Understanding Gender and Education in South Asia - New challenges and approaches to girls' and women's education

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#### The context

- There is no gender and education oriented network in India or South Asian region
- The linkages of gender and education are not articulated and addressed – both in education or development sector
- Lack of access to schooling and disparity in educational levels are not limited to lack of infrastructure or resources.
- Rising levels of education are not changing the gender relations and dynamics
- Education of Girls is a commitment of most of the countries and MDG too underline gender parity in Primary Education

### What informed our concept

- Text book study done in 5 states
- Training of teachers in last
  15 years
- Working with education system
- Being part of the curriculum forming committee
- Part of the textbook writing for SCERT Delhi

#### Chapter 1 Understanding Diversity



Look around you in the classroom: do you see anyone who looks exactly like you do? In this chapter you will learn that people are different from each other in many ways. Not only do they look different but they might also belong to different regional, cultural or religious backgrounds. These differences enrich our lives in many ways and also make them more fun!

All these different people, who come from all kinds of backgrounds, and belong to all kinds of religions and cultures help to make India so interesting and so diverse. What does diversity add to our lives? How did India become like this? Are all kinds of difference a part of diversity? Can diversity also be a part of unity? Read this chapter to find some answers.

# **Our Experiences**



- Well received & appreciated by Academics and Civil Society
- UGC used our framework to design a similar course
  - A group emerging who is bringing connections of Gender and Education in different spheres of work

# What are we proposing

- create a network on gender and education across the south Asian region where organizations can work with each other, sharing their experiences, research, approaches and policies to strengthen interventions on girls' education
- enhance the capacities of practitioners and policy makers linked to the education sector and grassroots organizations working for women's rights and empowerment.
- create teaching learning materials drawing on the conceptual work done by feminist academics to enabling those involved in education to integrate gender in their work.

#### What can it do

- Acknowledge and address poverty, cultural and gendered norms that are larger contributors
- Develop an understanding of the historical context that still determine in powerful ways how education for girls and women is articulated
- Establish dialogue amongst various stakeholders for girls and women's education
- Create opportunities for learning and sharing across among countries from each others' experiences

## What can it lead to

- An active and dynamic network at south Asian level to share and learn from each other's experiences of doing policy advocacy around gender and education and replicate some of the efforts in their own context
- Training Module and Material Created to be adapted and used at local level
- Gender concerns are acknowledged and addressed in policies of mainstream education in different countries based on specific context