



Breakthrough unveils gender curriculum tested in 150 schools, effective in changing biased attitudes

Evaluating 14000 students, J-Pal concludes significant change in discriminatory attitude, if gender sensitization starts early.

New Delhi: Evaluating Breakthrough's unique school based gender sensitisation programme, the first of its kind in India, *Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab* (J-PAL, South Asia) concluded significant shifts in both gender attitudes and behaviour of programme recipients.

The situation for women in India is alarming as the sex ratio (0 to 6 years) in a state like Haryana has plummeted to 830 girls for every 1000 boys, as per the 2011 census. Girls who do enroll in school tend to drop out as they enter adolescence – only 73 girls make it to tertiary school for every 100 boys. To counter this situation, Breakthrough has developed a 3-year gender sensitisation programme for both boys and girls in classes 7-9 (age 12-15 years).

J-Pal conducted a randomised evaluation to assess the impact of this intervention across 314 schools in 4 districts of Haryana (Panipat, Sonapat, Jhajjar, Rohtak). 150 of these schools were randomly selected to receive the Breakthrough programme, while the remaining schools served as a comparison group. The researchers surveyed a massive sample size of approximately 14,000 students from these schools, to evaluate the impact.

The results are extremely encouraging, particularly given the context of the high levels of gender discrimination in Haryana. Overall, the intervention led to a **4-percentage point increase on the gender attitude index**, indicating a significant improvement in gender attitudes. There has also been an increase by **3-percentage point in the gender behaviour index**, indicating more progressive behaviour overall. Interestingly, the behaviour change was far more significant among boys than for girls, giving us a promising tool to work with boys in future.

A heartening result is that the **programme impact on children with highly gender discriminatory parents (bottom 20%), is comparable to the effect of growing up with parents with more progressive gender attitudes.**

A further analysis of the findings reveals that the intervention led to a **7- percentage point increase in attitude towards women's paid employment outside the home.** In the context of Haryana, where women are often not allowed to leave their homes, this is an incredible shift. There is also an increase in **attitude towards female gender roles by 3.6-percentage points**, indicating a questioning of some of the stereotypical roles assigned to women. Further, results suggest an **increase in attitude towards education by 4-percentage points**, implying a greater belief in the need for girls to receive education at levels that are equivalent to boys.



Sohini Bhattacharya, CEO Breakthrough, said “With the JPal evaluation, we now have firm evidence that this gender sensitisation curriculum is effective in changing attitudes and behaviour, even in a state like Haryana that has high gender discrimination. We now want to ensure that this curriculum is introduced in schools across India so that women and girls in our country experience true equality, and a safe, supportive environment. We are petitioning the HRD ministry to ensure that this curriculum is integrated into our education system. We urge people to join us by signing the petition.”

About Breakthrough:

Breakthrough is a human rights organization seeking to make violence and discrimination against women and girls unacceptable. We use the power of arts, media, pop culture, and community mobilization to inspire people to take bold action to build a world in which all people live with dignity, equality, and justice.

We create groundbreaking multimedia campaigns that bring human rights issues into the mainstream and make them relevant and urgent to individuals and communities worldwide. These, along with our in-depth training sessions with young people, government officials, and community members, have inspired a new Breakthrough Generation of leaders to initiate change in the world around them.