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# TOWARDS INCLUSIVE BUDGETING FOR DALIT WOMEN



ALL INDIA DALIT MAHILA ADHIKAR MANCH

## About All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch

All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM) is a forum led by Dalit Women, committed to challenge the nexus of patriarchy and caste oppression which has marginalized Dalit Women for centuries. AIDMAM has membership and solidarity of non-Dalit women, Dalit men and other human rights defenders committed to the cause of protection and promotion of the rights of Dalit Women. Promoting leadership of Dalit Women, AIDMAM nurtures women leaders towards greater participation in politics and civil society. This is a campaign towards right to life, economic security, development, dignity and equality in a violence-free society for Dalit women.

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# Towards inclusive budgeting for Dalit women

*The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBVS) was launched to enable girls, predominantly from marginalized communities, to avail upper primary education through residential schooling. Although introduced as a vehicle to empower impoverished girls, the scheme has so far been unable to redress structural inequalities that impede their access to education. This Briefing Paper draws from a study of the KGBV scheme to highlight existing gaps in policy and implementation. Data collected from 12 KGBVs in Aurangabad and Munger districts of Bihar reveal that aspirations of Dalit girls and their parents for quality education remain largely unfulfilled. Field based observations further support the view that resource allocations for KGBVS fall far below the budgets of comparable schemes meant for the general population, which then reflects in poor quality of infrastructure and services in KGBVs.*

## INTRODUCTION

Expanding the notion of empowerment, the Working Group on Women's Agency and Child Rights formed for the Twelfth Five Year Plan (12<sup>th</sup> FYP) emphasized that empowerment must enable all women to increase their choices and capabilities. In order to achieve substantive equality, the overall framework should take steps to address the specific vulnerabilities faced by women belonging to the most marginalized sections of society (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2012).

The 12<sup>th</sup> FYP is a reflection of the Indian Government's long standing constitutional and policy commitment to safeguard the rights of members of the Scheduled Castes (SCs). Articles 16(4) and 15(4) of the Constitution allow the State to provide reservations in favour of SCs in employment and education respectively. Relaxations with regard to eligibility criteria exist to encourage representation of SCs in proportion to their population. Articles 330, 332 and 334 ensure reservation of seats for SCs in the state and central legislative bodies. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution guarantee reserved seats for SCs in local rural and urban bodies, within which a minimum of one-third seats are reserved for SC women. Significant legislations include the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.<sup>1</sup> Sections 3(xi) and 3(xii) of this Act include specific clauses to protect SC women from violence. The Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) was launched in the year 1979, to bridge gaps in the socio-economic development of SCs. It channelizes benefits to SCs through identified schemes, for which states/Union Territories and central ministries have to earmark funds proportionate to their population.

Over the last 67 years since independence, there has been a substantial increase in government employment and political representation of SCs and definite improvements in their human development indicators (Thorat, 2005). Despite these gains, the condition of *Dalits*, especially Dalit women continues to remain abysmal. Dalit women/girls are arguably the most marginalized, as they continue to face discrimination at multiple levels.

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<sup>1</sup>The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 was introduced to prevent atrocities against SCs and Scheduled Tribes (ST), provide special courts for trials and ensure relief and rehabilitation of victims.

**Table 1:** Select indicators on the status of Dalits

INDICATORS	STATUS
<b>Poverty ratio</b> <i>Source:</i> Planning Commission (2011-12)	All India: Rural (25.7%); Urban (13.7%) SCs: Rural (31.5%); Urban (21.7%)
<b>Percentage of women with BMI&lt;18.5</b> <i>Source:</i> NFHS 3	All India: 35.6% SCs: 41.2%
<b>Under five Mortality Rate</b> <i>Source:</i> NFHS 3	All India: 74.3/1000 SC: 88.1/1000
<b>Infant Mortality Rate</b> <i>Source:</i> NFHS 3	Other categories:48.9/1000 SC: 66.4/1000
<b>Households with no toilet facility</b> <i>Source:</i> NSS 65 <sup>th</sup> Round	All India: 49.2% SC: 65%
<b>Literacy Rates</b> <i>Source:</i> NSS 64 <sup>th</sup> Round	All India (female): 85.5% SC (female): 69%
<b>Literacy Rates (Rural)</b> <i>Source:</i> NSS 64 <sup>th</sup> Round	All India (female): 68.8% SC (female): 49.9%
<b>Out of school children (6-17 years), 2007–08</b> <i>Source:</i> Calculated from NSS 64 <sup>th</sup> Round	All India (female): 21.8% SC (female): 25.0%
<b>Net Attendance Ratio at Upper Primary Level (Urban), 2007–08</b> <i>Source:</i> Calculated from NSS 64 <sup>th</sup> Round	All India (female): 72.3% SC (female): 60.3%

Their marginalized status is reflected most starkly when indicators for Dalit women/girls are compared to national averages (refer Table 1).

### EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

The marginalization of Dalit women is specifically compounded by the absence of quality education and supportive infrastructure. Quality education has for long been regarded as a vehicle for achieving dignity and confidence for vulnerable groups. It is a medium that enables accumulation of cultural capital that can then be converted into secure employment for a raise in social and economic standing (Jeffry et al. 2004). In India, access to formal education has been a critical factor in the economic empowerment of marginalized communities (ibid., 2005).

In its continuing pursuit for greater equality in education, the government has introduced a number of legislations and policies, primary among which are the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE) and the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, 2001 (SSA).

The enactment of the RTE in 2009 was a landmark step that provided legal underpinning to attain the goal of universal elementary education in the country. The ongoing *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* became the primary vehicle to operationalize the RTE Act. The three main objectives of SSA include universal access and retention; bridging of gender and social gaps in enrollment levels; and enhancement of learning levels of all children.

RTE strengthens and supports a range of measures that have been implemented to counter existing “deep rooted inequalities and injustices” (Valeskar, 2010) historically faced by SCs in the country. The Act makes it obligatory for the appropriate government to ensure free elementary education, including admission in schools and completion of studies for children between the ages of six and fourteen years (refer Box 1 for schemes which support education of SC students).

