

Women Teachers Empowered in India: Teacher Training Through A Gender Lens

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Dr. Sandra L. Stacki

Preface

UNICEF's Programme Division is pleased to present this Working Paper on women teachers as part of our knowledge building effort in girls' education.

The research for this paper was conducted several years ago, but many of the arguments presented on gender issues in education have particular significance for the Medium Term Strategic Plan (2002 –2005). Girls' education is the top UNICEF organizational priority.

The paper analyzes the early days of the Teacher Empowerment Programme in India.¹ To begin with, UNICEF followed a "gender blind" approach to the training programme. However, as the evidence presented in the paper shows, there was a necessary and notable shift towards an explicit focus on exposing and addressing gender-biased attitudes, roles and behaviours. Without this additional focus, equality between men and women in the programme would not have been achievable. Testimonies from UNICEF staff members, female trainers and teachers all show the importance of assessing and analyzing the impact of gender bias - implicitly and explicitly. The paper also argues that for women teachers to be true role models and be able to pass on the values of gender equity to girls and boys, they need to be able to facilitate their own empowerment in both private and public life.

The TEP contributes to the improvement of women teachers, in the short-run, and, in the long-run, towards improved and sustainable girls' education. All UNICEF staff, and professionals in other organizations can benefit from the lessons learned through the Teacher Empowerment Programme in India.

We trust that you find this paper useful, and look forward to receiving any comments you may wish to share with us.

*Joe Judd
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UNICEF Headquarters, New York
July 2002*

¹ The TEP has evolved into a comprehensive "Joyful Learning" strategy within UNICEF and the government's wider education programme, covering approximately 100 districts in 10 states

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

BTT: Basic Teachers' Training

DIET: District Institute of Education and Training

DOE: Department of Education

EFA: Education for All

GAD: Gender and Development

GID: Gender in Development

GOI: Government of India

JL: Joyful Learning

MLL: Minimum Levels of Learning

MP: Madhya Pradesh

NPE: National Policy on Education

POA: Programme of Action

TEP: Teacher Empowerment Programme

UP: Uttar Pradesh

UPE: Universal Primary Education

WID: Women in Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Worldwide, the commitment to Education for All (EFA) is stronger than ever before. The Dakar Framework for Action plots a course towards EFA by 2015, with a key interim commitment to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005. These commitments have been reinforced in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the International Development Targets (IDTs).

The 1990 World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, proved to be a turning point for learners. Since that first EFA Forum, reform efforts in Universal Primary Education (UPE) have targeted girls and women above all other constituencies. Concurrently, UNICEF's commitment to girls' education has become progressively more visible, vocal and focused on full and equal access to quality education for girls and boys.

Some improvement in girls' enrolment followed the Jomtien Conference, but the decade leading up to the Millennium also brought difficult lessons that demonstrated a major gap worldwide between rhetoric and action. Deep and entrenched obstacles to girls' education went beyond inadequate resources, number of schools and female teachers. Girls were not completing their schooling and gaining the skills required for them to achieve opportunity and equality in the larger world due to widespread gender discrimination.

A major shift in thinking, a major expansion of effort, and an all-encompassing movement to achieve relevant, quality education were required. Teachers needed not only gender-sensitive curricula and textbooks but also education in gender sensitivity. Teachers needed to devote broader, more overt attention to gender and to the underlying issues of poverty and discrimination. It was acknowledged that the presence of empowered teachers committed to gender equity in the classroom can be critical to the development of girls into empowered women. Gender-sensitive, empowered women teachers can serve as positive role models for girls and pass on new values to all their students.

This working paper is drawn from Sandra Stacki's doctoral thesis based on research in India in 1995 and 1996. Within the historical context of India's educational reform, the paper links India's education policies, programmes and laws to the need for empowered teachers. It focuses on a specific innovative and participatory teacher in-service programme called The Teacher Empowerment Programme (TEP) (or Shikshak Samakhya Pariyojana, "Teachers' Equal Say") in the two states of Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Uttar Pradesh (UP). Although the paper speaks to research begun several years ago, the arguments presented have become more salient with the passing of time. The TEP has evolved into a comprehensive "Joyful Learning" strategy within UNICEF and the government's wider education programme, spanning approximately 100

districts in 10 states.² For the purposes of this paper, reference will be made to the Teacher Empowerment Programme.

Education Reform In India

Part I of the paper provides a broad overview of 20th century education reform in India with an emphasis on the role of teachers, girls' education in primary education, and the country's current education environment. It addresses the large gap between India's innovative and forward-looking laws and policy goals and its rigid and bureaucratic educational practices that are mired in structures and institutions of the British colonial system and of the ancient and patriarchal culture of India.

The Teacher Empowerment Programme

Part II introduces the Teacher Empowerment Programme (TEP), illustrating the links between the programme's objectives and the overall goals of Indian education policy and Universal Primary Education (UPE). The TEP was initiated in Madhya Pradesh, later expanding to Uttar Pradesh.

The Programme placed trust, dialogue and teacher ownership at its core. The rationale emphasized that increased knowledge, skills, and decision making opportunities around curricula and policy would improve the quality of teachers, enable them to participate in a joyful, interactive training and impart a joy in learning to their students. TEP's methodology relies on interactive participatory activities, such as singing and storytelling, "getting into the minds of children" and developing low cost and low-tech products, such as hand-made pocket boards and language cards that the teachers can make themselves. This co-ed participatory environment encouraged and facilitated an implicit awareness of gender equity.

The TEP And The Gender Lens

This section of the paper addresses the inclusion of an explicit gender perspective in the TEP. As the programme evolved and expanded from MP into UP, teachers and trainers, especially the women participants, assumed increasing ownership. There was a notable shift from a gender-neutral equal opportunity approach to an explicit focus on exposing and addressing unspoken gender-biased attitudes, roles and behaviours.

Feminist theory encourages the sharing of women's experiences, or "lived realities". UNICEF officials and women trainers and teachers, demonstrate clearly that successful teacher education relies on exposing and understanding the impact of gender bias -implicit and explicit. For women teachers to be true role models and pass on the values of gender equity to the next generation, they must be able to consciously deconstruct and reconstruct their own roles and to facilitate their own empowerment in both private and public life.

² The Joyful Learning Strategy is part of the wider Support for Primary Education Renewal (SUPER) Programme. Components focus on decentralized management, learning environment, learning achievement, capacity building and in-service teacher training, teacher-learning materials support, and the strengthening of monitoring systems.

The detailed and personal accounts of two women teachers and a woman trainer in the TEP illustrate the continued timeliness of many universal feminist principles and their applicability to a wide range of multi-cultural, multi-national situations. They also bring to light some of the more complex questions of targeting and approach which are particularly relevant as the international community moves towards the elimination of gender disparities in enrolment by 2005, and UNICEF begins a new programming era where a gender review in education will be critical to quality indicators and targets.

1. **Numbers Count: more women teachers are critical to increasing girls' school participation.** There is power in numbers and a critical mass of female teachers can make a huge difference. It can give groups of excluded members of society mutual support to speak out. The paper illustrates how continuing interaction between men and large numbers of women on an equal footing can help them to accept change and respect women as equals. Diligence is required to overcome the overt and covert resistance to achieving this critical mass.
2. **But 'More' Isn't Enough: women teachers must also be empowered.** Numbers alone are not enough; women in positions of authority often assume the values and behaviours of patriarchy. To become active promoters of gender equity in the classroom, women teachers must first understand and articulate their unconscious and structural gender roles.
3. **The personal is political.** Feminist research through the private lives and personal experiences of women has revealed how women's private behaviour is an expression of cultural and social dictates. Linking theory to practice, by understanding their lives in this way, women can become more active agents in breaking down walls between private and public spheres, creating positive social change that benefits women, girls and all society. The life experiences of two women teachers, (Shail and Mamta), bring into sharp focus the link between private and public, between life and education, between the personal and political.
4. **Equalizing but not eliminating gender differences helps break down gender barriers.** In the TEP training, performance activities by both women and men such as storytelling or dancing, considered as the "female domain" helped women to surface more, feel more confident about their own capacities, dispel misconceptions and encourage men and women to treat each other more as partners. The evidence from the programme showed that men and boys become engaged in "joyful activities", including singing some of the gender-sensitive songs introduced by the women. At the same time, care was needed to avoid recreating gender stereotypes with women assuming the role of "performers" and men the role of "directors."
5. **Women trainers are important role models for both women and men.** Women trainers in the TEP were able to provide safety and protection for women teachers and give them the confidence and opportunity to follow their own paths. Women and men working equally as

co-trainers has provided positive role models for women and enabled men to accept women in leadership roles, with increased respect for their skills.

- 6. Women teachers' empowerment incorporates raising the gender awareness and sensitivity of male teachers.** Through the TEP, many men teachers and trainers have come to understand their own socially-constructed gender roles, attitudes and behaviours, to overcome their resistance and to accept and respect women as equals. Sensitive male teachers are needed, not only to demonstrate that girls are valued in the classroom and in society, but also to develop understanding and sensitivity about their own gender issues and those of boys.

Conclusion

Overall, the paper shows a link between one local grassroots programme and universal principles and experience. Through incremental changes, the TEP is realizing its potential to influence institutions at wider levels. Approximately one hundred districts in India now use the Joyful Learning model in their existing government in-service training. Yet the educational system in India still revolves around men's lives and values. Training programmes like the TEP are still too few and too far from achieving equity in the larger society. Such programmes must be enlarged and accompanied by meaningful policy and programmatic change on a state and national level. At the same time, they must retain enough flexibility for constructive interaction between implementing partners and local participants.

In the end, extreme patience and persistence are required for new and unsettling ideas to take root. Real empowerment is truly a lifelong and personal journey that emerges in degrees over time, from constant dialogue, struggle, and repeated doing. It will take careful thought, painstaking planning, serious commitment, adequate resources and passionate leaders to bring this about.

RÉSUMÉ ANALYTIQUE

A l'échelle mondiale, l'éducation pour tous (EPT) suscite une mobilisation sans précédent. Le Cadre d'action de Dakar prévoit de parvenir à l'EPT en 2015, l'une des grandes étapes intermédiaires consistant à éliminer dès 2005 les inégalités entre filles et garçons dans le domaine de l'enseignement primaire et secondaire. Ces engagements ont été renforcés par les Objectifs de développement du millénaire et les Cibles de développement international.

La Conférence mondiale sur l'éducation pour tous qui s'est tenue à Jomtien (Thaïlande) en 1990 a marqué un tournant décisif. Depuis ce premier Forum consacré à l'EPT, les réformes entreprises en matière d'enseignement primaire universel sont avant tout destinées aux filles et aux femmes. En même temps, l'UNICEF a peu à peu manifesté davantage l'importance accordée à l'éducation des filles, en privilégiant l'égalité d'accès des filles et des garçons à un enseignement de qualité, sans aucune restriction.

Si la Conférence de Jomtien a été suivie d'une certaine amélioration en matière de scolarisation des filles, la décennie qui a précédé le Sommet du millénaire s'est également caractérisée par de douloureux constats témoignant de l'écart important qui existe dans le monde entre les résolutions et les actions. Parmi les obstacles considérables et tenaces auxquels il fait face, l'enseignement des filles ne se heurte pas seulement à l'insuffisance des ressources, du nombre d'écoles et de femmes enseignantes. Si les filles ne terminent pas leurs études et n'acquièrent pas les compétences qui leur permettront de parvenir à l'égalité et de bénéficier des possibilités offertes dans la société, c'est à cause de la discrimination généralisée dont elles font l'objet.

Il est donc nécessaire de changer résolument de stratégie, de redoubler d'efforts et d'organiser une mobilisation générale afin de parvenir à un enseignement utile et de qualité. Les enseignants ont besoin de programmes et de manuels scolaires non sexistes et doivent également être sensibilisés aux sexospécificités. Les enseignants doivent s'intéresser davantage et plus manifestement aux sexospécificités et aux problèmes qui s'y rattachent : la pauvreté et la discrimination. On sait que les enseignants résolus à faire régner l'équité entre filles et garçons dans les salles de classe peuvent contribuer de façon décisive à ce que les filles deviennent des femmes autonomes. Des enseignantes autonomes et sensibilisées aux sexospécificités peuvent constituer aux yeux des filles des modèles à suivre et transmettre à l'ensemble de leurs élèves de nouvelles valeurs.

