

CHAPTER V
Summary, Findings, Discussion
and Suggestions for Further Study

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SUMMARY, FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is vital to balanced human progress. It can remedy many of our ills related to malnutrition, healthcare and education of children. Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women was taken up as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which was agreed upon by all the 192 United Nations member states and 23 international organisations. The MDGs were to be achieved by the year 2015. Though with the advent of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the shift from Millennium Development Goals has taken place, the core idea of international human development with equality and equity remains the same. Out of the seventeen goals, the fifth is ‘to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’. The document on Sustainable Development Goals was adopted at the Sustainable Development Summit held between September 25 and 27, 2015 at New York, USA. The SDGs are to be achieved between 2016 and 2030. In India the protection of women’s rights has been sought through the promulgation of laws and designing of policies. Education has been identified as the most powerful means to empower women and to make them independent. Since independence attempts have been made to ensure that the educational needs of all are addressed equally. Special provisions were made for weaker sections so that they could come on par with the rest and thus the ‘common good’ is well protected with less conflicts and struggles amongst them. Indian Constitution acknowledges the diverse needs of the complex society and attempts to render ‘level playing field’ for all the members of civil society. In order to protect the rights of socially and economically backward classes certain specific provisions were included. But only constitutional provisions have not been proved enough to ensure protection of everybody’s right. The effective implementation of the laws is crucial for making social equality a reality. It has been pointed out that there is a wide gap between policy and practice. The post colonial history has recorded quite a few struggles by different groups either claiming for their rightful share in the development or for fair treatment. Such struggles just go on to show that the sense of inequality is still pervasive. For fostering the feeling of unity and mitigate the sense of alienation amongst the member of the society, it is highly imperative that the members understand and recognise each other’s fair claims for development.

5.1 Women education in India

The history of girl child education is interwoven with the history of woman education. Woman education includes wide range of issues concerning such as equity, access, retention, religious beliefs and so forth. Historically, woman education in India has gone through various vicissitudes dating back to Vedic period to present day.

5.1.1 Women education in the Vedic period

In the Vedic period women had access to education in India, in fact it is believed to be one the golden periods of women education. There were several hymns in the Rig – Veda composed by women. Gargi and Maitryi were the prominent female philosophers of the time. Indrani and Urvashi were famous rishis. One can also find several compositions on women during this period.

5.1.2 Women education during medieval period

The status of women deteriorated during the medieval time this was mainly due to political, socio-cultural and religious reasons. The education of girls and women suffered immensely during this time. Only women from the elite and rich class had the access to education. Women insecurity gave rise to strict *purdah* practice and their confinement to home.

5.1.3 Women education in the British period

The British period is marked by both neglect of women education followed by initiatives and efforts by missionary societies and indigenous movements asserting women's rights. Sharma (2004) notes that while the Charter Act of 1813 made provision for education for men, education for women suffered setbacks due to social and religious reasons. In 1810 in Bengal region the attempt was made by Christian missionaries for opening the first institution for women education. The approval of educational development programme in the Woods Dispatch (1854) is considered to be the starting point of women education.

Walia (2007) notes that in the 18th century education of women suffered so much so that in the beginning of 19th century hardly 2 per cent women got education. It was during this time various socio-religious movements led by eminent persons like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar emphasized on women's education in India. Later Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Baba Saheb Ambedkar were leaders of the lower castes in India who took various initiatives to make education available to the women of India. The Maharaja Syajirao Gaekwad of Baroda did a pioneering work of making primary education compulsory in his state. He emphasized girl child education

and opened girl schools. The private enterprise also played its role in the expansion of education. There was an increase in the number of schools and training institutions. Walia (2007) notes that in 1882 there were 2,600 primary schools, 81 secondary schools and 15 training institutions. For the education of girls and women there was one college. In 1883 two Indian women got their first graduate degree. In 1916 the first Medical College for women- the Lady Hardinge College, Delhi was established. In the same year D.K. Karve's efforts to establish the first women university took shape in the name of Shrimati Nathibai Damodar Thakersay University. The Organisation of the Women's Indian Association came into existence in 1917. Annie Besant was its president. The organization had its primary object of spreading education among women (Walia, 2007).

These efforts were scattered and did little to improve the condition of women education. In 1941 the literacy rate for women was just 6 per cent as against 22.6 per cent of male literacy rate. However, women's education got a fillip after the country got independence in 1947.

