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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

ADS	Automotive directive systems
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
CDCS	Country development cooperation strategy
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
ENGAGE	Empowering Next Generations to Advance Girls' Education
GBV	Gender-based violence
GOI	Government of India
GPI	Gender parity index
IIPS	International Institute for Population Sciences
J2SR	Journey to self-reliance
LFP	Labor-force participation
LLF	Language and Learning Foundation
NAS	National Achievement Survey
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OBC	Other backward classes
OOS	Out of school
SC	Scheduled caste
SSA	*Sarva (now Samagra) Shiksha Abhiyan* (Education Campaign)
ST	Scheduled Tribe
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEEE Act	Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act
WE3	Women's Economic Empowerment and Equality

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/India mission contracted Banyan Global to undertake a gender and social inclusion analysis in the education sector to inform USAID/India's 2020–2025 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). USAID/India set out to identify key gender and social-exclusion issues, inequalities, constraints, and opportunities in the education sector. The findings and recommendations in this report support USAID/India in developing its CDCS and guide gender integration and social inclusion throughout the mission's education strategic planning, programs, projects, and activities throughout all aspects of the program cycle.

Methodology

This report was prepared at the culmination of a multistage process, which included a preliminary literature review. The research team consisted of one consultant, Rekha Mehra, senior gender expert, whom the home-office team at Banyan Global supported. Data collection included a literature review and 13 semistructured interviews with 15 education experts, USAID staff, leaders, and practitioners in organizations working on education and education reform in India, including the private sector, civil society, foundations, and donors. Annex D provides a detailed list of interviewees.

Key Findings and Recommendations

The recommendations in the following table addresses USAID Journey to Self–Reliance subdimensions (see Annex E) regarding inclusive development (social-group equality), government and civil-society capacity (government effectiveness), and citizen capacity (education quality and child health).

KEY FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
• Working with government school systems on system-wide changes to implement child-centered learning approaches reaches marginalized children and children with disabilities at scale and improves literacy.	• Work with selected government and private school systems to implement comprehensive child-centered reforms that foster reading and impact marginalized children and children with disabilities to foster scale and sustainability.
• Limited awareness exists throughout the educational system of the harmful effects of internalized gender and social inequalities on children's aspirations, learning. and literacy.	• Ensure education projects and activities are informed by gender and social-inclusion analyses and that all projects and activities reduce gender and social inequalities.
• More evidence and understanding of how gender and social inequalities impact children's ability to learn is needed.	• Support quantitative and qualitative research on the impacts of gender and social inequalities on learning.

• There is limited awareness of school-based violence and gender-based violence (GBV) and its harmful effects on children and learning.	• Raise awareness on school-based violence and GBV among government and private sector partners and require partners to act on it, support data collection and research and build the capacity of school systems to prevent and respond to GBV.
• USAID's education programs are viewed as gender neutral by staff and implementers, meaning that they do not explicitly acknowledge and address gender inequalities.	• Communicate USAID's commitment to gender and social inclusion in education, address gender and inclusivity gaps in learning and literacy programs, and require implementing agencies to do the same.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In line with the requirements in the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) automated directives system (ADS) 201.3.2.9 and 205, USAID/India contracted Banyan Global in 2019 to undertake a gender and social-inclusion analysis to inform USAID/India's 2020–2025 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). USAID/India later inserted education into its 2020–2025 CDCS as a sector and contracted Banyan Global to conduct an additional gender and social-inclusion analysis of the education sector. This analysis aligns with the 2012 USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, the 2016 updated U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence, the 2019 USAID Policy Framework, the USAID Journey to Self-Reliance (J2SR), and the 2018 Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment (WEEE) Act. The analysis keeps with the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education, Fiscal Years 2019–2023, the goals of which are to improve learning outcomes and expand access to quality basic education for all, particularly marginalized and vulnerable populations.

1.2 Purpose of the USAID/India Gender and Social-Inclusion Analysis

This analysis provides data to enhance the integration of gender equality and social inclusion of marginalized groups and children with disabilities into USAID/India's 2020–2025 CDCS. Specifically, the analysis addresses the following research questions, as specified in annex A of the report:

- What are significant gender and social-inclusion issues in the education sector and with regard to USAID's strategic plan?
- How do girls compare with boys, other marginalized groups, and the general population on dropout and literacy rates? What regional differences exist? What socioeconomic factors influence dropout and literacy rates?
- What are the constraints to promoting gender equality and social inclusion in education and basic literacy in India?

- What are the private sector, civil society, and donors doing on gender and social inclusion to promote quality education, literacy, and early-grade reading?
- What are the related data concerns and issues?

The report's findings and recommendations point to linkages by sector or thematic area with the USAID J2SR sub-dimensions (see annex E).

Section 2 of the report provides an overview of the key issues and constraints related to gender and social inclusion; Section 3 reviews the private sector, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and donor actions; Section 4 includes civil-society actions and lessons learned; and Section 5 provides a summary of the findings and recommendations. Annex A provides the scope of work for the gender and social inclusion analysis. Annex B lists key documents consulted. Annex C includes the interview guide, and Annex D lists key interviewees.

1.3 Methodology

This report was prepared at the culmination of a multistage process that included a preliminary literature review and key informant interviews. The research team consisted of one consultant, Rekha Mehra, senior gender expert, whom the home office team at Banyan Global supported. Data-collection included a comprehensive literature review and 13 semistructured interviews with 15 education experts, USAID staff, and leaders and practitioners in organizations working on education and education reform in India including the private sector, civil society, foundations, and donors. Annex F includes the research matrix that informed the methodology.

2. SIGNIFICANT GENDER AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS IN EDUCATION

2.1 Education Access and Equity in India

This section provides a gender and social-inclusion analysis of education access and equity in India. Education access refers to enrollment, retention, and completion. Equity refers to fairness and inclusion, including education inclusion and diversity, compounded discrimination, and language diversity.

India has made major progress in improving access to primary education in the past decade - 97 percent of children 6-14 years old now go to school. More than 260 million children are enrolled in 1.5 million schools in one of the largest school systems in the world.[1] Data show, however, that children are not learning and most perform below both Indian and international standards. Seventy percent of children in

[1] Government of India (GOI). Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education Statistics at a Glance, 2018.

class three[2] do not have basic reading and arithmetic skills.[3] Nationally, just 77 percent of boys and girls 14–16 years old can read at class two level.[4] Many children can complete eight years of schooling without learning even basic reading and arithmetic skills.[5] The problem compounds over the years as children who cannot read fall further behind, get discouraged, and abandon school. More than 60 percent of children drop out of school before completing class three.[6]

India has the largest number of illiterate women in the world. And, in 2015–2016, half of Indian women had just four years of education (although that is a great improvement from the previous decade when they had fewer than two years of education).[7] Even now, just one out of every 100 girls in rural India reaches class 12.[8] Recent data for 2015–2016 show more girls than boys enrolled at all levels except in higher education, but fewer tribal girls than boys are enrolled at senior secondary and primary levels.[9]

Those averages, however, mask gender and other social inequalities. There are still six million children out of school (OOS), the majority of whom are from marginalized communities including scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST), children with disabilities, and Muslims. Also, girls' enrollment declines in class five when they reach puberty. And it declines more steeply in secondary school as does boys' enrollment, because families expect girls to marry and boys to work. The opportunity for girls to learn, especially if they belong to marginalized groups, is small and the urgency to be literate is great, as it is for all children in India.

Almost all boys (95 percent) and girls 6–10 years old attend school, including pre-primary school. Enrollment declines with age, however; 88 percent of children aged 11–14 years are in school while 63 percent of children in school are 15–17 years old. Overall, the gender parity index (GPI) shows few gender differences in enrollment at all levels of education except at the higher primary level where more girls than boys drop out.[10] The largest gaps at all enrollment levels are between the poorest and wealthiest children, and a divide between rural and urban populations exists. At the secondary level, approximately 52 percent of girls and 55 percent of boys from the lowest-wealth quintile attend school, compared with approximately 81 percent of boys and 80 percent of girls at the highest-wealth quintile. There is little difference in attendance by caste and tribal groupings at the primary level, but at the secondary level these groups have the lowest attendance.[11] Girls also are overrepresented in public or government schools - where educational quality is poorer than in private schools - compared with boys.[12]

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[2] Class three is the equivalent of the third grade in the standard American school system. For all intents and purposes, the term class will be used in this report to mean a child's grade.
[3] ASER Centre. Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), ASER 2018–Rural, New Delhi, January 15, 2019.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Bhattacharjea, S., W. Wadhwa and P. Ramanuja. Progress Through Primary School in Rural India: Evidence from a longitudinal study, International Conference on Education and Development—Education and Development Post 2015: Reflecting Reviewing Revisioning, 10–12 September 2018.
[6] UNICEF. Equitable Education for All Girls and Boys, Brief, n.d.
[7] IIPS. National Family Health Survey (NFHS–4), 2015–2016: India, 2017.
[8] Agapitova, N. and C.N. Moreno. Educate Girls: Improving the Quality and Outcomes of Girls' Learning, Washington, D.C., The World Bank, April 2017.
[9] Based on GPI calculated on gross enrollment rate, GOI, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education Statistics at a Glance, 2018.
[10] GOI, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education Statistics at a Glance, 2018.
[11] IIPS. NFHS–4, 2015–2016: India, 2017
[12] Bandyopadhyay, M. and R. Subramanian. Gender Equity in Education: A Review of Trends and Factors, Consortium for Research on Education Access, Sussex, United Kingdom: Transitions and Equity (Create), Research Monograph No. 18, April 2008

In 2015–16, less than half of boys and men over six years old had seven years of schooling versus 4.4 years for women. The median number of years of schooling was higher in urban than in rural areas for men and women. Educational attainment increased with household wealth; was highest among those who did not belong to SC, ST, and other backward classes (OBC) groups; and was lowest among Muslims as compared with other religious groups. The poorest women had zero years of schooling.[13]

A high proportion of children with disabilities (25 percent) are not in school - nearly eight million children.[14] More girls than boys with disabilities are OOS, and the overall number enrolled drops with each level. Data are not readily available for third gender children.