Ce document de travail s'appuie sur la thèse de doctorat de Sandra Stacki, fondée sur des recherches menées en Inde en 1995 et 1996. En s'inscrivant dans le contexte historique de la réforme de l'éducation en Inde, il établit un lien entre les politiques, les programmes et les lois de l'Inde en matière d'éducation et la nécessité de disposer d'enseignants sensibilisés. Il met l'accent sur un programme novateur et participatif de formation interne des enseignants, le Programme d'habilitation des enseignants (PHE) (« Shikshak Samakhya Pariyojana », ou « Parole égale des enseignants ») mis en œuvre dans les deux Etats de Madhya Pradesh et d'Uttar Pradesh. Bien que ce document s'appuie sur des recherches entamées il y a plusieurs années, la pertinence des arguments qui y sont présentés n'a fait que s'accroître au fil des années. Dans le cadre de l'UNICEF et de l'ensemble du programme éducatif du gouvernement, le PHE a

donné naissance à une stratégie globale, baptisée « Apprendre en s’amusant », qui s’étend maintenant à une centaine de districts dans 10 Etats³. Dans le présent document, il sera simplement fait référence au Programme d’habilitation des enseignants.

La réforme éducative en Inde

La première partie du document donne un aperçu général de la réforme éducative menée en Inde au XXe siècle, en accordant une importance particulière au rôle des enseignants, à l’éducation dispensée aux filles dans le cadre de l’enseignement primaire et à l’environnement éducatif actuel du pays. Elle souligne l’écart important qui existe entre les lois et politiques novatrices et progressistes de l’Inde et les pratiques éducatives rigides et bureaucratiques héritées des structures et institutions du système colonial britannique et de la culture traditionnelle et patriarcale de l’Inde.

Le Programme d’habilitation des enseignants

La deuxième partie présente le Programme d’habilitation des enseignants, en illustrant les liens qui existent entre les objectifs du programme et l’ambition générale de la politique éducative de l’Inde et de l’enseignement primaire universel. Le Programme a été mis en œuvre dans un premier temps au Madhya Pradesh et ensuite également en Uttar Pradesh.

Le Programme est essentiellement axé sur la confiance, le dialogue et l’habilitation des enseignants. Dans cette optique, on estime que lorsqu’on renforce les connaissances, les compétences et les possibilités de décider des programmes scolaires et des politiques à mener, les enseignants dispensent un enseignement de meilleure qualité et peuvent participer à des formations interactives et agréables et inculquer à leurs élèves le plaisir d’apprendre. La méthodologie du Programme fait appel à des activités participatives et interactives, comme le chant et le récit de contes, et invite à « se mettre à la place des enfants » et à fabriquer du matériel peu coûteux et artisanal, comme des petits tableaux et des cartes de vocabulaire que les enseignants peuvent faire eux-mêmes. Cet environnement mixte et participatif encourage et facilite une prise de conscience implicite de l’équité entre filles et garçons.

Le Programme et l’optique des sexes

Cette section du document est consacrée à l’intégration d’une approche explicite des sexes au sein du Programme. A mesure que le programme a évolué et a été mis en œuvre non plus seulement au Madhya Pradesh mais également en Uttar Pradesh, les enseignants et les formateurs, et en particulier les femmes participantes, ont joué un rôle de plus en plus important. Un changement notable a eu lieu : alors qu’on ne tenait au début aucun compte des

³ La Stratégie “Apprendre en s’amusant” s’inscrit dans le cadre du Programme d’appui au renouveau de l’enseignement primaire (Support for Primary Education Renewal ou SUPER). Les différents volets de ce programme sont consacrés à la gestion décentralisée, aux conditions d’apprentissage, au renforcement des capacités et à la formation interne des enseignants, aux aides à la formation des enseignants et au renforcement des systèmes de suivi.

sexospécificités et qu'on privilégiait l'égalité des chances, on s'est ensuite délibérément attaché à identifier et à rectifier les attitudes, les rôles et les comportements implicitement sexistes.

Les théories féministes encouragent les femmes à faire part de leurs expériences, de leur « vécu ». Les membres du personnel de l'UNICEF et les formatrices et enseignantes ont montré que, pour être efficace, la formation des enseignants doit notamment permettre d'identifier et de comprendre les répercussions des préjugés sexistes – implicites et explicites. Pour que les femmes enseignantes puissent être de véritables sources d'inspiration et puissent transmettre à la prochaine génération les valeurs relatives à l'équité des sexes, elles doivent pouvoir consciemment déconstruire et reconstruire leurs propres rôles et contribuer à leur propre autonomie dans la sphère publique et privée.

Les témoignages personnels et détaillés de deux femmes enseignantes et d'une femme formatrice ayant participé au Programme montrent que de nombreux principes féministes universels restent d'actualité et continuent de s'appliquer à des situations multiculturelles et multinationales très diverses. Ils font également ressortir des questions plus complexes, en matière de ciblage et d'approche, qui sont particulièrement importantes à l'heure où la communauté internationale s'emploie à éliminer les inégalités entre filles et garçons dans le domaine de la scolarisation et où l'UNICEF adopte une nouvelle approche de la programmation, dans le cadre de laquelle les indicateurs et les objectifs de qualité dépendront en grande partie d'un examen des sexospécificités dans le domaine de l'enseignement.

7. **Importance numérique : Augmenter le nombre de femmes enseignantes contribuera de façon décisive à améliorer la participation des filles à l'école.** L'importance numérique confère un certain pouvoir ; une « masse critique » de femmes enseignantes peut avoir une influence considérable. Les groupes exclus de la société peuvent alors s'entraider pour s'exprimer. Ce document explique comment un dialogue permanent entre les hommes et un grand nombre de femmes, mené en toute égalité, peut les aider à accepter le changement et à traiter les femmes d'égal à égal. Il faut s'employer avec le plus grand soin à surmonter les résistances directes et indirectes qui empêchent de parvenir à cette masse critique.
8. **Mais il ne suffit pas d'augmenter le nombre de femmes enseignantes, il faut également qu'elles soient sensibilisées.** L'importance numérique ne suffit pas à elle seule ; les femmes occupant des fonctions de direction adoptent souvent des valeurs et des comportements patriarcaux. Pour véritablement promouvoir à l'école l'équité entre filles et garçons, les femmes enseignantes doivent d'abord comprendre et analyser les rôles sexosociaux qu'elles occupent, inconsciemment et structurellement.
9. **La sphère privée est politique.** Les études féministes portant sur la vie privée et l'expérience personnelle des femmes ont montré à quel point les comportements privés des femmes étaient dictés par des impératifs culturels et sociaux. En joignant la théorie à la pratique, en analysant leur vie sous cet angle, les femmes peuvent contribuer plus activement à gommer les frontières entre les sphères privée et publique, à instaurer des changements sociaux positifs, dans l'intérêt des femmes, des filles et de la société. Le vécu de deux femmes enseignantes (Shail et Mamta) met en évidence les liens qui existent entre vie privée

et vie publique, entre la vie et l'enseignement, entre la sphère personnelle et la sphère politique.

10. **Egaliser les différences entre les sexes, sans toutefois les éliminer, permet de surmonter les obstacles sexistes.** Dans le cadre de la formation au Programme, le fait que les hommes effectuent au même titre que les femmes des activités traditionnellement considérées comme « féminines » (par exemple raconter des histoires ou danser) a aidé les femmes à s'affirmer davantage, à avoir davantage confiance en leurs propres aptitudes et à lutter contre les idées reçues et a encouragé les hommes et les femmes à se considérer davantage comme des partenaires. Le Programme a montré que les hommes et les garçons participaient activement aux « activités amusantes », notamment en chantant des chansons non sexistes présentées par des femmes. En même temps, il a fallu faire attention à lutter contre les stéréotypes sexistes, en évitant que les femmes jouent le rôle « d'exécutantes » et les hommes celui de « dirigeants ».
11. **Les femmes formatrices sont d'importantes sources d'inspiration pour les femmes comme pour les hommes.** Les femmes formatrices participant au Programme ont pu offrir aux femmes enseignantes un environnement sécurisé et protégé et leur donner la possibilité de suivre leur propre voie, ainsi que la confiance en soi nécessaire. La collaboration des femmes et des hommes, qui ont assumé sur un pied d'égalité le rôle de co-formateurs, a été une source d'inspiration positive pour les femmes et a aidé les hommes à accepter les femmes qui occupent des fonctions de direction, en respectant davantage leurs compétences.
12. **L'accès à l'autonomie des femmes enseignantes passe notamment par une plus grande sensibilisation des hommes enseignants aux sexospécificités.** Dans le cadre du Programme, beaucoup d'enseignants et de formateurs de sexe masculin ont été amenés à analyser leurs propres rôles, attitudes et comportements sexosociaux, à vaincre leur résistance et à accepter et à respecter les femmes comme leurs égales. Il est nécessaire de disposer d'enseignants de sexe masculin sensibilisés, non seulement pour rappeler l'importance des filles à l'école et dans la société, mais également pour aider à mieux comprendre et identifier leurs propres perceptions des sexospécificités ainsi que celles des garçons.

Conclusion

De manière générale, ce document met en évidence le rapport qui existe entre un programme local et des principes et expériences universels. En instaurant des changements graduels, le Programme parvient à influencer les institutions à des niveaux plus élevés. En Inde, environ une centaine de districts se servent maintenant du modèle « Apprendre en s'amusant », dans le cadre de leurs services publics de formation interne. Cela dit, le système éducatif indien est encore essentiellement axé sur les expériences et les valeurs masculines. Les programmes de formation comme le Programme d'habilitation des enseignants restent trop rares et ont encore trop de chemin à parcourir avant de pouvoir instaurer l'équité entre les sexes dans l'ensemble de la société. Ces programmes doivent être développés et doivent s'accompagner d'une évolution importante des politiques et des programmes d'action, à l'échelle étatique et nationale.

Parallèlement, ils doivent garder suffisamment de marge de manœuvre pour instaurer un dialogue constructif entre les partenaires chargés de la mise en œuvre et les participants locaux.

En dernier lieu, si l'on veut que des idées nouvelles et dérangeantes s'imposent, il faut faire preuve d'énormément de patience et de persévérance. L'accès à l'autonomie est un véritable parcours personnel, qui dure toute une vie et progresse graduellement, à la suite d'un dialogue et d'un combat de tous les instants, ainsi que d'actions sans cesse répétées. On ne pourra y parvenir sans une réflexion approfondie, une planification minutieuse, une véritable détermination, des ressources adéquates et des dirigeants passionnés.

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

En todo el mundo, el compromiso con la Educación para Todos es hoy en día más firme que nunca. El Marco de Acción de Dakar fija el rumbo hacia la conquista de la Educación para todos en 2015 que contempla el compromiso interino de eliminar las disparidades debidas al género en la educación primaria y secundaria para 2005. Esos compromisos fueron reafirmados en los Objetivos de Desarrollo para el Milenio y en las Metas para el Desarrollo Internacional.

La Conferencia Mundial sobre Educación para Todos, que se llevó a cabo en 1990 en Jomtien, Tailandia, marcó un momento histórico crucial para la educación. Desde el primer Foro sobre la Educación para Todos, las reformas que se han puesto en práctica en materia de educación primaria universal han estado dirigidas principalmente a las niñas y las mujeres. Al mismo tiempo, el compromiso del UNICEF con la educación de las niñas ha adquirido un carácter más visible y audible, y se ha concentrado en el acceso pleno y en condiciones de igualdad a la educación tanto para las niñas como para los niños.

Aunque tras la Conferencia de Jomtien aumentaron en cierta medida las tasas de matriculación escolar de los niños, el decenio previo al Milenio también conllevó difíciles lecciones que dejaron en evidencia una enorme discrepancia mundial entre lo dicho y lo hecho. La carencia de recursos adecuados, de suficientes escuelas y de docentes mujeres no fueron los únicos obstáculos profundamente enraizados que afectaron la educación de las niñas. La discriminación generalizada basada en el género impidió que las alumnas terminaran sus estudios y recibieran las aptitudes y los conocimientos necesarios para lograr oportunidades y conquistar la igualdad.

