

Promotion of Girls' Education: A Literature Review of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) in India and an Empirical Study in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) of Assam

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Abstract

Education is a powerful tool for social change, gender equality and inclusive development. However, girls from marginalised areas across India continue to encounter substantial barriers to schooling. To address this identified gap, the KGBV scheme was created in 2004 as part of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to set up free residential schools for girls at upper-primary level in Educationally Backward Blocks. This paper reviews the current body of literature on the contribution of KGBVs in promoting girls' education with reference to India, Assam (BTR), where ethnic diversity, rural isolation and socio-economic disadvantage either overlap or reinforce one another to increase the possibility of educational exclusion for girls belonging to ST, SC, Other Backward Classes, tea-tribe communities and minority groups. Based on conceptual and experiential investigations, the review describes the ways in which KGBVs contribute in four dimensions – access, academic support, holistic development, and safe and supportive environment – for promoting enrolment, retention and completion of school education of disadvantaged girls. The article further analyses statistics of Board Examination of KGBVs in BTR, from 2021-2026 and compares their performance with all KGBVs of Assam, schools in BTR as a whole, and the state average. The results demonstrate that KGBVs in BTR, have maintained or exceeded the performance of comparison groups, with increasing pass percentage. Besides, number of girls, appeared in the examination also increased in the years. The research concluded that KGBVs have emerged as an effective institutional mechanism for educational inclusion and social empowerment. However, persistent obstacles are still predominant, relating to infrastructure, teacher shortages, digital access and socio-cultural impediments. The study ends with policy recommendations for increasing institutional capacity and sustaining the long-term impact of the initiative towards girls' education nationwide.

Keywords: *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV); Girl Education; Marginalised Communities; Assam; BTR; Gender Equity; Residential Schooling; Educational Empowerment.*

Introduction

Education is commonly recognised as a crucial tool for social change, empowerment and inclusive development. Though there have been significant gains in educational expansion in India, gender

disparity in literacy and school participation still persist, particularly among the girls from marginalised communities, such as Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC),

minority groups, and among the girls from economically weaker sections. Girls' access to quality education is sometimes stalled by social discrimination, poverty, early marriage, child labour, geographical isolation and patriarchal social systems, particularly in rural and educationally backward areas. Similar educational issues are also prevalent in Assam, with its ethnic variety, rural settlements, flood-prone areas and socio-economic inequality, where girls from marginalised communities are still vulnerable to educational exclusion.

In view of the above issues, the Government of India launched the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme in 2004 under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The scheme aimed to establish residential schools for girls at the upper elementary level in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) where the level of female literacy was much lower than that of the national average and the gender gaps in education were high. The main aim of the KGBV Scheme is to give free residential schooling to girls from poor areas so that they can access, retain and complete schooling (Anand & Das, 2017). The scheme targets out of school girls including school dropouts and never enrolled girls and girls from challenging socio-economic backgrounds.

KGBVs are an important intervention for boosting girls' education and gender equity in India. They offer a secured place to stay, free education, uniforms, textbooks, nutrition and a supportive learning environment to contribute in removing barriers that prevent marginalised girls from attending school. Studies have revealed that KGBVs have been crucial in

increasing enrolment, decreasing dropout rates and empowering girls both socially and educationally (Shah, 2011). The residential character of KGBVs is particularly useful for girls in distant tribal and rural areas where access to secondary schools is limited whereas KGBVs provide secure spaces for girls to pursue education without the pressure of domestic responsibilities or social limitations.

The role of KGBVs is quite important in Assam considering the socio-cultural variety and educational gaps among tribal and minority people in the state. Many districts in Assam still have low female literacy rates, poor educational facilities and significant dropout rates of girls. The populations living in char areas, tea garden areas and distant tribal belts are generally marginalised and suffer many challenges such as poverty, transportation issues, language barriers and lack of information on girls' education. KGBVs, here are not just educational institutions but also centres of social empowerment, building confidence, leadership, life skills and aspirations among girls from disadvantaged families. The material available emphasises the transformative significance of KGBVs in increasing educational participation and empowerment of marginalised girls. KGBVs play a crucial role in bridging educational disparities by creating inclusive and enabling learning spaces for marginalised females (Anand and Das, 2017). Similarly, Varalakshmi (2023) underlined the role of KGBVs in mobilising and retaining girls from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, while noting that issues remain with regard to infrastructure, staffing and management.