Disparities in attendance and dropouts

Table 1: Average Annual School Dropout Rate, 2014–15

Level	All			SC			ST		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary	4.36%	3.88%	4.13%	4.71%	4.20%	4.46%	7.02	6.84	6.93%
Upper primary	3.49%	4.60%	4.03%	5.00%	6.03%	5.51%	8.48	8.71	8.59%
Secondary	17.21%	16.88%	17.06%	19.64%	19.05%	19.36%	24.94	24.40	24.68%

Source: GOI, Ministry of Human Development, Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2018.

As shown in table 1, dropout rates are relatively low in primary school, increase with each level, and are highest in secondary school. The no-retention policy, however, disguises dropout rates until class eight. Girls have higher dropout rates than boys at the upper primary level, and ST children have the highest dropout rate, followed by SC children. Almost one-quarter of ST children, both boys and girls, drop out from secondary school.

OOS[15] children are disproportionately the poorest children, girls, rural children, tribal children, children with disabilities, and Muslims.[16] About six million children 6-13 years of age (three percent) were OOS in 2014. There were more girls than boys, more rural than urban, more STs among marginalized groups, and more in the 11–13 age group than other age groups. Children living in city slums and children with disabilities (28 percent) also were disproportionately OOS.[17] Most OOS children had never attended school; poverty was the main reason given.[18] Three-fourths of OOS children were concentrated in the eight states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Rajasthan. The most OOS children were in Odisha. In Rajasthan, only 46 percent of elementary school age ST, SC, and OBC girls, and 43 percent of secondary age ST, SC, and OBC girls were enrolled in school.[19] Poor and landless families (generally the poorest) often migrate to seek employment, which is a

[13] IIPS. NFHS–4, 2015–2016: India, 2017.
[14] United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Tata Institute of Social Sciences. N for Nose: State of the Education Report for India 2019: Children with Disabilities, New Delhi, 2019.
[15] OOS include children without access to school, those not enrolled, enrolled but do not attend, and those who drop out.
[16] IIPS. NFHS–4, 2015–2016: India, 2017.
[17] UNICEF. All in School, Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children, A Situational Study of India, August 2014.
[18] Social & Rural Research Institute. National Survey on Estimation of Out of School Children 2014 Draft Report, GOI EdCIL (India) Limited and Social and Rural Research, 2014.
[19] Education Above All, Educate a Child, and Results for Development. Leveraging Community and Government Resources for Gender and Educational Equity in India: A Case Study of Educate Girls, May 2019.

factor that hinders and disrupts children's education, keeping them OOS.[20] That issue has received little attention.

Table 2: Primary reasons for children currently not attending school*

Reason	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Not interested in studies	44.8%	27.5%	43.3%	24%	43.7%	24.8%
Costs too much	18.1%	20.0%	18.3%	19.1%	18.2%	19.3%
Required to work in family business or farm, or for pay outside	8.2%	4.1%	8.3%	3.8%	8.3%	3.8%
Required for household work	9.9%	12.4%	11%	15.1%	10.7%	14.5%
Got married	0.1%	7.4%	0.3%	8.1%	0.3%	7.9%

*Children age 6–17 years who dropped out of school (2015–2016).
Source: International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS). National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), 2015–2016: India, 2017.

As shown in table 2, the primary reason that children gave for dropping out was that they were "not interested in studies." More boys than girls gave this answer (44 percent boys compared with 25 percent girls). The issue deserves further investigation to understand what accounted for disinterest and the extent to which discouragement with school was a factor. Anecdotal and other evidence, however, suggests that the questionable quality of education being provided at school (arising from factors such as high teacher absenteeism, complex multi-age and multi-grade classes, and rote learning) seems to be a major factor.[21,22] "Affordability" was the next most-important reason for both boys and girls, followed by the "need to work for income" for boys and the "need to stay at home" for girls. "Marriage" was cited by 8.1 percent for girls compared with 0.3 percent for boys.

The significant drop in girls' post-primary education is the age at which the greatest benefits of education accrue in terms of income-earning potential, better health, and later marriage. The 2016–2017 nationally representative of 74,000 teenage girls showed that while 80 percent overall were in school, there was great variation between states, as half of 18–19-year-old girls in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha had dropped out by class 12. Those girls who had dropped out were disproportionately poor, from rural areas, and from STs. The most-common reasons were affordability (38 percent) and parents' lack of education (35 percent), while 25 percent were needed for housework or sibling care.[23] Many donors (including the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and Plan International); private-sector actors, such as Deloitte (and Indian companies through CSR); and civil-society organizations (such as SEWA Bharat, READ Global, Pardada Pardadi Foundation, Room to Read, and the Etasha Society) run life-skills and vocational education programs for adolescent girls.

Impact of social norms on education access and equity

Inequalities and inequities are embedded in Indian society and affect boys, girls, and children from all marginalized groups. Inequalities are so socialized that even as they influence negative behaviors and outcomes, they are neither noticed nor acknowledged. Social and cultural norms that underlie and perpetuate gender and social inequality permeate Indian society and harm the educational aspirations and achievements of marginalized children. These attitudes include son preference, which is reflected in the

[20] Bandyopadhyay, M. and R. Subramanian. Gender Equity in Education: A Review of Trends and Factors, Consortium for Research on Education Access, Sussex, United Kingdom: Transitions and Equity (Create), Research Monograph No. 18, April 2008.
[21] Patrinos, H. The Hidden Cost of Corruption: Teacher Absenteeism and Loss in Schools. World Bank, Oct 1, 2013.
[22] The New Indian Express. Indian Education: Creating Zombies Focused on Passing Exams, July 31, 2013.
[23] Wilder, R. Why Are Teenage Girls Not Going to School? India Development Review, Aug. 20, 2019.

sex ratio of 107.5, meaning India has 930 females for 1,000 males - ranking India 189 out of 201 countries (2019).[24] Asymmetric and strictly defined roles assign men as the breadwinner and women with the marriage and domestic responsibilities.[25] Believing that household work does not require much formal education, families underinvest in girls' education, and girls themselves internalize these values, which undermine their self-confidence and educational achievements.[26] Beliefs also constrain institutional reform.

Girls are undervalued and viewed as a burden, which results in parental underinvestment in girls' education, girls' lack of bargaining power at home, and the persistence of child marriage. About 60 percent of girls are married by 18 years of age, and many are wed by 15 years.[27] Child marriage, in turn, limits education, the ability to earn income, and future wellbeing, perpetuating a vicious cycle of poverty, deprivation, and lack of development.[28] As aspirations have risen recently, however, educated girls may be seen as able to contribute earnings to their husbands' households, which could raise demand for girls' education.[29]

Although data are limited, evidence shows that social and cultural norms and perceptions of low-income, SC, ST, and children with disabilities affect how students are treated in the classroom. They may be made to sit separately or not allowed to drink from the same water sources as other children.[30] Textbooks are gender biased: They depict mostly men, and when women are shown, they occupy lower positions. Teachers perpetuate gender stereotypes and their classroom behavior is typically biased in favor of boys.[31]

Gender-unequal social norms and beliefs are so socialized that they subconsciously influence negative behaviors and outcomes, and they are mostly not noticed or acknowledged. At the same time, education offers the unique potential to change socialization through exposure to alternative views that challenge gender and social stereotypes and inequalities. Addressing the issues associated with literacy and learning from the perspectives of gender equality and social inclusion offers a powerful entry point to improve the quality of education in India.

The impact of gender roles, responsibilities, and time use on education access and equity

Strictly defined gender roles and responsibilities, as mentioned previously, also affect girls and boys. Girls in poor households are disproportionately assigned domestic chores, including water and fuel-wood collection, cattle care, and the supervision of younger children. These tasks consume time and energy. Searching for fuel wood and dung for cooking alone can take up to two hours per day. These

[24] Statistics Times. Sex Ratio of India, 2019.
[25] Das, M.D. and S.K. Mehta. Poverty and Social Exclusion in India: Women, World Bank Brief, 2012. Poverty and Social Exclusion in India: Women, World Bank Brief, 2012. and Jha, P. and N. Nagar. A Study on Gender Equality in India, The International Journal of Indian Psychology, 2015.
[26] White, G., M. Ruther, J. Kahn. "Educational Inequality in India: An Analysis of Gender Differences in Reading and Mathematics," Indian Human Development Survey, Working Paper No. 2016-2. College Park and Delhi: University of Maryland and National Council for Applied Economic Research, March 25, 2016
[27] Das, M.D. and S.K. Mehta. Poverty and Social Exclusion in India: Women, World Bank Brief, 2012.
[28] Das, M.D. and S.K. Mehta. Poverty and Social Exclusion in India: Women, World Bank Brief, 2012. and Jha, P. and N. Nagar. A Study on Gender Equality in India, The International Journal of Indian Psychology, 2015.
[29] Wilder, R. Why are Teenage Girls not Going to School? India Development Review, Aug. 20, 2019.
[30] Bandyopadhyay, M. and R. Subramanian. Gender Equity in Education: A Review of Trends and Factors, Consortium for Research on Education Access, Sussex, United Kingdom: Transitions and Equity (Create), Research Monograph No. 18, April 2008.
[31] Ibid.

responsibilities can result in absenteeism and poor learning outcomes.[32] Despite government efforts to eradicate child labor, it persists in India and poses a major constraint to education in marginalized households. Driven by poverty, parents are compelled to put their children into the labor market instead of sending them to school. There are widespread instances of boys and girls in rural and urban areas having never attended school because they work, and the effects are more pronounced in older age groups. More boys than girls reported not attending school in order to supplement household income, and more girls than boys reported not attending school because of domestic chores.[33] More broadly, although some girls from low-income households work for pay, they typically are not expected to do so. Parents thus put a lower value on higher education for girls, believing that they do not need it. Instead, parents expect girls to get married and stay home.