Para hacer realidad la meta de la educación pertinente y de buena calidad eran necesarios un profundo cambio en la manera de pensar, un gran incremento de los esfuerzos, y un movimiento integral. Los docentes necesitaban no sólo programas de estudios y libros de texto que fueran sensibles a las cuestiones relacionadas con el género sino también que se les brindara educación para poder compartir esa sensibilidad. Los docentes debían prestar mayor atención, y de manera más abierta, a las cuestiones relacionadas con el género, y a los temas subyacentes de la pobreza y la discriminación. Se reconoció que la presencia en las aulas de docentes potenciados en ese aspecto, y comprometidos con la igualdad de los géneros, era fundamental para que las niñas se convirtieran en mujeres adultas potenciadas. Las mujeres docentes potenciadas y sensibles a las cuestiones del género pueden servir de modelo a las niñas, además de transmitirles nuevos valores a sus alumnos.

Este documento de trabajo se basa en la tesis doctoral de Sandra Stacki, que se fundamenta en investigaciones realizadas en la India en 1995 y 1996. En el contexto histórico de la reforma educacional de la India, el documento vincula las políticas, programas y normas jurídicas sobre educación de ese país con la necesidad de potenciar a los docentes. El documento se concentra en un programa específico, original y participativo de capacitación de los docentes en el empleo llamado Programa de habilitación de los docentes (*Shikshak Samakhya Pariyojana*) que se lleva a cabo en los estados de Madhya Pradesh y Uttar Pradesh. Aunque el documento se refiere a investigaciones que comenzaron hace varios años, los argumentos que presenta han adquirido más relevancia con el paso del tiempo. El Programa de habilitación de los docentes ha

evolucionado hasta convertirse en una estrategia de “Aprendizaje Feliz” que forma parte del programa de educación más vasto del UNICEF y del Gobierno, que abarca a un centenar de distritos en 10 estados de la India⁴. A los efectos de este documento, se lo denominará Programa de habilitación de los docentes.

La reforma educacional en la India

La Parte I del documento brinda una amplia semblanza de la reforma de la educación en la India en el siglo XX, y se hace hincapié en el papel de los docentes, la educación de las niñas en el ciclo primario, y la situación actual del país en materia de educación. Se refiere también a las profundas diferencias que separan a las normas jurídicas innovadoras y previsoras y a las metas de su política educacional por un lado de las rígidas y burocráticas prácticas educacionales, sofrenadas por efecto de las estructuras e instituciones del sistema colonial británico y la antigua y patriarcal cultura tradicional india por otro.

El Programa de habilitación de los docentes

La Parte II presenta el Programa de habilitación de los docentes, destaca los vínculos existentes entre los objetivos de ese programa por una parte, y las metas generales de la política educativa de la India y la Educación Primaria Universal por otro. El Programa de habilitación de los docentes se inauguró en Madhya Pradesh y se amplió luego a Uttar Pradesh.

La confianza, el diálogo y la identificación personal de cada maestro y maestra con el Programa de habilitación de los docentes son componentes íntimos del programa. Los fundamentos del programa hacían hincapié en que el aumento de los conocimientos, aptitudes y oportunidades de participar en la toma de decisiones con respecto al programa de estudios y a las políticas mejoraría la calidad de los docentes, y posibilitaría que estos participaran en labores de capacitación participativas e interactivas, e impartieran el placer del aprendizaje a sus alumnos. La metodología del Programa de habilitación de los docentes se basa en actividades participativas interactivas, como el canto y la narración de cuentos; en “entrar en la mente de los niños” y desarrollar productos de bajo costo y bajo nivel tecnológico, como las pizarras portátiles hechas a mano y las tarjetas para la enseñanza de idiomas, que los propios docentes pueden fabricar. El ambiente participativo mixto alentó y posibilitó la conciencia implícita de la igualdad de los géneros.

El Programa de habilitación de los docentes y la óptica del género

Esta sección del documento se refiere a la inclusión en el Programa de habilitación de los docentes de una perspectiva de género explícita. A medida que el programa se desarrolló y se extendió de Madhya Pradesh a Uttar Pradesh, los docentes y los capacitadores, especialmente las

⁴ La Estrategia de Aprendizaje Feliz forma parte de un programa más amplio, el de Apoyo la Renovación de la Educación Primaria. Los componentes se concentran en la gestión descentralizada, el ámbito de aprendizaje, los logros en material de aprendizaje, la creación de capacidad y la capacitación de los docentes en el empleo, el apoyo a los materiales de formación docente, y el fortalecimiento de los sistemas de vigilancia.

mujeres, se sintieron cada vez más identificados con el mismo. Se produjo una notable transformación, ya que de un enfoque dirigido a la igualdad de oportunidades que tenía carácter neutro con respecto a los géneros se pasó a un enfoque que puso en evidencia y trató de manera explícita las actitudes, las funciones y los patrones de comportamiento prejuiciados con respecto a las cuestiones del género.

La teoría feminista alienta a que las mujeres compartan sus experiencias o “realidades vividas”. Los funcionarios del UNICEF y las mujeres docentes y capacitadoras demuestran claramente que para que la capacitación de los docentes resulte exitosa se deben poner al descubierto y comprender las consecuencias de los prejuicios, tanto explícitos como implícitos, sobre el género. Para que las maestras puedan cumplir el papel de modelos de sus estudiantes y pasarle a la generación siguiente sus valores sobre la igualdad de los géneros tienen que contar con la capacidad de deconstruir y reconstruir de manera consciente el papel que desempeñan y facilitar su propia habilitación tanto en su vida privada como pública.

Los informes detallados y personales de dos mujeres docentes y una capacitadora que colaboran con el Programa de habilitación de los docentes ilustran la validez continuada de muchos principios feministas universales, y su aplicabilidad a una amplia gama de situaciones multiculturales y multinacionales. También arrojan luz sobre algunas de las cuestiones más complejas acerca de las formas en que se enfocan y hacia donde se dirigen determinadas políticas y actividades que resultan especialmente pertinentes ahora que la comunidad internacional avanza a la meta de la eliminación de las disparidades debidas al género en materia de matriculación escolar, propuesta para 2005, y el UNICEF inicia una nueva era en materia de programación, en la que el examen de las cuestiones vinculadas al género tendrá una importancia fundamental para contar con indicadores y metas de buena calidad.

13. La cantidad es importante: Para aumentar la participación escolar de las niñas es fundamental que haya más docentes mujeres. El aumento del número de mujeres maestras puede determinar una masa crítica que representará una enorme diferencia. El factor numérico puede brindarles a los integrantes de los sectores excluidos de la sociedad el apoyo mutuo que requieren para expresarse libremente. El documento ilustra la manera en que la constante interacción de los hombres con grandes números de mujeres en un plano de igualdad puede ayudar a los hombres a aceptar el cambio y a respetar a las mujeres y considerarlas sus iguales. Para superar la resistencia ostensible u oculta a la formación de esa masa crítica será necesaria mucha dedicación.

14. Pero “ser más” no es suficiente: Las maestras mujeres también deben estar potenciadas. Ser más no es suficiente. Las mujeres que ocupan posiciones de autoridad a menudo se arrogan los valores y los comportamientos del patriarcado. Para convertirse en promotoras de la igualdad de los géneros en las aulas, las maestras deben comprender y articular en primer lugar las funciones relacionadas con su género que cumplen de manera inconsciente o por razones estructurales.

15. Lo personal es político. Las investigaciones feministas de las vidas privadas y las experiencias personales de las mujeres ha revelado la manera en que los comportamientos privados de las mujeres constituyen expresiones de dictados culturales y sociales. Vinculando la teoría con la práctica, y comprendiendo sus propias vidas mediante la aplicación de ese enfoque, las mujeres pueden transformarse en agentes más activos de la eliminación de las barreras que separan la esfera privada de la pública, y generar cambios sociales que beneficien a las mujeres y las niñas, y a la sociedad en general. Las experiencias de dos maestras (Shail y Mamta) ponen claramente de relieve la relación entre lo público y lo privado, entre la vida y la educación, y entre lo personal y lo político.

16. La igualación sin la eliminación de las diferencias entre los géneros ayuda a derribar las barreras impuestas por cuestiones de género. Durante la aplicación del Programa de habilitación docente, las actividades de interpretación realizadas tanto por mujeres como por hombres, como la narración de cuentos y la danza, a las que se considera parte del “dominio femenino”, ayudaron a las mujeres a expresarse de manera más abierta, a sentirse más confiadas en sus aptitudes, y a disipar conceptos erróneos; y alentaron a los hombres y a las mujeres a tratarse como aliados. Las experiencias del programa indican que los hombres y niños participaron en “actividades festivas”, como entonar algunas de las canciones sensibles con respecto a los géneros que aportaron las mujeres. Al mismo tiempo, fue necesario tener cuidado para evitar la recreación de las relaciones estereotipadas, en las que las mujeres desempeñan el papel de “intérpretes” y los hombres las funciones de los “directores”.

17. Las mujeres capacitadoras constituyen importantes modelos tanto para las mujeres como para los hombres. Las capacitadoras del Programa de habilitación de los docentes pudieron brindar seguridad y protección a las docentes mujeres, así como confianza y la posibilidad de avanzar por su propia senda. El hecho de que hombres y mujeres trabajaran en un plano de igualdad como capacitadores representó un modelo positivo para las mujeres e hizo posible que los varones aceptaran la presencia de mujeres en puestos de liderazgo, y sintieran mayor respeto por las aptitudes de éstas.

18. La capacitación de las mujeres docentes incorpora el aumento del nivel de conciencia sobre las cuestiones relacionadas con el género y del grado de sensibilidad de los maestros varones. Durante el desarrollo del Programa de habilitación de los docentes, muchos maestros y capacitadores varones lograron comprender las funciones, actitudes y comportamientos que desempeñan debido a su género según los dictados sociales; consiguieron superar su resistencia y aprendieron a aceptar y respetar a las mujeres como sus iguales. No sólo es necesario que los maestros varones sean sensibles para demostrar que las niñas son valiosas en las aulas y en la sociedad, sino también para generar comprensión y sensibilidad sobre las cuestiones relacionadas con su propio género y con los niños varones.

Conclusión

En general, el documento demuestra la existencia de vínculos entre un programa local de base y los principios y experiencias universales. Mediante cambios progresivos, el Programa de habilitación de los docentes hace realidad sus posibilidades de ejercer una influencia en las

instituciones en un ámbito más amplio. Unos cien distritos de la India emplean hoy en día el modelo del Aprendizaje Feliz en sus programas de capacitación en el empleo de funcionarios gubernamentales. Sin embargo, el sistema de educación de la India aún gira alrededor de las vidas y los valores de los hombres. Los programas como el de habilitación de los docentes no sólo no abundan sino que los pocos que existen distan de conquistar la igualdad de los géneros en la sociedad en general. Es necesario que se amplíen dichos programas, y que se les aplique en el marco de políticas consistentes y cambios programáticos en los ámbitos estatales y nacional. Al mismo tiempo, esos programas deben mantener suficiente flexibilidad como para que se desarrolle una interacción constructiva entre los aliados que lo ponen en práctica y los participantes del programa.

En definitiva, para que las ideas novedosas e inquietantes se afirmen es necesario ejercer paciencia y persistencia extremas. La habilitación real es una travesía personal que insume toda la vida y emerge gradualmente a medida que pasa el tiempo, como resultado del diálogo constante, la lucha y el accionar reiterado. Para lograrlo, será necesario pensar cuidadosamente, planificar de manera puntillosa, asignar recursos suficientes y contar con dirigentes llenos de pasión.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

A New Vision in Education

In 1990, international agencies, governments, NGOs, professional bodies and the private sector convened at two major world events to give the highest priority to Universal Primary Education (UPE). The World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand and the World Summit for Children, in New York crystallized a world movement that had been growing over the past several decades. They provided a new impetus to the universally acknowledged central role of education in development and a better understanding of its frustratingly slow pace in many countries. At Jomtien, in particular, the call from many earlier conferences, research literature and reports culminated in a new commitment to increase the access, retention, and achievement of girls who were clearly lagging behind boys in most developing countries.

