

# **Chapter-I**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1. Introduction**

Education is one of the most important means for an individual through which he or she can develop his/ her personality and can live a dignified life. In a developing society, formal education becomes a fundamental prerequisite for improving a person's status. Better skills, a wide range of information and more knowledge are essential for administering programmes and agencies, improving productivity and a meaningful role in a democratic process.<sup>1</sup> Now education is recognized as a Human Right. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article 26 states that "Everybody has the right to education, hence the right accrues to all individuals, although children are understood as main beneficiary". The fact is that it is the birthright of every man and woman and the state is required to ensure it to the citizens. Denial of access to education is the denial of access to power and status. In the Indian situation though, the right to education is accepted, yet it is deeply affected by the stratificatory system of caste, class and gender. Access to education is easier for boys than girls, for upper caste than for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe, and for upper and middle classes than the poor.<sup>2</sup> According to the Annual Report (2006-2007) of the Government of India; in 2004-05, around 88 percent of boys and 79 percent of girls were attending school nationally. It reflects that a large proportion of girls than boys are denied access to schooling. Recognition of right to

education for girls is the cornerstone of women's empowerment. It provides opportunities for growth and also helps girls and women to know their rights and gain confidence in their claim for enhancing the status in society. Although international and national legal laws have been formulated to make education as a right for all but the task of making the right to education available for all children along with ensuring quality education has been proved to be a difficult one due to various problems.

### 1.1.1. Education as a Right for All

The world conference on *Education for All* (EFA) held in March 5-9, 1990 in Jometien, (Thailand), adopted a Declaration calling upon all member states and international agencies to take effective steps for achieving EFA by the year 2000. One of the most important goals of EFA Declaration is Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE); viewed as a composite programme of; access to elementary education for all children up to 14 years of age. Accelerating progress towards education for all is one of the defining developmental challenges of the early twenty- first century. The right to education is a basic Human Right. Like any human right, it should be protected and extended as an end in itself. But education is also a means to wider ends. Prospects for reducing poverty, narrowing extreme inequalities and improving public health are heavily influenced by what happens in education. Progress towards the equalization of opportunity in education is one of the most important conditions for overcoming social injustice and reducing social disparities in any country.<sup>3</sup>

The Dakar Framework for Action, adopted in 2000 (UNESCO, 2009) at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, defines a public policy agenda linking education to wider developmental goals. Out of these wider developmental goals, universalisation of primary education and eliminating gender disparities and inequalities in education are very important commitment to human rights and social justice. The goal of universal primary education is not just about getting children into school at an appropriate age. It is also about ensuring that they stay in school to complete a full cycle of quality basic education.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the Dakar Framework sets out an ambitious two-part agenda on gender equity. The first part aims at gender parity in school participation and the second at wider progress towards equality between girls and boys in educational opportunities and outcomes.<sup>5</sup>

Since the establishment of the Education for All Framework in Jometien, in 1990 and the Dakar Framework of Action in 2000, with special emphasis on girl's education, there has been considerable progress: about 22 million more girls enrolled in primary schools from 1999 to 2007 and gender gapes in primary school enrolment have narrowed in many countries (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2009).

Despite the efforts made at the international level, it seems a hard task to fulfil the Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal primary education especially the gender related targets due to the barriers to girl's education like poverty, son preference, violence along with structural inequality and poor quality of education. Statistics reveals that a large number of children are still out of school among which significant portion belongs to girls. The Global Monitoring Report, 2012 states that 61 million children of primary age were out of school in 2010 and girls account for 53% of world's total out of school children. Although it is a positive indication that the figure of

out of school girls is reducing compared with 58% in 2000, the decline in figures has slowed down since 2005 (UNESCO, 2012).

The EFA: global Monitoring Report, 2010, states that about 135 countries have constitutional provisions for free and non-discriminatory education for all. India's commitment to education for all goes back to 1950. In 1950, India made a constitutional commitment to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14, by adding this provision to Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy. Since then various educational commissions are formed, policies are formulated, schemes are launched, with the aim of achieving universal elementary education. One of the major landmark developments was insertion of Article 21(A) in the Indian Constitution, declaring Right to Education as a Fundamental Right and also the adoption of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act in 2009.

Due to all these efforts the enrolment in primary education has been increased steadily during the past few decades. But it is a matter of concern that there are millions of Indian children and young people between the ages of six to fourteen out-of-schools, the majority of whom are girls. Without India, which is yet to attain the goal of Education for All, the world cannot reach the Millennium Development Goals of having every child complete primary school by 2015.

### 1.1.2. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan:

The objectives of Universalisation of Elementary Education are being addressed through the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) in India. This SSA was launched in 2001-02. SSA is the biggest ever national plan of primary education in the country. It stands for quality, equality and establishment of universalisation of elementary education within a limited time frame. SSA has a special focus on girl's education and children with special needs. It is the government of India's flagship programme that is being implemented in partnership with State Governments to cover the entire country and address the needs of 192 million children in 1.1 million habitations.<sup>6</sup> The SSA which is sought to be implemented through dual cooperation between the Central and State governments has accepted the challenge of educating the children of the age group of 6-14 years with practical and quality elementary education within the time frame of 2010 A.D. The SSA is an integrated effort to enhance the efficiency of the schooling system and to ensure the building of community ownership for quality elementary education<sup>7</sup>.

