

## PREFACE

This thesis is the result of a study extending over five years and more. Its subject is of crucial importance to the Gujarat State and also to the nation. Equality of access to education for girls and women is a priority subject of concern even to UNESCO. The General Conference of UNESCO at its XVth Session (1968) proposed as one of the twelve major subjects for reflection and action on the part of Member States when the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 1970 as International Year. The thesis deals with the equality of access to secondary education for girls in the State of Gujarat. The study was originally planned to cover the period upto 1966. However, later on the period of the study was extended to 1971 with a view to making it upto-date as far as possible.

Certain assumptions are made in the study. The gap between the secondary education of girls and boys which was very wide during the British rule has been gradually closing down; the sociological climate in the State has been changing; the national awakening engendered by the freedom movement since the twenties and the increasing spread of western education among men and women had made the climate in urban areas in the

in the past and last two decades in the rural areas more favourable to the extension of girls' secondary education; the rising of the age of marriage for both girls and boys have had favourable impact on the expansion of secondary and higher education of girls; the trend towards more urbanisation has been also largely favourable to the spread of girls' secondary education; the private enterprise has been playing a vital role in expanding facilities of secondary education for girls in the State, but the Government has to step in where it is not readily forth-coming if the pace of expansion is to be accelerated; <sup>and</sup> the cause of girls' and women's education in the State has suffered owing to the adoption of the policy to treat female education as a part of the problem of general education. The results of the study have testified to the validity of these assumptions to a large extent.

The Gujarat State has made secondary education for girls free progressively from 1969. Its impact has not been discussed in the Study, because it is too early to measure it.

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