Studies on education of tribal females also suggest that KGBVs play a role in bridging the gender gap and promoting educational opportunities in socially excluded tribes (Kumar, 2024). Studies on KGBVs in Assam have pointed out their beneficial effects on girls' enrolment and educational management, along with concerns about administration and infrastructural limitations (Gogoi, 2015).

But even with these contributions, there are significant challenges in ensuring the effectiveness of KGBVs in Assam. Many KGBVs continue to face the challenge of inadequate infrastructure, shortage of trained teachers, lack of digital facilities, diversity of languages, socio-cultural obstacles and limited community participation, affecting the quality of education. There is therefore a need to critically investigate the role of KGBVs in promoting girls' education among marginalised populations in Assam and to determine the extent to which these institutions have succeeded in achieving educational inclusion and empowerment.

Theoretical Framework:

The conceptual framework outlines the relationship between Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) and the educational empowerment of girls from marginalised areas in Assam. The concept assumes that socio-economic disadvantages and gender barriers negatively influence girls' educational involvement, and that interventions through KGBV serve to improve the outcomes of educational access, retention, and empowerment.

The framework begins with the background of marginalised populations

in Assam, including Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC), Tea Tribe clans, minority groups, Other Backward Classes (OBC), Below Poverty Line (BPL) households and girls from rural and remote locations. These groups are frequently denied access to education due to poverty, social discrimination, geographical isolation and lack of educational resources, and girls from these communities are more likely to endure irregular schooling, early dropout and low educational attainment.

The second part of the framework outlines the key constraints affecting girls' education, which include poverty and economic hardship, patriarchal social norms, gender discrimination, early marriage, domestic responsibilities, low parental literacy, lengthy journey to school, safety concerns, inadequate infrastructure and social marginalisation. These constraints limit girls' enrolment, attendance and continuation in school education, especially in rural areas of Assam.

The final component addresses KGBV interventions as the key independent variable in the framework. KGBVs are residential schools set up to give free and quality education to girls from impoverished regions. The intervention has four main components, namely access and provision, academic support, holistic development and a safe and supportive environment.

KGBVs under access and provision provide free residential education, hostel accommodations, uniforms, textbooks, nutrition and health care support. These facilities ease the financial strain on poor households and motivate parents to send girls to school. Academic support is

given through frequent teaching–learning activities, remedial classes, bridging courses, monitoring and learning resources that help girls improve to improve academic performance and educational continuity.

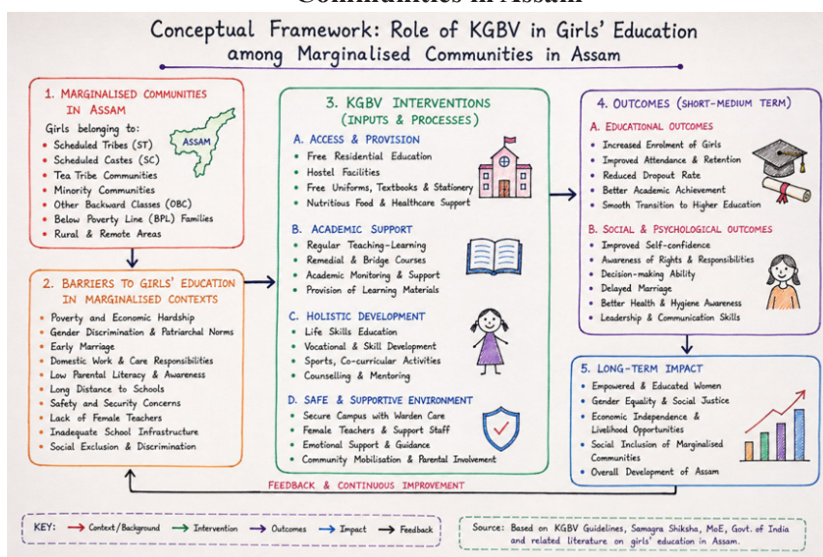
The holistic development component comprises life skills education, vocational training, sports, co-curricular activities, counselling and mentoring that together enhance confidence, communication skills, leadership traits and self-awareness among girls. The framework also stresses the significance of a safe and supportive environment through female teachers, wardens, emotional support, secure campuses and community participation – support structures that promote trust among parents and create a supportive educational climate for females.