The overall goals of SSA include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in elementary education, and enhancement of learning levels of children. SSA provides for variety of interventions, including, *inter alia*, opening of new schools and alternate schooling facilities, construction of schools and additional classrooms, toilet and drinking water, provision for teachers, periodic teacher training and academic resource support, textbooks and support for learning achievement.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.1.3. Girls Education at the Elementary Level:

The rights of the girls and women are guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Discrimination in Education and the Beijing Platform for Action.<sup>9</sup>

Education of girls has been a high priority for the Government of India. The National commitment to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the 6-14 years age group is now a Fundamental Right of every child in India after the passing of the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act in December, 2002. In order to achieve the goal of UEE reaching out the girl child is of central importance. EFA or SSA wants to bring change 'not only in the education system but also in societal norms and attitudes' in order to ensure girl's education. 'A two- pronged gender strategy has therefore been adopted, to make the education system responsive to the needs of the girls through targeted interventions which serve as a pull factor to enhance access and retention of girls in schools and on the other hand, to generate a community demand for girl's education through training and mobilization.'<sup>10</sup> The targeted provision for girls under SSA includes-

- Free textbooks to all girls up to class viii,
- Separate toilets for girls,
- Back to school camps for out of school girls, Bridge courses for older girls

- Recruitment of 50 percent women teachers,
- Early childhood care and Education centres in near schools,
- Teachers sensitization programmes to promote equitable learning opportunities,
- Gender sensitive teaching learning materials including textbooks,
- Intensive community mobilization efforts,
- Innovation fund per district for need-based interventions for ensuring girls' attendance.

Besides these the Government of India has launched two focused interventions for girls – the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary level (NPEGEL) and the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) to reach out to girls from marginalized social groups.

The Right to Education (RTE) in different sections makes reference to gender and girl's education both explicitly and implicitly. Some of the relevant provisions are –

- No discrimination against children from 'disadvantaged groups and weaker sections' on any grounds (including gender);
- Inclusion of women in school monitoring committees;
- Provision of good quality education that includes equity issues,
- Curriculum development in conformity with constitutional stipulations, training,
- Enrolment in age appropriate classes (which will largely apply to girls, especially from disadvantageous communities).<sup>11</sup>

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem:

In the context of the right to education being provided by the constitution, the role of government becomes crucial in implementing these constitutional provisions. Under the banner of universalisation of elementary education, it is a matter of concern for providing education for all, especially to the weaker section of the people including the girls. Because socio-politically these sections of people always remain neglected, exploited and deprived of all the rights and privileges provided by the state. Discrimination and neglect in childhood can initiate a lifelong downward spiral of deprivation and exclusion from the social mainstream. Existing discrimination against the girl child in her access to education endangers her current and future life (Pandey, 2004). Thus, education for the girls and women should necessarily gain precedence over other governmental policies.

Concern towards the equality of opportunity to all sections of Indian society is well reflected in Article 15 which lies down that no discrimination shall be made on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Hence, the equality of educational opportunity for girls flows itself from the Constitution. At the time of the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1949, a provision in the chapter of Directive Principles of State Policy had declared that universal free primary education should be made available to all children up to the age of fourteen years within a period of ten years. But even after five decades of its adoption we have not been able to achieve that target. In the year 2002, the Constitution was amended and with the Article 21 the following article was inserted namely,



Article 21 (A): The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such a manner as the state may by law determine.<sup>12</sup>

Accordingly the Government of India passed the Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act on 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2009. But we have yet to see the impact of this new provision from a practical point of view. The fact is that right to education has not been perceived by a number of children despite making all these efforts to make education free and compulsory for all. Because a large number of children are still out of school depriving of this right to education. Many social and economic factors are responsible for creating barriers and violation of the right to education. Although international and national legal laws have been formulated to make education as a right for all but the task of making right to education available for all children along with ensuring quality education has been proved to be a difficult one due to various problems. It is a widely known fact that compared to men, Indian women have lower literacy rates, lower enrolment rates and higher non-enrolment and dropout rates. Although the education system has expanded rapidly since India achieved independence in 1947, the gender gap continues to be substantial. In other words, women who constitute less than half of the Indian population are deprived of the right to education, information, knowledge, skills and thinking associated with formal education.<sup>13</sup> In Indian situation due to our stratified social structure girls are in a much disadvantageous position in availing the benefits of the right to education.

Therefore, it is necessary that in view of the existing stands and problems of education of girl children, the need for government initiatives in ensuring adequate and quality education to them cannot be over emphasized. It is the firm conviction that government schemes and programmes have the major role to play in the implementation of constitutional right to education.

Joining the hands with the Central Government, the Government of Assam also launched the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan in 2002, with the aim of fulfilling the goal of universalisation of elementary education. Also Chief Minister of Assam, Sri Tarun Gogoi declared that the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act would be implemented from April 1, 2010. Through this effort, the Government of Assam tries to implement the constitutional right to education by providing facilities and privileges to primary school students, with special privileges to girl children. As per 2011 census data literacy rate in Assam is recorded as 73.2 percent, out of which male literacy rate is 78.8 percent and female literacy rate is 67.3 percent. It reveals that inspite of launching a number of schemes and programmes government has failed to achieve gender equality in education with 11.5 percent gender gap in 2011. Moreover, likewise some other parts of the country, apart from enrolment, problem of mainstreaming of out-of-school children, lack of female teacher, lack of drinking water facilities and girl's toilet are also related to the issue of girl's education in Assam. Darrang district is also no exception in this case which was identified as one of the educationally backward districts in Assam, during the first phase of launching District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). According to 2011 census data Darrang district stands at 26<sup>th</sup> rank among 27 districts of Assam with literacy rate of 64.55 percent out of which 68.36 percent male and 60.40 percent female are literate. Though the gender gap in literacy is not quite high, but the

administration has failed to achieve the goal of UEE. As highlighted by other research works, the major problems of girl's education are mainly lack of female teachers, high wastage rate, and low retention especially in case of schedule caste, schedule tribe and Muslim children of Darrang district. Another issue associated with primary education is that despite the outstanding increase in enrolment the matter of quality education is not very satisfactory.

The aim of the investigator here is to conduct a research study about the strategies adopted under SSA for the children, especially to the girl children, for the implementation of Right to Education in terms of providing school facilities, increasing enrolment, reducing dropout rates and motivating the community to provide quality education to them.

### 1.3. Objectives of the Study:

1. To investigate into the implementation strategies adopted by Sarva Siksha Abhiyan for realization of Right to Education for girl children in Darrang District.

