



**U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) / India  
GENDER and Social Inclusion ANALYSIS**

**Program/Project/Activity Data:**

<b>Activity/Project Title:</b> Foundational Learning for Children with Disabilities		<b>Solicitation #:</b>
<b>Contract /Award Number (if known):</b>		
<b>Geographic Location :</b> India (States yet to be identified)		
<b>Originating Bureau/Office:</b> General Development Office		
<b>Funding Amount:</b> 10 Million USD	<b>Life of Project Amount:</b> 15 Million USD	
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**I. BACKGROUND**

The goal of USAID’s [Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy](#) and the Agency’s implementation guidance in [ADS 205](#) is to both improve the lives of citizens around the world by advancing gender equality and to empower women and girls in all their diversity to participate fully in and benefit from the development of their societies. The policy has the primary objective of improving access to resources, opportunities, and information (economic, social, political, and cultural); reducing gender based violence (GBV); promoting women’s leadership and empowerment; securing private-property rights and land tenure for women; and enhancing education and skill-building opportunities for better workforce development. USAID’s programs address the needs of and benefit all people inclusive of ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, income level, disability, and other factors. Pursuant to ADS 205.3.1 and in alignment with the USAID Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy, Operating Units (OU) are responsible for conducting gender and social inclusion analyses at the design stage of a new activity and for ensuring that the Policy is implemented throughout each stage of the Program Cycle.

Differences in power, status, and gender norms and relations affect people’s ability to participate in and benefit from proposed activities, especially groups that are particularly disadvantaged or that have strong unmet needs for empowerment (e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and

intersex (LGBTQI+) persons, youth, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, indigenous communities, the elderly, and other socially relevant categories).

In 2021, the Biden-Harris Administration released the first-ever [United States Government National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality](#) (strategy). The strategy reflects a commitment to address gender broadly, with a commitment to women and girls, in light of longstanding systemic discrimination and barriers which continue to affect their full participation and access to opportunity. Under the strategy, USAID combats discrimination and harmful gender norms that affect people of all genders: women and girls—including transgender women and girls—gender nonbinary and gender nonconforming people, as well as men and boys.

The strategy also addresses the impact of intersectional discrimination and bias on the basis of gender, race, and other factors, including sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, and socioeconomic status. Under the strategy, programs and approaches will be informed by the historical and current context of these overlapping burdens.

The activity Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) for Learners with Disabilities in India will also align its activity implementation with USAID's [Policy Paper on Disability](#), *Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2020 Policy (PRO-IP Policy)*, and [Youth Policy 2022](#). The Policies reflect USAID's commitment to supporting inclusive and sustainable development and advancing human dignity by protecting and empowering every social segment of the society. These policies position USAID to strengthen and expand upon decades of support it has committed to marginalized and underrepresented groups around the world. These policies offer guidance on the robust engagement and partnership with these groups to help USAID programs align with the communities' own development priorities and ensure that USAID staff and implementing partners safeguard against unintended, adverse impacts.

### **Activity Description:**

During a 3-year period, the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) for Learners with Disabilities in India activity will provide age and developmentally appropriate programming to support the acquisition of foundational skills by learners with disabilities in preschools and primary schools, in target districts, and develop relevant, evidence based scalable models are available for the state governments to upscale the interventions in the entire states. The (FLN) for Learners with Disabilities in India activity will achieve this goal through a combination of the following three components:

1. Strengthen the quality and capacity of the Government service delivery system mainstream preschool and primary school (up to grade III) to deliver age and developmentally appropriate Foundational Literacy and Numeracy instruction that is guided by principles of Universal Design for Learning for all learners, especially for learners with disabilities.

2. Raise family and community awareness around the importance of disability inclusive education, and support them in accessing government services for early detection, identification, referral, and intervention services as well as equitable learning opportunities.
3. Strengthen coordination among line ministries and relevant government departments to facilitate early detection, identification, referral and intervention that align with the human rights model of disability to ensure learners with disabilities (and their families) have access to preschools and schools where they acquire foundational learning skills, including language, literacy and numeracy.

Most available data about gendered educational outcomes in India do not reliably reflect the experiences of people with disabilities or LGBTQI+ people. USAID understands that education programs are most effective when they account for gender-related challenges in order to meet the unique needs of learners and educators in each context, and strives to improve the collection of quality data to inform equitable delivery of program benefits. This proposed activity aims to benefit all learners with disabilities and benefit all genders in their diversity.

