CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Education is empowerment. Better the standard of education, better will be the social, cultural and intellectual capital of the society. However the fact remains that for better education, better schools are a prerequisite. As India marches towards the economic excellence and infrastructural development, the call for the better educated and skilled workforce continues to grow. Besides this, the demands have grown multifold in the era of knowledge based society. To realize all this, merely enrolment of students or realizing growth in terms of quantity is not enough but creation of and maintaining an efficient quality system in educational institutions is the need of the hour. Along with the access to education, quality curriculum and its transaction are also vital in sustaining students in schools and enjoy the learning process. Since Independence India has invested huge resources into the expansion and improvement of education, in an effort to extend access from the elites to the masses. The first priority for the country was to achieve Primary Education and now attention is shifted to Secondary Education, to respond to rapidly increasing household and labour market demand for graduates with higher levels of knowledge and skills.

There are various programs and policies on the improvement of quality Education. The Secondary Education Commission of 1952-53, commonly known as Mudliar Commission recommended the establishment of a Board of Secondary Education to deal with all aspects of education at the secondary stage. It mentioned that quality secondary education is indispensable in creating

a bright future for individuals and nation alike. Thus strengthening the secondary and higher secondary stage by improving quality in a significant way, would enable Indian students to compete successfully for education and jobs globally. The Objectives of the NPE 1986 (The National Policy on Education) and POA (The Programme of Action), 1992, stressed to improve the quality of education in the country by providing education facilities to all the citizens of the nation, identifying and encouraging development of infrastructures, curriculum reforms, identification of learning outcomes in the form of competencies for secondary and higher secondary stage, reforming curriculum in the teacher training institutes for competency based teaching and learning and encouraging states to recruit teachers through objective methods of testing and to provide regular in-service training to the teachers. The initiative of the government is Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) launched in April 2009 with the basic developmental objectives of universalizing access to and improving quality of secondary education (Grades IX-X) in the country. There is a tremendous growth in the secondary education in the country, at present there are 44.8 million children in secondary education, which translates into a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 45.81 per cent in Classes IX–XII. These numbers is expected to continue to rise due to both supply and demand factors. On the supply side, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in primary education is over 100 per cent and is approaching that figure in upper primary. The proportion of children completing primary and upper primary education continues to rise, although slowly from 73.7 per cent to 75 per cent between 2004-05 and 2010–11. The total number of children aged 15–19 is expected to continue to rise until 2025, at which point it will be 4 million more than it is today. (MHRD, 2011)

In India there are 34 Secondary Boards, where 31 are State Examination Boards that prepare examinations for students at the end of lower secondary and higher secondary education and three central boards. However, the pass rates across states are not comparable as they vary considerably. The question that arises is why there is such disparity in pass rates. If an examination is reliable, one would expect examination results from one year to the next to vary only by a small degree. This makes it evident that there is no national picture of the quality of secondary education, as measured by the skills and knowledge acquired by students at the end of this stage of education.

Some states have adopted International assessments, these internationally benchmarked assessments; suggest student learning is very low in India. PISA is an assessment of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science. In the assessment, Indian states were ranked above only one country of the more than 70 countries and economies participating. On average, 15-year-old Indian students performed about four years behind the international average for OECD countries. (Walker 2011). A study by (Das and Zajonc 2010) used data from a test carried out using questions from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMSS) assessment in mathematics on Class IX children in Odisha and Rajasthan. Overall, when compared with countries that took the regular TIMSS assessment, Rajasthan was ranked 47th out of 49 countries and territories, and Odisha 43rd. Thus, the major issue with quality of secondary education is the absence of accurate data on the quality of education in the country and no national assessment of performance in secondary education. (World Bank, 2011)

Therefore it is important to give attention on the role played by the Secondary Education Boards in achieving the quality of secondary education. This leads to some important research questions for the present study i.e. what are the quality assurance mechanisms that are being practiced in secondary schools and what are the quality indicators in the secondary schools? Researcher has made efforts to answer these questions by reviewing some relevant documents. Some of the major concepts used in this study are quality of education, the quality assurance system and effective schools. A number of views of quality of education are examined here;

1.1 The Concept of Quality & Quality Assurance in Education

There is a wide range of discussion on the concept of quality assurance in the literature. The arguments around the adoption of quality assurance depend on diverse perspectives on what counts as quality. Consequently, there seems to be no universally accepted conceptual framework of quality assurance in secondary education.

Cheng (1995) have defined education quality as follows: "Education quality is the character of the set of elements in the input, process, and output of the education system that provides services that completely satisfy both internal and external strategic constituencies by meeting their explicit and implicit expectations". While Quality assurance according to Gray, Griffin and Nasta (2001) refers to the procedures and measures for checking that quality is being maintained or improved. The ultimate purpose of all quality assurance procedures is to improve quality.

Quality also pertains to the relevance of what is taught and learned and how well it fits the present and the future needs of the particular learners in question, given their particular circumstances and prospects. It also, refers to significant changes in the educational system itself, in the nature of its inputs (students, teachers, facilities, equipment); its objectives, curriculum and educational technologies; and its socioeconomic, cultural and political environment (Coombs 1985). Quality finally is to learn the right things and to teach them well (Fredriksson 2004). Another way of looking at quality of education is to use the effective schools view, which advocates for input and output measuring techniques.

So, a proper quality strategy should include both systems, inside and outside schools. Internally, curriculum, school development, student achievement, maintenance of facilities, organizational culture and climate could be the issue, while externally the connection among the schools and the parents, the community, the neighboring organizations. Such quality strategies could involve, staff development and cultural change, rewarding excellence, establishing a new educational policy and incorporating self-evaluation.

While discussing the concept of quality assurance; to Vroeijenstijn (1995) quality assurance is 'a systematic, structured and continuous attention to quality in terms of quality maintenance and improvement.' Most authors on the concept of quality assurance share this view.

UNESCO (2004), for example, described quality assurance as a systematic review of educational programs to ensure that acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being maintained. Similarly,

Wilger (1997) also shares similar views that quality assurance is a collective process by which a university ensures that the quality of educational process is maintained to the standards it has set itself. Contained in these definitions are issues of maintenance and improvement of quality and standards, embedded in the demands for accountability

The definitions given above illustrate that quality assurance is a generic term open to many interpretations. However, there seems to be a consistent thread that we could find across the varied perspectives. Some common elements are apparently highlighted through the vocabulary like *systematic, planned* and *structured.* Accordingly, a quality assurance system in secondary schools may be described as the totality of the policies, values/attitudes, procedures, structures, resources and actions devoted to ensure continuous improvement of quality of the educational processes. The definitions also imply conceptions like accountability, improvement, or both.