2. To develop a conceptual understanding on the issue of women's rights and girl's education from the perspective of feminism.

3. To study whether girls students are achieving quality education or not.

4. To study the effectiveness of the participation of the community in school management and administration for removing the social, regional and sex differences.

5. To provide additional measures for empowering the girls students for addressing their problems in getting quality education.

1.4. Hypothesis: Based on the topic of the study the following hypotheses have been formulated-

1. The strategies adopted by Sarva Siksha Abhiyan for promoting education to girl students have not been effectively implemented.
2. Though opportunities and rights are provided for promoting education under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, yet the girl students have not received the desired quality of education.

1.5. Methodology:

The present research work is a descriptive study. Keeping in view the nature and objective of the problem, the researcher has adopted the analytical survey method. Data pertaining to this research work was collected from both primary and secondary sources and also through field study. For the collection of secondary data, the researcher has dealt with books, journals, reports, official records, and seminar papers, internet and so on. The collection of primary data and field study involves—

(a) **Use of sampling method:** The researcher adopted the stratified random sampling method to draw the sample. For this purpose, the researcher selects the Darrang district of Assam within the State of India for the present study as the study area. The reason for selecting this Darrang District is due to its educational backwardness in comparison to other parts of the state. For a convenient and fruitful study and to collect representative sample all the three educational blocks (i.e. Sipajhar, Kalaigaon and Dalgaon) have been selected here. Total numbers of 50 schools have been selected representing 16 schools, 14 schools and 20 schools each from Sipajhar, Kalaigaon and Dalgaon educational blocks respectively. Out of these selected schools total numbers of 35 primary and 15 upper primary schools have been selected. Similarly from these selected schools total number of 100 teachers (two from each school) and 200 students (four from each school including two girls and two boys) are being selected for the study. Besides these 50 formal government primary schools, 2 girl's specific intervention schools have been selected by the researcher. Along with this 50 parents are also being selected by the researcher to collect information on community participation. With a view to know about Sarva Siksha Abhiyan related queries, the officials of Darrang district involved with this scheme are being interviewed by the researcher. While selecting the sample schools the researcher selected these schools from the wards and villages of the district where there is large concentration of S.C., S.T., O.B.C. and Muslim communities and accordingly selected the students representing these communities.

- (b) **Use of tools:** Structured Questionnaire, Interview Schedule and Information Blanks were prepared as tools for data collection from the Head Masters, Co-ordinators of the Girl's Specific schools, teachers, parents and students.
- (c) **Interview:** From each educational block informations were collected through personal interview consisting of total 50 parents.

## 1.6. Study Area:

The study area selected for this research work is the Darrang District of Assam.

**Location:** The Darrang district is situated in the North-East region of India in between  $20^{\circ}9'N$  and  $26^{\circ}95'N$  latitude and  $91^{\circ}45'E$  and  $92^{\circ}22'E$  longitude.

**Boundaries:** The district is situated in the central part of Assam and on the northern side of the river Brahmaputra. The Darrang district is bounded by river Pachnoi and Sonitpur district in the east, river Borno and Kamrup district in the west, the river Brahmaputra and Nagaong district in the south and Udalguri, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh in the north.

**History of establishment:** The present Darrang district is a part of old Darrang district of Assam. As a district of plains of Brahmaputra valley, Darrang, from time immemorial was the path of many invaders and travellers from the north, north-east and

the west. Mangaldai was an administrative sub-division of the old Darrang district, with Head Quarter at Mangaldai town from AD 1833 to 1835. But for frequent flood and the encroachment of the Brahmaputra, threatening the town and for the dirty drinking water, the Head Quarter was shifted to Tezpur in 1835 AD. Subdivisions were Mangaldai and Tezpur. Finally on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1983, the Mangaldai sub-division had been upgraded to a full-fledged district known as Darrang. It was last divided in 2003 by separating Udalguri sub-division from it to create the new Udalguri district.

**Some facts:**

- (1) The terrain of char including the river Brahmaputra is about 50 km in breadth with chars of various sizes. The char area of the district gets inundated and eroded at least twice annually due to heavy flood.
- (2) The northern belt of the district also suffers from heavy flood every year as its location is close to foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh.
- (3) Consequently, the educational institutions become relief camps and have to remain close for quite a sizable period to accommodate the flood victims. This wastage and stagnation in education contribute much towards the general backwardness in the education and the economy of the district (District Profile, Darrang).

**Economy:** This is an agriculture dependent district. It is favourable for the cultivation of ahu-rice, Sali-rice, jute and rabi crops. The district has practically abundant land for

the purpose of industrial development, but no worth mentioning industry is contributing to the economy.

**Population Composition:** According to the census report 2001 the total population of the undivided Darrang district was 15, 04320 persons, out of which 7, 73,861 were male and 7, 30,459 were female. According to the census report (provisional) 2011, the total population of new Darrang is 908,090, out of which 472, 134 are male and 77,096 are female. From the point of population composition, new district Darrang is still a multi-lingual district. Communities of Assamese, Bengali, Muslim etc. are dominated the new Darrang district and tribal population is negligible and remain in few villages along with other communities. Assamese and Bengali are the two major linguistic groups of Darrang.<sup>14</sup>

**Literacy scenario of Darrang District:** The overall literacy rate of undivided district has increased from 42 percent in 1991 to 55.44 percent in 2001. It was lower than the state average (64.25 percent). According to Census report, 2011 (provisional), the literacy rate of new Darrang is 64.55 percent. It is lower than the state average (73.18 percent).<sup>15</sup>



## 1.7. Review of Literature:

In order to make the study worthwhile, the researcher has made a comprehensive survey of the literature. These studies have been reviewed in the following—