The activity design team recognizes that for the activity to be inclusive and to contribute to the advancement of gender equality in India, they must work to eliminate gender disparities, promote equitable gender norms, and increase the capability of women and girls, in all their diversity, at the classroom/school level, as well as at system level. The design team seeks to advance gender equality in the following ways:

- Collaborate with gender-diverse local leaders to create and promote safe and inclusive education learning environments for learners and educators with disabilities and of all genders;
- Ensure that the families (with particular attention to meaningful engagement by all parents/guardians, inclusive of mothers/fathers/grandmothers/grandfathers) of learners with disabilities, especially girls, can meaningfully participate in decision-making about education programs, with particular support for girls and families from marginalized groups, including but not limited to the landless, scheduled tribes, and members of the LGBTQI+ community;
- Strive for equitable distribution of educational resources to girls, boys, members of the LGBTQI+ community, and other marginalized groups;
- Support educators to provide gender-transformative pedagogy that combats harmful gender norms;
- Ensure that teaching and learning materials challenge and transform harmful gender norms and reflect the experiences and identities of people with disabilities and of all genders. .

It is important to note that a gender and social inclusion analysis considers the different and intersectional threats, impacts, and opportunities of learners with disabilities, girls and boys included, in all their diversity and marginalized populations, including religious minorities,

Schedule Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes, other backward castes (OBC), youth, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex persons (LGBTQI+). As such, this initial analysis considers gender and social inclusion issues throughout the various stages of the Program Cycle – from activity design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and learning and adapting.

## II. EXISTING GENDER ASSESSMENTS

In December 2019, [a CDCS level gender analysis for education](#) was completed by USAID/India. As a result, the 2020-2024 India Country Development Cooperative Strategy (CDCD) included that under the IR 1.2: Students’ reading skills improved, USAID/India will focus on historical high performing programs, with an effort to consolidate and complement mechanisms that demonstrate substantial results in foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) outcomes. It also includes that USAID interventions will address the low rate of schooling that has led to illiteracy in India. The CDCS gender analysis findings show that less than half of boys aged six years and above have seven years of schooling as compared with 4.4 years for girls. Poor, rural men and women and those in marginalized groups such as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) have even less schooling. Women in the lowest wealth quintile tend to have no schooling. Main reasons for dropping out include “disinterest” (44% of boys and 25% of girls), affordability, work for income (boys) and stay at home (for girls), and marriage for girls (8.1%). To address these gaps, USAID/India has worked to improve teachers’ and other 23 stakeholders’ knowledge and skills on early literacy, support activities that develop and disseminate study materials available in native/local languages and State languages as required, to help children learn with ease, build the capacity of key state governments to understand the role of children’s literature in early grade literacy and formulate guidelines for selecting books for primary grade libraries, and support learning and action around the impacts of gender and social inequalities on learning.

In 2022, the Mission commissioned two studies: a *Rapid Assessment of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Disabilities* and a design support study, to ascertain the most distinctive characteristics and determinants of exclusion (discrimination, bias, stigmatization) affecting a selected set of marginalized groups, so as to better understand how this exclusion is negatively impacting persons with disabilities, including children, as they try to access and benefit from participating in inclusive education programming, and how such exclusion also constrains such persons and groups from effectively contributing to India’s growth and development.

## III. MAIN FINDINGS BY DOMAIN

As this brief gender analysis dives into different domains, it is important to highlight how there is a deep lack of data on persons with disabilities in all spheres of life, including in education, in

India. This is especially true for girls and women with disabilities who might experience layered discriminations.

## **1. Indian Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices.**

Although legislation is mostly gender-neutral, implementation of law and policy among Indian persons with disabilities is fraught with disparities. Women, girls, boys, and men with disabilities face similar impediments to access and mobility around the country. Both women and men with disabilities, particularly intellectual disabilities, face infantilization, abuse, and violence. Disabled women, however, face particular challenges. People with disabilities are less likely to access quality, inclusive education than people without disabilities. Women with disabilities are less likely to receive education and skills training than men with disabilities. Women are more likely to experience sexual violence and forced medical procedures, and they are less likely to receive the health services that they need. In addition, women with disabilities are less likely to receive government services including disability pensions and personal mobility devices like wheelchairs and walkers, which governments provide at reduced cost in many states. While these issues are often the result of poor policy implementation, they are also compounded by the gender-bias that pervades many parts of Indian society.

