
UNIT 2 EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF RURAL WOMEN

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 An Appraisal of Efforts for Girls' Education
- 2.3 Schemes for Girls' Education
- 2.4 Recent Policy Initiative to Expand System Coverage
- 2.5 Enrolment
- 2.6 Factors Contributing to Educational Backwardness of Rural Women
- 2.7 Training of Rural Women
- 2.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.9 Suggested Readings

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- 1 trace the development of educational services for women;
- 1 list the key indicators of rural female literacy;
- 1 identify schemes for girl's education;
- 1 analyse the reasons for low female literacy rates;
- 1 know about training schemes for girls and women;
- 1 identify some of the areas in which rural women may be trained.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Contemporary experiences in the world are establishing a strong link between education and development, particularly in the case of developed countries, as education is vital to human resources development. Women comprise half the world's population and their role in development cannot, therefore, be overlooked. The International Women's Year in 1975 served as a catalyst in many developed countries for an examination of the actual role of women in society. Simultaneously, there was a search for policies and activities, which could improve women's actual participation in national development. Investment in education and training for women is expected to fetch high returns. Women number 496 million and men number 531 million as per the Census of India 2001.

In India, women constitute nearly half of the rural population and play a vital role in the rural economy. They need to be considered equal partners in the development process. Not only do education and training go a long way in achieving this goal, but also help in raising the status of women, enable development of their potential and help them to live as independent and equal partners.

The purpose of providing education to women is to:

- 1) Enable women to think critically, identify their strength and take conscious, informed decisions.
- 2) Empower them to play a positive role in their own and the nation's development.
- 3) Enhance their self-image.

In this unit, we shall first take up the evolution of educational services for women, then go on to discuss literacy levels and enrolment among rural women and briefly discuss the barriers to women education. Lastly, we shall identify some areas in which women can be trained, the different schemes in operation and the agencies engaged in these activities.

2.2 AN APPRAISAL OF EFFORTS FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION

In pre-independent India, the formal system of education was created essentially with the objective of utilizing the educated for serving the British administration. In the initial years, women had little or no access to formal education, especially in rural areas. It was so partly because society at that time could not conceive of their role as government servants. In subsequent decades, as the formal system of education began to spread, the role of education as a liberating force came to be recognized and increasingly felt. Thus began the advocacy of the access of girls and women to the formal system of education. But it received little response. Only few girls belonging to urban upper and middle class families entered the formal system of education in the late 19th century. The low participation of women in education at that time is evident from the fact that female literacy just after Independence was a mere 7.9 per cent compared to the male literacy rate of 24.9 per cent (Census of India, 1951).

When India attained Independence, free education to all children up to the age of 14 years was made a constitutional provision. At the take off point in 1950-51, the status of female education and female literacy rates in India were abominably low and gender gaps stark. Ever since, the education of this population segment has been a matter calling for concerted efforts. A host of socio-cultural conditions that have traditionally caused the low participation of girls and women in the education process gradually began to be recognized and addressed. The education infrastructure was also inadequate and India was poised to simultaneously tackle multiple needs to bring about any change in the educational attainment levels of the country's population, particularly of the female population.

The First Five-Year Plan (1951-56) advocated the need for adopting special measures for overcoming the barriers to women's education. Education facilities were provided for girls by way of elementary education, secondary education, university education, technical education and adult education. During the Second Five-Year Plan (1956-61), the emphasis continued on the overall expansion of educational facilities for women. The Government of India set up a National Committee on Women's Education in 1958. The committee, after reviewing the education of women in India since 1900, made special recommendations to bring women into the fold of formal education.

Following the recommendations of the National Committee on Women's Education,

the Government of India constituted the National Council for Women's Education in India in 1959. As a result, during the Third Five-Year Plan (1961-66), Bal Sevika training programmes, condensed school courses and vocational training for adult women were launched. Apart from this, incentives, such as free textbooks and scholarships, were provided for girls.

The trend continued in the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-74) as well. In 1971, a Committee was constituted to study the status of women in India. The committee recommended provision of primary schools within walking distance, sustained propaganda by women officials, non-officials, social and political workers in order to bring every girl into school, particularly in rural and backward areas. Other important measures recommended were special incentives for areas where enrolment is low and a system of part-time education for girls who cannot attend schools on full-time basis.

Even so, disparities continued in the utilization of these facilities by boys and girls at various educational levels. Therefore, in the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-79), it was decided to step up enrolment and retention of girls and cut down on wastage by providing textbooks free of cost, mid-day meals, free uniforms and attendance scholarships. One of the reasons for the low enrolment of girls was the shortage of women teachers. Scholarships were, therefore, given to girls who enrolled in the teacher's training course.

Based on the recommendations of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, women's education was included as a major programme under Women and Development during the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85). Adult education centers for women were set up during this period to provide education in health, nutrition and family welfare. The Adult Education Programme aimed not only at making people literate, but also at modification of the contents so as to highlight the role played by women in the family and community. It was envisaged to :

- 1 provide more crèches, so that girls would not have to stay out of school to look after their siblings,
- 1 appoint women teachers in rural areas,
- 1 provide more girl's hostels, and
- 1 step up the adult education programme.

To break away from the stereotype of domestic science courses for women, it was decided to concentrate on science courses to increase participation of women in science and technology.

Steps to eliminate gender bias in school curricula were taken in the Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90) also. Elementary education was made free for girls. All the other incentives, mentioned earlier were continued.

Even among rural females, there is caste disparity. To bridge this gap, more scholarships, as compared to boys, were to be provided to girls of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who studied beyond matriculation.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, emphasized on female literacy. Provision was to be made for measures to increase the enrolment and retention of girls, their participation in vocational, technical and professional education and in non-traditional occupations. It suggested that centers be organised for imparting vocational training and steps be taken for retention of literacy skills and for application

of this learning in their daily life. Courses for women would also include banking and credit, entrepreneurship, etc.

The NPE also recommends that women's issues should be incorporated in courses of study in various disciplines, educational institutions be involved in programmes of adult education, legal literacy, use of mass communication to disseminate information on issues of relevance to women, besides providing information and training support for socio-economic programmes for women.

Education of girls and women has been central to the National Policy on Education (NPE). The NPE 1968, while emphasizing on Equalisation of Educational Opportunity recognizes that "the education of girls should receive emphasis, not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation" (section 4c). Carrying forward the same emphasis, the NPE 1986 and Plan of Action (POA) 1992 have been the inspiring force behind the Government of India's (GOI) approach and strategies for female education. These policy documents captured the status of female education and put in perspective the necessary remedial measures to affect improvements in the area of girl's education.

