

Schemes and Strategies of Women Education in South Asian Perspective: A Policy Analysis



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Supervisor

Dr. Alok Gardia

Associate Professor

Submitted By

Tilottama Singh

Research Scholar

FACULTY OF EDUCATION (KAMACHHA)
BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY
VARANASI- 221010, U.P.
INDIA

Enrolment No. 298798

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CHAPTER- V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Summary of the study

Education is one of basic needs as well as a human right. Therefore, every country in the world is obliged to protect that right and many countries are including that right to their constitutions and practicing by way of socio-economic and cultural policies. Education has been regarded as the most significant instrument for changing women's subjugated position in the society. It not only develops the personality of individuals but qualifies them to fulfill certain economic, political and cultural functions and thereby improves their socio-economic status.

A well-educated population, equipped with the relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills is essential for economic and social development in the twenty-first century. Education strengthens democracy by imparting to citizens the tools needed to fully participate in the governance process. Education also acts as an integrative force in society, imparting values that foster social cohesion and national identity. Education has been of central significance to the development of human society.

Education is holistic in concept and is multi-dimensional. According to Aristotle, education is creation of a sound mind in a sound body. By this, we can understand that education should pay attention to our physical needs and also to the mental needs. Mahatma Gandhi wrote "By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man's body, mind and spirit".

The women of South Asia have suffered neglect in the matter of education throughout the ages, seriously affecting their intellectual development and social status. The Constitution mandates universal and compulsory education for all. A number of programmes have been implemented to improve the level of female

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literacy. Some countries have made remarkable progress in this direction, but some have not.

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the achievement of education of women in the South Asian countries by adhering to the framework of a right-based approach; and to offer feasible policy options and tools for advocacy, as appropriate for ministries of Education of the region. For each country of the South Asia region the status of girls' education has been described. Factors supporting as well as hindering girls' education are explored through the study of available documents in hard and soft form.

Research questions

1. What is the Status of girls' education in South Asia at Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary level with respect to their Enrolment Rate, Dropout and Retention?
2. What is the Status of girls' education in South Asia at Higher Education level with respect to their Enrolment Rate?
3. What is the Status of girls' education in South Asia with respect to their Literacy Rate?
4. What are the Flagship Programs related to development of women education in South Asian countries?
5. What are the specific characteristics and policy strength of Flagship Programs related to women education in South Asian countries?

Objectives of the study

1. To study the status of girls' education in South Asia at Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary level on the basis of:
 - Enrolment rate
 - Dropout
 - Retention/Survival rate

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2. To study the status of girls in Higher Education in South Asia on the basis of Enrolment rate.
3. To study the status of girls' education in South Asia on the basis of Literacy Rate.
4. To identify the Flagship Programs related to women education in South Asian countries.
5. To study and analyze the Flagship Programs related to women education in South Asia on the basis of:
 - Funding
 - Policy strength
 - Goal achievement

Assumptions of the study

The education of girls has been an issue of concern in almost all countries of the world; the issue takes a serious shape especially in the South Asian context, which needs urgent remediation. Thus, it will be meaningful to ascertain the Status of girls' education in South Asia concerning enrolment rate, dropout, retention and literacy rate. Further, each country in South Asia has also evolved a policy framework to improve the status of girls' education with their own strengths and weaknesses. Such policies and related flagship Programs for development of women education would provide a meaningful policy analysis for mutual learning and enrichment in context of South Asian countries.

Research Design

The present study is an expository and analytical research in its nature. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, document analysis under qualitative research methods were employed.

Frame of study

The frame of the study constitutes primary and secondary data sources related to primary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education of women in selected

South Asian countries i.e. India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka of South Asian countries. Among the South Asian countries Afghanistan, Bhutan and Maldives have been left due to their distinct and specific geographical, social and cultural characteristics.

5.2. Major Findings of the Study

This section presents a summary of the findings derived after analysis of documents. The major findings of the study are as follows:

5.2.1. Findings related to objective 1

Enrolment Rate at Primary Level: The time period for the study was 2015-16 as data with respect to all South Asian countries was available up to this time frame. Some current data officially was also available and is quoted wherever applicable.

- In case of the country India, gross enrolment rate (GER) and the net enrolment rate (NER) of the girls was higher than that of the boys during the period of the study seen in figure 5.1 and 5.2.
- In case of Pakistan found that the GER and NER of girls was lower than that of the boys during 2015-16 seen in figure 5.1 and 5.2.
- In case of Sri Lanka found that the GER and NER of the girls was less than that of the boys seen in figure 5.1 and 5.2.
- In case of Nepal found that the GER of the girls was higher than that of the boys, but NER of the girls was lower than that of the boys seen in figure 5.1 and 5.2.
- In the case of Bangladesh, it found that both the GER and NER of the girls was higher than that of the boys seen in figure 5.1 and 5.2.

Figure No - 5.1

Gender wise Distribution of GER at Primary Level in 2015-16 in South Asian Countries