The impact of gender-based violence on education access and equity

Sexual harassment and violence are major constraints to girls' education and worries about security en route to and in school hinder parents from sending girls to school. Gender-based violence (GBV) is endemic in India at home, at work, and in public places. Women and girls are subjected to sexual harassment, verbal abuse, shame, and rape. During the 10-year period between National Health and Family Survey (NHFS)–3 (2005–2006) and the NFHS–4 (2015–2016), the percentage of women age 15–49 who have experienced physical violence since age 15 declined by four percentage points from its level in NFHS-3 (34 percent). During the same period, however, the percentage who have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months increased slightly, by about two percentage points (from 19 percent in NFHS-3). Women aged 15–49 were asked if they had ever experienced sexual violence by anyone as a child or as an adult: overall, six percent reported having done so in their lifetime, down from nine percent in NFHS–3.[34] According to the National Crime Records Bureau, the reported incidence of GBV increased by 40 percent from 2012 to 2016.[35] This increase may be due to a rise in reporting of violence and not necessarily an increase in the incidence of such violence.

As public spaces continue to be hostile to women and girls, safety in transporting girls is a concern for families, especially at the secondary and university levels when educational institutions are located at greater distances from home than primary schools.

The limited data available shows violence in schools affects all genders and has harmful effects on learning. In-school violence takes many forms (such as bullying, beating, and sexual and psychological assaults) and is perpetrated by peers and teachers alike. Bullied children are more than twice as likely to miss school or drop out altogether, and they perform less well academically than their classmates.[36] A study conducted in 2013–2017 by The Teacher Foundation in 15 Indian cities found the 42 percent of students in classes four through eight and 36 percent in classes 9–12 reported experiencing harassment from schoolmates, ranging from teasing to physical violence.[37] Boys are more likely to experience physical bullying, while girls more commonly face psychological bullying. Younger students are more vulnerable and bullying declines with age. Older students are more at-risk of cyber bullying and girls of online sexual harassment and

[32] Bandyopadhyay, M. and R. Subramanian. Gender Equity in Education: A Review of Trends and Factors, Consortium for Research on Education Access, Sussex, United Kingdom: Transitions and Equity (Create), Research Monograph No. 18, April 2008.
[33] Ibid.
[34] GOI Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. NFHS 2015–2016, 2017.
[35] The Diplomat, Where are India's Women Politicians?, 2018.
[36] Menon C, S., V. Chakrapani, and S. Jadav. Be a Buddy, Not a Bully! Experiences of Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Tamil Nadu Schools, Chennai and New Delhi, Sahodaran and UNESCO, 2019.
[37] Falt, E. India Commits to End School Violence, UNESCO, Bangkok Website, March 25, 2019.

GBV.[38]

Corporal punishment in schools is banned in India. It still may be used sometimes, but data on the issue is lacking. Key informants did not think teacher violence was a serious issue at the primary-school level and felt that psychosocial violence was a more-critical issue for marginalized children. But, again, data is limited.

Physical appearance increases vulnerability, and gender non-conforming students (such as gay, lesbian, third gender, and transgender) are at greater risk.[39] Awareness of GBV, including violence due to sexual orientation and gender identity, in the public and among school personnel is limited and data is scarce. A study in Tamil Nadu schools found physical bullying was more common in the higher classes, while sexual assaults were more common in the primary classes and perpetrated mainly by males (including teachers). Just 18 percent of bullied students reported incidents to school authorities, and they took action against perpetrators in only 53 percent of reported cases. In 29 percent of cases, those who experienced bullying were told to change their own behavior.[40]

In some cases, remedial actions are underway. For instance, the Delhi government recently directed all schools in the national capital territory that bullying is prohibited at school and to ensure that no such act goes "unnoticed and unpunished."[41] UNICEF is active on child-protection issues, including campaigns to end violence against girls, child marriage, and child exploitation. In West Bengal, for instance, it supported the state's education department in developing and adopting by a child-protection policy for schools and standard operating procedures.[42] These initiatives and similar ones to end GBV and all forms of violence in schools are excellent foundations to build on for more comprehensive coverage and higher impact. The first step is to raise awareness, as research for this report showed awareness and information on these issues is limited.

Impact of access to and control over assets and resources

Evidence from around the world shows that income in women's hands benefits children, as it improves their education, health, and nutrition.[43] Yet women in India disproportionately lack access to economic resources and assets and, even when they do have them, they may lack control over the income they earn. These differences stand out in the data on women's low rates of labor-force participation (LFP). Just 23.6 percent of Indian women in 2018 had a job or were actively looking for work as compared with 78.6 percent of men.[44] And among these women in the workforce, 95 percent (195 million) are employed in the unorganized sector or in unpaid work.[45] Women's LFP is higher in urban than rural areas. Overall, economic disempowerment contributes to poverty, undermines women's agency, and weakens their ability to influence household decision-making - including over children's education.

By contrast, poor women by necessity engage in productive work, mostly in agriculture and the informal

[38] For a fuller discussion, see Mehra, R. and D. Saksena, USAID/India Final Gender Analysis Report, USAID and Banyan Global, August 2019.
[39] Falt, E. India Commits to End School Violence, UNESCO, Bangkok Website, March 25, 2019.
[40] Menon C, S., V. Chakrapani, and S. Jadav. Be a Buddy, Not a Bully! Experiences of Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Tamil Nadu schools, Chennai and New Delhi, Sahodaran and UNESCO, 2019.
[41] Falt, E. India Commits to End School Violence, UNESCO, Bangkok Website, March 25, 2019.
[42] UNICEF. Annual Report, India, 2017.
[43] World Bank. World Bank Development Report: Gender Equality and Development, 2011.
[44] Women in the Workforce – India Quick Take, Catalyst, November 14, 2019.
[45] Global Compact Network India. Opportunity or Challenge? Empowering Women and Girls in India for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 2019.

sector. In agriculture, women who work on household land generally are unpaid, while landless women engage in casual labor where their wages are low (lower than for men in most cases). In the informal sector, women engage mostly in domestic service or are self-employed in a variety of trades or home-based work that is intermittent, low-paid, and offers no benefits. Education may offer low-income girls access to better and paid employment and a way out of poverty. Substantial literature documents the benefits accruing to girls and their families when young women have jobs.[46] In India, several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and corporate providers, sometimes in collaboration, now offer vocational skills training programs for girls and young women.[47]

2.2 Education Governance

This section analyzes education governance in India, focusing on national policies to support gender equality and social inclusion in this sector.

A plethora of policies support education in India, prohibit gender and social inequalities and discrimination, and seek to reduce disparities through remedial actions. Enacting many of these policies. however, remains a challenge. India has signed international human-rights treaties, such as the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Sustainable Development Goals, demonstrating its commitment to provide an inclusive, equitable, and quality education for its citizens. Legislation and many policies and programs reinforce that commitment. The 86th Amendment to India's Constitution (2009) guarantees free and compulsory education for all children aged 6–14 years as a fundamental right, and the Right to Education Act (2010) makes states responsible for implementation.

A number of programs stress gender and social equity in education, notably Sarva (now Samagra) Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) (The Education Campaign), which is the Government of India (GOI)'s program to universalize primary education (now all school education) that started in 2001. It emphasized education for girls, marginalized people, and tribal communities through investing in school infrastructure, improved textbooks and teaching materials, and teacher training.[48] Other programs include Beti Padao Beti Bachao (Educate and Save the Girl Child) (2015), the National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level, and the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalya scheme. As a result of these policies, programs, and other awareness-raising efforts in the media and elsewhere, there is widespread understanding that girls should be educated. And India has achieved universal primary enrollment. Yet deficits in learning persist. India just drafted a new education policy that, for the first time, draws attention to the lack of foundational learning (defined as children being unable to read fluently by classes two and three and not fluent in arithmetic operations by classes four and five).[49] The policy also proposes to broaden the right to free and compulsory education for all children 3–18 years old and to establish a gender-inclusion fund to get all girls in school.[50]

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[46] See, for example, Katz, E. Identifying Research Gaps and Priorities for Women's Economic Empowerment: Gender and Youth Employment, University of San Francisco, 2013. Adoho, F. S. Chakravarty, D.T. Korkoyah, M. Lundberg, and A. Tasneem. The Impact of an Adolescent Girls Employment Program: The EPAG Project in Liberia. The World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper, 6832, 2014.

[47] Mehra, R. and K. Shebi. Economic Programs in India: What Works for the Empowerment of Girls and Women, 3D Program for Girls and Women, UN Foundation, 2018.