1.2 THE CONCEPT OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

Researchers generally lack consensus on what constitutes school effectiveness. School effectiveness refers to effectiveness enhancing conditions at school level (Scheerens, 2004). It includes all the contextual variables related with school such as teaching, learning, administration, student's motivation and community involvement. In the early studies on school effectiveness the emphasis was on the enhancing conditions of schooling and output measures, mostly achievement of the student.

Other studies rejected this stand and stated that school effectiveness should not focus on mere academic achievement but other factors such as classroom behavior, student participation rates, and attitudes towards learning (Rutter, 1983; Sammons et al., 1996). Coleman (1966), the pioneer in school

effectiveness studies concluded that student background characteristics were far more powerful in determining student achievement than any school-level factors. In response to the results of studies of Coleman it was fond out that "Schools can make a difference" (Brook over, W.B., Beady, C., Flood, P. et al. 1979) and "School matters" (Mortimore et al., 1988). The other researchers (Edmonds & Frederikson, 1979; Brookover & Lezotte, 1978) in the effective schools movement also disagreed with the conclusions given by Coleman. These researchers tried to investigate correlates that resulted in some schools from the low Socio-Economic-Status producing high achieving students under difficult environmental conditions.

McCarthy (1980) view school success "as positive changes in any one, or a combination, of the following four variables: 1) student achievement, 2) student attitudes toward the school or themselves as learners, 3) teacher attitudes toward the school or students as learners, 4) community/parent attitudes towards the school". Erickson and Carl (1982) offer a similar definition. They say, "an effective school is one in which essentially all of the students acquire the basic skills and other desired behaviour within the school" such as literacy and mathematics competence, as well as problem solving and social skills. Hartwell and Vargas-Baron (1998) propose an idealistic "concept of quality that is not based on how well a few succeed, but rather on how well all succeed. Quality, thus, is attained when all student succeed in learning, according to their learning styles and abilities, not just those who are judged in traditional terms to be the most able".

Another approach is to identify the causes of school failure. For instance, Stoll (1995): has drawn our attention to lack of vision, unfocused leadership, dysfunctional staff relationships, and ineffective classroom practices as

mechanisms through which the effectiveness of schools can deteriorate (Mortimore 1997). Weber (1971) found out a number of characteristics for successful schools such as strong leadership, high expectations, and good atmosphere. According to Subbs (1995) the correlates of effective schools can be defined as the means of achieving high and equitable levels of student learning. It is expected that all children regardless their socioeconomic and background characteristics will get at least the essential knowledge and skill (Kirk and Jones2004).

In practice, School effectiveness is much broader concept. There exists a conceptual hierarchy of bivalence where effective and ineffective schools are measured by characteristics (Ball, 1997). Critics dismiss this sort of approach to school effectiveness as positivist and this means/ends construction reduces educational success to factors that can be measured (Morley and Rasool, 1999). This aligns with Sammons (1994) argument that definitions on school effectiveness are dependent on a variety of factors among them sample of schools examined and choice of outcome measured (Sammons et al., 1994).

Thus,a large body of research is carried out in developing and developed nations to examine the factors that contribute to school quality as measured in terms of students' cognitive achievement. The improvement in student achievement or outcomes is seen to be the major goal of school effectiveness. Therefore, it is of main importance to develop adequate and reliable ways to measure the quality of the school (Mortimore, 1991).

According,to the table-1.1, the factors in school that lead to student achievement are the intellectual capital, social capital and the organizational capital.

Table-1.1

Factors Affecting Students Achievement

Characteristics of Effective Secondary Schools
Intellectual capital
▪ Teachers have the knowledge, skills, and competencies to help all students learn and to accept responsibility for their own learning
▪ School staff believe that they have the capability to help all students achieve and reach their potential
▪ The principal provides education leadership and supports continuous professional development to increase the competencies and involvement of staff
▪ School staff has the know-how to decide "what goes and what stays" in the curriculum on the basis of a good professional understanding of how young adolescents learn.
▪ Teaching staff can design and deliver a curriculum that responds to the demands of accountability and is responsive to the social and developmental needs of students. Staff members are skilled at **interdisciplinary** curriculum.
▪ Parents and the school community understand and support the school's basic mission.
▪ The role of parents in the education of their children is clear, helping to forge real partnerships between home and school.
Social capital:
▪ Teachers master the technology of teamwork; they do not work alone in isolated classrooms
▪ There is a consistent practice of cooperative learning among students.
▪ All have high expectations for success; there is a generalized belief that all students can master essential knowledge, competencies, and skills.
▪ There is respect for human diversity and appreciation of democratic values.
▪ Leadership is a dispersed concept that includes all teaching staff
▪ Teachers are empowered, so that the principal is not the only one providing leadership
Organizational capital:
▪ The school climate is positive, with a clearly articulated school mission and agreed goals.
▪ The school has a purposeful, safe, and orderly environment
▪ The principal's leadership is focused on achievement of the agreed goals and the promotion of a school ethos oriented toward teaching and learning.
▪ The principal is a leader of leaders rather than a leader of followers.
▪ There are appropriate structures and opportunities for collaboration.
▪ There is a proactive organizational response when students do not learn.
▪ The school exercises its power to abandon some less important content**.**
▪ Students' progress is monitored frequently.
▪ Assessment for learning receives central attention; less attention is given **to** assessment for grading purposes.
▪ The school has organizational structures that make it possible to pursue and take advantage of external support and community involve men

(Scheerens, 2004).

Thus, the main concern of school effectiveness research has been to discover those school related factors that are critical in determining student achievement. As per the literature effective schools are frequently self-managing and self-improving they are flexibly structured to maximize the use of time and accommodate the varied lives of their students, staff, and community in order to improve the performance of all students. The structure of programs extends beyond the traditional school day and year as well as beyond the school building. The program draws on the entire community's resources to foster student achievement.

