
Analysis of factors impacting gender parity in higher education in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India

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Foreword

In the recently launched India-UK Roadmap 2030, both the countries have committed to working in partnership towards mutually beneficial goals and shared values. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, through sustainable programmes and collaboration with Indian institutions, central and state governments, business and civil society, is one of the important aspects of this bilateral agreement.

As the cultural relations arm of the UK government, the British Council has been empowering girls and women to lead, influence and benefit from positive social change, supporting them with networks to progress gender equality through our programmes in education, English and the arts.

The National Education Policy 2020, which sets a 21st century vision for education in India, notes 'Equitable and Inclusive Education and Learning for All' as a key element to achieving gender equality and outlines key actions to be taken for its achievement.

This provides us with an invaluable opportunity to work with the central and state governments in India, to promote and strengthen gender equality across the spectrum of our work in education.

As a step in this direction, we are pleased to release this think piece on gender parity in higher education, a paper that emerges out of original research conducted by the Sri Padmavathi Mahila Visvavidyalayam and the Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research (CHEER), University of Sussex and funded by the British Council. We hope that this paper will strengthen and give tangible shape to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the British Council and the Government of Andhra Pradesh on 28 January 2020, wherein we have agreed to partner on (1) improving opportunities for young people and (2) quality in education across schools and higher education systems.

We look forward to working with the Andhra Pradesh government and support in realising the recommendations outlined in this paper. This would be a concrete step forward towards achieving the vision of the India-UK Roadmap 2030.

Janaka Pushpanathan

Director British Council, South India



Executive summary

The state of Andhra Pradesh has identified that low educational levels among women and girls (aged approximately 18-22 years) negatively impacts their awareness, skills, confidence and networks that could improve their own and others' lives. Low completion rates at the secondary school level and low enrolment and retention rates at higher education level are the main stumbling blocks to the social, economic and political empowerment of women and girls and this ultimately contributes to gender inequality. This has led to a low Gender Parity Index (GPI) for the state; Andhra Pradesh has a GPI of 0.81, compared to the national parity of 1 (AISHE Report 2019) and 0.962 according to the Global Gender Gap report 2020; only Bihar has a lower GPI ratio, of 0.79.

As a response, in 2018, the Andhra Pradesh State Council for Higher Education (APSCHE) requested the British Council to collaborate on a research study with the objectives of (1) analysing the gender gap in higher education in the state; (2) identifying factors causing the gender gap in higher education; (3) identifying ways to increase female enrolment in higher education; and (4) supporting the State Government to accelerate efforts towards advancing gender equality in higher education. The research was undertaken by the Sri Padmavathi Mahila Visvavidyalam (SPMVV) in collaboration with the with the Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research (CHEER), University of Sussex, UK.

This paper has emerged out of the extensive qualitative research (primary and secondary) carried out by the SPMVV and includes additional secondary research and literature review undertaken by the British Council. A deductive approach¹ of qualitative research has been taken to review the primary data collected by SPMVV. The primary qualitative data collected by SPMVV and the reports produced on this data by the SPMVV and University of Sussex were reviewed along with the literature. This data has been used to validate the secondary literature available on the subject.

To understand the factors contributing to low gender parity in higher education, a trend analysis of the education pipeline was undertaken. An educational pipeline is a continuum of student progress leading from high school into post-secondary education through to the completion of a college degree. As part of this, variables such as Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and GPI across various social categories were studied

and compared to available national figures. Along with this, the analysis also looked at factors that can act as enablers or disablers to women and girls' participation in education at school and higher education levels. This included a study of residential schools, hostels, scholarships and transportation facilities. The trend analysis revealed the headlines outlined in the next section.

School education:

- State level GER for girls shows a declining trend in the education pipeline. This means that there is a reduction in the female GER as they progress through various stages of school education. At the elementary and secondary levels, it was lower than the India GER for girls, although for higher secondary level it was better than national.
- GER for female Scheduled Caste (SC) students was better than state average at elementary, secondary and higher secondary levels.
- GER for female Scheduled Tribe (ST) students was better than the state average at elementary level, but declines for secondary and higher secondary.
- Andhra Pradesh fares better than India average for female retention, transition and dropout rates.
- The reasons for some of these positive trends could be a result of the positive impact of various educational policies such as the mid-day meal programme, educational incentives like Ammavodi and Vidya Kanuka schemes and residential schools run by the state government especially for SC and ST students.
- While the positive outcome is encouraging, the data also points to a declining trend among female students across all social categories as the educational level increases. Reasons for this trend could include increasing distance of school from home, inadequate infrastructure and non-availability of female teachers, lack of clean toilet and/or WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), etc.

Higher education:

- GER in higher education for Andhra Pradesh for all categories stands at 32.4 percent, with female GER being 29 percent which is higher than the national

1. Hyde (2000) Deductive reasoning is a theory testing process which commences with an established theory or generalisation and seeks to see if the theory applies to specific instances. - (PDF) Recognising deductive process in qualitative research (researchgate.net)

figures of 26.3 percent and 26.4 percent respectively.

- However, on GPI in higher education, Andhra Pradesh ranks second from the bottom, at 0.81, higher only than Bihar. GPI for SC students stands a bit higher at 0.84 while for ST students it is lower at 0.76.
- The AISHE 2018-19 data also indicates that although GPI in higher education for the state has increased, it has been marginal and inconsistent. It has also been lower than the national level throughout the eight-year period, from 2011-12 to 2018-19.
- The main causes for such trends could include: (1) financial constraints faced due to increased costs of higher education (2) perception that higher education does not necessarily provide good employment opportunities (3) lack of motivation towards continuing education among youth in the state, compounded by patriarchal notions that lead to lack of enrolment or dropout among girls in higher education (4) challenges with transitioning from mother tongue/regional language medium of instruction into English medium at higher education level.
- The state evidences a gender disparity in choice of courses in higher education. Gendered choices in subjects seem to be influenced by social constructs of masculinities and femininities; students tend to make subject choices based on the perceived 'gendered qualities' of the subjects. These perceptions tend to develop as a result of gendered socialisation, which starts at the family level and continues into school and higher education, ultimately impacting the subject divide and choices. For example, Andhra Pradesh is in fourth place nationally in terms of enrolment into nursing courses, with a total of 21,913 students, of which 95 per cent are female (AISHE, 2018-2019). This is the highest in the country, when compared to female students enrolling into nursing courses in other states.
- The medium of instruction in higher education in India could also place women and girls at a disadvantage. As the requirements for English language skills increase in higher education, girls might find it difficult to cope with their studies. Low levels of or lack of English language skills, could also negatively impact everyday experiences in college / university, particularly if there is limited institutional support to develop language abilities. These challenges could result in women and girls discontinuing college or not enrolling into higher education at all.
- There is a gender disparity in the teaching workforce in the state. Only 35 per cent of faculty in higher education in Andhra Pradesh are female. Research suggests that presence of female teachers in schools can improve female participation in education. This could be linked to low participation of women in higher education which in turn impacts the availability of qualified women who can then enter the teaching workforce.

While this logic may be extended to cover higher education in India, there is need to conduct research to understand this better.

Education enablers:

- Andhra Pradesh has the highest number of private higher education institutions in the country.
- Historically, the state has invested a lot in residential education, especially at school level and for SC/ST students. In addition to this, the state also has KGBV, JNV which are central government programmes.
- Although these residential schools did not target this group specifically, they have done a lot to create access to education for girls.
- There is research that suggests that residential schooling can play a positive role in girls' education.
- In higher education, although there are more hostels for girls than boys and with better occupancy rate, there did not seem to be much evidence on the impact this has had on their education.
- Trends in scholarships show that state level scholarships were targeted at school level and for SC/ST communities. There was no specific targeting of female students. Central government scholarships were provided for both school and higher education, although there were more provided for higher education. Six out of nine central government scholarships were meant exclusively for girls. Private scholarships were mostly provided for higher education or higher education in STEM. There were not many specifically for girls.
- Student transportation is an important issue that was raised by respondents as a reason why they do not enrol or discontinue higher education, as this adds to the financial costs for commuting to and from college.

Perspective from the National Education Policy 2020:

Study of the NEP 2020 provisions to promote gender equality through education, indicates action areas for the state government and higher education institutions in the state to increase participation of women and girls in higher education. These include:

- Provide more financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs² in both public and private HEIs
- Mitigate opportunity costs and fees for pursuing higher education
- Conduct outreach programmes on higher education opportunities and scholarships among SEDGs
- Provide socio-emotional and academic support and mentoring for all such students through suitable counselling and mentoring programmes

The following section on recommendations is also

aligned with the above provisions mentioned in the NEP 2020.

Recommendations

The primary and secondary research conducted by SPMVV and additional research conducted by the British Council points to a number of recommendations.

Recommendation 1

There is a need for further study on the role of residential education for girls, especially from poor households, at key transition points in the educational journey, especially at the higher secondary and higher education levels.

Broadly, it is suggested that this further study can look at the following:

- If and how residential education institutions have contributed to the GER and GPI at various stages of education: elementary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education.
- The quality of facilities and institutional care provided in the residential education institution, with reference to basic amenities like buildings, toilets with WASH facilities, nutrition and safety of girls and women who live and study in these hostels.

Recommendation 2

The Government of Andhra Pradesh could consider developing a comprehensive scholarships strategy to increase participation of women and girls in higher education focussing on:

- provision of exclusive scholarships for female students for higher education, particularly in fields where they are underrepresented.
- developing a 'public-private-partnership' (PPP) model of scholarships by linking with businesses and CSR foundations, particularly those who are already providing scholarships for higher education, science and technology.
- exploring possibilities for increasing allocation of centrally sponsored scholarships to Andhra Pradesh. The current low GPI can provide a strong basis for increasing the allocation.
- undertaking tracer studies of female students who have received scholarships for higher education, to understand how the scholarship has impacted their lives and use the learnings in the development of the scholarship strategy.

Recommendation 3

The Government of Andhra Pradesh can consider commissioning research to understand the impact of female faculty on girls' participation in higher education, taking into account, intersectionalities like caste, class and ability/disability, etc.

Recommendation 4

The Bangkok Statement on Language and Inclusion, September 2019, states that "Policies related to language(s) of instruction impact learners at several key junctures, including early childhood education and school readiness (SDG 4.2), the transition to primary education (SDG 4.1), and carry-through into secondary, tertiary, vocational, and lifelong education of various forms (SDG 4.4). Language policies at each level play an important role in creating a positive learning environment, while fostering enduring peace (SDG 16), gender equality (SDG 4.5), and sustainable development (SDG 4.7)"

The British Council's position on medium of instruction reflects "a mother tongue-based multilingual education approach to basic education, which is also reflected in the NEP 2020. Recognising that students have the right to access both the school curriculum in their own or a familiar language and to receive quality English language learning experiences it is recommended that:

- At the primary school level, fluency in English is developed through strengthening the teaching of English as a subject.
- At primary level develop quality teaching and teacher education in English as a subject and to promote equal access to English language learning opportunities.
- Since education is a concurrent subject, at times there may be a lack of alignment between the medium of instruction language policies adopted by state and central ministries of education. In such cases, all may work together to identify ways and means of addressing the L2 proficiency gap, and to enhance the quality of work in English as subject within a mother tongue-based multilingual education framework"

(English language and medium of instruction in basic education in low- and middle-income countries: a British Council perspective, 2019)

- Develop an institutional framework to support learning of English for students, especially girls, who

are transitioning from a mother tongue based medium of instruction at the school level to English as a medium of instruction in higher education.

