

## The National Policy on Education 1986- Programme of Action 1992

### CED code - R N00.33

## 1. EDUCATION FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY

### 1. PREFACE

1.1.1 Education for Women's Equality is a vital component of the overall strategy of securing equity and social justice in education. Paras 4.2 and 4.3 of the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 are very strong and forthright statements on the intervening and empowering role of education. *Inter alia*, they emphasize the provision of special support services and removal of factors which result in discrimination against women at all levels of education. The POA clearly spells out the actions which need to be taken to promote education for women's equality; it can hardly be improved upon. What is sought to be done is to modify the contents of the POA wherever appropriate. What comes out clearly is the need for will to implement and institutional mechanisms to ensure that gender sensitivity is reflected in the implementation of educational programmes across the board. Education for Women's Equality is too important to be left to the individual commitments or proclivities of persons in charge of implementing programmes. It should be incumbent on all actors, agencies and institutions in the field of education at all levels to be gender sensitive and ensure that women have their rightful share in all educational programmes and activities.

### 2. PRESENT SITUATION

1.2.1 According to the 1991 census female literacy rate is 39.42% compared to 63.86% for males. The number of female illiterates at 197 million is more than male illiterates by 70 million even though the female population is less than the male population by 32 million. There are significant rural-urban disparities among women, rural female literacy is about half of urban female literacy. A striking finding is that for every 100 girls in class I in rural areas, there are only 40 in class V, 18 in class VIII, 9 in class IX and only one in class XII — the corresponding figures for urban areas being 82, 62, 32 and 14. If ten to twelve years of general education is the basic requirement for entrance into technical and professional education, rural girls would therefore stand excluded. An overwhelming proportion of vocational, higher and technical educational facilities are located in urban or semi-urban areas. Participation of girls in this sector continues to be low and gender stereotyped. Similarly, proportion of women and girls in engineering and agriculture based courses is woefully low.

1.2.2 This is compounded by the fact that the proportion of women teachers in the low literacy States is extremely poor. The percentage of women teachers at the primary and middle schools is 21% and 23% in rural areas and 56% and 57% in urban areas.

1.2.3 It is therefore imperative that the entire educational system is alive to the gender and regional dimensions of educational disparities.

### 3. POLICY PARAMETERS AND STRATEGIES

1.3.1 In pursuance of NPE the main features of the implementation strategy will consist of the following:

- (i) to gear the entire education system to play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women;
- (ii) to encourage educational institutions to take up active programmes to enhance women's status and further women's development in all sectors;
- (iii) to widen women's access to vocational, technical and professional education at all levels, breaking gender stereotypes;
- (iv) to create a dynamic management structure that will be able to respond to the challenge posed by this mandate.

### 4. PLAN OF ACTION

1.4.1 Strategies outlined below deal primarily with operational details regarding implementation of the POA:

- (i) All the Bureaus of the Department of Education will prepare a concrete action plan addressing gender related concerns in their specific area of work by August, 1993. Relevant nodal institutions like the UGC, AICTE, ICSSR, ICHR, CBSE, ICAR, ICMR, IAMR, State Boards, Vocational Education Bureaus, etc. will also prepare similar action plans. Part IV, para 4.1 to 4.3 of the NPE and Chapter XII of the POA will form the guiding principles for the action plan.
- (ii) A monitoring unit will be created in the Planning Division of the Department of Education to ensure integration of gender issues into policies, programmes and schemes. This unit will develop indicators for monitoring implementation, ensure effective dissemination of information and coordinate action. This will be done by August, 1993.
- (iii) Similar monitoring units/bureaus will be set up at the State level.
- (iv) Annual reports of all the bureaus and institutions will clearly spell out the steps they have