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Government Financing of Secondary Education for Girls: A Case Study of Delhi



Discussion Paper



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List of Acronyms

CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Examination
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
EE	Elementary Education
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NEP	National Education Policy
OBC	Other Backward classes
PAB	Project Approval Board
PTR	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
RMSA	<i>Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan</i>
RTE	Right to Education
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SE	Secondary Education
SmSA	<i>Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan</i>
SoSE	Schools of Specialized Excellence
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TE	Teacher Education
TEI	Teacher Education Institutions
WCD	Department of Women and Child Development





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Introduction

Education of girls is critical to economic development. Research has established that educating girls is one of the most cost-effective ways of spurring development (Tembon and Fort, 2008). Despite all the demonstrated benefits, girls face challenges in education that boys do not. Hence, a large number of girls across the globe are still out of school.

Literature have shown that in developing countries, parents from poor, disadvantaged and marginalised households consider schooling for girls more costly, both in terms of real financial cost and opportunity cost. Moreover, when faced with a choice as to which of their children to enrol at school, preference is given to boys. Thus, abolishing school fees and reducing the direct costs of educating girls are critical to ensuring universal girls' education (Sperling & Winthrop, 2015).

In India, evidence shows that girls are more dependent on public provisioning of education as the cost of education is lower in government schools. Thus, government has a huge role to play in ensuring quality education for all girls. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has acknowledged the numerous benefits associated with girls' education in the society. It also emphasises the need for universal access to quality school education as well as higher education for all girls. Therefore, it is important for the states to ensure quality secondary education accessible to all girls.

Delhi is one of the states that has prioritised school education as one of the key areas of governance. The state has announced the adoption of NEP by 2021. It has adopted a number of measures towards universal access to school education in recent past. One of the important interventions is free education for all girls from pre-school to secondary level.

However, there is no detailed analysis in the public domain about the nature of initiatives taken by government for prioritising girls' education and the quantum of fiscal support associated with those policy measures. This policy brief aims to discuss how Delhi government has financed and incentivised girls' education at secondary level. It also aims to illustrate good practices by the state that can be replicated in other states.

The basic research questions answered through this case study are:

1. What is the status of girls' education at secondary level in Delhi?
2. How does the Delhi government finance secondary education? How gender-responsive is its education budget?
3. How is Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SmSA) designed and financed to promote girls' education at secondary level?

The study comprises five sections. Following a brief introduction in Section I, Section II describes the status of secondary education in Delhi, particularly the status of girls. Section III maps the existing interventions of Delhi government for girls' education at secondary level. The policy measures taken by government during COVID-19 are also discussed. Section IV provides a macro picture of government financing pattern at secondary level alongside examining the gender responsiveness of education budget. Section V focuses on planning and budgeting aspects of SmSA at secondary level and gender-inclusivity of the scheme. Section VI concludes the discussion with some policy recommendations.



Status of Secondary Education in Delhi

This section attempts to evaluate the performance of Delhi across a range of educational indicators at the secondary level. The selected indicators shed light on several dimensions of educational landscape such as access, availability of infrastructure, quality and learning outcomes. Before looking at these dimensions, it is important to know the profile of the school-going children in the state.

As per the Indian education system, 14-17 is the age group for attending secondary and higher secondary education in school. According to Ministry of Education (MoE) estimates, the total population in Delhi in this age group shall be over 13.3 lakhs in 2021. Of these, girls comprise over 6.2 lakhs while boys constitute around 7.1 lakhs. The actual enrolment in 2019-20 was over 12.2 lakhs. This comprises 6.3 lakh boys and 5.9 lakh girls. Thus, it can be said that around 1.1 lakh adolescents in the said age group are either not in an age-appropriate grade or out of school. Of these, around 80 thousand are boys and 30 thousand are girls (UDISE+ 2019-20).

A social group-wise distribution shows a population of over 1.5 lakh Scheduled Caste (SC) and over 1 lakh Other Backward Classes (OBC) students in the secondary and higher secondary sections in Delhi. These comprise 12% and 8% of the total enrolment at the same levels of education, respectively. The state has only 6,337 students from Scheduled Tribe (ST) category.

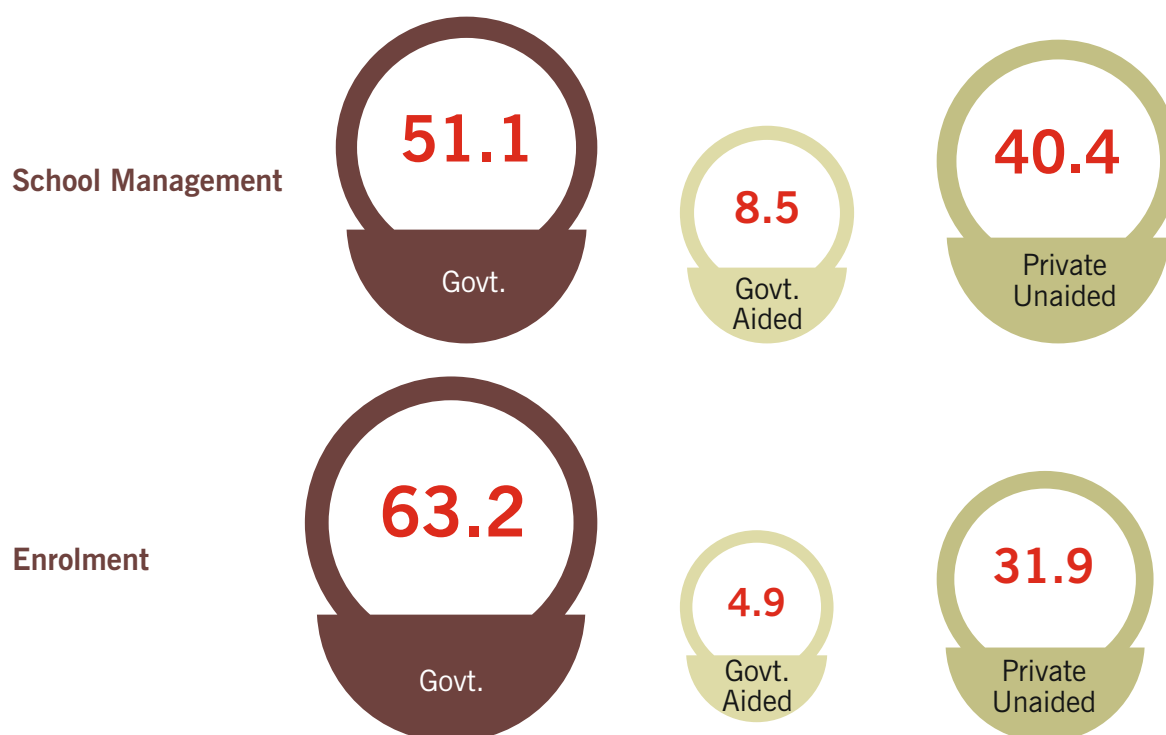
Out of its 17.4 lakh population in the 10-19 age group, over 38.1 thousand persons (2.2%) have some form of disability, which is at par with the all-India average.

Access

As per UDISE+ data for 2019-20, there are over 5.6 thousand schools for classes 1-12 in Delhi. About 48.8% of these are government schools whereas 4.4% are aided ones. Around 44.7 lakh students are enrolled in these schools where over 1.5 lakh teachers are employed. The pupil-teacher ratio is 1:28 and 1:18 for secondary and higher secondary sections, respectively. It is much higher than the national average for the secondary section (1:19), but lower than that for the secondary section (1:27).



