

(GENDER EQUITY IN ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF GWALIOR, MADHYA PRADESH)

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DECLARATION BY THE SCHOLAR

This is to certify that the M.Phil. Dissertation being submitted by me on the topic entitled 'Gender Equity in Access to and Participation in Elementary Schools: A Study of Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh' has been completed under the guidance of Prof. Madhumita Bandyopadhyay. It is declared that the present study has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship or Fellowship to this or any other University.

Nivedita Sharma

CERTIFICATE OF THE SUPERVISOR

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled 'Gender Equity in Access to and Participation in Elementary Schools: A study of Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh' is the work undertaken by Ms. Nivedita Sharma under my supervision and guidance as part of her M.Phil. degree in this University. To the best of my knowledge, this is original work conducted by her and the dissertation may be sent for evaluation.



(Madhumita Bandyopadhyay)

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List of Abbreviations

- U-DISE- Unified District Information System of Education
- MHRD- Ministry of Human Resources and Development
- NFHS- National Family Health Survey
- NSS- National Sample Survey
- GoMP- Government of Madhya Pradesh
- GoI- Government of India
- UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
- UNDP- United Nations Development Program
- UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund
- NCERT- National Council of Educational Research and Training
- MDG – Millennium Development Goal
- SDG – Sustainable Development Goal

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As widely acknowledged that education plays a pivotal role in the progression towards social and economic development of any nation. According to Dreze and Sen (2013), education enhances the one's quality of life, widens the economic opportunities, encourages participating in democratic process, helps in tackling health issues, bringing awareness of human rights etc. Through education, a nation can achieve development; it is considered a vital instrument for social and economic growth. Accessing educational opportunities to reach full potential in life is the right of every child, whether a girl or a boy (UNESCO, 2015).

In 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights came into place, it made education as one of the human rights. According to Article 26, every individual has Right to Education (UDHR, 1948). But even after declaring education as a human right, there are many children who are deprived of this right.

Jomtien Declaration on Education for All, 1990, observed that millions of children have no access to education, so they gave emphasis on universal access to education. Dakar Declaration also focused on free and compulsory primary education (UNESCO, 2000). Education has also been a part of Millennium Development Goal number 4, the objective of which is to achieve Universal Primary Education by 2015 (UNDP, 2000). In continuing the purpose of MDG, Sustainable Development Goal (number 4) came and stressed on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality, to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNDP, 2015).

At the time the Constitution of India was adopted, the chapter on Directive Principle of State Policy had declared that universal free primary education should be made available to all children up to the age of fourteen years (Ramachandran, Kumar, 2005. 129). Later in the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, Article 21A was added under which, state directed to give access of free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years (MHRD, 2002).

In all these commitments, the issue of gender equity has always been a crucial element. In all the international declarations, gender equality has been placed in their goal and objectives. MDG 3, focused on maintaining gender equality and empowering women.

SDG 5 emphasizes on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. In view of these international commitments, bridging the gender gap in education has been a significant cause of concern for most developing nations (Bandyopadhyay, 2012).

In India, to mitigate the gender disparity, most of the educational programmes have emphasized on bridging the gap and bringing gender equality. National Education Policy, 1968, said that the education of girls should be the priority. National Education Policy, 1986, states that Education will be used as an agent of fundamental change in the status of women, and the system has to remove the disparities and equalize educational opportunities by playing a positive and an interventionist role in the empowerment of women (NCERT, 1992). National Education Policy, 2019, also stresses to structure an education system that makes children reach their potential, so no one loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background (MHRD, 2019).

District Planning and Education Program (DPEP) was initiated in 1991, drawing from policy guidelines 1986, focused on gender equality. This program incorporated gender perspective in all aspects of the planning and implementation (Ramachandran. V, 2002).

Another major program Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan (SSA), introduced in 2000- 2001, emphasized on achieving universal elementary education by bridging the gender and social disparities (Ramachndran &Chatterjee, 2013). After the implementation of SSA in 2001, the next Five-Year Plan (2001–2007) targeted on bridging all the gender gaps in enrolment, retention and learning by 2007 (National Plan of Action, 2003). Samagra Shiksha (2018-19) subsumes the three Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE), emphasizes on bridging the gender and social gap in school education (MHRD, 2018). District Primary Education Program (1994), too, aimed to bridge the gender disparity and differences between various social groups (Singh & Sridhar, 2005). Other several progressive initiatives, from residential schools for girls like Kasturba Gandhi Vidhyalayas to Mid Day Meal, to expand the access and quality of basic education coverage, especially for girls (UNGEI, 2012) have been started.

Hence, the government has been making several efforts to bring in gender equality, and to make education accessible to all. Despite having enabling policies, girls in India

suffer from widespread prejudices (Bandyopadhyay, 2012). In majority of the Indian households, preference is given for the wellbeing and educational needs of boys in contrast to girls because of the "patriarchal social structure with a strong male preference" (Bandyopadhyay, 2012; Wu *et al.*, 2006). There is more number of girls from deprived and unprivileged disadvantaged communities from SC ST and Muslim communities who are still more likely to drop out (Samagra Siksha Abhiyan, 2018).

Regardless of the signs of progress, the 2015 MDG guidelines for universal primary education and elimination of gender disparities at all level of education is missed by many countries (UNGEI, 2012). Girls are still facing various barriers in education and are more likely to be excluded from educational rights as compared to boys (Sustainable Development Report, 2019). Ensuring gender equity has always been the concern for Government. The Sustainable Development Report 2019 mentioned that in spite of the progress in educational opportunities, 262 million children and adolescents (6 to 17-year-old), were still out of school in 2017. Among this group, girls are more vulnerable at the global level, as 118 girls were out of school for every 100 boys (Sustainable Development Report, 2019).

Educational policies can only be justified if they are based on equity, by giving opportunities equitably, as it is only equity that leads to equality. While educational policies emphasize equality in universal access and increasing the gender-based participation in the education process, the literacy rate and increasing drop out numbers depict something different. Achieving gender equity in and through education is a long-standing goal of the education policy in India (NPE, 1986). Gender inequality is a struggle for most of the developing countries, as Aikman, Halai & Rubagiza, 2011, deliberated that low-income countries can only be of quality when they explicitly recognize and help in realizing the rights and capabilities of all women and girls, and all men and boys. This demands an understanding of how gendered inequalities are experienced, maintained and reinforced, not only in school but in the community.

Equity in Education

Basic education is a catalyst to social change, and it can be considered as a vital ingredient to build human capabilities (as advocated by Dreze and Sen, 1995), which is essential for any society's economic growth. Education as a means to human

development can only succeed if the resources are distributed equally, which will help an individual to increase capability. Rohn (2013), in his study, equity in Education, deliberates that equity does not state that every student gets identical tutoring or instructions, but that appropriate that reasonable accommodations should be made to encourage access and achievement for all students.