Recommendation 5

The Government of Andhra Pradesh could consider developing a 'student transportation action plan' as part of the strategies to improve GER and GPI already put in place by the APSCHE. This action plan could be developed at the local level, by local authorities, working with schools, colleges, transport operators, students and their families. The action plan could identify key challenges experienced by students in commuting to and from colleges and could range from addressing costs of bus fare, frequency of buses, key pick up and drop off points, and crowding in the buses (which can address concerns around sexual harassment of girls and also the need for social distancing for protection against COVID 19).

Recommendation 6

Higher education institutions in the state could develop mentorship programmes for female students through close collaborations with alumni associations, especially female alumni, who can act as role models.

Recommendation 7

The state department for higher education and/or APSCHE can consider developing and rolling out advocacy and communication strategies in partnership with multiple stakeholders to promote women and girls' participation in higher education.

1. Introduction

Equitable access and participation of men and women in higher education is the corner stone of the growth and prosperity of a country. Low gender parity in higher education can have negative impacts on the level of human capital, employment and economic growth. As education is considered a significant means of achieving women's empowerment, gender inequalities could also have adverse impacts on women's agency. Thus, gender parity is fundamental to whether and how economies and societies thrive (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020).

Women and girls in India face gender discrimination which tends to be mirrored in their access to higher education, which in turn, is shaped by socio cultural factors, patriarchal attitudes and public policies for higher education. (Lal & Arora, 2016). Their participation in higher education is also influenced by factors such as availability of female teachers, institutional facilities and support systems, on-campus experiences, safety considerations and quality of education. (Dasgupta & Mukherjee, 2020; Morley, 2006)

These disadvantages clearly point towards an urgent need to invest in the education of women and girls, which can bring rich dividends, not only for women's own agency, but can also address poverty reduction, enable economic growth and achieve social justice. Research indicates that there is a strong correlation between women's education and factors such as increase in income, family health and nutrition, school enrolment and delayed marriage. It is a key policy intervention that can have a knock-on effect across various other areas of human development (United Nations, 2010).³

The centrality of gender parity in education is recognised globally through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4 and 5:

SDG 4 is the education goal which aims to **'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.'**

Under this, Target 4.5, also notes that **'By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations'**

SDG 5 commits to **'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.'**

India has committed to working towards the realisation of the SDGs, with the Niti Aayog being entrusted with the task of steering the progress to 2030, in what the UN has termed as the 'decade of action'.

The Andhra Pradesh SDG dashboard,⁴ notes the state as 'performer' for the SDG goal 4 on education, with a state level score of 62.07. However, the current status indicates that the score is decreasing, with 10 out of 13 districts being 'aspirants' with scores ranging from 0-49.

Similarly, the state is described as 'performer' for the SDG 5 on gender equality, with an average score of 53.91. Although the current status on the dashboard indicates that the state is on track to achieve the goal by 2030, the district level scores show that 11 out of 13 are rated 'aspirant' with scores ranging from 0-49.

This trend indicates the need to examine the reasons for low achievement on education and gender equality indicators and develop strategies and policies that can comprehensively address the low gender parity, particularly in higher education, in Andhra Pradesh.

As a response, in 2018, APSCHE requested the British Council to collaborate on a research study that could form the basis for developing long term engagement between the Government of Andhra Pradesh, the British Council and the UK in education. This led to the conceptualisation of a research study by the SPMVV in partnership CHEER, University of Sussex, UK.

This paper has emerged out of the extensive qualitative research (primary and secondary) carried out by the SPMVV, and includes additional secondary research and literature review undertaken by the British Council. A deductive approach⁵ of qualitative research has been taken to review the primary data collected by SPMVV. The primary qualitative data collected by SPMVV and the reports produced on this data by the SPMVV and University of Sussex was reviewed along with the literature. This data has been used to validate the secondary literature available on the subject.

The British Council hopes that the findings and recommendations mentioned in this document can support the Government of Andhra Pradesh to strengthen and accelerate its ongoing efforts to improve gender parity in higher education in the state.

3. United Nations (2010), "Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation", United Nations, New York

4. AP SDG dashboard

5. Hyde (2000) Deductive reasoning is a theory testing process which commences with an established theory or generalisation and seeks to see if the theory applies to specific instances. - (PDF) Recognising deductive process in qualitative research (researchgate.net)

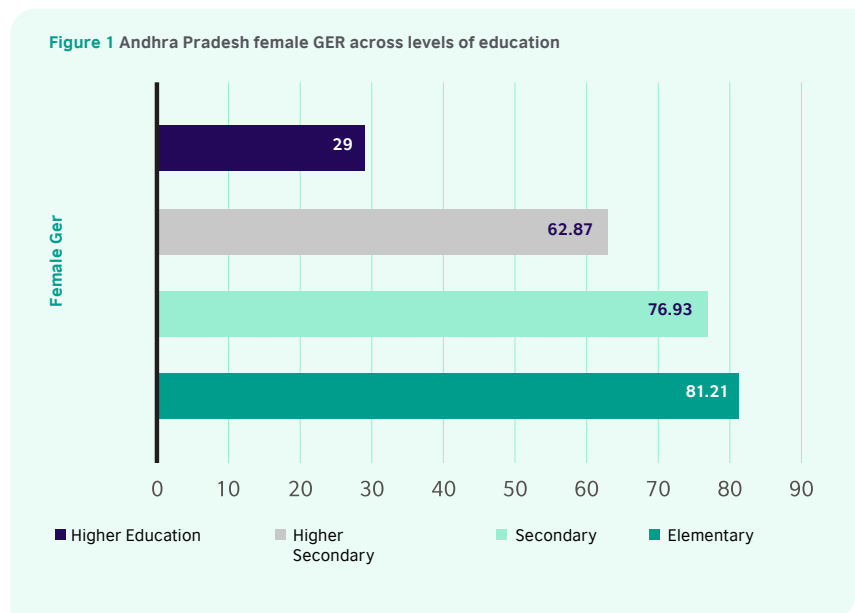
2. Analysis of the gender gap in education in Andhra Pradesh

The state of Andhra Pradesh has among the lowest GPI⁶ in the country, and stands at 0.81, compared to the national parity of 1 (AISHE⁷ Report 2019) and 0.962 according to the Global Gender Gap report 2020. Only Bihar has a lower GPI ratio, of 0.79. The state has identified this as an important area for development. Not only is gender parity linked to the overall growth and development of the state, the lack of it, has serious negative repercussions on women's self confidence, knowledge, skills and social networks. Low female participation rates through out the educational journey, from school to higher education, can become major obstacles to the overall empowerment of women and the achievement of gender equality.

To understand the causes and effects of low female participation in education, it is important to examine the educational journey of female students at the key transition points (elementary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education). This analysis can help understand issues of underrepresentation at various levels of education, where and why fault lines might develop. This in turn can support in developing policies, strategies and plans to strengthen the educational pipeline. *"An educational pipeline is a continuum of student*

*progress leading from high school into postsecondary education and through to the completion of a college degree"*⁸ (Educational Pipeline FAQ, 2006)

The figure below provides an overview of female GER⁹ across various levels of education. It clearly indicates a falling trend from elementary through to higher education in Andhra Pradesh. Hence, it becomes important to understand the causes and effects of this trend across the key transition points mentioned above.



6. Gender Parity Index: GPI is a socioeconomic index usually designed to measure the relative access to education of males and females

7. All India Survey on Higher Education

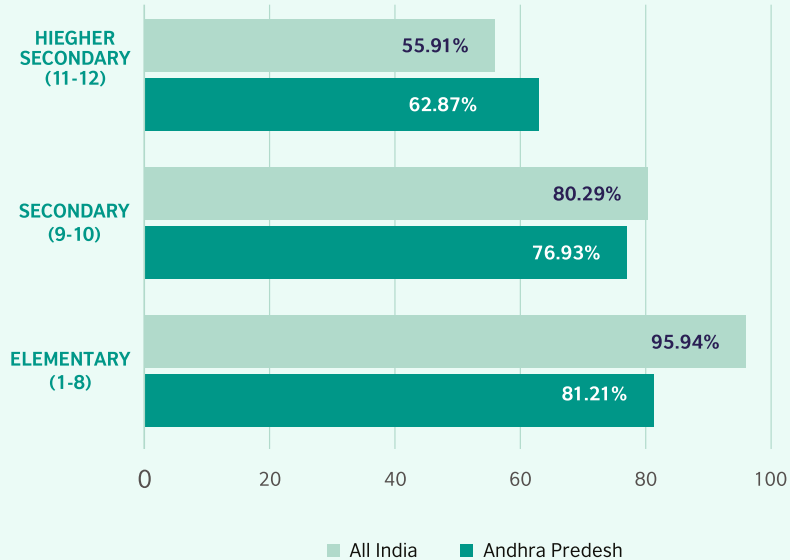
8. <http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pipeline/faq.shtml>

9. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER): Number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education.

2.1 School education

School enrolment data for Andhra Pradesh indicates that while the GER for girls at the elementary level was 81.21 in 2016-17, it reduced to 76.93 at secondary and 62.87 at higher secondary level.¹⁰ Compared to this, the all-India GER for female students for the same stages of education in 2016-17 stood at 95.94, 80.29 and 55.91 percent respectively. Except for the higher secondary level, Andhra Pradesh GER for female students remains below the national average.

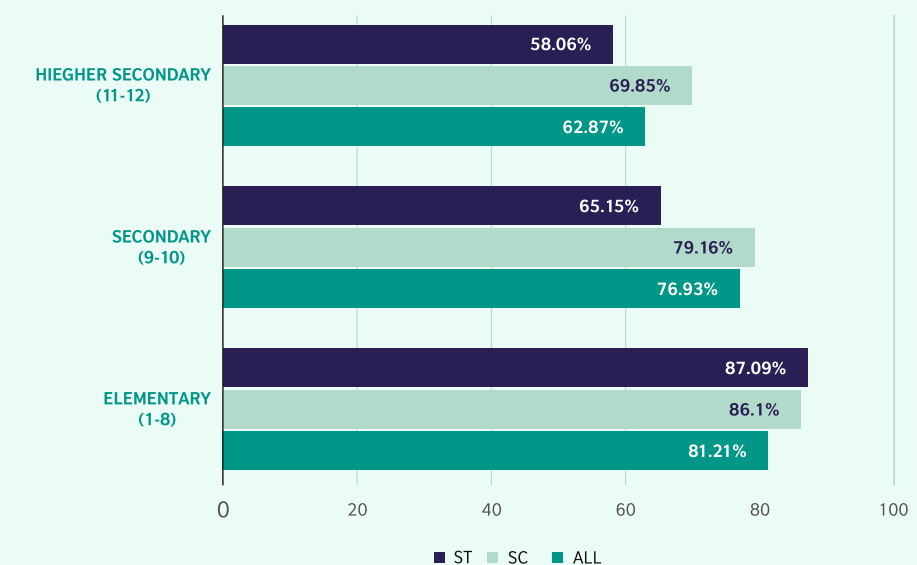
Figure 2 Andhra Pradesh GER in comparison to all India GER



GER for girls from SC communities showed a marginally better trend. At elementary level, it stood at 86.1, at secondary at 79.16 and 69.85 at higher secondary levels¹¹. The trend for girls from ST communities at elementary level, was better than both general and SC communities. However, there was a significant reduction at secondary and higher secondary levels at 65.15 and 58.06 respectively.¹²

Age specific enrolment data also shows that between the ages of 6–13 years, the enrolment was 80.38 while in the age group of 14–15 years it dropped to 50.03¹³. The data for the age group of 16-17 was not available for this state.