[48] Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, GOI. Elementary Education.

[49] Rajagopalan, S. Does India Really Need a New Education Policy to Achieve Educational Equity? Hindustan Times, July 24, 2019.

[50] Wilder, R. Why are Teenage Girls not Going to School? India Development Review, Aug. 20, 2019.

The Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) guarantees the right to education for persons with disabilities until 18 years of age.[51] But there is uncertainty about where children with disabilities should study and who should teach them (that is, whether in regular or special schools or at home). Although the SSA is charged with operationalizing the act, a number of other schemes and programs for children with disabilities are scattered throughout government departments, uncoordinated, and not acted upon. Factors involved include the lack of awareness of rights and entitlements, enforcement of implementation, suitable infrastructure, resources, proper school-based assessments, and flexible curricula.[52]

Women lack power and are mostly excluded from decision-making in both public and private life in India. In 2014, women comprised just 11.8 percent of members of the *Lok Sabha* (lower house) and 11.4 percent in the *Rajya Sabha* (upper house) of Parliament. However, due to the 1993 constitutional amendment that called for one-third (33 percent) of village council leader (*Sarpanch*) positions in *gram panchayat* (village council) to be reserved for women, they are much better represented at the local level. In 2017, women constituted 44.2 percent of elected representatives and 43 percent of *sarpanches* or heads of village *panchayats* (local governing bodies)[53] although it's widely believed that the male members of their families are the actual decision-makers and power centers.[54] Women also have limited decision-making power at home. The inability to make their own decisions limits women's mobility and ability to influence decisions about daughters' mobility and education.[55]

When low-income rural women are consulted about local matters, they often favor investment in children's education.[56] Evidence shows, however, that even when elected and participating in local government or in civic actions, women's effectiveness varies. In some cases, they have been effective in civic campaigns, sometimes as members of women's self-help groups. Their own lack of education, lack of self-confidence, and unequal social norms about status are common limiting factors. These restraints influence the ways in which low-income women and marginalized people engage with the educational system and how it affects their children. For example, they may not know of the importance of participating in school-management committees or are unaware of their roles and responsibilities in demanding accountability and improving the education quality. Even when participating, they may be reluctant to speak in front of traditional authorities like teachers and administrators, thereby mitigating their influence.[57]

2.3 Most Binding Constraints

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Centre's data show just 44 percent of class five children in government schools can read a class two level text - in sum, children are not learning despite being enrolled.[58] Tests showed that foundational reading and arithmetic skills started to decline, as primary

[51] Wikipedia. Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, n.d.
[52] UNESCO. N for Nose: State of the Education Report for India 2019: Children with Disabilities, New Delhi, UNESCO and Tata Institute of Social Sciences, 2019.
[53] Financial Express. Economic Survey 2018, 29 January 2018.
[54] Uttara Chaudhuri and Mitali Sud. "Women as Proxies in Politics: Decision Making and Service Delivery in Panchayati Raj.
[55] Jha, P. and N. Nagar. A Study on Gender Equality in India, The International Journal of Indian Psychology, 2015.
[56] Sinha, F., A. Tankha, A. Brar, N. Tirath, S. Varma, K.N. Mishra, and S. Subhasini. Self Help Groups in India: A Study of the Lights and Shades. Delhi: EDA Rural Systems and APMAS, 2006.
[57] UNICEF. Equitable Education for All Girls and Boys, Brief, n.d., Bandyopadhyay, M. and R. Subramanian, Gender Equity in Education: A Review of Trends and Factors, Consortium for Research on Education Access, Sussex, United Kingdom: Transitions and Equity (Create), Research Monograph No. 18, April 2008.
[58] Chavan, M., Something is Changing, IIPS. National Family Health Survey (NFHS), 2015–16: India, 2017.

enrollment climbed, in the years following passage of the Right to Education Act (2009), which operationalized free and compulsory education for children 6–14 years old. These outcomes recently have started to improve, but they still remain below levels in 2008.[59]

Though there are some differences in achievement between states, the general consensus among experts is that the overall quality of public education is low across-the-board.[60] Data show there are no significant disparities in reading between girls and boys in class three.[61] Tribal children, however, perform worse than the national average, with significantly lower scores and the poorest results in both language and mathematics among all social groups.[62] Learning outcomes are better in some cases in urban than rural areas, often because teachers are more readily available for urban schools. Still, education quality is low overall.

There are many reasons for the shortcomings in public primary education, particularly the failure to impart foundational reading skills. Irregular attendance is one factor. Experts believe there is "a clear relationship between attendance and reading ability."[63] A longitudinal study focused on class four students in government schools found just about one-third attended regularly, though rates varied greatly between states. Over a four-year period, students who could not read at the baseline had dropped out by the end line at twice the rate of those who could. Further, half of children were overage for their classes - posing hurdles for teachers and students alike. Overall, about half of all children are overage for their class in rural India in class four. Overage children attend school less often and perform less well than others. Few are at class level in terms of learning, and most are two or more classes behind and cannot follow the textbooks because they are too difficult. Difficulties in teaching and learning arise because of the complex, multigrade nature of classrooms.[64]

Chief among the constraints to learning, especially acquisition of reading skills, is the fact that most children in government schools are first-generation learners. Importantly, they come from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds and low-literacy homes. They have limited exposure or access to books and other reading materials. The home language for many children differs from the instruction language in school. Though most children are now enrolled in preschool, the educational quality is not sufficient to prepare them for formal education. These complex realities on the ground are not reflected in policies and classroom practices - or even in teacher preparation.

The teaching-learning process does not take account of these disadvantages. Teacher accountability is aligned to the wrong outcomes, namely the requirement to complete the curriculum for a particular class. Rote learning is emphasized. For the most part, children are not taught to decode - a critical skill in learning to read.[65] Teaching is teacher-centered rather than child-centered, students are mostly passive and are not engaged in participatory activities and discussions. The system emphasizes textbook learning mostly

[59] IIPS. NFHS, 2015-16: India, 2017.
[60] ASER Centre. Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), ASER 2018–Rural, New Delhi, January 15, 2019 and interview with Krishnan S, Central Square Foundation, November 4, 2019.
[61] National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and UNICEF. NAS (Cycle 3), Class III, Achievement Highlights, 2014.
[62] Sachdeva, S. Reading Solutions for Girls: Combating Social, Pedagogical, and Systemic Issues for Tribal Girls' Multilingual Education in India, Washington, DC: Brookings Center for Universal Education, December 2015.
[63] Bhattacharjea, S., W. Wadhwa and P. Ramanuja. Progress Through Primary School in Rural India: Evidence from a Longitudinal Study, International Conference on Education and Development—Education and Development Post 2015: Reflecting Reviewing Revisioning, 10–12 September 2018.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Interview with Krishnan S., Central Square Foundation, November 7, 2019.

divorced from children's real-world contexts. Few additional reading materials are available in most classrooms, though exposure to a wide range of storybooks and storytelling are known to help children read with comprehension.

According to one expert, poor learning outcomes are just the "tip of the iceberg."[66] In addition to the factors noted previously, the school environment and teachers' beliefs pose barriers to learning. Teachers' opinions and assumptions about children's abilities, language, culture, and gender negatively affect classroom practices. For instance, teachers have lower expectations of children from poor or marginalized backgrounds and in higher classes they may discourage girls from mathematics. Non-tribal teachers often teach tribal girls. They frequently point out their errors and remind them that they cannot learn because they belong to families with limited capabilities, thereby reinforcing their already low self-esteem.[67] In other situations, poor and marginalized children may be made to sit separately in class or eat in a different place. Overall, teachers reflect and act upon the beliefs ingrained through their own socialization, and pre- and in-service training and do not challenge and address the inappropriate beliefs and behaviors that can undermine children's confidence and learning.

Early literacy development is complex and, while no one thing leads to success or failure, both social and cognitive elements contribute to it. Sociocultural factors, exposure to language (hearing words), a growth mindset in teachers, parent engagement, and encouragement build confidence and yields improvements.[68] These factors suggest the need to change how we teach and what curricula are followed.[69] And some state governments are beginning to recognize and act on these findings. For instance, Bihar has set clear learning goals for each class and reorganized schools so that children are grouped by ability level, rather than age or class, for part of each day.[70]

2.4 Data and Research

A wealth of educational data are now available on a regular or periodic basis from government and private research organizations or as partnerships between government and others including donors. Sources include the ASER Centre, the Ministry of Human Resource Development's National Achievement Survey, and the Unified District Information System for Education database. Data are available by state and district level, sex disaggregation, and social groupings.[71] Data may not always be comparable though, as surveys use different definitions and methodologies (for example, reporting on the basis of age or class levels). There is a need to harmonize definitions and methodologies to ensure that data is complementary and not contradictory so it can be used for more diagnoses and solutions.[72]

More importantly, looking forward, data and research are needed to investigate causal relationships and

[66] Language and Learning Foundation (LLF) and UNICEF. Guidelines for Design and Implementation of Early Learning Programmes, UNICEF, 2019.
[67] Sachdeva, S. Will We Ever Be Able to Read? Barriers for Tribal Girls in India, Brookings, September 29, 2015. and Interview with A. Tandon, Young Lives India, November 7, 2019.
[68] Waterford.org. Exploring the Factors that Affect how Students Learn to Read, February 4, 2019.
[69] Interview with Krishnan S, Central Square Foundation, November 4, 2019.
[70] Bhattacharjea, S., W. Wadhwa and P. Ramanuja. Progress Through Primary School in Rural India: Evidence from a Longitudinal study, International Conference on Education and Development—Education and Development Post 2015: Reflecting Reviewing Revisioning, 10-12 September 2018.
[71] The reliability of the data is sometimes debated. See Joshi, N. No-Detention: Why did a Popular Policy Get Scrapped? IDR, April 10, 2019.
[72] For a complete set of recommendations to improve quantitative data, see UNICEF. All in School, Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children, A Situational Study of India, August 2014.

the ramifications of particular policy choices.[73] For instance, it is not clear whether children whose attendance is poor learn less or whether those not learning attend less.[74] The GPI, for example, is not the best gauge for gender equality. Research that reveals teachers' knowledge and awareness of gender and social exclusion and linguistic differences, as well as how they affect pedagogy and learning, would be better.[75] Little data are available to determine the prevalence and actual effects of discriminatory classroom experiences on literacy and learning among girls and boys and children from socially excluded groups. Research is limited, for example, on who (boy or girl) in the family gets preferential access to tuition and books when resources are limited. In particular, few studies measure the prevalence of classroom disadvantage and reveal its effects.