In addition, states like Madhya Pradesh and Bihar have been providing free bicycles to SC girls. The 12<sup>th</sup> FYP has provided budgetary support of Rs. 3,43,028 crore to the Department of School and Secondary Education, under which SSA is to receive Rs. 1,92,726 crore for the entire plan period (2012:122).

Recent data show that there have been significant improvements in the education index of most backward states, with the country registering a change of 62 percentage points from 1999-2000 to 2011-12 (IAMR, 2011). This is also indicative of a convergence of literacy rates across marginalized groups with the national average (ibid.). Further, there have been improvements in the access of SC girls to primary education and a decrease in the gender gap in education at the primary level. For example, the percentage of enrollment of SC girls to total SC enrollment in primary classes has increased from 42.9 per cent in 1994-95 (IGNOU, 2008) to 48.42 per cent in 2012-13 (DISE, 2013).

### Box 1: Schemes to support education of SC students

Post-Matric Scholarship scheme

Pre-Matric Scholarships for Children of those Engaged in Unclean Occupations

Central Sector Scholarship Scheme for Top Class Education for SC students

National Overseas Scholarships for SC etc.

Candidates, Special Educational Development Programme for SC Girls belonging to Low Literacy Levels

Upgradation of merit of SC students and scheme of free coaching

Source: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Despite these achievements in education of Dalit girls, numerous challenges remain. As documented in several independent reports and evaluation studies, these include: the lack of connecting roads and long distances between home and school, high incidence of domestic work and child labour, early marriage and childbirth, poor school infrastructure and restricted choice to continue education (Unni, 2009). The absence of adequate good quality residential schools for Dalit girls and lower expectation of returns from their education (with regard to employability) is also well established (Maertens, 2011).

Although these are overarching problems, children from the SC, ST and Muslim communities are more likely to be confounded with these barriers at all levels of education (Unni, 2009). For instance, the 12<sup>th</sup> FYP plan notes that the drop-out rates for SCs and other disadvantaged groups is significantly higher than the national average and that special focus is required to reduce the number of out of school (OoS) children from these social groups (ibid., para. 21.6).

### THE KGBV SCHEME: A SECOND CHANCE AT EDUCATION FOR DALIT GIRLS?

Recognizing the fact that poor and unsafe access to schools has a significant bearing on the dropout and enrollment rate of girls from disadvantaged families, the Government of India initiated the *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya* scheme in 2004.

The objective was to create residential school facilities for girls at the upper primary level (from Class VI to VIII). Under this scheme, 75 per cent reservation is provided for girls belonging to SC, ST, Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and minority communities. Girls from families that are below



the poverty line are given priority for the remaining 25 per cent seats. The scheme is operational in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs), defined as those with rural female literacy rate below the national average as per Census 2001 and gender gap in literacy higher than the national average (2001).

#### **Box 2: Objective and Operational Mechanism of KGBVS**

**Objective:** To ensure access and quality education to girls from disadvantaged groups.

**Target group:** SC, ST, OBC and Minority communities.

**Operational Mechanism:** Temporary location in rented or other available government buildings, followed by suitable construction upon identification of land.

Three models for implementation with separate financial norms defined, which include:

**Model I:** Schools with hostels for 100 girls;

**Model II:** Schools with hostels for 50 girls; and

**Model III:** Hostels in existing schools for 50 girls.

**Funding:** 65 per cent funded by Central Government and 35 per cent by the State Government.

**Monitoring, Evaluation & Training:** Done by the State SSA Society. Training for teachers and staff at residential schools is coordinated by the District Institutes of Educational Training, Block Resource Centres and *Mahila Samakhya* Resource Groups.

*Source:* Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme: Revised Guidelines

Within these blocks, areas with high concentration of SC, ST, minority populations, high percentage of OoS girls, small scattered habitations and low female literacy rates are given priority. During the Eleventh Five Year Plan period, KGBVS was merged with the SSA and is now implemented within the overall framework of the RTE Act, 2009. Box 2 lists the objective and operational details of the scheme.

## **THE STUDY**

A study was undertaken by the All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM) in 2012-13 with the objective of analyzing the priority accorded to Dalit girls in education policy,

**Table 2: Literacy rates**

All India	Bihar
All communities: 74.02% <i>Source: Census, 2011</i>	All communities: 63.8% <i>Source: Census, 2011</i>
SC: 73% <i>Source: NSSO, 2008-10</i>	SCs: 42.5% <i>Source: NSSO, 2008-10</i>
	Male SCs: 54.3% <i>Source: NSSO, 2008-10</i>
	Female SCs: 29.1% <i>Source: NSSO, 2008-10</i>

with a specific focus on KGBVS. The study was conducted in two districts of Bihar<sup>2</sup> namely Aurangabad and Munger<sup>3</sup> (refer Table 2 for literacy rates).

The study entailed secondary analysis of policy and budget documents, followed by primary data collection in 12 KGBVs across two districts. Testimonies of Dalit girls (including those currently enrolled, those who had dropped out as well as OoS children), their parents and school and government officials were documented through structured interviews (see Annexure I for details on methodology). In the following section, the key findings of the study are summarized, followed by a set of recommendations to address existing gaps in policy design and implementation.

## KEY FINDINGS

### I. GAPS IN POLICY DESIGN

Despite its inclusive vision to bring the hitherto marginalized to the mainstream, KGBV like several other initiatives flounders on account of deeper structural biases that permeate its basic design.

**Limited KGBVs and numerous OoS girls:** While KGBVs were introduced to provide girl students from marginalized rural backgrounds an opportunity to pursue education; its

<sup>2</sup>SCs in the state comprise 16 per cent of its total population (Census 2011) and 54.4 per cent people live below the poverty line in Bihar (Tendulkar Committee Report, 2009).

<sup>3</sup>Aurangabad and Munger have 23.5 per cent and 13.3 per cent SCs living in them, respectively. The literacy rates of the two districts are 72.7 per cent for Aurangabad (female, 62.05 per cent) and 73.3 per cent for Munger (female, 65.5 per cent) (Census, 2011).