J. C. Aggarwal and S. Gupta, in their book “*Right to Education and Revitalizing Education*” (2004), presents a brief but meaningful description and analysis of certain contemporary problems of education. In the beginning part of the book the authors highlighted the history of educational reforms in India dealing with Gandhiji’s effort for providing free and compulsory education to all children and his basic system of education which was adopted as the national system of education at the school stage, at the dawn of independence. Along with this other following recommendations of different education commissions, national policies on education and efforts made by different governments to promote primary education is also being discussed in this book. The writers also make an evaluation on The Rights of the Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, by commenting that this act has created certain problems on the issues of financial control by central and state governments, non exclusion of government school teachers from census, election and disaster relief duties, ambiguous use of ‘equitable quality’ etc. By writing on an overview of the development and recent initiatives in education, the book presents some practical but unconventional recommendations regarding education reforms. In view of the writer, ‘for the last about five decades the planning, management and monitoring of education have been in the hands of the technocrats and armchair academicians working in national and state level

educational institutions. Despite their best efforts, the provisions of the Article 45 of the constitution which envisaged the target of universal free and compulsory elementary education by 1960 is still elusive. This shows the lacunae in the field of education.

Praveen Jha and Pooja Parvati in their article “*Right to Education Act 2009: Critical Gaps and Challenges*”, have made an analytical study on the Right to Education Act 2009 reflecting on its historical background to the formulation of the act and also its strength and weaknesses. They say that the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act is a step in the right direction. But in their view the road ahead this seems to be rough as it remains ambiguous on ‘how’ and ‘where to’ in several important respects. The writers found confusion on the act, beginning with its definition of a ‘child’ as clarity is missing there. The definition of a ‘child’ (not less than 6 years and not more than 14 years) is in contrast to the UNCRC and Juvenile Justice Act in our country which consider a ‘child’ who is below 18 years and 14 years respectively. Also providing relaxation of rules and appointment of unqualified teacher for five years till the act is notified on the grounds of lack of availability of trained teachers reflect the government’s non-serious approach to implement the act and its disregard to quality outcomes. Moreover, to ensure the culture of accountability, the act requires that all schools, except those that are unaided, constitute school management committees. The writers argued here that it is not clear why unaided schools are left out of the purview of accountability. Besides these, they also criticize the central government’s attempt to shy away from taking primary financial responsibility for implementing the act is in keeping with its reluctance to

allocate adequately for the social sector. Thus, the budgetary allocation to implement the act for five years in Eleven Plan outlay seems disturbing.

The report “*Right to Education in England*” prepared by Anderson, Claridge, Dorling and Ericahall presents an analysis of the extent to which the government has implemented the right to education in England since 2002. The analysis which examines relevant laws, policy documents, empirical studies and statistics, found that the government has failed to implement the right to education in England in a number of key areas like availability of education to children in custody, in immigrant detention lacking educational provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This report also found that educational attainment is much lower for children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds; also teenage mothers continue to experience obstacles in gaining access to education and many refugee and asylum seeking children experience unacceptable delays in gaining access to education and same is the case with the minority ethnic background children. At the last part of the report, the writers provide some recommendations in order to bring an end to discrimination in providing right to education like amendment of The Education Act 1996, entrusting responsibilities to local authorities for the education of the children in custody and immigration detention, statutory guaranty to education for children seeking asylum, revision of National Curriculum and so on.

“*Overcoming Barriers to Girl’s Education in South-Asia : Deepening the Analysis*” (2009) is an analytical study done by Roshan Chitraker which offers a critical

analysis of the steps that countries are taking to overcome the barriers to girls education, as well as feasible policy options and tools for advocacy. All the countries in South Asia are making serious efforts to work towards gender parity, equality and equity within the framework of Millennium Development Goals and the Education For All targets. This Study brings together the results of available literature showing the status of girl's education in South- Asia, emphasizing that girls frequently suffer from multiple disparities and also the barriers to education for girls is often compounded by other issues including caste, ethnicity, religion, poverty and remoteness. This study reveals out three prominent issues regarding girl's education in South-Asia—

Firstly, there are countries in the region (Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan) where enrolment of girls has remained problematic, indicating a clear disparity between girls and boys in terms of access to basic education.

Secondly, inequality in educational access of girls and boys is also a function of whether they come from a rural or urban context and also with social class or linguistic groups they represent. Cultural tradition and gender role stereotypes are mainly responsible for continuation of such inequalities.

Thirdly, in countries where gender parity in enrolment has been achieved (Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka), another form of exclusion of girls exists- which also applies to the other countries of the region. Girls improved access to basic education has not meaningfully contributed to their social and political empowerment. Girls are discouraged from pushing an education that leads to a better paying carrier in the future, e.g. in technical, vocational and information technology fields.

Thus, all the countries in the region persistently face the problem of poverty and socio-cultural as barriers to girl's education. Therefore in view of the writer, much needs to be done through policy initiatives, programmes and special initiatives to address related issues, particularly compensating for the opportunity costs of sending the girls to school.

*“Gender Inequality in Primary Schooling in India: The Human Rights Perspective”* is an important essay written by Karuna Chanana which provides readers with an overview of the gender discrimination prevalent in primary school education in the country in 1990s. The author is of the opinion that the most basic rights of literacy and primary education were far from universal, with the gender gap between men and women of particular groups remaining largely constant over the post independence period. Hence in this essay Chanana demonstrates how national statistics provide a revealing picture of gender disparities in different region and among the Schedule Caste and Tribes, the most excluded group from education today. The study reveals that there was an increase in the number of primary schools with increase in enrolment. But there were inter-state differences in gross enrolment ratio of girls with substantial number of dropouts along with a number of non-enrolled girls. The writer also discusses on the variation of scholarship for girls by states. It was a matter of concern that the household expenditure for girls in both government and private schools were less than boys and most of the girls who are prevented from access to schooling are from poor families who want to make their girl economic earner by doing domestic help in others house. The author makes the concluding remark that ‘even though there are striking inter-state and inter group differences, poverty (overlapping with caste, tribe and rural residence)

and gender are the main parameters of denial of education. Again socio- cultural biases and the emphasis on domestic role are almost universal, yet their combination with poverty has an extremely detrimental effect on the participation of girls in education’.