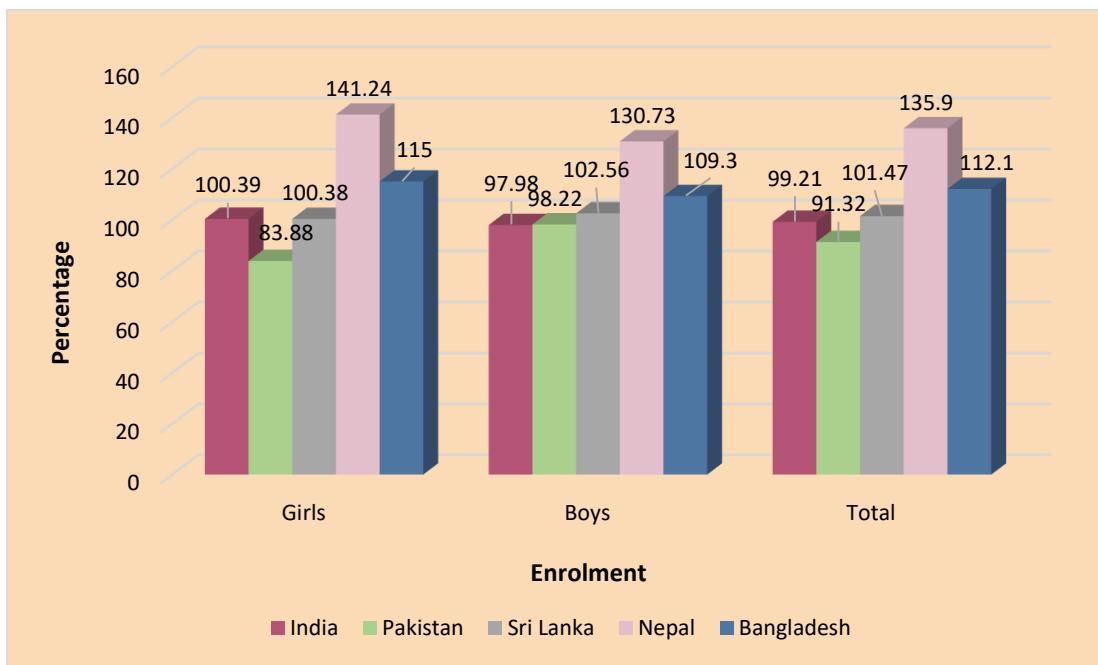
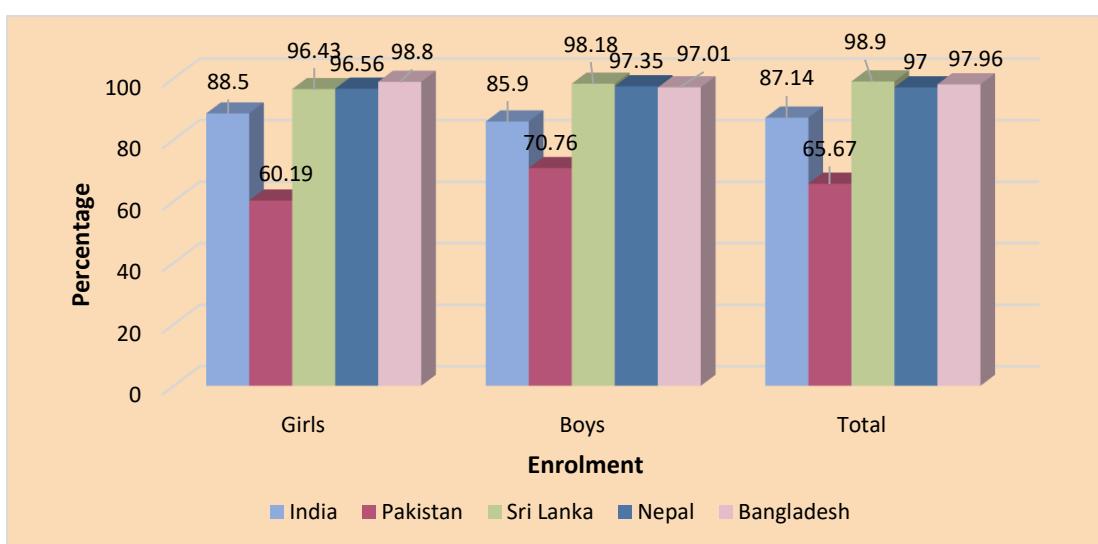


Figure No - 5.2

Gender wise Distribution of NER at Primary Level in 2015-16 in South Asian Countries



- Overall, the findings related to data available reveal that in most South Asian Countries the GER of girls have been higher than boys leaving the case of

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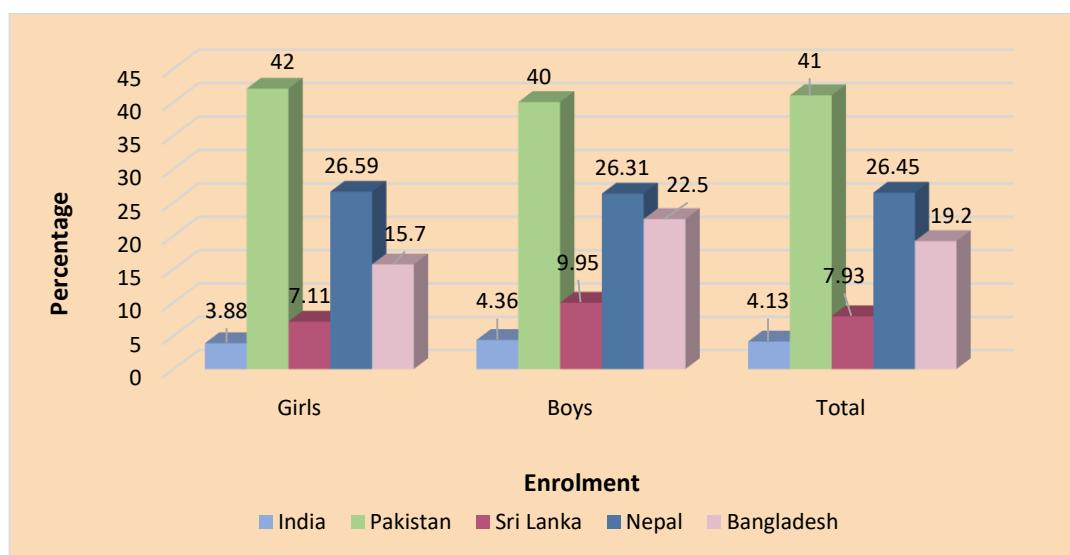
Pakistan and Sri Lanka. While NER of girls in most of South Asian Countries have been lower than boys leaving the case of India and Bangladesh. The poorest scenario was observed in Pakistan whereas the trend in GER in Nepal was healthiest further, the trend in NER in Sri Lanka was healthiest.

Dropout Rate at Primary Level

- In case of the country India found that the dropout rate of girls was less than that of the boys at primary level of education seen at figure 5.3.
- In case of Pakistan, it found that the dropout rate of girls was more in comparison to the boys seen at figure 5.3.
- In the case of Sri Lanka, it found that the dropout rate of girls was less than that of the boys.
- In case of Nepal, the dropout rate of girls was higher than that of the boys seen at figure 5.3.
- In the case of Bangladesh, the dropout rate of girls was less than that of the boys seen at figure 5.3.