India's National Policy on Education 1986 which was the outcome of a series of national consultations, perceives education as a tool for empowerment and social justice. It is also one of the first policy documents in the country to take a strong pro-women stance. The NPE 1986 acknowledges that inequalities in gender relations have to be addressed as a necessary precondition of equality in education, and makes a commitment to the promotion of education as an agent of basic change in the status of women. The link between education and women's empowerment was posited as being central to an equity-oriented education policy. *On girls' education the POA 1992 further states:*

It is impossible to achieve Universal Elementary Education (UEE) unless concerted efforts are made to reach out to the girl child. Girls who cannot attend formal schools or have had to drop-out will be provided educational opportunities through Non-Formal Education (NFE). Efforts, will be made to design special NFE programmes for out of school and adolescent girls with a view to get them back into the formal stream or qualify for technical or vocational education.

The rural girls are doubly disadvantaged by non-availability of educational facilities and by the work they have to do related with fuel, fodder, water, sibling care and paid and unpaid work. Co-ordinated efforts along with other Department/Ministries, need to be made to provide the necessary support service to enhance their participation and performance. Provision of support services and childcare facilities should be seen as a necessary and integral adjunct of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE).

2.3 SCHEMES FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION

Several interventions at the National and State levels have been initiated in the country to encourage greater participation of girls in primary education and narrow the gender gap for basic indicator of primary education. The State and Central Government initiatives were either in the form of special projects or integrated with the routine activities of their Education system.

Schemes, such as the non-formal education scheme (NFE) and the scheme of operation blackboard (OBB) preceded the advent of a series of projects with a clear thrust on improving the status of girls' education. During the late 1980s and

the early 1990s, experimentation in the primary education sector reached its height either through State sector or targeted projects. This genre of initiatives included the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project (UP BEP), Bihar Education Project (BEP), Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP), the Lok Jumbish and Shiksha Karmi Projects in Rajasthan, and the Mahila Samakhya Programme presently operational in 10 States.

These projects specifically emphasised on girls'/women's education. Rich experience gained in executing these projects in this era of experimentation provided valuable learnings that lent in designing the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). The next generation initiative for primary education in the shape of DPEP was launched in 1994 November in 41 districts in seven States that has extended coverage to 271 districts in 18 States of the country. The end of the Ninth Plan period saw the emergence of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), as the first national programme for achieving UEE that would benefit the entire country. SSA reiterates programming with special emphasis on girls that was articulated as a precondition for UEE by the first-generation basic education projects and continued in DPEP.

Non-Formal Education (NFE) Scheme

Targeted at the out of school children in the 6-14 years age group, the scheme of non-formal education introduced in 1979-80 was operational till March 31, 2001. Recognising that a large number of girls and working children have been left out of the ambit of education, the scheme reached out to these children through a decentralized management system. In the national context, 0.118 million of the 0.241 million NFE centres were exclusive NFE centres for girls.

The Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education (EGS & AIE) introduced in April 2001 provides for flexible strategies for the out of school children and extending access to small and unserved habitations. This includes centre-based strategies, bridge courses, back to school/camps, and residential camps for out of school girls. Investment has been made to make community management of such centres mandatory.

The Scheme of Operation Blackboard (OBB)

Under the scheme of Operation Blackboard, it was proposed to upgrade primary schools in low female literacy blocks by providing additional women teachers and teaching, learning equipment during the Ninth Plan. In addition to improving the learning environment, the scheme's focus on the recruitment of women teachers is of particular significance in the context of girl's education. In the revised scheme of 1993-94, it had been made mandatory that at least 50 per cent teachers be women. The OBB scheme has now been merged with SSA.

National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education

The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, commonly known as the mid-day meal scheme of the GOI, has far reaching consequences on girls ever since cooked meals are being provided in the schools. Studies have indicated that victimized by gender-based differential treatment in their homes, girls often come to school underfed or unfed. This cooked meal in the school is a welcome treat for such girls and is likely to ensure their retention in school. The inclusion of alternative schooling centres by the mid-day meal scheme is again going to impact girls in a big way, as a higher proportion of students in these centres are girls.

Lok Jumbish Programme (LJP)

“The goal of equity in education – between boys and girls” is a key objective in the Lok Jumbish programme in Rajasthan, one of the educationally backward states in the country. Efforts have been directed at creating a gender sensitive environment to ensure positive impact on girls’ education. Girls’ enrolment and retention are considered the principal indication of the project performance.

Besides ensuring that children complete primary education, Lok Jumbish has sought to bridge the gender gap in primary education, make education an instrument of women’s equality and ensure effective involvement of people in educational management. As girls’ deprivation of education is the most glaring manifestation of Rajasthan’s educational backwardness, a variety of strategies and activities have been adopted. The need for transformation of social attitudes as the basic condition for improved participation of girls has been recognized by the LJP. Lok Jumbish also focused on recruitment of women teachers. Going beyond recruitment, the project has organised the Adhyapika Manch (forum of women teachers) that serve the purpose of addressing gender issues, particularly those faced by the female teachers at the workplace and in the domestic sphere.

Shiksha Karmi Project

Located in Rajasthan, the Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) aims at the universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote, arid and socio-economically backward villages, with primary attention given to girls. The basic aim of SKP is to overcome two major problems of primary education with the support and participation of the community.

- 1) Teachers’ absenteeism in schools located in remote and difficult areas.
- 2) Poor enrolment and high drop-out rate of children, specially girls.

During the Eighth Plan, 71 percent of the girls identified in the catchment survey were covered and this has risen to 95.3 percent during the Ninth Plan. Girls’ enrolment has risen from 0.78 million to 1.11 million. At present, 95 percent of the girls identified through a survey in the third phase are studying in SKP schools.

The number of villages with cent per cent enrolment has also increased from 410 to 1104 between the Eighth and Ninth Plan period. During the period, the representation of female Shiksha Karmis rose to 18.5 per cent. More than 2500 new Shiksha Karmis have been added during the third phase, of whom 50 per cent are women. By doing so, the project has been successful in providing one of the critical elements that go to the creation of a supportive environment for girls’ education.

Mahila Samakhya Programme: Education for Women’s Equality

Taking the cue from the NPE 1986 and the POA 1992, the Mahila Samakhya (MS) programme was designed to realize the policy objectives. By organising women into collectives called Mahila Sanghas that provide them the space and gender sensitive inputs to reflect on their lives, to identify their needs and evolve collective ways of dealing with their problems, women are enabled to question, analyse, learn new ways of thinking and doing, make informed choice and set their own agenda. The success of the programme lies in its ability to identify the project direction through this collective process.