The book “*Girls Primary Education*” written by V.C. Pandey (2004) specially focuses on female education at primary level. This book brings out in detail the benefits of education for girls to the society, finance angle in providing free and compulsory education, gender disparities, efforts towards achieving the gender parity, efforts at international level etc. The writer offers a comprehensive analysis of the existing gender gap in primary schooling in the regions like developing countries, Sub-Saharan Africa, Arab States, Latin America, East Asia and Southern Asia. His study shows that girl’s education is more than an educational issue; it is deeply influenced by poverty, tradition habit, legal system and discrimination among other things. Political will is required not just to educate girls but also to eliminate these non education obstacles. Further examining the causes of discrimination and neglect of girl child he adds that girls are not encouraged and given the opportunity to pursue scientific and technological training and education and also to participate in and learn about the social, economic and political functioning of society and thereby depriving them to take part in decision making power. Therefore all barriers must be eliminated in his view to enable girls without exception to develop their full potential and skills through equal access to education and training nutrition, physical and mental health care and related information. He also says that in addressing issues concerning children and youth, governments should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender

perspective into all policies and programmes so that before decisions are taken an analysis is made of the effects on girls and boys respectively.

The book "*Women's Education in Developing Countries: Barriers, Benefits and Policies*" edited by Elizabeth M. King and M. Anne Hill (1993), extensively deals with the state of women's education and the extent of gender gap in education, using data for 152 developing countries covering the period 1960 through 1985. In the book their research indicates that the level of female education and gender gap in education are both important determinants of aggregate family well-being and economic growth. Analyzing how educational decisions are made within the family they find that the degree to which many of the benefits of women's schooling are social, whereas many of the costs are private, accounts for the persistence of gender gap in education. The study also focuses on the multiple benefits arise from increasing the education of women. It emphasizes the need to understand the sources of gender differentials in schooling or how these are effected by the structure of aggregate demand for labour as well as by the cost of educating girls. At the same time the studies also deals with the regional settings within which schooling decisions are made as well as the current status of women's education specifically in South Asia, Middle-East, North Africa, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and East-Asian regions. Besides these this book describes and analyzes various policy interventions intended to raise women's educational attainment and reviews specific examples of past and ongoing education programmes to demonstrate what types of schemes have been effective.

*“International Perspectives on Educational Diversity and Inclusion”* (2007) is edited by G. Verma, C. R. Bagley and M. M. Jha. The inclusion of minority groups within mainstream education in a way that serves principles of social justice and equity is a familiar one for educators worldwide. This book is innovative in its exploration of how globalization impacts on these challenges. With chapters from authors in America, Britain, Europe and India, the book addresses the issue of inclusion within the framework of diversity and models of comparative education. The author’s of this book extensively examine---

\*Accounts from cross cultural psychology on the special interests and educational needs of certain ethnic groups.

\*Research on social class divisions, neighbourhood poverty and social exclusion in Britain.

\*Educational developments for inclusion of minorities in Europe, Greece and Eastern Europe.

\*India’s educational policies surrounding its struggle to achieve ‘Education for All’ in a nation at the threshold of economic prosperity.

This book is unique in presenting accounts of attempts to include diverse ethnic and social groups and children with special needs within inclusive educational systems.

The book *“Gender within the Human Rights Discourse”* (1995) written by Veena Poonacha focuses on the human rights discourse and specifically the issue of women’s right within this broader context. This book is an effort to discuss the



evolution of the key concept of right and to understand its theoretical underpinnings from a feminist perspective. Also an attempt is made to situate the prevalent concepts within its historical, social and political context. Highlighting on that the whole human rights debate has been conducted within the framework of the western value system the book presents the Indian viewpoint on the evolution of the principles of human rights. It outlines the western debates in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries and provides an Indian parallel by tracing its philosophical roots in the ancient texts and also its rapid developments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Jyotsna Jha, in her working paper “*Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011: A Gender Review*” draws out messages from the GMR that education is a human right for everyone, including girls and women. In her view the recognition of education as a human right is critical in all times, but especially so during conflict and post-conflict situations. Failures to protect educational institutions and children, especially girls, reflect failures to act on the recognition of education as a human right. This has far-reaching and negative impacts, not only on the girls who are denied their rights but also for future generations. She further adds that gender disparities originate at different point in the educational system and provides several examples of varied origins. Most disparities can be traced to the primary level: late entry age, poorer retention and performance—and therefore higher dropout rates—translate into lower transition to secondary level for girls. The barriers that operate at primary level become more severe at secondary level: early marriage and parental concern for safety are bigger issues for adolescent girls. Secondary schooling is also costlier, so if girl’s education does not command social value, parents opt not to send their daughters to school.

In the 'British Journal of Sociology of Education, Vol-26', Fatuma Chege, Fiona Leach and Nelly P. Stromquist have made an extensive review of the "*EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003-4: Gender and Education For All: The Leap to Equality*". In this review Fatuma Chege States that the Report provides an explicit analytical framework which focuses on the human rights perspective and the interrelatedness of the six EFA goals within a gender perspective that locates gender equality in and through, education as a morally and instrumentally compelling issue in the pursuance of EFA. So focus on girl's education equally with that of boys is a crucial factor in the achievement of EFA goals. The writer further adds that goals of parity and equality is challenged by the problem of family poverty, security within and outside schools, child labour, impact of HIV/AIDS, and retrogressive cultural practices etc. It is observed that, "the report stresses the need for nations to embrace 'outcome related reforms' that address not only the Gross Enrolment Ratio at primary and secondary levels, but also the process of education that focuses on improving survival rates, eradicating repetition and drop out rates, as well as ensuring the safety of girls in the process of schooling. Evidence that the feminization of the teaching workforce is a visible strategy in enhancing gender equality in education for some countries is of worth considering".

