



# THE STATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN MAHARAJGANJ DISTRICT

Understanding  
Differential  
Opportunities and  
Vulnerabilities from a  
Gender Perspective



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## CREDITS

### RESEARCH DESIGN & SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION

Dr. Rakesh K Singh

### RESEARCH AND WRITING

Vijayalakshmi Balakrishnan

### EDITORIAL INPUTS

Dr. Rakesh K Singh

Kavya Bopanna

Sharon Ferdinands



New Education Group –  
Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education  
New Delhi – 110017

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## → LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ASER</b>	Annual Status of Education Report
<b>EBB</b>	Educationally Backward Blocks
<b>MHRD</b>	Ministry of Human Resource Development
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information System
<b>MWCD</b>	Ministry of Women and Child Development
<b>NEG-FIRE</b>	New Education Group- Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education
<b>NUEPA</b>	National University of Educational Planning and Administration
<b>PTR</b>	Pupil Teacher Ratio
<b>RMSA</b>	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
<b>RTE</b>	Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education
<b>SEWA</b>	Self Employed Women's Association
<b>UNGEI</b>	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
<b>UP</b>	Uttar Pradesh

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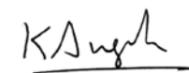
Greetings readers!

While we have achieved progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment under the Millennium Development Goals (including equal access to primary education between girls and boys), women and girls, especially in the developing countries, continue to face discrimination, violence and lack of opportunities to grow. Gender equality is not just a fundamental human right, but also a necessary foundation for a peaceful and sustainable world.

The report 'The State of Secondary Education in Maharajganj District – Understanding Differential Opportunities and Vulnerabilities from a Gender Perspective' highlights essential elements related to secondary education in 3 blocks in Maharajganj through a gender outlook. We have realized that there has been a massive descend in the transition of girls from primary to secondary education due to numerous societal reasons. Considering that secondary education holds immense potential to contribute to a community and the country's economic growth, it becomes imperative for both girls and boys to have access to secondary education and thus be instrumental to the sustainable development of their community and the country at large. The report also provides a summary of key findings from the field, along with a set of recommendations to support efforts to increase girls' access to secondary education in Maharajganj.

NEG-FIRE unconditionally stands by UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5 – 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'. We also believe that 'providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large'.

I would like to express my gratitude to all who have helped in the successful completion of this study – the Education and Knowledge Management team at NEG-FIRE and our Programme, Finance, HR and Admin teams; Dr. Cherian Joseph, Chairperson and Dr. Rudolf Heredia, Governing Board member of NEG-FIRE for their valuable suggestions; Ms. Vijayalakshmi for leading this study and for her insightful analysis, Dr. Rakesh for his contribution and most importantly our various stakeholders – children, parents, teachers etc., from the area that the study was carried out in. Thank you all for making this study what it is – An element of awareness, sensitization and change.



Vengatesh Krishna  
Executive Director, NEG-FIRE



**IN MAHARJGANJ, AND NATION-WIDE TOO, BOYS CONSTITUTE A LARGE SHARE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SCHOOLS. GIRLS, ON THE OTHER HAND HAVE HIGHER DROP-OUT RATES.**

Findings indicate that Maharajganj presents the same trends in gender-differential access to primary and secondary education as seen nation-wide, with boys constituting the larger share of students enrolled and drop-out rates of girls being higher. However, girls' enrolment up to age 14 in government schools in Uttar Pradesh is higher than that of boys. Available data and insights from the field have shown that the major factors constraining girls from making the transition into secondary education are: poverty and lack of disposable income, lack of free-of-cost government secondary schools in habitations, traditional gender norms that prioritise investment in the education of sons, the burden of household work, and to some extent, early marriage. The study recommends addressing both demand-side and supply-side factors that affect access to quality schooling, such as addressing negative attitudes of community members, contextualising development interventions and encouraging community ownership, and promoting gender equitable norms through textbooks and teaching methods.

**T**his study explores the differential access to secondary schooling for girls and boys in three blocks of Maharajganj district, which fall in Uttar Pradesh– a priority State for the New Education Group– Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education (NEG-FIRE). The study is being undertaken to assess the current state of education in the selected blocks, with a view to laying the foundation for the design of future interventions in these areas by NEG-FIRE.

This study is divided into four parts. Section I introduces the background, while Section II describes objectives, methodological details of the study and the wider policy framework within which it is situated. Section III analyses secondary

datasets to provide an overall view of the performance of the state of Uttar Pradesh and the district of Maharajganj on key indicators related to education, livelihoods and marriage for particular age groups. It also examines the access to education and transitions occurring over the years in the three selected blocks of Maharajganj and maps the external influences that come to bear on access to education for girls and boys at different stages of schooling, thereby identifying key stakeholders that policy and programmes should consider working with. Section IV provides a summary of key findings from the field, along with a set of recommendations to support efforts to increase girls' access to secondary education in Maharajganj.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY



## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Education in India is divided into three segments- primary, secondary and tertiary/higher education. With the Constitution of India guaranteeing the right to elementary education to all children between the ages of 6-14 years, significant policy and programmatic interventions have been launched to boost primary education. The resultant improvements in enrolment and retention have led to a larger number

of students completing primary education, and therefore a growing demand for secondary education. Sustained economic growth and expansion of skilled service sectors has also contributed to increased labour market demand for secondary and higher education. However, access to secondary education is still marred by inequalities based on gender, income, social group, location etc. The World Bank (2009)<sup>1</sup> presents evidence to demonstrate that secondary education is lower for poor children,

girls, children from minority social groups and rural areas as compared to wealthier children, boys, children from the general population and urban areas. Differences in secondary education enrolment rates are also found to exist between States.

The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) (2014) states that girls are likely to enjoy the economic benefits of education only with the completion of secondary schooling, unlike boys, who might be absorbed in the labour market even earlier. Moreover, secondary education for girls is known to produce social benefits such as reduction in early marriages, reduced female fertility and infant mortality, improved nutrition for pregnant and nursing mothers as well as their children etc. Women completing secondary education are also more participative in local, regional and national political processes.

Given that secondary education holds immense potential to drive the country's economic growth, serves to strengthen democratic participation, and carries significant social benefits especially for girls, promoting gender equity and engagement through education, particularly school-based education has been a key intervention strategy of India. This has in theory meant working with both women and men to ensure all girls are in school, but in practice it has meant a greater focus on demand side interventions exclusively focused on primary education of girls. Since achieving independence, several commissions, policies and programmes have been set up to improve the access and quality of secondary education.

More recently, the National Scheme of Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education, 2008, has sought to create an enabling environment for the secondary education of girls, especially those from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, through the provision of financial incentives which can be availed by the girls upon passing their tenth class examination. Another important scheme, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha

<sup>1</sup> The World Bank (2009). *Secondary Education in India: Universalsing Opportunity*. Human Development Unit, South Asia Region.

Abhiyan (RMSA), 2009, was launched with the aim of raising secondary school enrolment by providing a secondary school with a reasonable distance of all habitations. It also aims to provide universal access to secondary education by 2017, and to achieve universal retention in 2020. The scheme undertakes provision of physical facilities to schools, along with quality interventions and equity interventions.

The Department of School Education identified Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) across the country based on gender-sensitive criteria. An administrative block was designated as educationally backward if its female literacy rate, as per Census 2011, was found to be below the national average of 46.13 per cent and its gender gap in literacy was above the national average of 21.59 per cent. Once a block is identified as EBB, additional resources of the State are deployed in the area and schemes specifically designed for improving access of girls to educational opportunities are earmarked for it. Some of the many schemes for these areas include the setting up of a model school on the lines of a Kendriya Vidyalaya, at least one Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (a residential school for girls), and preferential sanction for conversion of primary schools into elementary and then secondary and in time higher secondary schools.

In spite of the global recognition of the positive attributes of secondary education for girls, the enrolment of girls in secondary education in India has traditionally been low. Despite improvements over the years, girls' enrolment in secondary education at the national level is as low as 49.06% (NUEPA, 2015)<sup>2</sup>. The ratio of girls to boys' enrolment in India stands at 0.90%. The national trend with regard to secondary schools is also reflected at the State level in Uttar Pradesh, with girls enrolment calculated to be as low as 46.51% and the ratio of girls to boys enrolment in the State standing at 0.89%.

<sup>2</sup> National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) (2015). *Secondary Education in India: Where do we stand?* NUEPA: New Delhi.

## 1.2 SECONDARY EDUCATION IN UTTAR PRADESH

### ENROLMENT IN UTTAR PRADESH VIS-À-VIS INDIA

A study of the figures available for the period from 2006 to 2014 reveals that the proportion of children not enrolled in school has been declining steadily at the all-India level for boys and girls, with only minor setbacks observed between years in the case of girls. According to figures available for 2014, the proportion of girls between the ages of 6 and 14 years that are not enrolled in school is slightly higher (0.8 percentage points) than that of boys from the same age group. While state-level figures for Uttar Pradesh also reveal an overall decline in the proportion of out-of-school children between 2006 and 2014, this decline has not been steady. Moreover, as of 2014, the differential between the proportion of girls and boys in Uttar Pradesh who are not enrolled in school is greater (1.6 percentage points), in fact, double of the differential at the all India level.