*“I have repeatedly failed to admit my daughter in the local KGBV. There are just not enough seats for all deserving students.”*

— Father of an out of school girl in Kyap Village, Rahiganj Block, Aurangabad district

limited reach against an overwhelming demand presents some serious challenges. Interviews with KGBV teachers and parents in Munger and Aurangabad revealed how drastically inadequate the scheme is with regard to attaining the goal of universal literacy and right to education for those belonging to disadvantaged families.

The enrollment rate for SC girls in Bihar is 48.5 per cent at the primary level and 46.1 per cent at the upper primary level (DISE, 2011-12). With no more than 100 girls per block able to avail educational benefits under the KGBVS, the needs of only a very small percentage of OoS girls are addressed under the scheme. This observation is corroborated by other studies. For instance, data collected in Purulia district of West Bengal, revealed that a mere 5 per cent of all OoS girls in the district were enrolled in KGBVs (Saxena, 2012). Taking note of this critical gap, the 12<sup>th</sup> FYP has proposed an additional KGBV per EBB, with increased focus on blocks with high SC, ST and Muslim populations (op.cit., para. 21.61).

**The poorest among the disadvantaged remain excluded:** The study documented important evidence which suggests that the poorest among the target groups of the KGBVS are unable to avail benefits under the scheme. Parents of girls who had dropped out or remain OoS shared that reliance on their daughter’s labour for financial returns was an important reason for keeping them out of school. 75 per cent of respondents from among the parents interviewed worked as manual agricultural labourers or brick kiln workers and 88 per cent were found to earn less than Rs. 1000 per month. 78 per cent of the parents interviewed cited dependence on their daughters’ labour as a deterrent in allowing them to pursue higher education. Even in cases where parents did not expect their daughters to contribute to family income, they were expected to provide care support to younger siblings. Exclusion also stemmed from a lack of awareness. A significant 40 per cent of parents of OoS girls were not aware of the scheme. 5 per cent of respondents complained that authorities had taken money to admit children into the hostels.

**What after Class VIII?** Students, parents and teachers alike shared their anxieties about the lack of suitable opportunities for girls once they completed Class VIII. Several parents noted that by the time the girls exited the KGBV they neither had the necessary skills to seek gainful employment nor the institutional support to pursue higher education. All

student respondents in the survey expressed their desire to study beyond Class VIII.

**Multiple forms of discrimination:** Numerous parents and students shared personal experiences of the apathetic attitudes of teachers in KGBVs towards Dalit girls. Officials talked about the lack of adequate training and sensitization among teachers as a leading cause of their misbehavior.

Another glaring demonstration of biased behavior was the singling out of Dalit girls for cleaning the KGBVs. While provisions in existing budgetary outlays include allocations for support staff, the study revealed that not one KGBV employed cleaning personnel as support staff. As a result, toilets, rooms and classes were cleaned by students, mainly Dalit girls, who then complained of fatigue, physical strain and frequent bouts of illness. Fear of such institutionalized forms of discrimination was cited by parents of OoS girls as one of the main reasons for not availing the KGBVs. At least 7 per cent parents, who were interviewed, shared cases of Dalit girls being discriminated against by fellow students and teachers.

**Sexual harassment, poor safety and the absence of remedial measures:** Several examples of sexual harassment followed by the absence of proper investigations were documented over the course of this study. Parents expressed need for an independent grievance redressal mechanism. Students affirmed the same. Absence of physical safety was cited by 5 per cent parents as a deterring factor in sending their children to schools.

*“I quit living in a KGBV to take care of my siblings. My parents convinced me that I would have done the same after completing class VIII. With no role models and no guaranteed alternatives, I was left with no choice but to perform my domestic duties.”*

— KGBV dropout from Asarganj block

#### Case Study 1: School is not for everyone

Rani (name changed), from Madanpur KGBV was forced to cook vegetables, make *chapattis*, sweep and mop the school premises by teachers and beaten up for failing to meet all tasks. She was made to sleep next to the toilet. Fear of punishment and hostility from authorities kept her mum during the few school inspections that took place. It was not until she fell ill that she was sent home. Complaints of ill treatment filed by her parents remain unaddressed. Even the medical bills of Rs. 400 that were submitted to the school are yet to be reimbursed\*. At home with her family, Rani asks innocently, “is it really this hard for everyone to be in school?”

\*(KGBV guidelines provide Rs. 750 per child for medical care and contingencies.)

### Case Study 2: Sexual harassment and injustice

Rupa Kumari (name changed), age 14, belongs to a family of agricultural labourers from village Doogul in Aurangabad district. She is the eldest among five siblings and quit school in Class IV to support her family income by working in the fields. Encouraged by the KGBVS, her family decided to enrol her in Class V. Rupa recounts, *“At the school, the Accountant, a much older man, began making obscene gestures at me. I was too afraid to share my fears with anyone. On finding me alone in the computer lab one day, the accountant molested me. He caught me and covered my mouth. I managed to open the door and screamed for help. When I told the warden and the teachers about the incident they refused to believe me. They hit me and forbade me from informing my parents. For some days I could not tell anyone but finally managed to call my father and narrate the entire ordeal. My father arrived the same day and took me home.”* The FIR filed by Rupa’s father has yielded no action. The accused remains at large. Rupa was forced to leave studies again and now lives with her grandmother. Her family continues to face pressure from the village *Sarpanch* and school authorities to withdraw its complaint.

## II. GAPS IN BUDGETS

Apart from gaps in policy design, the KGBVS also fails to deliver due to inadequacies in budgetary allocations. A review of the planning and budgeting procedures of the scheme provide further insights into why it fails to meet the government’s promise of education for all. As mentioned earlier, the operational procedures of the KGBVS are as per SSA guidelines.

**Planning in the KGBVS:** The SSA envisages a comprehensive decentralized planning process, which involves developing Annual Work Plans and Budgets (AWP&B) at different levels (national, state, district and block). It follows a pyramidal structure where plans generated at the lower level are compiled. For instance, the district level<sup>4</sup> AWP&Bs are a compilation of block plans developed by the School Management Committees, consisting of parents, teachers and community members. At the state level, the Project Approval Board of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) reviews and approves all the AWP&Bs. Following this approval, grants are released to State Implementation Societies. The AWP&Bs consist of budgetary proposals for prioritized activities or interventions to be undertaken in the coming

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<sup>4</sup>The district AWP&Bs are prepared by the District Core Planning Teams which comprise the District Project Officer and representatives from line departments such as health, public works, social welfare and women and child development, among others.

year, progress made and targets achieved in the previous financial year and the spillover activities to be carried over.