Difference between equity and equality was described by Jacob and Holsinger (2008), by stating that equality means “the state of being equal in terms of quantity, rank, status, value or degree,” while equity “considers the social justice ramifications of education in relation to the fairness, justness and impartiality of its distribution at all levels of educational sub-sectors.”

How equity can be seen in education was discussed in an OECD (2007) report ‘No More Failures: Ten Steps to Equity in Education.’ This report discussed that equity in education could be understood in two ways: fairness and inclusion (Field, Kuczera and Pont, 2007). Equity as inclusion ensures that all students get at least a basic level of skills. Equitable education systems are fair and inclusive and support their students to reach their learning potential without either formally or informally pre-setting barriers or lowering expectations. Equity as fairness implies that personal or socio-economic circumstances, such as gender, ethnic origin, or family background, are not obstacles to educational success. An equitable education system can redress the effect of comprehensive social and economic disparities. In an equitable situation, the girl would not be judged by her gender role but through her capability. In the milieu of learning, it allows individuals to take full advantage of education and training irrespective of their background (Field, Kuczera and Pont, 2007; Woessmann and Schütz, 2006).

Constitution protects the Right to education of each human being so that they can access their right without any discrimination. Still, certain sections of society have been marginalized; they need more attention, and merely giving rights does not mean that they will enjoy them. Since social impediments always pushed the marginalized away from exercising their educational right, so it is the responsibility of policymakers to provide a conducive environment free from any bias. In Samagra Siksha Abhiyan, too, equity is set as an approach for delivering integrated scheme, which states that “Equity emphasized on the fair distribution of resources, it is not based on the principle that each person needs the same amount of resources but is based on the need of the person that resources would be distributed to” (Samagra Siksha Abhiyan, 2018). Amartya Sen (1979) believed that “Utilitarian equality is the equality that can be derived from the

utilitarian concept of goodness applied to problems of distribution.” He argued that every individual is different, and their abilities are also varied, and according to their abilities, they can convert the same resources into valuable functioning. In the same way, Gender equality could be brought if the provided resources are distributed among all by equity principle and are also utilized by girls, the marginalized group.

Background of the Study

Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam believed that empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation; if women are empowered, a society with stability is assured. The link between nation development and female education as also discussed by Bandyopadhyay and Subramanian (2008) state that female education has strong correlations with other dimensions of human and social development, but despite strong economic and social evidence of the high returns to female education, most communities continue to under-invest in female education relative to male education (Bandyopadhyay and Subramanian, 2008). Globally, reports show better performance of girls as over every 100 boys who acquired minimum skill in reading in year 2015, 105 girls from primary school age and 109 adolescent women from lower secondary school age met at least the minimum standard (Sustainable Development reports, 2019). But the patriarchal practices in a society contribute to more number of uneducated women and their lack of participation in educational activities. Once girls are able to get enrolled in school, they are likely to continue their education with more success than boys (UNESCO, 2004).

According to Sustainable Development Report (2018) despite the cases of early marriage have decreased, more women are in the position of leadership and serving in the Parliament, laws are being reformed in order to ensure gender equality in the society, but discriminatory attitude along with practices violating human rights, patriarchy and male chauvinism are pushing women away from participating in the development process (UNDP, 2018). If we look at the status of women in India, they account for 48.5 per cent share in the total population of India, in which 64.63 per cent are literate (Census, 2011). Out of the total women population, 25.51 per cent women are part of the workforce, against 53.26 per cent male (MoPSI, 2018). India ranks 10th in the lowest female labor force participation rate (22.3 per cent), (World Bank Development Indicators 2017-18). It implies that 3 out of 4 women in India over the

age of 15 are neither working nor seeking work. The low participation of females in the workforce can be attributed to their status in education. The Gender Parity at the elementary level was observed at 1.05 per cent in the year 2015 – 16 (MHRD, 2018). The dropout rate of girls was 6.42 per cent at the upper primary level in the year 2016 - 17 (U-DISE, 2017). As per NSS 71st Round, in rural India, the primary reason for dropping/discontinuance of education in the age group 5-29 years for males was engagement in economic activity, while for females, the primary reason for dropping out was engagement in domestic activities (MoPSI, 2018). The enrolment of women in education has improved but retention and transition still remains an issue. Gender plays a vital role in the access and participation of children in schools in many countries including India (Bandhyopadhyay, 2012; Dewan, 2008). The contribution of females and other gender identities is also crucial for the development of the nation. There are a number of educational programs, initiated by centre and state governments across India, that emphasize on girl's education, so that they can access the education without any barriers. But, reports (UNESCO. 2019, OECD. 2012) suggest the persistence of gendered practices in schools and homes hindering the access and participation of girls in education.

Ideologies that shape female and male identities in Indian society are mutually reinforcing across institutions, such as the family, workplace, and community (Kabeer and Subrahmanian, 1999), leading to vicious cycles of under-investment on females. Ramachandran (2003) argued that there are several factors to push girls out from the education system, including the lack of female teachers, concerns regarding safety, and social norms that promote early marriage for girls, are some of the powerful contributory factors. Even if the impediments are the same for girls and boys, the first opportunity to access education would always be given to the boys. Subrahmanian (2005) also argues that because of prevailing norms about what women and men are supposed to do and how their activities and roles are to be cherished, determine the prospects which they have to access. She says that in a condition of poverty, boys are likely to be excluded from schools, but if the family can afford to send their children to school, boys are often advantaged over girls in access to schooling. Nambissan, 2005, talks about how prevalent gender differences can be seen in the distribution of various tasks among students. She further stated that the allocation of routine tasks given by teachers strengthens gender stereotypes. In numerous schools, girls can be found

performing light and decorative work, including arranging classroom or handing over the bouquets to the visitors, while boys are expected to do tasks requiring 'strength' such as lifting furniture or technical skills such as 'fixing lights' and so on. The gender discrimination further percolates into the hierarchical caste based social groups, where children from lower socio-economic groups are expected to perform more menial and gendered tasks.

Bandyopadhyay. M., (2008), deliberated that even with such impressive gains in the participation of children in schooling, a large section of girls still face complications in entering school and continuing with their studies. She found that Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal are those states where more girls tend to remain out of school than boys.

So every single individual and community should understand, and accept that providing education to girls is not just an educational necessity. It transforms thinking, behavior and alters the attitude of a society. Hence giving an equal chance to girls is seen as a value in itself worth pursuing (Bandyopadhyay. 2012; UNICEF, 2009).