2.5 Role and Use of Technology

Increasingly digital technology is being pushed to improve learning and policy discussions to support smart classrooms. The idea is that technology could make learning more joyful and improve access for the socially marginalized. In particular, the widespread use of Android phones can help them access content and the internet. Experts emphasize that technology is not an instant solution. It can work well when it used appropriately and for specific purposes. For instance, it can support individualized learning for readers at multiple levels in one classroom and for children with disabilities. It also can bring learning into the home, which is a benefit for marginalized children. A study of an intervention in western India found one hour per day of after-school computer-assisted learning significantly improved test scores.[76] Google's Bolo app is readily downloadable and has stories and story-based learning tools.[77] Technology also can assist teachers to track attendance in real time; administer diagnostic tests and, in response, offer individualized remedies; provide whole-class interventions, as in the case of EnglishHelper;[78] and provide in-service teacher training and support. The NGO World Reader champions digital reading in underserved communities to create a world where everyone can be a reader. It works with parents, teachers, and librarians to foster reading cultures through easily accessible digital reading. The USAID-supported technology-based intervention of Sesame Workshop India Trust improved reading skills of children, including those with disabilities. While technology can help leapfrog inequalities, it cannot be a replacement for teachers as children need human interaction and socioemotional support to thrive as learners.[79]

Technology has other limitations. Despite recent advances in access to electricity, computers, and the internet, large gaps in access still exist, especially among the poor and marginalized. And access to mobile phones is gender inequitable; following commonly held social norms in Indian households, men and boys typically get preferential access to a family phone.[80] There is a role for the private sector to improve infrastructure.

Civil-society organizations, the private sector, and donors are working independently and collaboratively

[73] Bhattacharjea, S., W. Wadhwa and P. Ramanuja. Progress Through Primary School in Rural India: Evidence from a longitudinal study, International Conference on Education and Development—Education and Development Post 2015: Reflecting Reviewing Revisioning, 10–12 September 2018.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Interview with S. Sen, Room to Read, November 5, 2019.
[76] USAID and Abdul Lateef Jameel Poverty Action Lab. Evidence Based Programming in Early Grade Reading, July 2012.
[77] Interview with Neelima Pandey, Kaivalya Foundation, November 6, 2019.
[78] The RightToRead Initiative: Englishhelper, n.d.
[79] Interview with S. Sachdeva, UNICEF, November 11, 2019.
[80] Centre for Communication and Development Studies. Catching Up: Children in the Margins of Digital India, 2019 and Pandit, S. Markers of Trust: Creating Digital Ecosystems for Women in Low-Income Clusters, Catalyst, N.d.

with each other and the government to develop and apply creative solutions to address educational inequalities and enable all children to learn. Some efforts are small experiments targeted to particular regions, social groups, or problems while others take on larger scopes. A snapshot of such efforts follows.

3. PRIVATE-SECTOR AND OTHER DONOR SUPPORT

Private sector and CSR: In recent years, existing donors' resources for education have shrunk. Yet new donors have emerged, including many private-sector firms who engage in education as part of their CSR obligations.[81] In fact, CSR support is heavily invested in healthcare and education, including girls' education. CSR investments in education often focus on job skills training and in a limited way on training for girls. Individual company CSR contributions are small. Larger private-sector donors include The IKEA Foundation whose educational investments are in job skills training.[82]

The Bharti Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Bharti Enterprises, is working on quality improvement in primary education with a focus on educating girls. It conducts free education programs for low-income students. It was at first a grant-maker but then decided to start its own Satya Bharti Schools as laboratories to develop strategies that could be replicated in government schools. Its goal was to improve the educational quality for rural poor and marginalized children, going beyond literacy to develop aspirations and self-confidence. It adopted child-friendly approaches that created a sense of safety, respect, and sensitivity to build children's self-esteem. Teachers were trained in child-centric methods, parents engaged in children's learning, children were taught that their voice mattered, and they were given opportunities to practice leadership in civic campaigns of their choosing. The foundation now supports these types of programs in 800 schools in 14 states.[83] A social impact assessment found that 96 percent of parents of a girl child in a Satya Bharti School wanted her to pursue higher education as compared with 73.7 percent of parents of a girl child in other schools, demonstrating the growing aspirations of parents for their daughters.[84]

Donors: Donors played a major role in several programs to advance gender equity and social inclusion in education. They often worked in partnership with the government and NGOs to develop and execute programs. Prominent among them is USAID, which supported Girl Rising: Empowering Next Generations to Advance Girls' Education (ENGAGE), an initiative that involved mass media, grassroots mobilization, and top-level advocacy efforts. It aimed to advance a future in which all girls have the chance to go to school; stay in school; and become healthy, productive members of society. Focusing on Bihar, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, Girl Rising: ENGAGE targeted adolescent girls, parents, teachers, and local influencers to encourage community-led action that raised the value of girls in Indian society. Activities included the production of the film *Girl Rising* with top Bollywood celebrities that premiered in late 2015. Partner Intel India also hosted 12 screenings, reaching approximately 2,000 girls. USAID also supported education for children with disabilities through a pilot program with Beneficent Technologies in Pune for visually

[81] Over 1,500 private sector firms in India are legally required to spend 2 percent of their profits on CSR.
[82] Interview with S. Sachdeva, Education Specialist, UNICEF, November 11, 2019.
[83] Interview with M. Saikia, Bharti Foundation, November 7, 2019.
[84] Bharti Foundation, Our Programs and Impact, Gurgaon, n.d.

challenged children (which has led to the building up of a bank of thousands of e-audio books) and on a program for children with speech disorders.

Other donors have included Sweden' Lok Jumbish (People's Movement) in Rajasthan, UNICEF's Bihar Education Program, and the World Bank's District Primary Education Program. Donors like the U.K.'s Department for International Development and the World Bank focused on adolescent girls, the latter on secondary education, and vocational training in 17 districts of Jharkhand.[85]

Among current donors, UNICEF plays a prominent role in education. It has programs in 17 states to improve educational quality by strengthening government educational systems and using a child-centered approach and a focus on gender equality and social inclusion. UNICEF supports early childhood education, builds foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, and creates a safe environment for learning. Activities include technical support for developing robust learning-assessment systems to guide district-level planning; strengthening the teacher-education system; revising the teacher-education curriculum; building teachers' capacity to deliver child-friendly pedagogy; and behavior change communications and advocacy to change social norms on the value of girls, child marriage, and gender equality.[86] The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization is also active, having recently published a comprehensive report on education for children with disabilities - "N for Nose: State of the Education Report for India 2019: Children with Disabilities."

4. CIVIL SOCIETY EFFORTS

A large number of civil-society organizations - including the Pratham Education Foundation, Room to Read, CARE India, Central Square Foundation, Katha, Azim Premji Foundation, Kaivalya Education Foundation, Planet Read, Quest Alliance, and Young Lives India (some current and former USAID awardees) - are implementing a wide range of innovative educational activities throughout India, focusing on improving both the quality of education at many levels and foundational learning. The following examples are just a few to show the breadth and range of these activities.

The NGO Educate Girls improved the Hindi and English reading skills, enrollment, and retention of 6–14-year-old OOS girls in remote, rural districts of Rajasthan, which had the worst gender gaps. It applied a comprehensive and child-centric model of school reform that engaged local communities, built girls' life and leadership skills, and improved the curriculum and teaching quality. These methods now are being applied in 12,000 schools.[87] Educate Girls also implemented the world's first development impact bond to improve literacy and numeracy for children in classes three through five and to increase enrollment of OOS girls in classes two through eight.[88]

The NGO Planet Read leveraged the popularity and time spent on TV movie viewing to introduce same-language subtitling to facilitate reading and literacy. Research found that subtitling was successful in promoting literacy and had a greater impact on children's than adults' reading. In September 2019, the

[85] World Bank. World Bank Approves US$63 Million for the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Jharkhand, India, World Bank Press Release, June 21, 2016.
[86] UNICEF. Annual Report, India, 2017.
[87] Agapitova, N. and C.N. Moreno. Educate Girls: Improving the Quality and Outcomes of Girls' Learning, Washington, DC, The World Bank, April 2017.
[88] Kitzmuller, L, J. McManus, N.B. Shah, and K. Sturla. Educate Girls Development Impact Bank, Final Evaluation. New Delhi: IDinsight, June 10, 2018.

ministry of broadcasting adopted a measure to air an increasing percentage of shows with same-language subtitling.[89]

The Kaivalya Education Foundation's women's empowerment fellowship program trains rural women to work with state and district offices to identify and troubleshoot local education issues, thereby giving them an opportunity to work and participate in education development.

