

A World Bank project in Africa established that the children of women with just five years of school had a 40 percent better survival rate than the children of women who had less than five years in class. A Yale University study showed that the heights and weights for new born children of women with a basic education were consistently higher than those of the babies born to uneducated women. A UNESCO project demonstrated that giving women just a primary school education decreases child mortality by five percent to 10 percent

Early marriage sharply reduces girl's access to education (*Source – Huq and Amin 2001*). After marriage, young girl's access to formal and even non-formal education is severely limited because of a lack of mobility, domestic burdens, child bearing, and societal norms that view marriage and schooling incompatible. Research shows that the enrollment of young women in secondary school is inversely related to the proportion of girls married before the age of 18 (*Source - DHS data since 1990*).



The World Bank estimated that for every four years of education, fertility is reduced by about one birth for mother. The reason Kerala's fertility rate is 1.7

per couple while Bihar's is over four is that Kerala's women are educated and most of Bihar's are not.

In many studies, the education of girls has been shown to lead to more productive farming and in turn decline in malnutrition. Educate a girl, and you benefit a community!

Education enhances a girl's income-earning potential and socio economic status. United Nations, World Bank, and U.S. studies amply demonstrate that women invest in their earnings directly in health, welfare, and education of their children, thus creating a long-term cycle of poverty reduction that spans generations.

The evidence shows that increased schooling of mothers has a measurable impact on the health of their children, on the future schooling of the child, and on the child's adult productivity. The children of the educated mothers consistently out-perform children with educated fathers and illiterate mothers.

Sadly, the world is not rushing to take up the challenge of educating the girls, who lag consistently behind boys in access to education throughout the developing world. Some 65 million girls around the world never see the inside of a class room. And yet not educating them costs the world more than putting them through school.

Realizing this, the Indian Government has started many initiatives. An amendment has been made to the scheme; Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) for providing additional components for education of girls at elementary level and started a new programme called National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL).

NPEGEL aims at providing education to under privileged / disadvantaged girls from class I to VIII. It is an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to all children including the girl child, through provision of community owned quality Education in a mission mode.

IMPLEMENTATION OF NPEGEL IN TEN MANDALS OF WARANGAL DISTRICT

Tharuni has been assigned the task of implementation of NPEGEL programme in **Ten Mandals** of Warangal district by establishing **61 Cluster Schools** catering for **200 villages**.

- **Objectives:** The main objectives of NPEGEL are

1. To develop and promote facilities to provide access and to facilitate retention of girls and to ensure greater participation of women and girls in the field of education.
2. To improve the quality of education through various interventions and to stress upon the relevance and quality of girls' education for their empowerment.

- **Strategy and Plan for implementing NPEGEL:**

- Model Cluster School (MCS): Girl child friendly Cluster schools will be opened in all the Ten Mandals. About 61 MCSs will be opened catering to 200 villages in selected lead schools.
- The MCSs were selected depending on the density of SC/ST/OBC/Minority girl population.
- The girl child atmosphere would be created in all MCS by taking up special Additional Interventions along with those the scheme envisages. All these facilities and infrastructure will be used by all the schools in that cluster, by rotation.
- The Additional interventions the NPEGEL supports are Remedial Material for Slow learners, vocational training, Teacher training, Short term Motivational Camps and running of ECE Centers.
- The Special **Additional interventions** which will be taken up by **Tharuni** are as follows:
 1. A Counseling Centre for Health, Personality Development, Rights (Child Rights & Legal Rights) would be established in all the MCSs. One Student friendly Teacher will be trained as Counsellor and the required material like books, FAQs, posters, flip charts and question box will be maintained in the counselling centre.
 2. Every year two guest lectures along with a film show will be arranged in the model cluster school on various girl child related topics like Menstruation, hygiene, nutrition, child rights, legal rights, gender issues, sexuality education, HIV/AIDS, employment opportunities, etc.
 3. A small library will be maintained in all Mandal cluster schools and books depicting success stories of great women, biographies, moral values, history and culture, health, entertainment, general knowledge, etc will be available for the girls. A teacher will be kept in charge of the library and library cards will be issued to the students so that they can regularly use the library.
 4. Special classes will be held for the girls on spoken English, cookery recipies, etiquette, culture, manners, communication skills, meditation, ethics and values.