Launched in 1988-89 with a coverage of 10 districts in three States, MS is currently being implemented in over 10,000 villages in 10 states in the country. With its

emphasis on process rather than mechanical fulfillment of set targets, the programme has afforded an opportunity to test the premise that educated and aware mothers can make a world's difference to the lives of their daughters and other girls in the community.

As a women's empowerment project, it does not aim at service delivery, but seeks to bring about a change in women's perceptions about themselves and that of society in regard to women's traditional roles. It endeavors to create an environment for women to seek knowledge and information in order to make informed choices and create circumstances in which women can learn at their own pace and rhythm. The centrality of education in the struggle to achieve equality is an important focus of Mahila Samakhya.

By persuading parents to send their children to schools, monitoring teacher attendance, following up on girls' attendance, and so on, the sanghas have become an influencing force insofar as local education issues are concerned. The programme in some States has worked towards total enrolment and retention of children in the village covered by Mahila Samakhya. Sangha women have been the major supportive force underlying the residential education programme for the adolescent out of school girls (Mahila Shikshan Kendra). They identify the girls, ensure their enrolment, retention and continuation in the education ladder beyond the MSK. The programme has ensured mainstreaming of girls into formal primary schools from the non-formal education and the preschool centres being run by it.

Education in Mahila Samakhya is understood as a continuous process of gaining the consciousness and ability to critically engage with one's environment and society and to acquire the knowledge from a position of strength.

Under MS, through the 10,000 women's collectives (sangha), 1.8 million women have been benefited. Besides this, girls, particularly adolescent girls and children have benefited by the Mahila Shikshan Kendras (residential education centres), Kishori Sanghas (collectives of adolescent girls) and the non-formal and pre-school centres.

Trends in DPEP Districts

By design, the educationally worst off districts were included in the project, as districts with female literacy rate below the national average qualified for selection under DPEP. The programmatic thrust on girls' education was, thus, ensured by inevitably selecting the educationally most backward districts apart from special strategies and interventions meant to prompt girls' education.

Gender Training

Gender sensitization has been a significant intervention in DPEP that was perceived to be a basic input for creating a supportive environment for girls' education. Specially designed gender training modules were developed for teachers, DIET faculty, educational administrators, BRC/CRC coordinators, project personnel, VEC members and community members. These programmes have enabled recognition of personal bias, concept building on gender and sex, besides helping to develop an understanding of issues related to girls' education.

Gender training for the teachers focused on creating an equitable learning environment in the classroom, their role in following up attendance, the need to pay special attention to girls to offset/neutralize the disadvantages girls face, and the importance of cultivating a close working relationship with the community.

In generating community commitment for girls' education, the importance of educating

girls, ways of encouraging girls' education at the community level, role that the community can play in creating a supportive climate for girls' education at home and school, are the key issues covered by gender training of VEC members and other grassroot groups.

Making Girls' Education a Community Agenda

The growing realization that 'demand' for primary education is a crucial factor for attainment of UPE, had led to the large-scale effort to work in partnership with the community. Since community/social factors and parental attitude have been major factors for girls not going to school, DPEP has evolved a variety of methods to involve communities for promoting girls' education.

On the one hand, the project set up grassroots community bodies, such as the village education committees (VEC) that are not just a vital link between the community and the school, but also play a leadership role in realizing the goals of UEE. To support the activities of VECs, states have constituted Mother Teacher Motivator Groups, etc. They are performing varied roles and responsibilities and are involved with different aspects of the programme, and have often been the prime driving force in the local context worked on issues related to girls' education.

All of these attempted to influence community decisions in favour of girls' education either to enroll them in school or allow them to remain in school to complete the primary cycle of education.

One of the mobilization strategies commonly used by the states has been the Meena Campaign. While the Meena materials have been used independently as a mobilization tool, they have also been used as a training tool particularly for teachers, VEC, MTA, PTA members, BRC and CRC Coordinators. Shows organised are followed by a structured discussion with the audience and through this exchange, their attitude towards educating girls becomes clear. To counter the almost invariable negative attitude, and reinforcing the importance of educating girls, the role of parents and teachers in improving girls' participation in primary education, concrete steps that need to be taken as a follow up, form part of the discussions. Along the lines of Meena, DPEP Bihar has the Muniya Beti Padhat Jaye campaign for which audio cassettes and printed material have been developed.

Towards Better Learning

States have strategised to create an understanding of gender issues, but as attitudes cannot be changed through one off training programmes, the classroom in the project areas are gradually transforming into 'girl friendly' classrooms. Though sign of transformed classrooms are to be seen, further work would be required to convert them into classrooms where equitable learning opportunities are assured.

The presence of female teachers is considered to be a supportive factor for girls' learning at school. DPEP encouraged States to increase the representation of female teachers, either regular or para teachers. In view of this, states have stepped up efforts to bring in more female teachers into the system. Effectively, however, policy support has been more in the case of para teachers. As compared to the formal schools, there are explicit state policies to recruit larger numbers of female teachers in the Alternative Schooling (AS) centres.

Installing Gender Equity

Efforts have been made to root gender equity through gender mainstreaming on the academic front. This has been attempted by systematic review of textbooks for

elimination of gender bias. Concerted efforts have been made to ensure that the textbooks and other TLM are free of any discriminatory or stereotyped content. As a part of the pedagogical renewal process, special training on gender sensitive textbooks were held for textbook writers and illustrators. Gender experts also screened the draft textbooks. To add strength to the gender sensitive approach, supplementary reading materials have also been developed in some States.

Improving Reach

Besides factors rooted in the family or the socio-cultural milieu of girl children, distance to schools and the associated threat to security have been reasons for their exclusion by the education system. The provision of alternative schools under DPEP has made it possible for many such girls to join/rejoin the education system. In such conditions, special alternative schooling centres have been set up exclusively for girls.

Check Your Progress I

Note : a) Use the space given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the text.

1) List down the five schemes for girls' education?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Write a short note on Operation Blackboard.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2.4 RECENT POLICY INITIATIVES TO EXPAND SYSTEM COVERAGE

Parallel efforts were mounted to make education a fundamental right for 6-14 years old children and also, bring the whole nation within the fold of an appropriately designed convergent framework for UEE. The Constitution (86th amendment) Act, 2002 to make Free and Compulsory Education for Children in the age group 6-14 years was enacted by parliament on December 13, 2003. This has laid down the foundation for crafting the details of the Free and Compulsory Education of Children Bill, 2003. The proposed central legislation incorporating the detailed mechanism for implementing the Constitution Amendment is under finalization.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a national endeavour, contemplates a package of initiatives for attainment of UEE that would include better standards of elementary education in the country. The Free and Compulsory Education of Children Act (when enacted) will be a compelling factor upon the State that will bind it to improve the efficiency of the education system in order to ensure quality education. The nation is poised to advance towards the coveted goal of UEE at an accelerated pace with the extensive package of inputs under SSA (over and above State sector investments) duly supported by a legislative measure.

