

Representation of Muslim Girls in a State Education Mission: A Study of District Rampur, Uttar Pradesh

Abdul Waheed

Afzal Sayeed

Hajra Masood

Abstract

Growing educational exclusion of Muslims in general and, Muslim women in particular is well authenticated by findings of individual researches, organizational surveys and government appointed committees/ commissions. Yet the problem has not been addressed effectively by the Government of India. Merely few insubstantial schemes are launched for the educational inclusion of Muslim women. One of the schemes is Kastuba Gandhi Balika Vidyala (KGBVs), launched in 2004. The scheme aims at bridging gender gap in elementary education. It is for out of school and drop-out girls in the age group 11-14 years. Prime Minister revised 15 point programme for the welfare of minorities (2006) and includes KGBVs as a mechanism to promote education of Muslim girls. Available evidences explicitly show that schemes for the welfare of minorities are ineffectively implemented and, therefore, their benefits do not reach to poorest to the poor of minority groups.

This paper examines the implementation of KGBVs in district Rampur, Uttar Pradesh whose almost half of the population is constituted by Muslims. The data were collected through a field survey in 2009 which explicitly show 28% representation of Muslim girls in KGBVs of district Rampur- about 22% less than the share of Muslims in the population of the district. As no study about the benefits of KGBVs to Muslims is available to the best of our knowledge, we do hope the data of this study would be of immense help to policy makers and community leaders.

Abdul Waheed (Associate Professor), **Afzal Sayeed** (Research Scholar), **Hajra Masood** (Research Scholar), Department of Sociology, AMU, Aligarh. Email: waheed_so@yahoo.com

Introduction

Elementary education (i.e. from class 1st to class 8th) is the foundation of the pyramid in the education system. It is a gateway to higher and technical education, critical for social transformation, economic growth and individual/group entitlements. Hence, the constitution of India (Article 45) directs the State to endeavour for providing free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years. Since the goal was not accomplished, the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 resolved that all children upto the age of 14 years will be provided free and compulsory education by 1995. But again the goal remained unaccomplished despite many policies and programmes for ‘Universalization of Elementary Education’ (UEE). Subsequently, three major steps were taken to translate the goal into reality:

- A) An umbrella scheme called Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched in 2001 for achieving the goal of UEE by 2010.
- B) The 86th constitutional amendment Act of 2002 made free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years a ‘Fundamental Right’.
- C) The Parliament of the country passed a ‘Bill’ called ‘Right to Free and Compulsory Elementary Education’ (RTE) in 2009 for realizing the goal of SSA and making the fundamental right a reality.

The 11th five year plan (2007-12) document shows that 1.32 lakh primary schools and about 0.89 lakh upper primary schools were opened during Tenth Plan (2002-07). Total enrolment at elementary education level increased from 159 million in 2001-02 to 182 million in 2004-05 and the number of out-of-school children decreased from 32 million in 2001-02 to 7.0 million in 2006-07. Although drop-out rate declined at steeper rate i.e. 10.03% during first three years of Tenth Plan but it remained very high (50.08%) at elementary level.

However, the stark reality at ground level is opposite to official statistics. Millions of children are still deprived of access to elementary education and the condition of disadvantaged sections is worst. Drop-out rate and percentage of out-of-school children are very high among them. The highest percentage (9.97%) of out-of-school children are among Muslims, followed by STs (9.54%), SCs (8.17%) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) (6.97%). Social and gender disparity, existing at both primary and upper primary education levels, continues to be an issue to be tackled with more concerted and sustained efforts.

This paper examines the implementation of ‘Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyas’ (KGBV) scheme and its benefits to Muslim girls in a Muslim concentration district Rampur,

Uttar Pradesh(UP). The study is based on primary data, collected through a field survey of KGBV schools in the district in 2009. No study or survey of KGBV in the context of Muslims has so far been conducted to the best of our knowledge. We, therefore, do hope that the findings of this study will provide some glimpses about the implementation of government schemes and their benefits to Muslims.

