



Education and Domestic Violence: A Woman Security Perspective

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Abstract:

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 enacted by Parliament in the fifty-sixth year of the Republic of India. It extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Act states that "domestic relationship" means a relationship between two persons who live or have, at any point of time, lived together in a shared household, when they are related by consanguinity, marriage, or through a relationship in the nature of marriage, adoption or are family members living together as a joint family. Under such relationship domestic violence constitutes an attempt to harm or injure or endanger the health, safety, life, limb or well-being, whether mental or physical, of the aggrieved person or tends to do so and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse.

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The act or harasses, harms, injures or endangers the aggrieved person with a view to coerce her or any other person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any dowry or other property or valuable security or "physical abuse" means any act or conduct which is of such a nature as to cause bodily pain, harm, or danger to life, limb, or health or impair the health or development of the aggrieved person and includes assault, criminal intimidation and criminal force. "sexual abuse" includes any conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates the dignity of woman "verbal and emotional abuse" includes- insults, ridicule, humiliation, name calling and insults or ridicule specially with regard to not having a child or a male child, and repeated threats to cause physical pain to any person in whom the aggrieved person is interested. "Economic abuse" includes deprivation of all or any economic or financial resources to which the aggrieved person is entitled under any law or custom whether payable under an order of a court or otherwise or which the aggrieved person requires out of necessity including, but not limited to, household necessities for the aggrieved person and her children, if any, stridhan, property, jointly or separately owned by the aggrieved person, payment of rental related to the shared household and maintenance; disposal of household effects, any alienation of assets whether movable or immovable, valuables, shares, securities, bonds and the like or other property in which the aggrieved person has an interest or is entitled to use by virtue of the domestic relationship or which may be reasonably required by the aggrieved person or her children or her stridhan or any other property jointly or separately held by the aggrieved person; and prohibition or restriction to continued access to resources or facilities which the aggrieved person is entitled to use or enjoy by virtue of the domestic relationship including access to the shared household (The Protection of Women From Domestic Violence Act, 2005: 1-5).

To elucidate the above paragraph it is necessary to examine the need of such Act which becomes inevitable for the protection of women security. The term "domestic relationship" denotes discontented

relationship where the women status needs to be redefined if they are being protected in family. Women status is always matter with the prejudice and mores of each and every respective society which not only subjugate them but also approves the violent practice as part of the tradition. Mostly the statuses decide in family in the context of their individual capacity. This individual capacity denotes their judgmental and economic capacity which helps them to ensure their participation in family activities and independent decision making. Such capacity cannot be provided in an instrumental way rather it has to be rendered through their individual ability. That will enable them to earn money, reach to health facilities, decide their relationship with others and not let it taken for granted by anybody in family or outside of it. In this perspective the education facilities to women has decisive role for their ability as well as their protection. At the very rudimentary level education amateer them about the knowledge of domestic violence and its harm on health, life and well-being. As it might cause in form of mental or physical harm or both and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse. Further, educational capability of women help them to decide about their life partner to whom they should married and when. This will minimize the scope of dowry and another unlawful demand which causes threat for their lives and nowadays one of the most prevalent forms of domestic violence. This not only leads to physical abuse but also mental torture for women. Moreover, "sexual abuse" not only operates through in form of oppression but also in terms of socially and culturally accepted norms where all privileges come under the control of men. Therefore, the most earnest need in this regard is to discredit such practices where education has a lot to say and do. It will not only liberate the mind of man as a perpetrator of such activities but will also enable the women to get liberate form this and refuge to accept these. Education will also enable the women to judge and remove any conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates their dignity. Education will help the male counterpart for disapprobation of practices of verbal and emotional abuse which insults, ridicule, humiliation, name calling and insults or ridicule specially with regard to not having a child or a male child, and repeated threats to cause physical pain. Further, it also approves the honourble lives for women in society. The domestic violence in form of "economic abuse" and economic dependency of women are unshakably related to each other. Therefore there is an ardent need of economic independence of women where education will be one of the most pivotal means. Educational abilities of women not only help them to get job and earn money but will also enable them to understand any form of economic and financial deprivation which they are entitled under any law or custom. Even when the educated woman get victimized she may be able to prosecute the concern and get back the due payable under an order of a court or otherwise where she entitled by virtue of the domestic relationship or which may be reasonably required by the aggrieved person or her children or her stridhan or any other property jointly or separately held by the aggrieved person; and prohibition or restriction to continued access to resources or facilities which the aggrieved person is entitled to use or enjoy by virtue of the domestic relationship including access to the shared household.

