

Enhancing Girls' Education through CCA

*Prerana Shelat**

*R.L. Madhavi***

ABSTRACT

“The question of the education of children cannot be solved unless efforts are made simultaneously to solve the girls education,” said Gandhji. The adage “If a woman is educated, an entire family is educated,” emphasises the importance of providing a proper education to the girl child.

Even though in ancient times there were equal opportunities for women in the field of education, later social climate prevented girls from moving out of home; this affected their education. Subsequent industrialisation world over; changed the role of women to a great extent. Women were required to fulfill responsibilities within and outside the home. So, the emphasis once again turned towards providing proper education to women, especially girls. In the Indian context, after achieving Independence, the women's education movement gained momentum. The constant efforts made by the government has raised literacy rate among women to 48 per cent. Traditional mindset, conservatism, security reasons, and a lack of awareness of the need to and the importance of educating a girl child, prevents the rural girl child from obtaining an education. This reluctance towards education in rural areas, is impeding efforts being made in the field of female education in Indian society. Concerted efforts to bring in the rural girl child into the formal education system and to retain them in the system up to the required level included many interactive programmes. In the present paper, the authors try to detail various CCA activities like role play, *bhavai*, mono-act, debate, elocution, etc. to involve girl students in an interactive teaching learning process.

National Curriculum Framework,
2005 thought of learning to occur
in a constructive manner.

Learning should have a connection with
the day-to-day life of the learner and it
should be an active process. Learning

* Lecturer, Department of Education, CASE, the M.S. University of Baroda, Vadodara

** Teaching Assistant, Department of Education, CASE, the M.S. University of Baroda, Vadodara

occurring in the social context, in relation to the surroundings of the learner is given primary importance. Moreover, the emphasis is on active learning process, where the learner is able to construct his/her own knowledge. The cherished goals of UEE, universal enrolment, universal access, and universal retention will be achieved by giving importance to the above mentioned points in teaching in classrooms.

Of these goals, the retention aspect is the most important one and the most difficult. One way to achieve retention and enrollment to the maximum extent is to involve children in activities. Various assessments reports on UEE related to SSA are pointing to the fact that teaching-learning process is uninteresting to children, especially those from rural, tribal, and marginalised sectors. This results in absenteeism on part of students, especially girls. That the curriculum is not related to the social context or the needs of the people is one reason for this disinterest. So, various programmes related to UEE, are now mainly concentrating on this aspect of retention, especially in the case of the girl child and curriculum related aspects. Active learning gives importance to students' participation in the process of learning. This means that one needs to involve students in different activities related to learning of the intended aspect. It has

been found that when the learning context is joyful and relevant to the surroundings of the learner, the involvement, interest, and motivation are enhanced. The present paper tries to focus on such practices, taking into account various co-curricular activities and their importance in learning especially for "girl child" education

Co-curricular Activities

In general, Co-curricular Activities (CCAs) are classified as those activities that are performed in addition to classroom activities that include instruction. They are classified as athletic and non-athletic, where the former includes sports activities and the latter involves activities related to social interaction. According to a web definition, "Co-curricular activities are those activities which are in addition to classroom instruction and do not result in a grade or credit. Any activity for which a grade is issued is not considered a co-curricular activity." (<http://bham.wednet.edu/policies/3700policy.htm>)

The purpose of co-curricular activities is to enrich and extend the regular curriculum. For example, students learn to work collaboratively with others, to set high standards, and to strive for superior performance while playing team sports or participating in drama and music activities (<http://msad40.org/policy/jj.html>). According to en.wikipedia.



org/wiki/Co-Curricular_Activities, “Co-Curricular Activities (CCAS are activities that schools or colleges in some parts of the world (like Singapore), or individual schools, organise for students. They often serve to promote leadership skills, personal development, healthy recreation, self-discipline, and confidence in pupils, and to create a well-rounded curriculum. They often take place outside curriculum hours, and may include musical groups, sports, uniformed groups, or clubs and societies.”