For UNICEF, which played a central role in both meetings, 1990 became the start of a decade in which education would become not only a high programming priority but also a call signal for evolving direction and policies. This included increased intersectoral work and a broadened definition of education that expanded its scope from traditional academic study to life skills, peace and conflict resolution, rights and empowerment. In addition, UNICEF incorporated into its new programming efforts a broadening of the focus on children of primary school age to include both very young children and adolescents.

In the years following Jomtien, the implications of the shift in vision widened with a growing acceptance of the legal and ethical right of all children to have access to school and to the opportunity for quality education. At the same time, the arguments about the economic and social benefits of education began to receive greater attention and entered into common political parlance. However, it became clear that achieving UPE by the year 2000 or even in the next decade would not happen merely by redoubling or tripling efforts to increase enrolment. The traditional methods were just not working. The rise in enrolment was not matched by a rise in learning, retention or completion of school, especially among girls.

What was needed to reach UPE was a major reform of educational goals, methods, and power relations. Such reform would reflect an expanded vision and new model of education that included improved and more relevant curricula and textbooks, teaching methods, and better trained teachers and administrators. Reform would require whole systems that were sensitive and relevant to gender and to powerless excluded populations of children, including the poor, ethnic and racial minorities and working children. Still, no commitment to new methods, schedules and curricula would succeed if education systems only resulted in perpetuating the status quo and replicating the western model of education installed and instilled in the psyches of most developing countries.

An educational system that goes hand in hand with social transformation was and is still needed. Such a system moves students and teachers from passive recipients and donors of knowledge to active participants in their own learning. It results in a full understanding and acceptance that a

major shift in power structures at all levels is required to bring real change and the possibility of achieving EFA.

The international community met again in Dakar in 2000 when new commitments to learners were made. These commitments, as laid out in the Dakar Framework for Action, not only reflect the expanded vision of education as first articulated in Jomtien, but also address some of the new challenges that have exploded since 1990, such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The broadened vision of education has called for new and revitalized partnerships (Shaeffer, 1992), and that is as true post Dakar as it was a decade ago. There is now a plethora of stakeholders involved in basic education efforts at the global level. They include multilateral and bilateral international development organizations central and local governments, NGOs, teachers, parents and communities. The best partnerships recognize independence, entitlements, and indigenous knowledge; express mutual respect and trust; and work within the framework of national development and educational priorities. In theory, at least, serious attempts have been made to move away from the practices of earlier decades when grants for education projects usually restricted the receiving country's equipment, experts, and other needs to choices pre-selected by the donor country or agency (Hallak, 1990). Although the Dakar Framework for Action obligates national governments to fulfil their obligations to learners, a long way must still be traveled to ensure that countries and communities, especially poor and excluded populations, play an active role in identifying their needs and determining what kinds of projects will meet those needs.

The Role of Teachers

To be involved in the dialogue about education systems around the world today is to understand and articulate the key role played by teachers. Through teachers can flow the ideology, values, and culture of a nation, state, and its people. Misinformation and constricted learning behaviours that students internalize can also be filtered through teachers' lack of knowledge, misjudgements, or biases. Calls for educational reform must therefore emphasize the education and empowerment of teachers that includes the real opportunity for them to share perspectives, power and decision-making.

One critical area in which all teachers must be educated is gender equity. Among international agencies and donors, EFA reform efforts have heavily targeted girls and women calling for the elimination of gender gaps in access, learning and retention. Numerous programmes have also been initiated that either focus entirely on females or make a special effort to ensure their inclusion. Education for girls, however, in strongly patriarchal countries will not result in empowered women who will participate in critical decision making -- unless their teachers are empowered supporters of gender equity. This is especially true of women teachers who must serve as positive role models.

Although they are the front-line participants and critical to successful quality schooling, teachers often form a silent majority; they are excluded not only from policy-making, governance and management, but also from day-to-day instructional strategies and decision making. Teachers as

a whole, especially in less developed countries, have held minimal power in educational systems that are organized in hierarchical ways. Women teachers in particular are even less able to participate in decision-making and have even less voice in creating the institutional structures and policies that affect their lives - in and out of school - and the success of their students.

Education researchers point out that the structural and institutional aspects of schools, rather than teachers, perpetuate the barriers to empowerment and equity. Structural obstacles encourage the reproduction of current power relations rather than stimulate changes. Even in many educational reform efforts, for example, teachers are often the forgotten or taken-for-granted vehicles used to implement but not to create or initiate reforms. Pre-service and in-service training are often not planned or integrated into reform efforts; in many developing countries, teachers have no formal pre-service education at all.

Yet, in spite of these arguments, it is also true that in many countries teachers are becoming increasingly accepted as essential partners in a dynamic education system. But if efforts to increase student access, learning and retention in primary education are to succeed, relevant and empowering teacher education is crucial (Hanushek & Lavy, 1994; Stromquist, 1994). Teachers must become active, fulfilled and empowered professionals themselves. If an educational system is to engender normative change, the entire system must be restructured to allow all actors to participate more democratically.

I

THE INDIAN CONTEXT

The Struggle between Continuity and Change, Tradition and Innovation

The education system in India remains at a critical juncture. The world's second most populous country, with current estimates of over one billion people, India has a literacy rate of approximately 51 per cent. The history of India's educational system is complex, marked by deep debate and many contradictions between policy and practices and between laws and their enforcement.

Elements of continuity and tradition have battled those of change and innovation. The power of cultural and historic barriers to change, including nearly two centuries of colonialism and many more centuries of a rigid caste system, have maintained a stubborn barrier to meaningful social transformation.

However, well before the past decade and even the past century, a populist movement continued to challenge very powerful traditional educational values and practices. A brief look at the diverse historical trends and currents can help to illuminate both the deep cultural roots of tradition and the strong reform elements that are critical to the current situation. This history reveals that progress is slow and uneven, and that the future is embedded in the past. Necessary changes must be perceived within the larger historical perspective.

Historical Links Between Women's Teacher Training And Girls' Education

Viewed through a gender lens, India's history of educational reform reveals more than a century of policies that seemed to anticipate and support the needed links between women's teacher education and education for girls. As early as 1882, the Indian Education Commission supported teacher-training institutes for women. In 1913, the government of India (GOI) passed a resolution that both established teaching universities and emphasized the education of girls. Primary school teachers were required to pass a vernacular middle examination, receive one year of training and take refresher courses. They would receive a salary of not less than 12 rupees, (~35 cents) and teach classes with no more than 30 to 40 students.

During the struggle for independence in 1947, and in the years following, a growing number of women activists struggled with the ideas of gender and social change, internally, with each other and with society. These women demanded a revision of the norms perpetuating inequities that would include the right to vote and equal rights to education. In 1944, the women's literacy rate had grown only to 3.4 per cent from 0.9 per cent in 1901 (Dulay, 1986, p. 175).

Their demands went far beyond the goals of national leaders and male reformers who promoted a limited view of female education that left the basic patriarchal social structure unchanged. Male leaders aimed to "use education to make women more capable of fulfilling their traditional roles as wives and mothers and not to make them more efficient and active units in the process of socio-economic or political development" (Chitnis, 1989, p. 137). Gandhi himself advocated culturally suitable education for women: "There is need for similar distinction between the education of males and females as has been made between them by Mother Nature herself" (cited in Agrawal and Aggarwal, 1992, p. 4).

Policy Reform Follows Independence

After independence, official GOI policies reflected the development of democratic ideology and institutions. The 1950 Constitution of independent India promised "universal, free, and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen" (Chitnis, 1989, p.135). Within this educational commitment, women were specifically named among "weaker others" to be given special protection and the opportunity to advance. To further these goals, the GOI established committees to reform the system including the Women's Education Committee, which addressed the training and employment of women teachers.

Almost twenty years later, in 1968, India's first National Policy on Education (NPE) recommended that "the education of girls should require emphasis, not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation." This document also proposed raising the status and increasing the benefits and training of teachers. (NPE 1968 cited in Pandey, 1992, p. 56-57).

The 1985 "Challenge of Education," a Ministry of Education policy perspective review, cited many shortcomings of the education system and criticized the government's failure to carry out reform. It drew attention to the continuing authoritarian, centralized and monolithic management approach that impeded decentralization and local participation. The system, it said, also created an environment of anonymity and widespread apathy of teachers and the community in regard to primary school.

The role of teachers reflected the many, often opposing, currents of tradition, caste, colonialism and reform. On the one hand, teachers held the status of guru deriving from the Brahman ideal of moral authority and sacred knowledge, subduing the curiosity and questioning of students. Yet teachers received poor quality teacher training, low pay and had little decision-making power in regard to substantive or administrative issues. The Challenge of Education, also declared that:

" . . . something will have to be done to change the orientation, work-ethic, knowledge and skills of the teachers, who will have to function much more creatively in a learning rather than a teaching environment, in which they will have to struggle continuously with new ideas as well as new technologies." (Challenge, 1985, p. 12)

The document also paid close attention to the quality of education, with a special focus on implementing child-centred and activity-based learning. Looking to education as an agent of

basic change, the policy strengthened India's focus on girls' education and its link to women's empowerment. The education system would play an interventionist role in promoting women's studies and empowering women to become actively involved as decision makers and administrators.

"The elimination of women's illiteracy and the removal of obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in, elementary education will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services, setting of time targets, and effective monitoring" (NPE 1986 cited in Shukla, 1988, p. 7).

In 1992, further policy change continued to promote the end of gender discrimination and the empowerment of women to full participation. The NPE and Programme of Action (POA) viewed education as an instrument of social transformation that would eliminate curriculum biases and enable professionals such as teachers, decision makers, administrators and planners to "play a positive interventionist role for gender equality" (DOE, 1992a and 1992b, p. 2.) To achieve this would require a large-scale overhaul of policies and practices. Such measures included: training all teachers and instructors as agents of women's empowerment; developing gender and poverty sensitization programmes for teacher educators and administrators; developing gender-sensitive curriculum; removal of sex bias from textbooks. They also included giving preference to female teacher recruitment to motivate parents to send girls to school. The NPE set explicit goals for women teachers' recruitment at a minimum of 50 per cent and urged that training facilities ensure an adequate, though unspecified, number of qualified women teachers in subjects that included mathematics and science (POA 1992).

The Struggle To Narrow The Gap Between Policy And Practice

Yet a stark contradiction has remained between policy commitments to women's equality and actual reform. Little real change has occurred despite the clear articulation by Indian educational policy and planning of what is necessary to create democratically structured programmes that will facilitate gender sensitivity and equity. Changing the ideology of a country steeped in cultural, social and economic inequities requires constant struggle.

Over the years, the absence of political initiative and funding accompanied by changes in political control has hindered steady progress toward these goals. Women's national literacy rates remain at 42 per cent compared to the rate of 69 per cent for men (UNICEF, 2002). Acknowledging these discouraging statistics, the Indian POA (1992) argues that the will to implement institutional mechanisms to ensure the reflection of gender sensitivity in educational programmes is still strongly needed. The limited scope of women's roles must be replaced with a 21st century ideology that makes them full participants in socio-economic and political development. Programmes that attempt to incorporate gender equitable policies, including those for teachers, have been increasing. Because they play a pivotal role in transmitting equality to their students, women teachers must be high on the list of women who participate in more gender equitable programmes.

II

THE TEACHER EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME:

A Promise of Joyful Learning

Within this context and expressed need, the Teacher Empowerment Programme emerged as one important programme that focused increasingly on gender equity for teachers. This in-service programme began in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh in 1992 as a grassroots effort designed to meet the immediate needs of teachers for new content and skills that would increase their influence on the process of education. Focused on interactive participation and decision-making of teachers, the TEP aimed to place power in their hands and facilitate its responsible use. Innovative and imaginative, the TEP did not reject official education policy; its general objectives and processes are consistent with the guidelines of the National Policy on Education (NPE) and its Programme of Action (POA).

TEP's Beginnings

The TEP began as a UNICEF initiative yet was enabled through a long standing relationship with the Government of India, familiarity with government policies and practices, and a deep understanding of the needs and conditions of teachers.

