and participation. The families that live below

\* Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development, Kathmandu, Nepal.



## *Education of girls*

the 'poverty' line are unable to utilize available educational opportunities. In low-income countries and subsistence economies, the opportunity cost of education increases the vulnerability of school age children with respect to participation in schools. In this respect girls are more disadvantaged than boys as they are an economic asset both within and outside the household, and as they have perforce to engage in household chores at a relatively earlier age. The time-consuming domestic and economic activities of girls have been documented in studies including 'status of women' studies in several countries. School-age girls collect water, firewood and fodder, look after cattle, assist in farm activities and in household and child-care responsibilities. Their working day is even reported to be equal to that of an adult male, thereby precluding them from enrolling in formal schools.

It has been claimed that socio-cultural norms and practices are a persistent obstacle to the educational participation of girls. Parents and the community tend to perceive girls exclusively in their domestic role in the household economy as potential child-bearers and rearers, and accordingly, to devalue female education and to prioritize the education of boys in the context of scarce resources. These norms of domesticity overshadow the reality of women's lives as economic producers in Asian societies in the perceptions of parents and often of policy and decision-makers. It has been noted, however, that parental attitudes are often ambivalent, and experience in many countries has shown that socio-cultural attitudes are not implacably resistant to change.

Evidence from studies also points to the fact that educational practices have tended to reinforce the gender inequalities that have their roots in economic and cultural imperatives. The assumption that low participation rates are largely the result of non-utilization of available opportunities is challenged by increasing evidence of an imbalance between the demand for and supply of education facilities in these countries. In both urban and rural communities, lack of schools (co-educational and separate schools) and women teachers, overcrowding, poor classroom facilities and ill-qualified teachers, inaccessibility of schools in the context of difficult terrain and absence of transport, uniform and rigid school schedules, and irrelevance and gender bias in the curriculum have operated as barriers to the educational participation and achievement of girls,

particularly in disadvantaged communities where parental support is minimal.

**Policies and programmes.** This overview of the situation pertaining to educational opportunity for girls at the first level of education points very clearly to the magnitude of the problem and its economic, social, cultural and educational ramifications.

Policies and programmes to improve the educational status of girls have been introduced in participating countries since the 1950s. Studies and discussions, however, have often reflected the view that the impact of these policies and programmes have not been commensurate with either needs or expectations. It is necessary, therefore, at this point of time to examine them in the light of the needs that have surfaced from reviews and the problems that have been identified.

In retrospect it is apparent too that the success of intervention policies and programmes have been related to the extent to which they reflect cognizance of three planning and programming perspectives.

- a) The efficacy of large-scale intervention through national policies or specific programmes in view of the magnitude of the problem. To be effective, national policies must operate within a conceptual framework that encompasses all issues relating to the role and status of women. Ad hoc programmes that may have inestimable value as innovative and pioneering enterprises have tended to remain on the periphery of national programmes and to have limited outreach unless they have been integrated as components of mainstream planning.
- b) The need for a policy of 'positive discrimination' in a situation of relative disadvantage for a 'transitional' period of time, in order to bridge the gender gap in educational opportunity. Widening gender disparities in educational participation in some countries in a decade of expanding enrolment reflect the vulnerability of girls to macro-factors and the need for special prioritized intervention.
- c) The importance of mobilizing the total community in the effort to expand the access of girls to education. National

policies and programmes need to mount campaigns concomitantly to conscientize parents, the community and local and national leaders to issues relating to equality, human dignity, sharing and co-operation, and the role and contribution of women, and to enlist community participation and women's group action as a prerequisite to effective policy or programme implementation. Education in its turn is an agent of socialization. The education system and its curricula have been perceived to reinforce and reproduce inequalities in gender relations but it is possible also to change perceptions and promote gender equality through the structure and content of education.

**National policies and plans.** The Constitutions in all countries 'enshrine' the principle of equal educational opportunity, and national five-year plans and special reports since the 1950s have reflected concern regarding the disadvantaged educational status of girls. Strategies outlined in plans and reports have not varied significantly over four decades but there has been increasing focus on illiteracy, non-enrolment and early leaving.