1.2.1 The Need for Self-Evaluation as a Quality Assurance Practice

During the self-evaluation process of a school the absence or presence of quality assurance mechanisms and procedures enables principals of schools to determine whether they are indeed enhancing the quality of their schools. In such a self-evaluation exercise the primary aim is to determine the mission statement of the school and, in line with this, its goals/aims and objectives in the light of its notion of quality and the role it sees for itself. It is extremely important that the school should prioritize identified mechanisms and procedures.

The task of quality assurance in secondary schools is not to implement a prescriptive quality assurance system, but to develop, a system that will be owned by all, by means of a participatory and comprehensive approach. With such an approach both those who manage (e.g. principals and Trustees) and those who are managed (e.g. Teachers/facilitators) will be made aware of their responsibilities with regard to establishing quality in their management and teaching functions. Besides, quality assurance is not about fulfill with the

expectations of school inspectors, but it should be taken as an integrated aspect of school work, teaching learning activities and the general performance of teachers. Therefore, in order to ensure that the quality assurance process is for continual improvement of all the activities and the overall performance of the school, continuous self-evaluation should form part of the planning of the schools. Unfortunately this self-evaluation system of assuring quality in schools is not followed in all the secondary schools today.

Thus, Educational system in India needs immediate interventions to remove deficiencies at schools level and for this, attempts have to be made to develop school education and sustain quality enhancement through self-evaluation. All this cannot be fruitful unless there in an efficient delivery system which effectively implements the objectives of school education. The delivery system has to relate to management of school education at the micro (school), meso (district) as well as at the macro (government) levels. Along with the efficient delivery system there also have to be certain parameters set to monitor quality of schools at secondary level. Researchers have focuses on the monitoring of school quality through the development of indicator systems, for it is essential to know not only "which factors work" to make schools effective, but also to identify according to which indicators school quality is being assessed in different parts of the world.

1.3   INDICATORS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

The major concern of this study was to explore the literature on school effectiveness in order to identify the in-school and out of school factors that were found to be crucial determinants of school quality.

According to (Murnane, 1987) Quality indicators can be divided as; Inputs, Process and Outputs, where the inputs include financial, physical and Human resources required to function at each educational level. Financial resources include educational expenditures per student. Physical resources include the age and quality of facilities as classrooms, laboratories, and libraries and any other physical resources required for academic and administrative functions of the school. Human resourceincludes the teacher, pupil, parents and other human resources engaged in educational activities at each class level. They also include background information about these teachers such as educational qualifications, experience, and perhaps knowledge competencies and attitudes.

Willms (2004) notes that many countries have established programmes to collect indicators of school quality for monitoring performance at national, regional and local levels. Quality of education becomes a matter of degree of the presence of the indicators, rather than an absolute, or discrete variable. This assertion is consistent with Yin's (1996) observation that, evaluation of school performance must focus on multi-level and multi-facet indicators including inputs, process, and outputs of schooling in addition to academic development of students. Ideally, indicators should evaluate both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of schools. The quantitative indicators available in most countries are enrolment ratios, learner achievement levels, qualification of teachers etc. The quality indicators given by UNESCO in 2005, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in 2005 and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) in 2009 focuses on bringing improvement in the education outcomes and thereby enhancing quality of education. The following table-1.2, presents the quality indicators given by these three agencies.

Table-1.2

Quality Indicators proposed by CBSE, UNESCO & RMSA

Sr. No.	INDICATORS		
	CBSE	**UNESCO**	**RMSA**
1	Scholastic Processes	Home school relations	School Planning and Manage
2	Beneficiary Satisfaction	Safe school and classroom environment	Curriculum transaction
3	Infrastructure	Clear school mission	Teaching learning resources
4	Leadership	Management leadership	Learners' progress in all the areas
5	Human Resource	High expectations for success	Teacher Professional Development
6	Co-Scholastic Processes	Opportunity to learn and student time on task	Infrastructure and other resources
7	Management & Administration	Frequent monitoring of student success	

(Source; UNESCO 2005, CBSE 2009, RMSA 2009)

The above table-1.2, discusses the quality indicators proposed by CBSE, UNESCO and RMSA. Process indicators which reflect the classroom reality are difficult to measure. Hence, methods of evaluation should include both quantitative data and qualitative information collected through interviews, observations and discussions. According to Harvey and Green, when quality is approached or viewed in terms of value of money, the approach focuses on performance indicators. Quality at this level is assessed in terms of quantitative improvement. In a school situation, an increase in the number of schools with 100% results in the public examination or the number of 1st class candidates in each year's Board examination results could quantitatively indicate quality improvement. The system of indicators of quality in education, as well as the quality criteria associated with the indicators, helps schools to point out the important areas of their own activities, their own advantages and disadvantages and development opportunities. School quality team can debate about representation and development of particular indicator aspect and search for method to upgrade and improve indicator representation in specific school circumstances. In the present study researcher has selected common six indicators quality from the above table-1.2, of indicators given by UNESCO, CBSE, and RMSA. The following diagram-1.1 represents the quality indicators selected for the present study.

Figure: 1.1: Quality Indicators

(Source: Common indicators identified by researcher from UNESCO, RMSA & CBSE)

These quality indicators are explained in table-1.3, with the dimensions they represent and how they have to be looked at during the field visits and observations made in the top performing schools.

Table-1.3:

Dimensions of Quality Indicators

	Key Indicators	Dimensions
1.	School Community Relations	Parents support in the school's basic mission, parents given opportunity to play an important role in helping the school to achieve mission.
2.	Infrastructure and other resources	**Physical environment:**Proper lighting facility in the classroom / sunlight **Social environment:** Teacher-Child relationship teacher-teacher relationship, Teacher-administrator relationship, school climate not oppressive, conducive for teaching-learning.
3.	Curriculum transaction in classroom	Details of classroom organization, display of material in the classroom, teaching-learning strategies / methods followed, use of teacher-learning aids in transactional process, involvement of students in teaching-learning process, assessment procedure followed, periodicity / frequency of assessment, belief of staff that all students can achieve mastery.
4.	Teacher's Professional Development	Details of the in-service teacher development workshops, seminars, short refreshing courses etc. attended by the teachers.
5.	School Leadership	Principal persistently & effectively communicates school mission to the staff, Teacher profile , Pre-Service Experience, In-service Experience, Ability to develop TLM ,Motivation level of Teacher, Teacher-Community relationship, Supervision Mechanism of Teachers work
6.	Student's Achievement	Details of Curricular and co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