Central Square Foundation's model for educational reform is to work with state governments on systemic reform and address major issues blocking progress in learning - pedagogy and curriculum reform. It believes this approach is the best way to achieve scale and sustainability. It funds NGOs to shift away from implementation and instead to advise governments on how to make comprehensive and systemic reforms. Its focus is on foundational learning to have children read with meaning and perform basic mathematics by class three.

Room to Read's USAID-funded Scaling Up Early Reading Intervention Program improved teachers' skills; enhanced students' reading habit; and established libraries in Chattisgarh, Uttarkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh reaching more than 350,000 children. The program showed the best results internationally among similar programs. It works with the states' government to build more-effective reading programs.

The USAID-funded Nurturing Early Literacy project implemented by Centre for Micro Finance is improving the reading skills of more than 93,000 students in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. It equips teachers with the knowledge and skills to improve literacy instruction in classrooms by moving away from rote learning to meaningful engagement with print and ensuring access to age-appropriate and quality literature to children through classroom and community libraries.

The reading and writing skills of people who are deaf is well below that of persons who can hear, although their cognitive abilities are the same. Most children who are deaf have parents who can hear and have no awareness of sign language. Therefore, during the critical period of language acquisition, (from two to seven years), many children who are deaf have no exposure to any language. Without a fully developed first language, learning how to read and write becomes difficult. Even among the few deaf children who are exposed to intensive speech and language therapy, most acquire only vernacular language skills and limited English language abilities. This lack of basic English capabilities has become the biggest hurdle for students who are deaf to pursue higher education and employment opportunities. To address this challenge, USAID initiated a program to improve the English-learning outcomes of 320 children who are deaf across schools in Delhi and Mumbai to build their language competency through v-shesh Learning Services Pvt. Ltd. Students were taught sign language for communicating and to use their visual memory and perceptions to develop language skills, starting from alphabets to words and vocabulary to sentences. With these basic skills in place, the students made significant progress in reading comprehension and writing skills.

The Shreyas Foundation was established in 1941 in Ahmedabad, and later partnered with SOS Children's Village to establish a children's village on its campus. For decades, the foundation has been providing a Montessori-based education to children from the equivalent of pre-school through grade 12 (class). Abandoned and destitute children are raised in the Balgram children's village from a young age and are provided a holistic education with the other students. In addition, a Girl Child Scholarship is provided to young girls from nearby slums to attend the foundation's school. As a result, children from all levels of society and castes learn together in an environment that promotes tolerance, understanding, and women's

[89] Interview with B. Kothari, Planet Read, November 5, 2019.

equality.

These diverse programs offer a multitude of lessons, including a focus on specified outcomes; individualized and remedial inputs for lagging readers; flexibility for tailored classroom solutions; data-driven course-corrections; and the importance of a wide variety of reading materials, story books, and stories they create themselves or are told in their communities.[90] Scale, sustainability, and the need to educate marginalized children requires working mainly with government schools. It is also critical to change mindsets about what works to foster reading, how and what to teach to reach the most marginalized children, and how to foster self-confidence and aspirations in girls. There is a need to develop a vision of an inclusive classroom and instill it throughout the system. All actors need to be on board with understanding and implementing changes.

The most-important lesson is that change is possible even in the most-difficult conditions and for the most-marginalized children. In some cases, as evidence in Uttar Pradesh showed, the largest improvements in learning were driven by children at the lowest-performance levels,[91] although some programs were criticized for being intensive, expensive, and small-scale. Change is also needed on a massive scale. Small, intense experiments for innovation and testing, however, are necessary for demonstrations - although it is critical that results feed quickly into government schools to be mainstreamed, reach marginalized students at scale, and become sustainable.

5. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Key Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1: Working with government and private-sector school systems on system-wide changes to implement child-centered learning reaches marginalized children at scale. The main social-inclusion issue regarding early-grade reading at the strategic level is that the majority of children are first-generation learners, mainly from poor and socially marginalized groups, their home language differs from the one in which they are taught to read, and they lack a culture of reading and access to reading materials at home. The key gender issue in early-grade reading is that tribal girls are the most disadvantaged, as they are more likely to be OOS or to start school later and their home language is generally different from the language of instruction. The current educational system, which relies on a teacher-centric, prescribed curriculum and rote learning, is not designed to meet the diverse needs of all children, especially those marginalized by gender, disability, class, caste, religion, and ethnicity. Overall, improvements in learning require action on three fronts: "assessing learning outcomes, acting on the evidence to make schools work for all learners, and aligning all actors to make the whole system work for learning."[92] A positive trend is that state and central governments have shifted focus from enrollment to learning, as well as on foundational learning.

Recommendation 1: Work with selected government and private school systems to implement gender-sensitive and socially inclusive child-centered educational reforms that foster reading

[90] Interview with G. Dharmarajan, Katha, November 6, 2019.
[91] Banerji, R., Behind the Headlines, Annual Status of Education Report, ASER 2018-Rural, ASER Centre, New Delhi, January 15, 2019.
[92] Banerji, R. ASER 2018 - Behind the Headlines, 2018.

sustainably and at scale. Many agencies, including USAID already are engaged in these efforts, and there are many opportunities for complementary partnerships. Crowding out other actors is unlikely. In fact, working with a common vision on the same activities, though perhaps in different geographies, is likely to be reinforcing and more effective for the magnitude of changes and scale required. (J2SR subdimensions: Inclusive development, government capacity, and citizen capacity)

Finding 2: There is limited recognition that gender and social inequalities affect classroom interactions and can harm students' self-confidence, aspirations, and learning. There is limited attention and commitment to changing attitudes, beliefs, and practices to foster more-inclusive classrooms and teaching practices. As Bandhopadhyay and Subramanian note, "gender inequality in education cannot be delinked from wider issues of women's status and (in)ability to assert their needs and rights."[93] Education can change harmful social norms, but it requires purposeful efforts within communities and the education system to recognize and act upon inequalities and inequities.

Recommendation 2: Ensure education projects and activities are informed by gender and social-inclusion analysis and all activities measurably reduce gender and social inequalities. (J2SR subdimensions: Inclusive development, government capacity, and citizen capacity)

Finding 3: There is the need for more evidence and understanding on how gender and social inequalities impact children's ability to learn. A great deal of quantitative data is available on education in India, but there is little on how gender and social exclusion affect learning and literacy. For example, a researchable question is, how is learning affected by linguistic differences like those tribal children face when their mother tongue differs from the language of instruction?[94] A better understanding is needed on questions like that one, along with nuanced data and methodologies, to address the foundational learning crisis and help first-generation readers.

Recommendation 3: Support quantitative and qualitative research on impacts of gender and social inequalities on learning. Research should provide in-depth evidence and understanding of how gender and social inequalities and inequities impact learning and reading to guide the development of solutions. Support research that defines the problem and answers questions like, what are the causes of gender and social inequalities in reading and arithmetic skills among students from poor and marginalized groups? How does classroom discrimination (or bullying) impact student learning? (J2SR subdimensions: Inclusive development and citizen capacity)

Finding 4: Limited awareness of school-based violence and GBV and its harmful effects on children and learning. Awareness, discussion, and mitigating actions on school-based violence, especially GBV, are limited. Only recently has school violence begun to be recognized as an issue, though evidence shows it affects educational attainment. Little data are available in India on school-based GBV and discrimination, including that related to gender identity and sexual orientation. There is a huge need for raising the public's and education personnel's awareness on violence and its damaging effects overall and on learning, as well as providing education on violence-eradication strategies.

Recommendation 4: Raise awareness on school-based violence and GBV among government and private-sector partners and require partners to act on it, support data collection and research,

[93] Bandyopadhyay, M. and R. Subramanian. Gender Equity in Education: A Review of Trends and Factors, Consortium for Research on Education Access, Sussex, United Kingdom: Transitions and Equity (Create), Research Monograph No. 18, April 2008.
[94] Interview with Saktibroto Sen, Room to Read, November 5, 2019.

and build the capacity of school systems to prevent and respond to GBV.[95] (J2SR subdimensions: Citizen capacity)

Finding 5: USAID's education programs are viewed as gender neutral by staff and implementers, meaning that they do not explicitly acknowledge and address gender inequalities. There is a belief that as data do not show gender differences in reading, there is no gap to address. The data, however, do not capture the subtle and embedded effects of discrimination and low expectations that the data do reveal, namely, the poor performance of children who are the poorest and most marginalized, especially tribal girls. In addition, the gendered effects result in girls being discouraged from continuing their education and pursuing careers in the long-term and instead conforming to the normative expectation for marriage.

Recommendation 5: Clearly communicate USAID's commitment to gender and social inclusion in education, take steps to address gender and inclusivity gaps in USAID-supported learning and literacy programs and require implementing agencies to do the same. (J2SR subdimension: Citizen capacity)

5.2 Recommended Gender-Sensitive Indicators to Include in CDCS Performance Management Plan

The following list is a menu of recommendations for possible gender-sensitive and inclusive indicators that USAID can select to align with future educational activities:

- Custom indicator - Percentage of USAID literacy programs addressing gender and social inclusion
- Custom indicator - Number and percent of activities in literacy programs addressing gender and social inclusion
- Custom indicator - Percentage of USAID-assisted project materials that are inclusive
- Custom indicator - Percentage of USAID-assisted training modules that are inclusive
- USAID F Gender Indicator - GNDR-8 - Number of persons trained with U.S. government assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public- or private-sector institutions or organizations
- USAID F Gender Indicator - GNDR-6 - Number of people reached by a U.S. government-funded intervention providing GBV services (for example, at schools).