School is a place of learning and construction, the very basis of equality building begins from the school itself, and the children are most diverse and in the process of physical and cognitive development at this stage, so the schools are expected to impart values of equality, justice without any discrimination. If children recognize and understand the issues of gender discrimination not only as the issue of women alone but as a public issue at the elementary stage of school itself, then the future of the nations will be free from any gender discrimination. Narayan et al. (2010) argued that education is no doubt a vital ingredient in achieving gender equality. Yet, it is not sufficient to eliminate the range of inequalities confronting women or enabling them to participate effectively in society (UNGEI, 2012). Retention and participation of girl student is still an issue. Different research studies have found that improving the quality of education through providing numbers of schools, creating a good physical environment, provision of learning materials, training of teachers has benefited for both girls and boys. But the girls from lower socio-economic classes, from the poorest of families facing far worst situation (Ramachandran, 2003), may need essential targeted initiatives to address their specific needs, which would create a barrier-free education opportunity for them.

Research on school processes suggests that the uniqueness of children is influenced by the environment in school, consequently denying their opportunities to learn. Many children often face discrimination by students, teachers and by the practices and norms that are part of the culture of schools. These practices reinforce the idea of masculinity and femininity (NCF, 2005).

The realization of gender equality in education is a serious issue of social justice. Gender equality is a more complex notion than gender parity and it is difficult to measure. It needs moving beyond counting the numbers of boys and girls in school to explore the quality of girls' and boys' engagements in the classroom, their accomplishments in education institutions, and their aspirations for the future (UNESCO, 2015). Education Quality needs to be evaluated along several dimensions, including how well boys and girls are prepared to start and continue school; how well they are received by schools and the extent to which teachers are prepared to meet their needs and uphold their rights; how safe the schools are as places for learning and how fulfilling they are in providing an overall gender-sensitive environment that is conducive to learning.

Hence, we need to refurbish our actions, which are based on evidence as well as a prior notion for bringing gender equality. Achieving gender equality necessitates bold and sustainable measures that address the structured impediments and root causes of discrimination against women (SDG report, 2019).

Rationale of the study

Gender is a socially constructed term, which divided human beings into two binaries (Male and Female) gender, and accordingly defined their roles, behaviors, activities, attributes and opportunities which are appropriate for them in society (World Health Organization). These roles, which are decided by the society, depict men as intelligent, tough, strong, brave, and women as shy, warm, passive. Gender inequality is one of the significant problems, which is a major challenge of contemporary society and for the educational system. Deep-rooted societal faith perpetuates discriminatory practices of girls and boys, and these practices not only deter girls from accessing their educational rights but also unconsciously reinforce them to accept the gender role, defined by the patriarchal society.

Low-income countries can be successful in providing quality education only when they explicitly recognize and help to realize the rights and capabilities of all women and men. For the realization of capabilities and rights, it is vital to understand the gendered inequalities which are experienced, continued and strengthened not only in school and through schooling but in different societal context which may deny rights to girls and boys differently and undermine their experience of education and the value it could have for their lives beyond school (Aikman. S, Halai. A, Rubagiza.J, 2011).

The study has selected Gwalior, a district of Madhya Pradesh, based on different rationales drawn from the external factors which are contributing to the educational status of gender.

Area Under Study

Madhya Pradesh is a state located in Central India and is considered 'heart' of India. It is the second-largest Indian state by area and the fifth largest by population with over 75 million residents. This state used to be a princely state, famous for its rich culture and heritage sites. According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate of Madhya Pradesh is 69.3 per cent, constitute 78.7 per cent literate male and 59.2 per cent female. The sex ratio of Madhya Pradesh is 930 (Census 2011). The Net Enrolment Ratio is 71.5 per cent, and the Gross Enrolment Ratio is 102.1 per cent. The literacy gap between the genders is 24.4 per cent. Literacy rate in Madhya Pradesh is still below the national average with astounding 40 per cent illiterate women in the state (Times of India, 2017). The article also said that around 86.62 lakh students were enrolled in the year 2014-15, while the number of student enrolment in 2015-16 came down to 80.94 lakh in primary classes. There are 52 districts in Madhya Pradesh, and Gwalior is one of these districts. It is the 4th largest district of M.P. with different dynasties. It was dominated by the Sindhia family of Marathas. During the 2nd century it was ruled by Nagvans. Gwalior fort found its root in 5th century. In 836-882 AD it was under the rule of Minit Bhoj. It was ruled by the Jat Ruler Lokandra Singh. Soldiers of Morar cantonment took participation in the first freedom struggle in 1857. After independence Madhya Bharat was formed on 1st April, 1948 with the inclusion of Gwalior, Malwa and other small states (GoMP, 2013). The city is also famous for the memorials of freedom fighters such as Taty Tope and the indomitable Rani of Jhansi. Gwalior strategically located within the main tourist destination. It economic majorly depends on agriculture, small

scale industries, tourism and small textile. Although in recent years many cities have seen decline of traditional industries, majorly cotton industries. 10.27 per cent population is engaged in primary sector of employment. This city represents various social groups and communities. Major schedule tribes are Gond, Arakh, Agariya, Bhaina, Bhil etc, and Schedule caste are Bedia, Chamar, Mochi, Jatav, Meghwaletc (GoMP, 2013).

The city is also famous for the memorials of freedom fighters such as Taty Tope and the indomitable Rani of Jhansi. Literacy rate of Gwalior is 74.08 per cent in which female constitute 63.96 per cent, and male is 82.93 per cent, whereas the sex ratio is 864 (Census, 2011). Among all districts in Madhya Pradesh, Gwalior ranked at 5 in terms of literacy rate. The district of Gwalior has four blocks named- Ghatigaon, Morar (Rural Morar and Urban Morar), Dabra, and Bhitwar. This study is based on Rural Morar Block, which has the highest literacy rate of 69.42 per cent as compared to all other blocks. The literacy rate is 57.61 per cent, with 65.10 per cent male literacy rate and 34.89 per cent female literacy rate. Madhya Pradesh has always been an area of interest for the researchers because of its diversity. Through extensive literature review, it was revealed that in Madhya Pradesh, gender equality and awareness in education has received some popularity and attention, but this attention was restricted only to the issue of accessibility and equality, gender stereotype in curriculum, dropout, etc. The secondary documents however project the outcome of and extent of gender inequality in schools across the country, but field based study will help us in understanding the factors contributing to the same in the form of gender-based practices. The gender based value system is further imbibed by the students and reinforced by the stakeholders through curricular and extra-curricular activities, school organization and socialization process in school. Madhya Pradesh is geographically enormous, with vast cultural differences within the districts, so the reasons for various problems are also different. If we compare Gwalior with Bhopal, the capital of the state, we can identify a huge gap between both districts. The sex ratio in Bhopal is 918, and in Gwalior, it is only 864. This difference leads to other disparities; for example, the difference in literacy rate: Gwalior has 74.08 per cent, and Bhopal has 80.4 per cent (Census, 2011). Gwalior, which has a low sex ratio and a high gap in male and female literacy rates, might need different approaches to decrease the educational disparities.