(Source: RMSA, Govt. of India, 2009)

1.4 PRESENT SCENARIO OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

The education systems in the States and Union Territories of India generally follow the 8+2+2+3 pattern, which provides for eight years of elementary education, two years each of secondary and senior secondary schooling, and three years of university education. Secondary education in India is institutionally diverse, with three National Boards and 34 State and Union Territory Boards. Each Board has its own specified curriculum and school certificate examinations for Grades 10 and 12. When we look at the aims of secondary education; the Secondary Education Commission (1952) articulated the aims of secondary education in the following words; "Committee is of considered view that no great purpose will be served by mere expansion of secondary education in its current form and structure. For achieving the mission of quality schooling for all for optimization of latent talents and potentialities secondary education has to be reconceptualised afresh as education of the adolescents in transition, as education for nurturing multiple intelligence and capabilities. Accordingly, curricular concepts and structures, instructional processes and pedagogy, student assessment and evaluation have to be redesigned. All such shifts must be contained in a compatible quality infrastructure". The Committee recommends a culture shift in secondary education. It is not that there is no control on the quality of secondary education; education systems in India have always had some kinds of checks on quality or standards of education and mechanisms to improve them. Since long school inspections keeping a check of school quality both in terms of academics and administration also is responsible for bringing improvement in all the areas of the school.

Research and the empirical evidence in the school inspection have shown that there is a considerable decline in external supervision practices by educational administrators, particularly in academic supervision, which has a direct bearing on improvement in the teaching-learning practices and the overall quality of school. It is, therefore, necessary that the supervisory systems and procedures need to be rethought so that they respond to the quality concerns of school education. There is need to reform school supervision, by changing its mandate – from inspection to support and professional development. The key to an institution's successful functioning probably lies in getting the balance right between delegation to, supervision over, and support of staff (Tyagi, 2011).

The progress of the learner should be seen as the final indicator of the success of the work of the head of school (Govinda *et al.* 1999).If the present situation of secondary school inspection needs improvement then it is very important for schools to go for self-evaluation and not to rely only on school inspection for bringing improvement in the system. School-based self-evaluation is not a new phenomenon; high achieving schools have been following it since long.

1.5 QUALITY EDUCATION AS NATIONAL MANDATE

The Government of India has initiated series of steps to improve the level of quality of education in the schools across the country. The 11th Five Year Plan (2007-12) has focused on improving the quality of school education. It reads as:

"Quality of education is a much discussed issue and there is no clear consensus on what constitutes quality, how to measure it, or whether it can be measured at all. The meaning of 'improved quality' needs to be defined in operational terms through clearly identified outcome indicators for various dimensions like teachers' competence, classroom processes, teaching learning materials, students' performance etc."

The broad secondary education development strategies envisaged (at the macro level) during the 11th Plan included: (i) restructuring of the school system (to a 5+3+2+2 system) and expansion of the secondary school network/physical access by upgrading the existing schooling provisions and establishing new institutions/sections including high quality model schools at the Community Development Block level to serve as benchmark for excellence in secondary schooling; (ii) promoting Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to leverage private investment in the expansion of secondary schooling provisions; (iii) ensuring quality secondary education with focus on science, mathematics and English; (iv) promoting inclusiveness in secondary education through demand-side financing strategies; (v) introducing ICT in government and aided schools; (vi) adopting the National Curriculum Framework, 2005; and (vii) undertaking institutional reforms in school management. The recommendations of the CABE Committee (2005) shaped the development priorities in secondary education. It suggested that not only universal enrolment, but universal retention and satisfactory quality of learning should be given priority at the secondary level.

Subsequently, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) was launched in April 2009 with the basic developmental objectives of universalizing access to and improving quality of secondary and higher secondary education in the country. The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha

Abhiyan (RMSA) aims at making secondary education of good quality, accessible and affordable to all young people by;

- Confirming to the prescribed norms related to physical facilities, staff and academic matters.

- Universalizing physical access to all young people

- Improving participation and retention

- Overcoming barriers due to gender, socioeconomic status and disability.

It is very important to note that how the objectives of quality learning outcomes are achieved in the absence of setting any quality benchmarks. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC 2009) recommended for the establishment of 6,000 model schools, one in each block, ICT based pedagogy and learning aids and broadband connectivity to all the Government and Government aided secondary schools, urban and local planning for the physical requirements for schooling, including provisions for play grounds and other school facilities flexible central schemes for school education, greater degree of autonomy of local level management in the use of funds, improved and regulated Pre-service teacher training, changes in the examination system, and special strategies to ensure greater access to schools in backward regions, remote locations and difficult terrains. This is in the direction of establishing quality secondary schools in the country.

As per the Planning Commission (Government of India) 2013, the general objective of the 12th five year plan's(2012-2017) for secondary education is to make quality education available, accessible and affordable to the target population in the age group of 14–18 years. To achieve this objective the following goals were formulated;

- Achieve near-universal enrolment in secondary education, with the GER exceeding 90 per cent by 2017;

- Raise the GER at the higher secondary level to 65 percent and reduce dropout rate to less than 25 per cent by 2017by 2017;

- Ensure quality secondary education with relevant skills including basic competency in mathematics, science, languages and communication, implement common curricula and syllabi of nationally acceptable standards, develop life skills including skills of critical and constructive thinking and use of ICT

It was noted there is inadequate quality assurance and accountability mechanisms in place. The quality of pre-service and in service training of teachers is low along with certain issues of curriculum, examinations reforms, school leadership, assessment and accreditation. Thus, in the Twelfth Plan, all secondary and higher secondary schools would be made to conform to minimum standards in facilities and quality. School Quality Assessment and Accreditation System would be established to cover all aspects of school functioning, including scholastic and co-scholastic domains, physical infrastructure, faculty management, school leadership, learning outcomes and satisfaction of pupils and their parents/guardians.

During the Twelfth Plan Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), is proposed to be made a single comprehensive scheme to address issues of coverage and quality in secondary education. This will be extended to the higher secondary stage and cover all government and government- aided schools.