As per SSA guidelines, AWP&Bs should be generated in a participatory manner to capture the actual needs of the socially and educationally disadvantaged groups. However, discussions with designate officials revealed an absence of any 'real' planning. Implementing officials at the village and block levels in both districts were not aware of the modalities of such an exercise and affirmed that these were confined to the district level and above.

An assessment of the nature of planning exercises at district and state levels presented a rather dismal picture. No details of methodology or procedures were provided to substantiate that a decentralized and participatory process was being followed at the sub-district level.

One reason highlighted by district and state level officials was the nature of the scheme itself. Being a centrally sponsored scheme, with pre-decided ceilings for every component and fixed unit costs and financial norms, it provides local planners with limited flexibility to innovate as per existing ground realities. The process of 'planning' is thus reduced to a mechanical exercise wherein, budget figures are entered based on suggested criteria and sent for approval to the central government.

The possibility of effective decentralized planning is further thwarted by the absence of proper mechanisms to assess the needs of beneficiaries at the block/village level. Discussions with officials revealed that the School Management Committees that are supposed to develop plans at the implementation level are either not formed or even where they exist, they do so merely on paper. This is corroborated by a study conducted by CBGA (2011) which found that even where committees had been formed, they lacked the capacity to undertake planning and rarely involved community members in the preparation of plans.

**Budgeting in KGBVS:** Budgets are policy instruments through which a government's commitments are translated into action. KGBVS follows the financial norms of SSA. As per the revised funding pattern of SSA in 2010, the share of Union Government is 65 per cent, whereas states are required to provide the remaining 35 per cent of funds. A separate questionnaire was administered to gather perceptions of officials regarding the planning and budgetary aspects of the scheme. Two sets of issues emerged from discussions held with officials:

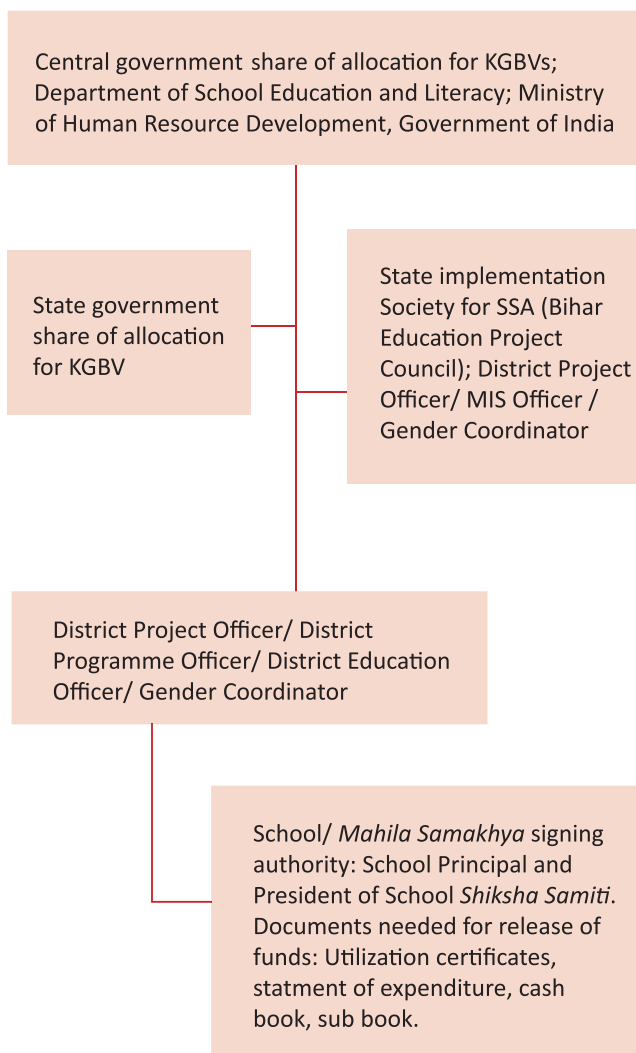
(a) those related to the fund flow process; and

(b) those pertaining to the aggregate budget for SSA (which includes KGBVS) and the unit costs of specific components under KGBVS.

**(a) Fund Flow process:** As illustrated in Figure 1, following the budget allocation by the Union Government and a share provided by the respective state government, funds are transferred to the SSA implementation society which in the case of Bihar is the Bihar Education Project Council. The funds are then transferred via the District Project Office to the implementing vehicle, which is either the *Village Shiksha Samiti* (VSS, as part of the state government apparatus) or the *Mahila Samakhyas*/NGOs. In the case of VSS, the school principal and the president of the *Village Shiksha Samiti* have the authority to withdraw money. Funds are transferred in three installments and require submission of utilization certificates to the state government.

Interviews with implementing officials in Bihar revealed that funds were often received by

**Figure 1: Fund flow diagram of the SSA**



school authorities in four or more than four installments. Delays in transfers were rampant. Implementing authorities blamed the state government for withholding funds, while the state officials asserted that non-submission of utilization certificates was the main problem. Studies indicate that delays in funds transfer are often a result of slow progress of submission of AWP&B from districts to the state and then to the Union Government (CBGA, 2011).

**(b) Budget allocation:** Inadequate budgetary allocation was echoed as a major constraint by all stakeholders in the field study. Three important issues need special mention:

i) Low aggregate budgets: Since the passage of the RTE Act, SSA is the primary vehicle for its operationalization. Over the years, especially since 2005-06, there has been nearly three-fold increase in spending on education through SSA (ibid.). As per the Planning Commission (2011), the total outlay approved for implementation of RTE through SSA over a five year period i.e. from 2010 to 2014 is Rs. 2.31 lakh crore. However, this allocation is woefully inadequate to implement RTE (CBGA, 2013). In fact the Working Group on Elementary Education and Literacy formed for the 12<sup>th</sup> FYP recommended an outlay of Rs. 1,46,825 crore in the first three years of the Plan. As opposed to this, the amount proposed in the Plan was Rs. 1,92,726 crore for the entire five year period. Lower allocations at the aggregate levels (for SSA) imply reduced outlays for all interventions that are part of SSA.