The fourth component discusses the educational, social and psychological outcomes of the KGBV scheme. Educational outcomes include increased

enrolment, improved attendance and retention, reduction in dropout, enhanced academic performance and successful progression to higher education. The social and psychological effects are strong self-confidence, a better sense of rights and responsibilities, decision-making capacity, avoiding early marriage, better health awareness and the leadership development.

Finally, the framework refers the long-term impacts such as women empowerment, gender equality, economic independence, social inclusion and community development etc. Educated girls are more likely to contribute to family welfare, societal progress and economic development. Thus, the framework clearly shows that KGBV is an efficient institutional mechanism for promotion of girls' education and empowerment among the marginalised populations in Assam through educational assistance, social protection and holistic development.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework – Role of KGBV in Girls' Education in Marginalised Communities in Assam



The above framework is explained in Figure 1, which links the pathway from the socio-economic environment of marginalised communities and the challenges faced by girls, to the four-dimensional KGBV intervention, to educational and psychosocial outcomes in the short- and medium-term, and to the long-term impact of women's empowerment and community development. The feedback loop at the bottom of the figure represents the iterative, continual nature of institutional reform associated with effective KGBV functioning in the literature.

Review of Related Literature

a) Education of Girls in Assam:

Scholarly interest is growing in the value of girls' education in Assam for social development, gender equality and women's empowerment. The study evaluated the historical evolution, socio-economic impediments, educational participation and government interventions in girls' education in the state.

Hussain (2021) studied the status of women's education in Assam and noted that education is an important tool for social change as well as for women empowerment and found that female literacy plays a significant role in decreasing poverty, unemployment, and social disparity. However, rural girls in Assam are deprived of these opportunities due to poverty, early marriage, and lack of awareness about education.

In a study of the status of women in higher education in Assam, Borgohain (2021) observed that the participation of women has increased significantly in urban areas with the expansion of universities and colleges, but rural and economically

backward girls still lack access to higher education due to financial constraints and social barriers.

Saha (2021) explored the female participation in higher education in Assam with special reference to Gauhati University. He pointed out that though there has been an improvement in the participation of women in higher education over the years, the enrolment in technical and professional courses is comparatively low among girls. He pointed out the urban-rural divide as a major educational challenge.

Dahal (2021) traced the historical development of women's education in colonial Assam and highlighted the role of missionaries, social reformers, and Assamese intellectuals in its development, but at the same time, social conservatism and patriarchal attitudes restricted women's educational opportunities in the early period.

An empirical study by Laskar (2022) in the Hailakandi district of Southern Assam found that household income, parental education, residential location and socio-economic conditions have a significant effect on girls' enrolment and continuation of education with rural girls lagging behind urban girls in educational achievement.

Joshi (2022) studied the problems faced by Bodo women of Assam and the role of education in empowering them. It was found that low female literacy, gender discrimination and limited investment in education were the factors that hindered social progress. It was argued that education has a transformative role in improving the social status, self-confidence and participation in decision-making among women.

Borah (2023) in a sociological study

on the educational status of Muslim women in Golaghat district of Assam, found that socio-economic backwardness, parental illiteracy and conservative social attitudes have a negative effect on the participation of girls in education. She recommended awareness programmes and community-based educational initiatives to increase the female literacy.

Dowarah (2020) examined the role of KGBVs in the Tinsukia district of Assam and found that residential schooling improved educational access and retention among girls from marginalised communities such as tea-garden workers, tribal groups, and economically weaker families, although infrastructural deficiencies and a lack of qualified teachers affected institutional functioning.

b) Education of Girls Belonging to Marginalised Communities:

Nambissan (2000) studied the educational deprivation faced by girls belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other marginalised communities in India. She argued that poverty, caste discrimination and gender biasness act as barriers for girls accessing quality education and claimed that social exclusion and unequal opportunity continue to marginalise girls in rural India.

Govinda (2002) in his study on the educational inequality in India, observed that tribal girls encounter numerous problems such as geographical isolation, non-availability of schools, poor infrastructure and non-availability of female teachers. Socio-cultural practices and economic hardship were also found to be major factors responsible for dropout among the marginalised girls.

Shah (2011) investigated the

KGBV initiative in Gujarat and noted that residential schools give opportunities for empowerment among marginalised girls; she opined that education increases the self-confidence, leadership characteristics and decision-making ability of girls coming from disadvantaged homes.