The proportion of out of school

boys and girls is higher in the age group of 11 to 14 years, as compared to the 7 to 10 year age group (ASER Report, 2014). This indicates the need for furthering enquiry into the barriers to continuing education between these two age groups. It is heartening to note that since 2012, there have been improvements in the proportion of out of school boys and girls across ages, except in the case of girls in the 7 to 10 year category, which has risen marginally between 2013 and 2014.

Interestingly, the enrolment of both boys and girls in private schools is greater in Uttar Pradesh than at the all-India level. Additionally, the rate of increase of boys and girls enrolment in private schools is also higher in Uttar Pradesh than for India as a whole. In Uttar Pradesh, just about one in three boys were enrolled in private schools in 2006. This figure has risen to over one in two boys by 2014. In contrast, the nation-wide pace is much slower- about one in five boys opted for private schooling in 2006, and this number rose to one in three boys by 2014. In the case of

➔ TABLE 1.1 PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN AGED 6-14 NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL, 2006-2014

YEAR	BOYS		GIRLS		ALL%	
	All India	UP	All India	UP	All India	UP
2006	5.8	5.2	7.5	7.1	6.6	6.0
2007	3.8	3.4	4.6	4.6	4.2	3.9
2008	3.8	4.9	4.8	6.5	4.3	5.6
2009	3.6	4.4	4.5	5.7	4.0	4.9
2010	3.2	4.7	3.8	5.9	3.4	5.2
2011	3.1	5.5	3.6	6.8	3.3	6.1
2012	3.1	5.6	3.9	7.2	3.5	6.4
2013	3.1	4.7	3.5	5.6	3.3	5.1
2014	2.9	4.1	3.7	5.7	3.3	4.9

Source: ASER Report, 2014



➔ **TABLE 1.2** PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN AGED 6-14 ENROLLED IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS, 2006-2014

YEAR	BOYS		GIRLS		ALL%	
	All India	UP	All India	UP	All India	UP
2006	20.2	32.9	17.0	27.0	18.7	30.3
2007	20.8	31.7	17.6	25.6	19.3	29.1
2008	24.6	39.6	20.3	31.2	22.6	35.9
2009	23.3	39.0	19.9	32.0	21.8	35.8
2010	25.5	42.5	21.7	35.4	23.7	39.3
2011	28.0	50.0	23.0	40.0	25.6	45.4
2012	31.5	53.1	25.2	43.2	28.3	48.5
2013	32.3	53.4	25.5	44.0	29.0	49.0
2014	34.5	56.4	26.9	46.4	30.8	51.7

**Note:**

1. 'Other' includes children going to Madrasahs and Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) Schools.  
2. 'Not in school' = Dropped out + Never enrolled.

Source: ASER Report, 2014.

girls, just over one in four girls in Uttar Pradesh were enrolled in private schools in 2006. By 2014, this number increased to almost one in two girls. In contrast, the pace of growth of private schooling as an option for girls nation-wide is much slower, increasing from less than one in five girls to just over one in four girls.

Assessing enrolment of boys and girls by type of schools reveals some similar and some diverging trends. In the case of government schools, the proportion of girls enrolled is greater as compared to boys within the 7-10years and 11-14years age categories, but boys constitute a larger proportion of enrolled students in the 15-16year age group. In private schools, boys outnumber girls in all three age groups- 7-10years, 11-14years and 15-16years. In 'other' schools, however, the proportion of girls is higher, albeit marginally, than boys in all three age groups. Not surprisingly, the proportion of not-in-school girls in all three age categories is higher than that of boys.

In terms of changes in enrolment by age, it is observed that in both government and 'other' schools, there is a fall in boys' and girls' enrolment with increase in age. Interestingly, private schools show a minor increase in girls' enrolment with increase in age, but in the case of boys' enrolment the increase is seen between the age groups of 7-10years and 11-14years, and a fall in enrolment occurs between the age groups of 11-14years and 15-16years. Overall, the proportion of girls and boys who are not-in-school is seen to increase dramatically with age.

While it is not revealed by this data evidence from the ground and insights shared from the field, suggest that those not in school, are primarily those who attended government schools, or other schools, such as madrasahs.

### 1.3 PRESENT STUDY

It is in the above context that the present study is located. To support the planning and implementation of development interventions in

➔ **TABLE 1.3** PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF SCHOOLS IN UTTAR PRADESH, 2014

AGE GROUP	TYPES OF SCHOOLS (ENROLMENT IN %)				Total
	Government	Private	Other	Not in School	
6-14 All	41.1	51.7	2.4	4.9	100.0
7-16 All	38.1	52.1	2.1	7.7	100.0
7-10 All	42.6	51.9	2.8	2.8	100.0
7-10 Boys	38.1	56.8	2.6	2.5	100.0
7-10 Girls	47.8	46.2	2.9	3.1	100.0
11-14 All	37.2	53.3	1.8	7.7	100.0
11-14 Boys	34.0	58.1	1.6	6.4	100.0
11-14 Girls	40.7	48.1	2.0	9.2	100.0
15-16 All	28.4	49.5	1.0	21.0	100.0
15-16 Boys	29.1	50.6	0.8	19.4	100.0
15-16 Girls	27.7	48.3	1.3	22.7	100.0

Source: ASER Report, 2014.

Maharajganj district of Uttar Pradesh, it explores secondary schooling opportunities and possibilities for girls and boys through a gender relations framework. Given the improved outcomes generated by the significant government attention being directed towards elementary education, it is now becoming increasingly relevant to ensure that children attending elementary schools are able to continue their education at the secondary level.

NEG-FIRE is a development organization committed to improving the lives of marginalised communities through enhancing access to quality education, especially in socio-economically backward regions of India. The focus of the organisation's interventions is concentrated on districts and blocks where children's education is most neglected. Uttar Pradesh is a priority focus state for NEG-FIRE's programmes, and Maharajganj is among the districts in the State being considered for more in-depth intervention.



# OBJECTIVES, POLICY FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This study has been approached not as a theoretical exercise to prove or disprove a hypothesis, but to yield a better understanding of the differential opportunities and challenges to education, especially secondary education, faced by boys and girls in Maharajganj district. This is being done to lay the foundation for designing educational interventions aiming to bridge the gender gap in education, to inform national discourse on children's education, and to add value to advocacy for more strategic and comprehensive policies.

## OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are:

- › To know the present status of adolescent girls in the study region
- › To study the (supply and demand) barriers that prevent adolescent girls from going to secondary school
- › To understand the issues affecting adolescent girls' attendance, retention and dropping out of schools
- › To suggest possible interventions for keeping girls in school

## POLICY FRAMEWORK

Efforts towards improving women's status in Indian society and economy are observed to have been in effect since pre-Independence times. Social reformers recognised some forms of gender inequality as injustices of patriarchal structures, and engaged in movements against regressive practices such as widow self-immolation, child marriage etc. as well as advocacy for girls' education. However, it was only in 1974, after the Committee on The Status of Women in India submitted

its report titled 'Towards Equality' that a strategic shift in seriousness of purpose occurred and the State actively began to address the exclusion of women from social, economic and political development processes. The report marked a watershed moment in national discourse on gender-inequality, as it shed light on the fact that women had not benefitted as much as men from the country's development in the post-Independence era, nor had they been able to impact the country's development in any significant

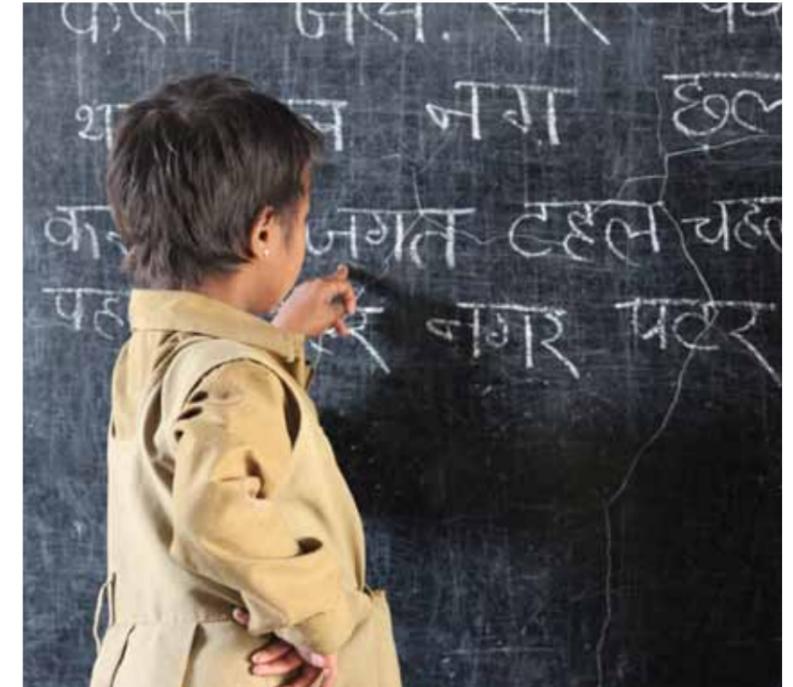
way. It demonstrated how women's limited access to opportunities, restriction on their mobility, as well as constrained exercise of their rights had created gender gaps on most development parameters and led to the feminisation of poverty. The report gave much needed thrust to the dialogue on increasing women's participation in national development, particularly in the political, economic and education domains.