SSA Intervention for Girls and Children of Disadvantaged Groups

Launched in 2001, SSA aims at achieving UEE by providing usable and quality education to all children and removing educational disparities by laying special stress on education of children belonging to under served groups. It envisages to provide schools to all habitations within a distance of 1 km.; enroll all children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate school, 'Back-to-School' camp by 2005; retain all children till the upper primary stage by 2010; bridge the gender and social category gaps in enrolment, retention and learning; and enhance significantly in the learning achievement levels of children at the primary and upper primary stage. SSA Mission facilitates inclusion and participation of children from scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST), Minority groups, urban deprived children, children of other disadvantaged groups and the children with special needs in the educational process. It gives priority to education of Girls belonging to SCs, STs and minorities.

In order to promote inclusion of excluded groups in educational processes a total of 3073 Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) in the country were identified on the basis of two parameters; a). Rural female literacy below the national average (46.13%) and b) Gender gap in literacy more than the national average (21.59%) for need based intervention in resource allocation, micro-planning and development in 10th five year plan. Another 212 Blocks with SC concentration, 142 Blocks with ST concentration and 52 Blocks with minority concentration were identified making a total of EBBs to 3470. Under National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary level (NPEGEL) additional resources were provided to EBBs.

National Programme for Education of Girls and KGBVs

NPEGEL was launched in July 2003 for bridging the gender gap in literacy and elementary education as well as for promoting education of girls of SCs, STs, Minorities and Other Backward Class(OBCs). The programme was a focused intervention of Government of India for reaching the "Hardest to Reach" girls, especially those not in school. It was a

separate gender distinct but integral component of SSA, which provided additional support for enhancing girls' education over and above the investments for girls' education through normal SSA interventions. The programme stressed to develop a "model school" in every cluster with more intense community mobilization and supervision of girls enrolment in schools. Gender sensitization of teachers, development of gender-sensitive learning materials, and provision of need based incentives like escorts, stationery, workbooks and uniforms were some of the endeavors under the programme. It was implemented in EBBs where the level of rural female literacy was less than the national average and the gender gap was above the national average as well as in blocks of districts which were not covered under EBBs but were having at least 5% SC/ST population and where SC/ST female literacy was below 10% and also in selected urban slums.

Launched in July, 2004 KGBV was an integral scheme of NPEGEL. The scheme was initially conceived for two years but from 1st April, 2007 it was merged with SSA as a separate component of the programme. The scheme was designed for setting up residential schools at upper primary level (i.e. from Class VI-VIII) for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minority communities. The scheme was designed for those EBBs that did not have residential schools at upper primary level for girls under any other scheme. However, the scope of the scheme was enlarged to cover the blocks that have rural female literacy below 30% and urban areas with female literacy more than the national female literacy (urban). Within these blocks, KGBV schools were to be located in areas with concentration of SC, ST, OBC and minority population, with low female literacy and/or a large number of girls out of school.

There were three models of KGBV

- a). Model-I was a school with hostels for 100 girls. The Recurring Grants for this model school was Rs.30.27 lakh and Non-Recurring Grants Rs.46 lakh
- b). Model -II was a school with hostels for 50 girls. The Recurring Grants for this model school was Rs.23.05 lakh with Non-Recurring Grants Rs.35.38 lakh.
- c). Model -III was a school with hostels in existing schools for 50 girls. The Recurring Grants for this model school was Rs.17.05 lakh and Non-Recurring Grants was Rs.31.68 lakh.

These schools were established for out of school or dropout girls in the age group 11-14 years belonging to SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities and below poverty line (BPL) families. Seventy-five per cent seats were reserved for girls of first four categories and 25 per cent for

the last category. Girls admitted in these schools were provided almost everything except clothes. During the 10th five year plan 2180 KGBVs were established in EBBs and 270 were sanctioned for minority concentration blocks.

KGBV in District Rampur

The district of Rampur was created on December 1, 1949 out of the territory of erstwhile Rampur state, merged in the state of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.). It is the smallest district of the state, having total area of 2362 sq. km with a population of 1,923,739 in 2001. It is bounded on the north by the district Udham Singh Nagar of Uttaranchal, on the east by district Bareilly, on the south by district Budaun and on the west by district Moradabad. It was divided into Six tehsils namely Suar, Tanda, Bilaspur, Rampur, Milak and Shahabad and 6 blocks- Shahbad, Chamraoaa, Saidnagar, Bilaspur, Milak and Suar.