It was found on reviewing the literature that, in Gwalior, there have been no comprehensive and qualitative methodological attempts to understand the gender-based participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Therefore, this study is an effort to explore and understand the gender-based involvement of girls and boys, as perceived by the different stakeholders of Government and private management school and how much the available data on drop out, retention, and promotion are justified with the reality of the area of study. The present study is titled as “GENDER EQUITY IN ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION OF GWALIOR, MADHYA PRADESH.”

Theoretical framework

This section is focusing on the theoretical perspective and approach selected for this study. In order to understand and analyse the gender equity in access and participation in school, I have drawn on two concepts of Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Based on the literature review and research questions, insights from Paulo Freire's work on "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" helped in framing, understanding, and analysing this study. The ideas which are drawn from the theory are discussed as follows:

Pedagogy of the oppressed - Paulo Freire

Pedagogy of the oppressed is a book written by Paulo Freire with an intent to share his teaching experiences and views regarding education institutions. According to him, Formal education works either for the "domestication of Learners" or for "Liberation" (Freire, 1985, 131). Paulo Freire's concepts in the pedagogy of the oppressed has been taken to understand the determining factors for enrolment and participation of students from a gender perspective and in identifying future initiatives for gender equity in education.

Oppressor and Oppressed

According to Freire (1970), in society, there are two distinct classes of people exist—the oppressor and the oppressed. The dialectical materialistic relation between these two propels a situation of oppression wherein an oppressor class oppresses and an oppressed class is oppressed.

The study is looking at the relationship between Oppressors and oppressed, from school as well as society perspective. This theory will help to understand that by what means

a Girl who is already oppressed in a patriarchal culture is facing discrimination and being oppressed in the school also. According to Stromquist (2014) Freire's concept of oppressed and oppressor, is a binary situation in which we are all involved, has brought challenges to a simplistic understanding of liberation. The school environment is also not apart from the relation of oppressor and oppressed, as Freire said that education is political and, as such can never be neutral. Freire recognized disadvantages arising from class, race, and gender (Stromquist, 2014). The relationship of teachers and students is that one is oppressor, and another is oppressed, Freire deliberated that oppressed can become oppressor, if she gained the power and oppresses her previous oppressor. In this study this approach would help to understand the relationship between teachers with students.

Culture of Silence

Freire talked about the culture of silence, where no one can speak against the knowledge of the teacher. This culture he relates to the concept of "Banking System," where a teacher deposits understanding in the mind of students, and they collect this information and memorize it (Freire, 1985).

Freire describes this system as domestication, which reflects the oppressive nature of society as a whole where the teacher teaches, and the students are taught, the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing, the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined, the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply, and teacher decides the program content, and the students adapt to it.

Freire argued that conventional learning was the tool of the elite because it treated students as objects upon which knowledge is "deposited." Genuine learning for Freire, could only be achieved through lived experience, critical reflection and praxis (Aronowitz, 2012). In the context of gender-based participation, this concept would be very relevant. It would help in analyzing whether the teacher is giving any space to students where they can also share their views instead act only at the receiving part. Culture of silence in school and between the relationship of teacher and students reinforce both girls and boys to play their gender assigned role.

Rugut and Osman, (2013, 24) stated that within the established power of society, banking system works as an negative influencer and demolish individual by

conditioning them to accept and practice the social and political affairs of the dominant culture.

Freire saw culture of silence as fabricated generosity from the dominant group who are oppressor who use teaching as a way of governing and regulating people who are turn in to the oppressed. Oppressor does this favour to enhance or uphold their own interest (Rugut and Osman, 2013; Freire, 1973).

Stromquist (2014), said that Freire's view on breaking the culture of silence is an advice for every feminist struggle because it meant raising voice to address the discrimination which women are facing in every society and prevent them from enjoying equal rights. So in the context of schools, gender-based roles are preventing children from reaching their potential, and even if any children want to rebel, she cannot, as the culture does not promote asking questions to teachers. According to Freire (1985), the system of dominant social relations creates a culture of silence that instils a negative, silenced and suppressed self-image into the oppressed.

This theory are taken up as a basis to understand the determining factors for enrolment and participation of students from a gender perspective, the status of enrolment of boys and girls in elementary school, and to identifying different initiatives to be taken for gender equality. This approach might be helpful in exploring, understanding, and analyzing the persisting gendered environment in our society.

Research Question

1. What is the status of the enrolment of boys and girls in elementary school?
2. What are the determining factors for enrolment and participation of children?
3. What are the different initiatives to be taken for further improvement in promoting gender equity in the schooling of children?

Research Objective

1. To find out the present status of elementary education and the extent to which gender matters in educational access and participation of children in schools.
2. To explore major contributing factors for educational access and participation of children from Gender Perspective.

3. To find out different initiatives to be taken for further improvement in promoting gender equity in the schooling of children.

Research Methodology

For this study, mixed-method has used to understand both qualitative and quantitative phenomenon of gender-based access and participation. For the selection of the research site, the purposive sampling method used and for the selection of respondents convenient sampling and purposive sampling method has adopted. Quantitative data has generated from U-DISE, Census Reports, NFHS and HRD, and to collect qualitative data, structured Interview Schedule, Observation schedule, Informal Interaction, case study and narrative method has used. Each method and procedure will be discussed concisely in chapter 3, Research Methodology.

Operational Definition

Access

Lewin (2007) took the reference of CREATE (Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity), the concept of access and discusses that access to education is not meaningful unless it results in securing enrolment and regular attendance, progression through grades at appropriate ages, meaningful learning which has utility, reasonable chances of transition to lower secondary grades, especially where these are within the basic education cycle, more rather than less equitable opportunities to learn for children from poorer households, especially girls, with less variation in quality between schools (Lewin, 2007).

This study also tries to look at the issue of access from the perspective of meaningful access (Lewin, 2007) which focuses not only on enrolment but also includes retention, attendance, learning, completion and transition from one level to another.

Participation

In this study, the term participation means the involvement of girls and boys in curricular and extra-curricular activities of the respective school.

Curricular Activities

Curricular Activities operationally pertains to the participation of students in academic courses.

Extra-curricular Activities

According to UNESCO (2004), extracurricular activities are a range of activities organized outside of the regular school day, to meet learner's interest. These activities include Sports, Drama, Music, Voluntary work etc.

By taking reference from UNESCO definition of Extra-curricular Activities this study refer extracurricular activities to those activities which are not included in the academic course, including organized and unorganized sports, informal games/local games, vocational events, art projects, organisation of school events, and morning assembly.

Gender-based role

Gender-based role in this study are considered those roles which are divided between men and women by the society and also are practised by schools influencing children's education.

Gender-Based Participation

In this study, Gender-based participation refers to the participation of girls and boys in curricular and extra-curricular activities according to their gender role.

Elementary School

Elementary school means schools from I to VIII level of schooling.