In the political domain, the report recommended reservation of seats for women in elected bodies



so that women's voices could be mainstreamed in governance and decision-making, thereby sowing the seed for the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments which mandated reservation of seats in elections to local bodies of governance nearly two decades later. In the economic domain, the report highlighted women's roles in the unorganised and organised sector, their specific vulnerabilities to exploitation, gender-based wage discrimination, and the relationship between women's low levels of education and the nature of their employment.

Around the same time national level policy on women's economic participation was being influenced the experience of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) played a catalytic role in promoting economically productive work for women in Gujarat by supporting self-employment through access to credit, training etc. A National Commission on Self-employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector was set up, and it submitted a report in 1988 which brought to the surface poor women's significant contribution to their families and the national economy in the form of paid work. It revealed that while one-third of all households are solely supported by women, in another one-third, women contribute to half of household income. However, labouring women were observed to lack decision-making power and organisational capacities, making them more vulnerable to exploitation than men. Importantly, the report stated that gender-neutral development policies and programmes, although not intentionally discriminatory, tended to have an unequal impact on men and women due to the many additional socio-economic disadvantages that women experience. It thus argued for a systematic formulation of gender-just policies and programmes which took cognizance of men and women's varied contexts and made concerted efforts to bring women at par with men.



**ONE-THIRD OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS ARE SOLELY SUPPORTED BY WOMEN AND ANOTHER ONE-THIRD CONTRIBUTE TO HALF OF THE HOUSEHOLD INCOME.**

Both these path-breaking reports along with other independent studies placed particular emphasis on promoting girls' education as a key requirement to enable women. The demand for education gained significant momentum in the following decades, and in 2002, the

right of children to free and fair compulsory education up to the age of 14 years was enshrined in the Constitution under Article 21A. The modalities to ensure that citizens were provided this right were elaborated in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009. The Right is interpreted by Central and State administrations to cover only elementary education (Class I-VIII), leaving secondary education (Class IX and upwards) outside its ambit. In recognition of the remarkable benefits of secondary education for personal, community and national development, there is significant demand from development experts and civil society for extending the RTE Act to cover secondary education as well.

An observation of the Government of India's policy and programmatic responses to the need for gender equality in across social, political, economic and education domains in India shows a gradual shift in approach. A 'Women in Development' approach was followed in the 1970s, where the focus of interventions was

on drawing women more fully into the development process. However, this approach treated women as a homogenous category, did not adequately account for variations in their experiences, opportunities and vulnerabilities, and did not recognise their invisible contributions to development processes. After the 1980s, this has gradually transformed into a 'Gender and Development' approach, which additionally contextualises government responses to suit women's social and economic realities, and addresses unequal patterns of gender relationships and decision-making powers. Such a policy approach helps challenge discriminatory gender norms and roles that are the root cause of gender inequality.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

Based on the largely healthy national level picture on primary education, the present study has attempted to identify and classify educational rights violations into two categories:

- › Deprivation of rights and entitlements of basic needs and services required for continuing education for girls, and opportunities for skill development and employment; and
- › Denial of equal opportunities to girl children from socially and economically deprived families in comparison with their peers, which prevents them from flourishing and realising their potential.

The engagement with gender deprivation and discrimination is based on the assessment that girls and women face both forms of rights violations for which the State is accountable.

The study maps pathways and transitions in the journey through school of a girl child, comparing the journey to that of boys from the same family, as well as to those of girls from previous generations and from diverse income and social backgrounds living in rural Maharajganj.

In particular, transitions between the following school years have been

examined:

- › Class V to Class VI
- › Class VIII to Class IX and
- › Class X to Class XI (inter-college)

#### METHODOLOGY

Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been utilized to generate relevant evidence from respondents across a range of themes. Quantitative data was obtained through secondary sources and qualitative data was obtained through In-Depth Interviews. Data from the field was analysed in conjunction with published statistical data from reliable government sources.

The collection of evidence for this study was based on three key principles:

- › Use of multiple sources of evidence
- › Creation of an information database
- › Maintenance of a chain of evidence

#### SAMPLE SELECTION

The locus of the study was the school. In discussion with the project partner, it was decided to concentrate the field study on schools in the two NEG-FIRE project blocks of Mithaura and Nichlaul, with the addition of a third block. The third block selected was Nautanwa, based on the desire to extend interventions to this block.

To support the process of school selection, detailed discussions with the Uttar Pradesh State team were organized in December 2014, to understand the local situation. The key learning from these discussions was the need to address issues of secondary education, a serious gap area, while simultaneously maintaining the ongoing interventions with children in Aanganwadi Centres and primary schools. Given that the focus of interventions has been entirely on government schools in rural areas with the most socially and economically backward households, the team emphasized that this focus should be maintained within the parameters of the research study. They also discussed the need for the study to add substance to the policy advocacy efforts of the organisation.

## GIRLS AND WOMEN FACE BOTH FORMS OF RIGHTS VIOLATIONS FOR WHICH THE STATE IS ACCOUNTABLE.

Based on these discussions in Lucknow and Delhi, it was decided that the schools selection would be based on data obtained from NUEPA's School Report Card project, which is a Government of India initiative that provides comprehensive and accurate information on vital parameters regarding students, teachers and other related variables in a standard format that allows for comparisons. With respect to the objectives of the study, purposive sampling was undertaken to focus on the most marginalized populations and those schools which have a largely female student population.

A total of 21 schools from the three blocks were selected for this study—eight schools from Nichlaul block, eight schools from Nautanwa block, and five schools from Mithaura block, with most of the selected schools having a majority of girl students. However, the number of female teachers in most of these schools was found to be lower than the number of male teachers.

Attention was paid to ensuring that the selected sample contained representation from all five different types of schools found in Maharajganj district, based on the understanding that they present variable opportunities to boys and girls:

- › Schools run by the Department of Education, Uttar Pradesh: These are uniformly co-educational schools where education is provided free of charge.

→ TABLE 2.1 SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR STUDY

S.NO.	SCHOOL NAME	VILLAGE NAME	SCHOOL CATEGORY	SCHOOL MANAGEMENT	RURAL URBAN	SCHOOL TYPE	STUDENTS ENROLLED		TEACHERS	
							Boys	Girls	Male	Female
<b>I NICHLAUL BLOCK</b>										
1	R.Kumari Inter College Attach	Thuthibari	Pri with U Pri Sec/H SEC	Private Aided	Rural	Co-Ed	203	200	14	1
2	S.V.Sishu Mandir P.Mad.Vidyala	Thuthibari	Primary with U Primary	Private Un-Aided	Rural	Co-Ed	503	294	8	0
3	UPS Sadakhawa	Thuthibari	Pri with U Pri Sec/H SEC	Private Aided	Rural	Co-Ed	203	200	14	1
4	P M V Jamuikala	Jamui Kala	Upper Primary	Dept. Of Education	Rural	Co-Ed	54	94	2	3
5	Janta Ucchatar Madhayamik Vidyalaya	Narkatha Bazar	U Pri with Sec	Central Govt	Rural	Co-Ed	174	206	4	0
6	Girls Pri School Pakdi Bhartkh	Pakdi Bharatkhand	Primary	Local Body	Rural	Girls	0	171	1	1
7	Primary School Pakdi Bhart Khand	Pakdi Bharatkhand	Primary	Dept. Of Education	Rural	Boys	107	0	2	1
8	Maktab Kathari	Katahari	Primary with U Primary	Private Aided	Rural	Co-Ed	77	206	6	0

→ TABLE 2.1 CONTD. SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR STUDY

S.NO.	SCHOOL NAME	VILLAGE NAME	SCHOOL CATEGORY	SCHOOL MANAGEMENT	RURAL URBAN	SCHOOL TYPE	STUDENTS ENROLLED		TEACHERS	
							Boys	Girls	Male	Female
<b>II NUATANWA BLOCK</b>										
9	Jr. High School Rajabari	Rajabari	Upper Primary	Dept. Of Education	Rural	Co-Ed	7	11	1	0
10	UPS Belahiya	Belhiya	Upper Primary	Dept. Of Education	Rural	Co-Ed	13	5	1	0
11	Saraswati Shishu Mandir Bargadwa Bazar	Bargadawa	Primary	Private Un-Aided	Rural	Co-Ed	83	97	2	0
12	I.P.CH. Janjatiya Adarsh School	Bargadawa	Primary	Tribal/Social Welfare	Rural	Co-Ed	281	276	10	0
13	Primary School Bargadawa	Bargadawa	Primary	Dept. Of Education	Rural	Co-Ed	79	95	2	2
14	Mundar Prasad Inter College	Bargadawa	U Primary with Sec/ H Sec	Private Aided	Rural	Co-Ed	78	137	18	2
15	Janjati Siksha Niketan	Taraini	Primary	Tribal/Social Welfare	Rural	Co-Ed	87	76	7	0
16	PMV Argha	Argha (Sukarouli)	Upper Primary	Dept. Of Education	Rural	Co-Ed	24	26	5	1

→ TABLE 2.1 CONTD. SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR STUDY

S.NO.	SCHOOL NAME	VILLAGE NAME	SCHOOL CATEGORY	SCHOOL MANAGEMENT	RURAL URBAN	SCHOOL TYPE	STUDENTS ENROLLED		TEACHERS	
							Boys	Girls	Male	Female
<b>III MITHAURA BLOCK</b>										
17	Digvijay Nath Inter College	Chowk	Pri with U Pri Sec/ H SEC	Private Aided	Rural	Co-Ed	888	554	12	0
18	Digvijay Nath Girl L P M V Chowk	Chowk	Upper Primary	Private Un-Aided	Rural	Girls	0	439	0	5
19	Maktab Parsouni	Parsouni	Primary with U Primary	Private Aided	Rural	Co-Ed	275	280	4	1
20	Madrassa G.A.S. Maktab	Panewa Panei	Primary with U Primary	Madarsa recognized	Rural	Co-Ed	159	219	8	0
21	Jr. High School Khajuria	Khajuria	Upper Primary	Dept. Of Education	Rural	Co-Ed	24	65	5	1

› Schools run by the Department of Social Welfare, Uttar Pradesh: These schools are largely either exclusively for boys or girls and cater to a mix of residential and day scholars.