The district is predominantly rural, 75.03% population of the district reside in villages while remaining is urban area. With 879 females per 1000 males in 2001, the sex ratio of the district was 19 points less than the state average (898) and 54 points below the National average (933). Census of India recorded 38.8% literacy rate of the district in 2001, 26 percentage points below to National average and 18 points less than state average. The gender gap in literacy was 20.75 in the district. Similar was the situation of work participation rate in the district which was 28%, below 4% to state average and 11% to National average. The condition of Muslims, constituting half of the population of district, was worst as they were found most illiterate community, having average literacy rate of 33%. Also they were most poorest community largely engaged in menial and lowly paid occupations.

There were 7 KGBVs in district Rampur at the time of Survey. The Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) of SSA of the district 2009-10, shows that 3 KGBV were sanctioned in 2006-07 for the Blocks Shahbad, Chamrauwa and Suar while the remaining 4, one each for Block Saidnagar, Milak, Bilaspur and Rampur city were sanctioned in the year 2008-09. Six of these schools were being managed by Non Government Organisations (NGOs) while remaining one was being managed by District Institutes of Educational Training (DIET). The information contained in the AWPB about KGBVs are presented in table no.- 1

It is evident from table No.1 that there were 250 Muslim girls in a total of 713 (or 35 per cent) in KGBVs, 14% less than their population in the district. The highest percentage (78%) of their representation was shown in blocks Saidnagar and Rampur city. While it was 32.5% in block Shahbad, followed by Block Suar (30%). In remaining three Blocks

representation was as low as 10%. The representation of Muslim girls was quite low in comparison to their population percentage in different blocks.

The official statistics was not corroborated by the information, provided to us by the wardens of these schools. It would be appropriate here to mention the nature of information and the difficulties which we encounter in receiving it from the ‘‘Wardens’ of the schools. We intended to conduct comprehensive survey of these schools, covering their administration, functioning, financial resources and facilities to and performance of students. We approached the district office for its permission to such a kind of survey. However, we could not receive required information from schools despite the letter of district officer to schools in this regard. All the schools under the management of NGOs were located in rented buildings. We were not provided any information by wardens except number of students and teachers. Indeed, such information was displayed on their boards. We were not allowed to talk with students, count their actual numbers, inspect the kitchen and other facilities. Indeed, the wardens were instructed by managers of the schools not to disclose any information about the actual condition in the schools. While reporting such difficulties in survey to the district officer, she expressed her inability to help us further and informed us that there were many discrepancies between official statistics and actual condition in KGBVs. The information provided by the wardens of the schools are presented in table No. 2.

Discrepancies are visible between the official information contained in AWPB and that provided by wardens of the schools. For example, wardens reported a total of 700 students in 07 KGBVs as against 713 shown in AWPB. The significant discrepancy existed in the representation of minority students. Wardens reported 200 Muslim girls whereas their number were shown 250 in AWPB. Moreover the representation of girls of Sikh community was not shown in official record which was reported by the wardens. Representation of Muslim girls was reported to be 50% of the total students in the school located in Rampur city despite the fact that near about 80% population of the city was constituted by Muslims, the most illiterate community having large number of out of school and drop-out girls in the age group of 11-14 years. Similar was the situation in Block Suar in which Muslims’ population was about 70% but their representation in KGBVs was as low as 15%. When we asked warden of the school about the reason of low representation of Muslim girls in the school, she responded that only 25% admission could be given to minorities as per the reservation policy in the scheme. When we informed her about schools having more than 25% girls of minority communities, she candidly said that I did not know about it. Whatever may be the reason, the fact remained that Muslim had 28% representation in KGBVs as against 50% population in the district. The

highest representation (43%) was reported of SCs who constituted 15% population of the district.

Minorities had also low representation in ‘teaching staff’ of the schools. There were ‘full time’ and ‘part time’ teachers in all KGBVs. Besides, every school had a ‘Warden’ who was administrative head of the school. Warden and full time teacher were recruited through a selection committee, consisting of experts and district officials. The salary of a warden was Rs. 11,000 while it was Rs. 9200 for full time teacher per month. Both of them were to permanently stay in the school and entitled for free fooding and lodging facility. Apart from 07 wardens, there were 24 full time teachers in 07 KGBVs. On the contrary part time teachers were appointed by school management/NGOs on a salary of Rs. 7200 per month. Their nature of appointment was quite temporary, subjected to termination any time whenever school management wishes to do it. The number of such teachers were reported to be 23 in 07 schools. These figures are shown in table no 3.