Through combined goals and efforts, the partnership of UNICEF, the GOI, and the teachers' union capitalized on an increasingly conducive environment and was able to put stated policy goals into practice. For teachers, this meant improved status, teaching skills and materials, greater participation and decision-making in governance and programme development and more joyful training in pedagogy. The empowerment of teachers would also have a direct and positive bearing on achieving the goals for students that included increased attendance, retention through class five - especially for girls - and higher levels of achievement.

According to Jude Henriques, the UNICEF education officer at the forefront of the TEP's initial development, most education reforms begin with the curriculum, textbooks, and testing procedures. For him, reform begins with the teacher.

Let me assess to what extent can I intervene in the government system to be able to get teachers interested, excited, motivated, committed -- whatever word you choose. What moves teachers? What makes teachers tick? . . . Can we get teachers to teach so that when children learn, so that when a child goes back home, the child will say something about the teacher--say 'this is what I learned in school, this is what I did. I want to go tomorrow to school.

Henriques was aware that trust and commitment are powerful concepts that are necessary for the programme to succeed. He worked to make sure that he and the teachers believed in each other and that the seeds of ownership and sustainability spread among them. Together they built strong teacher teams that helped to develop the training module and manual and then served as trainers of other educators at state, district, and school levels.

The TEP ties educational developmental theory to practice as teachers learn a child-responsive approach that is joyful and experiential. They learn that teachers must be nurturing and caring and offer concrete contexts so children can learn through play and various hands-on activities. They learn to provide opportunities for children to express themselves verbally and artistically through singing, dancing, and drama and to allow ample time to tell and listen to stories that make sense of their environment and their lives.

Joyful Learning in Practice

Unlike most previous in-service trainings, the TEP addresses the lack of joy in teaching, the overburdened curriculum and the unmotivated teachers - all criticisms in various GOI and other education reports. The unshakeable foundation of the Joyful Learning approach is that teachers participate and collaborate through an interactive, hands-on approach.

The choice of districts in which to implement the TEP was linked to indicators showing the poorest literacy rates. UP is India's most populous state and one of the five lowest literacy states where the rate stands at about only 41 per cent--55 percent for males and only 25 percent for females (Kamaluddin, 1996; Sahni, 1996).

When the TEP expanded to the State of UP, teachers themselves chose the name Ruchipurna Shikshan or Joyful Learning (JL) for their training, reflecting both their ownership of the programme and a new attitude it motivated. Just one month before the training began in UP, on the day annually celebrated as Teachers' Day, over 12,000 teachers pledged and committed themselves to work toward UPE, to avoid absenteeism and drunkenness, and to become better teachers. Since that day, many teachers have pledged or re-pledged their commitment as part of the Joyful Learning Programme.

Among the ways in which Henriques promoted the effectiveness of the TEP was to make sure that teachers could participate at low cost and to emphasize activities that were concrete and relevant to the local environment. Teachers made their own teaching aids such as the cloth pocket board sewn to create rows and pockets. They used colour-coded cards for activities such as matching, categorizing, and sequencing, or word cards that enabled language arts skills such as vocabulary, syntax, or story telling. These activities have remained a part of the training throughout the history of the programme, and flourish today. Low-cost, low-tech and inclusive processes represent activities that teachers can initiate with the children themselves. The portable, pocket board teaching aid has proven particularly effective in environments where there is no classroom.

Mamta, one woman teacher, was clearly inspired by the expressive, child-responsive teaching and the opportunity she was given to be creative. She believes that Joyful Learning focuses on the whole development of the child's mental, physical, cultural, and moral being.

Joyful Learning is good for the students. It is good for the teachers also. The teachers are thinking that we only have to lecture in the class. There is no need to understand the child's mind. But now, they are thinking it is also our duty to see what the children are grasping from us . . . and taking interest in. . . . They were teaching us like the students of Class Two because this was the training for Class Two. . . . We have to know the mind of the students of Class Two. . . . We sing so many songs, we play so many games, and we were doing work in groups. The training was exciting.

Yet just as important as providing teachers with new skills and content, the training in UP went beyond teachers and administrators. It included space for dialogue among teachers, trainers and government officials for reflection, sharing and discussion of concerns. In one training session, for example, teachers expressed concern about outdated syllabi and curricula in the pre-service Basic Teacher Training (BTT) programme. They expressed the need for better communication among department officials, monitors, and the DIET (District Institute of Education and Training) instructors to increase their understanding and ownership of the TEP. The intangible aspects and principles upon which the programme was based are evident during these dialogues - respect, trust, commitment, and equity. The in-service manual for Class One expresses these empowering foundations:

Teachers are all creative, talented people and respond remarkably when they are respected and included in the decision-making integral to their work in the classroom. They gain a sense of ownership over their work and their classrooms, when they are involved in development of the curriculum, designing of the syllabus, making and selecting of teaching materials and in designing training programmes leading to their own intellectual and professional development. (DOE, UPPSS, & UNICEF, 1995, p. 8)

Placing teachers in a central role, encouraging hands-on interactive activities and the making of teaching aids have garnered strong and wide teacher support in the districts in which the programme has operated. Although implementation is challenging, partners have learned to work together and make the best use of each others' diverse expertise, resources and knowledge. Furthermore, the TEP has begun to converge with other government-sponsored teacher training programmes to spread more widely the joyful learning that ultimately will benefit both the teachers and the students.

The above discussion of teacher involvement in education reform, Indian policy history and the general goals and processes of the TEP, sets the stage to view the TEP through a gender lens. The training itself may empower to some extent all the teachers who participate. The following

section posits that further empowerment - of men as well as women teachers - requires explicit attention to gender and the limitations imposed by institutional and social structures. The following section addresses these issues and highlights specific aspects of the TEP that have been particularly effective in empowering women teachers.

III

THE TEP AND THE GENDER LENS

One of the key questions emerging from the research was whether and to what extent a gender-neutral or gender-blind approach to teacher empowerment would actually result in gender equality and specifically the empowerment of women teachers. Through a closer examination of the TEP in practice, this Section links the practical day-to-day realities of the TEP at work to broader feminist principles. Through the eyes and voice of several participants, it demonstrates the flexibility of the programme, to create and respond to a demand for more gender explicit attention. There is an exploration of the philosophy that a gender neutral approach can bring about equally the empowerment of women as well as men teachers. And finally, this section links particular and individual efforts to prevailing feminist research and the socially constructed and constricted gender roles played by women in India and in many other cultures.

The Gender Lens: Feminist Principles Demonstrate Critical and Continuing Realities

Over the past three decades as feminist research has taken on an abstract and theoretical quality, its origins are often forgotten - origins based in the lifeblood and 'lived realities' of women's experience. As women's lives keep changing, this earthbound educational reform programme in India is a reminder that change is slow and uneven and that to become empowered women themselves must keep reliving, reviewing and revising their experience.

The following precepts bring together feminist principles with the TEP experience.

Numbers Count: hiring more women teachers is a key strategy to increasing girls' school participation

Worldwide, and for several decades, the critical role of female teachers in reducing the gender gap in primary and secondary education has been well established. Numerous studies indicate that girls in developing countries "learn better and stay in school longer when their teachers are women" (UNESCO, 1993, p. 13). The general assumption had been that the presence of female teachers would provide an automatic incentive for girls to enrol in school; they would create a safe atmosphere that would encourage families to send their daughters to school, and would provide positive role models. Simply because they were women, female teachers would be gender sensitive in their attitudes and behaviours, fight for more gender sensitive curriculum and provide a safe environment free from sexual harassment. An increase in the numbers of women teachers would accelerate, if not ensure, sustainable gender equality in education.

The 1950 Indian Constitution guaranteed free, universal, compulsory education for all children to the age of 14 (Chitnis, 1989) with female education as a key element of planned development. Yet today, girls in India still conspicuously trail their male counterparts. India has the largest number of out of school girls in the world - over 19.5 million (UNICEF 2002). Current figures

suggest that there are over 11 million fewer girls than boys enrolled at the primary level. Literacy rates are 69% for men and only 42% for women (UNICEF 2002).

Many approaches have been put in place to reduce this gap--awareness campaigns, child-care centres, more schools closer to home, direct incentives. Experience has proven repeatedly that there is strength in numbers. When a country's teacher education programmes graduate enough female teachers, the likelihood of expanding female education improves. In fact, the Education for Women's Equality chapter of India's 1992 POA notes the direct relationship between dropout rates of girls and the small proportion of women teachers. In the state of UP, which has one of the lowest literacy rates in India, female teachers number only 21 and 23 per cent in rural primary and middle level schools. In urban areas, these percentages are 56 and 57 per cent (POA, 1992, p. 1). Achieving a critical mass can give groups of excluded members of society mutual support and the motivation to speak out, assert themselves and express in the public sphere what has been for protection only private attitudes and behaviours. Continued exposure of men to large numbers of women on an equal footing will help them to stop seeing women as subordinate and to accept change. As UNESCO, the World Bank, UNICEF and many other agencies have claimed, more female teachers must be hired.

But 'More' Isn't Enough: women teachers must also be empowered

Experience has also shown that hiring more women teachers will not by itself promote gender equity and social change. As long as societal gender discrimination persists, access alone will neither keep girls in school nor produce empowered women capable of significant decision-making. Women themselves internalize and replicate the lessons of culture. They carry with them and pass on to girls under their tutelage the societal behaviours and attitudes imposed on them from early childhood. They do this, often unintentionally or unknowingly, through their own culturally determined behaviours and attitudes.

As role models, women teachers may communicate to girls the dictates to be obedient or submissive, not to stand up for themselves or take risks. In the classroom, research has shown repeatedly that women teachers may also perpetuate these behaviours and pass on traditional messages by calling on boys first and allowing, even encouraging, interruption, argumentativeness and other traditionally male behaviours while discouraging girls from the same behaviours. Educators themselves need to be empowered supporters of gender equity and of women teachers who will serve as positive role models. These possibilities imply social transformation and, thus, threaten the existing power structure.

If women are to achieve equality in Indian society, women teachers must be in the forefront of those who encourage social transformation for girls. They must themselves be, and help young females to be, critically aware of their society's norms that include an understanding of patriarchy and how and why females have been traditionally subordinated in society. They must help female students to challenge accepted gender roles. "Activism should not ignore the interplay between the empowering and the oppressive in the form and content of our work" (Orner, 1992, p. 6).

Empowerment has become an important concept in the work of many agencies. It is consistent with the shift in approach from Women in Development (WID) - a gender neutral demand for women's equal integration into the development process - to Gender in Development (GID--also often called Gender and Development, GAD) which demands a change in structural relations to create greater power and autonomy. When women both participate and express their views, and have the power to make decisions that affect their public and personal lives, they are empowered. Teacher empowerment programmes that incorporate GID theory promote these goals. It is argued that empowered women teachers lead to greater retention and learning achievement for girls. More critically conscious, educated women can contribute to a more just and equitable social order that includes transformation as a goal of educational reform.

The Personal Is Political: research through "lived realities"

Feminist scholarship has shown repeatedly how the patriarchal construction of knowledge devalues both the intellect and emotions of females (Bhola, 1994). Educational systems are microcosms of societal values and formal education. Their function is to instill appropriate behaviour and cultural norms, which often includes unspoken but clear gender-specific messages. Schools then, at all levels, are too often vehicles for reproducing stereotyped or limited views of girls and boys, women and men.

Examining the issues through women's personal experience, or what is called 'lived realities', helps to better expose and understand the depth of gender messages and how women's private lives and roles are both mirrored in and hidden from the public sphere. Documenting women's realities and making their lives visible helps to expose and correct the patriarchal bias of social science. Conceptualizing women's private behaviour as an expression of cultural and societal dictates has enabled feminist researchers to bring a persuasive new perspective to the theory of political and social power relations. It also allows women, who understand their own experiences in a new way, to contribute to the creation of a new social order that benefits women, girls and all society. For both men and women, discussion and exploration of experiential forms of expression often result in a better grasp of the strong links between private and public realms.