5.1.4 Women education after Independence

After the liberation of the country the need for the improvement of women education was acknowledged at the highest level. The factors that could promote women education were addressed in various commissions, committees and policies. With the increasing understanding of the issues of women education, the handling of them also got evolved.

5.1.5 Present status of women education in India

Looking at the enormous efforts and ambitious plans to improve the condition of women education, the output is still far from satisfactory. In India the economic and technological progress is not in congruence with the condition of women. Their social condition vis-a-vis partake in the country's development is still not at par with their male counterpart. As per the recent census (2011) women population of the country is 58,74,47,73 i.e 49 per cent of the total population. The female literacy rate is 65.46 % whereas the male literacy rate is 82.1 per cent. Jharkhand and Bihar registered the lowest female literacy rates of 56.2 per cent and 53.3 per cent respectively. The status of female enrolment at primary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary stages has always lagged behind male enrolment.

5.1.6 Education of the Scheduled Tribe in India

“Within developing country, the great divide seems between the rich and the poor. The poor in turn, is divided between the urban and the rural poor, the tribals coming at the bottom of the rural” (Saxena, 2010)

Though the present study is not entirely on Scheduled Tribe (ST) community, with 81.6 per cent tribal population in the Narmada district (Census 2011), it is likely to be inclined to take in its fold more ST people as way of sample than people from other communities. It is felt that the information on ST community is necessary to provide the study appropriate background.

5.1.7 Narmada district

Narmada district is situated in the South of Gujarat state between north latitude 21° 25' 45' and east longitude of 72° 34' 19'. The District is surrounded by Vadodara in the North, Dhule district of Maharashtra in the East, Bharuch district in the West and Surat district in the South. The district is spread over 2800 sq km. It has four talukas with 527 villages and 221 village *panchayats*. (on 18/2/2014 a new block Garudeshwar was declared. At the time of writing the thesis the head quarter for the Garudeshwar block, including BRC and TPEO's office, is with Nandod block). The four talukas are Sagbara, Dediapada, Nandod and Tilakwada. There are 216 *gram panchayats* in the district. In the district there are 687 primary schools, 53 secondary schools, 23 higher secondary schools, 4 colleges (arts, commerce and science), a PTC collage, a B.Ed. college, a C.P. Ed., a woman polytechnic collage. Narmada district was part of Bharuch District till the year 1997. On October 2, 1997 Narmada district came into separate existence. Out of the four Talukas, three, namely, Sagbara, Dediapada, and Nandod got separated from Bharuch and the fourth – Tilakwada was separated from Vadodara. In the year 1918-19 Nandod was renamed as Rajpipla and was established as a Nagarpalika in 1948. Rajpipla is the current headquarter of the district. The district has population of 590,297 (census, 2011) the main occupation of the district is agriculture as about 79% of the workforce of the district is engaged in agricultural work. Animal husbandry and small scale business are available in the district. (SSANarmada, <http://narmadadp.gujarat.gov.in/narmada>, <https://narmada.gujarat.gov.in> - 2015)

5.1.8 Tribal community and culture in the Narmada district

Most of the tribal people in Gujarat belong to *bhil* community. In the ancient literature that includes Mahabharata, Puranas and mythological tales *bhils* have been referred to be the decedents of non-Aryan tribes *Nishad, Nag, Pulind, Shabar and Kirat*. The *bhils* inhabiting in Narmada district said to be the descendents of the oldest *Nag* tribe or *Pulind* tribe. The *Nag* tribe was spread across the banks of Narmada river right from its mouth to its origin and till the region of Nagpur. This tribe was attacked by *Yadavas* and driven out. They were made to flee to the mountains of Assam. Another view holds that about two thousand years ago *Pulinds* occupied the region on the banks of river Narmada and they are the ancestors of the people whom we call *bhils* today (Patel A. M. 2000). The main tribal communities that are found in Narmada district are *Bhil, Vasava, Dhanka and Tadvi* etc. They consider *Pandar Devi* as their chief goddess. They believe in nature gods. The following are their main gods (1) *Humario* (2) *Nandurio* (3) *Matalio* (4) *Geeb* (5) *Diwas Padvo* (6) *Nagdev* (7) *Pandev* (8) *Vaghdev* (9) *Jug Devta* (10) *Jal Devta* (Community Ruling - 2001). They conduct mountain worship locally known as *Dungar Puja*. The tribal community has realized the need to be organised, to keep up with the changing times and has formulated community rules and regulations for birth ceremony, marriage ceremony, appropriate age for marriage, and rules for divorce, some of these ceremonies involve use of local wine. With the objectives of spreading awareness and solidarity amongst community, representatives of the *Vasava Bhil* community brought out a booklet titled *Samaj Pramanit Dharadhoran – Ritrivajo Vyavaharu Ruling - 2001*. The booklet chalks out rituals and rules on aforementioned social rituals and matters.