In view of above paragraph the relationship between education and protection of women becomes very clear. However, the role of education may not go in desired way as it argued above if the issues of access of quality of education, appropriate curriculum and other related condition would not be provided. Because, inappropriateness of such precondition may lead towards diminish of their capability. Education should effectively deal the issues that the girls should not learn that their bodies are source of shame and embarrassment, which compromise their bodily integrity. In short education cannot be regarded as a capability enabling means unless it specifically address the process of developing the capabilities necessary to live a life one has good reason to value. In order to meet this need the "Right to Education Act 2009" and revamped Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan have been able to provide proper policy framework in addition of other special programmes for girls education. Special

schemes for girls' education mainly includes The National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) and Mahila Samakhya (MS) (Education for Women's Equality) programmed etc. have also initiated with targeted manners to address the need of girl's education.

In order to facilitate appropriate structure for quality and quantity education for girls, it is necessary for education policy to adopt the appropriate means to educate all girls in equal manners irrespective of their caste, class, culture, locality etc. Among one of such initiatives Right to Education (RTE) affirms its commitment for education of all children up-to the age of fourteen years. Especially on the issue of girl's education the Right to Education (RTE) Act begins with the explanation "Child" means male or female child of the age of six to fourteen years. Then the second paragraph of the Act says "Child belonging to disadvantage group" means a child belonging to the Schedule Caste, the Schedule Tribe, the socially and educationally backward class or such other group having disadvantage owing to social, cultural, economical, geographical, linguistic, gender or such other factor as may be specified by the appropriate Government, by notification (RTE 2009:3-4). In pursuance of such objective the revamped "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Policy Framework for Implementation" facilitates detail provisions for its effective implementation. Under title "Gender and Girls Education" the framework acknowledges that reaching out to the girl child is central to the efforts to universalize elementary education. SSA's focus on gender parity is rooted in the National Policy on Education (NPE) and the Plan of Action (POA) (1986/92: 4-12) which brought centre-stage the issue of gender and girls' education. More importantly, it linked education of women and girls to their empowerment. NPE states that education should be a transformative force, build women's self-confidence, and improve their position in society and challenge inequalities (SSA 2011: 23-51).

The approach to gender and girls' education is based on the report of the Committee on Implementation of the RTE Act and the Resultant Revamp of SSA, which pointed out that although gender has become an accepted category in policy and programmed formulation, it continues to be understood in limited ways. It is largely seen as a biological category (concerning only girls and women), as a stand-alone category (not related to other issues or other forms of discrimination), and in terms of provision of opportunities so that girls can 'catch up' with boys and 'close the gap'. Thus, achieving gender parity has been an overarching concern of the education system. While this is of critical importance and has led to some impressive improvements in girls' enrolment, retention and completion, it has also led to gender being understood primarily in quantitative terms. In the next phase of SSA implementation, gender and social disadvantage must become integral to concerns of quality and equity. Gender as a crosscutting issue should be viewed as an integral and visible part of the quality agenda. Girls are not a homogenous or singular category and gender does not operate in isolation but in conjunction with other social categories resulting in girls' having to experience multiple forms of disadvantage. The dimensions of location (rural-urban), caste, class, religion, ethnicity, disabilities etc. intersect with gender to create a complex reality. Curriculum, textbooks, pedagogic practices, need to capture the entire web of social and economic relations that determine an individual's location in the social reality and shapes her lived experiences. Developing such an understanding is necessary for improving classroom practices, curriculum, training and strategies for reaching the remaining out-of school children. Further, data on gender should be further disaggregated by other axes of disadvantages; it must be analyzed and used for planning purposes.