› Madrassas: These educational institutions offer regular state-designed curricula in upto Class VIII, along with religious education. Although technically open to all, these schools cater almost exclusively to children of Muslim families.

› Saraswati Shishu Mandirs: These educational institutions provide a mix of regular school curriculum along with religious education. Although technically open to all, these schools

cater almost exclusively to children of Hindu families.

› Schools run by non-profit trusts: These schools are registered under the Societies Registration Act and are the principal providers of secondary education in the district. They schools are further divided into two types—schools which are provided financial support by the government (aided schools) and those which are entirely independent. Both types charge fees, but the amount is lower in the government-aided schools.

While the schools run by the Government of Uttar Pradesh's Department of Education and

Department of Social Welfare are affiliated to the State Board of Secondary Education, most of the private schools are affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education. Most of the faith-based schools are affiliated to the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education. In private schools and colleges (both aided and unaided), fees range from INR 100 to 300 per child per month. Even the most remote villages have private schools providing education.

# UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION IN MAHARAJGANJ

The study is confined to Maharajganj district of Uttar Pradesh. Maharajganj has been in the news for its poor educational status and performance. It is one of the most underdeveloped districts in the country infamous for its socio-cultural traditions which hardly give any space to women and girls in public sphere. Despite impressive gains of late in terms of enrolment of children and female literacy rate (which has gone up from 28% in 2001 to 49% in 2011), education is still a distant dream in the lives of many girl children in Maharajganj.

The Department of School Education identified educationally backward blocks (EBB) across the country based on gender-sensitive criteria. Based on these criteria, all but one of the blocks in Maharajganj district is designated as EBB (Table 3.1).

Since most of the blocks are Educationally Backward, the State Government is deploying additional resources to Maharajganj, especially for schemes specifically designed for improving access of girls to educational opportunities. Setting up model schools on the lines of Kendriya Vidyalayas and establishment of at least one Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, a residential school for girls, are testimony to this fact. However, despite these special schemes, Maharajganj continues to remain backward.

For the purposes of the situational analysis, national, state and district level disaggregated data for boys and girls, primarily from the age groups of 10-14 years and 15-19 years

have been examined. The datasets used to present the analysis in this section are from: i) the Ministry of Human Resource Development's (MHRD) education Management Information System (MIS) data which covers all government-run schools, government-aided schools, and selected private schools, and iii) the Census of India, 2011.

### 3.1 ILLITERACY, CHILD WORK AND EARLY MARRIAGE

Given the evidence on the fall in enrolment with increase in age in Uttar Pradesh, it is pertinent to study the levels of illiteracy in Maharajganj district. A downward trend is visible in available data, as illiteracy is lesser in the 10-14 year age group as compared to the 15-19 year age group. The need for more strategic and targeted approaches to achieving equity in education is made apparent by the fact that girls continue to constitute the majority of illiterates in both age groups across all three population categories (total, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe) in Maharajganj. However, the reduction in illiteracy between the two age groups is also much greater in the case of girls than in the case of boys, indicating that the situation of girls is improving at a faster rate than that of boys.

The proportion of male and female illiterates in both age groups amongst the Scheduled Castes is roughly equal to that of the total population, but this is found to be lesser amongst the Scheduled Tribes. Evidently, the Scheduled Tribe population in these two age groups has higher literacy achievements than the rest of the



population.

Child work and early marriage, which are the two main known causes for illiteracy and drop out of children from the education system, arise primarily from poverty. Poverty and low incomes often force families into making their children enter the labour force at a young age as a way of augmenting household income. Not only does this present a significant impediment to continuing education, it also perpetuates a cycle of poverty by transmitting the disadvantages of limited education, unskilled labour and low incomes to future

TABLE 3.1 EDUCATIONALLY BACKWARD BLOCKS (EBB) IN MAHARAJGANJ

S. NO.	STATE NAME	DISTRICT NAME	BLOCK/TALUK NAME	EBB/ NON-EBB
01	UTTAR PRADESH	MAHARAJGANJ	BRIJMAN GANJ	EBB
02			DHANI	EBB
03			GHUGHLI	EBB
04			LAKSHMIPUR	EBB
05			MAHRAJGANJ	EBB
06			MITHOURA	EBB
07			NICHLI	EBB
08			NOUTANWA	EBB
09			PANIYARA	EBB
10			PARTAWAL	EBB
11			PHARENDA	EBB
12			SISWA	EBB
13			TA NICHLI	EBB
14			ANAND NAGAR	NON-EBB

Source: www.ssamis.nic.in (Accessed in 2015)

data available across the four main work categories- cultivators, agricultural labourers, household industry and other workers- it is found that boys constitute the bigger share of main workers in both age groups in Maharajganj. However, the difference in male and female main workers in the 10-14 years and 15-19 years age groups is lesser in the categories of household industry and other workers. A distribution of male and female main workers belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from both age groups also reveals a similar trend. The majority of main workers from these categories are found to be working as agricultural labour.

More boys and girls in Maharajganj work as marginal workers than main workers. However, a study of the

marginal workers in Maharajganj in both age groups across the three population categories also reveals that boys comprise a larger share.

Amongst both boys and girls, there is an increase in the number of marginal workers after the age of 14 years. However, the share of women marginal workers within each population category is seen to fall in the age group of 15-19 years.

Disaggregated data for the marginal workers in Maharajganj also shows that boys constitute a larger share of all occupational groups in both age categories, with the exception of the household industry where females in the 10-14 year age group are slightly more in number than their male contemporaries. Interestingly, the number of girls from Scheduled Castes working in

➔ TABLE 3.2 ILLITERACY BY AGE GROUP IN MAHARAJGANJ, 2011

POPULATION									
Age Group	Total Population			Scheduled Caste			Scheduled Tribe		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
10-14	342689	176195	166494	63325	32647	30678	2015	1026	989
15-19	271778	143567	128211	49549	26231	23318	1616	809	807

ILLITERATES									
Age Group	Total Population			Scheduled Caste			Scheduled Tribe		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
10-14	39283	16527	22756	7220	3175	4045	154	58	96
15-19	39777	13559	26218	7133	2626	4507	179	58	121

Source: Census of India, 2011 (Provisional figures)

cultivation as marginal workers from the 10-14 year age group is greater than the boys in the same age group. Also, more girls from the Scheduled Tribes are found to work as marginal workers in cultivation and 'other' work as compared to boys across both age groups. This indicates a preference to send boys out to work as wage earners, and to make girls work within the confines of family spaces. Such an analysis is corroborated by conversations in the field which revealed that decision-making regarding girls' education and work is heavily influenced by security concerns.

On the whole, data on main and marginal workers from the age groups considered shows that families in Maharajganj are more comfortable sending boys to engage in economically productive labour outside the home as compared to girls. Conversations in the field provided greater insight into the gendered patterns in work and education experienced by children. It was learnt that girls perform more housework than boys- they work at home before leaving for school and also after returning from school. The increasing pressure of household chores with age affects girls' academic performance

as well as their school attendance negatively, thereby making transition to the next class challenging and resulting in higher drop outs amongst girls than boys. Another difference in the treatment of girls and boys is that girls reported facing increased restrictions to their mobility as they grew up, thereby constraining their opportunities for growth. Boys did not face any such restrictions and therefore enjoyed the privilege of access to greater opportunities for education and to earn a livelihood.

Poverty is intimately connected to child marriage. Girls are often seen as a liability by poor families because women are largely confined to the household and are generally not seen as major contributors to household income. In addition to this, the problem of dowry exacerbates the pressure on families to marry their girls off early, as despite legal prohibition of the practice, it continues to be common for parents of the bride to give gifts of cash and kind to the groom's family at the time of marriage. The amount of dowry increases with the age and sometimes also with the level of education of the girl. Hence, families marry their daughters young in order to avoid paying a hefty dowry.