Anand and Das (2017) evaluated the significance of KGBVs in promoting education of girls among SC, ST, OBC and minority populations and observed that KGBVs have a significant impact on enrolment, retention and educational involvement of girls in educationally backward areas.

Thamminaina, Kanungo and Mohanty (2020) conducted a systematic review on educational experiences of girls belonging to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). The study found that poverty, language problems, lack of female teachers, cultural restrictions and poor infrastructure act as barriers to education. The study highlighted the need for formulating culturally inclusive educational policy, with community participation.

Nayak and Kumar (2022) examined the reasons why some tribal girls continue education while others drop out in rural India, and found that parental support, local-language instruction, female teachers, and economic stability are positively associated with continuation, and early marriage, household work, and poverty are associated with dropout.

Kumar and Kushwaha (2023) investigated the issues related to education among tribal girls and evaluated the success of the KGBV scheme, concluding that residential schools provide a safer environment for education of marginalised girls, improve academic

continuity and provide opportunities for empowerment, but infrastructural gaps and administrative limitations continue to affect implementation.

Tiwari (2025) explored the educational experiences of marginalised girls in rural India through an intersectional lens, demonstrating that caste, class, religion and gender collectively determine girls' sense of belonging in schools. Girls in KGBVs reported feeling more confident and participating more socially, but they still experienced discrimination and exclusion.

c) KGBV and Girls' Education:

In her analysis of the KGBV programme in Gujarat, Shah (2011) pointed to its contribution to girls' empowerment by noting that KGBVs not only provide access to education but also help girls develop self-confidence, leadership qualities and decision-making abilities and that curriculum and pedagogical practices create discursive spaces for empowerment among rural girls.

Roy (2015) studied the effect of the Right to Education (RTE) Act on girl-child education in India and found that KGBVs became an important intervention under the RTE framework by providing educational access for girls from marginalised communities in educationally backward regions, with residential schooling reducing dropout rates and promoting continuation of education.

Gogoi (2015) in a detailed evaluation of curricular and co-curricular activities in KGBVs of Assam found that the KGBVs played a significant role in the educational development of girls from marginalised communities by enhancing academic participation, confidence, and

extracurricular engagement. However, challenges like inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, and absence of proper hostel facilities impacted institutional functioning. Gogoi (2015) in a related study examined the management system of KGBVs in Assam and observed that the effective functioning of institutions was influenced by the coordination among administrators, teachers and community members. The study also brought to light the problems related to financial management, monitoring mechanisms and lack of administrative support.

Shah (2016) further explored the process of translating educational access into social change through KGBVs and identified that KGBVs provide the opportunity for marginalised girls to challenge traditional gender norms and social inequalities and argued that educational empowerment needs to be accompanied by institutional support, culturally relevant practices, and community participation for sustainable impact.

In India, the role of KGBVs in promoting girls' education among marginalised communities was studied by Anand and Das (2017). They found that KGBVs substantially improved enrolment, retention and participation of girls from SC, ST, OBC and minority communities in educationally backward blocks, with the residential schooling model creating a safe and supportive environment for girls who had been previously denied educational opportunities.

Ghosh and Yadav (2020) studied the status of KGBV girls hostel scheme in Assam, under Samagra Shiksha and found that the provision of hostel facilities helped girls from remote and disadvantaged

communities to continue their secondary education by reducing the drop-out rates. It was observed that residential schooling created safer learning environments for girls who otherwise faced socio-economic barriers to education.

Dowarah (2020) studied KGBVs in the Tinsukia district of Upper Assam and found that the scheme improved access to education among girls belonging to economically weaker and socially backward communities and reported increased enrolment and retention rates, especially among girls from tea-garden and tribal communities, however infrastructural inadequacies and lack of educational resources remained major concerns.

Thamminaina, Kanungo, and Mohanty (2020) conducted a systematic review on the education of PVTG girls. They identified that the absence of female teachers, language barriers, poor infrastructure, and social insecurity are factors affecting participation of the girls in education. The authors recommended that KGBVs and residential schooling can be instrumental in overcoming these challenges.

Pooja and Yadav (2023) studied the role of KGBVs in Haryana and found that the scheme played a vital role in skill development, vocational learning and empowerment of girls by imparting life skills, educational opportunities and social awareness among the girls belonging to economically and socially deprived sections.