Constitution Eighty Sixth Amendment Act, 2002

Building on the Constitutional commitment to provide free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years, the Constitution Eighty Sixth Amendment Act, 2002 was enacted. It makes it binding upon States to “provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years” (article 21 of the Fundamental Rights). Further, this amendment also states that “the State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years” (Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy).

The draft bill on the Free and Compulsory Education for Children Bill, 2003 defines schools that will come within the purview of the Act. Some of the relevant definitions given in the draft Act to put the provisions in perspective are as follows:

“Compulsory education” means and implies an obligation on appropriate Government to take all steps to ensure that every child is enrolled and retained till the prescribed level of education is received by such children in a school imparting the prescribed courses of study and the steps taken on that behalf.

“Free education” means exemption from the obligation to pay tuition fee or other charges, which schools usually collect from pupils in a school. It may extend to provision of free supply of textbooks, note-books, other study materials, health care and nutrition where the appropriate Government so declares by rules made under the Act.

“Guardian” means any person to whom the care, nurture or custody of any child falls by law or by natural rights or by recognized usage, or who has accepted or assumed the care, nurture or custody of any child as entrusted by any lawful authority.

“Parents” means the father or mother of a child and includes an adoptive father or mother.

“School” means a centre for imparting education fulfilling such requirements and other conditions as may be notified by the appropriate government and the requirements so specified would not be less than those specified in Schedule A of the Act.

The draft bill tries to elaborate the operational details that would impinge on the outcome of this enactment, viz., systematic tracking of out of school children, the deliverables by the Government, the responsibility of parents, duties of teachers, grievance redressal mechanisms, steps to be taken on violation of attendance order, etc. Besides spelling out the penal provisions, the draft bill also goes into the details of competent courts for trying cases under the act.

By implication, the State will have to work on the dual aspects of “quality” and “quantity” in provisioning elementary education, as the motto will now have to be ‘adequate quality facilities for quality elementary education’. While streamlining the

system will be important, it will be equally important to generate parental commitment for education. Sprucing up the systemic aspect will mean provision of adequate facilities with the necessary physical infrastructure, adequacy of teachers and their capability to ensure quality education, teacher accountability, putting in place the requisite academic support system, along with a mechanism for monitoring and supervision, institutionalizing a systematic approach to pupil evaluation, building effective partnerships with the community and their representatives, etc. The draft Act has been shared with the States and education specialists from the Government and non-Government sector. It is being widely discussed to arrive at a political consensus.

As an Overarching National Framework, SSA

SSA is an effort at UEE by ensuring community ownership of the school system. Besides its aim to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010, it also pursues the goal of bridging social, regional and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community in the management of schools. SSA is a National effort that will help to put into effect the fundamental right to education for the 6-14 years old children.

It allows states to formulate context specific guidelines within the overall framework. Encourages districts in states and UTs to reflect local specificity. Promotes local need based planning. Based on broad National Policy norms, makes planning a realistic exercise by adopting broad national norms. The nationally expressed objectives are expected to enable the districts and States to achieve Universalisation in their own contexts and in their own time-frame with 2010 as the outer limit for such achievement.

By design, most of the on-going schemes of the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, GOI, have been integrated in the fold of SSA. The Mahila Samakhya programme will continue to be an independent effort of the Department. Scheme-wise modalities for smooth transition from the earlier pattern to the one under SSA have been carefully defined. Introduction of the District Elementary Education Plan (DEEP) has made it possible to get a holistic picture of elementary education in the district, vis-à-vis the status and needs, making it possible to link the proposed interventions to proposed investments.

Through its coverage of the entire country, SSA addresses the needs of 192 million children in 1.1 million habitations, 0.85 million existing primary and upper schools and 3.3 million existing teachers would be covered under the scheme. The programme seeks to open new schools in habitations, which do not have schooling facilities and strengthen existing school infrastructure through provision of additional classrooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance grant and school improvement grant. Existing schools with inadequate teacher strength would be provided additional teachers under the programme. The capacity of existing teachers would be built by extensive training, provision of grant for developing teaching-learning material and development of academic support structure.

The Project Approval Board (PAB) has approved the Annual Plans of 592 of 600 districts in the country upto February 28, 2003 in 30 states/UTs at an outlay of Rs. 30.80 million during 2002-2003. In addition to its broad-based approach to UEE, SSA recognizes that certain groups and certain regions are harder to reach compared to others and need special attention. The basic programme structure itself ensures that more funds go towards these regions and groups. It has a sustained focus on inclusion and participation of all girls and other children from SC/ST families, minority

groups, urban deprived children and children with special needs. For effective results, SSA provides Rs. 5.00 million per district per annum towards innovative activity targeting such groups.

Citing good practices from earlier projects SSA encourages measures that would impact on girls, particularly those out of school and belonging to socially disadvantaged groups, such as SC/ST and minorities. In the light of this, efforts will be made to mainstream gender concerns in all the activities under the SSA programme. Mobilisation at the habitation, village/urban slum level, recruitment of teachers, upgradation of primary into upper primary schools, incentives like mid-day meals, uniforms, scholarships, educational provision like textbooks and stationery, will all take into account the gender focus. Every activity under the programme will be judged in terms of its gender component. Besides mainstreaming, special efforts like the Mahila Samakhya type of mobilization and organisation, back-to-school camps for adolescent girls, large scale process based constitution of Mahila Samooths will also be attempted. The selection criteria takes into account the low female literacy among the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women.

More specifically, the SSA framework allows for incentives to girls. In each school, a Mothers'/Womens' Committee would, depending on the real needs, decide on incentives within the already prescribed financial ceiling of Rs. 150/- per girl child per year. This package could include free uniform, scholarship, textbooks/workbooks, stationery, escort services and any other locally felt need. Only such incentives that are not already provided by the state will be funded under SSA. The provision of funds for innovations under SSA is envisaged to be used for carrying out special interventions for the promotion of girls' education. As a proactive measure to promote girls' education, SSA mandates the reservation of 50 per cent of teachers' positions for women. Provision of toilets for girls are yet another targeted gender intervention under SSA.