Figure 2.1: Enrolment in and distribution of secondary and higher secondary schools by management – Delhi (2019-20) (in %)



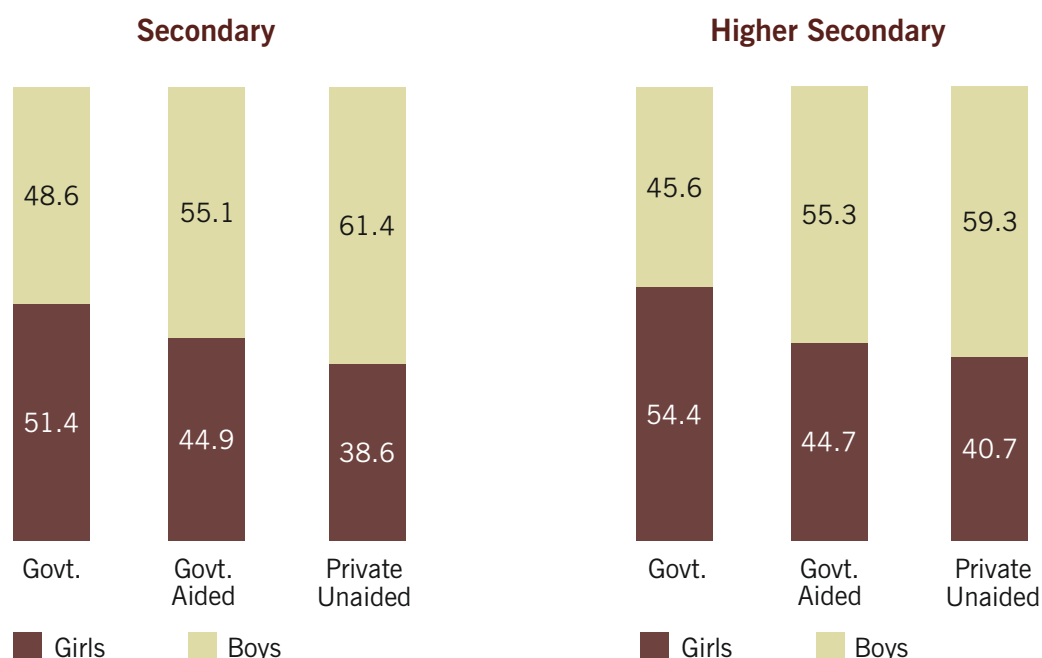
Note: Government schools include those run by the Department of Education, Department of Social Welfare, and local bodies, alongside *Kendriya Vidyalayas*/Central Schools, and *Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas*.

Source: UDISE+ data 2019-20

According to UDISE+ data for 2019-20, enrolment at secondary and higher secondary levels is above 12.2 lakhs in Delhi. Over 48% of the students are girls. At over 68%, majority of the schools are government or government-aided, and cater to almost 60% of the students. Roughly 32% of the schools are private unaided ones, yet attended by more than 40% students.

In 2021-22, the enrolment for classes 1-12 in public schools rose by over 2.3 lakhs (“236k+ apply for entry,” 2021). A majority of the new entrants are those who have shifted from private schools. Financial setbacks induced by the pandemic made the exorbitant fees of private schools unaffordable for a large number of households. This surging demand makes this an ideal opportunity for reorienting the focus towards public education.

Figure 2.2: Secondary and higher secondary enrolment by gender and school management – Delhi (2019-20) (in %)



Source: UDISE+ data 2019-20

There is a clear gender divide in not only enrolment but also schooling preferences at both secondary and higher secondary levels. Girls are more likely to be enrolled in government schools. Families are more likely to send boys to private schools which are perceived to provide quality English medium education. Around 60% of the students in private unaided schools are boys. Gender gaps of over 10% persist in aided schools as well.

Patriarchal mindsets emerging from sociocultural factors result in little to no value being accorded to the education of girls. A large proportion of them are forced to drop out after completing class 8 or 10. Students, especially girls from marginalised communities tend to be concentrated in public schools. Stalling dropouts and retaining them in the education system is also a challenge. Initiatives in this direction will be discussed in Section III.

The gender parity index of gross enrolment ratio (GER) for Delhi is 1.04 (secondary) and 1.12 (higher secondary). These are higher than the corresponding national averages of 1.00 and 1.04, respectively. Tendencies of son preference and resultant devaluation of the educational attainment of daughters pose severe challenges in the efforts towards achieving gender parity in schooling and secondary education. Targeted interventions are necessary to bridge the persistent gender gap as well as integrate the out of school children into the fold of education.

Availability of infrastructure

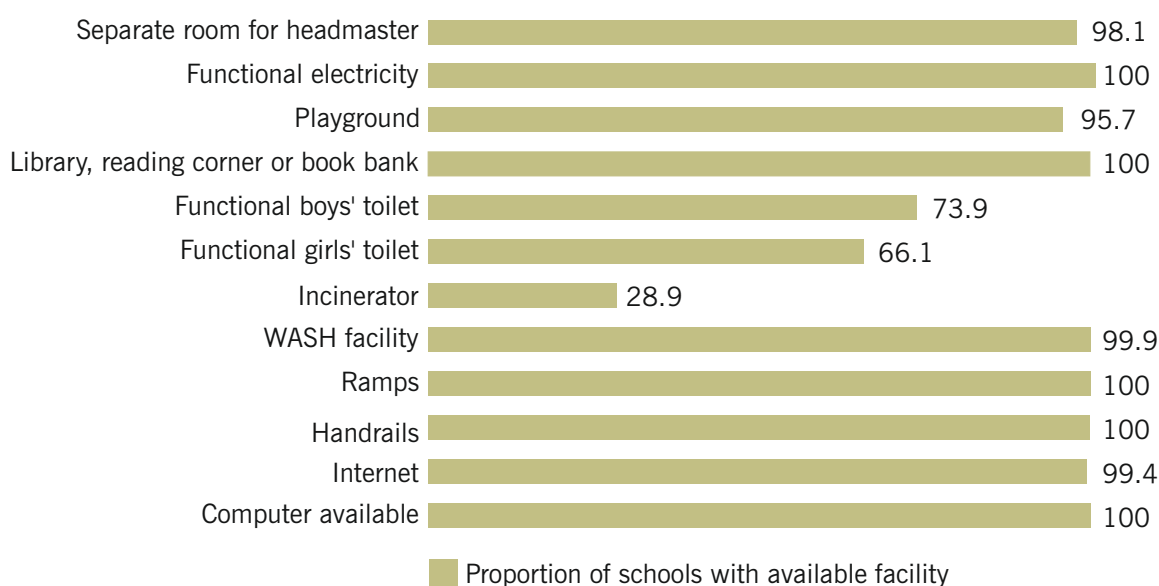
School accessibility is a key determinant of attendance. This reaffirms the significance of the availability of infrastructure in encouraging school participation (Jayachandran, 2002). It not only facilitates a



sound environment for teaching and learning but also makes the schooling experience more enjoyable in itself.

The *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* (SmSA) framework mentions the norms for strengthening infrastructure in existing schools as well as those that are yet to be constructed. These norms concern classrooms and related furniture, laboratories, libraries, playgrounds, functional WASH facilities, and separate toilet blocks for girls and boys. Gender and Equity is a critical component under SmSA which necessitates adequate infrastructural facilities for the inclusion of girls from socially disadvantaged communities, as well as students with disability.