Reviewing the report Fiona Leach views that the analysis of the report is located within a right based approach rather than locating it in economic and social benefits outlook. It is found that "many countries are still at the first stage right to education, and that right within education which poses a more challenging set of entitlements including safety from gender violence and the elimination of gender bias in curricula, textbooks and classroom practices and rights through education are far from achieved". And it is not only with the poorest countries, rich countries are also facing these challenges.

Critically analyzing the report Nelly P. Stromquist states that the chapter 2 of the report with the promising title 'Towards EFA: assessing progress', presents statistics before 2000, including the various statistical trends that have occurred up to that time. Therefore this analysis cannot realistically be considered an assessment of EFA progress. Although this report reviews the literatures focusing on obstacles to girls education and identifying right to education but left out issues of religious fundamentalism, market fundamentalism and militarism which had a negative impact on girl's educational environment.

*"Gender and Education: An Encyclopaedia (Vol I & Vol II)"* (2007) are the two books edited by Barbara J. Bank which deals with the ongoing discourse on gender and education. This reflects on the current state of educational research and gender is a central focus of all these research. The essays included on the first part of this book focused on gendered theories of education which is used to encompass theories that have something to say about gender and education. Out of this some of the essays put gender as central to their theories and have less to say about education which others focus on educational structures and processes for which gender is relevant but not central. At the same time the second part of this book contains the research works on education which put more emphasis on gender in their research. The third part of this book focuses on different kinds of schooling and reviews the extensive literatures concerned with the benefits and shortcomings of co-educational versus single-sex school. Part fourth and fifth deal with the ways in which the curricula of educational institutions is gender exclusive as well as the ways in which it is gender inclusive. The other parts of the book discusses on gender construction and achievements in extra-curriculum specifically in United States and also concerned with the gender

constructions in school based peer groups, particularly at the elementary and secondary level. This book also extensively deals with broad range of policies and official actions that have been or should be implemented to promote gender equity, foster the highest levels of educational achievement among boys and among girls.

*“New Dimensions of Primary Education”* (2011), written by S. K. Paneer Selvam is a book which deals with the research work done by the author in the field of primary education. His research study is stated as ‘Evaluation of DPEP in Tamil Nadu with special reference to Block Resource Center’, as he has made an attempt to evaluate the DPEP programme in general and in particular its intervention’s strategy namely the establishment of Block Resource Centre (BRC) to provide academic support and training to teachers at block level. While outlining the framework of the study the author makes an in-depth analysis of international efforts to promote primary education, present status of primary education in India in general and Tamilnadu in particular, details about primary education under Five Year Plans, new dimensions, strategy and programmes of primary education, different challenges of primary education and also makes an analysis of District Primary Education Programme introduced in 1994 to achieve Universalization of Primary Education in Tamilnadu. His study finds that after launching of DPEP, there is considerable improvement in the enrolment rate, decrease in dropout rate, improvement in completion rate etc. But there is gender bias in recruiting female Block Resource teachers and recommended for recruitment of more female teachers.

The book *“Education of Weaker Sections: Policies and Problems”* (2010), edited by D. Pulla Rao, is a collection of some research papers which have examined the efforts made by the government and the achievements made in the area of education for the weaker sections. The book is divided into three sections—(1) School education and literacy, (2) Higher education and (3) Education of the weaker sections. In the first section it is pointed out that despite the planned effort, the country could not achieve universal literacy. There is a case study of the experience of the residential schools for the weaker sections in Andhra Pradesh. The case studies of enrollment and retention of S. C. children in selected districts in Andhra Pradesh has brought out the results indicating that in some districts the school enrollment is declining due to the increase in number of schools. It has also brought out how child labour in the country particularly in agricultural sector is contributing for the dropouts among the boys and girls of weaker sections. The study has also focused on tribal enrolment and the disparities in enrolment between boys and girls. The section on the problems and policies of the weaker section’s education deals with the issue of women empowerment. There is a positive outlook in some of the papers that indicate the progress of education among the weaker sections is in the right direction. It is because of the fact that the present government has introduced several schemes like Midday Meal, Scholarships that are motivating the people to send their school to schools.

*“Women Education and Empowerment”* (2010), is a book edited by Chitranjan Ojha which contains some articles and papers highlighting on the area of empowerment of women through education. This has focused on the role of the universities in empowering women, how Indian women has been subjugated throughout the history

and how education helps them to overcome the barriers and awakened them in social and political field etc. The study on Indian Women Empowerment through Education finds that 80 percent economically active women are engaged in agriculture. They work like farm manager and one third of all practical purposes are headed by women. So it is described as feminization of agriculture. But the survey reveals that 35 percent of rural head families are below poverty line. 'Due to lack of education they cannot know about package donated by the government for farm sector, weather forecasting, access to credit prices and availability of farm inputs, market information etc. Education may uplift the women farm manager from the clutches of poverty'. Thus describing education as an effective weapon for women empowerment it is said that 'the real solution to empower women lies in a holistic approach that deals with all the major interrelated issues of economic welfare, social justice, education and health, religious and customary traditions. For such transformation education for women is must for self-reliance as it empowers them to handle self and surroundings'.

Effat Yasmin, in her article, "*Empowering Women through Education: Insights from Jammu and Kashmir*" (2011), examines how education has been the fundamental key to women's empowerment in the state. Focusing on the relationship between education and development she says 'economic independence cannot be achieved without the proper level and equality of education'. Her study finds that number of primary school in Jammu Kashmir has gone up and female enrolment is also picking up but there is 'dropout and stagnation cases which amount to wastages in education'. The author while analyzing the causes of low female literacy says that most of the parents believe that male children will live with them in their old age; hence they should get

better education, better health facilities, more leisure and comfortable childhood. One of the serious matters as identified by the author is that 'the militarization of civilian space both by state and non-state agencies in Kashmir has disturbed the social landscape in several ways. The presence of paramilitary forces in orchards and places next to school in rural areas has resulted in high dropout rate among female students since 1990s. Another cause as identified by the author is 'Dependency Syndrome' which explains that girl remain dependent upon the father, brother or after marriage, upon her husband. They play almost no role in decision making, be it their education, other issue pertaining to their life. In order to improve their status, there is need for removal of deep mental blocks in the adult mind about girl's efficiency and capacity to participate in the economic workforce as decision makers, giving capacity building training to girls in schools. The syllabi for school education should inculcate the values of gender equality, self-respect, courage, independence etc. with the help of which girls can develop their personalities.

