

Literacy vs CSR Vidya Vihar Pilani Rajasthan Focus - The other side of Grim Realities

One will not be surprised if tomorrow some journalist concludes that less the population of a country more the number of prisoners since USA has less than 5 percent of the world's population and 25 percent of world's prisoners.

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Sevanti Ninan's Media Matters column in the Hindu dated March 16, 2008 under Grim Realities and the same paper dated April 13, 2008 under Silent Crisis has gone about deriving and driving the point that there is a strong correlation between high literacy and low Child Sex Ratio (CSR). CSR is number of female children in the age group of 0-6 years per 1,000 male children. The overall CSR for India in 2001 was 927 females per 1000 males.

According to this analysis, Vidya Vihar, where Birla Institute of Technology and Science - BITS Pilani which is one of the top ranking universities in India today is located, has a literacy rate of 89.8 per cent and an overall Child Sex Ratio (CSR) for 15 wards of 871, which is more adverse than the CSR for the main town of Pilani which has literacy rate of 78.6 per cent and a CSR of 897.

Not to be left behind, Rajasthan Patrika a leading Hindi Newspaper dated 10 April 2008 went about reiterating the same issue as if to prove the quote of Peter McWilliams 'News media are, for the most part, the bringers of bad news and it's not entirely the media's fault as bad news gets higher ratings and sells more papers than good news.'

Its unfortunate that none concerned bothered to know that more than 50 percent of the total population of 14366 in Vidya Vihar happens to be students from all over India studying and staying in hostels and not involved in family raising activities. When it comes to enrollment of girls in higher education in India Today, BITS Pilani has been ranking in the top of such institutions both nationally and internationally.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has established a Centre for Women Studies (CWS) at BITS Pilani with the objective of working towards socio-economic upliftment of women through technological interventions. Prof AK Das Group Leader Biological Sciences at BITS Pilani is spearheading a project on Systems Biology approach towards understanding severe malaria with special reference to the transcriptome and proteome of the parasite and the host.

BITS Pilani along with its collaborators Sankara Nethralaya, Frontier Lifeline and Madras Medical Mission, Chennai; LV Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad, CMC Hospital, Vellore; Bombay Hospital, Mumbai & Indore; indeed has been walking the Health Care Delivery Road in India today through the ranked among the best Optometry, Physician Assistant, Medical Laboratory Technology, Hospital & Health Systems Management as well as Master of Public Health Programmes.

On April 28, 2008, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India had organized at Delhi a National Conference on 'Save the Girl Child' which was inaugurated by Dr Manmohan Singh Prime Minister of India. The emotion charged Dr Singh who himself is a father to three daughters gave a clarion call for much greater focus on female literacy, since the adverse sex ratio that India has today had to be challenged fundamentally in the minds of all Indians. Dr Singh also reiterated

the urge by the Chairperson of UPA, Smt. Sonia Gandhi that the country must reorient the National Literacy Mission to focus on female literacy.

Save the Children is a leading independent organization creating real and lasting change for children in need in the United States and around the world. It is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, comprising 28 national Save the Children organizations working in more than 110 countries to ensure the well-being of children.

Save the Children a globally respected organization in a recent report '[State of the World's Mothers' report](#), has pointed out that the main reason for the gender gap in India is inequity of healthcare for female and male children.

According to Charles McCormack President and CEO of Save the Children, to close the gender gap focus must be on female literacy, enhanced income earning opportunities for women and better provision of basic healthcare for the mother and child.

It's for sure that the honorable Prime Minister of India and the President of Save the Children while making emphasis on female literacy did not think that high literacy leads to low child sex ratio.

Female literacy has considerable multiplier effects in all areas of women empowerment and no one anywhere has a doubt that educational empowerment alone can transform women into powerful agents of social change but there are some who think otherwise.

If someone thinks that to protect the girl child, one must promote illiteracy, then its time to recollect the statement that some people use statistics the way a tippler uses a lamp post, more for support than enlightenment.

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Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani Rajasthan which has set the industry university collaboration bench mark as well as having the reputation of pioneering the online examinations for admissions in India today through the path breaking BITSAT offers degrees in various disciplines presently at Pilani, Dubai, Goa campuses and in the short future at Hyderabad campus apart from an array of work integrated learning programmes for HRD of a vast spectrum of Indian corporates. The alumni of the Institute are spread across the globe from Australia to America.

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