Figure 2.3: Status of infrastructure in government secondary and higher secondary schools – (2019-20) (in %)



Source: UDISE+ data 2019-20

All government secondary and higher secondary schools in Delhi have access to libraries, functional electricity, and computer facilities. These schools perform almost at par with their private unaided counterparts in terms of availability of infrastructure. However, almost one in three schools lacks access to functional girls' toilets, while one in four schools does not provide functional toilets for boys. Over 70% of government schools and 66% of the private ones fail to provide incinerators. Student Classroom Ratio (SCR) in government secondary schools is 45 which indicated the need for additional classrooms (Dept. of School Education & Literacy, 2020).

Toilet facilities constitute fundamental amenities and are non-negotiable in schools as students spend about six hours a day therein. Non-availability of toilets and incinerators can result in dropouts among girls upon menarche or long absenteeism during menstruation. Inhibiting period absenteeism necessitates the provision of toilets and sanitary napkins within all schools.

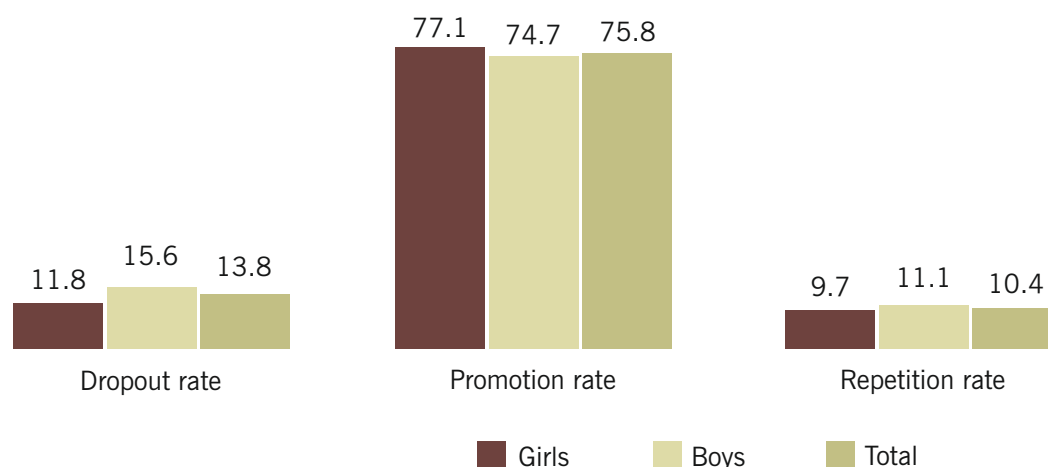
Over 9.6 thousand students with disability study across all secondary and higher secondary schools in Delhi. Of these, about 42.5% are girls. Delhi schools have been exemplar in terms of access to handrails, ramps, and toilets friendly for disabled students across all levels of education and managements. This is a best practice in inclusive education for all states and Union Territories to emulate.



Quality and learning

Following a brief overview of the state of infrastructure in secondary and higher secondary schools, select indicators related to quality and learning are discussed below.

Figure 2.4: Dropout, promotion and repetition rate by gender at secondary level- Delhi (2019-20) (in %)



Source: UDISE+ data 2019-20

Dropout rates are high in Delhi at about 14%. Drop-out rate of SC students is 17% at secondary level and 14.7% at higher secondary level. For Muslim children, the drop-out rate is as high as 24.6% at secondary level and 15.2% at higher secondary level (Dept. of School education & Literacy, 2021). Incidence of drop out is relatively higher for boys than for girls. The latter outshine the former when it comes to promotion rates and also tend to have lower repetition rates. This makes it evident that girls perform at par and also better than their male counterparts when provided opportunities and the required resources to study. Overall, there is scope for improving promotion rates and reducing repetition rates.

Figure 2.5: Transition rate by gender – Delhi (2019-20) (in %)



Source: UDISE+ data 2019-20

It is encouraging that transition rates are high at both secondary and higher secondary levels. These are also greater for girls, corroborating the above assertion that girls are willing to study and perform better when provided a conducive study environment and academic support.

Teachers with professional qualifications can help enhance the overall performance of students. Over 80% of the teachers at secondary and higher secondary levels in government schools hold a B.Ed. or equivalent qualification. This has translated into positive learning outcomes among students. Data from the second cycle of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) National Achievement Survey for class 10 (2017-18) illustrate that the academic performance of students from Delhi was above the national average in all subjects.

The Delhi government has constituted a new board namely Delhi Board of School Education in 2021. For the A.Y. starting 2021-22, 30 existing government schools will be affiliated under its aegis (PTI, 2021). Of these, 20 shall be Schools of Specialized Excellence (SoSE) and 10 shall be general schools. The SoSEs shall offer specialisations in STEM, Humanities and high-end 21st century skills, and Performing and Visual Arts to students in classes 9-12. This experiment seems promising and is expected to thoroughly revamp the state of public education in Delhi.



Section III

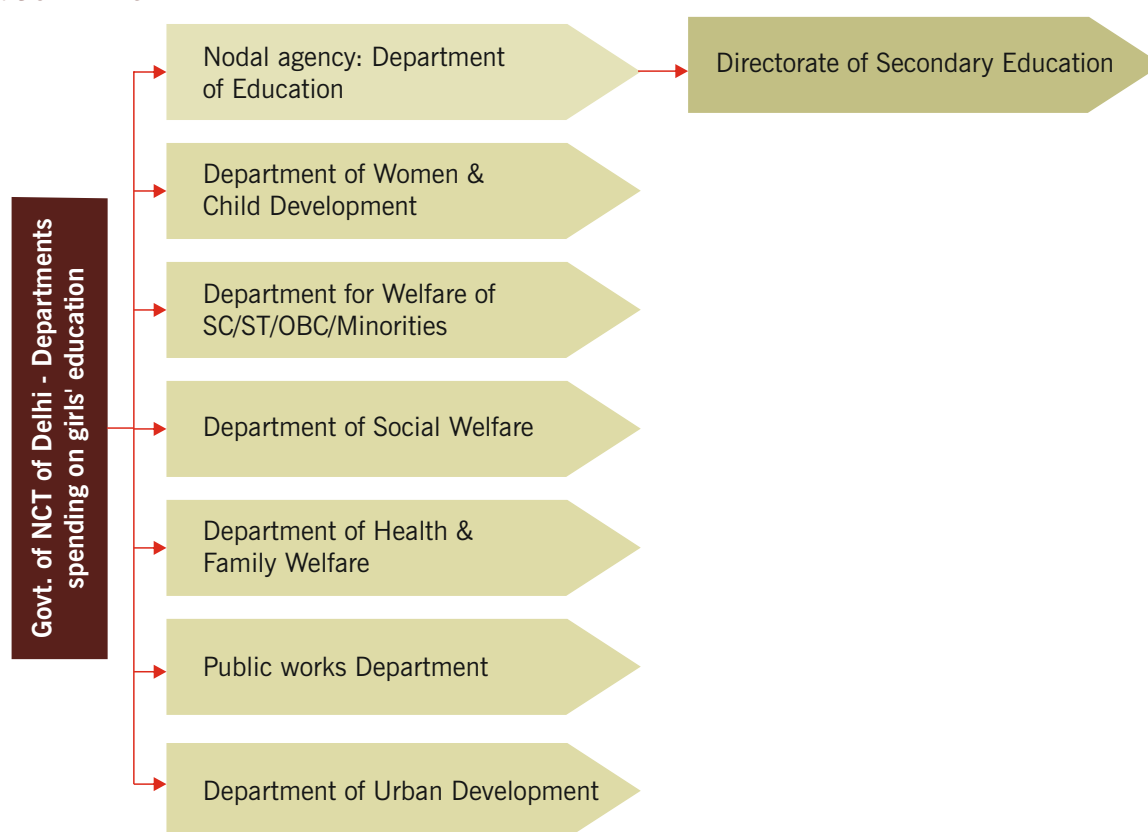
Mapping the Interventions of Government of Delhi for Girls' Education at Secondary Level

Following an overview of the state of secondary and higher education in Delhi, this section explores the girls-specific interventions therein. It is commendable that the government of NCT of Delhi allocates almost one-fourth of its budget towards education (Sisodia, 2021). The government of Delhi took a positive step towards promoting secondary education by announcing free education for all students in government schools up to class 12 ("Delhi govt schools," 2018). This seems to have had a positive impact, reflected in a decline of almost 2% in overall female dropout rates between 2018-2019 to 2019-2020.