Figure No - 5.3

Dropout Rate at Primary Level in 2015-16 in South Asian Countries



- Overall, the findings related to data available reveal that in most South Asian Countries the dropout rate of girls has been lower than boys leaving the case of

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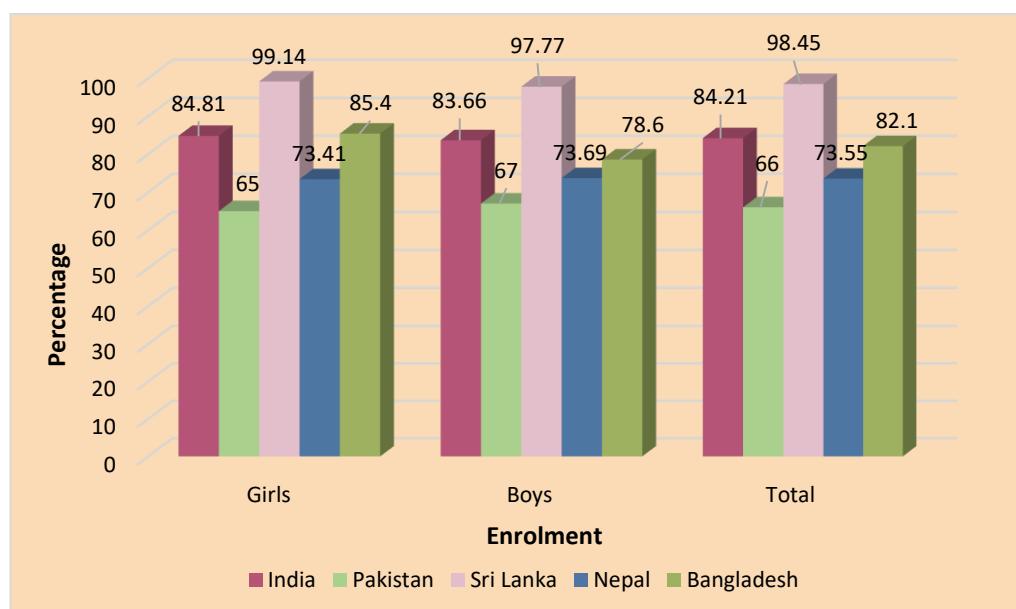
Pakistan and Nepal. The poorest scenario was observed in Pakistan whereas the trend in dropout rate in India was healthiest.

Retention/Survival Rate at Primary Level

- In case of the country India, the retention rate of girls was higher than the boys' up to primary education level seen at figure 5.4.
- In case of Pakistan found that the retention rate of girls was less than that of the boys in 2015-16, but in 2017 the retention rate of girls and boys was almost equal.
- In the case of Sri Lanka found that the retention rate of girls was better than that of the boys seen at figure 5.4.
- In the case of Nepal, it found that the retention/survival rate of girls was marginally lower than that of the boys seen at figure 5.4.
- In case of Bangladesh found that the retention rate of girls was higher in comparison to the boys at primary level of education.

Figure No - 5.4

Retention Rate at Primary Level in 2015-16 in South Asian Countries



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- In the context of Retention rate of girls at primary level a reverse though healthy trend was observed in most South Asian Countries. It has been observed that the poorest scenario was in Pakistan whereas the trend in retention or survival rate in Sri Lanka was healthiest.

Enrolment Rate at Secondary Level

- In case of India, it found that the GER and NER of the girls was higher than that of the boys at secondary level of education seen at figure 5.5 and 5.6.
- In case of Pakistan found that the GER and NER of the girls was less in comparison to the boys seen in figure 5.5 and 5.6.
- In case of Sri Lanka found that the GER and NER of the girls was higher than the boys.
- In case of Nepal found that the GER and NER of the girls was higher than that of the boys.
- In case of Bangladesh, the GER and NER of the girls was higher than that of the boys at secondary level during the period of the study seen at figure 5.5 and 5.6.

Figure No - 5.5

Gender wise Distribution of GER at Secondary Level in 2015-16 in South Asian Countries

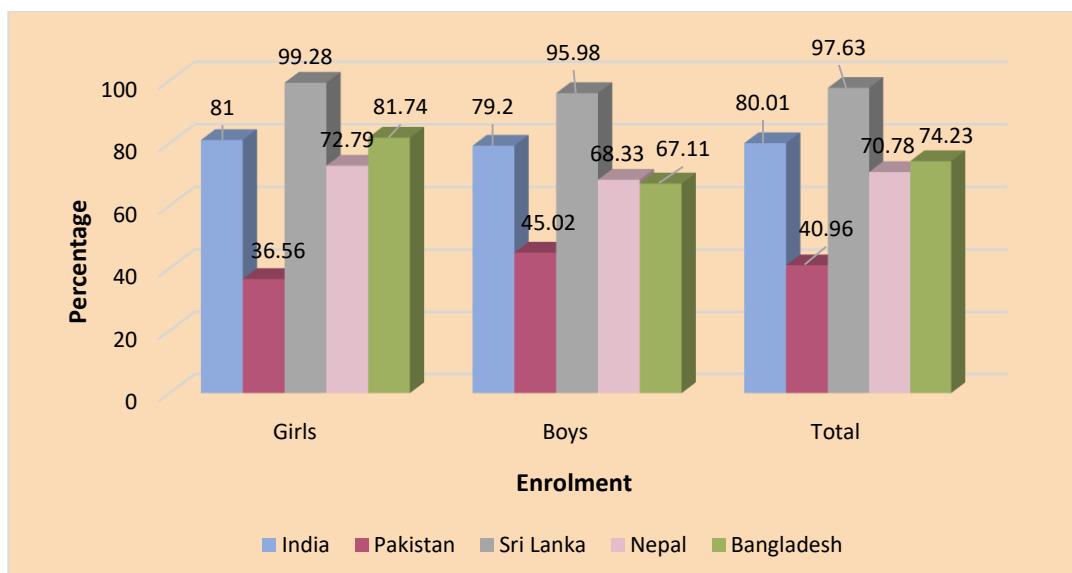
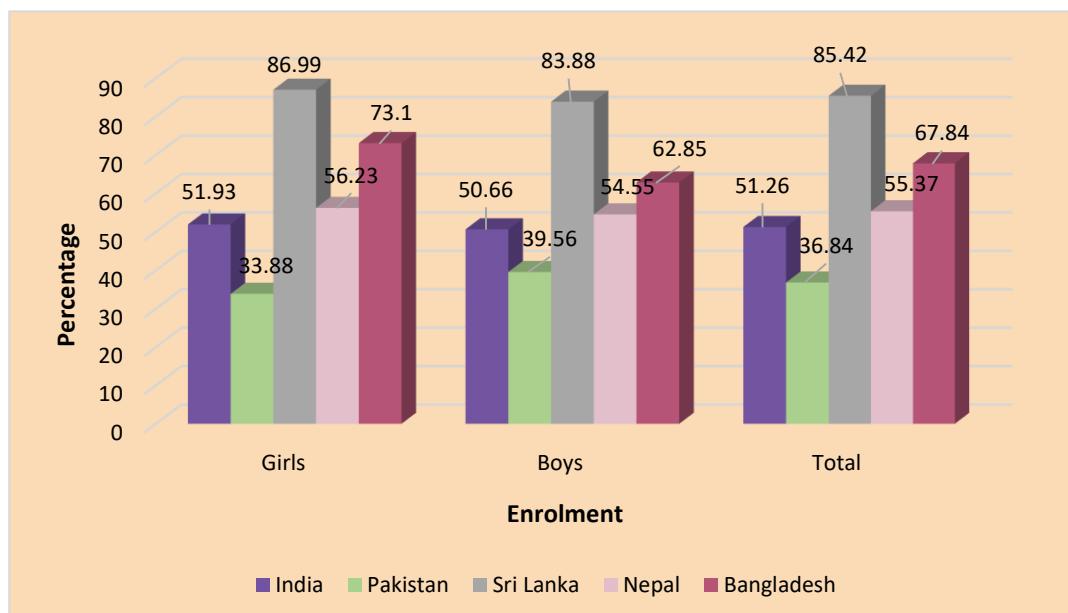