Kumar and Kushwaha (2023) studied the challenges faced by tribal girls in getting education. They assessed the effectiveness of KGBV scheme and discovered that poverty, geographical isolation, early

marriage and household responsibilities were major hurdles which were tackled by KGBVs through free residential education, hostel facilities and academic support.

Parray and Najar (2023) examined the role of KGBVs in empowering the girls through education. They found that girls studying in KGBVs had better educational achievement, cultural participation and social confidence than girls studying in ordinary government schools. They concluded that KGBVs play a transformative role in empowering the girls of weaker sections in the society.

The role of KGBVs in fostering gender equity among tribal girls in India was assessed by Kumar (2024). In his study, the researcher found that the residential schools enhanced educational participation, literacy and retention rates among tribal girls residing in remote and deprived regions. The study found that KGBVs were significant institutions for reducing gender disparities in tribal education.

d) KGBVs in BTR of Assam: Recent trends

Although several studies have examined the role of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) in improving educational access, retention, and girls' empowerment in India and Assam, there is limited empirical evidence on their academic outcomes in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). The BTR, comprising of 11 Educationally Backward Blocks (13.58% of Assam's total EBBs), was therefore selected as the study area because it represents one of the largest concentrations of KGBVs serving girls from marginalised communities.

The present study adopted a purposive sampling method to select the

Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) of Assam as the study area. The BTR was purposively chosen because it contains 11 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyayas (KGBVs) located in 11 Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) and also due to its ethnically diverse population.

The analysis was based on secondary board examination data (2021–2026) obtained from the official records of the Assam State School Education Board (ASSEB) and records maintained by the concerned KGBVs. Descriptive statistics, including the number of students appearing, number passing and annual pass percentages were used to analyse academic performance. A year-wise comparative analysis was carried out by benchmarking the pass percentages of KGBVs against those of other schools in the BTR and the overall Assam state average. Board examination pass percentage was used as the primary indicator, which is considered as a standardized and comparable measure of academic performance across schools and years.

Unlike earlier studies that primarily focused on educational access and empowerment, the present study benchmarks KGBVs' performance against

other schools in the BTR and the Assam state average. This study addresses the gap of the earlier studies, as reflected in various reviews towards academic performance, by providing the longitudinal quantitative assessment of students from all 11 KGBVs in the BTR using Secondary Board Examination data from 2021 to 2026. The analysis demonstrates the performance of KGBV students both in BTR and the state averages of Assam, in several years. This provides new empirical evidence on the academic performance of KGBVs in an educationally backward region and offers a measurable basis for assessing the educational outcomes of KGBVs among girls from marginalised communities.

However, it does not capture other educational outcomes such as learning gains, dropout, empowerment, self-confidence, or leadership. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of academic performance in board examinations rather than the overall impact of KGBVs.

Table 1: Number of Girls Appeared and Passed in Board Examination under KGBV programme in BTR Area from 2021 to 2026 (Year-wise)

Table 1
Year wise status of Board examination result, KGBV (BTR)

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Appeared	122	177	145	156	184	208
Passed	122	129	129	148	166	192
Pass %	100%	73%	89%	95%	90%	92%

Source: Data collected from KGBV (BTR) Board Examination Records, 2021-2026

The table reveals that the participation of girls in education has been increasing over the period under consideration and their academic achievement has been improving as well. In 2021, all 122 girls who appeared in the Board Examination achieved a 100% pass percentage, which is indicative of a good academic base and institutional assistance in that year. In 2022, the number of girls appearing in the board examination increased to 177, showing a rise in enrolment and participation in secondary education. However, the pass percentage decreased to 73% (129 passing), a decline that could be attributed to issues related to rapid expansion, learning gaps, or academic disruption post-pandemic.

Performance of Girls in KGBVs increased further in 2023 with 145 girls appearing of whom 129 passed, bringing the pass percentage to 89 per cent. This suggests that corrective actions and academic support programmes had become

more successful. In 2024, the results were even better with 156 appearing and 148 passing with a pass rate of 95% as a result of improved educational quality and higher learning outcomes. Highest number of participants so far has been in 2025 with 184 girls appearing and 166 passing. The pass percentage has come down a little to 90 percent but generally the performance has been good. The number of girls appearing peaked at 208 in 2026 – the highest in the six-year span — of which 192 passed, a pass percentage of 92 per cent. In short, the data point to an expansion of educational access and steady academic achievement among females in KGBV BTR schools with pass percentages maintaining high but fluctuating from year to year. In Table 2, the results of KGBV BTR is compared with three institutional groups: all KGBVs in Assam; BTR schools overall; and all schools in Assam over the same six-year period.