However, much has to be done to achieve gender parity in secondary education. The retention rate for girls at secondary level is high at around 80.4% in Delhi. It is well above the national average of nearly 60% for girls. Nevertheless, it is worrisome that retention rates declined by almost 5% during 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 (UDISE+ 2019-20). This was followed by school closures owing to the COVID-19 outbreak which necessitates prioritizing retention and preventing dropouts among girls.

Key departments of Delhi government responsible for strengthening gender and equity in secondary education are listed as follows.

Figure 3.1: Mapping of state government departments spending on girls' secondary education in Delhi



Source: Delhi budget documents, various years

The Education Department is the overarching nodal agency responsible for education in Delhi. The public school system is managed by the Directorate of Education. Other departments responsible for welfare of SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, women and children undertake a range of interventions such as providing scholarships and incentives, establishing and maintaining residential hostels, and implementing schemes for adolescent girls.

Schemes and programmes to promote secondary education for girls

The Department of Education runs interventions under *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* in Delhi. Its approach towards gender and equity largely focuses on self-defence training for girls and special project for equity. At the secondary level, provision of sanitary pad vending machines and incinerators in schools is a key element of the project for equity (Department of School Education and Literacy, 2021). In the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B) 2020-2021, it was proposed to conduct menstrual health and hygiene orientation workshops for girls (Education Department, 2019). Other proposed initiatives for secondary students included cyber safety workshops on responsible use of social media, screening and interventions for substance abuse of all students in classes 6-12, and first aid workshops.

However, the interventions at secondary level have potential for expansion. Activities targeted towards girls can comprise workshops for sexual and reproductive health alongside those for career guidance, skill development and employability, and digital learning. Enrolment drives for mainstreaming out of school girls, especially those with disability too must be held regularly.

Figure 3.2: Key interventions for promoting secondary education among girls – Delhi

Schemes/incentives to promote secondary education for girls									
Residential hostels		Scholarships and incentives				Other support schemes			
Hostel for SC/ST/OBC/Minorities girls	Residential schools/hostels for urban deprived children	Pre-matric and post-matric scholarships	Reimbursement of fees to SC/ST/OBC/Min.	Assistance to buy stationery to SC/ST/OBC/Min.	Free transport, textbooks, subsidy for uniform	<i>Beti Bachao Beti Padhao</i> scheme	<i>Ladli</i> scheme	Menstrual health and management	SABLA scheme for adolescent girls

Source: Gender Budget Statement 2018-19, Delhi budget document

Interventions to promote secondary education for girls can be categorized as residential hostels, scholarships and incentives, and other support schemes. These schemes and programmes have had a positive impact in terms of a fall in dropout rates in 2019-20 as compared to previous years but have failed to address fall in overall enrolment.

Residential hostels

1. Hostel for socially disadvantaged girls

The Department of Welfare of SC/ST/OBC/Minorities runs a hostel for poor girls from these socially marginalized communities studying in class 12 and above in government institutions. Free lodging and boarding are provided to eligible girls with an annual family income below Rs. 1 lakh. The same department is also responsible for the construction of hostels attached to *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas* providing similar free residential facilities and amenities. However, a large number of such hostels are required to reach out to a larger number of disadvantaged girls in Delhi.

2. Residential schools/hostels for urban deprived children

In the AWP&B 2020-2021, it was proposed to include students in the age group 15-18 in three residential hostels run by the Delhi government with the support of Centre for Equity Studies (Education Department, 2020). These residential hostels provide free basic amenities such as food, water, shelter, and education to urban deprived children. While this is also a welcome initiative, it must be replicated across all districts to cater to many more deprived and vulnerable girl students.

Scholarships

Pre-matric (classes 1-10) and post-matric scholarships (class 11 up to higher education) for SC, ST, OBC, and minorities students are centrally sponsored, and implemented through Department of Welfare of SC/ST/OBC/Minorities in Delhi. There is also a provision of merit scholarships for students from the same social groups studying in classes 6-12 (Department of SC/ST Welfare, n.d.). The eligibility criterion for this is at least 55% marks (school level) and 60% marks (college level) in the previous examination.

Incentives

I. Monetary incentives

1. Reimbursement of tuition fee – SC/ST/OBC students

Students in classes 1-12 with an annual family income below Rs. 3 lakhs are reimbursed compulsory fees such as tuition, laboratory, and library fees (Department of SC/ST/OBC/Minorities Welfare, n.d.). They must have a score of at least 50% and an attendance rate of at least 70% in the preceding year. The amount reimbursed is Rs. 48,000 or the actual amount paid, whichever is less.

2. Assistance to buy stationery to SC/ST/OBC/Minorities

The Department of SC/ST/OBC/Minorities Welfare provides eligible students in classes 6-12 an annual assistance ranging from Rs. 450-750 to purchase necessary stationery.

II. Non-monetary incentives

Transport, textbooks, and uniforms

The Department of Women and Child Development (WCD) provides free transport facilities to girl students in rural areas. It is also responsible for free supply of textbooks and granting subsidies for purchasing school uniforms for students studying in government schools. Coaching facilities and a stipend are also provided to students in higher secondary sections to prepare for competitive examinations.



Other support schemes

Ladli scheme is an initiative of the Government of NCT of Delhi to empower girls and promote their education. Financial assistance is provided in the form of term deposits at various stages – upon birth, and subsequent admission in classes 1, 6, 9, 10, and 12 (Department of Women and Child Development, n.d.). The fixed deposit can be redeemed upon attaining 18 years of age and has passed class 10. The Directorate of Education, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, and New Delhi Municipal Corporation support the Department of WCD in the implementation of this scheme. Another initiative of the latter is menstrual health and management programmes for girls in upper primary and secondary sections.

The Department of WCD also implements two centrally sponsored schemes namely *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (BBBP) scheme and Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for the Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG or SABLA scheme). BBBP aims at improving the child sex ratio in gender critical districts through advocacy and media campaigns alongside other wide-ranging interventions. SABLA scheme focuses on strengthening health, hygiene and nutrition of adolescent girls.

While the government of Delhi has introduced a range of innovative measures to improve its schooling system, there is a long way to go in terms of interventions oriented towards girls. Incentives such as distribution of sanitary napkins and free bicycles/transport vouchers in urban areas as well, besides door-to-door awareness campaigns are crucial in the path towards achieving gender equality in education. A UNFPA study in India found that cash incentives to girls can aid in retaining them in schools and eventually reduce gender-based discrimination (UNFPA, 2016).