5. Keeping in view our strong belief in the concept of “*sound mind in a sound Body*”, the girls will be encouraged to take part in indoor and out door games and regular competitions will be held every six months in their schools. A Division level “Sports Meet” will be organised every year to bring out the sporting skills among the girls.
6. Martial Arts like Karate, judo, etc are a must for the girls in these days and hence regular classes will be held in the Mandal cluster schools depending on the demand. Yoga and other exercises will be taught in the regular classes and every day the evening school hours will be extended to adjust the time for play and exercises.
7. Music and dance classes will be organised depending on the demand from the girls. The girls will be encouraged to learn the folk arts from their grand parents to continue the culture and traditions of their past. For this purpose, linkages will be arranged with local music and art academies duly giving preference to local artists.
8. Art and painting sessions will be arranged as part of the regular curriculum and girls will be encouraged to send their paintings, etc for competitions and exhibitions on a regular basis.
9. Vocational centers will be opened in all Mandal cluster schools. Products with low cost materials will be produced by the girls and a market link up will be arranged through DWCREA groups, Floriculture, flower decoration, fabric painting, home made sweets, pickles, bakery items, paper covers making, cloth bags, embroidery items, will be taught and the girls will be encouraged to sell the products. This activity will be taken up during Dasara and Sankranthi holidays only.
10. Capacity building will be done for the girls by giving training in electric repairs, radio and TV repairs, computer hardware, cycle repair, bore well pump repairs, home care services, telephone operation, receptionist training, dayi trainings, etc so that in the future they can be self sufficient and earn their livelihood. For this local and other agencies support will be taken.
11. Thrift will be encouraged among the girls and post office savings accounts will be opened for each group. The girls can take loans for their personal expenditure and also can support their families when a need arises.
12. Gardening will be encouraged by the girls in and around the school premises. Social work will be taken up to develop a service attitude among the girls. NCC camps will be set up in all Mandal cluster schools.

E C E CENTRES :

1. Community based ECE centers will be opened where there is no Anganwadi Centre / ECE centers existing.

2. The ECE centers will be in the form of play schools and the children will learn in a joyful learning method

Special Short Term Motivational Camps :

After mobilizing the girls, they will be kept in a short term motivational camp for a period of two months in Mandal cluster schools. Trained volunteers will be appointed to motivate the girls.

Free Health Camps :

Free Health camps will be held every month in the Mandal cluster school with the help of local gynecologists and pediatricians (Children's specialists). Specialist camps like eye camps, dental camps, etc will be organised based on the need.

Community Mobilization :

Kalajathas, film shows and meetings will be held in the villages on the importance of girl child education, social evils and gender issues.

Teachers Training :

Teachers and teacher educators will be trained for gender sensitization.

OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT:

- A Memorandum of Understanding has been entered between Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Warangal and Tharuni, a voluntary organisation on 14th Sept. 2004 for implementation of NPEGEL (National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level) Project in 61 cluster schools spread over 10 Mandals of Warangal district for a period of two academic years. The District Collector & Chairman SSA Warangal and the Director, Tharuni are signatories to this MOU.
- The project was formally launched by Mayor, Warangal on 11th November 2004 at ZPSS, Upparapally in Wardhannapet Mandal. The APC, DPEP Warangal also graced the occasion.
- NPEGEL Project Survey in 400 villages benefited **560 Dropout girl children**. They were rescued from child labour and were admitted into schools.

- About 50 Child Rights Forums/Girl Child Rights Forums were formed and 28 Balika Sanghams involving the Girl students were set up in the schools.
- The Library Books and furniture for all the 28 budgeted Model Cluster Schools have been purchased and **Libraries** have been set up in all these schools. Sports and Music equipment has been purchased and given to the entire 28 Model cluster Schools.
- In Eighteen villages Community Awareness programs on the issues like Child Labour and Child Marriages was taken up which involved Kalajathas, Torch Rallies and Village Meetings as per the agreed contribution from Tharuni. About 10 girls from each school were trained in folk art forms on the issues of girl children.