1.6 MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS OF VARIOUS COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS ON QUALITY EDUCATION IN INDIA

The National Policy of Education (NPE) has played a major role in the quality assurance development of the Indian education system. With the constitutional amendment of 1976, bringing education into the concurrent list, the Central Government has a meaningful role in ensuring the quality of education. It has to reinforce the national and integrative character of education, maintain quality and standards, it recommended development of many areas of curriculum enrichment; a high quality education should be accessible to the poor, disadvantaged, and even for population of rural area NPE-1968was prepared to improve the quality of education in the country and was focused on providing education facilities to all the citizens of the nation. The policy has been reviewed in the subsequent years. It was further updated in 1992 to spread knowledge and freedom of thought among the citizens of the country. It also called for paying immediate attention to:

- Improving the unattractive school environment, the unsatisfactory condition of buildings and the inadequacy of instructional materials; and

- Laying down minimum levels of learning that all children completing different stages of education should achieve.

The Objectives of the NPE (The National Policy on Education) and POA (The Programme of Action), 1992 are as under

1. To identify and encourage the development of such infrastructures that would have a bearing upon the improvement in quality in school education.

2. To encourage networking and sharing of resources and expertise between different systems of schools - Government aided or unaided, so that there is an overall improvement in quality education in schools.

3. Curriculum reforms involving continuous re-organization and up-gradation of content and process of education.

4. Identification of learning outcomes in the form of competencies or levels of learning for secondary and higher secondary stage.

5. Strengthening and reforming the Secondary School Boards towards national uniformity in standards in learning and in the examinations.

6. To reform the curriculum in the Teacher Training Institutes for incorporating the process for development of competency based teaching and learning.

7. To encourage the States to recruit teachers through objective methods of testing and to provide regular in-service training to the teachers.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF, 2005)

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been working at the National level for the all-round improvement in the quality of school The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005, developed by NCERT endeavor that Schools are given the freedom to devise their own the curriculum and pedagogical strategies, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) must be deployed as a tool for quality improvement. A balanced pupil-teacher ratio and the rationalization of distribution of teachers (especially between remote rural and urban areas) are perceived as fundamental to the improvement of the education quality.

National Knowledge Commission (2009)

NKC recommended establishment of 6,000 model schools, one in each block, ICT based pedagogy and learning aids and broadband connectivity to all the Government and Government aided secondary schools, urban and local planning for the physical requirements for schooling, including provisions for play grounds and other school facilities, flexible central schemes for school education, greater degree of autonomy of local level management in the use of funds, improved and regulated Pre-service teacher training, Changes in the examination system, and special strategies to ensure greater access to schools in backward regions, remote locations and difficult terrains. (National Knowledge Commission 2009).

Ministry of human resource development prepared a draft vision (Table-1.4) for secondary education, to deal with the quality components like curriculum reforms, teacher preparation, research and monitoring of quality, information and communication technology, roles of national and district level agencies and guidelines for financial norms.

Table-1.4:

Draft Vision

Draft Vision Document for the Improvement of Quality of Secondary Education

The document is designed to deal with the following quality components:

a) Curriculum Reform: A major quality aspect of secondary education which includes:

    i) Revision of state syllabi and textbooks at secondary stage in accordance with the National Curriculum Framework-2005 (NCF- 2005).

    ii) Improving classroom processes and school management to implement the curricular and pedagogic shift for enhancing participation in learning process and providing success experience to all learners.

    iii) Assessment and examination in consonance with the emerging perspectives on Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) as well as examination reform at secondary stage.

b) Teacher Preparation: Another quality imperative which deals with setting up of mechanisms for continuous in-service professional development of secondary stage teachers in each state/union territory.

c) Researches and Monitoring for Quality: As important quality interventions, which is not only helpful in ensuring quality but also improving modalities for quality inputs as and when required.

d) Information and Communication Technology: A quality component that is infused in each of the quality initiatives such as curriculum reform, teacher preparation, research and monitoring.

e) Quality Indicators: Monitoring quality interventions require concrete measurable and observable indicators for various aspects such as curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, etc.

f) Roles of Various National-/State-/District-Level Agencies: Each state/ union territory hasvarious structures to deal with the planning and implementation of the programme. For quality secondary education it is imperative to bring clarity on the roles of these institutions to further increase synergy among them.

g) Multi-Layer Strategic Guidelines and Indicative Financial Norms: Each of the aforesaid quality aspects requires guidelines and norms for stakeholders operating at different levels under the RMSA for the effective implementation of the programme. In the context of quality components, the guidelines and norms need to be specific with the main objective to improve real school-classroom setting and learningof students.

(Source: MHRD 2009)

These guidelines mentioned in the table-1.4, are helpful to the secondary education in bringing clarity of roles to both the national and district level agencies for increasing synergy among them and speed up working towards quality of education.

1.7 NEED FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION

Quality assurance in education is the efficient management, monitoring, evaluation and reviews of the resource inputs and transformation process (teaching and learning) to produce quality outputs (students) that meet set standards and expectations of the society. Robinson (1994) defines quality assurance as the set of activities that an organization undertakes to ensure that a product or service will satisfy given requirements for quality. Its goals are the anticipation and avoidance of faults or mistakes by setting attainable standards for a process, organizing work so that they are achieved, documenting the procedures required, communicating them to all concerned, and monitoring and reviewing the attainment of standards As per the definitions quality assurance in education encompasses systematic management, monitoring and evaluation procedures adopted to measure the performance of school administrators, teachers and students against educational objectives. Thus, quality assurance helps the schools to reflect on their own practices and develop, by means of a participatory and comprehensive approach, a system that should be owned by all. With such an approach both, those who manage (e.g. principals) and those who are managed (e.g. facilitators) will be made aware of their responsibilities with regard to establishing quality in their management and teaching functions. At present the secondary education in India has grown into a largest system of education and therefore establishing quality standards is the need of the hour. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has initiated mechanism of accreditation of its affiliated schools. It is both a process and a status. As a process it reflects the fact that in the process of achieving accreditation the school goes through a process of self-discovery and self-audit as well as external

review by peers which help to qualitatively improve the institution. In terms of status, it provides public with the information that school meets the standards of quality set forth by an accrediting agency.

The responsibilities for quality assurance in education are spread across various partners; the government, educational inspectors and schools. Since there is a strong correlation between quality assessment and school improvement these partners must look for a way in which internal and external evaluations can be matched with each other. Thus, the focuses must be upon the integration of self-evaluations and school inspections that is internal and external evaluation for the development of schools.