COVID-19 response measures

Prolonged school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic increased the likelihood of dropouts, more so among girls. Following school closures in March 2020, measures for school education announced by the Delhi government included mass promotion without examinations until class 8, online classes, data packs for students, regular SMS updates to parents regarding activities, and television broadcast of classes (“Delhi govt announces slew of education plans,” 2020).

The government of Delhi has announced free education for students who have been orphaned because of COVID-19 (Mani, 2021). They shall be given the necessary support to continue studying in the same school at least till class 8, then they can be shifted to government schools. In September 2021, schools reopened for classes 9-12 at 50% capacity amid strict restrictions. The challenge is to bring every girl back to the classroom. It would be necessary to identify and monitor instances of non-attendance and reach out to girls and their families to encourage them to continue learning. Schools must also be equipped with adequate sanitation and WASH facilities, arrangements for physical distancing and medical check-ups, to ensure that schooling continues uninterrupted despite and in adherence to the new normal.

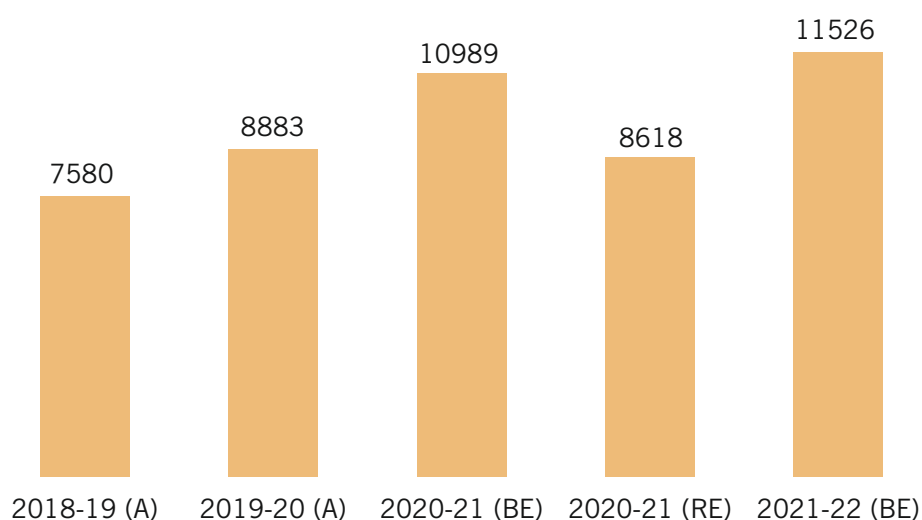


Government financing of secondary education in Delhi: How gender-inclusive?

While the mapping of interventions at secondary level indicates government efforts towards improving girls' education, it is also important to see how sustainable and inclusive these interventions are. Alongside many other factors, adequate allocation of financial resources is crucial for effective implementation of schemes on the ground. This section examines how the government of Delhi is financing secondary education over time and whether the government is adopting a gender-responsive approach in its budgeting process.

As per 2021-22 state budget document, around seven to eight departments (Refer Figure 3.1) are largely spending on secondary education. While total spending by all the departments accounts for Rs. 11,526 crores in 2021-22 (BE), a closer look reveals a substantial increase in budgetary allocation this financial year in comparison to the state spending in the last four years on secondary education. The share for secondary education in total budget of the state has increased from 16.4% in 2018-19 (A) to 16.7% in 2021-22 (BE). However, the actual expenditure in 2019-20 (A) was 17.4%. This indicates a marginal decrease in the share for secondary education sector in the state budget in the last two years. However, Delhi is the highest spending state and share of secondary education in total budget always lies between 16-17%.

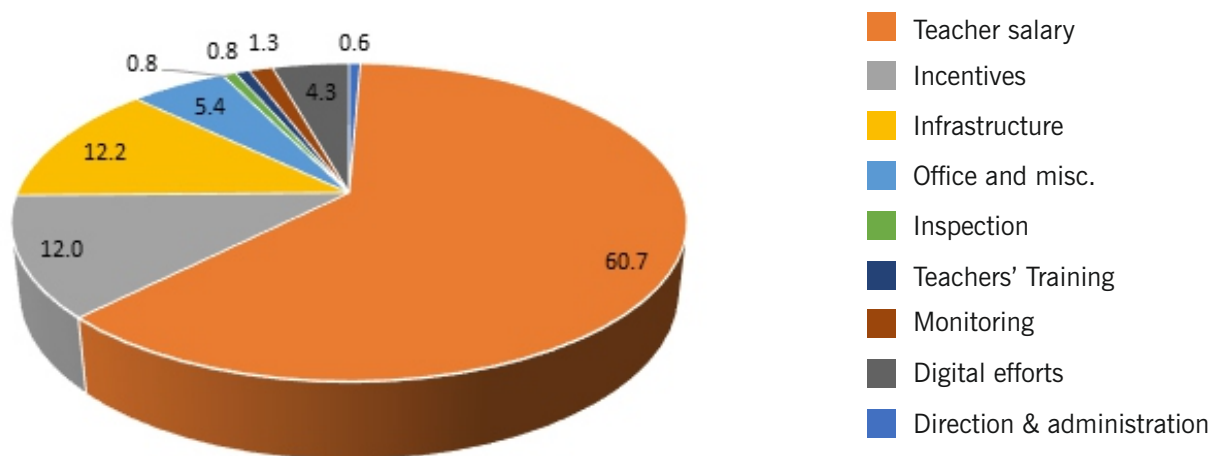
Figure 4.1: Delhi Government - spending on secondary education (Rs. crore)



Source: State budget documents, various years

Shortage of teachers is a serious concern in Delhi. The state currently has 36,508 government and government-aided school teachers teaching at secondary and higher secondary level, of which 57% are female teachers, as per UDISE+ 2019-20. There is a decrease of 7,876 teachers (11%) in Government schools in last one year (Dept. of School Education & Literacy, 2020). There are 1,173 vacant posts of teachers at secondary schools. There is also a shortage of subject teachers at secondary level. For example, pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) for social studies in the state is 199.

Figure 4.2: Distribution of budgetary resources across components of secondary education- 2021-22 (BE) (in %)



Source: Delhi state budget 2021-22

It is obvious that the largest proportion of the education budget is spent on salary, pension, and various incentives for teachers. In 2021-22, around 61% of total secondary education budget has been allocated for teachers' salary. However, given the shortage of teachers, there is a need for higher allocation for this component as well.

The second largest share of secondary education budget are expended on infrastructure (12.2%) and various monetary and non-monetary incentives to students (12%). These include scholarships, reimbursement of coaching fees for students and subsidies towards Central Board of Secondary Examination (CBSE) fee for class 10 and 12 students under Social Welfare Department

Studies have shown that the decision of parents to continue with their daughters' education once the latter attain puberty depends upon the availability of schools with proper infrastructure and effective implementation of government programmes and schemes (Kannabiran et al., 2017). Therefore, access to secondary schools and an enabling school environment are important determinants of decisions regarding girls' education.

Around 12% of the secondary education budget has been allocated towards school infrastructure. A large proportion of the secondary education budget has been allocated for establishment of geography and science laboratories and construction of digital classrooms in all government schools. In this context, it is important to note here that Delhi government has allocated around Rs. 516 crore for interventions including creation of virtual schools, digital classrooms, online assessment and science programmes for media. Digital efforts by government constitute around 4% of total secondary education budget of the state. Notwithstanding the substantial improvements in school infrastructure in the last five years, a large number of schools lack inclusive infrastructure. To illustrate, around 26% schools do not have functional toilets for boys, 34% schools do not have functional toilets for girls, and 71% schools are without incinerators (refer Figure 2.3). This emphasizes the need for prioritising inclusive infrastructure especially for girl students.