Several issues are perceived to be of critical importance to national-level planning. Educational policies and plans are apt to be isolated from the larger conceptual issues relating to the role and status of women that have been underscored in the researches on women's issues generated during the UN Decade for Women. Nor, with the exception of China, have policies attempted directly to counter socio-cultural barriers by conscientizing and mobilizing the community on a sufficiently large scale to make a tangible impact on community attendance and participation.

Competing priorities appear to work to the disadvantage of girls. Targets have often been specified in plans but have not been achieved as they are apt to be unrealistic in terms of resources that have been allocated. National representatives have sometimes expressed the view that international and bilateral aid programmes which involved the investment of substantial resources and are appropriate channels for large scale intervention, tend to overlook national priorities and to compartmentalize projects. It is interesting to note that primary education projects in operation in four countries do not prioritize the need to reduce gender disparities or to

envisage mobilizing community participation to ensure the utilization by girls of the infrastructural facilities created by these projects.

It has been further noted that plan implementation has been often adversely affected by the inability of the delivery and monitoring systems to ensure the smooth flow of funds and the effective utilization of resources and facilities.

The concentration of authority at the top level, inadequate supervisory staff, particularly in rural areas, and failure in monitoring to examine specifically trends in the participation of girls and related problems to appraise the impact of programmes are noted to have contributed to delays in implementation. In recent years school mapping exercises have been undertaken to increase efficiency in the planning and location of schools and special personnel appointed in one country to monitor attendance.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that there is a need for in-service training programmes for administrative and supervisory personnel to improve management and monitoring techniques and procedures, and for greater flexibility in administrative procedures and school schedules. Women's education divisions or units within the Ministry of Education have a special responsibility to monitor implementation and to function as facilitators in close co-operation with national and local management and monitoring personnel.

**Community participation.** The most crucial 'support' programme in the promotion of education of girls is the mobilization of the community through creating awareness of the importance of educating girls and developing participatory planning, implementation and monitoring techniques. China provides perhaps a unique experience in this respect among participating countries in mass consciousness raising programmes which disseminate the concept of gender equality and make a frontal attack on prejudices and 'feudal' cultural norms, and in entrusting responsibility for the promotion of the access of girls to education to the local community. Elsewhere community campaigns have rarely been conducted on a mass scale, but the success of local efforts in limited areas point to the efficacy of this strategy for countering the socio-cultural factors that are claimed to be a major barrier to educational opportunity for girls in traditional societies.

## *Education of girls*

In this context the mass media is a necessary instrument for such programmes. Studies have shown that the media tends to project a negative image of women and it is now opportune to use it positively to change community perceptions and attitudes to the education of girls.

Women's organizations have a special role to play in mobilizing official and community support for education programmes for girls. In the past they have been involved largely in the organization of leadership training and non-formal income-generating skill development programmes which have promoted self-reliance and motivated women and girls to achieve a better quality of life. Some traditional women's organizations tend to be dominated by the urban and social elite and to operate on the basis of patron-client relationships. While these organizations can operate within the power structure to promote policies, effective community action is best generated at grass roots level where change-agents, women's groups and community groups co-operate in planning and implementing local level programmes that will meet the needs and aspiration of girls. Such groups exist in many countries and their activities appear to offer most promise if a two-way relationship is promoted between official representatives and community groups.

**Incentives.** The provision of incentives to subsidize the cost of education through free tuition and textbooks in primary schools is a major national strategy in operation in all countries. There is no doubt that this strategy has helped to increase enrolment appreciably in the last decade. In economically disadvantaged communities, further incentives are required to make it possible for children to use free education facilities. Consequently national plans in some countries have proposed scholarships, uniforms and mid-day meals to facilitate participation, and incentive awards to schools and communities as reward for increasing the participation of girls. Nevertheless evaluation studies have also reported the haphazard application and eventual failure of some of these programmes to meet needs. An Indian evaluation in 1974 stated that incentives were not in operation in all states and that poor planning, meagre allocation and lack of community involvement were responsible for non-implementation. A recent study by the National Council of Educational Research and Training in New Delhi also pointed out that the incentives provided were inadequate to compensate the most

disadvantaged for their loss of income. In Bangladesh, management problems have led to the non-implementation of incentive schemes. In many countries, the absence of community campaigns has meant that disadvantaged communities have often been unaware of the availability of such incentives.