1.8 MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN GUJARAT STATE

Gujarat is one of the progressive states of India, with the literacy rate for the rural areas as 62.06 per cent and for the urban areas 82.59. In all the 24 districts of Gujarat Ahmadabad has the highest literacy rate of 79.89 per cent, while Dahod district has the lowest literacy rate of 45.65 per cent (Census 2011). Gujarat follows a uniform structure of school education i.e. the 8+2+2 system the Primary stage comprises if classes I-VIII, Secondary stage comprises of class IX & X and Higher Secondary stage comprises of class XI-XII. Schools in the state are affiliated with the Gujarat state Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board. However, some schools are also affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) or the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (ICSE) boards. There are only a few secondary schools run by the government. Majority of the secondary schools are run by trust and funded by grants from the government. The welfare department of the

government in rural and tribal areas runs the Navi Taleem (Nayi Taleem) primary schools and ashram shalas (Tribal Schools) which have hostel facilities as well. Thus the Gujarat Board of education is supposed to advice the state government on all matters relating to secondary and higher secondary education and to lay down the general policy for development of secondary and higher secondary education and intends to provide quality education to all its learners. The table 1.5 below shows the how much is the increase in no. of government secondary and higher secondary schools affiliated to the Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools and the no of students enrolled when compared between the year 2009 and 2013.

Table: 1.5

No. of Students &Secondary & Hr. Secondary schools affiliated to GSHEB

Government Secondary Schools		Government Higher Secondary Schools		No. of Students in Government Secondary Schools		No. of Students in Government Higher Secondary Schools	
2009	**2013**	**2009**	**2013**	**2009**	**2013**	**2009**	**2013**
194	644	198	322	7.46 lakhs	9.23 lakhs	3.62 lakhs	4.11 Lakhs

(Source:gujarat-education.gov.in)

The above table-1.5 indicates that in 2009, there were only 194 Government Secondary Schools in Gujarat. Over the period of three years, 450 new Government Secondary Schools have been started. Hence in 2013, there are 644 Government Secondary Schools. In case of Government Higher Secondary Schools in Gujarat the no. was 198 in the year 2009. In three years' time there was an increase of 124 new Government Higher Secondary Schools. Hence in 2013, there are 322 such Schools. In case of students there was

increasing number of students in secondary schools from 7.46 lakhs to 9.23 lakhs, which is an increase of 1.76 lakhs students whereas in Higher Secondary Schools, increasing the number of students from 3.62 lakhs to 4.11 lakhs, which is an increase of forty nine thousand students.

1.8.1. Management Structure for Secondary Education in Gujarat

The following figure 1.2 describes the structure of management in the Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Board and displays the hierarchy in management.
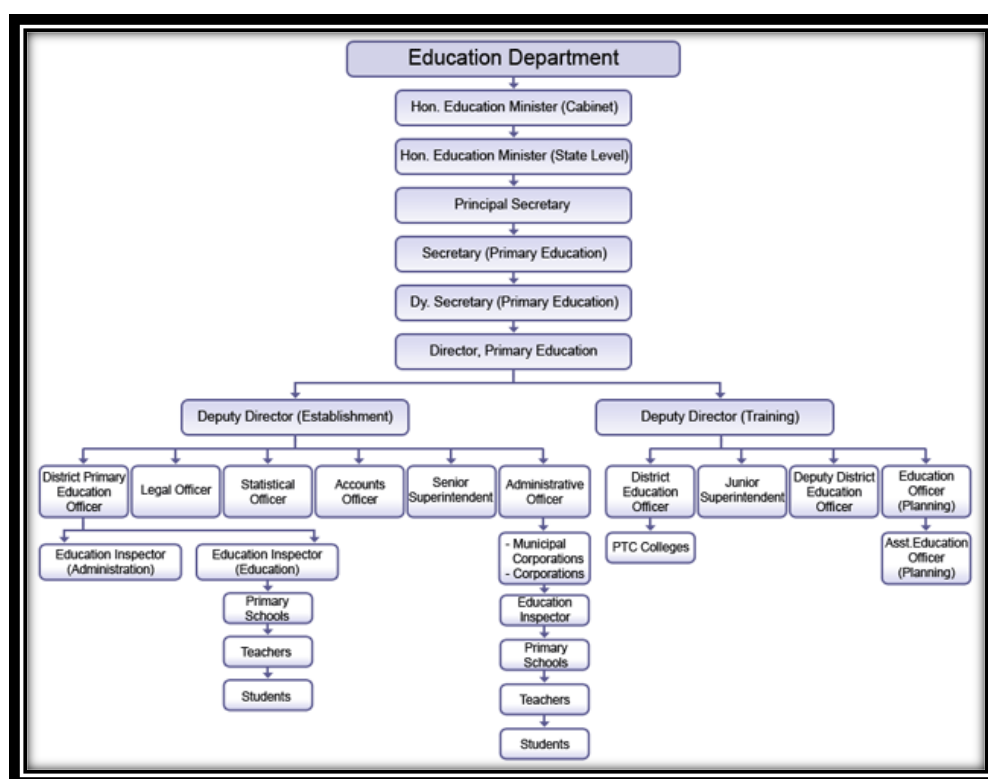

Figure-1.2

Management structure of Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education board

(Source:www.gcert.gujarat.gov.in)

The above figure shows that at the Secretariat Level the Minister of Education takes all policy decisions while the secretary Education looks after secondary and primary education. At the State Level the Commissioner of schools coordinate with the Board & looks after secondary education and at the district level he is assisted by the District Education Officer. The government with the Education Minister as its chairperson constitutes the textbook Board and for developing techniques and tools for imparting education has Gujarat Institute of Education Technology (GIET).

1.8.2. Some Major Issues and Challenges of Secondary Education in Gujarat

Secondary Education suffers from lack of access, low participation, and from equity and quality issues. The key constraints of secondary education in Gujarat state include the following:

- Insufficient and uneven distribution of school infrastructure, facilities, and resources;

- Insufficient supply of effective teachers, uneven teacher deployment and low pupil-to-teacher ratios, which limit intake capacity;

- Sub-optimal use of the private sector to expand enrollment capacity and to achieve social objectives; and

- Insufficient open schooling opportunities for those who have left the formal system.