5.1.9 The backwardness scenario in the Narmada district

The government of Gujarat treats block as a unit for the identification of backwardness. The identification is carried out on 11 indicators. The blocks are divided into four groups Most Backward, Backward, Relatively Developed, and Relatively More Developed. The rank is assign to a block in such a manner that the block receiving least value is ranked first. The Mid-Term Appraisal document of State Flagship Scheme of Developing Talukas (2011) in the list of 56 backward blocks includes all four blocks of Narmada district. The same document cites lists of backward blocks as per Dr. I. G. Patel Committee (1984) and Cowlagi Committee (2005). In the I. G. Patel Committee's list of 25 Most Backward Talukas, Dediapada block was on the top whereas Sagbara was at 4th place. The Cowlagi Committee Backward Taluka List comprising 30 talukas

placed Sagbara at 7th place and Dediapada at 12th place. The Cowlagi Committee went beyond economic criteria and took into consideration the human development parameters including gender disparities. There were 44 indicators divided in four main groups and 12 sub-groups. Out of 30 backward talukas in the Cowlagi Committee 23 are tribal dominated. The government of Gujarat has acknowledged this fact and covered these areas under Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP). Dediapada and Sagbara are under ITDP. Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana is a part of ITDP. Narmada is one of the beneficiaries of this program. The *doodh Sanjeevani Yojna* is implemented in the primary schools of the Dediapada block of Narmada district. The scheme is intended to alleviate the problem of malnourishment amongst the tribal children. Occasionally, *Baal Kishori Mela* is held in the Narmada district when grant is made available for it. The *Kishori Melas* are meant for the adolescent girl children studying in the upper primary schools to provide them necessary guidance to cope with the physical and mental change that they face.

5.2 RATIONALE

The statistics available on enrolment, dropouts and literacy rates - all indicate at improvement in the state of gender related inequalities. Literacy and enrolment rates have gone up. Dropout rate has come down. It seems that the concerted efforts by the central government, state government and voluntary organizations have ameliorated gender disparities. It is important to see and assess these developments in the regional specificity and background, as the improvements are not often uniform and identical across the regions and groups (that include social, linguistic, religious and gender). Time and again studies and literature on rural, tribal and gender education have pointed out the unequal distribution of educational provisions, facilities and advantages. Sahoo and Das (2010) have deliberated on the issues like skewed sex ratio, high infant mortality rate, and their bearing on gender disparity in educational opportunity. They postulate, “girls and women belonging to linguistic and religious minorities and families living in forest and hill locked areas are ... major sufferers of schooling system.” On the scanty number of stories on education in Sainath’s (1996) seminal work ‘Everybody Loves a Good Drought; Stories from India’s Poorest Districts’, he retorts, “There could have been a little more on education ... had there been a little bit more of education in the places I went to” Though the work is almost two decades old, the stress on the regional disparities continues perennially through some of the more recent literature of the similar genre and disposition. To understand the status of girl

children's education, it is imperative to understand the geographic condition, the community's perception and interest, the support that is available and the socio-economic condition of the region. It is amidst these manifold influences that one's education takes shape. The macro data often do not bring to light the working of these influences and their diverse ramifications on education. Ramchandran (2004) points out that macro data do not reflect educational disparities resulting from social and economic inequalities. The girl child education has direct bearing on the locality, its customs and beliefs, its perceptions and its economic condition. The problems of girl child education can be comprehended in the proper way if we take these factors into account while appreciating them.

Working with a voluntary organisation, involved in an agreement with the state government for the implementation of a series of more than thirteen programmes designed for improving the primary and secondary education scenario of Narmada district, gave the investigator an opportunity to closely work with all the stakeholders of primary and secondary school education system. It also encouraged to closely study the problems that appertain primary education; especially of a girl child.

5.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- (1) What are the factors that interfere with the girl child education in Narmada district?
- (2) How are the programmes for encouraging education of girl child education perceived and received in the Narmada district?
- (3) What are the factors that could encourage enrolment and retention of girl child in the district?
- (4) What is the socio economic condition of the girl children in the Narmada district and how is it affecting the education of girl children?
- (5) How is a girl child perceived in the community?