Teachers' training, monitoring & evaluation are crucial components for improved learning but remain resource-starved. A meagre 0.8% of total secondary education budget has been allocated for teachers'

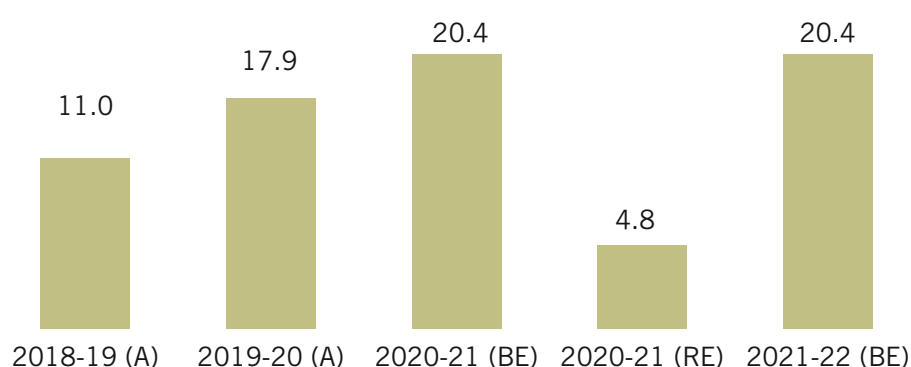
training and 1.3% for monitoring component in 2021-22 (BE). The resources for monitoring are largely allocated for installation of CCTV cameras in government schools (Figure 4.2).

Following the launch of SmSA, both the pre-service and in-service teachers' education became part of the scheme 2018-2019 onwards. Teachers' training is being financed almost entirely through SmSA. It is important to note that the Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) are functioning at below optimal level due to shortage of human resources. Delhi has 10 functional District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs) but the institutions are functioning with limited capacity because of huge staff shortage, both academic and non-academic. Thus, there is a need for the state to allocate resources adequately for institution-building (infrastructure as well as human resources) in order to ensure the availability of a cadre of professionally qualified teachers.

To facilitate teachers to undertake online NISHTHA training under the scheme, a provision has been made for financial support up to Rs. 1,000 per teacher for procuring pen-drives with pre-loaded content and modules, printing of modules and high-speed data pack to government and government-aided teachers at secondary level on reimbursement basis, and subject to successful completion of the training course.

On average, a girl in India receives less than four years of education in her lifetime (UNESCO, 2014, as cited in Agapitova and Moreno, 2017). In the last two decades, several policy measures were adopted to promote girls' education in India. Yet gender disparities in education are persistent, especially at secondary and higher secondary levels. Girls face numerous barriers in their pursuit of formal education. Therefore, constant support and specific program strategies are required not only to bring them into the schools but also to retain them therein.

Figure 4.3: Expenditure specific to girls' education reported in the state budget (Rs. crore)



Source: Detailed demand for grants, State budget documents, various years

Undoubtedly, interventions carried out by the government to promote access, enrolment and retention also benefit girls. However, evidence reveals that such general interventions are not sufficient to address the issue of gender inequality. Additional and specific interventions targeted towards girls are necessary. This makes it important to analyse the nature of interventions being undertaken by the government of Delhi while designing the secondary education budget.

The policy discourse shows that the girls' education is a state priority. As discussed in section III, the government has taken some concrete initiatives to promote girls' education. These include free

education from Class I to XII, free textbooks and uniforms, free transport facilities to girl students of rural areas, and grants-in-aid to government-aided schools to ensure menstrual hygiene. The government also provides stipend to girl students belonging to rural areas and slum areas to retain them till their education is completed.

Figure 4.3 shows the spending of Delhi government on some specific interventions for girls in the last four years. The interventions are largely through grants-in-aid to programmes for adolescent girls in schools, construction of girls' hostels for scheduled caste children, self-defence training of girls in schools, and transport allowances.

While the budget for girls-specific interventions at the secondary level remains unchanged at Rs. 20.4 crore in 2021-22, as in the previous year, the budget has been almost doubled in the last two years. Low revised estimates for 2020-21 is probably because of non-utilisation of funds for transport allowance and self-defence of girls in schools as schools were largely closed because of the pandemic.



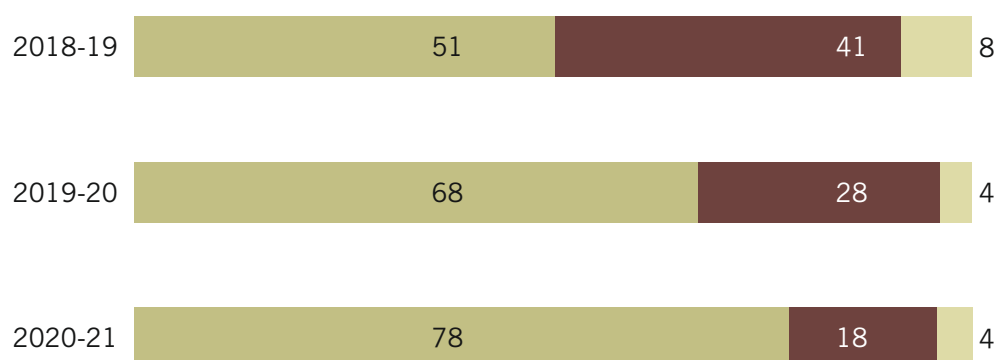
Section V

Planning and Budgeting for Girls' Secondary Education: A Special Focus on *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan*

SmSA is an overarching program for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class 12. It has been envisioned as a holistic approach towards school education. The SmSA framework recognizes gender as a critical cross-cutting equity issue. Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of the scheme. The equity agenda spelt out in the scheme is a move from an incentives and provision-based approach to an outcome-based approach (Kundu, 2019).

In 2020-21, Delhi had a total approved budget of Rs. 550 crores including a 13% spillover from the previous year. Out of this total budget, Rs. 429 crores have been approved for elementary education (EE), Rs. 100 crores for secondary education (SE), and Rs. 21 crores for teacher education (TE).

Figure 5.1: Distribution of approved outlay under SmSA for EE, SE and TE (%)



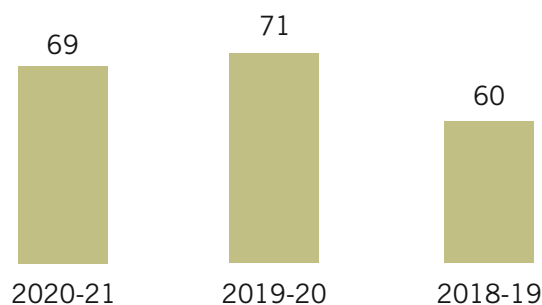
Source: Minutes of PAB meeting, SmSA, various years

The integration of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* and Teacher Education was aimed at providing holistic education. The rationale for the integration of the three schemes can be achieved only if the new scheme is able to identify where the gaps were, and where more interventions are needed; and allocate resources accordingly (Kundu & Rastogi, 2020). The pattern of allocation across these three components for the last three years shows a continuous decline in the share of secondary education in SmSA budget. It has dropped by 23 percentage points between 2018-19 and 2020-21. In fact, the approved outlay for SmSA in the state has declined from Rs. 590 crore in 2019-20 to Rs. 550 crore in 2020-21. However, the larger fact remains that in 2020-21, more than 3/4th of the approved budget has been allocated for elementary education, and only 1/4th for secondary education, which was 51% and 41% respectively in 2018-19.