Table 2
Consolidation of Board Examination Results, 2021–2026 (Comparative)

Year	KGBV (BTR)	All KGBVs, Assam	BTR Schools (overall)	All Schools, Assam
2021	100%	92%	96%	93.1%
2022	73%	61%	50%	56.5%
2023	89%	87%	74%	72.7%
2024	95%	92%	74%	75.7%
2025	90%	82%	64%	66.1%
2026	92%	86%	71%	65.63%

Source: Records of KGBV and Assam State School Education Board exams, 2021-26.

The comparative data further validate the continuously strong performance of the KGBVs in BTR vis-a-vis all comparison groups. KGBVs in BTR achieved a 100% pass rate in 2021 and outperformed the results of all KGBVs in Assam (92%), the schools in BTR in general (96%) and all schools in Assam as a whole (93.1%). The score of KGBVs in BTR has come down to 73% in 2022 but was still far higher than the other schools in BTR with overall pass rate of 50% and the Assam-wide figure of 56.5%. It reveals that the girls in KGBVs continued to perform better than the general student population even in a challenging year. KGBV (BTR) recorded pass percentage of 89% in 2023, which is slightly above the overall KGBV result of 87% for the state of Assam and much above the other schools in BTR (74%) and state average for schools in Assam (72.7%).

KGBV (BTR) obtained an achievement of 95% girls passed out in 2024, beating all the comparing groups mentioned above, including average result of BTR Schools with only 74%. This trend of outperformance maintained in 2025 and 2026 with KGBV, BTR recording pass rates of 90% and 92% respectively, both consistently higher than the results for other schools in BTR as a whole and state average in the schools of Assam. The six-year trend shows that the specialised educational policies, residential facilities, academic assistance and social support offered through the KGBV model, result in far better examination performance of the marginalised girls than in normal school situations.

Results

The evaluation of literature and analysis of board examination results seem to suggest that KGBVs have played an important role in boosting girls' education amongst marginalised populations in Assam, notably in the BTR region. The project has proved to be a significant educational intervention for girls belonging to Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, minority communities, tea-tribe populations, economically poorer households and rural backward regions.

One of the major conclusions is that KGBVs have significantly enhanced access and engagement in schooling of marginalised girls. The residential nature of the schools has helped overcome barriers such as poverty, distance from schools, safety concerns, domestic responsibilities and social restrictions. The provision of free education, hostel facilities, textbooks, uniforms, nutrition and healthcare support has encouraged parents from disadvantaged communities to send their daughters to school.

Board examination data from the schools in BTR shows that the participation of girls has been consistently increasing over the years. The number of girls appearing in board examinations, increasing from 122 in 2021 to 208 in 2026 – indicates better enrolment, retention and continuation in school. While the pass rates varied, the overall academic performance has been seen strong, ranging from 73% to 100%, demonstrating that KGBVs are not only enhancing access to education but also providing the quality of learning with

remarkable results.

The second major finding was that KGBV students in BTR consistently performed at or above the level of the other schools in BTR as a whole and often outperformed the average result across Assam. Take the example of KGBV BTR, which in 2024 recorded a pass percentage of 95 per cent as compared to 74 per cent in other schools in BTR and 75.7 per cent for the Assam state average. This illustrates how focused residential education initiatives for marginalised girls have succeeded.

These results may be viewed in the context of earlier studies on girls' education in Assam. Hussain (2021), Borgohain (2021), Saha (2021), Dahal (2021), Laskar (2022), Joshi (2022), and Borah (2023) collectively observed that girls' education in Assam has been expanded over the years, but continues to face challenges arising from poverty, gender discrimination, early marriage, parental illiteracy, socio-economic disadvantage, and the rural–urban divide. These studies suggest that such barriers continue to influence educational participation and progression, particularly among girls from disadvantaged communities.

The encouraging board examination performance observed in the present study is consistent with previous researches, highlighting the contribution of KGBVs to girls' education in Assam. Dowarah (2020) reported that KGBVs improved educational access and retention among girls from tea-garden, tribal, and economically weaker communities, although infrastructural and staffing challenges remained.