Several programs initiated by the Government of India have stressed the importance of gender and social equity in education - like the Sarva (now Samagra) Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) or "Education for All," that focused on children's holistic education. SSA emphasizes the importance of quality of education, administrative reforms, girls' education, inclusive education, and strengthening school education systems. Other programs like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao program (Save the Girl Child, Educate the girl child) (2015), provides girl children access to services for their survival, safety, and education. As a result of these policies, programs, and other awareness-raising efforts in the media and elsewhere, there is widespread understanding that girls should be educated.

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 for the first time has drawn attention to the lack of foundational learning among children in India, defined as children being unable to read fluently by classes two and three and not fluent in arithmetic operations by classes four and five. The policy also proposes to broaden the right to free and compulsory education for all children 3–18 years old and to establish a Gender Inclusion Fund to increase girls' participation in school. The fund will focus on ensuring 100% enrollment of girls in schooling and a record participation rate in higher education, decrease gender gaps at all levels, practice gender equity and inclusion in society, and improve the leadership capacity of girls through positive civil dialogues. Funds will also enable States to support and scale effective community-based interventions that address local context-specific barriers to girls and transgender students. NEP 2020 has also recognised a special category known as Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups, and persons with disabilities have been included in this group.

The Department of School Education and Literacy recognizes the important role of Universal Elementary Education (UEE)<sup>1</sup> in providing equal opportunities to all in India. The provision of UEE calls for the need to revise textbooks to remove gender bias and sensitize all educational personnel to gender biases, stereotypes, and challenges. Integral part of UEE is the provision of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).

The Government of India passed the Disabilities Act in 1995. This law states that persons with disabilities have equal rights, and that the government should make possible their full participation in society. The government has to provide free education and integrate children with disabilities into mainstream schools. This law also states that all public places including buildings, schools, etc., should be accessible and provided with ramps. India's Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, stresses that every child with a benchmark disability between the age group of 6 and 18 years shall have the right to free education and have 5% reservation in seats in Government and Government aided higher educational institutions for persons with benchmark disabilities.

India has a comprehensive policy and legal framework addressing rights and protection for children and providing opportunities to ensure that all children have equal access to quality protection services. The core child protection legislation for children is enshrined in four main laws: The Juvenile Justice Act/Care and Protection (2000, amended in 2015); the Child Marriage Prohibition Act (2006); the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (2012) and the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation (1986, amended in 2016). Over the past five years, notable efforts have been made to set up fast track courts to respond to incidents of abuse and to deal with cybercrime against children and women. In 2019, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Bill was amended, stipulating stricter punishment for sexual crimes against children. Despite these, violence against children exists in different forms (verbal and physical punishment, insensitive behaviors and attitudes, bullying, harassment, and sexual and psychological assaults), impacting their learning, health, and socioemotional well-being within homes and schools. Children with disabilities, especially girls, become victims of violence frequently and

Even though there are a plethora of government programs/policies that prohibit gender and social inequalities and discrimination, and also a signatory to the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Sustainable Development Goals, demonstrating its commitment to providing an inclusive, equitable, and quality education, the deficits in learning still persist and remains as a challenge. Although these efforts are a step in the right direction, they operate under the false assumption that access to and completion of secondary education are sufficient to ensure girls' empowerment and gender equality. Thus, despite all these interventions at both central and state-levels, girls' education, and women's marginalization and disempowerment remains deeply problematic.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.education.gov.in/en/overview-ee>

## 1.a Education access and learning outcomes

India has the largest number of women with no and low literacy skills in the world. As per the IIPS report 2015–2016, half of the Indian women have at least four years of education (although that is a significant improvement from the previous decade when they had fewer than two years of education). According to the National Statistical Office the average literacy rate of India is 77.7%, the female literacy rate continues to lag behind significantly, while the male literacy rate is predicted to be 84.7 percent. At the primary level, the gender parity index (GPI) is less compared to the secondary level, especially when it comes to the children's enrollment in government schools where girls outnumber boys. The World Bank report (2017) highlights that at the primary levels, just one out of every 100 girls in rural India reaches class 12. Enrollment of children in schools declines in class five when girls reach puberty and are pressured to marry, and the boys have to work due to economic constraints.