Unfortunately, bringing both pre-service teacher education and in-service teachers' training under the purview of SmSA has not changed the scenario for teacher education which was not accorded priority in terms of resource also allocation. The approved budget for teacher education dropped from 8% to 4% in

the last three years (Figure 5.1). As per PAB minutes, Delhi has 10 functional DIETs. As per SmSA norms, Delhi should have 208 academic posts. However, against the 208 sanctioned posts, only 132 academic posts have been filled up, which implies of 37%. Similarly, against 45 sanctioned posts in State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT), only 11 posts have been filled up, which means 76% of the posts are vacant. This clearly indicates the need for higher resource allocation for the Teacher Education component.

Figure 5.2: Spillover in secondary education component as % of total spillover in the scheme

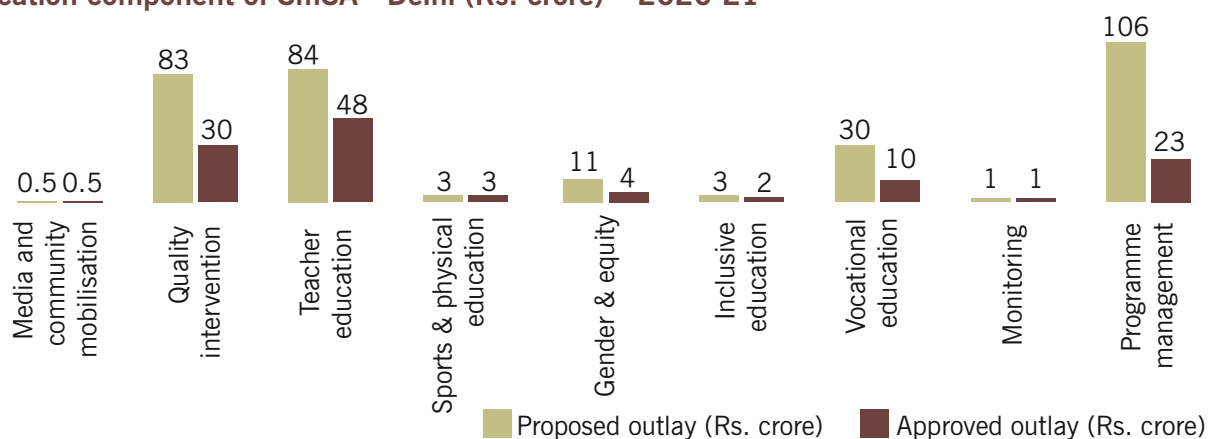


Source: Minutes of PAB meeting, SmSA, various years

The secondary education budget has shrunk from Rs. 211 crores in 2018-19 to Rs. 168 crores in 2019-20, and further lower to Rs. 100 crore in 2020-21. Along with under-allocation, the sector also witness under-utilisation and over time this has increased. In 2018-19, nearly 60% of the total spillover amount was due to under-utilisation in secondary education. The utilisation rate further decreased in the last two years. It is likely that under-allocation towards secondary education in SmSA is stemming from under-utilisation of the component.

The spending pattern in the secondary component of SmSA reflects that lesser priority is being accorded to improving secondary education by the state government. Hence, it is all the more important to see how this money is getting distributed across different components. To understand this, the study looked at the approved budget for all interventions reported in PAB minutes under secondary education vis-à-vis how much was actually demanded by states.

Figure 5.3: Comparison of proposed and approved outlay for various intervention in secondary education component of SmSA - Delhi (Rs. crore) – 2020-21



Source: Minutes of PAB meeting, SmSA, 2020-21

It can be observed from Figure 5.3 that for most of the interventions, the amount approved was lesser than what was originally proposed by the state. More often than not, lower allocation than the estimated budget affects effective implementation of the scheme on ground. Of all the interventions, Teacher Education and Quality Interventions component receive a higher share of the secondary education budget under SmSA. In 2020-21, against a demand of Rs. 83 crores, the PAB has approved Rs. 48 crores for Teacher education, which is only 57% of the resource demanded. Gender & Equity is one of the components where the approved budget is merely 36% of the proposed outlay. A disaggregation of interventions under this particular component shows the budget heads under which the state has demanded resources (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Proposed vs. approved outlay in 'Gender & Equity' component in secondary education - 2020-21

	Proposed (Rs. crore)	Approved (Rs. crore)
Self Defence Training (up to Class X or XII)	0.6	0.5
Special Projects for Equity - (NR) (Secondary) (Sanitary pad vending machine & incinerator)	9.4	3.2
Special project for equity - menstrual health & hygiene	1.43	0.41

Source: Minutes of PAB meeting, SmSA, 2020-21

As per the SmSA framework, the state reports all the 100% girls-specific interventions under the Gender & Equity component. The components under this intervention for which the state has made resource demand in 2020-21 are self-defence training, installation of incinerators in school and promotion of menstrual health and hygiene (Table 5.1). Lower budgetary approval is definitely a serious challenge; however, for many of these interventions, there is no demand for resources from the Delhi government to the PAB. This implies a lack of plan or vision on the part of the state government for implementing such interventions under SmSA.

As per UDISE+ 2019-20, the state has around 9,668 children with disability studying at secondary and higher secondary level of education, of which about 4,110 are girls. However, the PAB minutes for 2020-21 show an approved allocation of Rs. 0.5 crore as stipend for 2538 girls. This implies that 61% of the enrolled girls with disability are not getting the monetary support as stipulated in the guidelines. A total of Rs. 1.72 crore has been approved under SmSA for children with disability studying at secondary level. Given that these children are more vulnerable and a large number of children in the 15-19 age group are still out of school, there is a need for adequate resource support to make the scheme inclusive.



Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Education is one of the key priority areas of Delhi government. The new government promised to revamp the whole education system right from schools to higher education institutions to create a skilled workforce. However, in the school education sector, especially at the secondary level, the presence of private players is as prominent as that of the government. At secondary and higher secondary level, there are 60% government and government-aided schools and 40% privately-run schools. The recent trends are interesting as the government schools are catering to around 68% of the students as 32% of the students are enrolled in private schools. A gender-wise distribution of enrolment shows that girls are largely enrolled at government and government-aided schools, whereas private schools are the preferred option for boys. Gender disparity is quite significant in the state, especially at secondary level.

Over time, the government of Delhi has taken a number of policy measures to incentivise and increase access of secondary education for girls. For instance, the government has made secondary education free for all girls. This has improved the access, enrolment, retention and quality of learning among girls. However, the incidence of dropout in the state is as high as 14% at secondary level. Although it is higher among boys, about 12% of the girls dropped out before completing secondary education as per data from UDISE+ 2019-20.

One of the crucial factors influencing the performance of the state in secondary education is public investment in the sector. In the last five years, state spending on secondary education has increased not only in absolute terms, but also in proportion to the total expenditure by the state. This definitely reflects policy priority towards secondary education. Delhi has few programmes exclusively designed for girls, but there are a number of interventions acting as enablers to girls' education. These include providing free textbooks, uniforms, and stipends, besides establishing various residential schools and hostels. There are also several interventions to ensure inclusivity in education.