If incentives are to have an impact, they must either be extensively implemented as in free education policies, or be intensively applied to projects or disadvantaged locations as a form of positive discrimination. Two successful examples have been the programme for the education of girls in disadvantaged communities in China and the Equal Access of Women to Education or the Education of Girls and Women in Nepal Programme (EAWEP/EGWN). In rural, mountainous and minority areas in China, a programme of boarding schools, books, stationery and medical allowances, educational guidance and parental 'education' has operated as a package of incentives to increase participation rates of girls to over 90 per cent. In the special programme in Nepal to increase the access of girls to education, in-built incentives in the form of free tuition, stipends, residential facilities, books, stationery and medical allowances have enabled a significant number of rural women to qualify and function as teachers particularly in remote areas where the participation of girls in education is a relatively new phenomenon.

### **Supply and training of women teachers**

The vicious cycle of educational disadvantage has resulted in a low proportion of women teachers in these countries – 8.2 per cent in Bangladesh, 9.4 per cent in Nepal, 25 per cent in India and 32 per cent in Pakistan – in contrast to the situation in many other countries in the region where women constitute over half the teaching force. In the cultural context of these countries, increasing the supply of women teachers has been perceived also to be an important strategy in increasing the access of girls to education in conservative societies and in remote areas.

The achievement of this objective requires a purposeful and consistent programme of recruitment and training of women teachers and the orientation of these teachers to their role as catalysts of social change. Two countries have evolved specific programmes, as distinct from policy proposals, to increase the supply of women

## *Education of girls*

teachers – Nepal since the early 1970s and Bangladesh in the 1980s. The Nepal programme was one of UNESCO's early initiatives to increase the access of girls to education. In this UNESCO-UNICEF-NORAD supported programme of 'positive discrimination', a pilot project has developed into a national programme that is integrated in the teacher training and secondary school structure, training women from 74 of the 75 districts including remote districts in which female educational participation was non-existent till relatively recently times. It is a large scale intervention with in-built incentives and preparatory educational upgrading facilities, and while the motivational campaigns that are intended to be a component of the recruitment process have not been extensive or intensive, the process of recruitment in remote areas has engendered consciousness of the need for educating girls. The conventional teacher training programme to which they were admitted, however, has begun only recently to meet the educational needs of girls to train them to function as role-models and change-agents in rural society.

In Bangladesh, recruitment of women teachers has been intensified in recent years with a target of 50 per cent of the vacancies in primary schools, and the intake of women teachers to primary teacher training programmes has increased sharply to 73 per cent of the total intake in 1982-1983. Special institutions are envisaged for training women teachers and the IDA project has also appointed 500 women teachers. There is as yet, however, no programme to equip these teachers for their role in improving the access and educational status of girls and changing community attitudes or to revise the teacher education curriculum to meet this need. Some efforts have been made in other countries too. Programmes such as the construction of separate residences for women teachers in traditional communities have failed through lack of integration of programmes with community needs and participation.

A major lacuna has been in relevance in teacher education, in the orientation of both men and women teachers to promoting the access of girls to education, and to improving the self-concepts and achievement levels of girls. Teacher education programmes still tend to be steeped in the influence of the home economics syndrome that has helped to perpetuate gender-segregation and stereotypes. The Unesco Sub-regional Workshop held in Kathmandu in 1984 and

subsequent follow-up national workshops have initiated a process of curriculum development in teacher education.

In-service teacher training has been an integral feature of formal and non-formal education in the region. As a flexible strategy for large scale intervention it has yet to be utilized, except as a pilot workshop programme, to introduce changes in teacher education and in classroom teaching directed specifically to the educational needs of girls. Teachers themselves have been socialized by negative socio-cultural norms and it is possible through teacher training to change their perceptions and to equip them with skills to promote equal participation and positive outcomes among girls.