A study of the figures of early marriages occurring in Maharajganj by age group shows that as of 2011, no boys or girls below the age of 10 years are married. Three percent of girls and less than two percent of boys in the age group of 10-14 years are married. There is an alarming spike in the percentage of married girls in the 15-19 years age group, with 23% being married. The proportion of married boys in the same age group is just under eight per cent. The legal age of marriage for girls in India is 18 years, and for boys is 21 years. As of 2011, about three percent of all girls in Uttar Pradesh who were below the age of 18 years were married, and slightly more than three percent of the boys under 21 years of age were married. Early marriage is a grave problem as it often leads to discontinuation of girls' education, low paid jobs, lack of decision-making power in the household, early child bearing and associated medical complications for both the mother and child etc.

➔ TABLE 3.3 MAIN WORKERS BETWEEN 10-19 YEARS IN MAHARAJGANJ, 2011

POPULATION									
Age Group	Total Population			Scheduled Caste			Scheduled Tribe		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
10-14	342689	176195	166494	63325	32647	30678	2015	1026	989
15-19	271778	143567	128211	49549	26231	23318	1616	809	807

MAIN WORKERS									
Age Group	Total			Scheduled Caste			Scheduled Tribe		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
10-14	6827	4170	2657	1156	730	426	25	15	10
15-19	19861	14820	5041	3661	2814	847	86	71	15

Source: Census of India, 2011 (Provisional figures)

➔ TABLE 3.4 DISAGGREGATED DATA ON MAIN WORKERS BETWEEN 10-19 YEARS IN MAHARAJGANJ, 2011

TOTAL POPULATION MAIN WORKERS												
Age Group	Cultivators			Agricultural labourers			Household Industry			Other Workers		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
10-14	1815	1132	683	2827	1757	1070	368	215	153	1817	1066	751
15-19	4315	3237	1078	9520	7089	2431	936	672	264	5090	3822	1268

SCHEDULED CASTE MAIN WORKERS												
Age Group	Cultivators			Agricultural labourers			Household Industry			Other Workers		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
10-14	241	165	76	590	373	217	50	29	21	275	163	112
15-19	563	444	119	2113	1620	493	144	102	42	841	648	193

SCHEDULED TRIBE MAIN WORKERS												
Age Group	Cultivators			Agricultural labourers			Household Industry			Other Workers		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
10-14	8	4	4	8	7	1	0	0	0	9	4	5
15-19	21	16	5	39	34	5	2	1	1	24	20	4

Source: Census of India, 2011 (Provisional figures)

➔ TABLE 3.5 MARGINAL WORKERS BETWEEN 10-19 YEARS IN MAHARAJGANJ, 2011

POPULATION									
Age Group	Total Population			Scheduled Caste			Scheduled Tribe		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
10-14	342689	176195	166494	63325	32647	30678	2015	1026	989
15-19	271778	143567	128211	49549	26231	23318	1616	809	807

MARGINAL WORKERS									
Age Group	Total			Scheduled Caste			Scheduled Tribe		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
10-14	17868	9558	8310	3276	1790	1486	61	29	32
15-19	45471	28373	17098	9269	5961	3308	230	141	89

Source: Census of India, 2011 (Provisional figures)

➔ TABLE 3.6 DISAGGREGATED DATA ON MARGINAL WORKERS BETWEEN 10-19 YEARS IN MAHARAJGANJ, 2011

MARGINAL WORKER												
Age Group	Cultivators			Agricultural labourers			Household Industry			Other Workers		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
10-14	2444	1252	1192	9726	5307	4419	1199	593	606	4499	2406	2093
15-19	5085	2810	2275	30529	19515	11014	2146	1203	943	7711	4845	2866

SCHEDULED CASTE MARGINAL WORKER												
Age Group	Cultivators			Agricultural labourers			Household Industry			Other Workers		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
10-14	374	185	189	2020	1127	893	193	96	97	689	382	307
15-19	725	419	306	6907	4475	2432	331	199	132	1306	868	438

SCHEDULED TRIBE MARGINAL WORKER												
Age Group	Cultivators			Agricultural labourers			Household Industry			Other Workers		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
10-14	11	4	7	36	19	17	3	1	2	11	5	6
15-19	16	5	11	170	109	61	13	9	4	31	18	13

Source: Census of India, 2011 (Provisional figures)

➔ TABLE 3.7 EARLY MARRIAGE IN MAHARAJGANJ, 2011

Age Group	Total			Currently Married		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
0-9	639567	331274	308293	0	0	0
10-14	359522	184890	174632	9599	3153	6446
15-19	288136	152063	136073	44100	12138	31962
Less than 18	1176215	608281	567934	25281	7613	17668
Less than 21	1349361	702368	646993	82865	25852	57013

Source: Census of India, 2011 (Provisional figures)

### 3.2 ACCESS AND TRANSITIONS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

In terms of access to secondary education in the three selected blocks of Maharajganj, children in Mithaura appear to have a low level of access to secondary education opportunities, which children in Nautanwa and Nichloul have average access (Digital Gender Atlas, MHRD). In contrast, the elementary level presents a better picture, with children in all three blocks having medium access to educational opportunities up to the age of 14 years or Class VIII.

In 2012-13, the transition rates of children from Upper Primary to Secondary School were low in Mithaura and Nautanwa, while the rate was average in Nichloul (Digital Gender Atlas, MHRD). However, in 2013-14, Mithaura demonstrated an improvement over the last year, with a medium transition rate of children from Upper Primary to Secondary School. However, Nautanwa and Nichloul had the same kind of transition rates as the previous year, i.e. low and average respectively.

#### TRANSITIONS FROM UPPER PRIMARY TO SECONDARY EDUCATION IN UTTAR PRADESH

Since data on enrolment, drop outs, retention and stream choices in higher secondary education is not available at the district level from any reliable source, this section examines these aspects at the level of the State. Given that the trends in

education observed in Uttar Pradesh are reflected in Maharajganj without any major divergence, it may be safe to attribute broad findings from state level data in this section to the district of Maharajganj as well.

The table below provides data on the transition of boys and girls from upper primary to secondary to higher secondary education in Uttar Pradesh. More girls repeat the VIII standard than boys, indicating that

the transition from upper primary to secondary education is a greater challenge for girls. However, once they have entered secondary and higher secondary education, boys constitute a larger share of the repeaters.

Data also shows that while some children with disability are being mainstreamed, the number of male students in this category exceeds that of females from Classes VIII to XII.



➔ **TABLE 3.8** REPEATERS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY FROM CLASSES VIII TO XI IN UTTAR PRADESH, 2013-14

Grade	Enrolment 2013-2014			Repeaters		Drop out Rate	Repetition Rate	Students with Disability		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls			Boys	Girls	Total
VIII	1752580	1800634	3553214	15813	16093	6.72	0.94	11120	9417	20537
IX	1671638	1525878	3197516	31975	26995	-	2.14	3251	2345	5596
X	1771388	1547051	3318439	54844	38226	8.54	3.32	2786	2088	4874
XI	1316756	1206734	2523490	26556	22280	-	2.08	1791	1370	3161
XII	1333021	1186273	2519294	30204	23021	-	2.73	1740	1094	2834
Sec. (9-10)	3443026	3072929	6515955	86819	65221	-	2.73	6037	4433	10470
H.Sec. (11-12)	2649777	2393007	5042784	56760	45301	-	2.37	3531	2464	5995

Source: Secondary Education in India, State Report Cards 2013-14, DISE

➔ **TABLE 3.9** STREAM-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF BOYS AND GIRLS IN CLASSES XI AND XII IN UTTAR PRADESH, 2013-14

Age	Total (H. Sec.)		Stream	Class 11		Class 12	
	Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
<15yrs	1289816	1563138	Arts	243917	443965	262045	460633
15yrs	688788	467212	Science	370911	139032	376641	125937
16yrs	867088	794100	Commerce	42053	17865	39969	16176
17yrs	688788	467212	Vocational	13883	10223	14272	10459
>17yrs	647324	371440	Other	13227	2169	10633	1726

Source: Secondary Education in India, State Report Cards 2013-14, DISE

In line with national trends, even in Uttar Pradesh girls outnumber boys in the Arts stream, whereas boys outnumber girls in all other streams.