While the share of the state government in secondary education is increasing, the contribution of the central government towards the same through grants-in-aid is declining. This is observed in the case of SmSA. In the last three years (since its inception in 2018-19), there has been a decline in the amount of approved outlay. The share of secondary education in the total SmSA outlay has also been falling. Unfortunately, in the last three years, the funds allocated under secondary component of SMSA have not been fully utilised. In 2020-21, more than 69% of the spillover under SmSA is because of under-spending in secondary education. Unfortunately, the fund utilisation patterns has not been satisfactory in the last two years.

Every year, there is a gap in the resources demanded by the state and those sanctioned under the Project Approval Board for each intervention related to secondary education. The government of NCT of Delhi must demand resources for other crucial components of girls' education such as menstrual health and hygiene, safety of girls en route and within schools, besides gender sensitisation of teachers.

While the overall status of girls' education in Delhi has improved, it is most apparent at the secondary level. The transition rate is 94% from secondary to higher secondary as compared to 98% from elementary to secondary. This implies that majority of the girls in Delhi are attending school education.

Hence, the state needs to keep up its efforts to materialise the goal of universal access to school education as envisaged in the NEP 2020. The state government has decided to implement NEP 2020 in Delhi and is in the process of formulating its implementation policy based on the NEP recommendations.

It has already been established that completion of school education for a girl is the most powerful and consistent factor in light of increase in earnings, labour force participation, social integration, political participation, improved personal and family's health, participation in household decision making, and reduction in instances of child marriage and teenage pregnancy (Dollar & Gatti, 1999; CRY, 2020). Therefore, ensuring school education for all girls will also lead to larger benefits for the society.

The state has made remarkable gains. There is still a long way to go for establishing a high quality, affordable and equitable education system with equal opportunities for all. In light of the findings from the analysis, the study suggests a range of viable policy measures that Delhi could implement to ensure quality secondary education for all girls.

Policy recommendations

Need for higher investment to universalise free secondary education for girls

Delhi has 8.1 lakh girls in the age group of 15-19 years, who constitute 8.4% of its population. As per the recent National Statistical Office survey (75th round), 9% of girls in this age in the state have completed elementary education but dropped out before completing class 12 (National Statistical Office, 2019). The state is providing free secondary education to those enrolled, but additional financial resources are required to integrate the already dropped out children. A cost estimation at all-India level by CBGA-CRY shows that to provide free secondary education to a girl who has dropped out after completing elementary education, the government needs to spend around Rs. 34,661-48,194 per girl per annum. As per capita estimate, the government would need at least Rs. 302 crore (approximate) in addition to the current expenditure to bring all eligible girls within the ambit of secondary school education system. After COVID-19, there integrate reverse migration of students from private schools to government schools. For this, additional resources will be required to strengthen the existing school system.

A sectoral analysis of the status of secondary education for girls is need of the hour

Delhi has succeeded considerably in reducing gender disparity, but gender inequity in secondary education is still a challenge, especially in rural Delhi and slum areas. Girls faces various kinds of barriers including socio-economic, cultural, and institutional ones. Therefore, it is important to first understand the factors impacting their schooling decisions to address such challenges. Development of context-specific interventions is possible only after a rigorous analysis of the gender situation in different regions and across social and economic groups. Unfortunately, lack of availability of disaggregated data at the implementation level is a challenge in the policy domain. Effective policy implementation demands a thorough sectoral analysis and availability of data at disaggregated levels.

Need for immediate recruitment of subject teachers and teacher educators in the state

The PTR for subject teachers is not up to the mark in the state, as many schools have less than four subject teachers. The shortage of head teachers is also a challenge. The state is managing the situation



by recruiting guest teachers. Higher education access needs to be improved and over-dependence on guest-teachers must be reduced.

As a large number of government girls' schools do not offer STEM subjects, girls, especially those from marginalised communities have limited access to science and maths education. The government should fill the vacant posts immediately and preference should be given to women teachers.

There is a need for higher recruitment of professionally qualified teachers who are eligible to teach at the secondary level. They must also be provided adequate opportunities to avail Teacher Education. However, there is shortage of academic staff both responsible for pre-service and in-service teacher education in the DIETs as well as in SCERT. Immediate policy attention is required to address these institutional bottlenecks.

Upward revision of scholarship amount for girls and timely disbursement

Household decisions to send girls to school at the secondary level largely depends on the direct cost of education. Therefore, provision of scholarships is a strong enabler for girls' education. Delhi government provides a number of scholarships to students to arrest dropping out. However, studies have shown that the amount of scholarship is not only insufficient but also irregular. It is mostly disbursed only after the academic year, which does not relieve the students of the burden and anxiety (M.V. Foundation, 2015). Therefore, government should increase the amount of the scholarship and make it inflation-indexed as well. There should be more transparency in the process right from application to disbursement.

Creating gender awareness among community members

Despite several interventions, the status of girls' education in Delhi is not up to the mark. One of the factors responsible for this outcome is the patriarchal mindset of people. While continuous engagement of parents with teachers and students through Mega Parent Teacher Meetings, and restructuring of School Management Committees are regular practices at elementary level, this is not done frequently at secondary level. Therefore, social practices of early marriage of girls are still prevalent in Delhi. The patriarchal structure of the society deprives girls from exercising their basic human rights. As a conscious policy decision, the government needs to promote gender-responsive policies across all sectors. There is a need for community-level campaigns to change community gender norms which are socially constructed. For this purpose, a substantial share of SmSA budget should be spent on gender-sensitisation training of teachers, school management committee members, as well as community members.

Enhancing investment in creating and institutionalising child protection policies

NEP 2020 acknowledges the importance of ensuring girls' safety as an enabler to complete their education. There is also growing evidence on children's increased presence online which has been accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This points towards an urgent need to prioritise investment in creating robust child protection policies to ensure safety en route and within schools, besides including components on cyber safety. In addition, investments need to be made for capacity-building of teachers, children, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure a safe learning environment for girls.



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Annexure

Table 1: Projected population in 15-19 age group and gender-wise distribution in 2021 - Delhi

Population			Proportion of total population (in %)		
Female	Male	Persons	Female	Male	Persons
8,11,000	9,29,000	17,40,000	8.4	8.5	8.5

Source: National Commission on Population (2020, p. 186-187)

Table 2: Population in 15-19 age group by gender and social categories - Delhi

	Female	Male	Persons
Total	7,42,257	9,25,118	16,67,375
SC	1,44,453	1,70,870	3,15,323
ST	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

Source: Census 2011

Table 3: Enrolment in secondary and higher secondary sections by gender and social category - Delhi

	Enrolment			Proportion of total enrolment in %		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
General	4,67,985	5,13,905	9,81,890	79.3	80.4	79.9
OBC	42,525	48,909	91,434	7.2	7.7	7.4
SC	77,006	73,073	1,50,079	13.0	11.4	12.2
ST	2,824	3,107	5,931	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total	5,90,340	6,38,994	12,29,334	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: UDISE+ 2019-20

Table 4: Estimates of out of school children in the age group 14-17 – Delhi

	Female	Male	Total
Projected population - 2021	6,18,000	7,16,000	13,34,000
Secondary and higher secondary enrolment - 2019-20	5,90,340	6,38,994	12,29,334
Out of school children (Projection - enrolment)	27,660	77,006	1,04,666

Source: Authors' computations based on UDISE+ 2019-20



Table 5: Population with disability in 10-19 age group - Delhi

Female	Male	Persons
15,486	22,702	38,188

Source: Census 2011

Table 6: Number of students with disability in secondary and higher secondary section - Delhi

Female	Male	Total
4,110	5,558	9,668

Source: UDISE+ 2019-20





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