**Complementary structures.** The inadequacy of formal education as a delivery system in low income countries has been recognized in all countries and there is a wide and rich experience in the region of attempts made to develop complementary structures to universalize primary education. The only national strategies or large scale interventions however appear to be the use of indigenous institutions as feeder schools in Pakistan in recent years and the proposed national non-formal education programme in India. Free 'boarding' schools in disadvantaged localities in China, India and Thailand, and experimental feeder schools in Bangladesh have had a positive impact in consequence of their target orientation.

The Sixth Five Year Plan in Pakistan introduced in 1983 a programme of basing grade I-III feeder schools in mosques in locations where the demand for primary education could not be met. The programme has the advantage of accessibility, particularly in remote areas, and cultural acceptance and community support even as co-educational institutions, and it is reported that the target of 8,000 mosque schools has been reached two years ahead of schedule. Gender-wise enrolment statistics are not available and it is difficult therefore to determine whether these mosque schools have been an effective strategy in increasing the access of girls to education in the context of the larger proportion of boys enrolled in these schools. The Mohalla schools in the houses of elderly women, which were envisaged as an instrument for extending educational opportunity to girls from conservative families have not as yet been revamped nor have they made any significant impact.



## *Education of girls*

In Bangladesh, Maktab schools are traditional mosques or home-based institutions but a national strategy has yet not been developed to use them extensively. Meanwhile a feeder school experiment in the Mehr – Panchagram district, developed to bring out-of-school girls within the ambit of the educational system, has demonstrated the effectiveness of complementary structures in situations in which economic or cultural constraints prevent girls from enrolling in formal schools. These feeder schools provide instruction for girls in grades I and II within easy access of homes and with provision for transfer to regular primary schools. Community support and participation, the commitment of organizers and the use of local human resources through the service of underqualified rural women as teachers are characteristic features of this programme. It is reported that there have been 100 per cent participation and retention rates in these 'schools', and the possibility of replicating them on a national scale is being explored. It is important to note, however, that the success of a national programme will depend on continuing commitment to its objectives and mobilization of community participation. Replications or extensions of innovative experiments have failed in the past in many countries in the absence of the transfer of these two key pre-requisites.

Non-formal part-time primary education programmes have been introduced in China and India over a long period to meet the needs of out-of-school children whose economic activities preclude them from enrolling in formal schools. Programmes organized in China and centres such as those conducted by the Institute of Education, Pune, India, for non-school going children of 9 to 14 years of age have contributed significantly to educational opportunity and to relevance in curriculum development.

Non-formal education programmes, however, have had a minimal impact relative to the needs of a large out-of-school population in several countries. The administration in India has been engaged, in recent years, in formulating a national strategy of non-formal education as a complementary mechanism in universalizing education. In the early 1980s, the nine most educationally backward states were selected for intensive programming and some centres were established exclusively for girls as an educationally disadvantaged group. In the new plan, it is proposed to provide non-formal part-time educational facilities for a substantial proportion of the

## *Education of girls*

for orienting men and women teachers to the educational needs of girls has yet to be recognized.

A few countries have also initiated action in the area of early childhood education as a strategy to release school age girls from child care responsibilities so that they may participate in educational programmes and as a stimulus to participation and achievement in primary education. Except in China and India, efforts have been sporadic as competing priorities make demand on resources. Nevertheless it is possible to build in early childhood care and education programmes as an adjunct of formal and non-formal education programmes, utilizing the human resources in the community for this purpose. Such centres are also a focal part of intervention for programmes that may help to counter gender role stereotypes so that boys and girls can enter the primary school without cultural handicaps.

In a situation where girls from economically disadvantaged families are engaged in time-consuming domestic and economic tasks, or have no schools within a reasonable distance from their homes, new structures need to be created to enable them to have access to primary education as a base for individual and national development. If these structures are to serve their purpose, they need to be developed within a national framework as an outcome of the educational planning process in response to the specific needs of out-of-school girls and their communities, particularly in economically disadvantaged and 'minority' groups. As experience has shown, flexibility and community involvement are crucial determinants of successful implementation.