**Table 3:** State level allocation for KGBVS

DISTRICT	OUTLAY APPROVED (IN RS. LAKH)		
	Spill over	Fresh	Total
SSA	174537.40	390059.09	564596.49
KGBVS	7368.53	12653.15	20021.68
Total for Bihar	181905.93	402712.24	584618.17

Source: Minutes of PAB for AWP&B, 2013-14

At the state level, the AWP&B 2012-13 shows that the total fund available as on 30 September, 2012 was Rs. 22013 lakh. The latest AWP&B 2013-14 shows that the outlay approved in the Project Approval Board (PAB) meeting was Rs. 20021.68 lakh. This includes the spillover funds from the previous year. At the state level in Bihar, the budgetary outlay for KGBV has in effect decreased in 2013-14 from 2012-13.



ii) Low utilization: Apart from low outlays, KGBVS also suffers from poor utilization of funds. As shown in Table 4, the overall utilization figures for Bihar in 2012-13 was 17 per cent and 13 per cent and 20 per cent for Aurangabad and Munger respectively.

**Table 4:** District-wise availability and utilization of funds

DISTRICT	AWP&B 2012-13 (in Rs. lakh)	TOTAL AVAILABLE FUND (in Rs. lakh)	% EXPENDITURE AGAINST APPROVED AWP&B
Aurangabad	412	108	13%
Munger	315	43	20%
Bihar State	22013	13859	17%

Source: AWP&B, 2012-13 (Bihar education Project Council)

iii) Low unit costs: Evidence gathered during the study point to severe implementation challenges due to low unit costs. If one goes down to the school level, the average budget for running one KGBV is roughly around Rs. 25 lakh. The following is an example of a typical budget at the school level:

**Table 5:** Budget received at the school level (in Rs. lakh)

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
<b>Non-Recurring*</b>			
Construction of building	30.10	30.10	30.10
Boundary wall	1.50	1.50	1.50
Drinking water and sanitation	1.00	1.00	1.00
Electric installation	0.20	0.20	0.20
Furniture/ equipment including kitchen equipment	3.00	3.00	3.00
Teaching learning material and equipment including library books	3.50	3.50	3.50
Bedding	0.75	0.75	0.75
<b>Recurring</b>			
Maintenance per girl student per month @900	9.00	9.00	9.00
Stipend for girl student per month @ Rs. 50	0.60	0.60	0.60

Supplementary TLM, stationery and other educational material	0.60	0.60	0.60
Examination fee	0.02	0.02	0.02
Salaries:			
Warden			
Full time teachers			
Part time teachers	6.00	6.00	6.00
Full time accountant			
Support staff			
Head cook			
Assistant cook			
Vocational training	0.50	0.50	0.50
Electricity/water charges	0.60	0.60	0.60
Medical care/contingencies @ Rs. 750 per child	0.75	0.75	0.75
Maintenance	0.40	0.40	0.40
Miscellaneous	0.40	0.40	0.40
Preparatory camps	0.15	0.15	0.15
Parent teacher association/school functions	0.15	0.15	0.15
Provision of rent (8 months)	4.80	4.80	4.80
Capacity building	0.30	0.30	0.30

Source: Primary data on KGBV budget collected during field study in Rafiganj block, Aurangabad district, 2013

As per Table 5, unit costs have remained unchanged for the past three years. All officials expressed the need for revisions in unit costs, especially for essential items such as food. Reconsideration of support staff and teachers' remuneration was also seen as critical. At present they remain extremely low as compared to the entry level annual pay-scale for a post-graduate teacher or a trained graduate teacher of *Navodaya Vidyalayas* (Rs. 1,11,600-4,17,600). Data from the study shows that cumulative expense on salaries for all teaching and non teaching staff, including cook, warden, accountant, full time and part-time teachers was only Rs. 6 lakh for three years.

### III. GAPS IN IMPLEMENTATION

Inadequacies in budgetary provisions are reflected most starkly in poor implementation of the scheme. This section details out limitations in the infrastructure facilities available for students in the 12 KGBVs that were studied. As per KGBVS guidelines support for construction

of building and boundary wall and provision of drinking water, sanitation facilities, furniture, bedding, kitchen equipment and electric installations should be made available. In addition, funds are allocated for necessary teaching and learning material which include library books.

**KGBV buildings:** A quarter of the KGBVs in the study were being run in temporary buildings. Some of these were buildings of other schools. In one KGBV, the girls lived in a building that was under construction. The KGBV in Bariyapur, Munger district housed its students in two rooms that were allotted to the region's Cluster Resource Centres<sup>5</sup>.

**Availability of rooms and beds:** In the two districts, no standard norm was being followed to run the KGBVs. The number of rooms per KGBV ranged from two rooms to a maximum of 14 rooms; the average number of rooms per KGBV being six. With about 100 girls living in each of the KGBVs, a minimum of 18-20 girls on an average were housed in one small room. Three fourths of the KGBVs had one room to house the warden, while a quarter of the sample did not have that either. In Madanpur, Aurangabad district, almost 33 girls were forced to stay in one room. A third of student respondents indicated that they were made to share beds with three or four other students on account of shortage of beds.

**Bathrooms & toilets:** On an average, each KGBV had four bathrooms and six toilets, implying a ratio of 25 girls to one bathroom and 16 girls to one toilet. In Sadar block in Munger district, 33 girls used one bathroom and toilet. Fifty per cent of the hostels surveyed had only hand pumps. As a result, girls would be forced to queue up to carry water buckets inside.

### Case Study 3: Stressed and overworked

Bindu Kumari (name changed), 11 years old was enrolled at KGBV Madanpur, Aurangabad. From her first day, she was asked to clean the toilets and classrooms. Overworked, Bindu's health gradually deteriorated but the drudgery of her daily chores remained unchanged. Around the same time, her father became a victim of caste violence. Finding little meaning in her stay at the KGBV, she decided to return to support her family instead. Her words echo her disenchantment with the system "I cannot decide whether my life at KGBV was any better than the pressures of survival at home".