Girls with disabilities are at risk of greater neglect within their family settings as compared with boys with disabilities. Differences are also evident in their participation in education. Statistics show that enrollment of girls with disabilities is persistently lower than boys : the GPI (gender parity index) of children with disabilities from 2014-15 to 2018-19 indicates constant but low ratio of girls with disabilities to boys with disabilities. This ratio between the girls and boys with disabilities remains between 0.74-0.7 in school education<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, while the ASER 2018 report states that the percentage of girls out of school has decreased from 2008 to 2018, it does not capture data for children with disabilities, and the same conclusion cannot be made for girls with disabilities.<sup>3</sup> The same ASER data suggests that gender differences are also reflected in reading and math outcomes, with better learning outcomes for either girls or boys depending on the state: For example, while the reading outcomes for girls and boys in the age group 14 to 16 is very similar, girls outperform boys in many states like Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, West Bengal, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. In basic math, boys seem to have better outcomes. Nationally, 50% of all boys in the age group 14 to 16 can correctly solve a division problem as compared to 44% of all girls. But in states like Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, girls in this age group are performing better than boys. It is to be noted that the above data does not reflect the learning outcomes for learners with disabilities.

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<sup>2</sup> NCPEDP. (2021). *NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY: Opportunities & Challenges*. New Delhi: National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCEPDP). Retrieved May 1, 2022, from [https://ncpedp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/WHITE-PAPER\\_FINAL-1.pdf](https://ncpedp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/WHITE-PAPER_FINAL-1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> ASER. (2018). *Annual Status of Education Report 2018*. New Delhi: ASER Centre. Retrieved May 15, 2022, from <http://img.asercentre.org/docs/ASER%202018/Release%20Material/aserreport2018.pdf>

TABLE 5: GENDER DISPARITY IN ENROLLMENT OF Learners with Disabilities IN INDIA

YEARS	GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES	BOYS WITH DISABILITIES	RATIO
2014-15	1,110,469	1,488,011	0.74
2015-16	1,093,037	1,471,818	0.74
2016-17	1,023,646	1,354,579	0.75
2017-2018	1,002,964	1,342,022	0.75
2018-2019	902,407	1,208,437	0.75

Source: UDISE+ data as per (NCPEDR, 2021)

Challenges for learners with disabilities include those accessing basic hygienic services as well. General schools usually do not make provisions to support the menstrual hygiene of learners with disabilities. Learners with disabilities face various challenges during their menstrual cycle, and at times may need to depend on their caregiver for help. Most of the time the parents help their own child, and wherever this is not possible, the learner is not sent to school. Contrary to this, special education schools generally offer help from the female Aayas, who help learners in such situations.

## 2. Cultural Norms and Beliefs.

There is an extreme variance in cultural norms and beliefs throughout India. However, in both traditional and progressive communities and households across different communities and contexts, some commonalities exist regarding how men and women are expected to behave in social situations and interact with one another, especially women and girls with disabilities. Of note, gender self-segregation occurs in many parts of the country throughout various social strata and a layered discrimination exists for women with disabilities. In public/social situations, it is often men who set cultural, political, and economic agendas - all of which have implications on girls' education and access to services that they might need. Economically, women with disabilities are unlikely to participate in the workforce.

An understanding of disability and education in India should take into consideration the important intersections with gender and other social categories. Gender disparities are reflected in multiple dimensions, whether wages and salaries, nutritional status, educational status, and social and political status. These gender disparities worsen the situation of learners with disabilities, especially girls.

Families are frequently unwilling to invest in the education and skills development of women and girls with disabilities as they are perceived as unfit for employment and enterprise. In many

places in India, the harmful cultural practices including son-preference in education is a double burden for women with disabilities. They face exclusion on the basis of gender, which is compounded by their disability status. Further, access to places of education for women with locomotor impairment keeps many women out of the education ecosystem. Barriers to access include transportation systems, buildings, and facilities without accessible toilets.

Socio-cultural and economic issues also play a significant role in dropout rates. For example, some children and adolescents, primarily girls, are not sent to secondary school because of harmful practices relating to early or child marriage, perceived roles of gender or caste, or child labour and pressure on children/adolescents to work and earn (mostly boys). Often the need to care for siblings prevents older children, especially girls, from attending school. In regions with poor hygienic conditions, lack of good sanitation and unhealthy food habits unfortunately make children prone to chronic illnesses, thereby preventing them from attending classes consistently or at all.<sup>4</sup>

A girl with a disability belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes might be affected by multiple layers of discrimination : because of her gender, her disability status, and her belonging to a specific caste or a tribal society. Among the data gap with regard to persons with disabilities, including learners with disabilities in India, it may be explicitly noted there is also no enrollment data providing an insight on caste for learners with disabilities.