**Curriculum development.** The curriculum as an agent of socialization and social control is a powerful instrument of perpetuating value systems, norms and stereotypes, reproducing social relations or stimulating social change. Its distribution of knowledge and skills affects class and gender relations and the 'hidden curriculum' manipulates role and behavioural expectations. The socio-cultural norms and practices that adversely affect the educational participation and achievement of girls have been perceived in many societies to be reinforced through the operation of the curriculum as a social learning process. In many countries in the region such as Australia, New Zealand and China, efforts are being made currently to use the socialization process to counter gender role stereotypes, to promote

## *Education of girls*

for orienting men and women teachers to the educational needs of girls has yet to be recognized.

A few countries have also initiated action in the area of early childhood education as a strategy to release school age girls from child care responsibilities so that they may participate in educational programmes and as a stimulus to participation and achievement in primary education. Except in China and India, efforts have been sporadic as competing priorities make demand on resources. Nevertheless it is possible to build in early childhood care and education programmes as an adjunct of formal and non-formal education programmes, utilizing the human resources in the community for this purpose. Such centres are also a focal part of intervention for programmes that may help to counter gender role stereotypes so that boys and girls can enter the primary school without cultural handicaps.

In a situation where girls from economically disadvantaged families are engaged in time-consuming domestic and economic tasks, or have no schools within a reasonable distance from their homes, new structures need to be created to enable them to have access to primary education as a base for individual and national development. If these structures are to serve their purpose, they need to be developed within a national framework as an outcome of the educational planning process in response to the specific needs of out-of-school girls and their communities, particularly in economically disadvantaged and 'minority' groups. As experience has shown, flexibility and community involvement are crucial determinants of successful implementation.

**Curriculum development.** The curriculum as an agent of socialization and social control is a powerful instrument of perpetuating value systems, norms and stereotypes, reproducing social relations or stimulating social change. Its distribution of knowledge and skills affects class and gender relations and the 'hidden curriculum' manipulates role and behavioural expectations. The socio-cultural norms and practices that adversely affect the educational participation and achievement of girls have been perceived in many societies to be reinforced through the operation of the curriculum as a social learning process. In many countries in the region such as Australia, New Zealand and China, efforts are being made currently to use the socialization process to counter gender role stereotypes, to promote

a more positive image of women and to raise the consciousness and level of aspiration of girls.

Consciousness of the need of restructuring curricula is explicit in policy statements at national level. In India, a national committee on the differentiation of the curriculum for boys and girls recommended a common curriculum with home science courses for both boys and girls till the end of the middle school. In Bangladesh, a policy statement in 1979 referred to the need to develop new curricula "to remove prejudices and traditional social values that discourage or operate as obstacles to girls' education". Both China and India (NCERT) have developed new curriculum materials that promote a more positive image of women. Gender role stereotypes in educational materials, including textbooks, have been identified through studies in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

Nevertheless, schools and teachers' colleges continue to use curricula and materials that reinforce concepts of dependency and exclusive domesticity. While the primary school has a common curriculum, gender role stereotypes extending from child-rearing practices and pre-schools, influence school activities and the achievement of girls. Research evidence indicates that there are more differences within sexes than between sexes and that gender-differentiation in classroom and play activities leads to differential outcomes in educational achievement. A specific illustration would be the absence of opportunities for girls relative to boys to develop spatial skills in pre-schools and primary schools, and possibly consequent under-achievement in critical areas such as mathematics, science and technical subjects.

It is necessary therefore for curriculum development units at national and district levels to review and develop curricula used in primary schools and teacher training to improve the self-concepts of girls and to provide optimal conditions for the development of both boys and girls according to individual abilities and aptitudes.

Efforts have already been made in all countries to increase the relevance of the curriculum to the socio-economic needs of the environment. An important area of intervention in this respect needs to be the incorporation of elements of appropriate agricultural, industrial and household technology in the school curriculum so that the domestic chores and economic activities of girls will cease to be a

## *Education of girls*

major barrier to educational opportunity. The quality of the learning environment and educational materials and the achievement of a minimum and common level of competencies by boys and girls is a prerequisite for optimal educational outcomes.