Figure 3 Andhra Pradesh GER across education levels and social category



10. Table 5.12 Gross Enrolment Ratio by stage of school education, SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA, U-DISE FLASH STATISTICS 2016-17, Provisional data as on 30 September, 2016
11. Table 5.13, Gross Enrolment Ratio of Scheduled Castes by stage of school education, SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA, U-DISE FLASH STATISTICS 2016-17, Provisional data as on 30 September, 2016
12. Table 5.14: Gross Enrolment Ratio of Scheduled Tribes by stage of school education, SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA, U-DISE FLASH STATISTICS 2016-17, Provisional data as on 30 September, 2016
13. Table 5.17: Age Specific Enrolment Ratio, SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA, U-DISE FLASH STATISTICS 2016-17, Provisional data as on 30 September, 2016

Primary data from SPMVV's research also suggests an increase in enrolment of boys and girls. The data was collected from Kurnool and East Godavari districts. The respondents reported that several families in villages send their children to school and many support them to complete school education. This change was reported to have happened in the last 10 years.

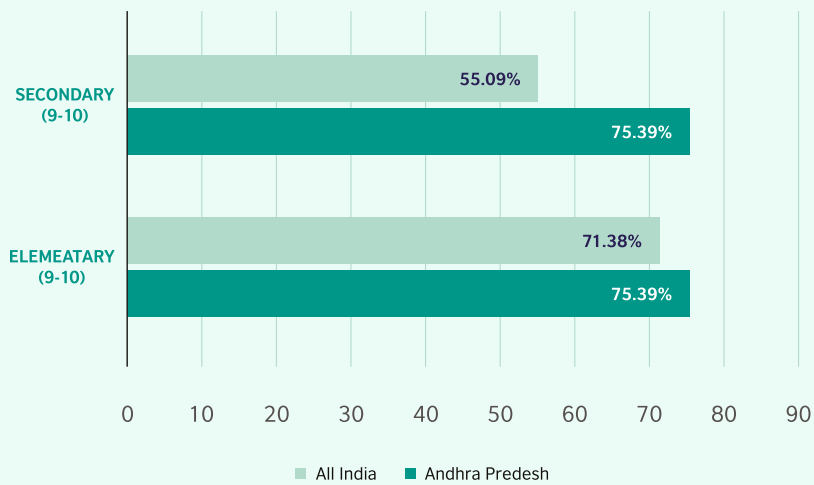
'...most of the families send their children to school now.' – respondent from East Godavari.

'earlier children used to study only up to lower classes.' caregiver from Kurnool

'most boys and girls complete class 10.' – caregiver from Kurnool.

The state seems to fare better when it comes to retention rates for girls in Figure 4. At the elementary level it is 83.95 per cent and at secondary level it is 75.39 per cent¹⁴. This is higher than the national figures of 71.38 per cent at elementary level and 55.09 per cent at the secondary level¹⁵.

Figure 4 Female retention

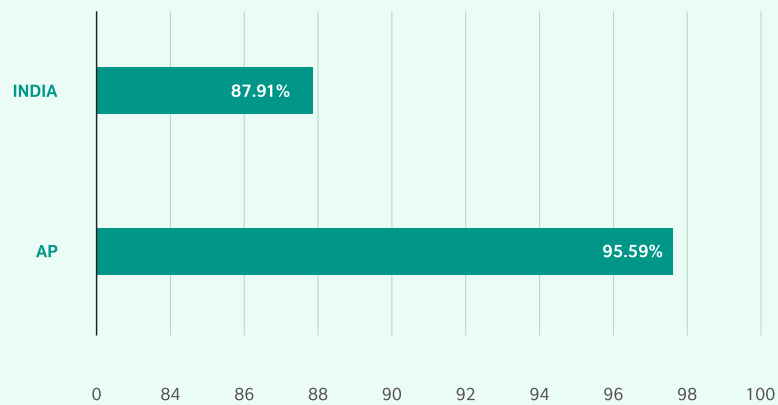


14. Table 5.28: Retention Rate by educational stage, 2016-17, SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA, U-DISE FLASH STATISTICS 2016-17, Provisional data as on 30 September, 2016

15. Table 1.47: Retention Rate, 2016-17, all India, SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA, U-DISE FLASH STATISTICS 2016-17, Provisional data as on 30 September, 2016,

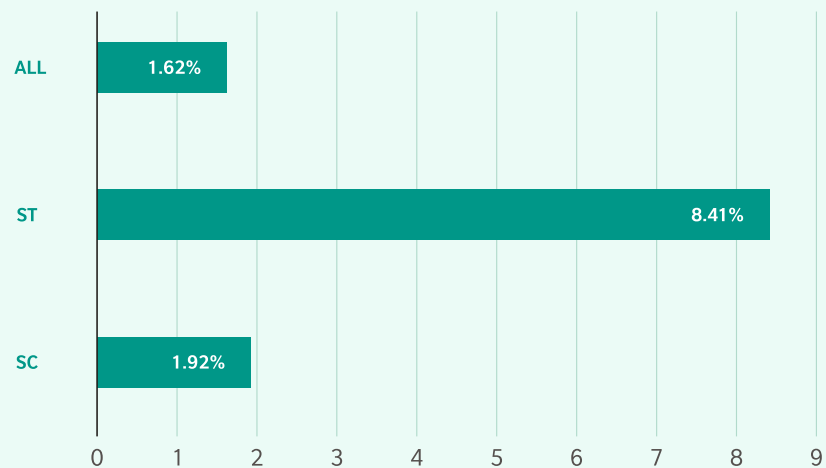
The transition rate from elementary to secondary also shows a similar positive trend for girls, with 97.54¹⁶ per cent transitioning from elementary to secondary as compared to a national figure of 87.91¹⁷ per cent for the same educational stage.

Figure 5 Female transition: elementary to secondary



Andhra Pradesh also evidences an improvement in dropout rates for girls. In 2015-16 the dropout rate at elementary level for girls stood at 6.33 per cent which improved to 1.62 per cent¹⁸ the following year. However, dropout rates for female SC and ST students were higher than the state figures for 2016-17.

Figure 6 Female dropout rate at elementary level (201617)



Based on the above, the trend in school education in Andhra Pradesh seems to suggest that there is a challenge in the area of enrolment. Andhra Pradesh GER is lower than the national average at elementary and secondary level. However, there seems to be a positive trend on female enrolment among SC and ST within the state. GER among SCs is consistently higher than the state average at elementary, secondary and higher secondary education; whereas for STs, it is higher at the elementary level. The data for female retention and transition seems to compare favourably with all India figures.

16. Table 5.19: Transition Rate by gender, 2016-17, SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA, U-DISE FLASH STATISTICS 2016-17, Provisional data as on 30 September, 2016

17. Table 1.48: Transition Rate by gender, all India, SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA, U-DISE FLASH STATISTICS 2016-17, Provisional data as on 30 September, 2016

18. Table 5.25: Dropout Rate by educational stage, SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA, U-DISE FLASH STATISTICS 2016-17, Provisional data as on 30 September, 2016

Though secondary data indicates that transition rate from elementary to secondary has gone up for girls, the data from qualitative interviews conducted by SPMVV suggests that girls are still lagging behind boys, when it comes to completion of secondary and higher secondary education.

'His (her/his son)10th class batch had 60 strength and 20 among them are girls. Out of these 20 girls, only two girls are continuing their post graduation now, and the rest have discontinued at the level of SSC¹⁹ and intermediate and got married.' – caregiver from East Godavari.

Similar observations were shared by the majority of boys, girls and caregivers in the two districts where primary data was collected.

Three reasons were provided as the key enablers for retention in schools. These are (1) the distance of schools from the residence, (2) mid-day meals provided in the school and (3) Ammavodi financial assistance scheme (refer Annex 1 for details).

One of the reasons for the better performance in GER among marginalised communities, and overall better retention and transition rates at the state level, could be attributed to the Mid-Day Meal programme.²⁰ In 2003–04, the Government of Andhra Pradesh introduced the cooked Mid-Day Meal (MDM) programme in all government, local body and government-aided primary schools, including Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) Centres. In the first year of its implementation, the programme had positive outcomes such as (1) reduction in classroom hunger; (2) increase in enrolment, especially of girls and (3) increase in daily classroom attendance, especially of girls from marginalised communities.²¹

According to a paper presented at the International Conference on Recent Innovations in Science, Agriculture, Engineering and Management, 20 November 2017, titled 'Impact of Mid- Day Meal Program on Enrolment, Retention and Academic Achievement of Primary School Students',²² the MDM programme has had a positive impact on school participation rates of girls from socio-economically marginalised communities.

The paper stated that,



“the MDM, being a free meal, acts as an incentive for poor families to send their children, both boys and girls, to government schools covered under the programme. However, it has particularly improved school attendance for girls and SC children due to various reasons. First, MDM is only provided to children who are enrolled and attending school. Hence, it acts as an incentive for parents to ensure their school age children are attending school regularly. Even if children are required for domestic work at home, they attend school at least until lunch time. Secondly, parents also send younger children along with other children, since a free meal is provided. In this way, there is an opportunity for the older children to attend school regularly, while also encouraging younger children to enrol. The research found that these trends could enable decrease in enrolment ages by encouraging parents to enrol their children early. This in turn can help in improving retention rates, as drop out tends to happen when older children, especially girls, are enrolled into lower classes.”

Kumar M, Vishal 2017

In addition to this, the various education incentives being offered by the state government such as the Ammavodi and Vidya Kanuka programmes (refer Annex-1) could also have had a positive impact on school participation rates, including girls and students from SC and ST communities. This was also mentioned by some of the respondents during interviews.

19. Secondary School Certificate

20. The National Programme of Mid-Day-Meal in Schools (MDMS) is a flagship programme of the Government of India aiming at enhancing enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children studying in Government, Local Body and Government-aided primary and upper primary schools and the Centres run under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS)/Alternative & Innovative Education (AIE) and National Children Labour Project (NCLP) schools now called as Special Training Centres (STC) of all areas across the country. (MidDayMeal Programme Annual Work Plan and Budget2018-19, Introduction) Recently, the programme has been renamed as 'Jagananna Gorumudda' scheme

21. MidDayMeal Programme Annual Work Plan and Budget2018-19, Section 1.1 Brief History

22. <http://data.conferenceworld.in/GKU/24.pdf>

In qualitative interviews conducted by the SPMVV, a female respondent from East Godavari, who had dropped out of college, stated that, *'I received scholarship and the mid-day meal programme was initiated with my batch in school.'*

Many respondents from both the districts mentioned the Ammavodi scheme as a crucial enabler for students to complete education.