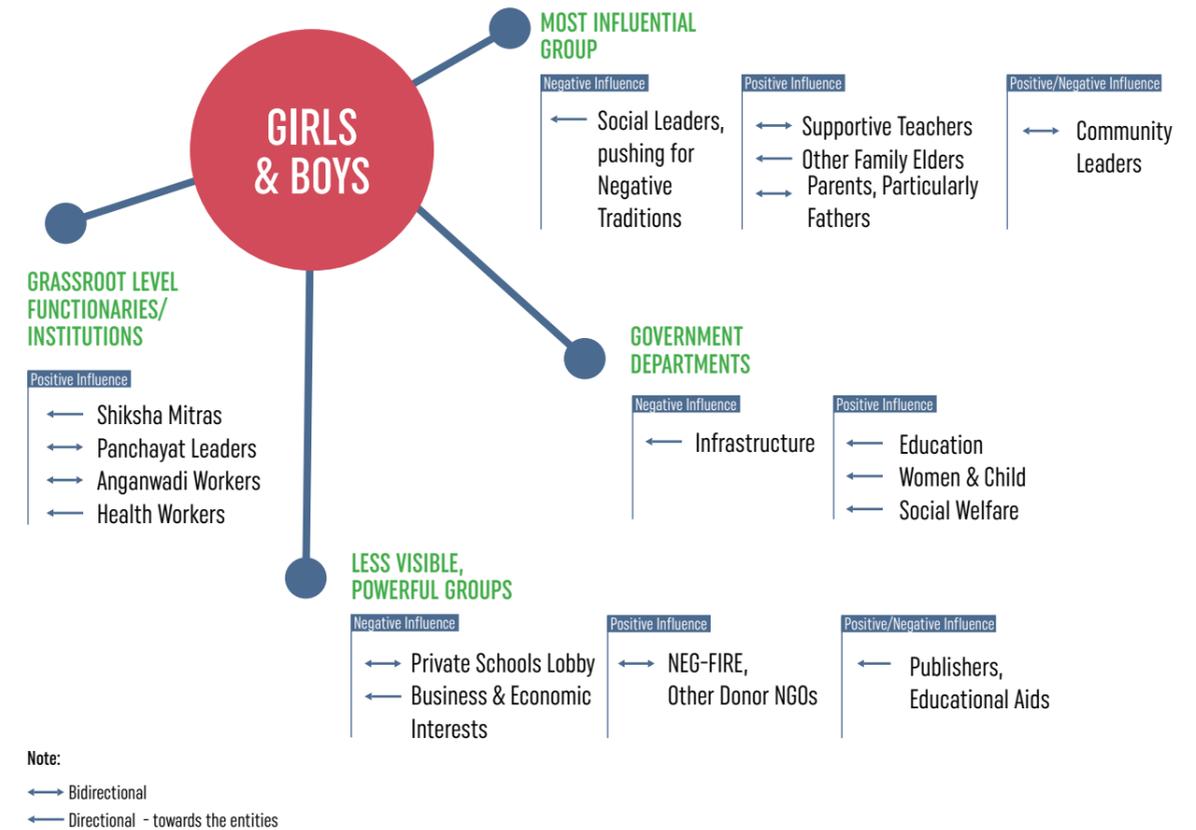
Through the RMSA, there have been attempts of different kinds to improve opportunities for and experiences of secondary schooling in the selected study blocks. This has included: attempts of the State to improve Information and

Communications Technology in nine schools during 2007-08 and 2011-12; the sanction of 20 new higher secondary schools; promotion of vocational education such as automobile services, retail etc in one school; and upgradation of the infrastructure and facilities such as laboratories, lavatories, libraries etc in four schools.

**3.3 MAPPING INFLUENCES ON SECONDARY EDUCATION OF CHILDREN**

Multiple factors influence the ability of children to enrol in and complete secondary education, necessitating a gamut of integrated policy and programmatic interventions across different domains. This section attempts to support cogent planning

➔ **FIGURE 3.1** INFLUENCE MAPPING OF CHILDREN TRANSITING FROM CLASS V TO CLASS VI



of interventions with the aim of increasing access to secondary education by mapping the pathways by which various factors come to influence boys' and girls' uptake of education at the upper primary and secondary levels.

Three influence maps<sup>3</sup> have been prepared to illustrate the factors that have a positive or negative influence over the decision to retain children, particularly girl children, in school. The maps help visualise institutional and community relationships in an attempt to explain the various actors/entities that have power, influence and control over the girl child's ability and willingness to access secondary schooling opportunities. Circles represent institutions and actors and

links, with linkages being represented by connecting lines. The size of the circle illustrates the relative importance of the institution/actor, while the thickness and direction of the arrow that connects it with the lives of children denotes the strength of the relationship and the direction in which influence is exerted. Plus/minus signs illustrate whether the influence is positive or negative.

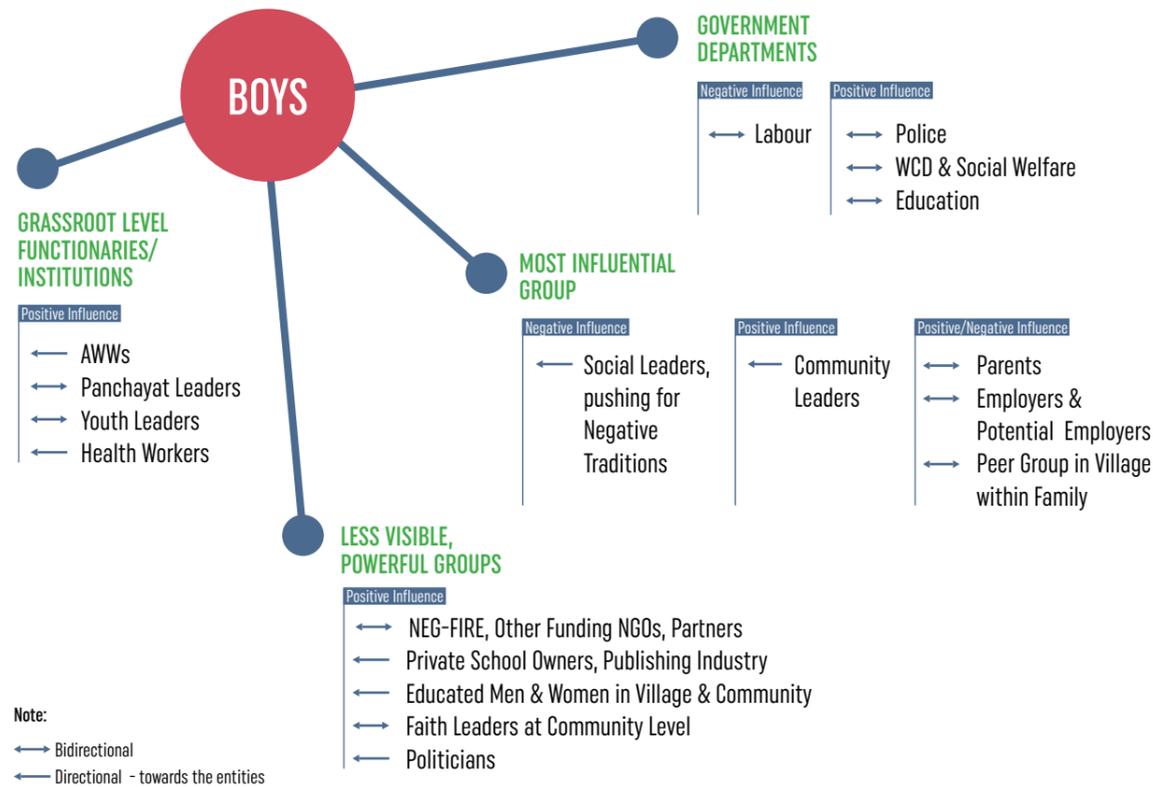
The first influence map shows the transition point from primary to upper primary classes. While gender differentials in opportunities are visible here, these differentials are not strong enough to push girls out of school. It is thus possible at the Class V level to develop one common influence map for both boys and girls.

The next two maps illustrate the transition points of Class VIII-IX separately for boys and girls. They show that while the same stakeholders influence boys and girls' access to secondary schooling, quite often the impact of their influence is not the same. In the case of boys, the support for education and schooling is explicit. However, in the case of girls, there are a range of actors who could have a positive influence on their access to secondary education as well as those that could have a negative effect on the girls' access to opportunities and possibilities. The support to girls' education is thus not uncontested.

On the whole, the maps show that at a local and household level, power

<sup>3</sup> The process of creating maps has been adapted from: Mayers, J., Ngalande, J., Bird, P. and Sibale, B. 2001. *Forestry Tactics: Lessons learned from Malawi's National Forestry Programme*. Policy that works for forests and people series no.11. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.

FIGURE 3.2 INFLUENCE MAPPING OF BOYS IN CLASS VII-VIII-IX



rests with those who have access to local networks, those who play a role in community management and those who make decisions about the allocation or substitution of assets. These areas of power are often very closely linked to gender. The maps also reveal that the lack of state support to secondary education impacts boys and girls differently, with further variations in impact on those coming from poor and vulnerable groups. A thorough analysis of these influence maps could help identify the manner in which various stakeholders mediate a child's access to secondary education at different ages, thereby assisting planners to consider direct and indirect influences in the design of comprehensive policies and programmes.

**3.4 INSIGHTS FROM DATA AND FIELD RESEARCH**

This section, containing insights from published data and field research conducted on a village in Nichnaul block, illustrates the manner in which some of these factors operate and impact the situation on the ground.