For example, Kumar (1994) rejects theories that define women as totally passive in their responses to restricting and discriminatory structures. Acknowledging the presence of powerful institutional obstacles, she believes that understanding the hidden and subversive ways in which women exercise their independence while outwardly controlled by a repressive normative order

Research through "lived realities" reveals:

- The nuances and complexities of women's lives and how they differ from those of men
- Where the professional sphere fails to accommodate the practical needs of women
- The sizeable gap between private and public behaviour for women, the difficulty of women in bridging that gap, and of men in accepting new behaviours
- The gap between equality on paper and in practice
- The different styles of women's resistance
- That understanding women's lives is critical to understanding their roles as teachers
- The replication of traditional and stereotyped gender roles and behaviours.

is highly relevant to understanding women's experience. "Protest does not have to take only well-recognized forms, but it can appear in various other permutations of daily life" (p.3). For example, evasive tactics, genres of song and dance, private correspondence and diary writing may all be forms of data that help feminist researchers to understand other women and their culture and for women to understand themselves.

Looking Gender In The Eye - Listening to the Voices of Women Teachers

Linking feminist theory to the TEP, this study pays close attention to the voices of women teachers as they strive to make space for themselves as professionals in a patriarchal society. In particular, it depicts two women primary school teachers, Shail and Mamta, both of whom took the TEP training and are now members of the core group of teachers in the RaeBareli District of UP. The study compares their lives, teaching careers, attitudes and relationship to their society and its norms.

Listening closely to their life stories, related experiences and private views, brings into sharp focus the link between private and public, between life and education, between the personal and political. It also reveals the complexities, nuances and entrenched attitudes and behaviours behind the theory and the statistics. The voices of these teachers help to reveal how their daily lives, thoughts and feelings fit into the larger public culture and system that helps or hinders women teachers' empowerment.

Shail

Why is a woman always regarded as a 'woman', not as a person? Why are her rights limited only to pieces of paper and a constitution? A woman gives birth to man and yet is treated as no more than a decorative piece for his bed. He cheats her in the name of love. She has to bear the strain of physical and verbal abuse from him and is forced to face immeasurable humiliation and struggle in society at every step.
(Shail, a woman primary school teacher in the TEP)

The relationship between personal and political, private and public is repeatedly clear in the life of Shail, the author of the above most-private writing - which she shared only after trust had been established.

"What use," my mother said, "that a girl should be learned! Much good will it do her when she has lusty sons and a husband to look after. Look at me, am I any worse that I cannot spell my name, so long as I know it?" (Markandaya, 1954, p16).

Shail, whose name means "mountain", was 30 at the time of the study, and a teacher of Class Two in a government school in the RaeBareli district of UP. Her life was like that of many Indian girls. The fictional Indian mother's words quoted above relate to her own experience as a girl struggling to overcome both her family's and village's resistance to continuing her education. This resistance challenged a patriarchal dictate that she follow the traditional path for which

females need no more than a Class Five village education. Today, with a fuller understanding of how the personal is political, she is keenly aware of the structural nature of her own experience. She said, "I very very much struggle in life for girls' education because in the villages are very very many problems."

Shail grew up in a small village of about 4,000 in the RaeBareli District with her parents, two older brothers, and a younger sister. Her family owned about ten fields where they grew vegetables and pulses, a form of lentils. When Shail expressed a desire to continue school after Class Five outside the village, community and caste sentiment were against her. Her friend and neighbour Monica translated for Shail:

"When Shail was taking her education, the village was against her. They said that she should not have so much education. She is a girl. She should get married and go to her husband's place. If she is going to get so much education, she is going to do something that will destroy our village. But she just said, "No, I'm going to study further."

Where did Shail get her determination? The village fear that she would disturb its pattern of life - - that she would influence other girls to leave the village for education in the city-- nearly swayed her father. Yet her older educated brother was in the military and had seen more of the world. He knew that girls were getting educated, accepted the idea that this was a positive step and helped persuade their father to let Shail leave the village. According to her friend Monica, "he wanted his sister to be educated and to stand on her feet."

Living with an uncle's family in Lucknow, the capital of UP, Shail continued her education through Grade 12. She found a job in a Montessori school near her home village, where she taught and went to school part-time, completing her B.A. in 1986 and her M.A. in political science in 1988. In 1994 Shail earned a Ph.D. in Hindi.

During the period of the study, Shail was living in four small rooms about two kilometres from the centre of RaeBareli. With both of her brothers dead, Shail had become the primary family wage earner. On her 3,000 per month rupee salary (then equivalent to about \$90 U.S.), she provided the main income for herself, her mother, and her three nephews.

When she first was interviewed for this study, Shail said that she did not want to get married because she had made a commitment to help provide for her nephews, including a private education. But as she became more trusting, she also became more comfortable in expressing her growing "feminist" views. Besides the care of her extended family, she acknowledged an additional reason for not getting married: that she did not want a man to control her life. Once Shail overheard me talking with a male administrator who referred proudly to the much lower rate of divorce in India than in the United States. I had responded politely that laws and customs in the U.S. made divorce easier and more acceptable. But from what I had read and seen, many women in India appeared to suffer silently and might be likely to get divorced were it not for the difficulty of the legal process and their fear of social ostracism.

Shail said that she had agreed with my views and believed that the male administrator was downplaying women's problems in India. That, she said, was part of the gender blindness of men and many women. She continued, talking about wife killings and bride burnings, and removed a folder from her bookshelf where she kept her dissertation, her M.Ed., and other important writings. She explained that she had written much about this struggle, including poems and other writings. These writings were precious to her and she was protective of them, saying that many others, including her family, did not agree with her or even understand. She would not risk publishing such works where she lives for fear of reprisal. Even allowing the use of a short excerpt in this study created some hesitation. Shail has learned to choose her battles wisely.

Mamta

Mamta has always lived in the centre of the town of RaeBareli. At 25, she was an expressive and upbeat young woman, strong in her Hindu religious beliefs. She usually dressed casually in pyjama-style tunic with loose drawstring pants, rather than in a sari. Unlike Shail, Mamta lived in a large home with groups of small rooms surrounding a centre courtyard. Her mother had died recently and Mamta was living in an extended family of 20, which included her father, three older brothers, their wives and children and her niece. Although Mamta was contributing to her family, they were not dependent on her salary to the same extent as Shail's family. Mamta said that her father always allowed her much choice. Her brothers were all well educated with engineering and other technical degrees and her sisters-in-law were permitted to work outside the home -- although there were no jobs for them. Mamta spoke English well, and like Shail, was well educated. She went to a public school near her home through Class Five and attended a government school up through Class 12 followed by a two-year B.A. programme from Kanpur University and an M.A. in English where she was the only girl in her class. She also had completed a B. Ed and in 1993 a two-year BTT--Basic Teacher's Training diploma course at the DIET in RaeBareli. In her own co-educational grade school, Mamta remembered the exact ratio of 13 girls to 27 boys.

Why did she remember these numbers so clearly? "Because," she said, "we were less in strength". Although the numbers made little difference in the way she was treated, they did make a difference in the way she felt. Mamta and her female classmates were told that "we are different," she said. "We have certain limitations as 'ladies' and "should not waste much time with the boys." Society would not approve.

Despite the fact that Mamta believed her family was freer than many in terms of gender roles, her brothers were still looking for a good husband for her and teased her about this. A substantial dowry would be required if she were to be matched with any type of professional man. Even though Mamta had a Master's degree and was fluent in English, her status as a primary teacher did not warrant a match with the highest level professional such as a doctor. Primary school teachers are considered public servants, not professionals. While many men in Mamta's class and caste look for educated wives, for many families, especially in rural areas, an educated woman is believed to cause problems and create ripples in the traditional patriarchal structure. Desai (1995) quotes Karlekar's (1987) discussion with a mother from an untouchable caste who states: "Too much of schooling will only give girls big ideas and then they will be beaten up by their

husbands or abused by their in-laws" (p.26). For families such as these, girls' education is expected to be tied to functional domestic uses.

Mamta's reflection on why she chose to be a teacher mirrored her inherent and socialized "female" character traits and the bringing of private "female" values into the public sphere. "I love children very much," she said without hesitation. "A teacher is the builder of the country and in this way I am helping my country to build a nation -- a good nation". The name, Mamta, meaning "mother love," fits the demeanour of this primary teacher. She exhibits a particularly caring, nurturing relationship in her teaching--less authoritative than many teachers I observed in UP primary schools.

In her former teaching position at a public (private) school, she had more resources to work with in a nicer facility. Mamta knew that the government schools had poorer facilities, yet she received a higher salary than at the public school. She explained that government schools needed furniture, chairs, and a better building and that she did not like sitting in a chair at a desk when the students are sitting on the bare or mat-covered floor; it caused too much separation. Mamta truly had the children's interest at heart and sometimes she felt as though government officials were concerned only about themselves and not about the children.

Looking Gender in the Eye - The TEP in Practice

Underlying the implementation of the TEP is the philosophy that teachers must be trusted, respected, listened to, and encouraged to nurture their creative abilities. Committed to the empowerment of all teachers, trainers in the earliest sessions in Madhya Pradesh did not include explicit discussion of gender, caste or class issues. No content explicitly targeted excluded populations, structural inequalities and obstacles or patriarchy. The emphasis was on the immediate participation of all teachers through activities that encourage open and equal male and female interaction and break down inhibitions that would obviate the need for specific attention to gender issues.

This mainstreaming, or gender blind, strategy prevalent at the start of the movement for gender equality, acknowledged the need for equal female participation but emphasized that programmes should respond to the needs and concerns of women within the framework of broader human and social development objectives. However, such an approach has also exposed the difficulties of translating mainstreaming goals into visible results and actions and has proven extremely limited in producing significant and speedy improvement in the status of women. This is true in the most socially progressive societies, but especially in country programmes where the national environment is not conducive to promoting social equity and empowerment of women (UNICEF, 1994a, p.9).

Looking at the TEP through a gender lens, what arises as central to the discussion are the relative benefits and drawbacks to mainstreaming gender concerns through gender-neutral practices of equality or to promoting gender-specific analysis and activities. What some call gender neutral or gender-blind approaches to the training do not consciously promote or directly raise awareness of the larger societal, structural inequalities that must be altered.

The Evolution of a Gender Explicit Focus

As the programme expanded from MP to UP, the need for specific discussion of gender issues was acknowledged and incorporated into the structure, design and implementation of the programme process. Explicit targeting of gender equity became part of the TEP curricula in UP, opening space for depth of coverage and for additional content. Planners were aware that more time was needed to break down the barriers of women's silence and dispel misconceptions about their acceptance of the status quo. Longer training sessions evolved and the overall training increased in length from one to five days. To achieve equality and empowerment, it would also be necessary to address men's underlying attitudes towards gender. The impetus for this shift came largely from Sahni, a woman trainer, whose own "lived realities" and gender consciousness drove this aspect of the training. She described this unfolding process:

We spent about 10 days together around a table trying to develop this package. And we would get up and do things -- perform the package, so to speak. And that's how it developed. We said, "well then the training should take this form too because it was so enjoyable". People liked it and they seemed to gain a lot from it; it seemed to make a lot more sense.

Gender sensitivity was introduced in day one of the training as the group began to learn gender-sensitive songs. On the third afternoon, a gender sensitization session focused on the status of women in general and more specifically, on a discussion of discriminatory social and political structures such as patriarchy. These sessions included sharing personal histories and anecdotes; composition and rendition of poems and songs pertaining to the issue of girls' education, and collaborative development of concrete plans for increasing enrolment and retention of girls and for sensitizing the parent community.

The State Representative of the UNICEF field office in Lucknow at the time of the study pointed out the new emphasis of gender in both the Class One and Class Two training manuals. She said, "We're getting more and more sensitive about these things this last year and looking at it in a more focused way, rather than in general terms."

Creating a Critical Mass of Women Teachers

Throughout the research and observations of the TEP, the interdependency of numbers of woman teachers and empowerment surfaced repeatedly. Reasons for restricted women's participation in teaching varied from practical to psychosocial - for example, from competing family obligations to feelings of unworthiness. Both are rooted in gender roles resulting from lifelong discrimination and socialization. Yet attention to lived realities and explicit discussion of gender issues will support woman teachers and gender equity and help to increase the numbers of woman teachers.

