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# Jharkhand: Backward Gumla block has female literacy rate higher than national average

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CHAINPUR (GUMLA): Gumla, which has 12 blocks, is among the aspirational districts in the country and one of the most underdeveloped areas, but one of its blocks - Chainpur - has a female literacy rate of 84.09% which is far more than the national rate (65.46%) as per the 2011 census. Out of 12 blocks, Chainpur is among the only two which do not have proper electrification, according to the government website for Gumla.

When the Union government set up the prestigious Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) in 2005 to bridge the learning gap between boys and girls, all blocks, except for Chainpur, were eligible to get the all-girl residential school, which is meant for educationally backward blocks. At that time, Gumla had only 11 blocks.

The administrative officer of the Jharkhand education project council, Jayant Mishra, said under the central scheme, one KGBV was allotted to such blocks that had poor female literacy than the national average. "Back

then, only Chainpur was not considered academically backward out of the 11 blocks of the district. The latest block - Albert Ekka - was carved out of Dumri and was not in existence back then. So, Albert Ekka also doesn't have a KGBV. The state will open its prestigious school designed on the lines of KGVV there," he said.

'Gumla admin will improve all residential schools for girls'

The high literacy rate of Chainpur, a remote and Left-wing extremism-hit block, is often linked to the advent of Christian missionaries in Jharkhand. Belgian Jesuit priest Constant Lievens, while laying the foundation of Christianity in Chhotanagpur, had chosen Chainpur, besides Torpa in Khunti, as his place of work in the 1885-86 period.

Many feared that Chainpur might lose the distinction if it continues to face neglect on the education front.

Eventually, the state government set up the Jharkhand Balika Aawasiye Vidyalaya (JBAV) on the lines of KGBV in 2022 to ensure 'shiksha sanrakshan' (protection of education) for the girls. The students will have access to smart classes and high-tech laboratories.

In Jharkhand, 57 blocks were not considered educationally backward and hence the KGBVs were not sanctioned. The state government is opening the JBAs in these blocks, Mishra said.

DC Sushant Gaurav said, "The district administration will improve all residential schools for girls - KGBV, JBAV and Scheduled Tribes residential schools. These schools will have computers, library, and adequate sitting arrangements."

The joint secretary in the Union ministry of Ayush, Rahul Sharma, who is also the central 'prabhari' officer of the Gumla aspirational district, met DC Gaurav and SDO Ravi Jain to review the functioning of JBAV. Chainpur BDO Shishir Kumar Singh said he has begun correcting the shortfalls as pointed out by the officers.

JBAV warden Lili Grace Baa, said, "We have 200 students, mostly from the tribal communities, enrolled in Classes VI to XII. "

Talking to TOI, Sharma said, "As education is an important indicator for an aspirational district, the opening of the JBAV will give a fresh boost to the girls in Chainpur, which has a female literacy rate higher than the national rate. Students can dream of and pursue better career options after their Class XII. The school will be a silent movement for the empowerment of women in this remote region of the state."