While the better GER among SC and ST students might be attributed to the MDM programme and other educational incentives, the data also points to a declining trend among female students across all categories as the educational level increases. Research suggests that elements like distance of school from the residence are important factors that influence school participation among girls. This was corroborated in the primary research conducted by SPMVV, where respondents cited school access as an important criterion. According to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan²³ (SSA) programme in India, every village should have a primary school within two kilometres and a secondary school within five.

Additionally, infrastructure and availability of female teachers also have a bearing on the participation of girls in education. Parents, particularly in rural areas, hesitate to send their daughters to school when there are no female teachers. Forty-eight per cent of teachers in Andhra Pradesh schools are female. Similarly, the lack of clean toilet facilities can have a bearing on school attendance levels of adolescent-age girls. *"Several research studies report that in the absence of toilet facilities, girls stayed at home during menstruation, causing them to miss out on lessons and tests and ultimately forcing them to drop out."*²⁴ (Adukia, A, 2018). In Andhra Pradesh, although 89.81²⁵ per cent of schools have functional toilets for girls, only 39.32²⁶ per cent have WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) facilities. SDG 6 recognises the importance of WASH, particularly with the positive impact it can have in ensuring continued access to education for girls.

2.2 Higher education

"Access to higher education for women and girls is influenced by multiple factors, including socio-cultural aspects, attitudes and government policies for higher education. This seems to suggest that social and gender-based disadvantages that girls face in India are also carried into higher education."

(Lal & Arora, 2016). *"Since women and girls from different social and economic groups enter into different kinds of institutions, factors such as the quality of education, including facilities, recruitment of staff, male and female teacher ratio, support systems in the institutions, safety and campus experiences, have emerged as crucial issues."* (Dasgupta & Mukherjee, 2020; Morley, 2006). These findings indicate that the differences in male and female enrolment in higher education are likely to lie in the social and systemic determinants of education.

Qualitative data collected by the SPMVV seems to suggest that respondents understood the value of continuing education. Across the two districts (Kurnool and East Godavari), from where the data was collected, all the respondents reported an increased awareness among parents of both boys and girls about the importance of higher education for girls. It was commonly reported that education is a means to a good life and a better future. For example, Shanker, from a village in Kurnool, had enrolled his daughter into a government college to pursue a Masters' programme, living in a private hostel. He opined: *'parents feel, that even if they face financial difficulties, their daughters and sons have to be safe and happy. They should have bright future and better jobs.'*

The women who were interviewed consistently observed that higher education is necessary to gain knowledge, jobs, and earn respect in society. They also noted that attending colleges and universities would provide them with the required exposure to choose the right career option. Similar comments were made by some young men in the sample such as Raju, a rural respondent from East Godavari, who had dropped out at the higher secondary level. He believes that: *'girls need higher education for them to stand on their own feet and to get a job. This will also help them to be confident and skilfully handle difficult situations that they encounter in life.'*

Despite this awareness of the importance of higher education for girls, why does it seem that the state of Andhra Pradesh compares unfavourably in terms of indicators in higher education? This section looks at the trends and possible causes, through a gender lens, across various criteria as discussed below.

23. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is Government of India flagship programme for achievement of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time bound manner as mandated by the 86th amendment to the Constitution of India making free and compulsory Education to the Children of 6-14 years age group, a Fundamental Right.

24. How sanitation facilities in schools can improve educational outcomes, Aug 2018, Anjali Adukia, University of Chicago

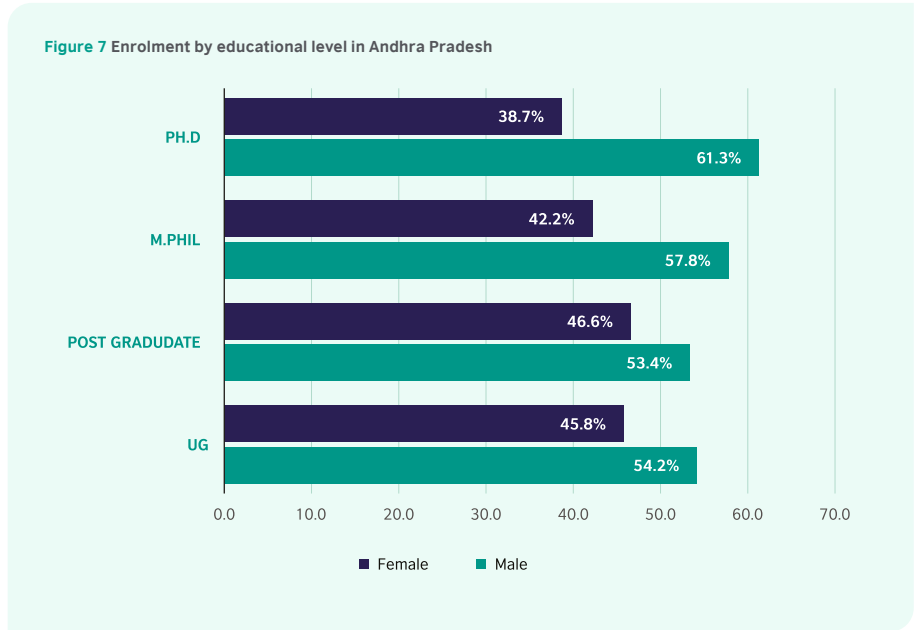
25. Table 3.14: Percentage of schools with toilet for girls, 2016-17, SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA, U-DISE FLASH STATISTICS 2016-17, Provisional data as on 30 September, 2016

26. Table 3.18: Percentage distribution of schools by WASH facility by school category.

27. 2016-17 (drinking, water, functional toilets & hand wash) SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA, U-DISE FLASH STATISTICS 2016-17, Provisional data as on 30 September, 2016

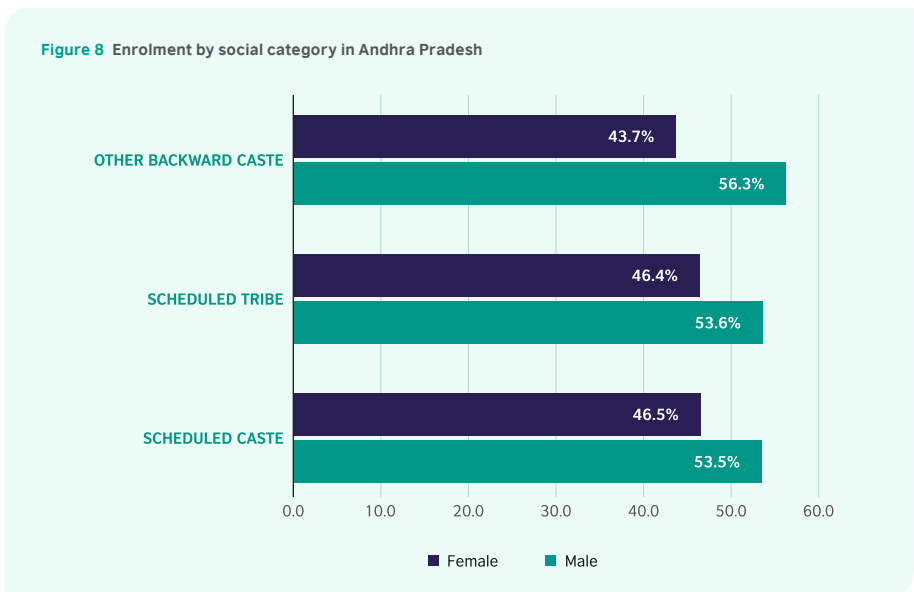
2.2.1 Trends in enrolment

According to the AISHE 2018-19 report, total enrolment in higher education has been estimated to be 37.4 million with 19.2 million males and 18.2 million females. Females constitute 48.6 per cent of the total enrolment. The same report also states that Andhra Pradesh has 14 million students enrolled in undergraduate courses, of which 45.76 per cent are females, which is below the national figure. For overall enrolment in post graduate courses, Andhra Pradesh stands at sixth position nationally, with 211,292 enrolments for the year 2018-19, with 46.6 per cent being females.



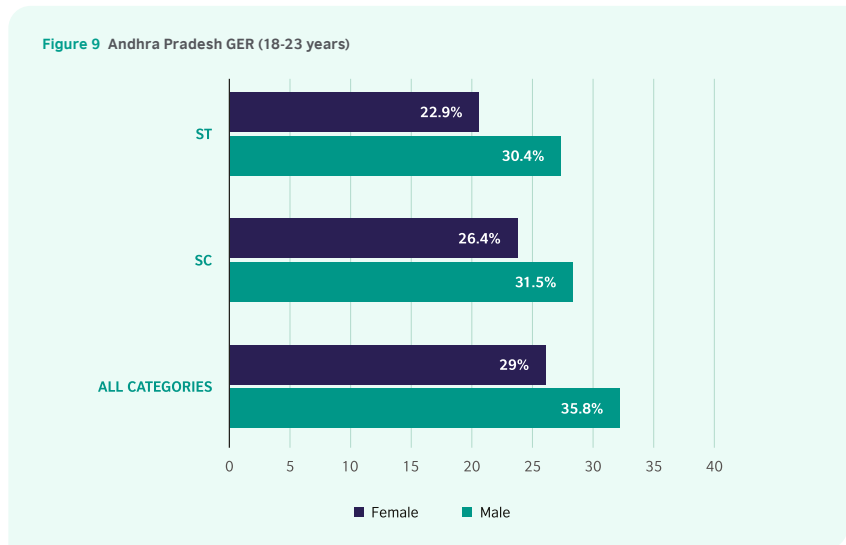
The AISHE 2018-19 data shows a downward trend, as the level of education increases. Andhra Pradesh had a micro share of 2.94 per cent in overall Ph.D. enrolments nationally, although it stood in 11th position out of 28 states. In the distribution of enrolment share between male and female in Andhra Pradesh for the year 2018–19, male stands with 61.31 percent (3054) and female students are just 1927 which is 38.69 percent as indicated below. By contrast, in states like Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi and Tamil Nadu, the female enrolment for Ph.D., is comparatively progressive, with Tamil Nadu having the highest female enrolment at 46.94 per cent (AISHE Report, 2018-19).

When disaggregated by social category, it is seen that the enrolment data for SC and ST are similar, while that for Other Backward Classes²⁸ (OBC) indicate a trend of relatively lower enrolment of females into higher education, as indicated in Figure 8.



28. Other Backward Classes means the class or classes of citizens who are socially and educationally backward, and are so determined by the Central/ State Government. (A-2, page 280, AISHE report 2018-19)

GER in higher education for Andhra Pradesh for all categories stands at 32.4 per cent, with female GER being 29 per cent which is higher than the national figures of 26.3 per cent and 26.4 per cent respectively.