[95] Many resources are available for addressing GBV, raising awareness, changing behaviors, and offering related services including the "School Based Violence Prevention—A Practical Handbook" by the World Health Organization.

ANNEX A: GENDER ANAYSIS SCOPE OF WORK

Scope of Work
For
USAID/India Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)
Education Gender Analysis
Addendum I

I. Background

USAID/India's country-level gender analysis was submitted in August 2019 and identified key gender issues, inequalities, constraints, and opportunities in India in the following sectors: Health (Tuberculosis, Maternal and Child Health, Family Planning), Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Water Security, Pollution and its Health Impacts (PHI), Disaster Risk Reduction, and Digital Connectivity.

Prior to the launch of the Country Development Cooperation Strategy process, USAID/India had received guidance regarding phasing out of the basic education sector over the next two fiscal years. However, in July 2019, Asia Bureau leadership provided further policy guidance to USAID/India that basic education should be reintegrated into the strategy with a longer phase-out period and eventual shift to the US-IDF. This addendum to the Phase I of the Gender Analysis reflects this shift.

II. Objective:

The goal of USAID/India's country-level gender analysis in the education sector is to identify key gender issues, inequalities, constraints and opportunities for addressing gender gaps in India and offer conclusions and recommendations for integration into USAID's country-level strategic planning and across the Mission's program cycle, including in education programs, projects, and activities. This analysis will supplement the USAID/India August 2019 gender analysis. It will be a country-wide gender analysis with specific focus on groups disadvantaged by educational systems including girls, women, and marginalized groups, which includes but is not restricted to people with disabilities, scheduled castes, LGBTI, and third gender individuals.

III. Country Context (Rationale, Evidence and Link to the Journey to Self-Reliance (J2SR))

Research demonstrates that improved educational outcomes are linked to decreases in poverty and improved GDP growth. Every additional year of schooling has been estimated to increase income per worker by 8.3 percent. This increase in income, on average, leads to significantly higher standards of living and greater opportunities.

Despite nearly universal access to primary education, the quality of public education in India is poor and many who have financial resources choose to enroll their children in private schools. Reliance on high fee-charging private schools rather than public schools has created a lack of incentives to fix the education system, locking the poor into a cycle of poverty where they are forced to stay in inadequate public education systems, not equipping them with the tools to lift themselves out of poverty and increase their self-reliance.

The FY2020 J2SR Country Roadmap places the Education Quality sub-dimension at 0.33, well below the average for middle- and lower-income countries. In addition, the Mission has identified specific factors (see graphic in Section V) as central to understanding the state of basic education in India.

While quality of education is generally viewed as being poor across South Asia, India is one of the worst countries in the world in terms of primary school dropouts.

IV. USAID/India Background

Of the two mission priorities identified in Phase I, the education component described in this addendum most appropriately falls within Priority 1 - Advancing India's Self Reliance. As with poor health status and pollution, the lack of education is also a major contributor to multidimensional poverty in India, a strain on productive human capital, and an impediment to furthering self-reliance.

Over the past few years, USAID has demonstrated innovative early literacy and other basic education solutions to improve education outcomes among targeted populations in India, however the Government of India (GOI) lacks the internal structures, policies, and capacity to implement those solutions and scale them up throughout the country. USAID will build GOI's capability to implement, assess and manage appropriate early literacy programs, removing one of the greatest contributing factors to the cycle of poverty in India and thus furthering India on its path to self-reliance. This approach is different in that it focuses less on solution testing and curriculum innovation and more on government effectiveness, institutional capacity building, and public sector reform in education. Activities in education will have the goal of preparing target Indian states -- and eventually, the country -- for scale up of evidence-based literacy solutions.

GOI commitment

The GOI allocated $6.6 billion for basic education in 2017-2018. While USAID can never match the resources that the GOI puts towards basic education, Indian State Governments continuously request USAID and its partners to continue in their demonstration of innovative early literacy solutions by building government capacity to implement those solutions in targeted state governments for statewide scale-up.

V. Objective and Purpose of Gender Analysis

The objective and purpose of this analysis remains the same as the previous scope of work. The new CDCS and its private sector-centric approach presents an opportunity to not only assess the challenges and successes of integrating gender into current and future education programs, particularly early grade reading and literacy programs, but to also explore how best to integrate gender sensitive interventions across USAID/India's education portfolio in a more synergistic fashion. This gender analysis will examine the gender dynamics and those of marginalized groups and also the relationship with the institutional, market and cultural structures that support them. Findings from this education-specific gender analysis will be integrated into the overall CDCS, DO, and IR.

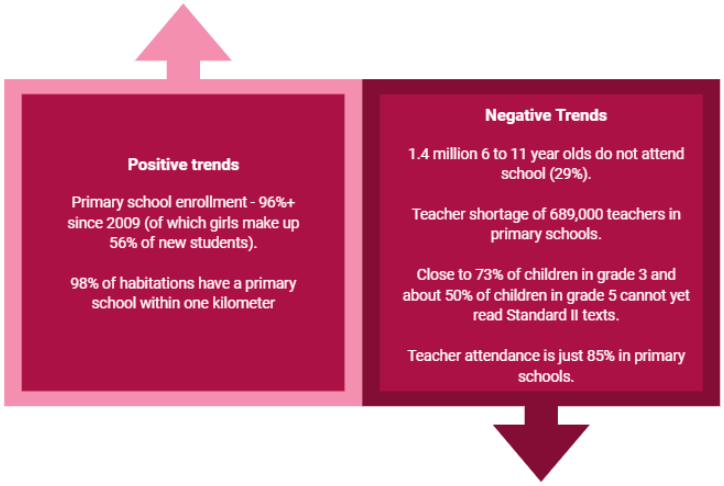
More specifically, the gender analysis will:

1) Provide a broad overview of the significant gender issues in the education sector (literacy in particular) at a country /macro level. This overview should include information and data derived from:
    a. Country-level gender analyses performed by the government and other donors or academics and
    b. Reports from United Nations (UN) human rights committees; shadow reports and reports by bilateral and multilateral organizations.

2) Provide an overview of successful strategies on how other donors and private sector corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding has been used to support gender equality and women's economic empowerment in the education sector (with an emphasis on literacy and early grade reading). The analysis should identify new ways to engage the private sector to use its CSR and other funding to address issues that negatively impact girls' and other marginalized groups' primary education.

3) Provide a snapshot of civil society's efforts to promote gender equality, empower women and girls and prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) through education and literacy.

4) Work with the Mission's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) point of contact to suggest any other new gender-sensitive indicators that should be considered besides the one proposed in the gender analysis August 2019.



Specifically, the analysis should include discussion of:

i. The broader social and economic factors that influence drop-out and literacy rates.
ii. Gender and other social disparities exist that are relevant to or influence drop-out and early grade reading/literacy rates.
iii. Regional variations related to drop-out and literacy rates of men/boys, women/girls, and marginalized groups and what factors influence these.

V. APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The approach and methodology will be consistent with the scope of work from the previously completed USAID India gender analysis. Please refer to this scope of work as needed. The deliverables for this SOW will be produced on a compressed timeline given the Mission's requirement to have findings and recommendations integrated into the CDCS due in November 2019. If the consultant is not based in India, there will be no time for field visits and will have to depend on extensive literature review and telephonic interviews.

VI. DELIVERABLES

This Scope of Work consists of two deliverables:

1. An education-sector gender analysis with findings and recommendations and
2. Integration of these findings into USAID India's draft CDCS.

Both deliverables should be submitted to the Mission by November 15, 2019. The contractor may request an extension for final delivery of Deliverable 1 (gender analysis report) to December 1st if needed however the deadline for Deliverable 2 should remain at November 15th.

Deliverable One: Education Gender Analysis

The Gender Analysis Report should include:

a. A country/macro-level overview of significant gender and inclusive development issues in the education sector.
b. An overview of private sector and other donor support and engagement strategies in the education sector.
c. Civil society efforts to promote gender equality and address GBV through education and literacy.
d. Findings and recommendations
e. Recommended gender sensitive indicators to include in the CDCS level PMP.

The draft report will be submitted to USAID no later than November 20, 2019. The Mission will take one week to give written comments back to the team. The team will have three working days to submit the final report. Upon approval, the USAID/India Program Office will be responsible for submitting the report to the DEC.

The Report will succinctly describe:

- The gender inequality and female empowerment and social inclusion issues related to USAID/India's current and future strategic plan and education portfolio and manageable interest.
- An analysis of the most binding constraints to promoting gender equality and social inclusion in education/basic literacy in India.
- Specific and significant gender issues that need to be addressed at the strategic level in the education portfolio (focused on early grade reading).
- Specific recommendations on how USAID/India can better address these gender-related gaps and incorporate gender equality and women's empowerment objectives at the strategic level.
- Up-to-date analysis on other donors' work on gender equality, and specific recommendations on how USAID/India can leverage its own comparative advantage to maximize the impact of this collective work.
- A bibliography of sources consulted, including interviews, focus groups, and any other data collection method.
- Gender data, concerns, priorities, and approaches in such a way that it provides useful guidance for USAID/India to use for the forthcoming CDCS. It should, where appropriate, include examples that demonstrate the application of existing gender analyses and lessons from experience with ongoing programs that address gender constraints.