Bringing the out of school girls to school would require a proper identification of girls who are out of school in the course of micro planning. It also calls for involving women through participatory processes in the effective management of schools. Experiences across the States under Mahila Samakhya and DPEP have suggested the need for a clean perspective on women's issues. The provision for girls' education would have to be stimulated in the local contexts and interventions have to be designed to suit the specific community needs in this regard. Special interventions need to be designed to address learning needs of girls and relating education to their lives. SSA is committed to making these interventions possible.

Based on the experiences of DPEP and Lok Jumbish, SSA cites examples of interesting and successful interventions for improvement in access, enrolment, retention and achievement of girls for replication.

The gender experience and capacities built in the education sector in ongoing programmes like Mahila Samakhya can be used to integrate gender concerns in other programmes of the Department, and also to plan, monitor and evaluate these programmes.

Gender concerns will be a thrust area for teacher training programmes, both pre-service and in-service. Under programmes like DPEP, efforts have been made to integrate gender concerns in the in-service teacher training programmes. However, similar effort has not gone into pre-service training courses.

Both the levels of training would require greater emphasis. For this NCTE, SCERTs

and DIETs and other institutions handling teacher training will be encouraged to set up women's cells.

It strives to create national and state capacities for planning and implementing programmes for the education of girls. For this purpose, a National Resource Centre for the education of women and girls will be set up.

The goal of UEE being pursued by SSA will necessitate sector reforms in a big way to meet some of the basic systemic requirements and also to tone up the delivery system. The states have adopted policies on para teachers to overcome teacher shortage and also to ensure improved representation of women teachers. The close involvement of the community in selecting the para teachers has been a means of acquiring community interest and ownership.

The central scheme of EGS and AIE, with its flexibility and the range of options it brings with it, will go a long way in covering some of the most difficult to reach groups of children to further expand system coverage in the Indian context.

While larger systemic issues of access, infrastructure, teachers, textbook review and incentives to girls have been built into SSA, the geographic pockets that warrant special attention and efforts have been targeted through the National Programme for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and the Kasturba Gandhi Swatantrata Vidyalaya Scheme. The proposed expansion of the Mahila Samakhya programme has been planned to cover such backward pockets. Working in synergy, the four initiatives are designed to meet the routine educational needs of girls as also cater to their specific situations.

Implementation of the three special interventions will be confined to the 2198 educationally backward blocks (EBB) identified on the basis of Census 1991 and updated as per Census 2001. These blocks are located in 261 districts. Another 12 districts in Jammu and Kashmir have also been identified using the same criterion. These schemes will also extend to 23 additional districts that have SC female literacy rates below 10 per cent. They will also be included for coverage.

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

The proposed National Programme for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL) will be implemented in specific areas with low female literacy and will focus on intensive implementation and monitoring to enable each girl to be tracked, and introduce flexible learning packages to ensure different strategies to suit children in different circumstances, including out of school girls, drop-out girls, working girls, girls from marginalized social groups, girls with low attendance and girls with low levels of achievement to gain quality elementary education and develop the self-esteem of girls through a community based approach. It is proposed to develop a model upper primary girl-child friendly school in each cluster in all the EBBs (2198 blocks in 274 districts in 17 states). Additionally, the scheme will also cover 25 districts in ten states with SC/ST female literacy rate below 10 per cent. While this strategy is expected to extend the outreach to eligible girls, there is a provision for alternative schools, bridge courses and flexible timings for the girls out of the formal school system. Further, to prevent drop-out of girls, remedial classes are also proposed.

Typically a cluster would include 10 villages and each block is envisaged to have about 10 clusters. These schools would be provided with teaching learning equipment, books, other equipment, facilities for games, etc. Facilities will be used for learning

through computer, film shows, reading material, self defense, life skills, riding bicycles, reading games, etc. Instructors will be hired for specific time periods for imparting vocational and other training. As the model school in the cluster, its girl-child friendly infrastructure will be open for use by other schools in the cluster and also for teacher training.

This new scheme pays special attention to the adolescent girls through the proposed development of supplementary teaching material that would include material on women achievers, stories that can enhance the image of women and girls, nutrition, sanitation, environment, gender and legal issues. Curricular enhancement in this context would also include classes on self-defense.

The cluster school will also be the venue of the residential upper primary school/ National Open School (NOC) centres to mainstream those girls who had dropped out from regular school for some reason. The additional space created with support from this scheme would have a large rooms, toilets, water supply and electrification, and will suffice for housing the proposed residential facilities.

Another component of the scheme is mobilization for enrolment, retention and learning. This will entail community follow-up of enrolment, attendance, achievement and other factors necessary to ensure girls' education. Efforts at enrolment and retention will be supported by women's sanghas under Mahila Samakhya, village level core groups, mothers' committees and parent teacher associations. State MS Societies, wherever set up under the directions of GOI, will provide direction and support to the programme. Elsewhere, a sub committee of the SSA Society, with nominees from relevant departments of the State Government, GOI, experts in girls' education and representatives of SC/ST women's organisations, will be set up for this purpose. At the national level, National Resource Group (NRG) under MS shall provide inputs on conceptual issues and concerns arising in the programme and advice GOI on policy matters concerning the education of girls.

The Constitution of India grants equality of opportunity to all citizens irrespective of race, sex, caste and community. Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State of the Constitution guarantees free and compulsory education to all till they complete the age of 14 years.

2.5 ENROLMENT

Drop-outs: The female literacy in India is greatly constrained by drop-out rates. According to NSSO report 1997, in rural India, out of every 100 girls who enrolled in class I, only one enters class XII. In urban areas, it is 14 girls at that level. Out of 100 girls enrolled in class I, less than 40 join class Vth. In this context, there is a positive relationship between school attendance and Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE). The attendance ratio increases and drop-out rate decreases gradually, as the MPCE increases in both rural and urban areas. It has been observed that though rate of drop-out has been decreasing from year to year, but still the problem is quite enormous. However, it is encouraging that the rate of decrease in the drop-outs is much higher among the girls as compared to the boys.

The inadequacy of education to reach out to girls and women can be analysed from four different aspects, namely supply, access, demand and participation. Factors like distance of girls' schools, schools having toilet facilities/privacy to girls, as they move to upper primary level are important for girls' participation in education. Other social factors hindering female literacy are parental attitude, social norms related to women's education, employment potential as a return of education, expenses

involved in schooling, health and sanitation facility in school, etc. The alternative models like non-formal education, adult education, early childhood education, etc. have contributed in limited ways. Some major programmes like District Primary Education Programme, Operation Blackboard, Shiksha Karmi Project, National Open Institution, etc. have considerably influenced the female literacy.