### **Detailed analysis of the situation of education of girls**

In order to make an in-depth examination of problems and programmes, participants identified seven areas of concern in the situation of education of girls and reviewed the current situation, past and present strategies and 'gaps' that have emerged in these areas. They were:

- i) Access and equity;
- ii) Social attitudes;
- iii) Participation and retention;
- iv) Quality and curriculum relevance in primary education;
- v) Teachers' recruitment, training and retention;
- vi) Management, monitoring and evaluation; and
- vii) Resources.

The outcomes of the review are presented in the following tables with a summary of the discussion in each area. The gaps and needs that were identified provided a basis for the formulation of strategies in the next phase of activity in the Meeting.

Limited physical access to schools, and particularly imbalances between demand and supply and long distances from home to school were identified as critical factors affecting enrolment and attendance. The poor quality of existing physical facilities, urban – rural and regional disparities, and the perennial issue of quality versus equity were seen to be related issues.

The measures adopted by many countries to meet these needs have ranged from school mapping exercises, opening more schools, and improving infrastructural facilities in schools, to special programmes in underserved locations. It was felt, however, that these efforts have had limited impact on the overall situation and on the

1. Access and equity

<i>Current situation</i>	<i>What is being done</i>	<i>What needs to be done</i>
Limited physical access due to inadequate provision of schools, difficult terrain and distance to school from home	Opening of new schools  School mapping	Improving accuracy of data collection  Macro- and micro-level planning to ascertain needs of girls  Increasing efficiency in the planning and location of schools  Complementary approaches, e.g., non-formal education, part-time schools, feeder schools, indigenous institutions, distance education, mobile teachers
Lack of basic facilities and security in and outside school	Efforts towards providing basic facilities such as buildings, furniture, instructional materials, drinking water, latrine, school compound, etc.	Increasing and improving school facilities  More community involvement and contribution to improve school facilities  Providing escorts to groups of children  Providing safe school compound
Urban/rural, ethnic, regional imbalances	More schools being opened in rural areas to overcome rural/urban and regional imbalances  Special programmes launched and/or incentive schemes utilized to increase educational participation of underprivileged ethnic groups	Increasing provision in rural and disadvantaged areas  Instituting a scheme of better equipped schools; helping disadvantaged schools
Lack of flexibility in school schedules and consequent absenteeism and dropping out	Efforts to synchronize school vacations and harvest seasons in some countries	Flexibility in entry age, multiple shifts, adjustment of the school schedule to meet such community needs as agricultural cycles, religious festivals

1. Access and equity (*continued*)

<i>Current situation</i>	<i>What is being done</i>	<i>What needs to be done</i>
Discrepancy between planning perspectives and needs of recipients		<p>Recipient participation in planning and implementation (bottom up planning)</p> <p>On-going assessment of recipient needs to improve planning and monitoring processes</p> <p>Creating awareness of community needs and special needs of girls among planners</p>
Issue of quality vs. equity		<p>Avoiding ad hoc programmes that do not contribute to the achievement of long-term priorities</p> <p>Ensuring that long-term priorities based on accurate data are established and that planning proceeds according to priority; priority being given to equity and equal educational opportunity for girls</p>

availability of adequate educational opportunities for girls, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

It was necessary, therefore, to identify further strategies that may accelerate progress. Shortcomings that surfaced were in the prioritization of the needs of girls in resource allocation, and in the efficacy of the data collection and micro and macro level planning processes. Greater flexibility in school organization, the creation of more complementary structures to supplement school facilities and more participation of the community in the provision of facilities were identified as other areas for action.