Zoya Hasan and Ritu Menon in their article, "*Creating an Enabling Environment*" explore many factors and processes that work against the ability of Muslim girls to sustain education. Instead of popular stereotype view which blame Islamic religion and backwardness, the writers examines the effect on girls' educational aspirations when the most common forms of employment among Muslim men only require low levels of schooling. However their view is that wherever conditions have been favourable, Muslims are now investing in schooling with mothers expressing a strong desire to have their daughters educated. They have concluded that – low income, widespread poverty, social norms that inhibit girls education, a patriarchal ideology that

prioritizes marriage and domesticity for women and gender inequality on the other hand, and perceptions of discrimination, limited job opportunities and slow upward mobility are constraints that Muslims experience as a community. However there are also objective factors such as the inaccessibility of schools, poor instructions, and lack of teaching in mother tongue and so on. Their study also shows that female education has been particularly slow in North India where gender division of labour, hypergamous marriage and related patriarchal norms tend to be more prevalent.

Karuna Chanana in the article, "*Female Sexuality and Education of Hindu Girls in India*" (2003), has made an analysis of female education with the help of establishing a relationship between textual and ideological context and the empirical reality. This article begins with the images of women as depicted on the Hindu scriptures and texts, moves on to the colonial period and the independent India. It seeks to see links between socialization and education as processes. To establish this link the author writes that 'the central concern with protection of female sexuality and the attendant notions of female purity/impurity and its link to caste status and honour of the agnatic kin group and familial considerations put severe constraints on the schooling of girls and women. Therefore this article is based on the premise that decisions regarding access to education are taken within and by the family and are governed by familial considerations of gender roles and the need for formal education. The empirical studies find that the educational policies and programmes are rooted in social values and premises. So schooling of girls is essentially embedded in the societal context even though it provides an expanded space for growth of women it ensures that women remain passive actors in the process of schooling, do not question the patriarchal



ideology and do not transgress the social boundaries and work within the accepted system of value. In view of the author, schools and schooling become active instruments of cultural reproduction and social control without seeking to alter the informal process of socialization.

The reports of the research study on “*Discrimination of the girl child in Uttar Pradesh*”, conducted by Social Action Forum For Manav Adhikar, New Delhi, reveals that the barriers to girls’ education in U. P. are lack of school facilities like classroom, sanitary facilities etc. Moreover the incidence of female illiteracy is alarming high in the region and they constitute the bulk of the illiterate population. Lack of education in the girl child especially in the rural areas not merely precludes them from productive employment opportunities but also affects the quality of life of the girl when later she will become a woman. The dominant patriarchal culture prefers the education of boys and not girls. Negative parental attitude towards educating daughters is a barrier to a girl’s education since parents see her education as wastage of money because she will eventually live with her husband’s family. The findings of the study strongly reinforce the need for well-focused affirmative action not merely on the part of governmental agencies but equally importantly also on non governmental civil society organizations for elimination of discrimination against the girl child in education by taking the following steps—

- (a) A timeframe should be set to eliminate the existing gap between girls and boys, by ensuring universal and equal access to and completion of primary education by all girls.

- (b) Increase in enrolment and improvement in retention rate of girls should be ensured if necessary by allocating appropriate budgetary resources. Enlist the support of the community, religious leaders and parents besides formulating incentives, scholarships access programmes for out of school girls and other measures.
- (c) Integration of human rights education in educational programmes, enunciating clearly that the human rights of women and the girl child is an inalienable, integral and invisible part of universal human rights and of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of India.

The book "*Women and the Wind of Change*" (2000), written by Dr. Vinita Kaul is an objective study of the injustice done to women and how, over the centuries, their place in society was progressively eroded by selfish and short-sighted men and how, over long periods, women themselves acquiesced in their ill-treatment. In the chapter on 'Education and Enlightenment', the author after making a statistical analysis of literacy rates of boys and girls, their enrolment and gender gap, has made a conclusion that 'the advances in female educational participation belie the gender based inequalities that persist, be they in the more blatant form of unequal access and utilization or, in the subtle and often invisible form of miscommunication in the classroom'. She also adds that 'if we earnestly desire to see the role of education as the agent of basic change in the status of women and as a trail blazer alerting the destinies of those living in the darkness of ignorance into a meaningful existence, we will not only have to shed our rigid gender biased norms willy-nilly but also evolve radically enlightening views

which will treat with compassion, resolve with dispassion and change with persuasion the downtrodden women and their all important issues’.

Sarojini Nayak and Jeevan Nair, in their book, “*Women Empowerment in India*” (2005), traces the evolution of Indian women through the mists of history to the present efforts to empower them and give them their rightful place in society. In the chapter on ‘Women’s Education’, the writers view that in urban areas in India, women’s education has made remarkable progress during the post-independence period, reducing the gap between the elementary education of boys and girls. Further, in the rural areas, education of girls in the upper middle class families has also been encouraging. However among the low income groups, the gap continues.

The essay “*Women’s Nature and the Access to Education*” (1988), written by Malabika Karleker deals with the beginnings of women education in British India. Karlekar’s main argument is that the participation of women in education and employment in non-traditional areas has not brought about a substantial change in the notions of femininity. She traces the genesis of women education in nineteenth century Bengal and links it to the differential perceptions of its functions for a boy and a girl. According to her, this system catered to the needs of the emergent Bengali-middle class. For example the belief that over exposure to formal education would destroy what was special about a women’s nature limited her access to education. Therefore formal education was to be imparted only to enhance this ‘special nature’. Thereby choices were limited in formal education of girls and this put constraints on its emancipatory role. She looks at existing reality to see the continuity of traditional role models, and

observes that asymmetrical relations between the sexes have influenced and shaped the system of education during the colonial period and after.