Schools tend to become the sites of gender-power relations, and a site where labeling and discrimination take place against girls in general, along with those who belong to categories such as scheduled caste girls, rural girls, tribal girls and girls with disabilities, further marginalization occurs within schools. They may be made to sit separately or not allowed to drink from the same water sources as other children. Recent studies show some teachers perpetuate gender stereotypes, and their classroom behavior is typically biased in favor of boys<sup>5</sup>.

### **3. Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use**

The State of Karnataka recently released a position paper on gender education. The survey among teachers, parents, and students helped to understand their perceptions and attitudes regarding gender roles in the education space. Key findings includes 1) Nurturing and looking after the children are perceived as basic responsibilities of women, 2) women tolerate violence for the good of the family and as a symbol of sacrifice and compassion, 3) teachers assign tasks related to decoration to girls and tangible physical tasks to boys, 4) Boys get severe punishments and girls do more classroom chores, 5) teachers perpetuate stereotypes like boys are better at STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) subjects while girls are inclined towards art or languages, and 7) Education systems/curricula perpetuate messaging on gender

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<sup>4</sup> <https://innovate.mygov.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/mygov15596510111.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://docs.iza.org/dp14305.pdf> (Biased Teachers And Gender Gaps in Learning Outcomes)

roles, such as men must take complete financial responsibility of their family while women must give primacy to taking care of their children and family<sup>6</sup>.

Field experiences from USAID other education activities illustrates that a significant percentage of teachers hold beliefs that promote and perpetuate restrictive gender and social norms and practices (for example, girls should be given responsibilities associated with traditional roles of girls/women such as providing refreshments to guests or singing songs while boys should be put in-charge). These perceptions and associated norms need to be discussed with teachers so that they can identify and address restrictive gender role modeling in schools. Observations from primary classrooms in some states indicate that the teachers often have strong beliefs about boys' and girls' characteristics that include the perception that boys are stubborn, annoying, bullying, active, and healthy while the girls are more accommodating, adorable, sensitive, and obedient. It is considered acceptable for boys to have negative characteristics (aggressive, unruly) while girls are expected to maintain positive characteristics (diligent, neat). These perceptions prevail from children's early years and shape how the participation of girls and boys are promoted through the classroom practices and activities and even at the later stage in life.

#### **4. Access to and Control over Assets and Resources and Power of decision making**

According to the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), poverty and local cultural practices play a role in gender inequality in education throughout India. Lack of hygiene and access to clean toilets is seen as the primary factors for girls' increased dropout from school as they reach puberty. 23% of girls in India leave school once they hit puberty. And the girls who continue education miss as many as 50 school days each year as a result of menstruation.

Girls and women of all ages with disabilities remain unseen, unheard, and silent. Hence their concerns and rights are often unrecognized and unmet. They are commonly stereotyped as sick, helpless, childlike, dependent, incompetent and asexual, greatly limiting their options and opportunities. Many times, they become victims of physical, psychological, sexual and financial violence, neglect, social isolation, trafficking, institutionalization, degradation, detention, denial of health care, and most importantly education. In addition, women with disabilities are less likely to receive government services including disability pensions and personal mobility devices like wheelchairs and walkers, which governments provide at reduced cost in many states. While these issues are often the result of poor policy implementation, they are also compounded by the gender-bias that pervades many parts of Indian society.

#### **IV. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS**

In preparation for this activity, several consultations were conducted including 20 key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with key informants. Stakeholder consultation took place in four states, namely, Bihar, Maharashtra, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh. An initial stakeholder mapping identified two categories of stakeholders: primary and secondary

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<sup>6</sup> [https://dsert.kar.nic.in/nep/16\\_Gender\\_education.pdf](https://dsert.kar.nic.in/nep/16_Gender_education.pdf)

stakeholders. Primary stakeholders included: parents and caregivers of children with disabilities, special educators, teachers, and representatives of the Department of Elementary Education and the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment at the Central and State Governments. Secondary stakeholders included representatives of public and private schools, special schools, NGOs, civil society organizations, experts working in the field of child rights, education and disability, disability rights advocacy groups, and eight National Institutes under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment exclusively related to issues pertaining persons with disabilities.

Main findings from the KIIs and FGDs spread light on the following issues:

- there is a great intersection between lack of WASH facilities and school drop out of girls with disabilities;
- Learners' safety during commute to and from school along with within school is a big concern, especially for girls. Respondents shared that the presence of female teachers and female ays in school can help girls with disabilities feel and remain safe in schools, and might facilitate discussions of specific issues relevant to the participation of girls with other teachers and parents;
- Learning remains the main lever. Many parents felt that unless there are specific learning opportunities for their children with disabilities in the classroom such as braille materials they are not inclined to send them to school. This is especially true for girls with disabilities due to family and community norms that negatively impact their participation in school.
- Many teachers expressed the need to work closely with parents and communities to break the notion that disability is a punishment from God and shouldn't be interfered with .
- There is a negative perception of children with disabilities, and more so girls with disabilities, among many teachers who might feel sorry for them and redirect children and their families to health and survival services instead of supporting their participation in school.