2. Social attitudes

Current situation	What is being done	What needs to be done*
<p>Negative community and parental attitudes to the education of girls as a result of fear of erosion of religious/cultural values and parental authority</p>	<p>Organization of adult education programmes</p>	<p>Intensification of activities already initiated</p>
<p>Lack of awareness of the value of education; disillusionment with the immediate benefits of education</p>	<p>Use of the media to create more positive attitudes</p>	<p>Consciousness raising: mobilization of community on a large scale to encourage participation and support and to create awareness of the benefits of education</p>
<p>Low status assigned to women and consequent low levels of aspirations for girls</p>	<p>Creation of special machinery such as Women's Education Units</p>	<p>Use of communication network to raise awareness at all levels: leaders, policy makers, administrators, educators, women and girls</p>
	<p>Mass community campaigns in one country</p>	<p>Preparation of media materials such as radio programmes, pictorial booklets, posters, audio cassettes, TV programmes, plays, puppetry, literature</p>
	<p>Provision of leadership training programmes for women by NGOs</p>	<p>Use of change agents at grass roots level, particularly women, and creation of women's groups</p>
		<p>Establishment and strengthening of nutrition and agricultural programmes to create positive attitudes towards change</p>
		<p>Motivation of NGOs to offer programmes for out-of-school girls of school age</p>
		<p>Promotion of better co-operation between NGOs and NGOs, NGOs and governmental agencies.</p>

\* The measures referred to are responses to the overall impact of negative social attitudes.



## *Education of girls*

Socio-cultural norms and religio-cultural values pertaining to the role and status of women were noted to affect adversely the attitudes of parents to the education of girls. Ignorance, irrational fears and low levels of aspiration with respect to educating girls were perceived to be largely responsible for negative attitudes or indifference, and consequently, for non-enrolment and low retention in schools.

While only one country had undertaken a mass community campaign, adult education programmes and the media have been utilized by governmental institutions and non-governmental agencies in other countries to promote more positive attitudes. It was evident that the major thrust should be on consciousness raising through intensive community campaigns, and that change-agents at grass roots level and non-governmental agencies and particularly women's groups need to be activated to motivate parents and the community to send girls to school or to educational centres.

In a context of low participation and retention rates of girls and socio-economic disparities in enrolment, most countries had introduced free education, free textbooks and other incentives in primary schools. Some had introduced special scholarships and incentive awards for promoting the education of girls, complementary structures to enable girls to attend classes at times convenient to them and special programmes to increase the supply of teachers.

It was felt strongly that more purposive strategies had to be implemented to bridge the gender gap. Existing programmes need to be strengthened by extending coverage, concentrating on the provision of incentives within specific locations and on expansion of part-time programmes so that such programmes become components of national strategies rather than ad hoc initiatives.

It was envisaged also that compulsory education, where feasible, and the improvement of the learning environment would improve participation and retention. But it was recognized that special measures were required to increase the participation and retention of girls particularly in disadvantaged communities.

There was a need therefore to expand secondary and further education opportunities for girls to raise levels of aspiration, to provide greater flexibility in entry and re-entry to schools and to establish linkages between non-formal and formal education.

3. Participation and retention

<i>Current situation</i>	<i>What is being done</i>	<i>What needs to be done</i>
Low participation and retention rates	Free education, reduced tuition fees for larger families	Free education and other incentives
	Free textbooks, uniforms and mid-day meals	
	Use of attendance officers in one country	Compulsory education where facilities are available
	Remedial instruction for slow learners	Improving the quality of the learning environment and training of teachers
	Non-detention policy (repetition) to counter adverse effects of examinations on retention rates	'Non-detention' policy supported by remedial instruction programmes
Gender and socio-economic disparities in enrolment and retention	Special attendance scholarships for girls	Disseminating information regarding special incentives
		Increasing secondary school facilities and other educational opportunities for girls
	Incentive awards for schools increasing participation	
	Part-time primary education, feeder schools, separate schools for girls, boarding schools in remote areas	Multiple entry system to schools and linkages between formal and non-formal education
	Provision of more female teachers in remote areas; preference given to the appointment of local people as teachers	Reduction of frequent transfer of female teachers
		Evaluation of the appropriateness and effectiveness of school programmes for girls
		Promoting pre-school centres to reduce dropping out
	Encouraging community members and especially women's groups to monitor attendance of girls	