Limitation of the study

- The researcher limited the number of villages to two villages of Morar, one of the major blocks of Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, due to the time constraints.
- The schools are selected within the vicinity of 25 km of Morar, due to the limited availability of the means of transportation.
- The study is limited to understand gender equity in the context of girls only because the literature has shown more discrimination towards girls as compared to boys. Hence researcher has limited the present study to the perception of stakeholders- teachers and parents, on girls' education.

Significance of the Study

This study majorly aims to uncover both, qualitative and quantitative aspects of the gender-based participation in school-related activities of students in elementary

education in Gwalior. In order to understand the status of gender in education, an in-depth review of extensive-ranging theoretical roots concerned with the area of education and gender has been done. Keeping the aim of this study in mind related areas like gender discrimination, gender stereotype, gender-based socialization, education, and gender-related studies were explored. All these studies helped in building the conceptual and comprehensive understanding of the varied dimensions of gender-based participation in education—the review assists in developing data collection tools for the collection of qualitative data. The primary stakeholders who were directly impacting the participation of girls and boys in education were interviewed, these stakeholders included head teachers of two Government and two Private schools, Teachers and Parents from the same school and Block officer. The result obtained through this study aimed to identify that if students' participation based is on their gender, if the gender-based participation is blocking their way to develop their skill and stopping them from exercising their fundamental right to education.

The finding of the study can help refurbish the existing government policies and programs which are being run by the state and the central Government. It could be useful in understanding the ground realities, the gender-based participation, which are consciously and unconsciously followed by the teachers and parents, and how it is impacting the social and economic status of girls.

Organization of Chapters

The details of the study are organized sequentially in five chapters under following heads-

I. Chapter I -Introduction: This chapter details out the problem in general, statement of the problem, the need for the study, research question and objective of the study, definition of key terms, scopes and limitations of the study.

II. Chapter II – Review of Literature: This chapter focuses on an in-depth review of the various literatures, which will focus on multiple themes of gender and education; it also documents the various studies reviews in the field of gender and education.

III. Chapter III -Research Methodology: This chapter is the detailed description of the methodology used for the study. It consist design of the study, sample, tools, and methods of data collection.

IV. Chapter IV -Education Scenario in Area of Study: This chapter focuses on the educational status of Gwalior in particular with respect to India (national level) and Madhya Pradesh (state level). It discusses the educational indicators which are vital to examine gender equality in school access at the elementary level.

V. Chapter V -Gender Based Participation in Elementary Schools – Empirical Evidences: This chapter deals with the interpretation and analysis of primary data; it includes the observation of school practices, perception of stakeholders, narratives of stakeholders, and two case studies of students.

VI. Chapter VI -Finding and Conclusion: This chapter summarises the major findings and conclude the study.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This chapter presents a review of the available studies, reports, research papers, and international organizations defining and examining gender at home and in school, which in turn plays a decisive role in girls' education.

Concept of Gender

Butler (1986. 35) endorsed Simone De Beauvoir's statement that "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman," which itself distinguishes sex from gender. It suggested that gender is a characteristic of identity which is gradually acquired.

Gender roles are varied in different cultures, societies, classes, not every society decide the same responsibilities for women and men. (FAO, 1997, UNESCO, 2003). According to Bravo Baumann (2000), gender relations are the behaviours in which a culture or society defines rights, responsibilities, for men and women concerning one another. Sex is understood to be the invariant, distinct, and various aspects of the female body, whereas gender is the social meaning and form that body acquires, the variable modes of that body's acculturation (Butler, 1986).

According to Marry E. John, (2017, 22) "gender originates in grammar and linguistics, where it is referred to the use of different genders in particular language. According to her in the 1950s, the term gender first time used by American Psychologist, followed by sociologist, they connect term gender in relation to the identity of human beings. They made a sharp contrast between the biological notions of male and female (such as genital differences, chromosomal or hormonal differences) and the way we get our sense of who we are as boys and girls or men and women. Some of these psychologists argued that it mattered very little what exact biological characteristics a particular body might have – what really mattered was how such a child was socialised by their family and by society more broadly" (John, 2017).

Nambissam (2005. 192) opined that society classified attributes and qualities into 'masculine' and 'feminine,' which is dominantly reflected in the practices and culture. On the basis of classification, the roles, resources, and entitlements influence the opportunities for women. Furthermore, she added that in India, other dimensions also contributed to gender discrimination, like social structure such as caste, class,

community status which also influence the participation of women in educational institution and larger society.

Gender-based practices are a concern for every country. Gender inequality has been the central theme of many deliberation and discourses. The National Focus Group on Gender Issues in Education (2006) emphasized that gender is not only an issue for women; instead, it is a people's issue. To alleviate the gender differences from the prevailing power relation and dominant structure between men and women, it is the responsibility of every institution to work in the direction of equality (NCERT, 2006), and to endeavor this objective we have to understand the establishments who rooted the ideology of patriarchy in the young mind (Menon, 2012).

Nussbaum (2002) argued that because of growth indicators, we fail to recognize that how deprived people are doing, and women also belong from this group, who are often not able to enjoy the nation's prosperity. According to Nussbaum (1999), all over the world, women find themselves treated unevenly in respect of job, safety and integrity, health care, education, politics and in many more fields. She said that if women being asked what they are actually able to do and to be, we can come much closer to exploring and understanding the impediments which society has created for women (Nussbaum 2002. 1).

Gender Socialization and Education: Indian Context

Education enables girls and boys, women and men to participate in social, economic, and political life and is a foundation for the development of a democratic society (OECD, 2011).

School experience motivates students to become part of the school and to participate in learning activities. CAFE report, 2005 pointed out that in school, the experiences of children from the unprivileged section could be isolating and humiliating. There are poignant situations where they face discrimination. This report pointed out that this kind of alienating discrimination is equally visible in the treatment of boys and girls. The gender discrimination operates through a 'hidden curriculum' and works as an extension of patriarchy embedded in society. These circumstances not only hurt the emotions of the child but turn out into one of the reasons for drop out. The schools could become gender-friendly only when the teachers would be able to create a new cultural ambiance and gender-friendly curriculum (CAFE, 2005).

The development of gender identity in schools arises from the interplay of beliefs (roles that students role they will play in the future), outlooks (feelings toward them), and behaviors (different activities carried out in the classroom), (Stromquist, 2007).

The practices as per gender-based roles are prevalent in schools also. Nambisam takes the reference of Bhattacharjee (1999) and discusses how schools play a vital role in reinforcing gender identities on the educational experience that girls receive. She discusses that school divide the children during formal and informal activities, like separate assembly lines for girls and boys, allocation of routine tasks, and so on. Further, she adds that girls are generally found in performing 'light' task such as decoration or arranging classrooms or receiving guests during functions, while boys perform all tasks which seek 'strength,' like fixing or moving things from one place to another (Nambissam, 2005. 194).