5.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A Study of the Problems of Girl Child Education in the Narmada District of Gujarat.

5.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To study the problems of girl child education in the Narmada district
 - (i) with regard to the deterring factors to the girl child education.
 - (ii) with regard the trends of enrolment and retention.
 - (iii) with regard to the girl child's involvement in school activities.

(iv) with regard to the facilities and support available to girl child.

(v) with regard to the interest of the community in girl child education.

2) To study the perceptions of parents on a girl child.

3) To study the socio-economic status of the girl child.

5.6 TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

Girl child: Girl student of the age group 6-15 years studying in the Upper Primary regional medium government schools.

Deterring Factors: Factors that intervene with and affect girl child education.

Girl child's involvement: Girl children's academic motivation and ambitions; their participation in routine school activities.

Interest of the community: Community's relation with school; its awareness and concern for education and its commitment towards solving problems of girl child education.

5.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study is limited to the regional medium government upper primary schools of Narmada district.

5.8 METHODOLOGY

In order to meet the objectives of the study, - both quantitative and qualitative information were required. Quantitative information was required in terms of students' enrolment, drop out, attendance, etc. The qualitative information needed for the research was procured by way of personal visits, interviews, meetings, discussions and observation.

5.8.1 Sampling strategy

The information on the government upper primary schools of the Narmada district was procured from the District MIS (Management Information System), SSA Narmada. All the Gujarati medium government upper primary schools of the Narmada district were treated as the population. In the 393 upper primary schools 12,399 girl children and 12,951 boy children were enrolled. There were 393 head teachers and 859 upper primary teachers in these schools. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to select schools from four blocks. Out of the total number of upper primary schools of each block, 10 per cent were randomly selected as sample. In the sampled schools 2,228 boy children and 2,080 girl children were enrolled. There were 42 head teachers and 123 upper primary teachers. All head teachers from the sampled school

were selected as sample. 2 upper primary teachers, 3 girl students from each upper primary standards i.e 6, 7 and 8 (3x3=9) and their parents were randomly selected. However, in case the parents of the same girl child selected as sample were not available, data from the available parents whose daughter was studying in the upper primary section of the school was accepted. The District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) and the District Gender Coordinator (DGco.) were included in sample. In total there were 884 respondents.

5.8.2 Tools and techniques

Questionnaires (Appendices 1 to 4) were developed for girl children, teachers and head teachers for **objectives 1(i) to 1(v)**. For each of the objectives responses were elicited from all the intended respondents i.e. girl children, teachers, head teachers, District Gender Coordinator, District Primary Education Officer. Each item, either in the questionnaire or in the interview schedule, was chosen keeping in perspective how the problem of girl child education relates to the respondent. The exercise was important as experience with the phenomenon decides attitude/view/stance/ of an individual and girl children, teachers, head teachers, and administrators all are differently faced with the problems of girl child education. Here, the intention was to collect/record (and later meaningfully assemble) information from all the individuals and sections of people concerned with the issue. Questionnaires were framed in such a manner that respondents may not feel constrained only with the listed options. The last option was kept 'open' with a blank to fill in, in case of the respondent wanted to add something of her own. Moreover, personal experiences, opinions, views and suggestions were sought by way of queries seeking a brief description. Semi-structured interview schedules were developed for the District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) and District Gender Coordinator (DGCo.) (Appendices 7 and 8). For **objective 1 (iv)**, namely *to study the facilities and support available to girl child*, besides questionnaires an **observation schedule** (Appendix 5) was felt necessary to capture the extent of coverage and quality of facilities in some close details. The observation schedule was comprised of four facility related aspects; (i) Girl children's toilet (ii) Mid-day meal (iii) Games for girl children (iv) Participation of girls in school and school related activities. For **objective 2** namely, *to study the perception of parents on girl child*, a perception scale (Appendix 6) was developed. The scale had 25 statements seeking rating of each on three options; 'Agree', 'Disagree' and 'Indecisive'. For **objective 3**

namely, *to study the socio-economic status of girl child*, a **questionnaire** seeking information on the socio-economic status of girl children was developed.