Minorities had only symbolic representation in teaching staff of KGBVs. There were two persons of Christian community: one warden and other full time teacher. While Muslims were represented by 02 full time teachers and 07 part time teachers.

Discrimination too appeared against Urdu (the mother tongue of Muslims in this area) teaching in KGBVs. The policy document of SSA prescribed appointment of two Urdu teachers in a KGBV, opened in Block and selected urban area with Muslim population above 20 percent, if there was a demand for Urdu as a medium of instruction. Although every block of Rampur district had more than 20% Muslim population, in no KGBV education was imparted through the medium of Urdu. However, Urdu language was taught in all schools by the teachers who were appointed to teach subjects other than Urdu.

Thus it is crystal clear that Muslims are under represented in both students and teachers of KGBVs. Their mother tongue is also being discriminated. This is the situation of a district where Muslims constitute half of the population and represent in the state legislature and other decision making bodies. What would be the situation in other district in which neither they are demographically influential nor have representation in decision making bodies? We could simply imagine the worst as no data is available.

Tables

Table No. 1: Community-wise representation of Students in KGBVs in District Rampur

S.No.	Name of KGBV Block	Location of the School	Starting Date	Managing Agency	Students				Total
					BPL Families (Upper Caste Hindus)	SC/ST	OBC	Muslim	
1	Shahbad	Patwai	01/05/2008	Janhith Sewa Sansthan, (NGO) Rampur	11	50	22	40	123
2	Suar	Awas Vikas (Rampur)	28/03/2008	Sarwajanik Sikshonayan Sansthan, (NGO) Hardoi	21	27	22	30	100
3	Chamrauwa	DIET Compound	01/07/2008	Principal DIET, Rampur	20	50	20	10	100
4	Rampur City	Awas Vikas, Rampur	01/01/2009	Janhith Sewa Sansthan, (NGO) Rampur	10	5	5	75	95
5	Milak	BRC Centre, Milak	01/01/2009	Janhith Sewa Sansthan, (NGO) Rampur	40	27	23	10	100
6	Bilaspur	BRC Centre, Bilaspur	01/01/2009	Deepjan Kalyan Samiti (NGO), Bareilly	40	27	23	10	100
7	Saidnagar	BRC Centre, Saidnagar	01/01/2009	Vishal Samaj Sewa Sansthan, (NGO), Rampur	10	5	5	75	95
Total					152	191	120	250	713

Table No. 2: Community-wise representation of Students in KGBVs in District Rampur

S.No.	Name of KGBV Block	Location of the School at the Time of Survey	Starting Date	Managing Agency	Students					Total
					BPL Families (Upper Caste Hindus)	SC/ST	OBC	Minority		
								Muslim	Sikh	
1	Shahbad	Patwai	01/05/2008	Janhith Sewa Sansthan, (NGO) Rampur	11	27	22	40	0	100
2	Swar	Awas vikas (Rampur)	28/03/2008	Sarwajanik Sikshonayan Sansthan, (NGO) Hardoi	20	50	10	15	5	100
3	Chamrauwa	DIET Centre	01/07/2008	Principal DIET, Rampur	4	35	43	18	0	100
4	Rampur City	Awas Vikas, Rampur	01/01/2009	Janhith Sewa Sansthan, (NGO) Rampur	0	26	24	50	0	100
5	Milak	Awas Vikas	01/01/2009	Janhith Sewa Sansthan, (NGO) Rampur	1	54	20	25	0	100
6	Bilaspur	BRC Centre, Bilaspur	01/01/2009	Deepjan Kalyan Samiti (NGO), Bareilly	0	44	4	46	6	100
7	Saidnagar	BRC Centre, Saidnagar	01/01/2009	Vishal Samaj Sewa Sansthan, (NGO), Rampur	0	65	29	6	0	100
Total					36	301	152	200	11	700

Table No. 3: Representation of Minorities in Teaching Staff of KGBVs.

Position	Hindus			Minorities		
	General	OBC	SC	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs
Warden	6	0	0	0	1	0
Full time	13	5	3	2	1	0
Part time	8	6	2	7	0	0