Govinda and Bandyopadhyay (2011) discussed the quality of schooling in relation to exclusion. They identified certain determinants that contribute to the quality of education. The first thing they reported was the physical infrastructure of schools. They found that almost all the villages under study had school buildings, but the quality and resources was a matter of concern. They found that in tribal areas of Dindori (Madhya Pradesh), the infrastructure facilities were in poor condition. In the same cluster, few schools do not have a proper building. They reported that schools have computer labs, but the availability of electricity was an issue. All these facilities create hurdles for the students, particularly for the girls in getting quality education as they already get limited opportunities.

Thashiya (2017) took the reference of Kunjumon (2012) and stated that the role of school in constructing gender ideologies in students. The findings depict that each school has its own culture and practices, and both play a vital role in the formation of gender differences in students. In a formal setting, schools pass on gender roles and norms through their everyday practices. He also argued that private management schools are more substantial and permit open and direct mingling of different sexes. Schooling reinforces the gendered inequality of socialization across all divides. It is evident that the education of girls remains embedded in the societal context even though it provides an expanded space for growth to women (NCERT, 2006).

Global education monitoring report stated that in southern and central Asia, the gender parity index was dominated by the progress of India (UNESCO, 2019, 7). It is indicating that India is working towards providing education access to everyone. But the same report analysed that the negative views about the girls' education are held by many countries which are expanding educational opportunities for them. It stated that India has recently performed excellently in terms of gender parity. However, most of the people in India believe in patriarchal norms. Here, people do not value girls' education, which restricts their equal chances to access education and participate in nation development. It means providing equal opportunities in an unequal society may or may not be a path for shifting patriarchal norms (UNESCO, 2019, 20)

Gender and Education

The pervasiveness of gender is beyond boundaries and across cultures in every sphere of lives. Gender defines the access of resources to both girls and boys and so in a patriarchal society like India, access of educational opportunities is limited for girls. According to Dreze and Sen (2013), in India, despite the strong pro-education rhetoric, the school education has expanded very slowly. They discussed the girls' education and opined that nearly half of girls were out of the education system in India in the year 2005 -06. Bangladesh, which is poorer than India, has caught up with- and in ways overtaken India in the education of girls (Dreze and Sen, 2013. 112).

The primary source for a child to acquire themselves with knowledge, practices, and behaviour is family; it is family who provide the earliest understanding of their role in society. According to Nambissam (2005), through family, children internalize the culturally appropriate behaviour of 'masculine' and 'feminine.' She further argues that in India, the parents impose division of tasks, customs, clothes, games, and many other things among their children. This division further influences the decision in relation to the education of children.

In society, cultural norms, means of livelihood and financial status place girls' education at a greater risk than the boys. According to Nambissam, parents' concern with the boys' education as compared to the girls because of the cultural practices related to the marriage where it is believed that girls have temporary status in their natal homes, while boys are obliged to provide economic security to parents. Hence, the education of girls is influenced by the consideration of marriage rather than the need

for economic security for individuals or the family (Nambissam, 2005. 192). Ramachandran, Mehrotra and Jandhyala, (2008. 5) discuss that if the number of children is more and it becomes difficult to spend equally on education, then parents make choice by either sending only the better performing child, or they would consider to give opportunity to boy over the girl, or they could push the boy child to private school and let the girl to continue her studies in a government school.

To further understand the outlook of society towards gender, Kumar discussed the different judgments of people towards labor, which children perform in their families. He said that if a boy belongs to the family of a poor farmer and contributes to the family's work, one may say that the boy is helping in the work of the family. His contribution will be acknowledged in the home and society. In case of girls, the situation will be defined quite differently. They started helping their mothers in household chores from a very early age and continue throughout life, but her work would never be acknowledged, and this basic description holds validity for every social, economic, and political setting (Kumar, 2010).

Srivastav (2006), in her paper on Gender Concern in Education, focused on the status of education of both girls and boys in schools. She said that while boys were being pressured by their parents, teachers, and the society to be stronger and masculine, the girls were portrayed as fragile and represented as primary upholders of family tradition and values.

According to the 3rd round NFHS data, less than half of the women of 15-49 years of age are literate in six Indian states. Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, where this study has been conducted, are among these six states. In NFHS 3 (2005-06), the gender difference in school attendance was much higher in rural areas as compared to urban areas, as shown by the national level as well as the state-level data. In the case of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, more boys than girls attended schools in rural areas (Bandyopadhyay, 2012). Drèze & Kingdon, (2001) said that the tradition of girls leaving parents' house is prevalent in India. But mostly in rural areas, this tradition affects the educational opportunities for girls, as according to the tradition, girls does not stay in parents' house after her marriage. So, parents often consider that they have no direct stake in the education of their girl child, as they will have no return on investment in education. Whether the child is doing good in academics and how much

education will be beneficial for her in the future, for most of the rural parents, it is quite challenging (Dreze & Kingdon, 2001).

Krishan Kumar (2010) rightly pointed out that boys are receiving information and communication aptitudes to participate in the enlarging scope for employment and upward mobility through education. Education has empowered them to remake and fortify patriarchal beliefs by broadening their control over the developing circle of important issues. Girls are being discriminated in different aspects like rurality, position, caste, belief, religion, and disability are further complicated by political and socio-economic forces (NCERT, 2006).

Global education monitoring report, 2019, points out that in most of the countries, there is one predominant view about the role of women in society, which is of housewives and caregivers. These perceptions influence girls' education in several ways. In the sixth round of the world value survey, conducted between 2010 and 2014 in 51 countries, including India, the analysis showed 80 per cent of respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the statement that "When a woman works for pay, the children suffer most" (UNESCO, 2019, 19).

Language and Gender

How we communicate, the uses of phrases and words indicate the status of everyone in our society; it shapes one's identity and attitude towards particular things. In many traditions and cultures, the name of the family continues to be identified by the name of the male member.

In her paper on Gender Concern in Education, Srivastav (2005) emphasized the effect of language on young minds. She argues that it is a prerequisite to focus on the verbal expression while communicating, playing, teaching, or scolding the girls, as this process of socialization affects their self-esteem and self-confidence. In schools, it is the accountability of teachers to understand that a girl is coming from the society. Apart from school, there are a number of influencing factors that shape a girl child's personality and affect her performance. Accordingly, the teacher should create an environment that positively reinforces her efforts instead of demotivating her (Srivastav, 2005).

Factors affecting gender equity in education in India

Household Chores

Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanin (2008) argued that despite progress in educational enrolment and government measures to eradicate child labor, the incidents of child labor are still prevalent in India. The pressure of household chores, most of the time, impacts the learning outcome of the girls (Ramachandran, 2003). Nambissam (2005), discussed that long working hours at home result in poor attendance, poor learning outcomes and gradually drop out of school. The activities in which a girl child is usually involved are cattle rearing, collection of wood, domestic chores, and looking after their siblings. These activities are disproportionately carried out by girls, and they also remain invisible to statistical counts of child labor. Smita (2007) discussed the impact of migration of parents on children's education, where she highlighted that most of the time, adult girls need to accompany their parents to take care of daily chores and look after their siblings. The proportion of working children is greater in intensive labor, like cattle rearing, agriculture, and household activities (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2008. 60). And in this process, they either drop out or are never enrolled in the schools.