While there has been improvement and innovation in the area of gender and girls education, many interventions like gender training remain largely sporadic and continue to be seen as 'add-ons' (Ibid:

27). With RTE coming into effect, the thrust would now be to mainstream good practices and processes within the education system. Efforts pertaining to gender have focused mainly on females. As a result, several women have been empowered and a space has been made to raise gender concerns and develop a better understanding of the structural and social barriers to girls' education. However, since the long-term objective is to transform unequal gender relations and bring about systemic change, therefore, it would be equally important to build on these gains and include boys and men more significantly in this process. In order to address gender it is therefore necessary to go beyond specific schemes and provisions and be treated as a systemic issue.

The policy identifies that despite significant improvement in the enrolment of girls, girls from disadvantaged communities continue to form the bulk of out of school children. Therefore access continues to be an equity issue in the case of girls. Also, there is a need to consider retention as an equity issue, as SC, ST, Muslim girls are vulnerable and most likely to dropout. Parents of children from such communities often have limited means, and any adversity compels girls from such communities to leave the system that they had difficulty entering in the first place. The overt and tacit forms of discrimination that are embedded in the school environment (classrooms and beyond) make schooling a difficult experience. A key focus in SSA will be to address this challenge. With regard to access and retention the focus would be on older girls, where the need is the greatest. Support measures that address economic, academic and social dimensions that lead to dropout would need to be planned as a more cohesive intervention. Measures would include transport, escorts, and counseling, helping them to negotiate domestic work burdens, community support mechanisms, and academic support depending on the nature of the problem.

Moreover, as adolescence is a crucial and complex stage of life where young people discover issues related to sexuality and develop a sense of self, innovative measures to bolster girls' self-esteem and confidence (in addition to imparting the regular curricula content) would be included. Attention would be paid to addressing the particular needs of girls from other disadvantaged groups or those living in difficult circumstances (street children, migrant children, and girls in conflict situations). Girls in such situations are particularly vulnerable and face several security concerns. Some activities already conducted as part of the (Add reassign Equity Issues in Elementary Education Framework for Implementation) NPEGEL Scheme (where operational), and SSA's Innovation Fund could be used for supporting those interventions which cannot be supported under any other norm (Ibid: 28).

Issues of quality and equity are inextricably linked. It is important to understand that poor quality impacts on equity and poor equity reinforces poor quality. Therefore, efforts which are aimed at one must also include the other. Within SSA, quality concerns are being increasingly highlighted, and the approach to quality improvement is undergoing a major shift to become integrated, comprehensive and overarching. In the context of implementing the RTE Act this approach shift to quality would have to be enriched whereby the curriculum, textbooks, teaching-learning materials, the use of space in the classroom, infrastructure, assessment and teacher trainings are looked at holistically and mutually reinforce each other. Each of these issues would need to be addressed by a gender perspective.

Within the context of "Gender" and specifically for the girls of Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) block with a rural female literacy rate below the national average and gender gap in literacy higher than the national average and Blocks of districts which have at least 5% SC/ ST population and SC/ ST female literacy rate below 10% and Selected urban slums have been give uttermost priority at the implementation front (Ibid: 234-244). It also envisioned for development of innovative gender

sensitisation/training programmes, with the assistance of concerned organisations and women's groups, for teachers and administrators and creates an environment whereby all the sections of the education sector will become alive and sensitive to the role of education in eliminating gender disparities. To initiate networking between different institutions for research, extension and information dissemination to increase output of gender sensitive, quality teaching learning material especially in regional languages, and decentralised area-specific models of intervention. Further, it emphasizes to gear the entire education system to play a positive interventionist role to enhance self-esteem and self-confidence of women and girls, build a positive image of women by recognizing their contribution to the society, polity and the economy. Break gender stereotypes, ensuring that the content and process of education is sensitive to gender concerns. Provide co-ordinated efforts to ensure necessary support services to enhance girls' participation and performance in elementary education. Build community support for girls' education and provide a conducive environment for girls' education in the school, community and home and ensure that girls get good quality education at the elementary level. To implement it with true spirit the scheme emphasizes on "mobilization" for girls' education, involving community, teachers, NGOs, etc.