All tools were prepared after referring to the relevant literature. An extensive consultation with academicians was carried out. Inputs from persons with domain knowledge were sought. In case of questionnaire for socio-economic status, it was referred to the academicians working in the field of Economics. As all tools were in Gujarati language, for linguistic corrections they were referred to the Gujarati language experts. All suggestions/inputs/corrections were considered before final drafting of tools. Try outs on 50 urban and 50 rural girl children were carried out. Necessary changes and corrections were made before the actual administration of the tools. Fields visits were recorded in the forms of videos, photographs, field diaries and field notes.

5.8.3 Data collection

Data were personally collected. A set containing 30 questionnaires was prepared for the each sampled school. Each set was coded corresponding with the initial letters of the block e.g. for Nandod total 18 sets were prepared each having code from Set N-1 to Set N- 18. In total 42 such sets were prepared for 42 schools from all 4 blocks. The schools were personally visited and data were collected. The data collection work from the field was started in the March 2014. Discussions were held with the head teachers and the teachers of upper primary section. It was during the discussion that the questionnaires were filled. If queries and confusions arose it was sorted out there. There were incidents in which the respondents wanted some time to record their response. This happened due to the reasons such as; they needed time to get accurate information from the records (in case of head teachers who wanted time for providing data on enrolment and dropout) and if they were occupied with some other work. In such cases whatever was possible was recorded; for the remaining information they were requested to fill the information and send it back through post. Ticketed envelopes were provided to the respondents. The help of local teacher was taken when necessary; especially in procuring information from parents. In the cases where insufficient or unclear information was received, the school was contacted through registered posts. On the return of the questionnaires the school head teacher would put his seal and signature 'a return pro forma' (Appendix 11). After the field visits, 9 schools were found which either did not provide complete information or provided unclear information. They were regularly followed up telephonically and by registered post. Finally, by the April 2015 questionnaires from 42 head teachers, 84 upper primary

teachers, 378 girl children and 349 parents were collected. Interview schedules with District Primary Education Officer and District Gender Coordinator, Narmada were held. Both interviews were video recorded.

5.8.4 Data analysis

Frequencies were calculated and converted into percentages for each response. Frequency and percentage both have been stated in tables. The frequency has been indicated with the letter 'f' and percentage with the sign '%' at the top of the column. The option that received the highest frequency has been placed at the top in the table followed by the options receiving lower frequencies. Hence, the options in the tables are in descending order in terms of their frequencies. Meaningful and optimal presentation of the available data has been attempted. Content analysis of the data obtained through interviews, field notes and descriptive responses was done. Cross references have been made wherever needed. To illustrate the point more clearly tables and graphs have been used.

Objective wise analysis has been done. The order of the presentation of the data analysis is: girl children, teachers, head teachers, District Primary Education Officer, District Gender Coordinator and (in case of objective 1(iv)) researcher's observation.

5.9.0 OBJECTIVE WISE FINDINGS IN BRIEF

Following are the objective wise findings of the study.

5.9.1 Demographic profiles

Most of the girl children were in their age appropriate class. Majority of girl children (76.4 %), teachers (39.3 %) and head teachers (50 %) were from Scheduled Tribe (ST) community. Majority of teachers (58.3%) were females whereas majority of head teachers (71.4 %) were males. All teachers and head teachers knew Gujarati language. Number of teachers (84.5 %) and head teachers (57.1 %) knew Hindi and some of the teachers (72.6 %) and head teachers (52.4 %) knew English. Majority of teachers (66.7 %) were commuters whereas majority of head teachers (52.4 %) were local residents. Majority of teachers (45.2 %) were post-graduates and majority of them had done B.Ed. (71.4 %). Majority of head teachers (59.5 %) had done 10+2 and majority of them had done Primary Teacher's Certificate course (PTC). Most of the teachers (63 %) were freshly recruited (had less than 5 years of experience) whereas majority of head teachers (78.6 %) had more than ten years of experience. Majority of teachers (45.3 %) were language teachers. Majority of schools had been adjudged average on *gunotsav* parameters as they had received grade 'B' in their last assessment.

5.9.2 Deterring factors of girl child education

The girl children's responses and the views expressed by the teachers, head teachers, DPEO and DGCo. directly or indirectly, in most cases, denote a poor economic condition of the people. For sizable girl children it was difficult to keep timing of school, as they were required to carry out various other tasks. There was a considerable number of girl children (24 %) who worked as daily wage earners and some of them were working at the cost of schooling. The teachers and head teachers held poor economic condition responsible for migration, child labour, mal-nourishment, dropout, retention related issues amongst girl children. There was a considerable number of teachers and head teachers who believed that the curriculum was not suitable for the girl children of the district. Girl children were found struggling in English and mathematics. Language and interaction were not found to be a major problem amongst girl children, boy children, teachers and head teachers. Spreading awareness amongst parents, providing financial assistance were some of the suggestions from teachers and head teachers for solving the problems of girl children education.