**INSIGHTS FROM DATA:** School-wise data throws light on some interesting trends:

- > In both government schools, SB Khas and Shikarpur, girls outnumbered boys in every class in 2012-13.
- > The student population in government schools tends to be predominantly from socially backward communities. In Shikarpur, 92% of children are from Scheduled Caste families, demonstrating an escalating

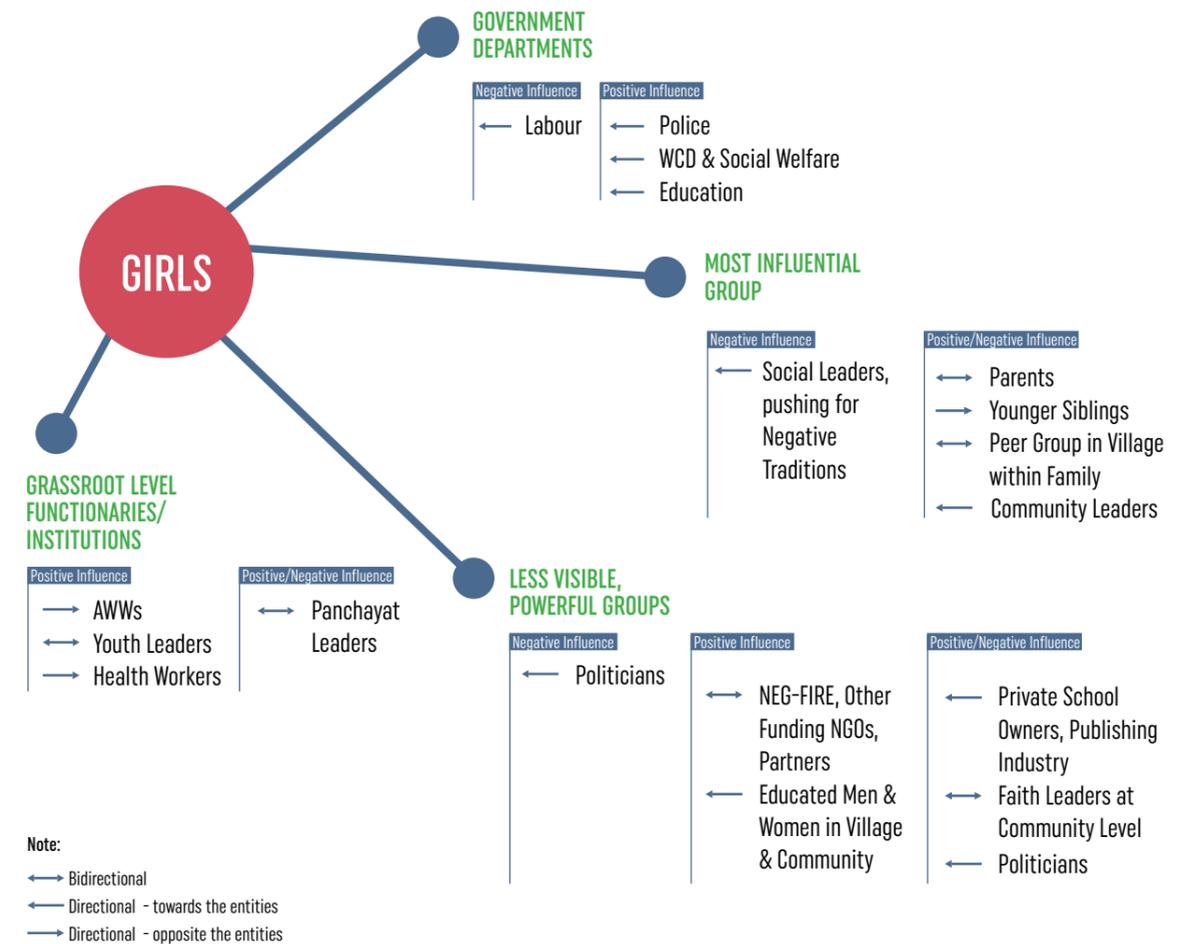
trend from four years ago when this proportion was 77.6%.  
 > The Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in both government schools is not in compliance with the Right to Education norm of at least one teacher for every 40 students. In SB Khas the PTR is 102, while in Shikarpur it is 67.  
 > In Class V in SB Khas, there were four boys for 18 girls from the general population. Among the SC population, the number of boys is 8 and the girls are 10 in Class 1. By class V, there is one boy for three girls. Among Other Backward Classes, there are 3 boys for 15 girls in Class V.  
 > When the incentives provided are tracked, the situation slightly changes. Among Other Backward Classes, 80 boys and 86 girls received text books, and uniforms demonstrating that there is significant presence of children being registered at one school

and attending another.  
 > In the private school, the trend is quite different. There are 142 boys to 87 girls from OBCs and 18 boys and 6 girls from Scheduled Caste families in Grade 1. There are no Muslims in the private school. The private school has 3 teachers and classes are regular.  
**INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELD:** The following observations made during the field visit in January 2015 are noteworthy:  
 > **Sub-optimal functioning of schools and attendance:** The government primary school has a single teacher and two Shiksha Mitras who live in the village. However during the week of the field visit, the

school had been operational only on one day as the teacher did not attend school on all other days of that week. Moreover, although 100 children are enrolled at the school, the older children estimated that only about half this number attends classes.  
 > **Lack of options to study beyond the elementary level:** For children who wish to pursue education beyond Class V, there is no government school available in the region. (A junior school (Classes VI-VIII) has been sanctioned, but no teachers have been appointed as yet). Even for girls who have completed Class VIII from the private school, there are no further educational opportunities in the vicinity.

> **Limited interaction with government educational system:** Young girls' engagement with the government educational system beyond school is solely through the Kishori Manch of the Aanganwadi Centres, which meet twice a month for about two hours each.  
 > **Differential attitude towards education of boys and girls:** Parents do invest in education, but more for boys than girls. They are found to be more willing to send their boys to bigger towns and even allow them to stay as boarders. However, there is a reluctance to send girls, which they explain by citing safety concerns.  
 > **Poverty as an impediment to education:** The income levels in

FIGURE 3.3 INFLUENCE MAPPING OF GIRLS IN CLASS VII-VIII-IX





## GIRLS OF THE LANDLESS AGRICULTURAL WORKERS WERE THE WORST HIT BY THE DYSFUNCTIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM.

the village are low. The majority of families are agricultural labourers with either nil or very small land holdings. The Aanganwadi worker pointed out that the children, particularly girls, of the landless agricultural workers were the worst hit by the dysfunctional education system.

› **Early marriage:** Poverty, coupled with the lack of opportunities also opens up the possibility of girls being married young. While most girls claimed that their peers were getting married after attaining the age of 18 years, they eventually revealed that some of their classmates were already married and most others got married within a year or two after their formal schooling ends.

› **Girls' eagerness to study further:** Girls have expressed their desire to study further, but their limited exposure poses difficulties to articulating what they want to study or become. Girls from the private school were found to be more articulate and vocal in wanting more education, though even they found it difficult to voice their dreams and aspirations.

› **Recognition of the demand for education at the Panchayat level:** The Gram Panchayat head accepted that education provision was a pressing issue. He acknowledged the desire of girls to study further but expressed helplessness in further girls education or even adult education due to the Panchayat's financial constraints.

### ➔ CASE STUDY

#### STATE OF FORMAL EDUCATION IN SOHAGI BARAVA VILLAGE (Nichnaul block, Maharajganj district)

Sohagi Barava is known to be among the most remote, most disadvantaged and least served by public services among all the villages in Maharajganj district. There are three ways to get to the village- the most direct route is by boat across the river; the second and shorter route requires access through Nepal; and the third, which is used by the village folk and frontline government community workers requires a trip through the forest and the Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar.

**Demographic Profile:** According to the Primary Census Abstracts, 2011, the village has 1099 households. The total population (as on April, 1, 2014) is as follows- 5208 from the general category, 1999 from the Scheduled Castes, and 44 from the Scheduled Tribes.

**School Structure:** Data from the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), District Information System for Education (DISE) and the School Report Card initiative of the NUEPA shows that there are six Aanganwadi Centres and three schools in the village. Two of the schools are government-run primary schools (up to Class V), while the third is a private school which charges a tuition fee of INR 100 (excluding other expenses such as books, uniforms etc) and provides education to both girls and boys up to Class VIII. All three schools are covered by the School Report Card initiative.

**Administrative Attention:** The remote location of the village and difficulties in accessing it complicate the challenges to service provision. While the district administration has made efforts to improve the lives of residents through initiatives such as installing solar lamps in all homes, education (especially for girls) remains a largely overlooked area. Even the private school has not introduced Classes IX and X, possibly due to concerns regarding financial viability.

**Overall:** Concerted administrative focus is required to further girls' access to upper primary and secondary education, so that they can overcome social and financial barriers to avail opportunities that can help them realise their potential and aspirations.

## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Prior to discussing key findings from the field study and recommendations for action, a word must be said about the macro policy environment. The formulation of education policy and also children's policy is complex. Education, especially for girls, is influenced to different degrees by personal, familial, social and state agenda and perspectives. As the institutional and social environment are neither uniform across regions nor static in time, policies in practice can vary greatly across different parts of a country and over time.

Formal policies that impact children's lives may originate at a number of 'levels': international (e.g. the United Nations Convention on

the Rights of the Child, Millennium Development Goals, now Sustainable Development Goals); regional (e.g. trade agreements on opening up the education sector); national/sub-national (made by state or provincial authorities); and local (made by decentralised authorities). Furthermore, in districts like Maharajganj which have a substantial international border, policies of neighbouring countries may impact family livelihood strategies as a result of which children may be encouraged or forced into both legal and illegal income generation activities. In order to define relevant programme goals and design suitable interventions to achieve them, it is

necessary to undertake policy analysis to differentiate between these levels of influence and to understand the manner in which they fashion ground realities.