Despite these well-documented challenges, the board examination results of the 11 KGBVs in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) displays an encouraging picture. Located in educationally backward blocks and catering primarily the girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, these schools recorded consistently high pass percentages ranging from 73% to 100% during the study period. In several years, the KGBVs also achieved pass percentages comparable to or higher than those of other schools in BTR and the Assam state average. While the present study does not establish the reasons for this performance, the findings demonstrate that girls enrolled in these KGBVs have achieved strong academic outcomes in board examinations despite the broader educational challenges identified in the literature.

The literature also stresses the significant role of KGBVs in the social and psychological empowerment of girls. The girls studying in the KGBVs develop self-confidence, leadership skills, decision making ability and awareness on health, hygiene and social rights. The schools create a supportive and safe learning environment so that girls continue to study and aim for higher studies and better livelihood.

The assessment also reveals some continuing problems that hinder the successful operation of KGBVs in Assam. Some institutions still face infrastructural challenges, lack of skilled teachers, lack of digital facilities, language difference, limitation in skill education and administrative problems.

While the present study provides

valuable evidence on the board examination performance of KGBVs in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), it is limited to academic outcomes measured through pass percentages, access, enrolment and empowerment. It also does not examine other important dimensions such as school infrastructure, residential and learning facilities, teacher availability, digital resources, progression to higher education, or psychosocial outcomes including self-confidence, leadership and life skills. Future research should address these gaps by adopting a more comprehensive approach to provide a holistic assessment of the educational outcomes of girls from marginalised communities studying in KGBVs.

Overall, the findings indicate that KGBVs have emerged as transformative institutions in the promotion of educational inclusion, gender equity and empowerment of marginalised girls in Assam including the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

Conclusions and Policy Implications

The analysis concludes that Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas have been a major contributor in promoting girls' education among the marginalised populations in Assam, especially in the BTR. The scheme has successfully addressed many of the socio-economic and gender barriers that traditionally prevented girls from accessing education. KGBVs have significantly improved enrolment, retention, participation and academic achievement among disadvantaged girls by providing free residential schooling,

academic support and a safe and secure educational environment.

Students of KGBVs have shown greater performance in the Board Examinations, compared to numerous general schools in BTR and Assam as a whole. Constant increase in number of girls appearing for Board Examinations along with the consistently high pass percentage indicates that KGBVs are playing an important role in ensuring educational continuity and reducing dropout rates, and thereby established to be an important instrument for educational inclusion and social empowerment of girls from marginalised communities.

The KGBVs not only enhance the academic performance of girls but also bring self-confidence, leadership qualities, Social awareness and life skills among the adolescent girls, leading to their empowerment and gender equality in Assam, in the long run. Educated girls are more likely to take part in decision making, restrict early marriage, help in the welfare of the family and contribute towards community development, signifying that KGBVs are playing a transformative role in advancing education and social change among disadvantaged communities.

But there are certain problems of structure and administration. Some KGBVs still have problems of poor infrastructure, inadequate faculty, restricted facilities for use of technology, poor vocational training and socio-cultural barriers which influence the overall quality of education. It is consequently vital to improve institutional support and policy execution for sustainable

success in education.

Recommendations for Policy

Infrastructure

Government authorities should improve facilities in KGBV dormitories and classrooms including sanitation, electricity, libraries and digital learning resources, particularly in remote and tribal areas.

Recruitment of Qualified Instructors:

To increase the quality of teaching and establish a conducive learning environment for girls, trained and specialised female instructors in relevant subjects should be appointed.

Digital and Skill-Based Education:

Introduction of computer education, digital literacy, vocational training and career guidance programmes in KGBVs should be made to equip girls for further education and employment prospects.

Development:

Community Awareness Programmes:

Awareness programmes should be launched to motivate parents and communities to promote girls' education and to curb practices such as early marriage and gender discrimination.

Strengthening Monitoring and

Administration: Institutional functionaries should regularly monitor, maintain transparent financial management and community participation.

To conclude, KGBVs have proved to be a beneficial educational intervention for the marginalised girls of Assam. With continued government support, infrastructure enhancement and inclusive educational techniques, these institutions may further enhance girls' empowerment, eliminate educational disparity and contribute considerably to social and economic growth in the region.

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