Although there has been a considerable increase in enrolment, it has not been uniform all over the country.

Statistics of the Department of the Education, 1999-2000 reveal that although enrolment of girls (classes I to V) is high (above 80%), it is low for the states of Uttar Pradesh (50.18%) and Bihar (61.46%) because of educational backwardness, low status of girl child, early marriage, as girls are considered “PARAYADHAN”.

The provisional enrolment for girls in classes VI-VIII was 49.66 per cent for India in 1999- 2000, but it was only 22.04 per cent in Bihar, and 25.80 per cent in Uttar Pradesh, 43.75% in Orissa, 43.91% in West Bengal, 48.30 % in Dadra & Nagar Haveli, 48.35% in Rajasthan, 48.70 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, and 49% in Jammu & Kashmir. It was above 50% in the rest of the country, which is also not a satisfactory situation.

In 2001, the Fundamental Right to Education Act was passed, and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan launched to ensure that all children complete at least 10 years of schooling by 2010. This will be a challenge to achieve, especially in educationally backward states.

In keeping with the trends observed, rural female enrolment is lowest in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and highest in Kerala. To start with, female enrolment is lower even at the primary level. You will also note that for each state, the enrolment of girls in the age group 15-19 is the lowest compared to the other age groups. What do you feel could be the reasons for this?

Usually, the girls are withdrawn from the school at this stage or they drop-out. Some of the reasons for this are :

- 1 marriage of the girls,
- 1 reluctance to send girls out of the house after puberty,
- 1 lack of relevance of school curriculum,
- 1 shortage of women teachers,
- 1 lack of school buildings and hostels,
- 1 requirement of girls to help out in the farms/family occupation or household chores or responsibility of looking after younger siblings.

Access and Enrolment

- 1 Conduct regular enrolment drives.
- 1 Conduct special camps and bridge courses for mainstreaming girls.
- 1 Set up special models of Alternate Schools exclusively for girls.
- 1 Organise Balika Shikshan Shivirs.
- 1 Provide formal schooling facilities in centres of religious instruction.
- 1 Intensify mobilization efforts among resistant groups.

- 1 Work in close collaboration with the community in identified pockets.
- 1 Use women's groups to follow-up issues for girls education.

Retention

- 1 Prioritising the monitoring of attendance of girls and using community/parent involvement, especially for this purpose.
- 1 Follow-up of drop-out girls to bring them back to school.
- 1 Organise regular retention drives to put pressure on parents to ensure retention.
- 1 Monitor attendance of each child in identified pockets for intensive activities to prevent drop-out.
- 1 Special coaching classes/remedial classes for SC girls.
- 1 Ensure congenial learning environment for girls in the classroom by giving special inputs to teachers, either in selected pockets or across the programme districts. Teacher sensitization could be an important means of ensuring this.
- 1 Organise remedial classes through the VEC/MTA members for girls who do not fare well at school.
- 1 Adding a fillip to girls' education, the Government of India has laid out its approach for the present cycle of the year plan – 2002-2003 to 2006-2007. The thrust areas for girls' education in the Tenth Plan include:
 - 1 Specific measures to bring the girls child to school. This should include issues of access as well as socio-cultural and economic factors that prevent girls from attending school.
 - 1 Focus attention within the community, especially on women for raising awareness relating to girls' education. Efforts should be made to endure peer pressure on guardians for girls' education.
 - 1 Provision of necessary infrastructure like toilets for girls.
 - 1 Provision of support services like childcare to enable girls to attend school.
 - 1 Special efforts would be made to recruit women teachers and to augment teacher-training facilities for women, so that adequate number of qualified women teachers are available in different subjects for greater recruitment of female teachers.
 - 1 To encourage greater participation of women in structures like the Village Education Committee, Parent Teacher Associations.
 - 1 Each programme to spell out in concrete terms its concern for girls' education and gender equality.
 - 1 To use distance learning modes to promote education of girls.
 - 1 To encourage contextual need based and flexible learning systems for adolescent girls who have been denied access to formal education.

Check Your Progress II

Note : a) Use the space given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with the text.

1) What is Sarva Siksha Abhiyan? Write its main Provisions?

.....
.....

.....

2) Suggest five ways to reduce the rate of drop-out of girls in school?

.....

2.6 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO EDUCATIONAL BACKWARDNESS OF RURAL WOMEN

We have discussed the issue about low female literacy. But in spite of the well-intentioned policies and programmes, why is this state of affairs continuing? There are several causes for this. We shall now discuss in the following sub-sections for some of these causes.

Socio-cultural

The low status of women in our society and the preferential treatment given to males at every level is a major cause of female illiteracy. Parents, mostly in rural areas, fail to see why their daughter must be educated, as for her, training in household chores is considered more important. This, of course, reflects the dominant role of housewife and mother attributed to women in our society. Another argument put forth is that an educated girl would require an educated husband, who as a result of his education, would demand a higher dowry. In the first place, to find a boy of an equal educational level, if not higher, would be difficult. Many parents also do not like the idea of sending their daughters to co-educational schools, particularly at the middle and secondary levels. When family resources are limited due to poverty, preference for schooling is given to sons over daughters, as they are expected to be the breadwinners for their families.

Even if viewed in terms of investment, parents find it more reasonable to spend on the son's education rather than the daughter's, as the latter will move out of their family after marriage, thus taking away with her the acquired knowledge and skills.

Another reason is that, in rural areas, the mobility of a girl tends to be restricted after she attains puberty. If the school is particularly far off and there are no transport facilities or women teachers, the problem gets compounded.

Girls are expected to be married in their early teens and parents failing to comply face a lot of social criticism. Early marriage is an important reason for drop-out rates among girls.

Economic

The outlays on nonformal, adult education and primary education have been inadequate even while education may be free up to the primary level. A majority of the people,

particularly in rural areas, simply cannot afford the expenses on textbooks, stationery and so on.

Girls in rural areas often assist the family either by working in the field or in household work or in looking after younger siblings. The family, in such cases, may be reluctant to send her to school and lose out on working hands thereby.

Reasons Related to the Education System

Lack of facilities in close proximity is one of the important problems in the education of girls in rural areas. To send girls to far off places for education is both economically impractical and socially unacceptable in such a context.

The school curriculum shows an urban bias with little or no relevance to rural life and environment. In addition, dull teaching methods and lack of educational support at home lead to low performance. Even if the school is nearby and they do go, there may be no teachers, books or other facilities, which are necessary. The quality of education imparted is low, and when minimum levels of learning are not attained, parents withdraw their children from the school system.