Changes in the policy environment over time can come about even without any change in government stance, policy statements and attendant budget allocations. Such changes occur largely due to pressure or demand from families to which the market responds swiftly, though not necessarily effectively. Market-based solutions to education have a significant impact on household finances, necessitating critical choices by poor families with limited resources. In financial decision-

making on education by such families, the male child often has an edge over the female child, as he is seen as a long-term, economically productive asset due to which families are more willing to invest scarce resources in educating their sons rather than daughters. Thus, market dimensions need to be taken into account for a more comprehensive analysis of differential access to secondary education for girls especially in the remote parts of India that are predominantly occupied by poor families, such as Maharajganj district.

This section attempts to enumerate the key socio-economic and education-related findings with regard to the differential access of boys and girls to education in Maharajganj district, based on which it provides constructive recommendations for programming.

#### KEY FINDINGS

##### Socio-Economic:

- › The vast majority of children in rural Maharajganj belong to

low income families that do not have productive assets. This is largely a function of generational discrimination based on social stratification.

- › The pressure on poor children to engage in economically productive work in order to substantiate household income is the major factor constraining their access to education and their academic performance.
- › Child marriage is another barrier to education, but is now a largely female phenomenon. Married girls are often able to continue schooling as long as they remain with their parents, but shifting residence to the marital home usually puts a permanent end to schooling. There are indications of improvement with gradual increases in the mean age at marriage of girls. However, despite being a legally punishable offence, child marriage still finds social sanction in some regions.
- › Parents are willing to send both sons and daughters to school. For their daughters' education they want

the schooling facility to be available within the village and to be free of cost. For their sons, however, there is greater willingness to send them further away and invest limited family disposable income.

- › Due to the fact that security of girls is a strong factor guiding family decision-making on their mobility, there is a clear correlation with the availability of good quality schooling facilities in the village/hamlet and the retention of girls in schooling. Where good quality schooling facilities are available in the vicinity, parents are willing to keep their girls in school longer as opposed to marrying them off at a young age.
- › The gender-based division of roles and responsibilities between sons and daughters becomes more pronounced when children reach adolescence. Boys are expected to train as bread-earners and girls as home-makers.
- › Girls want to study further and seek lives different from their mothers. They notice and dislike the fact that greater limits are placed on their mobility and access to opportunities and assets (mobile phones, cash etc.) in comparison to boys. However, nothing is done to challenge the status quo.

##### Education-related:

- › The quality of elementary schooling impacts the willingness of parents and children to participate in secondary schooling.
- › The demand for secondary schooling options within the villages/hamlets studied far outweighs the existing supply. More options for secondary schooling are available in larger villages and peri-urban settlements rather than in the remote villages/hamlets.
- › Secondary schooling is largely provided by the fee charging private sector and is unregulated with little or no government supervision or specialized educational intervention to examine the curriculum being taught to children. The lack of cost-free, state-run secondary schools is a key factor limiting the educational attainments of girls especially. Even



in those select schools where the state government is providing secondary education, the incentives provided during elementary school years (uniforms, books, mid-day meal etc.) are no longer available to secondary school students.

- › The lack of teachers, their low levels of motivation and erratic attendance pose barriers to the education of both boys and girls. Opportunities to learn science and mathematics are limited due to low availability of qualified teaching staff. Overall, the availability of qualified teachers in the district for the higher classes and especially in more specialized subjects is far less than the norm.
- › Teachers' own location within the social environment and their gender-biases place additional limits to girls' ability to explore their full potential. Girls currently in school are mostly first generation learners, and have limited access to family support for help with difficulties in grasping concepts or lessons.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations for strengthening interventions for girls' secondary education are located at the level of the community, school and wider policy environment.

- › Preparing girls for secondary education from an early stage: Designing and rolling out a comprehensive engendered educational initiative that begins providing support to girls at the stage of upper primary education, i.e. in Classes VI-VII. Increasing girls' retention beginning with these classes, improving the quality of school education and enhancing their girls' academic performance will go a long way towards ensuring more girls make the transition from upper primary to secondary education.
- › Exploring alternate opportunities for learning: Considering that girls' mobility is often restricted with increasing age, the possibilities of furthering girls' education through the use of Information and Communications Technology (such

## FOR CREATING A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO BUILD SUPPORT AMONGST NOT JUST WOMEN BUT MEN TOO FOR EDUCATION GIRLS.

as using media such as televisions, mobile phones and internet) could be explored to help drop outs continue their education, as well as to supplement learning for those still enrolled in schools. In fact, such strategies could prove especially useful for both boys and girls from poor and marginalised communities in areas where schools are few schooling opportunities are limited due to extraneous pressures.

- › Creating a cadre of community-based gender champions: Local members of the community, especially educated women, may be identified as gender champions to mentor and support girls in school. An early area of intervention for these gender champions could be the development of a gender-aware risk and vulnerability mapping mechanism at the village level. Their role would extend to identifying girls in vulnerable situations and trying to negotiate in favour of continuing education (for instance, identifying girls who are at risk of being married early and persuading their families to keep them in school and delay marriage). They could also initiate skill-based supplemental education that will provide long-term economic

security.

- › Promoting influence mapping at the community level: Influence mapping is a policy analysis tool which can easily be transposed into a programme support instrument for gender-based analysis. Enabling the creation of influence maps by local residents would promote community-based analysis and understanding of power dynamics, influencers, priority concerns and practical strategies for development. The analysis of community-level stakeholders could be combined with the knowledge of domain experts to design powerful interventions that are responsive to people's needs and preferences, while simultaneously promoting community awareness and ownership.
- › Addressing men's attitudes towards girls' education: Efforts to promote girls' education have largely concentrated on helping girls and women voice their concerns and negotiate confidently on behalf of their interests. However, in order to accelerate the process of creating a more favourable and sustainable environment for girls' education, and it is necessary to address men's attitudes and build support amongst men for girls' education. Although challenging in practice, constructively engaging with men in addition to women will provide greater scope for dismantling negative gender norms and behaviour, thus paving the path for significant long-term benefits.
- › Addressing negative gender tropes in the school environment: Those preparing school textbooks and those interpreting them, i.e. authors, teachers and students, are all located within a socio-cultural environment that shapes gendered norms, attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, special efforts must be made to undertake a critical review of textbooks from a gender lens in order to identify and alter elements that emphasise traditional gender roles and negative stereotypes, so that the teaching-learning process can promote more equitable views. This is particularly true in the case of private schools and market-based educational aids which

despite being significant stakeholders in the secondary education system, are not closely monitored by government authority.

› Assigning specific school staff members with tracking school-based gender interventions: Assigning specific staff members in schools with the responsibility of tracking gender interventions is an effective mechanism to monitor operations and facilitate the process of decision-making for improving programming. The key role of such staff persons would be to serve as operational and strategic focal points for coordination and accountability on gender programming in schools. They would also be responsible for regular/periodic knowledge-sharing on best practices.

› Extending the Central Government's MIS to cover secondary education: The MHRD's MIS system tracks only elementary education at present. Regular collection, publication and analysis of authentic data on children in secondary education will add value to government and non-government programmes aimed at improving educational attainments for boys and girls.

› Research and policy advocacy to extend the Right to Education to secondary education: At present, the RTE Act is limited to elementary education. While strong data-based arguments exist in published literature on the exponential benefits of secondary education, particularly for girls, further context-specific research at the national, state and district level in India is required to demonstrate the requirement and advantages of ensuring secondary education for all. Such research will play a crucial role in strengthening policy advocacy efforts directed at making the provision of free and compulsory secondary education a matter of right under the Constitution of India.

› Setting up a gender task force: Establishing a gender task force to provide a macro perspective on shifts in the policy scenario and



changes in factors influencing children's education will add value to long-term interventions. Apart from experts on education, inclusive social development and gender, membership of the gender task force may be drawn from diverse fields such as law, marketing, supply chain management and even organizational behaviour. The emphasis on creating a combination of complementary skill sets and experiences to guide the programme is for the purpose of developing swift and cutting-edge strategic responses to emergent trends at ground level, as well as for the capacity development of programme staff.

#### CONCLUSION

To conclude, secondary education is recognised as a game changer not only in terms of health, livelihood generation and political participation, but also in terms of national development. However, the state of secondary education in Maharajganj is abysmal, demonstrating a reflection

of the inequitable gender trends existing at the national and state level to a greater degree. Although the investments made in primary schooling over recent decades are showing positive results in terms of an increased demand for secondary education, a gender gap in education persists. While this gap is reducing at a gradual pace, available data evidences a need for the Central and State Governments as well as non-government bodies to elevate and intensify their policy and programmatic response to the challenges that children, especially girls, face in accessing quality secondary education. The increasing demand for education beyond the upper primary level from poor communities that cannot afford to pay for private schooling makes a strong case in favour of government provision of free-of-charge secondary schools at the village level in Maharajganj district, with additional focus on teacher recruitment and training, school infrastructure development and curriculum design.

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**New Education Group**  
**Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education**  
A-1, Third Floor, Sarvodaya Enclave  
New Delhi- 110017  
Telefax: +91 11 26526570  
Email: [info@negfire.org](mailto:info@negfire.org)

[www.negfire.org](http://www.negfire.org)