In addition to the above issues and challenges Gujarat has an education system that is expanding and including more first-generation learners as well as students from disadvantaged socio-economic groups. This makes it more important for the state to establish systems of quality assurance and keep a check on quality education in the state. The State government has considered these issues as urgent and has taken several steps to bring improvement in the quality of secondary schools.

1.8.3. Quality Assurance Approaches in Secondary Schools of Gujarat State

- *Board Examinations/External Examination*

The Indian secondary schools affiliated to any of the boards go for examination conducted by the board. The Secondary schools affiliated to the Gujarat Board enrol their pupils for the board examinations conducted by the board outside of individual schools. This type of system ensures that all students in all participating schools write the same exams, in order to get some insight into whether they have attained similar levels of education. Thus, exams are often thought about from the point of view of individual students – they are used to check what individual students have learned, and to give them certificates on the basis of their achievements in the exam. However, they are also an important mechanism for checking up on whether teachers and schools are teaching the prescribed curriculum appropriately. Board or External examinations are a way of ensuring that all students write exams of the same standard and a way of checking up on schools and individual teachers, by seeing how well their students perform. Governments take action if, for example, a school has a high failure rate in the external exam.

- *School Inspections*

Inspection has been a mechanism particularly associated with schools. It has been used to monitor the quality of teaching, as well as general aspects of schools. Inspectors could be subject experts who visit teachers to monitor how they are teaching, and give them support and advice. They could also be educational experts who monitor how schools are run, and provide advice to school heads. They also provide feedback to government about the levels of educational quality in schools. Government can then take remedial steps if necessary.

- *Accreditation*

     Accreditation has also become an important mechanism within education. In order to be able to offer educational programmes in specific areas, institutions have to be accredited by the appropriate body. Though it is a known fact that the development of students' potential depends on the quality of the school and the quality of its teachers. However, till recently there was no system available for evaluating the quality of education delivered by schools of Gujarat.

     Hence, the Gujarat School Quality Accreditation Council (GSQAC) has been formed, with a view to evaluating the performance of schools as well as teachers including government, non-government and grant-in-aid primary, secondary and higher secondary schools, as also for accrediting the schools according to those standards. Gujarat School Quality Accreditation Council (GSQAC) is a body that will rate schools in the state based on a streamlined procedure, and will provide an accurate revelation of the school's academic merit. It will be having three committees, a general body - headed by the education minister, an executive committee headed by the principal secretary of the education department, and a committee for setting up the standards for evaluation and accreditation, to be headed by the secretary for primary education. The Gujarat School Quality Accreditation Council (GSQAC) will rate schools in the state on the basis of the management and teachers.

     Another important step in quality assurance for secondary schools in the state of Gujarat is that Quality Council of India has offered to help the Education Department in Gujarat to set up a quality assurance agency for government schools and also take up the accreditation of 100 schools on a pilot basis. Quality Council of India is ready to translate the parameters of National Accreditation

Board for Education and Training (NABET) in Gujarati and help them set up a quality assurance agency, National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET) falls under the purview Quality Council of India (QCI).

All the present lacunae with the pedagogy, physical infrastructure, safety and hygiene NABET can help in the evaluation and benchmarking of all these issues and surveillance will be done within a span of four years. The Gujarat government has set up Gujarat Accreditation Board for Education which will be affiliated to Quality Council of India (QCI). This board will regulate quality of governance among government schools in the state and help them Adopt Standards.

1.8.4. Government Initiatives to Improve Quality of Secondary Education in Gujarat

In Gujarat in the last decade, vital reforms have been affected to enhance the quality in education, they are as follows;

- Annual supervision of the schools by the board officials,

- Up gradation of Commissionerate Office and 26 District Education Offices by obtaining ISO 9001:2008 Certification.

- E-Governance initiative by launching websites for 26 DEO Offices' and 325 Government Schools.

- Under ICT@ Schools project E-Content syllabus of Class 9, Class 10, Class 11 and Class 12 (prescribed by GSHSEB) installed in the Computer Labs of 6000 Secondary & Higher Secondary Schools

- KarmyogiTalim for teachers and principals as a part of professional development.

- Under 'Shudhhikaran' action; Teacher recruitment done through Board officials instead of the trustee members and prohibition is put on the tuitions conducted by teachers

- The Teachers' Eligibility Test (TET) now mandatory for recruiting teachers.

- Centralized Assessment System. Each question is assessed by an individual evaluator.

- Comprehensive and continuous evaluation introduced at the secondary school level.

- Vocational courses included in the curriculum,

- Bar code system in place of writing seat numbers on answer books.

- Examination results of SSC (X) and HSC (XII) examination declared on internet and students given their mark sheets on the same day.

- October examinations for X and XII repeaters abolished.

- Students failed in one subject allowed to take special examination which is usually held immediately in the month of July, without waiting for one year to clear the examination.

- Common Entrance Test for admission

- Teleconference for the students of Std. X and XII.

- "Shala Sankools" for effective monitoring of quality in schools.

- Gunotsav Drive to grade Secondary Schools performance through ability test.

- policy of declaring equivalence of ITI with SSC and HSC

In spite of efforts made by the government for quality education, it is still a challenge. The school based initiations and the existence of quality indicators in schools is necessary for the quality assurance in education. Hence the present study focuses on the quality assurance systems in secondary schools by identifying the quality indicators through the perceptions of the teachers, students and parents and exploring further to study the school based initiations with respect to quality assurance.

1.9. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Quality of secondary education is a major concern of the country. Parents keep attaching more importance to the quality education and motivate their children towards stern competitions to secure a seat in the best schools. The major objective of the best schools is the learning outcomes of students, which is exhibited in form of cognitive achievement. So they take the students' cognitive achievement as an important indicator of school quality along with other indicators. Quality of a school system can be ascertained only with its identified indicators. The school authorities thus, monitor quality continuously with respect to different identified indicators and take appropriate actions to achieve the goals. Such an approach helps the management and the teachers to be aware of their responsibilities with regard to establishing quality in their management and teaching functions.