As regards higher educational course, it has been seen that girls tend to opt for teachers' training as opposed to boys who enroll in science, engineering and technical courses. The girls who do enroll in science courses are usually from the higher income strata in urban areas. What is required is to encourage girls from rural areas, SCs and STs as well, to apply for these courses. As an incentive, scholarships may be provided to girls who enroll in science courses.

Lack of awareness and motivation for education among parents and children, and low value placed on education in rural areas is a very common reason for illiteracy.

The reason for backwardness in education of women can be summarized as:

- i) Conservatism on the part of the parents.
- ii) Social customs and taboos.
- iii) Shortage of women teachers.
- iv) Lack of school buildings and hostels.
- v) Curriculum, which is irrelevant to rural students.
- vi) Lack of transport facilities.
- vii) Early marriage of girls.
- viii) Girls are expected to stay at home to do household chores and look after their siblings.
- ix) School situated far away from home.

2.7 TRAINING OF RURAL WOMEN

Apart from providing facilities for education of women, it is also important to train them so as to empower them with the following:

- i) Economic power
- ii) Decision-making
- iii) Self-confidence

- iv) Enhanced skills
- v) Ability to think critically
- vi) Ability to participate in the development process
- vii) Ability to unify and take collective action.

Women contribute substantially to the economic resources of a family both by way of services rendered and wages earned. Yet development projects are meant mainly for men, and only social welfare schemes cater mainly to women. There is, however, an increasing realization of the fact that women play an active role and have to be involved in rural development schemes. Training of rural women is, thus, important so as to increase their involvement in the development process and enhance their skill and make them equal partners in national development.

The major objectives of training for rural women should be to equip them with better skills and enhance their knowledge, so as to prepare them to face new challenges due to technological development and assert themselves as persons.

Training Areas

As you have read about schemes for women, which provide scope for training, here we will take a look at some of the areas in which it would be useful to train women. Some reference was made to this in Unit 1 of this Block. There are four major areas:

a) Health, Nutrition and Child Care

Training in these areas can be addressed to update knowledge and skills in the areas of child care and immunization, nutrition, hygiene and house keeping.

b) Agriculture

Rural women participate extensively in agricultural activities. Mechanisation of agriculture creates a need for a different set of skills. Thus, it would be useful to train women in such areas, which can ensure employment opportunities instead of the usual retrenchment.

c) Cottage Industries

Women play an important role in cottage industries, such as toy-making, weaving and basket-making. Training in rural crafts is essential for women's self-employment and for securing better economic status.

d) Other Areas

There is a need to allow women to break out of stereotyped roles. For instance, women can be encouraged to enroll for courses in TV and radio repairing, electronics, animal husbandry, operation of agricultural machinery, etc. and not confine themselves to food preservation or tailoring and embroidery alone.

Agencies Involved in Training

Some important agencies imparting training to rural women are:

- 1) Central Board of Social Welfare (CSWB)
- 2) State Boards of Social Welfare
- 3) Literacy House

- 4) Krishi Vigyan Kendra
- 5) Mahila Mandals
- 6) Various Voluntary Organisations

Training given to women by voluntary organisations and cooperative societies that have been successful are: handloom and handicrafts, silk weaving and dyeing and training-cum-production units, e.g. cane and bamboo articles, mat weaving, carpet weaving, etc.

Mahila Mandals provide an opportunity to rural women to learn from each other and from resource persons appointed by the government in areas, such as child care, environment, hygiene and nutrition. Other relevant areas, which can be incorporated are legal literacy, adult education, information on procedures to be followed for seeking financial assistance for projects, and dissemination of information on various rights of women and policies framed for them periodically. **Mahila Mandals** cater to the needs of housewives, mothers and non-workers.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra is an innovative scheme implemented by Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Besides training in agriculture, women receive training in such areas as nutrition, hygiene, kitchen gardening, poultry keeping, home management, child care, rural sanitation, etc.

There are various training programmes to train the field level workers and functionaries like Mukhya Sevikas, Mid-wives, Gram Sevikas, Bal Sevikas, Anganwadi workers, health functionaries and craft instructors to operate welfare programmes and projects for women education and training.

- i) Steps must be taken to ensure universalisation of elementary education and minimization of drop-out rate and stagnation.
- ii) Equal opportunities for women should be provided at all educational levels.
- iii) There should, at the same time, be provisions for vocational education, non-formal education and training in skill development.
- iv) Curriculum should be devoid of gender bias.
- v) School timings should suit local conditions.
- vi) Support structures, such as crèches and balwadis should be provided so that girls can be free to attend school.
- vii) Educational facilities and incentives should be provided for SC and ST girls.
- viii) In view of the constraints faced by women, provision of open learning system, part-time educational programmes and coordination of school/college hours with the agricultural cycle would go a long way in stepping up enrolment and retention.
- ix) Women's issues and concerns, information and training in new technology could form the core of Adult Education Programme.
- x) The emphasis should be on improving conditions for learning by enabling women to participate in the educational process, rather than just opening more educational institutions.
- xi) Involvement of the community, Panchayats, mahila mandals, etc. in bringing awareness about education and women's empowerment can bring about qualitative improvement in the situation.

Agricultural Extension Training

Women farmers have less contact with extension services than men. In most countries, extension services are predominantly staffed by men. Until recently, their services were often directed to male farmers or heads of households. Female-headed households, therefore, frequently had less access to extension services than households headed by men. Women members of male-headed households often had even less access to these services. Extension services erroneously assumed that the messages delivered to male farmers would trickle “across” to women. This excluded a significant proportion of the women farmers from access to extension information, services, and sometimes also inputs and credit. The messages themselves frequently ignored the unique work-load, responsibilities, and constraints of women farmers. Finding the means to reach this large, frequently overlooked group is necessary to improve extension coverage and to learn from local farming practice, as well as from the point of view of equity. In many countries, agricultural extension services are being reoriented toward more demand-driven and sustainable services, with greater cost sharing between extension agents and farmers, greater control by local units, increasing private sector provision of services, and growing NGO and farmer group involvement. To be successful, these participatory and community-based approaches will require greater involvement of women, who constitute a significant proportion of active farmers in many parts of the world.

A number of strategies to reach women farmers have been found to work in different country settings. The first step is to increase awareness about gender differences in agricultural production systems among staff and management of ministries of agriculture. Next, extension services must be adapted to take account of these differences by training and employing more women agricultural extension agents as well as facilitating and increasing interaction between male extension staff and women farmers. Because men extension agents will outnumber women for some time to come, training men staff to work with women farmers will be a particularly significant strategy. At the same time, the quality of extension services must be improved as explained below.