Figure No - 5.6

Gender wise Distribution of NER at Secondary Level in 2015-16 in South Asian Countries



- Overall, the findings related to data available reveal that in most South Asian Countries the GER and NER of girls have been higher than boys leaving the case of Pakistan. The poorest scenario was observed in Pakistan whereas the trend in GER and NER in Sri Lanka was healthiest.

Dropout Rate at Secondary Level

- In the case of India, it found that the dropout rate of girls was marginally less in comparison to boys.
- Researcher did not come across the data related to dropout at secondary education level during the period of the study in case of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.
- In the case of Bangladesh, it found that the dropout rate of girls was higher in comparison to that of boys.
- Overall, the findings related to data available reveal that the dropout rate of girls has been lower than boys in case of India and higher than boys in case of Bangladesh. Whereas researcher did not come across the dropout rate of other sampled South Asian countries.

Retention/Survival Rate at Secondary Level

- In the case of India, the retention rate of girls was marginally lower than that of boys.
- Researcher did not come across the data related to the retention or survival rate during the period of the study in case of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.
- In the case of Bangladesh, it found that the retention rate of girls was marginally less than that of boys.
- In context of Retention rate of girls at secondary level, it has been observed that the poorest scenario was observed in India and Bangladesh, whereas researcher did not come across the other sampled South Asian countries.

Enrolment Rate at Higher/Upper Secondary Level

- In case of India at higher secondary level, net enrolment rate of girls was less than that of boys but gross enrollment rate was higher than boys.
- In case of Pakistan, it found that the enrolment of girls was less than the boys.
- In case of Sri Lanka found that the GER of girls at higher secondary level was higher than the boys.
- In the case of Nepal, the GER and NER of the girls was higher than the boys.
- In the case of Bangladesh, it found that the GER and NER of the girls was marginally lower than the GER and NER of boys.
- Overall, the findings related to data available reveal that in most South Asian Countries the enrollment rate of girls has been lower than the boys leaving the case of Sri Lanka and Nepal. The poorest scenario was observed in Pakistan, whereas the trend in enrollment was healthiest in Sri Lanka.

Dropout Rate at Higher Secondary Level

- In the case of India, it found that the dropout rate of girls was less than that of boys.
- Researcher did not come across the data related to dropout at higher secondary education level during the period of the study in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.
- In case of Bangladesh found that the dropout rate of the girls was higher than that of the boys.
- Overall, the findings related to data available reveal that the dropout rate of girls has been lower than boys in case of India and higher than boys in case of Bangladesh. Whereas researcher did not come across the dropout rate of other sampled South Asian countries.

Retention/Survival Rate at Higher Secondary Level

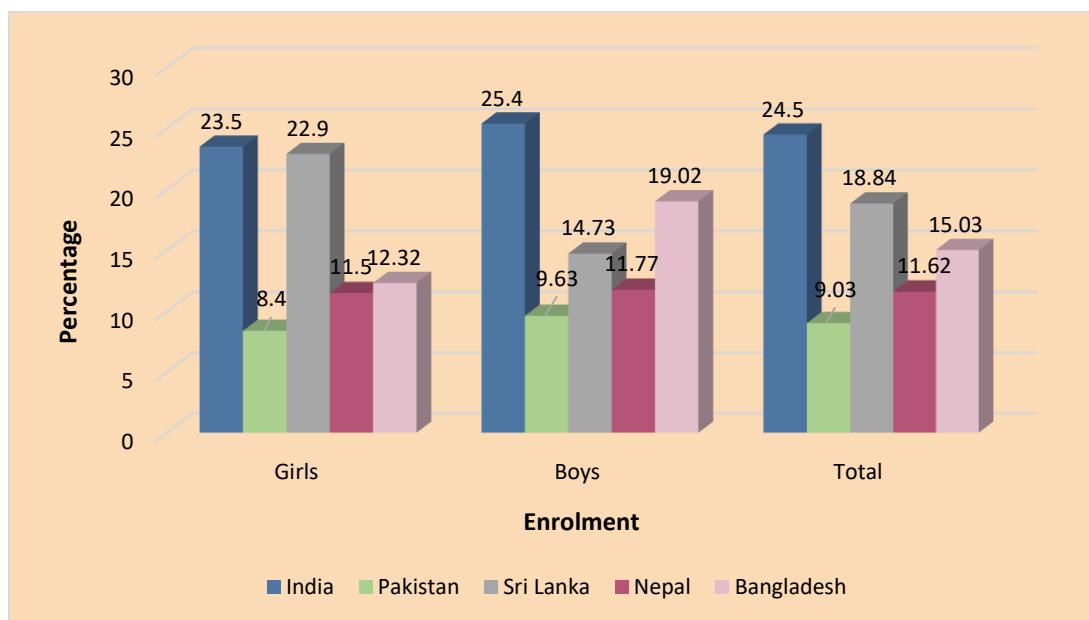
- Researcher did not come across the data related to retention or survival rate at Higher Secondary Education level in South Asian countries that are in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh.