In the book *“The North-East Elementary Education”* (2005), the author Jayashree Roy has tried to trace the origin of modern education in the North- East, analyze the growth of elementary schooling facilities, studied the position of female literacy and girls education in the context of educationally forward and backward tribes in districts, the effect of decentralization and the role of local bodies in primary education through the case studies of Mizoram and Nagaland and finally she has seen as to how far the ethnic, or political movements of the region have either encouraged the growth of education or have adversely effected it. In her study she found that the dropout rate for girls is not necessarily based on any gender bias in the region. The matriarchal tribes such as the Khasis, Garos and Jayantias attached great importance to female education. But even in the so called patriarchal tribes such as the Lushais of Mizoram, female education was given utmost importance, as it was believed that an educated mother or daughter would be of an economic and social asset to the family. Both in Manipur and Mizoram, females always participate in the workforce, at all levels, and the expansion of the service sector in Mizoram at present has enhanced the demand for female education. Only among some patrilineal tribes there was gender bias against girl’s education.

Chitra Sarma in her article, *“Educating the Girl Child for Self- Sustenance (with special reference to Diphu in Karbi- Anglong District of Assam),* emphasizing the need

of education for the girl child examines the role of vocational training centres of Diphu in creating awareness of self-sustenance. Depicting the real picture of the women in our society she writes that most of the family gives differential care to sons and daughters. This differential amounts to discrimination against girls which violets their fundamental human rights of survival with dignity. It is also a fact that the 'girl is voluntarily chained as inferior, ordained, as she thinks, she was by destiny to suffer humiliation and self annihilation. Deprived of her fundamental birth rights—right to justice, freedom, education and equality—her wilful amnesia submits her to a process of graded dehumanization and depersonalization'. So in view of the writer in this context the most important thing is to impart education to girl and to make them aware about their status, rights and privileges and make them economically independent. In her study she finds that isolation and lack of exposure to the outside world is a major factor contributing to the negligence of which has created also unemployment problem. But the vocational training centres in Diphu of Karbi- Anglong have inculcated the attitudes among the girls that education can change their present and future lives for the better. Thus for the emancipation of the girl child the writer has suggested for making girl's education compulsory, establishing special girl child education projects, equal treatment at home with boys, equal wages for equal works, higher allocation of funds for girl's education, restructuring mentalities/ attitudes of adults and so on.

#### 1.8. Defining the Key Terms:

**Right to Education:** The Right to education today is a legal right recognized and protected by the state. Right to education means providing equality of educational

opportunities for all individuals in order to realize his/ her potentialities and development of personality. The legal framework states that it implies providing free and compulsory education to all children between 6-14 age group without discrimination of any kind i.e. race, caste, class, sex, religion, language, ethnicity and so on. In broader sense, right to education is a social and economic right. 'Education can help to overcome constraints on capabilities partly through developing the knowledge, understanding and skills that all girls and boys, women and men need in order to achieve what they value for their lives. This means ensuring an education system which allows all individuals, irrespective of gender to develop their capabilities and freedoms.'

**Gender Parity:** Gender parity in education, means that the same proportion of girls and boys enter and complete schooling. When there is no gender parity, there is a gender gap, and a greater proportion of either boys or girls are receiving education. Thus 'gender parity is a limited term that can simply measure the changes in numbers of girls as compared with boys enrolling in school'.

**Gender Equality:** The term gender equality is much broader than gender parity in education. It goes beyond simply enrolment, attendance or retention highlighting on the 'need to remove the deep-seated barriers to equality of educational opportunity for both the sexes – such as discriminatory laws, customs, practices and institutional processes. This process of working towards equality is sometimes called practising equity'. Governments have a responsibility to develop gender equitable education policies for children's learning, as well as for their long term well-being.

**Quality Education:** The term quality education means to ensure education to all girls and boys that are personally and socially worthwhile. Dimensions of educational quality

which are crucial for the achievement of gender equality in schooling include the content of teaching learning materials, curriculum, textbook, infrastructure, teacher-pupil relations, gender sensitive use of resources etc. 'Aspects of quality and gender equality in education include the freedom to enter school to learn and participate there in safety and security, to develop identities that tolerate others, to promote health, and to enjoy economic, political and cultural opportunities'.

## References:

1. Desai, N. & Thakkar, U. (2009) *Women in Indian Society*, New Delhi, National Book Trust, p. 54.
2. Ibid, p. 55.
3. UNESCO. (2009) *Overcoming Inequality: Why Governance Matters*. EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2009, p.24.
4. Ibid, p. 9.
5. Ibid, p. 11.
6. Aggarwal, J.C. (2010) *Right to Education and Revitalizing Education*. Delhi, Shipra Publications, p. 23
7. SCERT. (2003) *Project Report on A Study in School Education in Assam: Status, Issues and Future Perspective*. Guwahati, Assam.
8. NUEPA (---) *Status of Education in India: National Report*. MHRD, GOI, New Delhi, p.4.
9. UNGEI. (2010) *Dakar Declaration on Accelerating Girls' Education and Gender Equity*. [Online] Available from: [http:// www.ungei.org](http://www.ungei.org).
10. World Bank. (---) *Girl Child Education*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.developed nation.org>.
11. NUEPA, op.cit. p.17.
12. Aggarwal, op.cit. p. 24.
13. Chanana, K. (---) 'Gender Inequality in Primary Schooling'. In: John, E.M. (ed.) *Women Studies in India- A Reader*. New Delhi, Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., p. 336.
14. Census of India, 2001, 2011 (Provisional).
15. Ibid.