Girls’ Education – Problems

In the Vedic period, women were given equal status with men in all the duties related to day-to-day living. The later Vedic period saw some downward trends with *Manu Sutras* coming into existence, during this period a woman became subservient to her father, husband, and son respectively. Later, Muslim rule saw the emergence of the *pardah* system and early marriage of girls due to many security concerns prevalent in society of those times. The social position of women was compromised further when they were marked as unfit and barred from any social duties and were even denied education. British rule saw the emergence of some social reformers who opposed *sati pratha* and child marriage. During this period, in the late half of 19th century, through the enactment of new laws several reforms were brought in, like widow remarriage

and the reopening of schools for girls.

After attaining Independence, the government has taken several steps to improve the literacy rate among women. It is also recognised that merely increasing the facilities for education is not sufficient, but there is need to make a continuous effort to empower women and remove any disparity in their participation in social activities related to day to day life. Due efforts are being made towards realising this endeavour through policy framework and legislations.

In spite of all the efforts made in the last 50 years, the country is not in a position to achieve 100 per cent literacy rate in general and more so in the case of women. Many social, emotional, psychological barriers are preventing achievement of this goal, especially in rural areas. Dropping out of girls from schools without completing the required minimum years in schools still remains a worrying factor for educational agencies. Security reasons, unhealthy social situations, home responsibilities, unattractive school and teaching atmosphere, elders’ attitude, and lack of awareness are some of the factors contributing to the prevailing illiteracy among rural and marginal groups, especially regarding the education of a girl child.

Co-curricular Activities and Education

Examining the different definitions and purposes of CCA, and its importance

in the formal education system indicates that the problem lies in the uninteresting curriculum and teaching practices employed in schools in India. This along with a lack of awareness in rural areas of the advantages of educating a girl child compounds the problem. The solution lies in designing a proper teaching and learning process that places sufficient emphasis on co-curricular activities that will make the learning process active and interesting. This approach will work towards solving the problem of retaining the “girl child” in schools to some extent. Learning through co-curricular activities is mostly joyful and involves the interaction of a child to a greater extent than traditional teaching-learning processes. These innovative teaching methods will also help in developing the different social values of cooperation, honesty, sincerity, respecting others, creativity, and soon. They will help create a girl child that is independent or interdependent depending on the situation.

Taking into consideration the present problems faced by UEE, the traditional, rigid classroom atmosphere, the changing paradigms of learning, and the availability of resources, it is the opinion of the authors that the present teaching-learning process is not sufficient to achieve the set goals and aims of UEE. However, there is no doubt that the process can

instill in students cognitive concepts to a certain extent. Sadly, it will not develop in students the application level learning. Therefore, the authors feel that in the present scenario if CCAs are implemented they will ensure learning in a joyful manner. They will definitely satisfy the active learning requirements of the learner. This would solve the problems of retention as learning process will involve the learner. In addition to school level activities, some activities should be designed to involve the community outside the school to increase and spread an awareness about education of the girl child.

The authors give suggestions for activities that will draw the girl child in rural areas towards completing education.

Different Co-curricular Activities

The basic aim of education is the all round development of the individual. In today’s favourable attitudes towards the holistic development of a child, involving the child in activities other than curricular ones has gained much importance, as such activities are helpful in developing effective and psychomotor domains of the student. Therefore, in the present day school system activities like yoga, sports, and field trips are given greater emphasis. Retention of girls in schools is a problem caused by unattractive teaching methods, irrelevant curriculum, and a lack of interest from elders. To achieve



holistic development of a girl child, it is important to involve the students in different activities that are directly related to their environment. This approach would work towards solving the problem to some extent. Research confirms that an educated mother will contribute greatly towards the education of her child.

CCAs can be designed for school level interaction or for social interaction. Certain activities that can be used to capture the interest of girl students are described here. These activities however need to be practiced while maintaining regular classroom interaction. They are designed to inculcate a sense of dedication towards learning, understand the importance of regular attendance, understand the importance of fairplay, learning practices, and teamwork. The innovative learning process will also help the “girl child” learn how to do their best to achieve set goals. Understanding the importance of goal setting as a key factor for success and the achievement of academic goals is important.

Using folk media – An useful CCA tool could be the use of folk media. Tools that are popular and familiar to the children can be adapted to provide concrete learning experiences and direct participative activity involving enactive learning. Students will enjoy songs like *balgeet*, *jodakana*, and *ukhana*. These

songs if combined with inquiry will sustain interest.