5.9.3 Enrolment and retention trends

The enrolment data of four years (2011-12 to 2014-15) did not show much discrepancy between the enrolment of girl children and boy children. In fact, the four years' cumulative figure was almost equally divided between boys and girls. The year wise enrolment showed girl's enrolment remained lower than that of boy's in all years. The widest gap of 4.2 per cent was observed in the year 2012-13. The widest enrolment gap between girls and boys was observed in Tilakwada block. The Dediapada block had the narrowest enrolment gap. The cumulative enrolment always remained in boys' favour. The transition across grades was found incremental for boy children whereas for girl children it declined towards higher grades. This may be due to the increased weighing down of the social and economic factors on grown up girl children. Drop out cases were few. There were 20 dropouts in four years. There were 4.8 per cent constantly absent girl children and there were 20.4 per cent irregular children.

5.9.4 Girl child's involvement in school activities

Girl children were participative in almost all school activities like prayer, sweeping, watering plants, opening and closing classrooms, serving mid-day meal and so forth. Majority of girl children played games in school. Majority of girl children expected a job at the end of their education. For some of them education itself was an

end and for some others education was the source of knowledge, civility and learning. Many girl children rated learning as the main reason to come to school. Girl children appeared highly motivated as many wanted to study up to college and beyond; even if it meant going out of their village. Majority of girl children secured grade 'A'. Teachers and head teachers said that girl children's performance was good in the examination. District Primary Education Officer and District Gender Coordinators spoke very highly about girl children's participation and performance in curricular and extracurricular activities.

5.9.5 Facilities provided to the girl child of the Narmada district

School emerged as the major source of assistance to the majority of girl children in their study. Some girl children received help from home also, but this help was mostly confined to buying books and stationary items. Teachers were largely supportive on approach. Their support was extended to co-scholastic activities also. All the teachers and head teachers claimed that they put efforts to bring back constantly absent and irregular girl children. They said that their support was available for underperforming girl children in the form of remedial classes, extra guidance and attention. Private tuition was available to a very few girl children. Most of the girl children (94.4 %) were beneficiary of scholarship. There was sizable number of girl children (19 %) who said that their further study was completely dependent on scholarship. Most of the girl children received scholarship in their bank accounts. Majority of girl children (85.2 %) claimed they spent their scholarship on education needs. Girl children also benefited from support programmes like *baal kishori mela* and distribution of iron tables. Though DPEO, DGCo., teachers and head teachers appreciated *baal kishori mela*, it was found that they were not held regularly in the district. Very few teachers and head teachers found the *Dhoodh sanjeevani* scheme helpful. The practice of mid-day meal scheme was of different quality and standard in different schools. In some of the schools food, use of proper utensils and cleanliness were in need of serious attention. Separate girl children's toilets were found in most of the schools but their condition was not satisfactory in some of the schools. Facility of playing games was found insufficient in schools. The girl children were found playing games which required few or no equipments. The DPEO, DGCo, teachers, and head teachers were of the opinion that the available schemes for girl children were sufficient what required was their proper implementation. However, a few suggestions on schemes that they felt important to be implemented did come up.

5.9.6 Interest of the community in the girl child education

Majority of teachers and head teachers believed that girl children's education needed encouragement in the district. They were, including DPEO and DGCo., of the opinion that the community's awareness regarding girl child's education had increased. By and large the experience of the teachers and the head teachers with the community was positive.

5.9.7 Parents' perception

There is perceptible awareness about the education of girl children in parents' rating on the statements. Parents wanted their girl children to study beyond primary education. Neither many awarded primacy to boy child education over girl child education, nor subscribed to the statement that a girl child's education is less important as she has to go to her in-laws after marriage. There is an increasingly understanding that education can be an empowering force. Stereo-typing did not receive much endorsement. Majority of parents did not subscribe to the view that science, mathematics and technical subjects were for boys only. Carrying lunch tiffin to the farm, taking care of siblings, sacrificing school for farms during harvest were rejected by majority as the work of girl children only. The majority of parents acceded to the statement that girl children's opinion was important in the matters concerning them; including marriage. The concern for girl children's safety received agreement from the better part of the respondents. It could be the reason why majority of them wanted their girl child to inform them before going out. They also wanted them not to stay out till late night and be cautious on selection of clothes. There was an over whelming agreement for the training in self-defence and outdoor games for girl children. Majority of parents believed that girls were more talkative and more obedient than boys. The perception of parents on girl children and their education was found favourable.