Further, the scheme also emphasizes on educational tours/exposure visits to enhance their knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence and having interaction with important people of the area. It stresses on Designing Special Training for older girls and development of relevant content for residential and non-residential Special Training for older girls, who were drop outs or had never enrolled. Follow-up strategies for providing ongoing support to girls mainstreamed to schools from bridge courses and special training centers. Engagement of older women as escorts for school going girls where schools are at a distance or passage to school is hazardous or unsafe. Monitoring and tracking of girls' attendance and supportive strategies to facilitate regular attendance of girls and their retention in schools to enhance learning achievement, completion and transition to next level of education have also been taken into consideration. It also emphasizes on nutrition and health which remain a critical issue for girls' education. Greater malnutrition among girls and lower family priority towards their health affects their learning capacity.

The scheme emphasizes on Community Mobilization (Mobilization for enrolment, retention and learning) for girl education at the District and cluster (a group of about ten villages) level. Mobilization activities include the training of teachers and educational administrators, mobilization of the community, including formation and training of resource groups (Mother Teacher Associations (MTA), Women Motivator Groups (WMG), Mahila Samakhya (MS) Sanghas etc. Activities by resource group for enrolment, retention, talking to parents etc., training & review of resource group, community follow up of enrolment, attendance and achievement etc. shall be carried out (Ibid: 30).

Mahila Samakhya (MS) (Education for Women's Equality) programme was started nearly 20 years ago and has been recognised as an effective strategy for creating circumstances for girls' education and empowerment. The critical thing in this programme is that its agenda and priorities are set by women's groups, called Mahila Sanghas, themselves. Over the years Mahila Sanghas and their federations have themselves given a place of importance to girls' education. They play an active role in working towards removal of barriers to the participation of girls in education. The Mahila Sanghas ensure that the education system is sensitive to the needs and interests of girls through monitoring and ensuring accountability in village schools, addressing teacher absenteeism, Mid Day Meal (MDM) implementation and quality, etc. Mahila Samakhya has demonstrated the possibilities and practicable ways of creating and using gender-sensitive curriculum, classroom pedagogy, teacher training and life-

skills. Sanghas women are often members of village level committees, and play an important role in SSA implementation and monitoring (Ibid: 241).

Besides, its objective and scope focuses on the dynamic management structure by strengthening the capacity of National, State and district institutions and organizations for planning, management and evaluation of girls' education at the elementary level to respond to the challenges of girls' education. Develop innovative gender sensitisation/training programmes, with the assistance of concerned organisations and women's groups, for teachers and administrators and create an environment whereby all the sections of the education sector will become alive and sensitive to the role of education in eliminating gender disparities. Initiate networking between different institutions for research, extension and information dissemination to increase output of gender sensitive, quality teaching learning material especially in regional languages, and decentralised area-specific models of intervention.

Further, the policies also emphasize to gear the entire education system to play a positive interventionist role to enhance self-esteem and self-confidence of women and girls, build a positive image of women by recognizing their contribution to the society, polity and the economy. Break gender stereotypes, ensuring that the content and process of education is sensitive to gender concerns. Provide co-ordinated efforts to ensure necessary support services to enhance girls' participation and performance in elementary education. Build community support for girls' education and provide a conducive environment for girls' education in the school, community and home and ensure that girls get good quality education at the elementary level. To implement it with true spirit the schemes emphasize on "mobilization" for girls' education, involving community, teachers, NGOs, etc. This is to be a process oriented programme, where community ownership and the basket of components must evolve with local participation. The block will be the designated as the unit of planning implementation and monitoring. However, all blocks may not need to take up all activities. The projects should be based on local conditions and need of that block, all strategies and interventions must target all girls in the age group of 6-14 years for universal elementary education (UEE) with special focus on girls in difficult situations, namely: Out of school girls, including never enrolled and dropout girls. Over age girls, who have not completed elementary education, Working girls, Girls from marginalized social groups, Girls with low attendance, Girls rescued from work, trafficked children, daughters of sex workers, displaced girls including girls in disturbed areas and urban settings.