Approaches to Gender Analysis in Agricultural Extension

Introducing gender as an analytical concept in agricultural extension at the ministry level is necessary if officials are unaware of gender roles in agricultural production: for example, who does what, who uses which produce, and who are the heads of households. Several strategies have been tried successfully, including:

- 1 Discussions, workshops, and agenda items on gender.
- 1 Studies on farming systems.
- 1 Study tours and training courses in other countries.

Increase Contact with Women Farmers, Targeting Rural Women as Extension Clients

- 1 Adapt selection criteria for contact farmers or contact group members, for example, changing from heads of households to active farmers, so that women are also included.
- 1 Facilitate women’s attendance at extension meetings: Advertise meetings of particular interest to women. Hold meetings at times and in locations convenient and accessible to all. Arrange for child care (perhaps among the women themselves) during extension meetings or training sessions.

- 1 Because women have less time available for extension activities than men, set the time, location, and day of activities to suit women's schedules as much as possible. For example, where women do certain work on set days of the week, liaise with women and male elders to schedule around this work, that is, by holding evening meetings or training sessions.
- 1 Provide separate facilities for women as necessary at training centers, in markets, or other public places.
- 1 Where women are unable to attend residential training, provide training in one-day modules or provide a mobile training unit to visit central villages and transport women from nearby villages.
- 1 Where women cannot leave their homes for project activities, hold meetings in women's compounds or use other accessible means of communication, such as videos, cassettes, TV, and radio.
- 1 Produce messages in written, oral, and visual media, targeted to women farmers and presented by women announcers and performers to supplement face-to-face extension efforts.
- 1 Provide for informal social interaction at extension meetings to strengthen women's attendance.

2) Targeting the Extension Service

- 1 Set targets for both men's and women's participation in extension activities: Break national targets down to regional or smaller targets to take account of local variations and opportunities. Include such targets in extension agents' annual evaluations.
- 1 Include brief agricultural and livestock production messages in home economics, handicrafts, and nutrition extension activities for women.
- 1 Establish a network of female para-extension agents or village group technicians, who are trained by the extension service in standard agricultural messages and in women's other economic activities. Act as a liaison between the extension agent and the group/village and, in turn, train group members who are accountable to and paid by the village group (with perhaps some reimbursement from public funds).

Targeting Male Extension Agents

- 1 Train men extension agents in culturally acceptable methods of delivering extension to women.
- 1 Engage a woman agent to start extension activities with a group to overcome initial resistance and hand it over to a male agent when the group is established and running.

Targeting Women Agents

- 1 Recruit more women agents, and provide them with transport and other necessary resources.
- 1 Retrain home economics extension workers to convey key agricultural extension messages.
- 1 Appoint coordinators at regional or national level to: Ensure that training of extension agents includes analysis of gender roles and activities. Liaise with NGOs, other projects, and agencies, so that the best use is made of the human, financial, technological, and information resources available for rural women.

- 1 Conduct gender analysis of the farming system and use findings in: Conducting training sessions, Adjusting research agenda, Planning extension messages and activities.
- 1 Include rural women in planning future extension programs. They should prioritize their own extension needs. They may, for example, prefer extension on activities that give them some income to extension on traditional commodities or on commodities produced by both themselves and their husbands.

Training Schemes for Women in the Government of India

S.No.	Ministry	Department	Scheme
1.	Human Resource Development	Directorate of Adult Education	1) Adult Education Instructor's Training
		Department of Women and Child Development	2) Literacy for Women
			3) Crèche Workers Training
			4) Balsevika Training
			5) Anganwadi Workers Training
			6) Support to Empowerment Programme for Women (STEP)
			7) Setting up Women's Development Corporation in the States/U.T.
			8) Swawlamban scheme of setting up Employment, Income generating, Training-cum-employment, production units for women.
			9) Swadhar scheme of setting up women's Training centers/Institutes for Rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances.
			10) Condensed Courses of Education for Adult Women and Vocational Training.
			11) Socio-economic Programmes.
			12) Awareness Generation Projects for rural and poor women.
2.	Ministry of Labour	Office of the Director General, Employment and Training	13) Vocational Training and Basic Skill Course
			14) Advanced Skill Course
			15) Instructional Training Course
3.	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	16) Female Health Worker Training
			17) Female Health Assistant Training
			18) Training of Dais
4.	Ministry of Industry	Development Commissioner	19) Training of Technical Trades Workers in Small Scale Industry
			20) Training in Industrial management for small Entrepreneurs and Supervisory Personnel

Check Your Progress III

Note : a) Use the space given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the text.

1) Write the main areas of women's training?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Write the names of five schemes from the Ministry of HRD for rural women?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2.8 LET US SUM UP

According to the figures of the 2001 Census, the literacy rate in the country as a whole is 65.38 per cent while that for females is only 54.16 per cent. The rural female literacy rate would be even lower. Among rural women, those from STs occupy the lowest position in the educational hierarchy. The educational situation of Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes also needs special attention. The participation of rural girls in elementary education is very low, which is evident from the enrolment ratios. There is a wide disparity among different states in enrolment of rural girls.

The enrolment of girls in the 11-14 years age group is much lower than in the 6-11 years age group, which indicates the large drop-out rate at primary stage. The reasons for low literacy and low enrolment of rural girls is mostly due to socio-cultural, economic and educational problems. Women in rural areas play vital role in economic activities, agriculture and at home. It is quite essential to provide appropriate training to rural women for human resource development and to enable them to live as equal and independent partners. The training must equip them with better skills, knowledge and information in relevant areas.

The government and voluntary agencies are actively involved in imparting training to rural women. However, we have still a long way to go in education and training of rural women and girls.

2.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

Government of India, Report of the National Committee on Women's Education, 1958-59, New Delhi.

Government of India (1975), *Women in India – A Compendium of Programmes*, New Delhi.

Awasthy, Indira (1982), *Rural Women of India*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi.

Jain, Devaki (1975), *Indian Women*, India Publication Division I&B, New Delhi.

National Council of Education Research and Training, (1984), *Educational backwardness of Girls in Eight Selected States* (an unpublished report), New Delhi.

National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (1990), *Education For All by 2000, Indian Perspective*, NIEPA.

Usha Rao N.J. (1983), *Women in Developing Society*, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi.

Udai Pareek (1982), *Education and Rural Development in Asia*, Oxford and IBH Publications, New Delhi.

Registrar General and Census Commissioner (2006), *Provisional Population Totals: Paper 1 of 2001*, New Delhi.