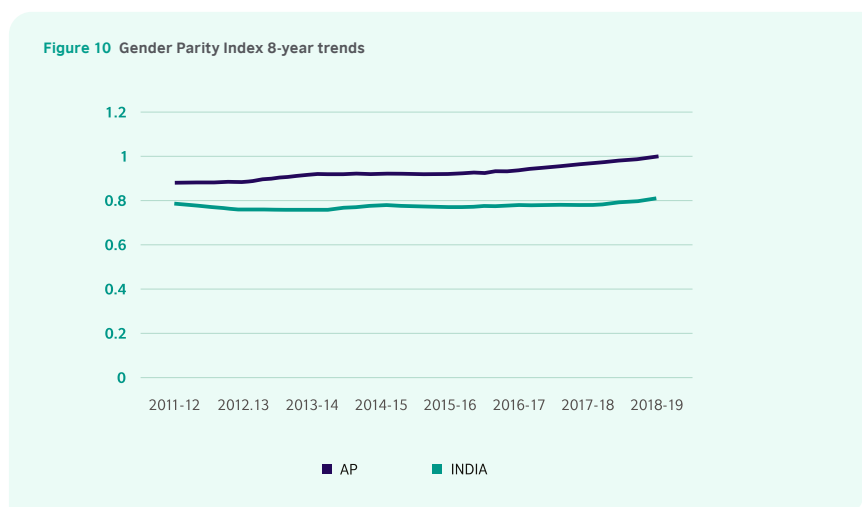
Qualitative interviews conducted by the SPMVV explored views of respondents about the stage at which girls generally drop out of education. The observation most commonly shared by the respondents was that most dropping out occurs at the higher secondary level. There is also a trend of girls entering higher education but dropping out before they complete their undergraduate course.

Raju,²⁹ from East Godavari district, who dropped out at higher secondary level due to the death of his father, noted that almost all girls in his village are enrolled in school and many appear for the 10th class exams. He explained that this was possible because of the proximity of the school to the village. He went on to say that studying beyond 10th class depends to a large extent on two factors: (1) how the female student performs in the 10th class examinations and (2) the distance to the college from home. **‘Only 20-30 percent of those who pass the 10th class, get enrolled into the intermediate course and 70 per cent of them drop out before completing it.’**

A few girls, however, do return to higher education after a gap, although support from the husband (and his family) is important for them to do so. Interviews conducted by SPMVV suggest that many girls who do not continue to higher education either stay at home, get married or engage in skill-based occupations like tailoring.

2.2.2 Gender Parity Index

On GPI in higher education³⁰, Andhra Pradesh ranks second from the bottom, at 0.81, higher only than Bihar. GPI for SC students stands a bit higher at 0.84 while for ST students it is lower at 0.76. The AISHE 2018–19 data also indicates that although GPI in higher education for the state has increased, this increase has been marginal and inconsistent. It has also been lower than the national level throughout the eight-year period, as indicated in the table below.

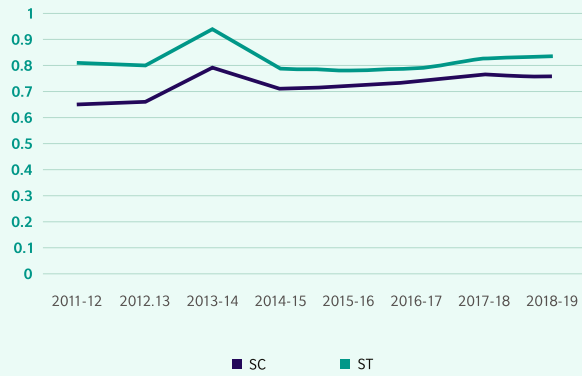


29. Name changed

30. Gender Parity Index in primary, secondary and tertiary education is the ratio of the number of female students enrolled at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education to the number of male students in each level

The data analysis by social categories presents an interesting picture. For the SC category, the GPI has been consistently higher than the state level over the eight-year period, whereas for the ST category, it has been consistently lower than the state level for the same period, except for a marginal increase over the state average in 2013–14 at 0.79 (ST) and 0.76 (all categories).

Figure 11 Andhra Pradesh GPI 8 year trend by social category



'Many girls drop out by tenth or intermediate. Our village has 500 households, and there is not a single girl with a degree.' – caregiver from Kurnool.

Qualitative data collected by SPMVV shows various reasons why young boys and girls/men and women pause or drop out of higher education. Some of these are common for both boys and girls whereas some challenges related specifically to women and girls which could explain the cases for low GER and GPI in the state. Broadly, these may be described as reasons relating to finance, employment or motivation.

Financial constraints: In the primary data collected by SPMVV, many respondents mentioned constrained by increased expenditure for higher education, in terms of enhanced tuition fees and additional transportation costs to commute to college. There is also pressure on young people to work and augment the family income, which could lead them to drop out of college. In a patriarchal society, the financial constraints are likely to impact/affect female education more. Where financial means are scarce, parents are likely to prefer to send their sons to college and arrange for their daughters to be married (see Recommendation 1,2 and 5).

'When my father died, I stopped going to college and was married off within the extended family. Now I am working as a daily wage labourer, earning INR 170 per day (approx. GBP 1.5).' A 20-year old girl from Kurnool district. She has two younger brothers, both of whom are continuing their education. One is studying in higher secondary and the second in primary school.

The same respondent opined that people in my *'neighbourhood think that it is a waste of money to send girls for higher education. They think, what is the use when they will clean utensils at home?'*

She, however, aspires to complete her education. She thinks that it's important for girls to have education to get respect and for economic independence. *'If situation permits, I would like to continue education. My husband's family, even elders, are supportive of my wishes.'*

Employment: The issue of employment comes with various challenges. A college degree does not guarantee a job or better opportunities at the outset. In the primary data collected by SPMVV, many respondents belonged to poor families, with parents who had very little or no formal education, and worked as daily wage labourers. When a child from such a background attains a college degree, there are very high expectations from them about securing a job with a regular income. However, these expectations are not always met. In the absence of jobs, many, especially girls, take up skill-based jobs like tailoring, which could be carried out from the home and also bring in income. This was considered to be more desirable than studying which did not seem to come with any assurance of employment (see Recommendation 6).

'Are they getting jobs for whatever they study? That is why we are not interested in making the girls study further. It is better to get them married.' caregiver from Kurnool on why girls are not completing their studies.

'Along with financial assistance to the girls to continue with higher education, we (girls and their families) need more awareness about various government schemes which can help us to continue (with education). It is also important that government supports creation of local job opportunities, especially for girls.'

Lack of motivation: Youth in rural India seem to lack motivation from family and/or peers to continue when they experience obstacles in their educational journey. Additionally, there is an absence of local role models who could inspire them pursue their dreams. One of the respondents mentioned that he could continue till the first year of college only because of encouragement from his brother, himself a school dropout. In the case of girls, the motivation factor is lower, often facing parental pressure for marriage or perceptions of safety which makes them unwilling to send daughters to co-educational institutions (see Recommendation 5,6,7).

'My surroundings do not provide a conducive environment to continue higher education. Most of the rural girls discontinue studies in 10th or in higher secondary' – female respondent from East Godavari.

'Special programmes like motivational speeches must be arranged by the schools and colleges for students, particularly for girls to build their self-confidence' – female participant in focused group discussion, Kurnool.

2.2.3 Gender disparity in choice of course

A study of enrolment data shows that the choice of courses seems to be influenced by gender, with girls choosing courses that might be deemed to be more appropriate for women to study. For example, Andhra Pradesh is in fourth place nationally in terms of enrolment into nursing courses, with a total of 21,913 students, of which 95 percent are female (AISHE, 2018-2019). This is the highest in the country, when compared to female students enrolling into nursing courses in other states.

The same scenario of gendered subject/course choice is visible in school level teacher training courses, where Andhra Pradesh has 65.92 per cent female students – the second highest proportion of female students on teacher training courses nationally, after Maharashtra (78.63 per cent). In engineering and technology courses, Andhra Pradesh has better female enrolment, of 35.5 percent when compared with the national level (All India Council for Technical Education). According to the study titled 'Gendered access and participation: unequal subject choices in Indian higher education'³¹

A study on 'Gender, Subject Choice and Higher Education in India: Exploring 'Choices' and 'Constraints' of Women Students' also notes that



Relative to boys, girls' choices are far more constrained, as these choices are mediated by the constructions of gendered subjects and occupational identities, and by the larger perception of gender roles for women..... women's choice of subjects in higher education is often determined by concerns of 'marriageability' and 'social safety'. Parents prefer to send their daughters to colleges that are nearby, or if outside their place of residence, to all-girls colleges or those with attached hostels as they are considered to be 'safe'. These factors are never in play while making decisions about boys' choice of subject in higher education.

Gautam, 2015, (see Recommendations 5,6 and 7)



Gendered choices in subjects are influenced by social constructs of masculinities and femininities; students seem to make subject choices based on the gendered qualities that the subjects are perceived to hold. These perceptions tend to develop as a result of gendered socialisation, which starts at the family level and continues into school and higher education, ultimately leaving its imprint on the subject divide and choices. This could explain the reasons for underrepresentation of women in STEM³² subjects and overrepresentation in the arts and humanities. Such clustering of women in specific subjects also constrains their employability and occupational options'.

Channa. K (Ed. Kumar. K 2017)' (see Recommendation 6 and 7)

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: The challenge of sexual harassment was stated by many girls during the interviews conducted as part of primary data collection by SPMVV. The boys interviewed also mentioned this as one of the reasons for girls dropping out. As stated above, perceptions of safety were a deterrent in sending girls for higher education. In one case, a respondent reported changing from a co-educational institution to an all-women's college. In addition, respondents also mentioned the need to have hostels where girls could live and study, although the issue of safety and security of female students living in the hostels was also raised.

'Lack of safety and security for girls due to various forms of harassment by men makes it hard for girls to continue their studies'

– male respondent from Kurnool, studying in a private college.