<sup>5</sup>Cluster Resource Centres are in operation under the SSA to enable teachers to learn from each other's experiences.

**Drinking water and electricity:** No tap connections were available at the KGBVs. The only source of water was a lone hand pump. Teachers shared that a lot of time was wasted in arranging for water to meet daily needs. Water shortage resulted in girls' compromising on their health and sanitation requirements. Heating facilities were absent and cold water was used throughout the year. Temperatures in both Munger and Aurangabad drop below 10 degrees Celsius in December and January.

All student respondents and teachers complained of frequent power cuts. Not one school had electricity backup facilities. Students narrated their inability to work post sunset as most evenings were spent in darkness.

**Essential supplies:** Availability of basic essentials like beds, blankets, cots, tables, tube lights, drinking water and toiletries was affirmed by students. However, respondents complained that these basic items were not replenished/replaced at regular intervals.

**Food:** Most of the girls living in the KGBVs did not have any major complaints about food. However, many girls expressed their desire to have eggs, milk and more vegetables in their diet. In the two hostels of Sadar block and Tarapur block in Munger there was no gas connection due to which food was rarely prepared on time. The warden in Sadar block Munger shared that *"there are times when girls go to school without any food and they only eat after they come back from school."*

**Library and extracurricular activities:** Less than half of the KGBVs had a library for use by students. Library books were kept in the cupboard but a dedicated room to sit and read was absent in all schools that were visited. The girls complained that apart from text books, they did not have any other books to read. No additional classes for music, physical education, dance or art were provided even though students who were interviewed expressed a special interest for training in music.

**Teaching material:** 95 per cent students responded in the affirmative when asked about receiving stationery. However, they highlighted that material often fell short and books arrived as late as towards the middle of the year. Although several KGBVs had a computer, they were either nonfunctional; or not being used due to the absence of a computer teacher.

**Playground:** Girls in less than half of the KGBVs had access to a playground. One of the girls poignantly expressed that she aspires to be a sportswoman when she grows up.

With no training facilities available in the KGBVs, aspirations such as these often result in disappointment for students.

**Physical security:** While all KGBVs had appointed security guards, 25 per cent of the schools in the sample did not have a boundary wall. As a result, the KGBV staff shared that they found the premises unsafe, especially at night. Safety was a concern repeatedly voiced by parents of students as well.

**Medical supplies:** Not one KGBV had any medical supplies. In cases of medical emergencies, students were referred to the nearest government hospital. Most wardens expressed their inability to provide proper care for students who fell ill. They shared the need for ambulance services especially when children had to be taken to the hospital at night.

The evidence gathered during the field study is corroborated by the national evaluation reports commissioned by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India to assess the implementation of KGBVS. Although the national evaluation reports laud the KGBVS for its objectives to promote equity in education, it highlights numerous irregularities that have emerged in its implementation, suggesting the need to re-examine the existing policy framework. They also provide evidence to highlight serious inadequacies in spaces for resting and studying of students and hygiene related health problems, home-sickness and depression that are frequently faced by girls (as cited in Saxena, 2012).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*“Girls’ education needs to be looked at in a far wider and more complex perspective ... (it) would demand from us the recognition that girls’ lives and education in contemporary India continue to be shaped by cultural forces deeply anchored in history.”*

— Krishna Kumar (2010:75)

The 12<sup>th</sup> FYP emphasizes four aspects that need prioritization in education – access, equity, quality and governance (op. cit., para. 21.14). These can be adequately targeted only through a combination of measures which should include: efficient implementation strategies, enhanced budgetary allocations, incentives that enable families to prioritize education in the face of poverty, and pedagogy that helps girl students overcome the culture of subordination.

The findings of this study suggest that in its current form, the KGBVS falls short of providing Dalit girls a non oppressive and liberating learning environment.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the scheme does provide an important window of opportunity to support SSA in universalizing education for girls from socially and economically disadvantaged communities. As corroborated by the field study, there is a strong demand for such targeted interventions. Based on field insights and discussions with officials and experts, a set of recommendations are presented below.

### **I. NATIONAL IMPETUS FOR A STRONGER AND MORE MEANINGFUL KGBVS**

**Raise financial allocation of SSA:** Testimonies of officials and teachers clearly indicate that several implementation gaps relate to scarcity of funds. There is an urgent need to revise the annual allocations of SSA and ensure a corresponding increase in allocations for the KGBVS.

**Introduce new budget heads:** In keeping with its vision of inclusive education, the KGBVs should ideally provide a comfortable and joyous learning experience for disadvantaged Dalit girls and help them break the cycle of deprivation and drudgery. Unfortunately, the current approach assumes that children from disadvantaged families can adjust to poor living conditions. This is best reflected in the extremely low unit costs for the scheme, which in turn affects the quality of services provided. For instance, there are minimal budgets for procurement of items such as bedding, woolens, sanitation facilities, library resources, etc. What is even more alarming is that these have not been revised since 2005-06. In addition, resources for teachers' training, support staff for cleaning activities, and accommodation quarters for teachers, which are essential to ensure better school management, remain unbudgeted at present.

**Increase number and size of KGBVs:** The 12<sup>th</sup> FYP has recommended that there should at least be two KGBVs in all EBBs (op. cit., para. 21.61). Given the fact that there is enormous demand for such an intervention, the central government should also consider increasing the number of students that each KGBV caters to. Insights generated from the field as well as analysis of the budget reveals that in its current form, the KGBVS remains extremely limited in scope and fails to conclusively address the educational barriers faced by Dalit girls. By restricting its target population to 50 or 100 girls per school, the scheme invariably excludes a majority of Dalit girls, who remain out of school.

## II. INNOVATION AT THE STATE LEVEL

**Enhance budgetary allocations at the state level:** The KGBVS gives state governments the flexibility to add financial resources to strengthen the scheme. Based on individual state requirement, governments must enhance allocations beyond the stipulated 35 per cent.