5.2.2. Findings related to objective 2

- In case of India, it found that at Higher Education level GER of women was less in comparison to men see figure 5.7.
- In case of Pakistan found that the gross enrollment rate of women was less than men during 2015-16 see figure 5.7.
- In case of Sri Lanka found that the gross enrollment rate of women was higher than that of men see figure 5.7.
- In the case of Nepal, it found that the gross enrollment rate of women in 2015-16 was lower than men, but in 2017 and 2018 the GER of women was higher than that of men.
- In the case of Bangladesh the gross enrollment rate of women was less than that of men.

Figure No - 5.7

Gender wise Distribution of GER at Higher Education Level in 2015-16 in South Asian Countries



- The Scenario of higher education was mostly unhealthy as the enrolment rate of women in Higher Education in all South Asian Countries was not above 25%. Where 25% enrolment was only found in India in other South Asian Countries it was not even above 15% except Sri Lanka. Thus, a dismal scenario exists in the context of Higher Education with respect to enrolment of women. Overall, the findings related to data available reveal that in most South Asian Countries the gross enrollment rate of women has been lower than men leaving the case of Sri Lanka. The poorest scenario was observed in Pakistan whereas the trend in GER in India was healthiest.

5.2.3. Findings related to objective 3

- In the case of India, it found that the literacy rate of girls and women was less than that of boys and men at all the different age groups.
- In the case of Pakistan, it found that the literacy rate of girls and women was less than that of boys and men at all the different age groups.

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- In the case of Sri Lanka, the youth literacy rate of women was higher than men, but the adult and elder literacy rate was lower than that of men.
- In the case of Nepal, it found that women were far behind that of men in literacy rate for all the different age groups.
- In the case of Bangladesh, the youth literacy rate of women was better than that of men, but the adult and elder literacy rate of women was lower than men.
- In context of literacy figures in South Asian perspectives a universal trend was observed that in all South Asian Countries the literacy rate of women has been lower than men. These gaps were wider in case of Pakistan and Nepal.

5.2.3. Findings related to objective 4

Country	Name of Programme	Programme Scope
India	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)- Launched in 2001 <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Providing elementary education to all children (6–14)➤ Disparity reduction among focus groups in education➤ Bridge all gender and social gaps at primary stage (1-5) by 2007 and at elementary level (1-8) by 2010➤ Universal retention by 2010	Primary Education
	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)- Launched in March, 2009 <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Raise the minimum level of education to class X and universalize access to secondary education➤ Ensure good-quality secondary education➤ Reducing the gender, social and regional gaps in enrolments, dropouts and	Secondary Education

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving retention ➤ Improving quality of secondary education resulting in enhanced intellectual, social and cultural learning 	
Pakistan	<p>Education Sector Reform (ESR)- Launched in 2001</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improvement of literacy rate ➤ Universalization of primary education ➤ Improvement in the quality of education through better teachers, reformed curriculum, and efficient examination system ➤ Introducing a third stream of gender and area-specific technical vocational education in tehsil and district levels ➤ Empowerment of district education authorities ➤ Promotion of public-private partnerships 	Literacy, general education and quality of education
Sri Lanka	<p>Education Sector Development Framework and Programme-II (ESDFP-II)- Introduced in 2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Equity in access to education ➤ Improvement in the quality of education ➤ Efficient and equitable resource allocation ➤ Strengthening governance and delivery services 	Primary and secondary education
Nepal	<p>Basic and Primary Education Programme- II (BPEP-II)- Launched in July 1999</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improving the quality of basic and primary education in order to enhance learning achievements ➤ Increasing the Equitable Access to Education for all 	Primary and basic education

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	<p>(especially girls and marginalized groups)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Management Strengthening in Education ➤ Improving the systemic efficiency ➤ Raising the percentage of female primary school teachers 	
	<p>School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP)- Introduced in 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure equitable access of quality basic and secondary education ➤ Enhance literacy and competencies among the youth and adults ➤ Equip secondary level students with soft skills based technical and vocational education ➤ Enhance teacher qualifications and professional competencies to facilitate student learning 	Basic and Secondary education
Bangladesh	<p>Third Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-III)- Introduced in 2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve the quality of primary education and make accessible for all children ➤ Increase enrolment, attendance and the rate of completion of the primary education cycle ➤ Strengthening and building the capacity of the school management system at all levels ➤ Ensure accountability and transparency at all levels ➤ Increase effectiveness of budget allocation for primary education 	Primary Education Sector excluding NFE (Non-Formal Education)

	<p>Female Secondary School Stipend Program (FSSP)- Launched in January 1994</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Increase girls' enrolment and retain them in secondary education➤ Enhance women's capabilities to participate in the socio-economic development➤ Discourage the female from marrying early➤ Reducing the gender gap	Secondary education
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5.2.4. Findings related to objective 5

Funding in South Asian countries

- In India, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a major flagship program for Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE): It provides financial assistance to the entire country for managing elementary education. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme is largely funded by the government of India, but apart from this the World Bank, Department of International Development and the European Community (EC) also contribute to it. In 2016-17 under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan 22,500 crore was allocated to education by the government of India, of which 21,678 crore was released. Similarly in 2015-16, 22015.42 crore was allocated by Government of India and 21666.51 crore was released. Under the SSA, additional funds given to out of school children and also to improve the quality of school. Nowadays financing of SSA has been made more sustainable.
- Another flagship program for monitoring growth of Secondary education is Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). In terms of financial aspects of RMSA, the funding pattern was 75:25 in respect of general states. Out of budget provision of Rs. 3565 crore, an amount of Rs. 2966.72 crore has been released to 36 States for construction of new school buildings, Girls Hostels and existing secondary schools for strengthening/improvement of existing infrastructure, various recurring interventions such as school annual grant, minor repair grant, in-

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service training of teachers, salary of teachers and staff, learning enhancement programme, equity & ICT interventions, vocational courses etc., during 2015-16. External funding agencies such as the World Bank, Development for International Development (DFID) and European Union also extended their support to the RMSA program.