Development of guidelines for incorporating gender concerns in curriculum and pedagogy, development of material including teaching learning material, audio-visuals and other material helping in enriching curriculum and textbooks, development of supplementary reading materials for girls, including life skills, which would provide the support needed for girls' education. The focus of interventions should be on retention of girls and improvement in quality of learning. Quality of education to girls implies their improved participation in schooling as a precondition of reduced dropout rates, completion of elementary education, effective system and higher transition rates to next level of education. Moreover, their knowledge enhancement and empowerment lie in participation in learner centered and activity based learning. This will enhance their knowledge of self-esteem and ensure self-confidence, skills and capacities to equip them for coping with different situations in life. It will also enable them to make informed choices, participate in decision making processes, access to resources which will assure them quality of life. Detailed action plans for the target group of girls and the specific strategies to be adopted in the block need to be spelt out, with defined and measurable outcomes. Thescheme goes on elaborating the means for effective implementation such as establishing of Model Cluster School (MCS) for Girls', as a model girl child friendly school at cluster level will be opened in all selected districts/blocks where

the scheme is operational. A cluster will be for about 5-10 villages with each block having about 8-10 clusters. This girl-child friendly infrastructure will be used by all the schools in that cluster, by rotation. It shall have facilities in terms of teaching learning equipment, books, equipment, games, etc. Facilities will be used for learning through computers, film shows, reading material, self defense, life skills, riding bicycles, reading, games etc. Instructors will be hired for the day or on contract for imparting vocational and other training. These would be aimed at improving the achievement of girls, fostering an interest in education among them, and raising the importance of girls' education in the community.

The facilities will also be used for teacher training in the cluster. Clusters will be taken up in a phased manner, and those schools will be selected which have shown the best performance for enrolment of girls over the baseline, and which are accessible to around 10 villages/schools, whose girls can use this infrastructure and which has land for additional civil works and play fields. While selecting the location of the model cluster schools, the density of SC/ ST population would also be taken into consideration. To collaborate with SSA the scheme outlines the norms for intervention to supplement and support girls' education over and above the investments for girls' education through SSA interventions. All strategies and interventions must target all the 6-14 year old girls within the block. Focus of interventions should be on retention of girls and improvement in the quality of learning. Detailed action plans for the target group of girls and the specific strategies to be adopted in the block are spelt out, with defined and measurable outcomes.

Further, the scheme also emphasizes on educational tours/exposure visits to enhance their knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence and having interaction with important people of the area. It stresses on Designing Special Training for older girls and development of relevant content for residential and non-residential Special Training for older girls, who were drop outs or had never enrolled. Follow-up strategies for providing ongoing support to girls mainstreamed to schools from bridge courses and special training centers. Engagement of older women as escorts for school going girls where schools are at a distance or passage to school is hazardous or unsafe. Monitoring and tracking of girls' attendance and supportive strategies to facilitate regular attendance of girls and their retention in schools to enhance learning achievement, completion and transition to next level of education have also been taken into consideration.

The policies also emphasize on nutrition and health which remain a critical issue for girls' education. Greater malnutrition among girls and lower family priority towards their health affects their learning capacity. Therefore, school health would involve general health check up with a more intensive follow up of such girls who require special attention. On sanctioning of a 'Model Cluster School for Girl Child', a list of such schools mentioning the nearest Government Hospital or Referral Hospital or PHC Centre to the school will be provided to the concerned State Health Department under intimation to the Department of Elementary Education & Literacy who will request the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for providing necessary services to the Model Cluster Schools. A synergy for this would be built with the Department of Health. Similar synergy will be developed for convergence of 'Mid-day Meal Scheme' (MDM) run by the Department of Elementary Education & Literacy.