1. *Ek marl dhingali ne be anie aankh*
2. *Meto meti man, manniya Adh maniya be bal Amnejavti nadi par Nadi maa ekaj nav Je le man no bhar to mitro karo vichar kevi rete karvi nadipar*
3. *Ek titho tith ghar mapethe tith tithe mari lath be tittha saath*
4. *Shiyale sheetal va v aye pan khare ghatipeda thae*
Fake ghol kapas khathol tel dhare chale tambol
Dahre shareere dagali shal phaate gareeb tana pag gaal

Drama – Plays that can depict evils of social customs can be chosen. Children can be divided into groups and each group can choose to enact a sub-theme related to a specific topic. For example, the topic of “pollution” can be divided into air pollution, water pollution, and soil pollution. The groups could enact plays that highlight the importance of growing a tree or the importance of clean surroundings. These plays can be performed in street corners or in the school compound.

Ma-Beti sanghatan – A girl child and her mother would form a *sanghatan*. Whatever the girl learns at school can be taught to her mother thus making her mother literate (if the situation is such that the mother is illiterate). If the mother is

educated and talented, her help can be sought in peer education. She could help educate illiterate mothers and be an inspiration to them.

Girls' community centre – A lady teacher from the village can run this community centre. It could become the place where girls from the village and nearby schools can come and learn about various things related to their life: the importance of being literate, hygiene and related health concerns, problems pertaining to early marriage, vocational training, and so on.

Bal Sakhi – This can be held on the school premises as a peer learning strategy for girls. Senior girls who have knowledge about various matters like health and hygiene, HIV/AIDS, and life skills can tutor juniors and make them aware of basic essentials.

Awareness skit – A small skit focussing on superstitions prevailing in society, social evils, governmental provisions for girls' education, and so on could be organised to help spread an

awareness among students as well as in the community.

Story telling and story making – This involves adapting a story like that of “The Thirsty Crow” to teach the students concepts like the principles of physics. Weaving facts into a story is a device that makes learning joyful, participative, and interesting.

Vocational training – A training centre can be established in the school premises to train girls in different vocational arts like embroidery, toy making, tailoring and so on. Skills that will help in sustaining life later and also help in the transformation of culture.

Bhavai – This is a folk-theatre form that could be used to narrate anything in a humorous manner. Sensitive issues, social issues, normal stories, anything can be narrated by the actor/s in an appealing way using songs and humorous comments.

Example – A *bhavai* narrating and highlighting facilities provided by the government for educating girls and developing community awareness for girls' education can be performed.

Elocution – Elocution is speaking using the correct pronunciation, grammar, style, and tone. An elocutionist, one who studies elocution, can determine a person's geographic or cultural origin by his or her manner of speaking (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/elocution>). In addition to language development, it helps in developing



communication abilities, and the power of a student to explain concepts. When a student is asked to talk about a local or specific problem, their understanding gets clearer and they become more aware of their surroundings.

Example: Topics related to social taboos, for example girls' education or superstitions existing in rural areas could be addressed.

Turncoat – Generally in a debate, the participant is asked to speak for or against a given topic. One has to adopt one stand and stick to it. But in turncoat, the person is expected to react to the given topic in both ways. One has to talk both for and against the topic. This helps to bring out creativity, imagination, and quick response skills in a person.

Example – Topics like child marriage, need for proper health and hygiene practices in girls, etc.

Role-play – This involves one person taking up a character that is related to and existing in their surroundings and enacting it. In doing so, the awareness about the complexity of the personality of the role played increases in the person. It also enhances the creative imagination of the person playing the role.

Example – Psychological condition of an adolescent mother could be depicted

Mime – Here the person wants to convey his message through actions and not by words. To express feelings in activities brings out inner feelings and

expressions of the person related to the topic vividly.

Example – Topics to convey messages related to cultural transformation, awareness about changing situations, etc. could be planned.

Mono acting – The mono act is a scene with only one person being physically present. The person plays different roles behaving as though there was another person in the scene. It is an acted out monologues scene. The invisible person is in the scene but at the moment listening to what the person on the stage is saying. The actor may react as though the invisible person has spoken (<http://www.byu.edu/tma/arts-ed/9-12/e2-aa/monoact.htm>)

Example: Inner feelings of a girl who is out of school explaining different situations that prompted her to leave school.