## **V. ANALYSIS OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY TECHNICAL COMPONENT**

The table below provides an overview of the activities that will be implemented under the activity technical components. For those activities where gender issues have been identified, the table presents recommended actions that will be taken to ensure gender equity remains at the forefront of the activities' design, implementation, and M&E. The integration of gender and social sensitivity into the proposed technical approach is part of the evaluation criteria for the program. In addition, the Awardee will be obligated to draft a gender and social integration plan within 90 days of initiating the award.

### **Table 1: Activity Results Framework**

**Activity Goal: Suggested:** produce tested, disability inclusive, and age and developmentally appropriate interventions for the acquisition of foundational skills by learners with disabilities in preschool, and primary schools in target districts

**Table 2: Technical Components/Activities and Identified Potential Gender Issues**

<b>Components and Activities</b>	<b>Potential Gender Issues and Relevance to the Activity</b>	<b>Recommendations, Specific Actions, General Considerations</b>
<p>Objective/Outcome 1: Strengthened quality and capacity of the Government service delivery system in mainstream preschool and primary school (up to grade III) to deliver age and developmentally appropriate Foundational Literacy and Numeracy instruction that is guided by principles of Universal Design for Learning for all learners, especially for learners with disabilities</p>	<p>Persistent gender biased attitudes in institutions towards persons with disabilities, especially girls</p> <p>Lack of gender and disability inclusion lens in planning for learners with disabilities, and lack of understanding of the intersectionality of marginalization.</p> <p>Lack of disability inclusive and gender responsive materials, and disability inclusive and gender responsive training content in teacher professional development</p> <p>Mainstream preschools and primary schools are often not accessible for learners with disabilities. WASH facilities and services are not available for learners with disabilities.</p>	<p>Awareness raising campaigns should be carried out for government functionaries in key ministries/departments. It should form part of regular training and upgrading programs so that officials are regularly updated on disability issues.</p> <p>For girls with disabilities to continue education in school, it is important that they can access appropriate facilities for their menstrual hygiene, their safety, and their dignity.</p>
<p>Objective/Outcome 2: Increased awareness around the importance of disability inclusive education among and support to families and communities to access government services for early detection, identification, referral, and intervention services as well as equitable learning opportunities.</p>	<p>The prevalence of cultural and social value systems that devalues disabilities and identities, along with the cultural norms that see girls as less likely to access and be supported in school, might hinder the efforts made towards supporting parents in becoming full partners in the learning of their children with disabilities, especially girls.</p>	<p>There should be monitoring and quality check of teacher training and performance, led by a monitoring committee. In addition to representatives of government and NGOS, these committees should include parents of learners with disabilities as well as persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Parents should be supported in learning about the importance of</p>

	<p>coordination with multiple agencies on gender responsive programming in terms of knowledge , skills and attitude.</p>	<p>education for children with disabilities, and the importance of providing all children, especially girls with the same opportunities. These efforts should also be brought to the overall community (both rural and urban) so that adequate attention and importance is given to all children, especially children with disabilities, and especially girls.</p>
<p>Objective/Outcome 3: Strengthened coordination among line ministries and relevant government departments to facilitate early detection, identification, referral and intervention that align with the human rights model of disability to ensure learners with disabilities (and their families) have access to preschools and schools where they acquire foundational learning skills, including language, literacy and numeracy.</p>	<p>Coordination among multiple agencies on issues directly relevant to/necessary for gender responsive programming is at times not present.</p> <p>There is lack of reliable data on learners with disabilities, especially girls, and their presence/absence/success/challenges in the education sector.</p>	<p>Efforts should be made to increase the availability of data on persons with disabilities, including girls for both research and planning purposes at various levels.</p> <p>The State Education Plan should ensure that a ‘Gender Inclusion Fund’ is in place at both state and district level. The ‘gender inclusion fund’ should be created with consideration to the GPI, and allocation of funds should be higher where GPI is low. The GPI index should be made available to every district.</p> <p>Government planning should give special attention to the intersectionality status of communities, and the persons and learners with disabilities, especially girls.</p>