- The Education Sector Reform (ESR) is a comprehensive sector-wide flagship program of Pakistan introduced in 2001 with the objective of enhancing equity and improved quality at all levels of education. In terms of financial aspects of ESR, it found that compared to other South Asian countries the percentage of funding is very low and insufficient to achieve the national targets, so the provision of adequate financial resources for the education sector can facilitate achieving both quantitative and qualitative education goals.
- The Education Sector Development Framework and Programme-II (ESDFP-II) is a flagship programme of Sri Lanka introduced in 2012 to 2016 with the aim of establishing a viable primary and secondary school network to provide high quality education for children and also focused on the total personality development of children. ESDFP-II was funded by an international development partner such as the Government of Sri Lanka's consolidated fund and World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNICEF. The funding of the program was linked to performance. Performance was assessed according to two types of criteria: (a) Overall performance of the ESDFP, and (b) the individual performance of the different education agencies at the national and the Provincial Education Ministries.
- The Basic Primary Education Programme-II (BPEP-II) is a flagship programme of Nepal launched in 1999. In terms of financial aspects, during the eighth five year plan, 13.23% of the total government expenditure and 2.6% of GDP were spent for education. Budget for education was about 55% for the basic and primary sector. Nearly all program funding for primary education was through BPEP. In 2015-16 basic education expenditure attained 54.10 percent.

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- Another flagship programme of Nepal is a seven-year the School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP) running from 2009 to 2016 that covers the entire education sector (grades 1-12). In terms of financial aspects, SSRP of Nepal was funded by both the Government of Nepal as well as from a pool of eight Development Partners (DPs) and four non-pooling donors. Each year more than 80% of the government budget was used for school education.
- The third Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-III) is a flagship programme of Bangladesh government for 2011-2016 (extended up to 2017) with the objective to establish an efficient, inclusive and equitable primary education system and relevant child-friendly learning to all Bangladesh's children from pre-primary through Grade-V. In terms of financial aspects the original PEDP-III, the total program cost has been increased due to the extension of program period for one more year.
- Another flagship program of Bangladesh is Female Secondary School Stipend Program (FSSP) was launched at secondary level from January, 1994 for increasing participation, retention of girls in secondary education and enhancing their socio-economic status through expansion of their access to education. In terms of financial aspects, the Government of Bangladesh contributed to the Stipend component. The total amount allocated for stipend and tuition found that the government's strong commitment to increasing girls' access to secondary education.

Policy strength in South Asian countries

As per the policy document available and goal achievement of different schemes and policies, policy strength has been identified which are given below with respect to each sampled South Asian Countries:

- In Context of India Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has proved to be a very successful program for Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). There have been many provisions of policy and its proper implementation which contributed to the success of SSA. Timely release of funds under SSA in India,

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due to direct transfer of funds from central government to state proper implementation was observed. At the state level an empowered executive committee was also looking after supervising and monitoring all aspects of SSA. Further, SSA allowed greater financial powers to project functionaries and created space for decision making and professional autonomy. Engagement of contractual employees helped in the program. Availability of adequate resources, better monitoring and accountability, closed rapport with MHRD etc., enabled proper implementation of the program. Moreover, Policy strength under RMSA of India are important physical facilities, improvement in quality through additional teacher appointment, In-service teacher training, ICT enabled education etc.

- Under the Education Sector Reform (ESR) program of Pakistan, outcomes influenced by the project in a period of 3 years, there have been impressive increases in public sector enrollment and progress in moving towards gender parity. Though the program could not gain much momentum but its redressal of gender issues was a very important factor. At the same time funds to different sectors were allotted for holistic growth to all levels of education.
- Education Sector Development Framework and Programme-II (ESDFP-II) of Sri Lanka increased equitable access and improved the quality of primary and secondary education, also strengthened governance and service delivery of education. In the case of these programs effective governance was one important factor for the success of the program. The roles and responsibilities of all governing channels were identified so that structure of accountability may be maintained.
- The Basic Primary Education Programme-II (BPEP-II) of Nepal provides educational opportunities for socially disadvantaged groups and girls. Raising the female primary school teachers, timely providing textbooks, strengthening the capacity of national and district levels to design and efficiently deliver quality education. It avoided expenditures on programs with unproven benefits, all such contributed to schemes of BPEP-II. Moreover, the School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP) of Nepal introduced new reforms characterized by strategic

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interventions such as the improvement in quality of education and restructuring of school education. The girls' scholarship scheme is the most significant contribution to reduce the dropout of girls from school. A comprehensive National Framework for capacity development was also prepared during the SSRP period for implementing a nation-wide capacity development program in the education sector.

- Third Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-III) of Bangladesh covered the entire primary sub-sector. Non-government organizations also played a significant role and represented committees and working groups. Moreover, Female Secondary School Stipend Program (FSSP) of Bangladesh provides free tuition and stipends to all eligible female Secondary School Students, which brought quality improvement in Bangladesh.

Goal achievement in South Asian countries

- In the case of India, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) contributed to substantial achievements in universalizing access and enrolments especially among unreached children. Through this programme gender disparity is eliminated at primary level of education. Opening of several new schools, drinking water facilities and separate toilets for girls are the achievements under the provisions of the SSA programme. Moreover, under RMSA in India, new secondary schools were approved, in which some new schools have become functional, several additional classrooms and drinking water facilities were also approved in which some have been completed and some others are in progress.
- In case of Pakistan under Education Sector Reform (ESR) program, additional classroom, boundary walls and toilet facilities provided to schools. But the achievement for girls' education still remains problematic in Pakistan due to several reasons.
- Education Sector Development Framework and Programme (ESDFP) of Sri Lanka has achieved Universal primary education. At secondary level of education retention of girls was better than that of boys in 2016, which created a significant

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gender gap at secondary education level. The transition rate from primary to lower secondary was almost 100% till 2015. Also, the network of secondary schools has expanded to 5 kilometer distance from every child's homes.