2.2.4 The impact of medium of instruction

Despite the progress made in the education of women and girls in the past few decades, gender inequalities continue to persist, especially among the country's poorest. In patriarchal societies, **'if a choice has to be made between sending a boy or a girl to school, the boy will usually be given precedence'**³³ (Gender, www.educateachild.org). This is especially true if the choice is between private schooling and/or English medium education. Typically, parents might decide to send their sons to private and/or English medium schools while girls, if enrolled, usually study in government education institutions where medium of instruction is most likely to be the local language.³⁴

A study titled Language Education as a Tool for Empowering Women³⁵, states that, **'as education is the key to achieve women's empowerment, language education can be the matrix of the actualisation of that empowerment on a global scale'** (Gonzi, 2004). However, since the medium of instruction in higher education in India, tends to be in English, women and girls are at a disadvantage. As a result, girls might find it difficult to cope with their studies in higher education institutions. In the primary data collected by SPMVV, some respondents noted challenges in transitioning from Telugu medium at the school level to English medium at the college level. Low levels of or lack of English language skills, could also negatively impact their everyday experiences in college / university, particularly where there is limited institutional support to develop their language abilities. These challenges could result in them discontinuing college or not enrolling into higher education at all. **"The importance of mother tongue³⁶ has been emphasised in the NEP 2020 which states that wherever possible the medium of instruction in**

SUPPORT WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

"My daughter studied in Telugu medium up to class 10, then she joined a polytechnic college after given the entrance exam. Due to difficulty in understanding subjects that were taught in English, she discontinued."
– caregiver from Kurnool district

Young people understand the need for having strong English language abilities to complete their education and also to get a job. One of the female respondents from Kurnool emphasised the need for **"introduction of a spoken English course for the students to get better jobs."**

To improve female enrolment in higher education, a key informant from East Godavari emphasised the need to **"encourage English medium in education"**

schools until class five and preferably until class eight, should be the mother tongue or the local or regional language. The central government also has plans to introduce mother tongue/regional language, as a medium of instruction, or bilingual programmes in technical courses like medicine and engineering" (Nishak, 2020)³⁷

If realised, these policy initiatives have the potential to level the playing field for women and girls, which in turn, could contribute to reducing the gender gap in higher education. (See recommendation 4)

31. Routledge Handbook of Education in India, Debates, Practices and Policies, chapter 14, Karuna Chanana

32. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

33. <https://educateachild.org/explore/barriers-to-education/gender>

34. New order: Boys study in English medium; govt schools for girls, Deccan Herald, Oct 11, 2017

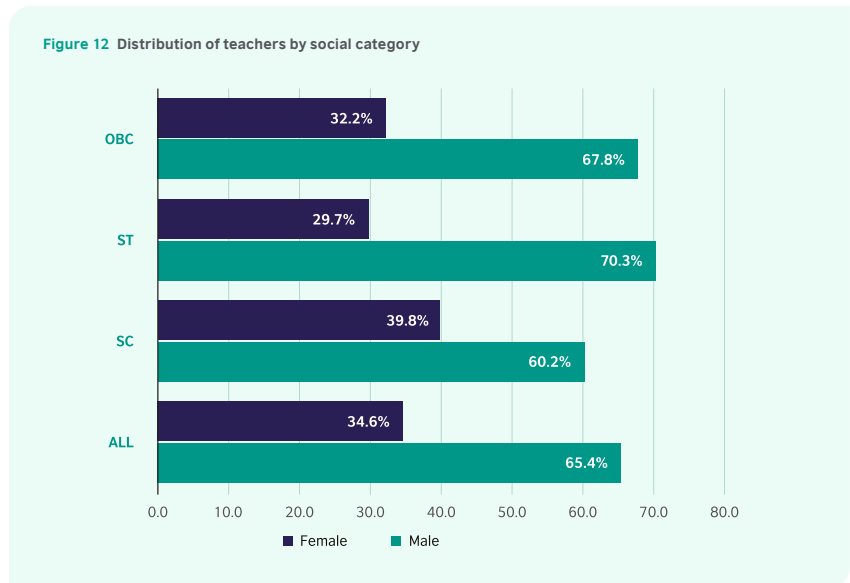
35. Language Education as a Tool for Empowering Women, Ca'Foscari University of Venice

36. The language that you first learn to speak when you are a child, Oxford Learner's Dictionaries

37. In higher education, it is time to prioritise Indian languages, Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, December 2, 2020

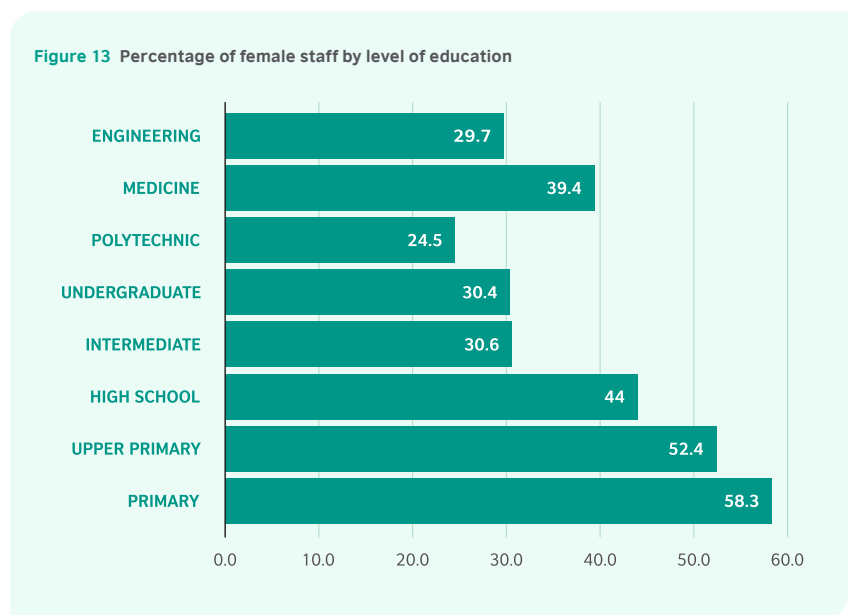
2.2.5 Gender disparity in the higher education teaching workforce

In terms of the profile of teachers in higher education, according to the AISHE 2018-19 report, there are a total of 100,758 in the state. Of these, 65.4 per cent are male and 34.6 per cent are female. Figure 12 is an overview of teachers in the state by social category.



The figure indicates that male teachers significantly outnumber female teachers in all social categories. A similar situation is seen at the district level as well. An analysis of the secondary data collected by SPMVV from the Kurnool district handbook for 2018-19, shows that the proportion of female staff decreases as the level of education increases.

Research suggests that gender parity in the teaching workforce has a positive impact on educational outcomes for women and girls. In patriarchal societies, parents might prefer that their daughters be taught by female teachers, and the lack of the same could become a barrier to female enrolment into education. Studies also suggest that female teachers can have a positive impact on retention and achievement rates of female students³⁹. This is particularly true for school education. Hence it might be worthwhile to posit that it could hold true for higher education also. However, since the research team did not come across any extant knowledge to this effect while researching this paper, it remains a hypothesis (see Recommendation 3).



38. Why we need more female teachers across all levels of education, Robert Jenkins, 4 October 2019

39. Greater Kashmir: Impact of women teachers, Dr. Arshed Iqbal Dar, 29 Oct, 2018

2.2.6 Scholarships

Scholarships are a critical input that enable females, who are stilling lagging behind males in education, to overcome their financial constraints and pursue academic and career opportunities. Overall, this has the potential to contribute towards their empowerment and agency (see Recommendation 2).

General and women-specific scholarships in education are offered by various private and public bodies. These could include state and central governments, colleges and university sources, religious entities, professional organisations and corporate sponsors.

Desk research was carried out to explore 24 educational scholarships provided by the state and central government and by NGOs, CSR foundations and other corporates. This included scholarships provided for school education and higher education including specific support for higher education in STEM subjects (see Annex 1).

Additionally, the trend of expenditure on scholarships was also studied, based on information available through the *Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education 2015-16 to 2017-18*.⁴⁰

Overall trends in scholarships are as follows.

State government scholarships:

- Among 24 scholarships studied, four were offered by the state government for school education, higher education and further education⁴¹.
- The scholarships studied were available for both male and female students. There was no specific targeting of female students in these scholarships.
- Two of the scholarships targeted students from SC and ST communities.

Figure 14 Types of scholarships

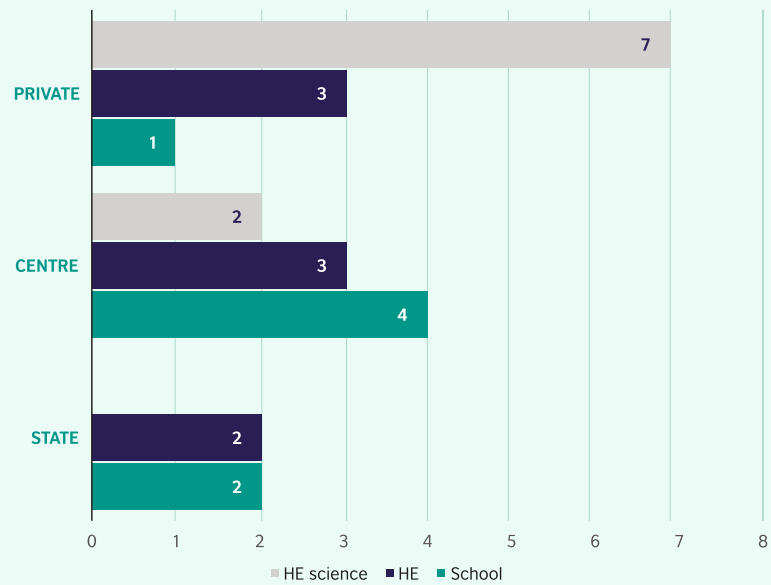
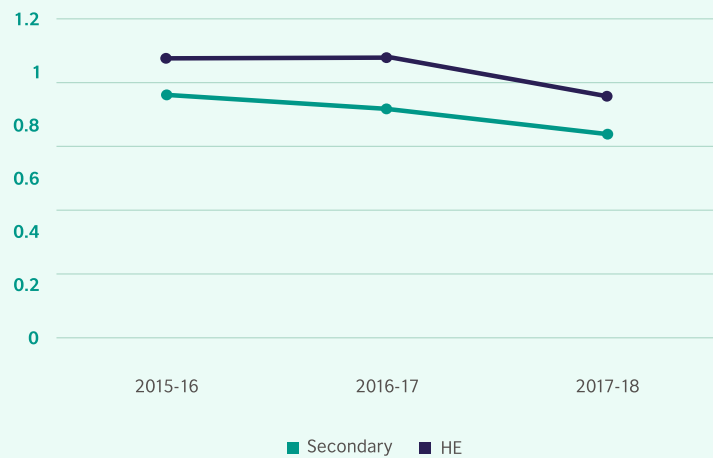


Figure 15 Expenditure on scholarships as a percentage of education budget



- The scholarships were generally provided for fee re-imbursments and living expenses. The value of scholarships provided is varied and ranges from INR 10,000–20,000 annually.
- In the case of the Jagananna Vidya Kanuka scheme, the scholarship was an in-kind provision of education kits for school students.
- Government expenditure on scholarships for secondary and higher education in Andhra Pradesh over a three-year period (2015–2018) shows a declining trend. Data for elementary education was not available.

40. The Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure is a publication of the Ministry of Education (formerly Ministry of Human Resources Development) which provides comprehensive and sector wise expenditure on education, culled out from budget documents of various ministries/departments and states/Union Territories

41. Further Education (FE) refers to educational choices made after the age of 16. It covers all qualifications lower than a degree.

Central government scholarships:

- Among the 24 scholarships studied, nine were central government schemes for school and higher education. Of these, six are meant exclusively for female students. These are provided by the department of school education, higher education, Ministry of Minority Affairs, University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The Central Sector Scheme of Scholarship for College and University Students, while being an open scholarship, makes a commitment to providing equal numbers of scholarships to male and female students.
- Among the scholarships studied, there seem to be more offered by the central government for higher education as compared to the state government where they appear to focus more on school education.

Private / Civil Society / Non-government Scholarships:

- Out of 24 scholarships studied, 11 were provided by non-government entities which ranged from CSR Trusts and Foundations to businesses.
- Ten were higher education scholarships and only one scholarship was offered at the school level. Among the ten, seven were for STEM education.
- The scholarship amounts ranged from INR 5000-INR 250,000 for varying periods of time. Some of these were provided as one-time scholarships, unlike the government scholarships which were paid over the course of the study period.