4. Quality and curriculum relevance

<i>Current situation</i>	<i>What is being done</i>	<i>What needs to be done</i>
<b>Quality of education</b>		
Concepts presented not suited to conceptual developmental level of children	Revision of concepts keeping in view the developmental level of children	Development of curriculum based on minimum level competencies for primary school age children
Curricula too heavy to be covered in allotted time	Studies undertaken to assess curriculum load	
Sub-standard textbooks	Establishment of textbook bureaus at different levels	Improvement of the quality of textbooks - presentation, illustrations, format, printing
Inappropriateness of textbooks to the life styles of the children; use of unfamiliar language in textbooks. Limited instructional resources	Developing textbooks in local languages with consideration given to local customs and values	Curriculum materials depicting the culture of the people
	Development of teaching/ learning kits	Teacher training in creative use of materials and classroom management
Inadequate involvement of related personnel in the design and implementation of educational programmes	In service training of teachers to prepare modules	
		Set up mechanisms for the greater participation of teachers in the development and review of curriculum and instructional materials
<b>Relevance</b>		
Irrelevance of curriculum to local needs	Curriculum revision to increase relevance; work experience programmes introduced	Introduction of appropriate technology (household, agriculture, cottage industries) in the curricula
		Curriculum and textbook review to establish curriculum priorities appropriate to local needs
Educational materials and school activities rein-	Review of textbooks to identify gender bias and prepara-	Review of educational materials to assess the

4. Quality and curriculum relevance (*continued*)

<i>Current situation</i>	<i>What is being done</i>	<i>What needs to be done</i>
force gender role stereotypes	tion of new materials with specific reference to the needs of girls in some countries	appropriateness of the gender roles presented  Development of curriculum materials that present wider roles of girls and women and that promote the concept of partnership and sharing of responsibilities and tasks
Teachers perceptions and expectations affect girls' participation, retention and achievement levels	Sub-regional and follow-up national workshops on teacher education curriculum. Change teachers' perceptions	Development of curriculum materials for teacher training which create teacher awareness of gender inequalities in the classroom
Teaching methods do not encourage optimal participation of girls in the classroom		Equipping teachers with skills to facilitate the development of girls' self-esteem and to encourage the active participation of girls in the classroom and extra-curricular activities

Further gaps were identified in the dissemination of information with regard to available incentives, and inappropriate curricula. Support systems such as the establishment of pre-school centres to reduce dropping out of children with child care responsibilities and to provide a 'head start', and mobilization of greater participation of the community and particularly of women's groups were also perceived to be potentially useful areas for action.

The poor quality of instructional materials and methods, curricula that is unrelated to local needs and educational materials that reinforce inappropriate gender role stereotypes were identified as factors that contributed to reducing retention and achievement among girls. In recent years work experience programmes have been introduced to bridge the gap between the school and world of work. A beginning has also been made in some countries and through the

*Education of girls*

sub-regional workshop held in Kathmandu and follow-up national workshops to eliminate gender bias in school and teacher education.

Nevertheless it was felt that more attention needed to be focused on these aspects of education and action instituted. Minimum level competencies need to be identified for primary school age children, the quality of textbooks improved, curriculum development decentralized and teacher training intensified. More components relating to the needs of the rural environment have to be incorporated in the curriculum. Primary school and teacher education curricula need to be reviewed and revised and new materials introduced to present a more positive image of girls and to assist in developing the self-confidence and self-esteem of girls.

**5. Teacher recruitment, retention and training**

<i>Current situation</i>	<i>What is being done</i>	<i>What needs to be done</i>
Excess of trained teachers but disparity in distribution in rural and disadvantaged areas	Giving incentives for female urban teachers to go to rural areas e.g. housing, transportation in selected areas	Provision of more incentives like service subsidies and other amenities which a country can afford  Provision of common housing facilities for female teachers along with other female workers for security reasons
Lack of female teachers especially in rural areas	Recruiting rural girls at grade VI level, giving them secondary school training while boarding at hostels, training and giving them preference teaching appointments  Relaxing qualifications for admission to teacher training and providing opportunities for up-grading competencies while in service through distance learning, school based in-service, programmes and extension centres  Posting trained male teachers in rural areas where acceptable	Upgrading hostel facilities for female teacher trainees  In certain countries with strict age requirement for entering government service, relaxation of such limits; permitting re-entry into the service of female teachers who for some reason have left the service earlier  Conscientizing through pre-service and in-service