Drop out of Girls

It is evident from the 75th NSS Round that in rural areas, 14.7 per cent girls drop out before completion of the education cycle (GoI, 2018). Out of it, 18.3 per cent girls drop out at upper primary level of education. The reasons discussed by the NSS 75th report were that the maximum per cent of girls (31.9 per cent) drop out from educational institutions because of the domestic responsibilities in the rural areas, and in urban areas, 26.7 per cent drop out for the same reason. 3.3 per cent of girls in rural areas drop out of school because of the distance of the school from home. These issues were discussed by Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanina (2008), where they found in NSS 61st round that in rural areas, 11 per cent of girls aged 10-14 left school because of household chores.

Underinvestment of parents in female education

Subrahmanian (2005) thoroughly discussed that girls are the second option for parents in choosing schooling for their children. She opined that existing gendered norms which decide the role of women and men in society, also determine the opportunities for them, and it is very likely that parents may favour their boys' over girls' in providing educational access.

This factor is also discussed by Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanin (2008). They argued that many communities believe that investing in educating girls give no returns, as the primary role of girls is to indulge in the household and reproductive activities. Enabling girls to partake in these activities requires domestic socialization, and getting them an education could prove to be counter-productive. Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanin also reported that in states like Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, enrolment of girls is likely to be less as compared to other states like Kerala and Himachal Pradesh. Govinda and Varghese (1993) found that differences in achievement levels are more noticeable in rural areas of Madhya Pradesh, where boys were performing better than the girls.

The social control of female sexuality and patriarchy outlook determines whether girls have access to education or not. This ideology also regulates the quality, type, and duration of education they receive and what they do with it later, i.e., whether they work or not and what kind of jobs are taken up by them, whether they work to earn before or after marriage (NCERT, 2006).

Another major issue is discussed by Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanin (2008). They found that because of increasing sexual violence, parents are refraining from sending their daughters to school. They argued that public spaces (like buses, roads, lanes, and markets) in India are not safe and unfriendly to the presence of women. Women rarely feel confident and secure in these spaces.

Besides these, there are several factors creating impediments for girls in access to education. These patriarchal values and gendered ideologies are taking away the educational opportunities of girls and widening the gaps in schooling enrolment. Subrahmanian argued that even if women are able to balance their burdens at home and participate in different opportunities, gender inequalities in most of the cases are institutionalized in their practices, in the norms, in resources, in the attitude and so on. These factors create obstacles in achieving equitable outcomes. In the education context, she focused on teacher's attitude, nature of the formal and hidden curriculum, safety, infrastructure, and many other hurdles that pushes girls outside of the system (Subrahmanian, 2005. 399). In the school system, there is a need to raise gendered concerns as reflected in the hidden curriculum through content, images, language, and text in textbooks, in the attitude of teachers and even parents, who reproduce patriarchal

values. Together, they all follow the rules and regulations, which are gender discriminatory and are becoming another form of domestication (NCERT, 2006).

Gender and Education Accessibility

The poor access to secondary education is one of the significant reasons for girls' lower enrolment in secondary education. The study stated that the long distances between the inhabitants and schools have been the major reason behind this poor access, and mentioned that secondary schools are majorly located in the centre of districts. The long-distance affects girls most because they are more vulnerable to insecure and unsafe roads (OECD, 2011).

In a study on Gender and School Participation, conducted in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, Bandyopadhyay (2012) stated that girls in India are distortedly represented among the never enrolled and drop out children. Many of them have got a substandard quality of education and thus gotten to be learning distraught, rehash their grades, and in the long run, drop out without completing basic education (King et al., 1999). Bandyopadhyay (2012), opined that it is vital to examine the accessibility and availability of educational facilities along with learning accomplishment in a gender-disaggregated way to look at whether gender matters for guaranteeing meaningful access for all basic school instruction in order to bridge the gap between gender in education.

Many researchers also talked about the demand and supply factors that affect the accessibility of education. Demand factors of schools, accessibility within reach of children with respect to poverty, and illiteracy, are many times affected by the supply components. Moreover, they influence access to school, especially for girls and disadvantaged groups (Bandyopadhyay, 2012, Lloyd, 2005).

It is further stated that regardless of numbers of legislation, particularly for gender equality, there is a scarcity of schools which are gender-friendly and within the reachable distance. These situations jeopardize girls' enrolment and continuation in school. Although most of the villages have primary schools within one-kilometer, upper primary schools are yet to be made accessible within the range of villages (Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanian, 2011; Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2011, Bandyopadhyay, 2012). Distance from village to school has been a concern for the government for many years. This is also one of the reasons for girls not to attend school.

For the same concern, the government increases the accessibility of schools. The study (Bandyopadhyay, 2012) found that the distance of primary schools from home was not the primary reason for the low attendance of girls' students; other reasons were also responsible. It has been mainly the absence of middle and secondary schools, which results in a low transition rate for girls. It is broadly recognized that the accessibility of qualified, prepared and motivated female teachers was one of the determining variables for advancing gender equity in schools. Other variables include the access of separate toilets for boys and girls, female teachers, teachers with gender-sensitive attitude, the inclusion of women in school administration committees, and gender-friendly educational programs emphatically impacts children, especially girls' education (Bandyopadhyay, 2012, Wu et al., 2006).

Sadgopal (2003) examined government guidelines and prospectus developed by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT). He reported that the conception of pre-vocational activities for the upper primary level incorporates sex-stereotyped practices such as keeping a clean home, looking after younger children and other family members. Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanin (2008), took the reference of Pandey (2006), and discussed teachers' attitude in the classroom. They identified that apart from the curriculum, the practices of teachers within the school are continuing the gender stereotypes. They favour boy students in many learning activities within the classroom as well as outside of it.

In the study, Gender Participation in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, it was observed that the expansion of private schools has imperilled gender equity. Over girls, boys are preferred by the parents to be sent to private schools. In Chhattisgarh, prevalence of child marriage and the unwillingness of parents to spend money on girls' education are vital reasons for the low education level of girls. (Bandyopadhyay, 2012)

Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanian (2008), argued that parental inclination for male children remains the main reason behind deciding family preferences related to education and life opportunities of children. They found nearly in all states poor parents from marginalized sections make choices in support of their boys while deciding about their children's education. The paper revealed that the proportion of boys and girls in being chosen for government schools was 54:46, while in private school, the ratio was 59:41. These increasing number of private schools is both a reflection of the

extraordinary request among different populace together with a reflection of the lack of quality and facilities in government schools (Bandyopadhyay, Subrahmanian, 2008).