**Table 6:** Innovative practices in various KGBVs

STATE	INNOVATIVE PRACTICE
Jharkhand	The state has the distinction of being the only one which has extended the entire KGBV umbrella up to Class XII
Uttarakhand & Gujarat	Both states have extended select KGBVs up to Class X
Rajasthan	Rajasthan has established select KGBVs along with <i>Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)</i> with hostel facilities. Students after clearing Class VIII get transferred to RMSA hostels where they study up to Class X
Andhra Pradesh	KGBVs are extended up to Class X
Bihar	There is special provision to enhance access of differently-abled girls to KGBVs

Source: EdCil India website

**Extend KGBVS up to Class XII:** In its current form, the KGBVS caters to girls only up to Class VIII, upon completion of which there is no mechanism to support students to access higher educational facilities or monitor their progress once they leave the KGBV<sup>6</sup>. Access to quality education is critical to the process of empowering Dalit girls to not only find decent employment but also break the inter-generational cycles of poverty and violence that their families face. It is essential therefore that the KGBV model is extended till Class XII and an action plan developed for monitoring the progress of students in higher education. As depicted in Table 6, several states have innovated beyond existing provisions.

<sup>6</sup>It is important to mention that a Centrally Sponsored Scheme – ‘Construction and Running of Girls’ Hostels for Students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools’ was launched in 2008-09 for construction of hostels. However the scheme was not operational in the study districts and therefore no analysis of the convergence of this scheme with KGBV at the ground level was possible.

**Track and monitor students' progress post KGBV:** State governments must create a database to enable monitoring of KGBV students which should then be used to extend mentoring and counseling support to them until the age of 18.

**Provide multiple exit platforms:** As argued by Kumar and Gupta, “the second chance given to KGBV girls will mean little if the system fails to give them the necessary skills, tools and psycho-social habits required to sustain empowerment”(2008:23). One recommendation is to link schools with technical programmes that would provide skills training to students and help them enter the job market. These trainings should be based on regional technical requirements and should include subjects like early childhood care, agriculture, paramedical care, etc. (Ramachandran, 2007).

**Forge linkages with other existing schemes for SC girls:** States should envisage linking up all schemes for SCs to enable students of KGBVs to access them. Schemes for scholarships, access to health facilities, insurance, provision of cycles and other incentives, etc. for girl children should be pooled together to ensure greater care for students enrolled in KGBVs. Additionally, a single window for all schemes related to education of Dalit children should come into existence for easy access to information, application forms, brochures, etc. Special camps in Dalit habitations should be encouraged for information dissemination.

**Table 7:** Comparative analysis of KGBVs and Navodaya Vidyalayas

NO.	HEAD	KGBV	NAVODAYA VIDYALAYA
1.	<b>Redressal of Students' Grievances</b>	Absence of any grievance redressal mechanism.	A students' grievance box has been installed in the <i>Navodaya Vidyalayas</i> (NVs). The keys of the sealed boxes remain with the officer nominated by the District Collector who scrutinizes the representations/issues raised by the students on the first week of every month. Complaints are communicated to the principal and regional officials.



2.	<b>Teachers' Training</b>	Sporadic trainings are conducted and no separate budget head exists for this.	In-service training for all the teachers is organized by drawing resources from within and outside the NV system. The teachers have to undergo at least one 21 day in-service course once every 5 years to become eligible for senior scales. Apart from these long duration in-service training courses, short duration induction, orientation courses, seminars, workshops, etc. are also organized as part of teacher training exercises every year.
3.	<b>Recruitment of teachers</b>	Para teachers are recruited.	Teachers are recruited through open competition at an all India level.
4.	<b>Maintenance and infrastructure provision for teachers and other staff</b>	There is no provision for maintenance cost of teachers and other support staff. 4-5 teachers live in a room which is converted into a staff room during the day. Additionally, they are supposed to look after children's welfare after teaching is over, but no living accommodation is provided to them.	Cost and facilities are built in the scheme.
5.	<b>Staff salaries</b>	Para teachers work with no fixed scales.	Teachers are paid under Central Government scale.
<b>Differences in key budgetary heads between KGBVs and NVs</b>			
6.	<b>Construction</b>	Rs 38,75,000 for main building, boundary wall, boring/hand pump, and electricity.	Rs 12,00,00,000 in two phases for 14 classrooms, library, staff room, principal and vice principal's rooms, labs, three dormitories, 23 teachers' quarters, kitchen and dining hall, playfield, water, sewerage, electricity, internal road.

7.	Equipment for furniture, kitchen provisions, etc.	Rs. 3,00,000	Rs. 6,75,000
8.	Bedding (Unit cost)	Rs. 400	Rs. 750
9.	School Uniform	No provision	Summer – unit cost : Rs 1,250 Winter – unit cost: Rs 1,550.
10.	Medical care/ contingencies (Unit cost)	Rs. 750	Rs. 1,117

**Incorporate best practices from existing schemes:** The *Navodaya Vidyalaya* (NV) scheme<sup>7</sup> fares better than KGBVS at every level. In their paper, ‘*What is Missing in Girls’ Empowerment?*’, Kumar and Gupta provide a comparison of the budgetary provisions of NVs and KGBVS (2008). They highlight that unlike KGBVS, NVs build in critical components such as travel expenses for emergency hospital care, items like woolen and cotton socks, laboratory equipment, intensive teacher training, etc. Equally significant is the recruitment of teachers at NVs at standard government pay scales, as opposed to KGBVs where para teachers with little training are appointed. Table 7 presents a comparative analysis of the two schemes along five key aspects, which include teacher training, recruitment and remuneration. There are also significant differences in budgets of the two schemes. On account of their higher resource allocations, NVs are equipped with superior facilities, better trained teachers and more rigorous planning systems as compared to KGBVs. The lack of adequate resources and infrastructural amenities in the KGBVS may be interpreted as reflective of a larger policy bias against marginalized sections. It is extremely critical therefore to step up the budgets of KGBVS and ensure that these are gradually expanded to the level and stature of NVs (ibid.).