The systems and practices of assuring quality of education in the State Board Secondary Schools needs immediate concern of the government as the development and implementation of quality assurance in Secondary Education is one of the areas of ongoing debate (RMSA launched in March, 2009 with the main aim of achieving quality secondary education) and with this quality of

education and its assurance has come to the forefront of all crucial issues in the context of increasing recognition of the role of Secondary Education for National development. The huge success of SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) has also increased the need of rapid institutional and enrolment expansion. This expansion depends on financial resources which are stringent, it increases the complexity of Grant in aid secondary schools in terms of expanding access as they depend on government for their full financial resources. These trends raise a concern about quality of education and thus lead to demands for accountability on the part of State Board Secondary Schools.

So far, there were no accreditation standards for primary and secondary education institutes in India. The private schools have set forth their own standards of school governance. On the other hand, the National Accreditation Board, and Training (NABET) established for improving quality of schools (has developed the procedures for schools that seek the accreditation) has not been made mandatory. Such apathy towards ensuring quality education has raised the question of how Secondary State Boards demonstrates quality of education in a changing secondary education environment and it requires an understanding of their current practices and systems for assuring quality based on empirical research.

In Gujarat school inspections is the only mode of assessing quality of educational institutions and thus serves an important link between the education administration and individual schools. Inspections are carried out via field functionaries who at district levels monitor the programmes launched by the department of school education and thus ensure quality in education. As per NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training 2001) in

Gujarat despite the inspection system is at place to monitor school quality, the reality of quality assessment is not satisfactory as the appointment of education officers at the district level to supervise subjects in secondary schools is a token process. District education officers do not visit the required number of schools while the size of the education system has increased tremendously in terms of number of institutions. Teachers are having a negative impact due to the summative' (combined) nature of inspection as the system causes fear of dismissal, frustration and unneeded competition among the teachers. Thus, quality of education is not monitored as required to enhance the teaching-learning processes in schools.

To manage quality of education in the schools, self-evaluation or school based evaluation as an internal evaluation must be effectively followed along with the external evaluation made by the inspectors. To make school based evaluation work for the benefit of the learners, it must be an integral part of the school's day-to-day management. Moreover, teachers and support staff need to be involved in the design of internal quality assurance mechanisms, and they in turn are empowered to use and embed. In fact it is the staff who will make things happen for an institution so the way in which they are valued and respected will play a major part as school based evaluation is a team effort.

The main focus of the research was to identify the top performing secondary schools of Gujarat and study the quality indicators prevailing in the school system as perceived by the teachers, parents and students. The study has also explored the current practices of quality assurance in the areas of quality indicators and then developed the scenario of best practices in selected top performing schools. Such a study will highlight the importance of quality assurance system in schools for excellent performance and then help in understanding how such systems are developed at school level and integrated in the school system.

Theoretically, this study will be an effort to bridge the research gap in the area of Quality Assurance in Secondary Education. The findings of the study can be used to develop theoretical framework and/or model for building Quality Assurance Systems that fits to the context of State Board Secondary Schools in Gujarat. The conceptual understanding of the problem and the insights gained from the review of related literature helped the researcher to formulate the following research questions for the present study.

1.10. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the rationale of the study the following research question emerged;

1. What is the status of the secondary school education in the state of Gujarat in terms of quality education?

2. What are the quality assurance mechanisms that are being practiced in secondary schools of Gujarat?

3. What are the quality indicators in the secondary schools of Gujarat?

4. How quality is assured in secondary schools of Gujarat by the government in terms of monitoring and evaluation of educational programmes?

5. Whether the individual schools adopt school based quality assurance system?

6. To what extent quality assurance system in the schools making an impact on school improvement?

7. What are the good practices of quality assurance in secondary schools of Gujarat?

1.11. TITLE OF THE STUDY

"A Study on the Quality Assurance System in the Secondary Schools of Gujarat State"

1.12. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1) To study the policies and programmes for Quality Assurance in Secondary Schools of Gujarat

2) To identify the quality indicators as perceived by the teachers, parents, and students of the top performing Secondary Schools in Gujarat.

3) To study the best practices of quality assurance system in top performing Secondary Schools of Gujarat.

1.13. EXPLANATION OF THE TERMS

Quality Assurance System

The term 'Quality Assurance System' is understood to refer to the movements, procedures, or activities through which these special properties, attributes, values or characters of an organization or establishment are maintained and the quality of the product or service guaranteed. In this study the term 'Quality assurance System in the Secondary schools of Gujarat' refers to those special efforts, procedures or activities or the best practices that are carried out by the high achieving state board secondary schools of Gujarat in their effort to maintain and guarantee quality outcomes in teaching and learning.

Secondary Schools

Secondary school is a grade of education from Standards IX to XII which caters to the students from ages 14 to 17 years.

1.14. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study focused exclusively on top performing English Medium secondary schools affiliated to the Gujarat Secondary & Higher Secondary Education Board (GSHSEB). Hence it may not be easy to generalize the results in schools where conditions of learning are different.

The study is also delimited to the secondary schools of Central Gujarat. The Central Gujarat comprise of Vadodara, Kheda, Anand, Dahod and Panchmahal districts

1.15. THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis explores the best practices in the top performing secondary schools of Gujarat Secondary & Higher Secondary Education Board, It is organised into five chapters. Chapter one, 'Introduction' gives a brief overview of the work. It provides an introduction to the study, the problem statement, the research questions, rationale of the study, objectives and delimitation of the study.

Chapter Two, 'Review of Related Literature' presents a literature review relating to the first and second research aim, which was to explore; the quality assurance mechanisms that are being practiced in secondary schools of Gujarat and identify the quality indicators in the secondary schools that add to student achievement. It covers the fundamental concepts of school effectiveness research.

Chapter three, 'Methodology' discusses the methodology of the study where the population, sampling procedure, data collection and data analysis methods are elaborated on. It discusses the reliability and validity of the analysis used in the study.

Chapter four, 'Analysis & Interpretation' deals with the various themes cutting across the objectives of the study. It also presents the Best practices in the top performing schools in the form of case studies, the presentation of each case study is followed by understanding the quality assurance procedures adopted in the schools and the quality culture present in these schools.Chapter five, 'Summary and Conclusion' is the summary in which the main findings are discussed in the light of the guiding research questions and the literature review. The chapter makes recommendations for the improvement of the practice of determining effective/ineffective schools and thereby the performance of secondary schools in Gujarat. The chapter also suggests areas for further research. Finally, there is the section with bibliography and appendix which includes the tools, permission letter, photographs,published articles and course work certificate.