The impact of being outnumbered

The study's women respondents referred often to the impact of being outnumbered. As Mamta and others described the gender ratios in their education, they articulated a general sense of discomfort ranging from tension to fear. This discomfort included a quality of being "on guard", reluctance to "be themselves," and/or a self-consciousness about what is "appropriate" public behaviour. Many of the TEP's training procedures and materials were designed by a group of two trainers and ten teachers, a group, however, that included only one woman trainer and one woman teacher. Although two females were better than none, given the special focus on girls' education in the UP programme, more women teachers among this group should have been recruited for the training. Sahni, who was the only woman trainer in the group, said:

In the first training camp, I was shocked when I saw there were six women in a group of 31 from five districts. That was all. Just six women and all these big burly men. It was a little bit scary. You're on your guard to begin with and you maintain a distance. And you don't know whether they're looking at you or listening to you. So you have to work twice as hard.

As a core teacher, Shail had gone to another Block in her district to help with training only to be turned away by the headmaster because she was a woman. "I don't want you; I don't need you." When Shail returned to her Block, she complained to the district manager and members of the UNICEF team. Nothing happened as a result. Sahni well understood this when she spoke of other "nasty experiences" similar to Shail's; she also reflected on her reluctance to send a woman trainer as one of twelve to supervise for two months in another district.

I knew it would be too tough going into another district. We selected one [woman]. And she turned it down as I knew she would. [When the department kept saying], "Oh, but there's no woman; we need a woman representative." That made me very angry too. "Why do you need a woman representative when you haven't done anything to make it easier for women to go to these places?"

Uncovering and overcoming structural barriers to participation

Overt resistance such as that described above may decrease. Yet other related factors, such as the practical consequences of women's roles or 'lived realities' remain serious impediments to the full participation of women in the training. Domestic duties and family responsibilities, for example, restrict women's time to prepare for teaching, allow for less leisure time and less motivation, or even restrict opportunity to attend the training, especially if it requires travelling to a location away from their home.

These structural obstacles are often a form of covert resistance that for two decades has included the arguments: "Women have every opportunity; they just don't take advantage." "They can't keep up." "They don't pay attention." "They lose interest and drop out." "It interferes with their real work of marriage", etc. Not only is this a self-promoting denial that the obstacles even exist, it is also a deliberate transfer of responsibility onto women for the impediments placed in their path by patriarchal social structures and expectations. Exposing these obstacles, as Sahni describes below, and understanding their causes help to create alternative solutions.

Sometimes bussing (travelling by bus) it, sometimes on burro, cart, sometimes on foot, and then staying with all sorts of strange men. . . . you're far more vulnerable. But they wanted to fill up, you know, they want to pretend that this whole thing is very gender representative. "So where's the woman?" I said, "there isn't any". "And why isn't there any?" "Because conditions aren't fit."

Sahni was referring to the lack of separate accommodations for women as another gender-based obstacle preventing women who had to travel from attending the training. At one training held in Mirzapur, most of the men who had come from other villages spent the night in the training room. They had stored their bedrolls on top of large supply cabinets in the back of the room and converted the training room to sleeping accommodations. However, this type of accommodation was impossible for women teachers. Because societal proprieties do not allow women to sleep side by side with men, only local women participants there at the school could participate. At the other two trainings, however, this difficulty did not seem to be present. In Lucknow, for example, the training was held at a pre-service institution that was also the DIET campus. This allowed for comfortable enough dormitory type, separate sleeping rooms for men and women. It is likely that the situation in Mirzapur was never analyzed through a gender lens.

When this issue was raised with Henriques, he seemed to imply that it was not a serious problem. His explanation was that most of the women are in urban areas where accommodations are available, or the women can go home at night. He also said that a large number of women teachers were entering the programme from tribal areas. "They are very powerful teams -- some of them nearly all women. Tribally, women are much more progressive and much more equal." He seemed to accept the truth that women could be as good, even better trainers than men, but he did not take the opportunity to further explore this rather pertinent observation.

Henriques agreed that men are more likely to become trainers because of required days away from home, and he emphasized the necessity of ensuring the presence of women trainers and role models. At first they tried to schedule the training so that the women trainers would be away from home for only two three days at a time because they had children to care for. They would come back for a few days and then go again. This would require a team to take a series of three-day trips back and forth. It would require increased expenses, but making the special effort and spending the resources, helped to accept women as part of the team. "They all get sent a clear message that women's participation and girls' education is important".

In UP, women were being encouraged to bring their children to the in-service training. That was "part of the package". Henriques explained, "We welcome it; we encourage it to ensure the teacher is there and that she can concentrate".

Participation and Performance Activities Break Down Gender Walls

Henriques believed that change would happen through a participatory approach to the training where men and women participate equally. In the early MP training, he did not draw attention to gender issues through discussion or analysis of structural or other obstacles.

In one series of participatory activities, all participants sat on the floor to reinforce equality. They engaged in small-group work of mixed genders or in mixed pairs where they created colourful cards for the pocket boards or thought of new ways to use the pocket boards with students. Equality was being modeled implicitly through planning and performing activities together. Henriques argued that "there is no difference between males and females in doing actions." In fact, he believes that normally woman teachers do much better than male teachers in the participatory activities. "It comes much more naturally to them."

Kamaluddin, the UNICEF education officer in UP at the time, also pointed out the improved relations among male and female teachers as a result of greater interaction and modelling by the TEP trainers during the 5-day in-service training. He compared it to the traditional, non-participatory, lecture-based "you should do this; you should do that" teacher training method.

It was so obvious [in the beginning] that the women would not hold the hand of male teachers. After their training they were behaving like brothers and sisters -- part of the same family. I think living together, eating together, thinking together is exceptional. [The traditional teacher training method] is not as effective as if you create an environment and you want me to act in accordance to what you are suggesting. So [within the five days] I find that I'm beginning to remove my blinkers and see world in its right perspective.

Shail confirmed that sitting and working together has had an equalizing impact. Before the Joyful Learning training, the women had no chance to sit with the men. Now, she said, "there's so much work, they have to sit together in order to get it done."

Before, the lady teachers were not able to talk in front of men; they were very shy and would hide their faces. In our country, if a woman comes in front of a man, she is considered a characterless woman. After the JL in-service, the women thought that teaching is their job, so they should not hide their face in front of men and others. They have more confidence among themselves and speak and sing songs in front of everyone.

Breaking Down Walls for Women

As gender-sensitive women teachers can be role models for girls, empowered women trainers can help teachers they train to understand and reduce stereotypes and prejudices by drawing on women's experience, or "lived realities." They can turn demeaned and devalued traditional female behaviours into respected assets that benefit themselves, their professions and their societies. All cultures have long recognized that "different" is too often a synonym for "deficient" and seen as a consequence of immutable female "nature." This can confine women to stereotyped and restricted gender roles. Feminism in the 1970's understandably accepted the "gender blind" argument that women's differences were a result of nurture (or lack of) rather than

nature and if women were given the same opportunities as men, these differences would disappear. Since the 1980's a voluminous body of literature has acknowledged and heralded women's ways of doing things in which differences--such as skills in and attention to consultation, cooperation and facilitation; and process and consensus building --are celebrated and esteemed and their capacity to transform society is promoted.

Gender neutral participatory activities in the TEP brought to the surface many of the differences between men and women and the need to address them directly. Over the past two decades, the link between women's private and public lives has been at the heart of the international women's movement and the subject of worldwide media attention. Yet the fact that Shail continued to hide her writings on the top shelf is a powerful reminder of the deep reality gap between what women think and feel and are willing to say and do in private and their public utterances and behaviours.

In private, women behave a certain way with a certain kind of freedom. When they are in public or around men, the behaviour change is significant. There is a consistent implication that the presence of men (in a setting outside the home) creates a public domain, even in an informal setting. Sahni said:

When there are just women, there isn't this tension. There was this part of our training where we hold hands in a circle. I always made sure that I was holding hands only with Rakesh [a man but her friend/co-trainer]. And that there was always a woman next to me. I would notice that there were all these smiles and snickers (by the men) that said, "Why are we holding hands? Men and women aren't supposed to hold hands." So I just stopped doing that, which is a pity because we were trying. I said, "No, I don't think it's culturally appropriate."

[And during the performance aspects of the training,] there were times when I was a lot more on guard than I would have been had the group consisted of more women. Because [the men] are not used to familiarity, they can misinterpret it.

Henriques expressed full awareness about the manifestation and consequences of this gap.

Women are not assertive or empowered in the public sphere. With dramatics, singing, action, lots of activity, it comes much more spontaneously to them. Except when doing it publicly. If they are outside the classrooms, they will not do it because they will be afraid, what will people think--they are dancing in front of other people.

Yet, performance, Henriques reasoned, is known to be an area where women excel and can bring their skills from the private to the public sphere with comfort and ease. He believed that breaking down this inhibition without drawing attention to the reasons behind it, would enable women to perform/participate publicly, what they are ordinarily only comfortable doing in a private sphere. In the early MP trainings, participants did not discuss these issues. Rather, there was a matter-of-fact environment of expectation that supported and trusted women's strengths without looking at the problem or its causes. The attitude expressed to them in the earlier training was: "We know

this is what we need to do. We think that if every teacher does it, it's good. Do you think you can do it?" And then, he said, "We let them decide."

Henriques also acknowledged that it does not happen automatically and that it took more coaxing at first to get women to perform publicly. But then, he noted that they were better at it. "Some of them came beautifully on. They didn't waste any time and were very good. They become my trainers." Sahni agreed that the performative nature of the training has helped women to surface more.

. . . performance is culturally considered part of the female domain. If there's a wedding or a festival, the women will sing, not the men. The men are supposed to be strong and all that sort of macho thing. So this gave the women an opportunity to do something that they were supposed to be better at. They emerged much more, volunteered and took centre stage much more and had more of the limelight--which is why I think it helped them be better participants.

And for Men

For men as well, performing helped to break down gender barriers. A key part of the curricula focuses on males and females teaching and singing songs that they will also teach to the children. The songs encourage girls' attendance and success in school. One song is called "The Dreams of Daughters" which is in the Class One manual, ("Shikshak Sakheed The Teacher's Friend").

*The elder says, "Don't send the daughter to study."
The elder says to bow down before elders.
"I won't bow down before everyone. Now I will not bow down at all."
"Daughter, don't go to study," the elder says.
"I will expand my knowledge and I will broaden my self respect"
(DOE, UPPSS, & UNICEF, 1995b, p. 110)*

The impact of such songs spread beyond the training, according to Kamaluddin who described how one of the male district leaders began to sing a song that says, "As women, we're not going to stitch our lips and silently tolerate everything you do." The district leader, said Kamaluddin,

is a die-hard kind of male chauvinist, but he's basically a Brahmin, a strong kind of personality. He started singing this song--I couldn't believe it. I thought, he was the man who was going to stand up and say, 'Shut up'. But he didn't. He was singing the song.

Kamaluddin also noted that in the hills he heard boys singing that same song -- even though he suggested they probably had no idea what it meant.

Sahni described the positive impact on her co-trainer, Rakesh, of the performance activities and of their working together. She also stressed the need for gender consciousness that accompanied the activities.

[if I] only do the activity bit of it, that won't work. It's giving all the wrong messages and reinforcing stereotypes. So Rakesh and I had worked it out: if he can sing, the men can sing too.

And if I can speak, then women can speak too. Rakesh and I would really take care to do everything together. If there was singing, then we would both be singing. If there was painting, then we would both be painting. If there was writing, then we would both be writing. And that was really important for everyone to see. It really helped because I saw people commenting. It was breaking lots of gender stereotypes.

Performance Activities: Gender Consciousness To Combat Stereotypes

At the same time, Sahni pointed out the difficulties raised by the performance and more public aspects of the training. For example, given the entrenched roots of patriarchy in her country, she said that many people still found it difficult to take a woman seriously. She found that without close attention, performance aspects of the training tended to perpetuate stereotyped gender roles. "Hypothetically", she said, "it's like the principal and the teacher, or the director and actor."