**Incentivize enrollment in KGBVs:** As highlighted by the study, one of the leading reasons for girls dropping out of schools or not being allowed to enroll in KGBVs is the family’s reliance on their labour for either domestic work (which includes sibling care) or to ease the financial burden on the household. Previous studies demonstrate the success of

<sup>7</sup> The *Navodaya Vidyalaya* scheme was started in the 1980s and has now become fully functional with around 576 establishments around the country. The NVs cater to rural children who are selected through open competition. For details please visit, [www.navodaya.nic.in](http://www.navodaya.nic.in)

providing incentives like scholarships to students (Ramachandran et al., 2007) in such situations. Accordingly, states may consider providing cash transfers to families that agree to educate their girls. It is important to note that selective incentives for attendance in schools is only a stop gap measure, and the goal of universal education can only be realized by ensuring children's access to the formal schooling system (ibid.).

***Provide holistic education:*** KGBVs should be encouraged to conduct district or state level writing competitions, science fairs, student exchanges, to make learning and teaching a more vibrant and enjoyable exercise. Provisions should be made in the budget for the same. In addition, adequate emphasis needs to be placed on library reading material and extracurricular activities. Students interviewed during the field study complained of lack of access to books other than course material and the absence of physical education or art and craft lessons. The importance of training in art, literature and sports as a vehicle for personality development, team building and other life skills is an established pedagogic fact.

***Invest in pedagogy:*** To undo years of socialization that ingrains values of subordination amongst Dalit girls, a highly trained and sensitive cadre of teachers is required. This is currently missing in the KGBVS. While KGBVS has access to resources in District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) and NGOs, the collaboration thus far has not yielded significant improvements in quality of education. KGBVs should consider utilizing state university resources for greater support to teachers for training and curriculum development (Kumar and Gupta, 2008).

### III. INCREASE ACCOUNTABILITY OF KGBVS

***Grievance redressal mechanism:*** Complaints of sexual harassment, unfair punishments, forced labour in the form of cooking, sweeping and cleaning of buildings and unsatisfactory learning experiences were documented in the study. Each complaint was accompanied with a demand for a mechanism that would enable grievances to be registered and action to be promptly taken. Only the introduction of functional, independent Grievance Redressal Committees (GRCs) can ensure healthy KGBVs. To give teeth to GRCs, participation of student representatives, parents, village education committee members and block officials should be ensured. Members should meet once every month. All complaints must be recorded in a centralized Management Information System, receipts duly given to complainants and secret boxes for written messages

made available in every KGBV building. State and central government officials should be provided quarterly updates on complaints made and actions taken.

***Village Education Committees (VEC)***: A transparent procedure for selection of students in KGBVs is likely to ensure greater representation of students from the poorest households from among SC, ST, Muslim families. Accordingly, VECs and *Panchayati Raj* Institutions should mandatorily be involved in admission procedures. The same committees should also be given the added supervisory responsibilities to monitor security arrangements at the KGBVs.

***Bal Panchayats***: To further increase accountability of schools, *bal panchayats* of girl students should be created in each KGBV with the support of district administrations. (Ramachandran et al., 2007).

## CONCLUSION

The Briefing Paper has looked at gaps in policy design, planning and fund flow processes, budgetary allocations and implementation strategies of the *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya* scheme. Government records and first-hand accounts of Dalit girls who are either studying in KGBVs or are out of school have helped identify critical shortcomings in the scheme and laid the basis for policy recommendations. It is believed that structural limitations that currently create impediments for Dalit girls' access to education stem from resource limitations that translate into low budgetary allocations, poor physical infrastructure and a dull learning environment. Quality education is thus heavily compromised and efforts made to bridge the large divide between illiteracy and employability fail to achieve desired results. This Briefing Paper proposes higher resource allocations, improved infrastructure, monitoring and tracking of Dalit girls' school performance, provision of grievance redressal mechanisms, among a host of other suggestions with the hope to make KGBVS, a scheme that will help challenge the historical discrimination faced by Dalit girls in the country.

## ANNEXURE I: Methodology Note from study on ‘Reframing Budgets for Dalit Women in India: An Analysis of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya’

**Location:** 2 districts of Bihar (Aurangabad and Munger)

**Sample:** 12 KGBVs in Munger and Aurangabad districts of Bihar were selected. The basis of selection of the KGBVs was those with the highest number of enrolled SC girls.

Data on out of school and dropped out Dalit girls and their parents was collected from villages adjoining to the selected KGBVs. Details are provided in Table 1.

Random sampling was used to identify 250 SC girl students (age 6-14) studying in select KGBVs. Snowball sampling helped identify 100 girls who had either dropped out from the KGBVs or had never been enrolled. These girls and their parents (a total of 100) were identified with the help of KGBV teachers and students who shared their details with the research team.

**Table 1: Sample districts**

DISTRICT	BLOCKS (KGBVS)	VILLAGES
Aurangabad	Aurangabad, Nabinagar, Madanpur, Deo, Goh, Rafiganj, and Haspura	Hamidnagar, Pranpur, Nagain, Kyap and Nabinagar
Munger	Tarapura, Asarganj, Sadar-munger, Tetiyabamber, Haveli-kharagpur and Bariyarpur	Majhi tola, Pari tola, Harijan tola, Kalyan-musheher, Bariyarpur basti, Ravidas tola, Mushahar tola, Rahmatpurhariyan tola, Thanamehta tola and Chasisthan

### TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

#### (a) Secondary Review:

Government data on scheme processes, financial allocations, release of funds and target achievement was evaluated.

**(b) Primary Data:**

Structured interviews were conducted by using different questionnaires for (i) students of KGBVs; (ii) dropped out girls from KGBVs; (iii) *Panchayat* members; (iv) Wardens of KGBVs; and (v) concerned officers at the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (MHRD), Education Consultants India Limited (EdCIL), the technical and logistical partner of the Elementary Education Bureau, MHRD; officials at Bihar Education Project Council, District Education Officers and Block Education Officers.

KGBVS implementing authorities and key government stakeholders who were interviewed comprised 12 service providers which included wardens, head masters, school teachers, accountants and security guards in the KGBVs, 2 district education officers, 12 block education officers, and 2 district gender coordinators.

**DATA COLLECTION TEAM**

The state data collection team consisted of 4 surveyors, a district coordinator and a state coordinator.

**TIME PERIOD**

Primary data was collected in three months from January to March, 2013.

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