5.9.8 Socio-economic condition

The socio-economic condition in the Narmada district is marked by virtual homogeneity, appalling hardship and abject paucity. Majority of girl children were from ST community, living in rural areas, with joint and farming families whose majority of members had primary education, if any. The characteristic features of the economic condition of the Narmada district were scare possessions, sole dependency on local resources, land with very limited irrigation and farming facilities leading to migration. The annual income of less than ₹40,000 only made possible to live in thatched houses, to use locally available firewood as fuel and to buy bare necessities occasionally. The poor transport and communication facilities were the part of daily hardships. Such formidable conditions forced girl children to child labour and made some wary that they might have to leave their education abruptly.

5.10 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Demographic profiles

1. Majority of girl children (76.4 %), teachers (39.3 %) and head teachers (50 %) were from Scheduled Tribe (ST) community.
2. Majority of teachers (58.3%) were females whereas majority of head teachers (71.4 %) were males. All teachers and head teachers knew Gujarati language. Number of teachers (84.5 %) and head teachers (57.1 %) knew Hindi and some of the teachers (72.6 %) and head teachers (52.4 %) knew English.
3. Majority of teachers (66.7 %) were commuters whereas majority of head teachers (52.4 %) were local residents.

Enrolment, retention trends and achievement

4. The four year's (2011-12 to 2014-15) cumulative figure on enrolment was almost equally divided between boys and girls. The year wise enrolment showed girls' enrolment remained lower than that of boys'.
5. Enrolment gap: the widest gap of 4.2 per cent was observed in the year 2012-13. The widest enrolment gap was observed in Tilakwada. The cumulative enrolment remained more for boys. The transition across grades was found incremental for boys and it declined for girls as they moved towards higher grades.
6. Incidents of dropout were low. There were 20 dropouts in four years. There were 4.8 percent constantly absent and 20.4 per cent irregular girl children.

7. Majority of the girl children secured 'A' grade. Teachers and head teachers said that girl children's performance was good. The DPEO and DGCo. had high appreciation for girls' participation and performance in scholastic and co-scholastic activities.

Deterring Factors of girl child education

8. Sizeable girl children were found working at the cost of schooling.
9. Teachers and head teachers opined that poor economic condition was responsible for parents' migration, child labour, malnourishment, dropout, retention related issues among girl children.

Facilities provided to girl children in the Narmada district

10. School was the major source of assistance to majority of the girl children. Some received help from home for buying books and stationary items.
11. Private tuitions were available to a very few children. 94.4 per cent of girl children were beneficiary of scholarship. The scholarship amount was spent mostly to meet the educational needs.
12. Girl children benefited from support programmes like *baal kishori mela* and distribution of iron tablets. The practice of mid-day meal scheme was of different quality and standard in different schools.
14. Separate girl children's toilets were found in most of the schools but their condition was not satisfactory in some schools.

Interest of the community and parents in the girl child education

15. Majority of the teachers and head teachers agreed that encouragement is needed for girl child education. DPEO and DGCo. opined that community awareness increased.
16. Majority of the parents believed that girls were more talkative and obedient than that of boys
17. There is an increasing understanding that education can be an empowering force.
18. Socioeconomic status showed virtual homogeneity, appalling hardship and abject poverty. Majority of girl children belonged to ST community living in rural areas. Parents were having agriculture as major occupation and annual income of less than ₹ 40000/-.