The report will be a maximum of 15 pages (excluding annexes) with an Executive Summary of no more than one page.

Deliverable Two: Integration of the education gender and social inclusion analysis into the draft USAID India CDCS.

The contractor should review the draft CDCS to be provided to the mission and recommend (via tracked changes) succinct language on gender/inclusive development and basic education/literacy in the draft USAID India CDCS. The Mission will note suggested sections where insertions can be made although the contractor is not limited to this. Due to length restrictions, the Contractor should include a maximum of 10 sentences in the CDCS.

Timing
The SOW will be carried out over a period of approximately 4 weeks, beginning o/a October 25, 2019 with telephonic calls and interviews (in case of a consultant outside of India). Deliverable 1 is due by November 27, 2019. Deliverable 2 must be completed by November 15, 2019.

Deliverable/Task	Due Date (Period of Implementation)
1. Telephonic Interview Mission Education Team to obtain information about USAID Education Portfolio.	o/a 10/25/19
2. Conduct research and telephonic discussions and interviews with USAID Implementing partners, US Embassy, Government of India, counterparts, other bilateral and multilateral organizations, private sector and NGOs active in education sector. If it is deemed appropriate and feasible, the Consultant may also conduct interviews with direct beneficiaries of current USAID/India programs.	**Period of Implementation**: 10/25-11/8/19
3. Produce a draft summary document in collaboration with Senior Regional Gender Advisor, and Mission Education specialist highlighting the gender gaps in the education. The consultant will be responsible for 1) authoring sections or the entirety of the summary documents as requested by the USAID/India Program Office and 2) for producing a bibliography of source documents consulted, which will be included as an annex in the final Gender Analysis report.	**Period of Implementation:** 11/8-11/20/19 **Due to USAID:** 11/20/19 COB IST
USAID will return draft comments on gender analysis document.	11/22/19 or earlier
USAID will provide draft CDCS report.	11/9/19 or earlier
4. Provide suggested CDCS language directly into draft CDCS on gender and inclusive development in education in the draft CDCS report.	**Period of Implementation:** 11/9 – 11/15 **Due to USAID:** 11/15/19
5. Produce a final report, incorporating USAID India feedback on the draft report and including recommended language on gender and inclusive development in education in the draft CDCS report.	**Period of Implementation:** 11/23-11/27/19 **Due to USAID:** 11/27/19 COB IST

VII. Expertise Required/Team Composition

The gender analysis team will consist of core team of five people including:

1. **Senior Gender Consultant**: A social scientist/team leader, preferably with a PhD preferably in sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, public health or rural development. This expert must have a minimum of ten years post-degree experience conducting gender

analyses, analyzing gender related data, and, and writing gender analysis reports.

This Senior Consultant will be responsible for the overall implementation of the analysis, ensuring that all expected tasks and deliverable are achieved on time and of high quality. S/he will oversee the overall design of the analysis framework, including methodological determinations; organization of calendar/travel/meetings; management of interviews, and other data collection events; and be the lead writer for the draft and final report as detailed under the deliverables section.

2. A USAID gender specialist, preferably a staff member from USAID/W's Asia Bureau or the Senior Regional Gender Advisor from RDMA, who will work with the team.

3. USAID/India Program Office Director or Program Officer, and

4. USAID/India Gender POC

ANNEX B: LIST OF KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

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ANNEX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION ANALYSIS

1. What are the main disparities in education for males, females, and third-gender and marginalized groups?

2. What are regional differences on these issues?

3. What are the main successes in promoting literacy for males, females, and third-gender and socially excluded groups in education?

4. What are successes in preventing dropout at the primary level?

5. What are potential measures for improving educational outcomes for males, females, and third-gender and socially marginalized groups in policy planning and implementation in schools?

6. What role does school-related and gender-based violence play in educational outcomes, and what are potential measures to mitigate it?

7. We are particularly interested in knowing what your organization may be doing to advance gender parity and social inclusion through your work and lessons learned that may be applicable more widely to improve education policies and programs.

8. What is the role of technology in promoting literacy? How can technology help children become literate?

9. What do you think USAID should focus on in the next five years to improve educational quality? And to improve foundational learning and literacy at primary school level?

ANNEX D: LIST OF KEY INTERVIEWEES

Disclaimer: In cases where an individual or organization could be at risk of legal, social, or physical hardship due to their participation in this research, names, dates, and contact information have been redacted or omitted to protect participants, ensure quality data collection, and adhere to do no harm and ethical data collection protocols and standards. For all interviewees, free and prior informed consent was obtained before the interview.

Name	Organization	Contact Info
Amita Tandon, Senior Program Manager	Young Lives India	tandonamita68@gmail.com
Anuja Bansal, Executive Director	PLAN India	Anuja.Bansal@planindia.org
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Dhir Jhingran, Founder Director	Language and Learning	djhingran@gmail.com
Geeta Dharmarajan, Founder Director	Katha	geeta@katha.org
Geeta Verma, Gender Specialist	CARE India	gverma@careindia.org
Krishnan S, Senior Programme Manager, Early Childhood Education	Central Square Foundation	krishnan@centralsquarefoundation.org
Madhu Ranjan, Senior Education Specialist and Team Lead	USAID/India	maranjan@usaid.gov
Mamta Saikia, CEO	Bharti Foundation	mamta.saikia@bhartifoundation.org
Mohammed Asif, Director Programme Implementation	PLAN India	mohammed.asif@planindia.org
Neelima Pandey	Kaivalya Education Foundation	neelima.pandey@gandhifellowship.org
Priti Dasgupta, Programme Officer, Girls Education	Room to Read	
Samyukta Subramaniam, Programme Head	Pratham	samyukta.subramanian@pratham.org
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Suman Sachdeva, Education Specialist	UNICEF	ssachdeva@unicef.org

ANNEX E: JOURNEY TO SELF-RELIANCE SUBDIMENSIONS

USAID J2SR Sub-Dimensions and Their Topline Metrics

J2SR Sub-Dimension 1

OPEN AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT

- Liberal Democracy
- Open Government

J2SR Sub-Dimension 2

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Social Group Equality
- Economic Gender Gap

J2SR Sub-Dimension 3

ECONOMIC POLICY

- Business Environment
- Trade Freedom
- Biodiversity and Habitat Protections

J2SR Sub-Dimension 4

GOVERNMENT CAPACITY

- Government Effectiveness
- Efficiency of Tax Administration
- Safety and Security

J2SR Sub-Dimension 5

CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY

- Civil Society and Media Effectiveness

J2SR Sub-Dimension 6

CITIZEN CAPACITY

- Poverty Rate
- Education Quality
- Child Health

J2SR Sub-Dimension 7

CAPACITY OF THE ECONOMY

- GDP Per Capita
- Information and Communication Technology Use
- Export Diversification

ANNEX F: GENDER-ANALYSIS RESEARCH MATRIX

This table includes the research instruments to facilitate gathering the required information for the USAID/India Gender and Social Inclusion in Education Analysis. The table reports the research objectives (rephrased and grouped in four research themes), the specific information needs for each one of them, and the tools to gather the information from secondary (documents) and primary sources (persons and institutions or organizations). The information needs were the base for designing the information-gathering tool for the interviews and literature review, tailored to each stakeholder and context.

Guiding Questions for the USAID: India Gender and Social Inclusion in Education Analysis

N°	Research theme	Information needs	Tools and sources of information
1	Gender and social inclusion in education in India: Data and trends in access and attainment, attendance, dropout rates, and reasons.	• Data on gender and social-inclusion gaps in education access and trends in attainment, attendance, and dropout rates • Data on reasons for dropping out	**Literature review:** National statistics, research reports, education research platforms, media reports **Semi-structured interviews:** Education experts (for example, in foundations, civil society, and implementing agencies) gender and social inclusion in education experts, implementing partners in education, donors
2	Gender and social-inclusion context in education in India	• Data on gender and social-inclusion gaps in education access and learning in India • Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices • Cultural norms and beliefs • Gender roles, responsibilities, and time use • Access to and control over assets and resources • Patterns of power and decision-making at household and public levels	**Literature review:** National statistics, education research reports, education research platforms, media reports, USAID's studies **Semi-structured interviews:** Education experts (for example, in foundations, civil society, and implementing agencies) gender and social inclusion in education experts, implementing partners in education, donors
3	Key issues and constraints to equitable and quality education, learning, and early grade reading, mainly by first-generation learners	• Main restrictions/obstacles/limitations to learning and early grade reading equitable access to sector's opportunities. • Gender and class and caste stereotypes and direct and indirect discrimination; gender cultural norms (intersection by class, caste, tribes, children with disabilities, third gender); and lack of appropriate awareness and training.	**Literature review:** Research reports, education research platforms, USAID's studies and evaluations **Semi-structured interviews:** Education experts (for example, in foundations, civil society, and implementing agencies) gender and social inclusion in education experts, implementing partners in education, donors

Nº	Research theme	Information needs	Tools and sources of information
4	Areas of opportunity for gender and social inclusion and successful experiments—small and at scale	• Potential entry points to improve education quality, learning and literacy for socially excluded groups, mainly first-generation learners • Lessons learned on gender and social inclusion from implementing agencies, experts, donors	**Literature review:** Research reports, evaluation reports, education research platforms, USAID's studies and evaluations **Semi-structured interviews:** Education experts (for example in foundations, civil society, and implementing agencies) gender and social inclusion in education experts, implementing partners in education, donors