The role of scholarships in providing opportunities for young people and adults to continue their education has been recognised in the SDGs 4, target 4B. An evaluation of a British Council STEM scholarships programme for women to study in the UK indicates an overwhelmingly positive experience and feedback from the recipients who reported that it was a life changing experience which improved their self-confidence and agency.⁴²

The above analysis of available scholarship programmes offered at the state and central level, and the efforts by private / civil society players, indicates that there is a felt need and an opportunity to create a multiplier effect that can substantially and positively

impact women's access to higher education (see Recommendation 2).

2.2.7 Education infrastructure as enablers

AISHE 2018-19 data indicates that Andhra Pradesh holds fifth position in India in terms of higher education infrastructure with 3540 higher education institutions comprising 821 stand-alone institutions,⁴³ 2678 colleges, and 41 universities. Out of 13 districts, five have between 100–199 colleges while eight are in the 200–299 range. This indicates that there is likely to be adequate access to higher education institutions across the state.

However, it must also be noted that out of a total of 2521 colleges in the state, nearly 82 per cent are classified as private unaided (the highest in the country), 6.4 per cent as private aided and 11.8 per cent as government colleges. Around 87 per cent of enrolments takes place in private colleges. While the number of educational institutions by district seems to indicate a positive trend of access to educational institutions, the prevalence of private colleges raises the question of affordability of higher education in the state. According to the Multidimensional Poverty Index Report, 2017, 21 per cent of the population of Andhra Pradesh are living in multidimensional poverty.⁴⁴

2.2.7.1 Residential education

Residential institutions as a means of providing schooling to students from marginalised communities have existed in India since the 1960s. In undivided Andhra Pradesh, residential schools and colleges were established through various government policies. In 1987, the Andhra Pradesh Social Welfare Residential Institutions Society for SC students was established by the Social Welfare Department.⁴⁵ In 1998, the Andhra Pradesh Tribal Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (APTWREIS) popularly known as Gurukulam was established.⁴⁶ The main objective of these institutions was to impart quality education to students belonging to the SC and ST community. It must be noted that since the bifurcation of the states into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in 2014, the administration of these institutions has also undergone some changes.

Started in 2004, the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas⁴⁷ (KGBV) provide education to girls in the age group of 10–18 years and from SC, ST, OBC, and minority communities to ensure smooth transition of girls from elementary to secondary and higher secondary school. The scheme aims to provide at least one

42. 70th year STEM scholarships for women Tracer Study Report, British Council 2020

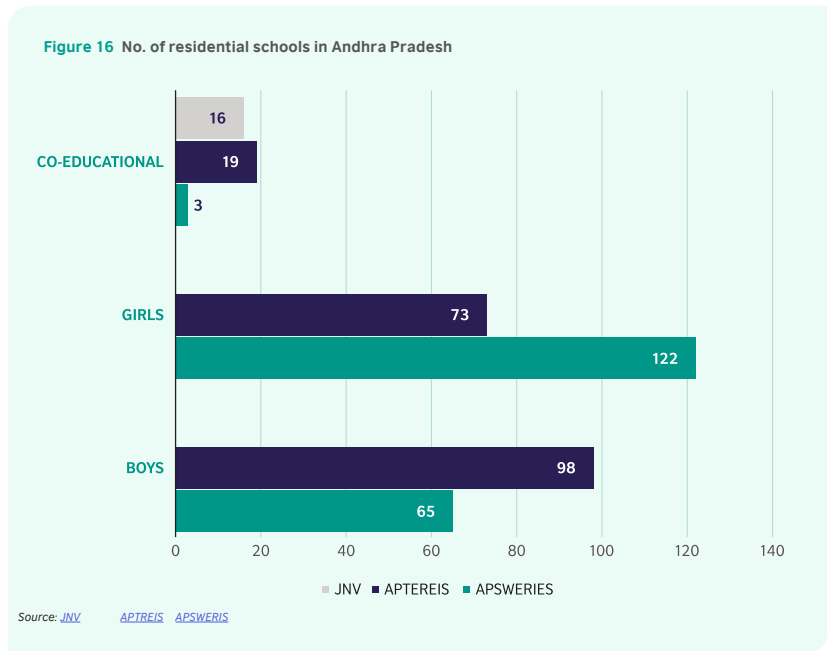
43. There are several institutions which are outside the purview of the University & College. These Institutions generally run Diploma/PG Diploma level programmes for which they require recognition from one or other Statutory Bodies. The AISHE report 2018-19, refers to such Institutions as Standalone Institutions. (AISHE report 2018-19, A2, page 277)

44. The global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is an international measure of acute multidimensional poverty covering over 100 developing countries. It complements traditional monetary poverty measures by capturing the acute deprivations in health, education, and living standards that a person faces simultaneously.

45. http://www.apswreis.in/aboutus_new.html

residential school for girls from classes 6–12 in every educationally backward block.

In addition to this, Andhra Pradesh also has residential schools under the central government Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) programme, which were established to provide quality education to students primarily from the rural areas. JNVs are residential, co-educational schools, affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), for classes 6–12⁴⁸. Figure 15 shows the number of institutions in each category.



From figure 15 it seems to strongly emerge that, although the primary objective of starting residential schools through the APSWREI and APTWREI was to provide access and quality education to SC and ST students in general, they have developed into a substantial educational resource which cater to the educational needs of girls quite significantly, 122 APSWREI are exclusively for girls.

Residential schooling also has an important gender dimension (refer Recommendation 1). A 2015 study by the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies Bangalore, titled ‘Residential Schooling: Impact on Girls’ Education and Empowerment’,⁴⁹ notes that it has the potential to influence girls’ participation in education from upper primary level (class 6) onwards, particularly for those who belong to disadvantaged communities. Some of the factors that were highlighted in the study are as follows:

- providing girls with an opportunity to be away from the family where they may be expected to undertake domestic chores or sibling and/or elder care at the cost of their education
- providing protection from the risk of sexual abuse and violence while traveling long distances to school, especially in rural areas
- providing some safeguards against early marriages

- mitigating the impact of poverty which might cause parents to withdraw their daughters from school and send them to work
- preventing drop out, especially of adolescent girls, because of inadequate WASH facilities in schools.

While analysing the role of education infrastructure in creating access to education, it is seen that there are a greater number of schemes for hostels in the school education category than in higher education.

In higher education, Andhra Pradesh has more hostels for female students (1188), with a higher occupancy (187,036), than hostels for male students (817) with an occupancy of 148,156. However, the number of girls’ hostels is lower when compared to states like Karnataka (2791), Gujarat (1556), Maharashtra (3153), Tamil Nadu (2705)⁵⁰.

2.2.7.2 Education and student transportation

Based on data collected by SPMVV through interviews with college going / dropped out students, travel and commuting to educational institutions was frequently noted as a challenge. Most depended on public transport, as they were not able to afford private transportation on a regular basis. There was also the issue of irregularity or inadequate availability of public transport to and from their towns/villages. Bus was the major mode of transportation.

46. <https://apwgurukulam.ap.gov.in/about.html>

47. <https://samagra.education.gov.in/kgbv.html>

48. https://www.navodaya.gov.in/nvs/nvs-school/SONBHADRA/en/about_us/About-JNV/

49. Page 28, http://cbps.in/wp-content/uploads/CBPS_Residential-Schools_Final-Report_23April2015.pdf

50. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Construction of Hostels for OBC Boys and Girls, location and capacity of hostels is determined by: (i) regions/districts not covered so far, (ii) Districts/towns having a large number of educational institutions. 5.2. As far as possible, hostels will be constructed in close vicinity of educational institutions.

51. The provincial or rural districts of India

The Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) is the main provider of public transport by bus in the state. As part of its social obligations, it offers free or concessional bus pass facilities to different categories of commuters (see Annex 2 for details).

The APSRTC offers 17 different types of free/subsidised bus travel for various categories of people. Out of these, nine pertain to school or college students. Among these, only one is provided specifically for girls studying in class 10 or below, up to the age of 18 years. All the others are gender neutral. So, while girls may be availing these bus passes, they are not targeted specifically at girls.

In the case of the bus pass for students from high schools/colleges in mofussil⁵¹ areas, they were not eligible for the slab rate bus pass, if they were receiving any 'stipend or fellowship' or were employed. This seems to be a disabling condition for those students, who might be scholarship recipients, but who are still in need of further support to continue to access higher education. As mentioned before, it also does not specifically target female students.

Student transportation could have a link with educational access. The available research on this theme is limited and mostly relates to school education. It has an important function, in that it helps students, particularly those from marginalised communities, overcome any geographical barriers in accessing education. (see Recommendation 5)

A study on 'Student Transportation and Educational Access, How Students Get to School in Denver, Detroit, New Orleans, New York City, and Washington, DC⁵²', notes that '**student transportation can have a positive impact on a student's health and well-being. It can address issues of safety and health while traveling to school, and positively impact a student's attendance and her overall academic performance. It can have a substantial effect on the quality of a student's education and the composition of her peer group**'. (Urban Institute Student Transportation Working Group, 2017)

While the above study pertains to the urban context and school education, in a country like India, it might also be extended to the context of female students in both rural and urban and higher education contexts. This was brought out quite clearly in the primary data collected by SPMVV as mentioned below. However, it does not seem to have found adequate attention in national policies such as the NEP 2020 and or in state or central transport policies.

DISTANCE FROM RESIDENCE TO THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:

Respondents reported having to travel longer distances to attend college as compared to what they used to do while in school. This added to the financial costs of higher education and came with concerns around safety of girls. They reported that public transport is not easily accessible and there is heavy reliance on privately owned or paid transportation.

'College is 10–15 kms of distance from the village and I commute by auto⁵³ or, when they are not available, my husband drops me to college. There is no public transportation facility to my village' – female respondent, who is studying in college, Kurnool district.

'For the last three years, there is a bus service provided by the government for students to commute to college. While it is useful, it is not sufficient for all students' – a parent from Kurnool district. His eldest daughter had to discontinue after class 7 due to a hearing impairment. His son has completed his graduation and is working as a teacher. His second daughter got married while she was in college and had to discontinue after that. However, she has now re-enrolled into college with her husband's support.

49. Student Transportation and Educational Access How Students Get to School in Denver, Detroit, New Orleans, New York City, and Washington, DC, Urban Institute Student Transportation Working Group, February 2017

53. An auto or autorickshaw is a motorized three wheel transport that can be hired like a taxi.

3. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

A holistic analysis of trends in women and girls' education cannot be complete without examining the role of public policy that forms the basis of the education system. Education policies over the years, such as the National Policy on Education 1986, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan etc, highlight the importance accorded by the government to the issue of education. Global events, such as the 1995 International Conference on Women and publication of the Beijing Plan of Action, World Education Forum at Dakar in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals and most recently the Sustainable Development Goals, created a momentum that led to these policies and schemes being formulated and that have resulted in improvements in GER and GPI over the years.