If the principal is a man and the teacher is a woman, when there's any kind of demonstration [or] groundwork to be done, the teacher will do it. And the principal will direct the proceeding. Always when there's a man and a woman together, they assume, even if the man has just arrived, that he is in charge. That used to --and continues to -- make me mad. If I would be doing all the work and then suddenly a man would show up from somewhere, it really makes me furious. So then you have to work twice as hard to make yourself heard, to make people listen.

The research for this study revealed many confirming instances of this experience in which the women would be more involved in working on the pocket board while the men appeared to be structuring the events. Yet there were some situations when a man rather than a woman would come forward to share a small group's activity with the larger group.

Sahni pointed out the implied sexual innuendoes that men often misread in women's performances and expressed anger about the more blatant provocative behaviour by men. She also noted the difficulty that women had not to back down after making a complaint.

[Doing these performances] you're really putting yourself at risk sometimes where these men are concerned. Where maybe they just want to watch you. And you never know what kinds of constructions they are putting on all of this. They're not used to performing with women. So all of that takes some steeling and some strength.

When we were forming these groups, two women refused to come in. They said, "we don't like the men in that group; they say all kinds of nasty things. "We have this game that says, 'What is round?' And then you respond: 'a wheel,' and the other person says 'be quick,' and someone else says 'bindi'. The other person says 'be quick', and they say 'okay, roti, a plate.' It goes like that. One of those men, while this whole game was being played, says, 'and women's breasts.'

I was furious. And [the women] said: "We won't hold hands with any of them." I said, "Well fine. I'm right there with that. Let's not hold hands with any of them." So I was very mad. I said, "Which one said it?" They pointed out the one man. I spoke to the district official and said, "This man has just made an obscene remark. And we want him suspended from the training." But the women got upset and said, "Oh poor chap. He has a family and things. Don't do that." Then I said, "No. He's not to be allowed. He can't go out as a trainer. We're not placing other women at risk."

'If She Can Do It, Why Can't I?': Empowered Women Trainers Serve As Role Models

For Women Teachers

For the TEP to succeed in empowering women, the influence of a gender-sensitive woman trainer on both men and women teachers cannot be underestimated. Sahni's own "lived realities" helped to make her the best kind of role model. She had been sensitive to gender issues since childhood, because of the oppressive behaviour by her father who demeaned and "shouted down" the women at home. In 1983, Sahni founded a women's organization called "Suraksha," meaning "Security". Striving to help women gain an understanding of patriarchy, she ran "Suraksha" from her home for three years with no funding, later receiving support from UNICEF and USAID for small projects. Her own empowerment and concern for gender issues grew, and in 1989 she completed her doctoral work in the United States. Her conscientization and image as a role model contributed greatly to the growth of empowerment in women teachers such as Shail and Mamta. As an Indian, Sahni is able to relate to the contextual and practical difficulties of women teachers in her country.

Mamta and Shail recognize Sahni as a model of possibilities for women. They began to develop, especially Shail, an "if she can do it, then so can I" attitude. She says:

In Joyful Learning there were many songs, which only a woman can sing clearly. So through songs women come in front. Dr. Sahni also provoked the women. . . . [They] thought that she is a lady doctor, and if she could do such things, why can't I? If there would be a man instead of Mrs. Sahni, they [women] couldn't be so frank. They couldn't so easily do the job. In society there is a distance between a man and a woman they had to keep. Because if they are together, another person would say anything about the man or the woman, that the woman is characterless and all.

Kamaluddin, the UNICEF education officer in UP, addressed the importance of a woman teacher role model.

The ultimate objective is to increase the competencies of the teacher. For example, when Shail was teaching in that school, she was part of a team of four or five teachers. She had to abide by what the head teacher told her to do and often this head teacher was a man. [Since the training] things have changed. You can see a large number of women trainers among the teachers and because of this programme, they have an equal learning opportunity. Shail is getting exactly the same opportunity that the man teacher is getting. Because of the focus of this training, perhaps she's even getting more attention. The other teachers are listening to and acting in accordance with them [the women trainers].

Sahni herself had a clear realization of her importance as a female trainer.

I think it is [very important] for many reasons. Especially to reach out to other women. . . for support, for safety, for protection. They begin to see you as a role model. There are many women teachers who wouldn't open up if there weren't any female trainers.

She noted that, like Shail, another female teacher trainee, Umila, had become a strong female role model through the training.

She's quite a remarkable woman and she has flowered, tremendously, with this training. When we conducted the training, the chief guest there made some remark like, "You know what is so nice is to see the weaker sex emerge. " So she got up and said, "There is something I want to say. I beg your pardon. We're really not, and we resent being called the weaker sex. Just women, that's all." That was quite a remark to make.

And for Men Teachers

For the men as well, Sahni argued, women trainers are important. Male trainers had told her their feelings of being "at a loss" when there were no female trainers in the group. They noticed that it was more difficult to reach out to the women trainees and to "get them on your side," or **for them** to participate wholeheartedly without the encouragement of women trainers. It is also important, Sahni said, for men to see women in more of a power role.

But persuading men to change their behaviour comes only by hard and exhausting example that involves women relinquishing their own gender roles and changing their own relationship to power. Sahni recalled how Umeshwar, a Block Leader, had been one of those males who would shout the female teachers down. A particularly telling example of this behaviour occurred in an incident that started as a discussion about language and grew into an explosive argument.

We were talking about how language is very biased in terms of gender. In Hindi there's the stem "shikshak" and the stem "shikshaka". Shikshaka is a lady teacher and shikshak is generally a male teacher. If you have only one, shikshak is used. And then Umeshwar says, "I think we should just abolish the damn shikshaka; shikshak is enough." I said, "No, why should we abolish the term shikshaka? Why don't we abolish shikshak?" He says, "No, we still like to have the male teacher." I said, "but teacher is gender neutral."

We do not have a feminine counterpart in English...there is no teacheress. There's a teacher; there's a teacher, and there's a teacher. And that's it. Men think that in the name of equality, all you need to do is eliminate women. Or -- you eliminate the differences and then we're all equal. How do you do that so you make women to be more like men? I said, "We would like that you try to include both." And I found myself arguing alone. Even Rakesh said, "Ya, it's such a minor thing." I said, "No, it's not a minor thing. Since we are talking about language and gender, you know this is a major issue."

Sahni added that the other women kept quiet and would not say anything. Then Umeshwar said something in a loud voice and Sahni responded.

"That's the whole trouble; you just keep shouting. That's the way you think, all you do when you meet women, you shout them down." Then I kept quiet. I refused to say anything. So he says, "You look angry." And I said, "Ya, I'm not angry. I'm just upset." And really, I had memories of this happening to me when I was little and my father would do that. Whenever the women in the house had an opinion, he would shout at them. And then you got shouted down and didn't say anything. So I had that same feeling once again. It got very, very tense the whole thing. But people began to think and so we accepted the role, and we bought the terms [both Shikshak and Shikshaka].

Sahni's awareness of what took place in her family home, her history with assertive and direct - as well as compassionate behaviour, proved extremely valuable in helping her to make the link between private and public interaction. She took quite a strong position and insisted that attempting to keep the language gender neutral with use of the male term, 'shikshak' was just another example of gender blindness. And Umshewar, according to Sahni, became an excellent example of a man who has learned about his own gender biases. He told her:

"I didn't think much of women until my experience in this training." He comes from a very feudal background, the warrior caste and very conservative. He admits to being very, very patriarchal and saying that women just have to be told. He says this training has not only revised his ideas, it has taught him to respect women more, to treat them more as equals, and that they have a lot to offer. And he thinks that in Harchandpur, certainly the women have gained a lot.

Co-Trainers

Men and women working together can provide role models for women and allow men to see and experience women in leadership roles as well as to experience their own histories and gender biases. Continued exposure to gender equality can help to break down the hierarchical societal roles and facilitate men's respect for the women's skills, even as something they might emulate. This practice coincides with the essence of GID policies--a reinforcement of the necessity of programmes that target both women and men at the deeper structural level--rather than WID policies that had targeted primarily the integration of women. Sahni said:

A lot of teaching is role modeling, and with gender, when you're talking about these things, the best thing you can do is just role model it. In fact when we had the gender session, he [Rakesh] did much more of the talking than I did. Otherwise it becomes us against them. If there is a woman carrying on about gender, the men take pride and just argue against it. They just end up doing that, which is why he would take [the lead] and I would play the supportive role in the gender session.

She explained how Rakesh helped to solve the problem described earlier, (see p. 32) when the men were being sexually offensive.

Rakesh spoke to him, [the man who made the offensive remark] and had him apologize publicly. "Look, we're a mixed group here, and these are all supposed to be your sisters. You're supposed to be helping them and each other. There isn't a safe atmosphere if you can't be open to such remarks. And there have been obscene remarks. We won't say what. But we all know. It's not to happen." And he said, "This is enough that he had to apologize."

That really helped. It helped the women be stronger, and I think it changed everybody's mind. And we've had to do that once or twice. Just take a very stern stance and I think they are less prone to taking liberties of this variety. That's why whenever I had to do this alone, when Rakesh was not with me, I was always much sterner than when he was around. Feeling first more vulnerable and secondly, just wanting, needing to have a greater distance and height too. And it worked. Because that is what is culturally expected.

CONCLUSION

This study of the TEP brings together the micro and the macro, broad principles and on-the-ground reality. It shows how such a programme can contribute in the short run toward the empowerment of women teachers and in the long run toward improved and sustained girls' education. This kind of locally initiated, bottom-up programme can make incremental, but fundamental changes in individual and group attitudes and behaviours that have the potential to collectively influence district, state and even wider institutions. The paper also illustrates the importance of flexible and participatory programming and, in this case, training, that is a *sine qua non* of empowerment. While the programme did not originate with an explicit focus on gender issues, the environment of flexibility, openness and trust that it created permitted this to occur.

The experiences of Sahni, Shail and Mamta demonstrate that the trials women face can also toughen their resolve to keep working toward equality and to resist folding under to society's persistently gender-biased treatment of them. Their support for each other, their growing numbers and the growing acceptance of the male participants all played a critical role in helping them to be more empowered in their schooling situations and to challenge public social norms.

The gender-explicit focus of the TEP in the State of UP clearly helped women teachers, such as Shail and Mamta, to gain self-esteem and confidence and to move closer to becoming co-decision makers with their male counterparts. It exemplifies how the personal is political, identifies the barriers between private and public spheres and links their "lived realities" to the larger social constructs of gender discrimination and stereotyped roles. The TEP helps men to understand and acknowledge the structural basis of their own personal attitudes and behaviours and creates space for both men and women teachers to share more freely their personal and public selves and concerns.

Unfortunately, the equity female teachers may achieve in the kind of expressive activities that the TEP encourages in the privacy of the training or even in their schools is still a long way from reaching the larger society. The educational system in India still revolves around men's lives, perceptions and values. The isolation and backlash resulting from well-documented and widespread negative experiences can be discouraging and disempowering for women as they reach out to be equals. Teachers in the TEP were aware, for example, that some male teachers in the programme were not pleased to see female teachers lead training activities and that the larger society would not easily accept the songs promoting girls' rights to education or the greater assertiveness of women.

As Mamta explained, even women exploiting women, especially mothers-in-law exploiting daughters-in-law, is still common practice. Increased and sustained follow-up training is needed so that women teachers can more fully understand the injustices they have experienced and perpetuated, gain voice and become agents of social change. Follow-up support for the long term is an ethical necessity, especially support of these women teachers who risk so much when they

resist tradition. The challenge, to which UNICEF and the Government of India is trying to rise, is how to replicate and sustain such a programme on the larger scale.

One hundred districts in India now incorporate the Joyful Learning model in their existing government in-service training. This convergence, however, must ensure that teacher input and decision-making with a focus on empowerment and gender awareness will not be compromised. For this is the heart of the evolution of the programme and will require careful thought, painstaking planning, serious commitment, adequate resources and visionary leaders.

Persistence and patience are required for new and unsettling, even threatening, ideas to take root and be accepted -- usually a tediously slow and painfully frustrating process. Real empowerment is truly a lifelong and personal journey that emerges in degrees over time, from constant dialogue, struggle, and doing over and over again. Although the UP TEP experience shows the negative power of entrenched cultural traditions, it also shows the real promise of change.

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