- Under Basic Primary Education Programme-II (BPEP-II) of Nepal, improving access to basic and primary education for all especially for girls and excluded marginalized groups. The programme improves the quality of education in order to enhance learning achievements and also develop capacity in a relatively short time period. Moreover, in the School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP) of Nepal, the net intake rate in primary schools has increased. Awareness about the importance of education has also increased, which in turn has increased overall expectations on the public education system to provide this.
- Under Third Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-III), Bangladesh has made impressive progress in ensuring equitable access to education. Gender parity has been achieved in both primary and secondary education. Key achievements include the introduction of a competency-based curriculum at the primary level, timely delivery of textbooks. The growth of girls enrolment seems through social mobilization and incentives provided by the government especially for rural areas. Moreover, during the Female Secondary School Stipend Program (FSSP) of Bangladesh, increased enrolment of girls at secondary level, as a result the gap between girls and boys enrolment was virtually eliminated. Increased enrolment of girls at secondary education level has put a huge strain on the secondary education infrastructure, making it a victim of its own success.

5.3. Conclusions of the Study

On the basis of the findings of the study following conclusion have been drawn:

- In South Asian countries Nepal has the highest total GER (gross enrolment rate), similarly Nepal also maintaining the highest GER in case of girls followed by Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka. Pakistan has the lowest total GER as well as lowest GER of girls. Therefore, the status of girls' education on the basis of

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enrolment at primary education level is poorest in Pakistan, whereas it is fair in Nepal in comparison to other South Asian countries.

- At primary education level, Pakistan has the highest total dropout rate as well as dropout rate for girls than boys. Whereas girls in Nepal have the second highest dropout rate after Pakistan followed by Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. While India has the least total dropout rate as well as for girls dropout rate among other South Asian countries.
- The retention or survival rate of girls' at primary level was highest in Sri Lanka followed by Bangladesh, India and Nepal whereas lowest retention of girls at primary level was in Pakistan. Thus, it concluded that girls' status of education at primary level was better in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India followed by Nepal and Pakistan in South Asian perspective.
- At secondary level of education GER of girls' was highest in Sri Lanka followed by Bangladesh, India and Nepal. Pakistan once again has the lowest girls' GER at secondary school level. Also compared to boys' enrollment of girls at secondary level was less in Pakistan whereas in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh girls' enrollment was better than boys.
- The total dropout rate was highest in Pakistan, whereas dropout rate of girls at secondary level was higher in Bangladesh compared to India.
- At Higher Secondary Level girls' enrollment was highest in Sri Lanka whereas India, Bangladesh and Nepal had less number of enrollment than Sri Lanka. Pakistan has the lowest girls' enrollment rate among other South Asian countries, so the enrollment rates at higher secondary level of girls was found healthiest in Sri Lanka and poorest in case of Pakistan.
- India has the highest total enrollment rate as well as enrollment rate of girls than other South Asian countries at Higher Education level. Whereas compared to boys, enrollment of girls' was better in Sri Lanka than India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. Girls' enrollment at Higher Education level was lowest in Pakistan than other South Asian countries. Thus, the status of girls' education at higher

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education level on the basis of enrolment rate was healthiest in India and Sri Lanka whereas poorest in Pakistan among other sampled South Asian countries.

- Total youth (15-24 years) literacy as well as youth literacy of girls was highest in Sri Lanka followed by Bangladesh, Nepal and India respectively. Whereas Pakistan has the lowest total youth literacy rate as well as girls' youth literacy rate compared to other South Asian countries. Adult literacy of girls' was highest in Sri Lanka and lowest in Nepal among South Asian countries. Total 65+ literacy rate as well as for 65+ girls' literacy was highest in Sri Lanka and lowest in Nepal. Therefore it concluded that the status of girls on the basis of literacy rate was healthiest in Sri Lanka while the poorest scenario exists in Pakistan and Nepal in comparison to other South Asian countries.
- In Pakistan total government expenditure on education is very less while in Sri Lanka is more than the other South Asian countries. Considering the South Asian countries the policy strength are: timely release of funds, physical facilities, teacher appointment, In-service teacher training, ICT enabled education, equitable access, educational opportunity for socially disadvantaged groups and girls, raising the percentage of female primary school teachers, strategic intervention such as the improvement in quality of education and restructuring of school education, emphasis on access of out of school populations, guaranteed the learning of all children by raising efficiency and enhancing effectiveness in the delivery of services, comprehensive national framework for capacity development, non-government organizations, free tuition and stipends to all eligible female secondary school students. The South Asian countries achieved their goal to some extent against the target of achievement. But still a long way off from attaining standards and there is need to improve the quality of education under their flagship programmes in context of all South Asian Countries.

5.4. Educational implications of the study

The present study highlights the schemes and strategies of women education. It is one of the most important aspects for society because women's education has long been recognized as a human right. There is a great problem that the

recommendations and guidelines of the different policies are made but are not implemented on the ground level. In such a context, it is required to analyze the policies formulated for women education. Therefore, the present study analyzes the document which provides conditions of schemes and strategies in South Asia.

The present study determines the need to provide and access to education to women. There are many major problems of women such as poor enrolment, dropout, retention and literacy. The study highlights the education of primary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education level of women, which provides useful data for designing special policies and intervention programs.

The study highlights the flagship programs related to women education in South Asian countries. Thus, it is the major contribution of the study to expose the real scenario regarding scheme and strategies, which is one of the important indicators for the social upliftment and for the formation of equal society. This study assists policymakers to formulate policies and is also helpful to ensure quality education.