The scheme emphasizes on Community Mobilization (Mobilization for enrolment, retention and learning) for girl education at the District and cluster (a group of about ten villages) level. Mobilization activities include the training of teachers and educational administrators, mobilization of the community, including formation and training of resource groups (Mother Teacher Associations (MTA), Women Motivator Groups (WMG), Mahila Samakhya (MS) Sanghas etc. Activities by resource group for

enrolment, retention, talking to parents etc., training & review of resource group, community follow up of enrolment, attendance and achievement etc. shall be carried out.

Another special programme for girl's education is Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme which was launched by the Government of India in August, 2004 for setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minorities in difficult areas. Aftermath the enforcement of RTE and the SSA Framework of Implementation the scheme becomes the part RTE (Ibid: 245-256). KGBVs can be opened in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs), in the blocks with a rural female literacy rate below the national average, gender gap in literacy higher than the national average further prioritize should be given to concentration of SC, ST, OBC and minorities population, and/or a large number of girls out of school, Concentration of SC, ST, OBC and minority populations, and/or a large number of girls out of school. It also includes areas with a large number of small, scattered habitations that do not qualify for a school (Ibid: 30).

Mahila Samakhya (MS) (Education for Women's Equality) programme was started nearly 20 years ago and has been recognised as an effective strategy for creating circumstances for girls' education and empowerment. The critical thing in this programme is that its agenda and priorities are set by women's groups, called Mahila Sanghas, themselves. Over the years Mahila Sanghas and their federations have themselves given a place of importance to girls' education. They play an active role in working towards removal of barriers to the participation of girls in education.

The Mahila Sanghas ensure that the education system is sensitive to the needs and interests of girls through monitoring and ensuring accountability in village schools, addressing teacher absenteeism, Mid Day Meal (MDM) implementation and quality, etc. Mahila Samakhya has demonstrated the possibilities and practicable ways of creating and using gender-sensitive curriculum, classroom pedagogy, teacher training and life-skills. Sanghas women are often members of village level committees, and play an important role in SSA implementation and monitoring (Ibid: 241).

This spirit of MS and the overall tenor of the RTE provide enormous scope for synergic outputs. Special mention in this regard should be made of the fact that occasionally one hears of MS being expected to sub-serve the goals of SSA. This would not be in accordance with the stipulation of NPE, 1986. MS should continue to zealously adhere to its non-negotiable principles, including the stipulation which gives to them space for making their own decisions regarding programme priorities and implementation strategies. The role of MS would be in monitoring and grievance redressal, development of training strategies for School Management Committee (SMCs) especially women members etc. In 1997, the "Mahila Samakhya" programme started a residential school called the "Mahila Shikshan Kendra." Mahila Shikshan Kendras have demonstrated ability to run bridge courses and to develop necessary curricula and teaching-learning arrangements. They could make an important contribution in conducting programmes for children who get admitted to age-appropriate classes but require preparatory courses to keep pace with other students. MSK can function as centre for special training for out of school children who have been enrolled in regular schools.

However, there are number of provision are been made for girl's education but, in mostly the success story remained limited. It needs more commitment and awareness not only from institutional side but equally from parents and student. From the view of policy implementation and institutional building set up there are a lots need to be done. Because, in many areas there are no proper institutional set up have

been developed so far and if something have done these are completely paralyzed in term of their functions.

The issues of quality learning remained truncated for girl's education due to unavailability of quality teachers, proper teaching learning atmosphere and lack of community participation as a check and balance on teaching.

In short, it could be said that there is an earnest need of hour to produce more outlier girls/women who can not only glorify her village and parents but can also dream for entire generation as a capable society. But underline fact is that the girls have to realize the value of education, parents have to support and participate in educational process and of course the all the institutional facilities are rudiment for desired outcomes.

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