The latest effort in policy making for education in India is the NEP 2020, popularly called as the 'first education policy of the 21st century'. The NEP 2020 came into effect on 29th July 2020. ***NEP 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century, which aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of India***' (NEP 2020, p3). As stated in the policy document, it is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially SDG 4 on education. It considers gender as a cross-cutting theme and aims to achieve gender equality in education in partnership with states and local community organisations. 'Equitable and Inclusive Education Learning for All' is, an important part of the NEP 2020. The policy addresses gender inequality in the following ways.



- **setting up a 'Gender Inclusion Fund', aimed at providing quality and equitable education for all girls.**
- **to achieve 100 per cent enrolment for girls in schools by 2030 and 50 per cent enrolment in higher education by 2035.**
- **to strengthen education access through construction of free residential schools along the lines of the JNV and KGBV**
- **to develop women's leadership through dialogue with education stakeholders like women heads of institutions, school leaders, teachers, wardens, physical instructors, and other staff.**
- **to improve the gender balance among teachers**
- **focuses on the safety of female students within and outside of the school, and requires schools to ensure against harassment, discrimination, and bullying in campuses, linked to yearly accreditation.**
- **aims to address social attitudes and gender stereotypes that are a barrier to girls' education by training front line workers like teachers and Anganwadi workers to provide counselling to girls' families, thereby increasing school attendance and reducing drop out.**
- **educational institutions will be required to conduct awareness sessions on gender issues to break gender stereotypes, gender equality and legal rights and protection for girls and women.**
- **to train teachers and school leaders to be gender sensitive and work towards inclusive classroom management practices⁵⁴.**

Mathur and Sharma, 2020

In the higher education space, the policy envisions ensuring equitable access to quality education to all students, with a special emphasis on the Socio Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs). The policy further states that the dynamics and also reasons for exclusion of SEDGs from the education system are common across school and higher education sectors. ***‘Therefore, the approach to equity and inclusion must be common across school and higher education. Furthermore, there must be continuity across the stages to ensure sustainable reform. Thus, the policy initiatives required to meet the goals of equity and inclusion in higher education must be read in conjunction with those for school education’*** (NEP 2020, 14. Equity and Inclusion).

The policy also outlines steps that all governments (NEP 2020, 14.4.1, Equity and Inclusion) and higher education institutions (NEP 2020, 14.4.2, Equity and Inclusion) need to take to promote higher education among SEDGs. These are as follows:

Government	Higher Education Institutions (HEI)
Earmark suitable government funds for the education of SEDGs	Mitigate opportunity costs and fees for pursuing higher education
Set clear targets for higher GER for SEDGs	Provide more financial assistance and scholarships to socio-economically disadvantaged students
Enhance gender balance in admissions to HEIs	Conduct outreach on higher education opportunities and scholarships
Enhance access by establishing more high-quality HEIs in aspirational districts and Special Education Zones containing larger numbers of SEDGs	Make admissions processes more inclusive
Develop and support high-quality HEIs that teach in local/Indian languages or bilingually	Make curriculum more inclusive
Provide more financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs in both public and private HEIs	Increase employability potential of higher education programmes
Conduct outreach programmes on higher education opportunities and scholarships among SEDGs	Develop more degree courses taught in Indian languages and bilingually
	Ensure all buildings and facilities are wheelchair-accessible and disabled-friendly

Government

Develop and support technology tools for better participation and learning outcomes

Higher Education Institutions (HEI)

Develop bridge courses for students that come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds
 Provide socio-emotional and academic support and mentoring for all such students through suitable counselling and mentoring programmes
 Ensure sensitisation of faculty, counsellor, and students on gender-identity issue and its inclusion in all aspects of the HEI, including curricula
 Strictly enforce all no-discrimination and anti-harassment rules
 Develop Institutional Development Plans that contain specific plans for action on increasing participation from SEDGs, including but not limited to the above items.

The NEP 2020, thus, sets out a 20-year blueprint to achieve gender equality in education as a whole. This, in addition to the analysis of trends in education, particularly higher education, have been viewed together and form the basis of the recommendations in the next section.



4. Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the educational trends analysed in previous sections through extensive secondary research and supported by qualitative data collected by the SPMVV.

Recommendation 1

There is a need for further study on the role of residential education for girls, especially from poor households, at key transition points in the educational journey

One of the research studies conducted by the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies suggests there is a positive correlation between residential schools and girls' education, especially at the secondary level. However, a robust and holistic evaluation of these initiatives and their contribution to girls' and women's education is required. Broadly, it is suggested that the study can look at the following areas.

- If and how residential education institutions have contributed to the GER and GPI at various stages of education: elementary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education.
- The quality of facilities and institutional care provided in the residential education institution, with reference to basic amenities like buildings, toilets with WASH facilities, nutrition and safety of girls and women who live and study in these hostels.

This study could support the state's commitment to enhancing women's education in Andhra Pradesh. As set out in the APSCHE theme paper on "Enhancing Gross Enrolment Ratio to 70 per cent by 2025 and 90 per cent by 2035 in Higher Education and to improve Women Enrolment in Andhra Pradesh", the state has already identified 'Establishment of Residential Girls colleges' as one of the strategies to achieving this, stating that, 'Establishment of fully residential colleges for girls is necessary in every district to ensure gender equity and also to increase GPI'⁵⁵

Recommendation 2

The Government of Andhra Pradesh can consider developing a comprehensive scholarships strategy to increase participation of women and girls in higher education.

The scholarships strategy could focus on the following indicative areas.

- Provision of exclusive scholarships for female students for higher education, particularly in fields where there is underrepresentation of female students.
- Developing a 'public-private-partnership' (PPP) model of scholarships by linking with businesses and CSR foundations, particularly those who are already providing scholarships for higher education, science and technology. Such an approach could create a multiplier effect by expanding scholarship amounts, reach and potential opportunities for internships and employment after completion of studies.
- Explore possibilities for increasing allocation of centrally sponsored scholarships to Andhra Pradesh. The current low GPI can provide a strong basis for increasing the allocation.
- Undertake tracer studies of female students who have received scholarships for higher education, to understand how the scholarship has impacted their lives and use the learnings in the development of the scholarship strategy.

The scholarship strategy will enable the state of Andhra Pradesh to demonstrate action taken to action steps outlined in the NEP 2020:

- For governments: 'Provide more financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs in both public and private HEIs.'
- For HEIs: (1) Mitigate opportunity costs and fees for pursuing higher education and (2) Provide more financial assistance and scholarships to socio-economically disadvantaged students.

Recommendation 3

The Government of Andhra Pradesh can consider commissioning research to understand the impact of female faculty on girls' participation in higher education, taking into account, intersectionalities like caste, class and ability/disability, etc.

Recommendation 4

The Bangkok Statement on Language and Inclusion, September 2019, states that "Policies related to language(s) of instruction impact learners at

55. https://apsche.ap.gov.in/Pdf/ger_enhance.pdf

several key junctures, including early childhood education and school readiness (SDG 4.2), the transition to primary education (SDG 4.1), and carry-through into secondary, tertiary, vocational, and lifelong education of various forms (SDG 4.4). Language policies at each level play an important role in creating a positive learning environment, while fostering enduring peace (SDG 16), gender equality (SDG 4.5), and sustainable development (SDG 4.7)”

The British Council’s position on medium of instruction reflects “a mother tongue-based multilingual education approach to basic education, which is also reflected in the NEP 2020. Recognising that students have the right to access both the school curriculum in their own or a familiar language and to receive quality English language learning experiences it is recommended that:

- *At the primary school level, fluency in English is developed through strengthening the teaching of English as a subject.*
- *At primary level develop quality teaching and teacher education in English as a subject and to promote equal access to English language learning opportunities*
- *Since education is a concurrent subject, at times there may be a lack of alignment between the medium of instruction language policies adopted by state and central ministries of education. In such cases, all may work together to identify ways and means of addressing the L2 proficiency gap, and to enhance the quality of work in English as subject within a mother tongue-based multilingual education framework”*

(English language and medium of instruction in basic education in low- and middle-income countries: a British Council perspective, 2019)

- *Develop an institutional framework to support learning of English for students, especially girls, who are transitioning from a mother tongue based medium of instruction at the school level to English as a medium of instruction in higher education.*

Recommendation 5

The Government of Andhra Pradesh could consider developing a ‘student transportation action plan’ as part of the strategies to improve GER and GPI already put in place by the APSCHE. This action plan could be developed at the local level, by local authorities, working with schools, colleges, transport operators, students and their families. The action plan could identify key challenges experienced by students in commuting to and from colleges and could range from addressing costs of bus fare, frequency of buses, key pick up and drop off points, and crowding in the buses (which can address concerns around sexual harassment of girls and also the need for social distancing for protection against COVID 19).

Recommendation 6

Higher education institutions in the states could develop mentorship programmes for female students through close collaborations with alumni associations, especially female alumni, who can act as role models.

Recommendation 7

The state department for higher education and/or APSCHE can consider developing and rolling out advocacy and communication strategies in partnership with multiple stakeholders to promote women and girls’ participation in higher education.

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Annexure

Annex 1: Indicative list of scholarships

State Government Schemes:

- Jaganna Amma Vodi scheme⁵⁶
- Jagananna Vidya Kanuka Scheme 2020-21⁵⁷
- Jagananna Vidya Deevena Scheme (YSR Fee Reimbursement)⁵⁸
- Jagananna Vasati Deevena Scheme⁵⁹

Central Government Schemes:

- Central Sector Scheme of Scholarship for College and University Students⁶⁰.
- Central Sector Scheme National Means-Cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme⁶¹
- Central Sector Scholarship Scheme of Top Class Education For SC Students⁶²

- Post Graduate Scholarship For Single Girl Child⁶³
- Pragati Scholarship Scheme For Girl Students - (Degree⁶⁴ and Diploma⁶⁵)
- Begum Hazrat Mahal National Scholarship⁶⁶
- National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE)⁶⁷

Private / Civil Society / Non-government Scholarships:

- Santoor Women's Scholarship⁶⁸
- Lady Meherbai D Tata Education Scholarship⁶⁹
- Glow and Lovely Scholarship⁷⁰
- L'Oréal India For Young Women in Science Scholarship⁷¹
- Technip India Limited Scholarship Programme⁷²

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69. [Scholarships for Indian girls and women – List of scholarships for girls](#)

70. [Scholarships for Indian girls and women – List of scholarships for girls](#)

71. [Top 10 scholarships for girl students in India, The Indian Express, May 10, 2020](#)

72. [Scholarships for Indian girls and women – List of scholarships for girls](#)

Annex 2: List of free / subsidised bus travel offered by APSRTC⁷³

- Free bus pass for students below 12 years of age
- Free travel bus passes to girl students studying upto class 10 and below
- Student passes in cities (for college students)
- Student General Bus Ticket (yearly/quarterly), for unrestricted journeys in city ordinary services in Visakhapatnam, and Vijayawada cities.
- Students (above age of 12 years) of high schools/ colleges in mofussil areas
- Special general bus tickets for students in job-oriented courses. These bus passes are priced a little higher than the tariff charged to other regular students.
- Exclusive trips to schools/colleges for number of students not less than 65
- Bus passes for the disabled at 50 per cent concession in normal fares
- Free bus passes to youth attending interviews conducted by government or public sector undertakings

73. Bus pass information retrieved from: <https://www.aprtc.ap.gov.in/coverage.php>

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