5.11 DISCUSSION

The problems of girl child education were found to be closely linked with the economic condition. Of all hindering factors, “managing household chores” emerged as the most recurring one. It could be misleading to take the statement on face value. In the joint family, (which Narmada district has in majority. See 4.8.4) everybody is expected to share some household responsibility. In this context, “I have to carry out household chores” is a too general statement which requires a judicious interpretation. Some of the more specific and a bit elaborative statements under the same category give out how acutely the students were aware about their economic condition from their early age. NT, a standard eight girl from Nandod block wrote, “I have to assist my parents because (our) economic condition is weak at home which is a hindrance to (my) study” (“ઘરની આર્થિક પરિસ્થિતી નબળી હોવાથી માતા-પિતાને ઘરકામમાં મદદ કરવી પડે છે જે અભ્યાસને અડચણ ઉભી કરે છે.”) For her specific health related problems, NP, a girl child studying in standard 7 of the same block but different school wrote, “I don’t know but, I fall ill every now and again”. (“ખબર નહિં પણ, હું અવાર-નવાર બિમાર પડી જાઉં છું”) The statement is particularly poignant if we place it in the context. There may be several children who might be suffering from some rare diseases or physical conditions which cannot be locally diagnosed let alone be cured properly. Even their parents might not know what their child is suffering from and what could be the proper cure for it. It compels to ponder over what one can do for health problems with extremely scarce resources. Certainly, such conditions do not have fallouts on just girl children and their education; they leave all helplessly at the mercy of their circumstances. Girl children saw education as a potential tool to change their condition. Girl children in their expectation from education wrote, “I will be able to get a job”, “Our life will become better”, “Our financial condition will improve”. The huge expectation stacked on education was particularly expressed in some of the more peculiar statements like JV, a standard 7 girl child from Nandod block wrote, “we do not have much money, I have to study” (અમારી પાસે બહુ પૈસા નથી, (એટલે) મારે ભણવું પડશે). RV, a standards 6 girl child from Dediapada wrote, “Now it will not do if we don’t study. For better future we have to study” (હવે ભણીએ નહિં તો નહિં ચાલે, સારા ભવિષ્ય માટે ભણવું પડશે). The figures available on enrolment and retention reflect the feeling of urgency to pursue education. Though the odds are still there which

force girl children to remain absent and irregular “to support parents”, they are determined to participate and perform at par with boy children, in cases even to excel. It is easily assumable that the available support and encouragement from variety of sources had their part in achieving this. Assessment of roles of School, family, government administration showed contribution of all towards the education of girl children. The government schools have to cater to the massive intake and they are responsible for extending support in various ways. In such a state of affair proper implementation is very important. HV, a frail looking student sobbing with tears in eyes and empty plate to the chest after much persuasion feebly muttered, “Food is over”. (ખાવાનું ખવાસ થઈ ગયું). In this case may be the dominant group or seniors were responsible. There are HVs going empty stomach and unnoticed in our primary schools. To ensure that the aid is reaching to the intended beneficiary proper implementation is very important. It is possible only when responsible persons are attentive, community is aware, and entrusted are honest and under careful watch. The view expressed by many teachers, head teachers, DPEO and DGCo. at the various junctures of this study that the community is not conscious about girl child education do not receive substantiation from the data received from the perception scale prepared for the parents. Parents’ perception was found favorable to girl child education. This is a commendable fact looking at the socio-economic condition of the region. However, it would be an interesting area of research to see how this position is sustained for post-primary education and higher education which are progressively less subsidized and demand more financial ‘investment’. Parents only invest in education when they see their investment resulting in some ‘profit’. This is an interesting stand point to see education in terms of ‘investment’ and ‘return’. Benerjee and Duflo (2011) observe, “Parents seem to see education primarily as a way of their children to acquire wealth”. In their critically praised work Poor Economics, Benerjee and Duflo present arguments from “supply side” of education and “demand side” of education. The “supply side” warrants heavy intervention of government by way of opening more school, providing well trained teachers, and all that that could “get children into class”. The “demand side” makes case for creating demand for education which implies taking the ‘returns’ or benefits from education high enough. The argument holds that when parents perceive there is high ‘return’ to their investment in education only then they would send their children for education. The fact is important to take into account in the context of

district like Narmada where the benefits of employing children in fields are immediate and tangible whereas the benefits (if at all) from sending them in school are remote and uncertain.

Girl children studying in the upper primary schools of the Narmada district are faced with the problem of assisting parents, taking care of siblings, working in the fields, migration so on and so forth. These problems are slowly decreasing and there are some positive developments, especially in recent times. Enrolment has been improving, dropout rate has gone down, parents and girl children are becoming more and more aware about the importance of education. In future, as the trends suggest, the problems will further get diminished.

5.12 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

- A study on enrolment and retention related problems in high schools of Narmada district
- A Research can be carried out on the condition of child labour in the Narmada district
- A Study on the socio- economic condition of the tribal community of the Narmada district can be carried out.
- With special focus on Dediapada and Sagbara blocks a study of social status of girl child can be carried out.
- A study on the problems of upper primary children in the subjects English and Mathematics.
- A package can be developed to teach English and mathematics to the upper primary children of the Narmada district.