5.5. Recommendations of the Study

- The Scenario of girls' education across South Asia has been very unhealthy in terms of parameters of the study. The analysis shows that the budget allocation is not satisfactory in many South Asian countries focusing on girls' education. It has been found that National budgets are not sufficient to provide adequate and quality girls' education under several schemes of government therefore it is recommended that for the development of education in South Asia especially in education of girls, increased allocation of funds for various schemes/programmes be made along with ensuring mechanism for optimum utilization of allocated funds.
- Orientation of educational policies should be made in such a way that it can focus and redress specific problems of girls in different geographical territories of South Asia. The policies should take care of specific needs and requirements of girls in a context specific approach to different countries.

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- Incredibly positive changes in decreasing the gender gap in primary education have occurred in South Asian countries especially in India and Sri Lanka, but the subjugation is that the percentage of girls completing primary education is not equally seen in the secondary level of education in South Asian countries. Therefore, there is need to address the important issue of high dropout rates at secondary level in education.
- Poverty, unawareness of girls and guardians, misapprehension of religion, lack of communication and violence against girls are among the reasons for their lagging behind. Thus, specific policy and practice intervention be designed in each South Asian country to improve girls' education in the region.
- In many cases the overall literacy rate among parents is very poor, thus, such parents lack a positive attitude and a mind set to value the education of girls. Hence, there is need to strengthen parental awareness on this line to value education of girls.
- The conclusions of the present study revealed that in South Asian countries enrollment ratio is quite healthy though retention of girls has been the issue which is not up to the mark. It has appeared that only enrollment of the girls is not sufficient for their upliftment, sincere efforts are needed to ensure their stay to reduce their dropout.
- The understanding regarding the policies of girls education developed during the study reveals that even the basic literacy program and related competencies among the girls are not being developed which needs serious intervention by the government of each South Asian country. Establishment of literacy courses to raise the girls' literacy level is recommended so that basic literacy among the girls may become a universal fact in South Asia.
- India spends a significant amount of money on education, even though the education policies have failed to some extent to achieve its outcomes, more significantly due to the failures of implementation of that particular policies regarding education. It has been a fact, which needs to be remediated for all levels of education. Thus, it is recommended that while allocating the funds for

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education of girls its strict monitoring and proper utilization be ensured which is equally essential aspect of policy formulation.

- While the education policies of India have certainly focused on reducing the inequalities in educational opportunities, it has failed to reduce the inequality in educational attainments, occupational attainments and returns to education. Recently National Education Policy 2020 has been introduced which is a healthy step in this direction. The policy and its future action plan should address these issues so that universal quality education be introduced not only in India but in all South Asian countries.
- According to National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Government of India will constitute a ‘Gender-Inclusion Fund’ to build the nation's capacity to provide equitable quality education for all girls students. The fund will be available to States to implement priorities determined by the Central government critical for assisting female in gaining access to education (such as the provision of sanitation and toilets, conditional cash transfers, etc.); funds will also enable States to support and scale effective community-based interventions that address local context-specific barriers to female and participation in education. This policy aims to eliminate any remaining disparity in access to education for children from any gender or other socio-economically disadvantaged group. The present policy initiative of India will help to boost the status of women education in India; other countries may also follow and formulate a policy focusing on the quality of women education.
- There is acute shortage of teachers across all the levels of education in India. The primary schools need additional teachers to fulfill the RTE norm that is 30:1 of Pupil teacher ratio. The absence of teachers is the biggest threat to ensure quality education in the country. Thus, it is recommended that the government of each country should ensure deployment of a sufficient number of teachers so that proper maintenance of standards can be made.
- In context of most effective policy for ensuring quality elementary education of girls, the education policy of Education Sector Development Framework and

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Programme - II (ESDFP-II) of Sri Lanka was found most effective that it has shown a higher literacy rate, while Pakistan found the poorest sector among other South Asian countries. Pakistan needs to assess the prevailing allocation of the nation's budget to education and make all efforts to increase the share with the average of South Asian countries, as the country has been found poorest in allocation of funds for girls' education.

- The issue that girls are under-achieving in primary education compared with boys needs to be seriously addressed in Bangladesh. This trend has to be addressed by the Bangladesh so that gender discrimination in terms of academic achievement be reduced. Similarly the conclusions of the study suggests that there is an urgent need to sensitize School Management Committees and school administrations on vulnerability of girls in school to make girl-friendly environment in school specifically it was found in case of Nepal.
- Generally, Sri Lanka performed incredibly well in the education sector rather than other South Asian countries, while Pakistan showed poorly in most of the indicators of quality girls' education. India and Bangladesh are gradually progressing towards quality education. Thus, according to relative status each country should try to bridge the gaps in policies and practices so that proper education to girls be ensured.
- Sri Lanka is a small country compared to India and Bangladesh. Investigating Sri Lanka's success could provide important insights for helping other South Asian countries. The country has healthy gender ratio at the same time in quality schooling the position of girls is found very healthy. Thus, it has a scope to exchange the knowledge capital for sustenance of quality schooling of girls in South Asian perspective.
- Effective knowledge management having the potential to capture the deep-rooted problems of discrimination of girls against an equitable participation in education is an issue for all the countries in South Asian region. It may work as an important policy goal for all the south Asian countries to achieve.

- The review of the study area has also revealed that the issue of quality schooling for girls has been an untouched area in educational research in the South Asian perspective. Adequate number of researches are needed to explore the dimensions in totality so that effective intervention may be designed. Thus, it is recommended that through government as well as by individuals' sufficient number of researches be induced on quality schooling of girls and women in South Asian perspective.

5.6. Limitations of the study

Initially the researcher targeted to study the status of women education in South Asia up to the year 2018, but owing to absence of data in many South Asian countries it could not be fulfilled. It was ascertained that data of all parameters with respect to all South Asian countries was available up to 2016. Hence, 2015-16 is kept as base data for drawing conclusions. However, data has been reported of current years wherever available.

The present study is subjected to certain limitations:

1. The time frame for the study was 2015-16 as data with respect to all South Asian countries was available up to this time frame only through valid official sources. In South Asian countries some current data officially was available and is quoted wherever available.
2. The study limited to availability of relevant records and documents, and official records regarding the flagship programme of women education in South Asian countries and also on the data related to GER, NER, dropout, retention and literacy concerning women education in those countries.