Skit – A skit is a short play that is usually performed in a more informal

setting like a club meeting or a classroom. Skits are often funny. Acting is to perform, to play a part, to pretend to be a character in a play for theatre, a movie, television, or radio. The written text for a skit or play is called the script (<http://42explore.com/skits&plays.htm>).

Example: Topics related to advantages of girls' education through contrasting the behaviour of an educated mother and an uneducated mother and their individual response to different situations arising in their life. For example,

*Ek che ganga ek che Jamuna sarkhi sahiyar jodi
Ganga che hoshiyar ghani ne jamuna bhot ne bholi Sarkhe sahiyal jodi.....*

Street-play – Generally, a play is a story written to enact in a stage or a theatre. Here no formalities are followed. A storyline is adopted related to a social problem and the group involved in performing the skit goes to a locale that suits their purpose and performs. This is more related to attempts to develop social awareness regarding a burning issue or simply for enjoyment.

Example – Social problems like disparity in the ratio of male/female children in recent census reports due to foetus abortion after knowing the sex of the foetus through illegal tests.

Club organisation

The above mentioned activities can be grouped and organised under one

heading such as the “Fine Arts and Drama Club”. The school can also maintain an “Art Club” for nurturing creativity among students. These clubs could invite leading personalities to speak to the students or hold workshops. This will help students absorb influences and hone their talents and improve through discussions. The club could create a detailed schedule for programmes to be held periodically through a semester.

Cultural Society

A society can be formulated with the involvement of parents on the school premises. This could be used to spread awareness of the culture and traditions specific to particular local groups existing in the school's environment. Specific art forms, creative talents related to local atmosphere, and traditions can be made known through performances by talented parents.

Organising regular meetings of the society members will help spread awareness and concepts pertaining to education. This enhances the awareness, intelligence, and leadership quality of students to a greater extent. They can grow up with the ability to take proper decisions about their problems and offer their services to society.

Student Newspaper

Publishing a newspaper could involve students in different activities. News related to their academic environment,



social conditions, cultural and traditional values can be published. Different students could be involved in activities like collecting news, editing and writing the final drafts, and in the publishing process. Simple technology could be used for this purpose. This activity will help bring out inner feelings, the creativity of the students, and work towards improving their social awareness and social values.

Service Organisations to Involve in Community Related Projects

Service organisations could be formed in schools. Students of the school could willingly offer their services and work with the community at grassroot level. These projects are student directed and student run. Students have the opportunity to make a positive difference in the community. Students can collect funds, build roads, dig wells, befriend the people and introduce concepts of health, education, and better living through casual interaction.

Student Council

A Student Council strives to be the representative voice of the entire student body. This organisation provides leadership roles within the school and within the local community.

It consists of a student-elected executive board and a few student-elected representatives from each class. The purpose of the organisation is to:

- Help protect the spirit, reputation, and cultural principles of the school.

- Promote and increase the spirit of goodwill between all groups involved at school.
- Be accepted and respected as the representative of the organisation by each and every student at school.
- Be a source for student involvement in school operations.
- Work with the administration and help to plan certain school activities.
- Strengthen the image of school by working with other schools as well as the neighbouring community.
- Promote an understanding of good democratic government.

Involving students in school level decision making to some extent will help in developing their decision making and leadership qualities.

Conclusion

All the above-mentioned activities are possible in the present atmosphere of a rural Indian school with greater involvement of the elders, teachers, and parents who have a proper awareness of the situation. All the activities explained are not new, but a teacher needs to possess the vision to use the right approach at the right time. Any initiative requires extra amounts of time and effort on part of the students and teachers to make it successful. These programmes not only need the participation of women/girls but also require to extend an understanding in boys and men of the importance and significance of women.

For this it is necessary to include willing male students and elders from the village into these activities. This will make these programmes lively and also strengthen the programmes from all levels like getting easy support and resources from the community for successful organisation. Resources required to carry on these activities are

to be procured from different sources including governmental agencies. Proper support to teachers who have a positive attitude and an inclination towards these activities is essential. This will improve the success rate of the programmes.

Immediate steps need to be taken to improve the literacy rate amongst girls.

REFERENCES

SHAH, BEENA, 1995. "Rural Women and Technology: Constraints and Prospects". University News. 33(3).

Web References

<http://www.marian.com/co-curr1.htm>