PROBE 1999 report found that most parents expressed much stronger interest in their son's education than in their daughter's. The overwhelming reason is economic return on education, because parents hope that education will provide employment opportunities to their sons. The same pattern was found in another study in BIMARU, stating that girls are facing severe gender inequalities. In these states, girls are only half as likely to get enrolled in a secondary school as boys (Kingdon, 2007). The reason had been the gender bias in terms of educational expenditure. (Kingdon, 2005).

In an endeavour to improve girls' access to education, educational facilities have improved. Still, there are fundamental systematic practices that are creating impediments in achieving the goal of gender equality in education (Bandyopadhyay, Subrahmanin, 2008). Sudarshan, 2014 discussed an organization's finding, *Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha* that works for environmental education in Uttarakhand and found that the enrolment rate of children from 5 to 10 year old was adversely affected by the distance between the village and the forest used for grazing and fuel wood, and the distance from the drinking water source. Enrolment of girls was found to be significantly and negatively influenced by the number of grazing animals. As compared to boys, girls from the age group of 10 to 14 were affected more.

Dreze and Kingdon, 1999 in a study on school participation in India, found strong inter-generational effects. As per their report, educated parents are more in support of the education of their ward, and their children more likely to attend school. Boys' schooling is more responsive to the father's education than that to the mother's, and vice-versa for girls. They also pointed out that maternal education encompasses a positive impact on a daughter's chances of completing primary school.

Gender Equality: Yet to be Achieved

On the process of development of the nation, Nakray (2018) opined that over the last two decades, from 1991 to 2011, India witnessed a remarkable improvement in economic growth along with the different social policies. Still, better human development outcome remains difficult to catch. In Human Development Index 2019, India achieved 129th rank among 189 countries (UNDP, 2019).

According to Dreze and Sen (2013), there are numbers of factor which are responsible for the deteriorating condition of school education, including limited coverage and low-quality standard of education being offered to and received by the pupil.

The low accessibility and quality of education, particularly for girls, has always been a concern for policymakers. First National education Policy, 1968 emphasised on girls' education and suggested that girls' education should be promoted because it is not only a concern of social justice but also to accelerate social revolution (GoI, 1968).

After the 1968 education policy, the world has experienced several social and political movements, and in the 70s, the invisibility of women's participation in the national economy took attention of social activist. In 1971, the government set up the committee on the status of women in India (GoI, 2015). This committee highlighted that the life of poor women was different from the rich women, and along with poverty, social inequalities were making their situation even worse. It also pointed out that the meaning of knowledge needs to incorporate local and specific needs of women.

Bhog (2017) discussed that this committee throws light on the productive role of women and stated that their contribution remained unacknowledged in policies, and subsequently, their needs remained unexplored. Hence the need of the time was not to provide only equality but also to build the environment for its success. By taking references from the committee report, a new National Education Policy came in 1986. This policy emphasized on the development of refurbish curricula, textbooks, teacher training, and other vital things and suggested that the education system should play a role of interventionist in the empowerment of women (GoI, 1986, Bhog, 2017).

After the 1986 policy, a number of initiatives have been implemented by central and state governments to achieve the education for all, and gave special attention in educating backward districts (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2011, 3). To expand access to education, the government passed the Right to Education Act and made the eight-year of education a fundamental right for every child. For maintaining the quality of education, policymakers implemented District Primary education Program and Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2011), National Action Plan and Literacy mission (Nakray, 2018). Madhya Pradesh launched incentive schemes like free of Cost Distribution Scheme of textbooks to all girls from class 1 to 5, book bank scheme for girls and boys from class 6 to 12, free uniform scheme for low social and

economic class girls and many other schemes to bring girls in the education system (GoMP, 2019). Ramachandran et al. (2008, 5) argues that incentives, either provided to institutions or individuals, are necessary and useful for many children, but merely incentives cannot fulfil other social barriers of a student. For example, in the absence of a school or an educational environment, incentives cannot retain a child in school for a longer period of time.

According to Dreze and Sen (2013), albeit the progress has been made by the government in order to provide education to everyone, but the quality of school education in India seems to be remarkably low. The concern of providing equitable education to girls is still a concern for the government. Nakray (2018, 29) argues that education policies in India resemble policy transfers that are being arbitrarily accepted and implemented by bureaucrats and stakeholders without acknowledging the culture and local needs of the people. Although this fact cannot be denied that the literacy rate and girls' enrolment have increased, gender equality is yet to be achieved.

White et al. (2016) reported that the progress in the status of girls' education is questionable when compared to global patterns, as reading and mathematical skills of girl students is very low, which reflects the social, cultural and economic biases against them. According to Subrahmanin (2005), gender parity can only reflect the formal equal numbers in terms of access, which measures the numerical gaps in the number of boys and girls. However, to bring the gender equality, we need to understand the power relation between men and women.

School Choice and Gender

India has witnessed an enormous expansion of its facilities for elementary education in the recent past (Juneja, 2010). Private schools are seeing a rise in their numbers and popularity in many areas (Juneja, 2011, Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2011, Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2008) in spite of an increase in public investment in the field of education. Numbers of schooling options are now available, which are running through private and public funding.

Due to the increasing numbers of private schools, access to schooling has seen an improvement, but it has severely broadened the gender gap. It has affected social equity, as mostly only the economically well-off families can afford to send their kids to these schools, and only sons are given preference over the girl child, for whom 'free'

education provided by the government school is deemed fit (Bandyopadhyay, 2012, Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanian, 2011, Kingdon, 2005). OECD (2012). Focus has been given to the question that why do more privileged parents tend to send their children to private schools, and the reasons included that parents believe these schools offer better education and a more conducive environment for learning. In providing education, boys have always been the first preference for parents than girls. As there are diverse schooling options to provide access to education so it is important to study that how gender percolates in different types of schooling accessed by students.

Juneja (2010) found that even though a variety of schooling options have contributed to greater access to schooling, the inequality related to access still remains among various socio-economic groups or genders. The access is greater for girls in urban areas (Sengupta & Guha, 2002), where the diversity is enhanced by market forces (through unaided and private aided schools). However, accessibility becomes a hindrance in the case of children from lower socio-economic groups (Ramachandran, 2004), and many of them have to attend government schools with subdued quality of education and other infrastructure. It implies that higher fee is afforded by only parents with good socio-economic backgrounds. So the accessibility to private schools is only limited to few children within a family. According to this study, roughly more than half of the children (50.8 per cent) get wiped out from the system by the end of upper primary, and by class ten, the rate increases to 62 per cent. Only 38 per cent of children are able to complete their schooling from primary till tenth grade, for multiple reasons.

(De et al., 2005) stated that the poor affordability of the aspirational parents to pay higher fee in private schools contributes to gender discrimination among their own kids. The distinction among the kids was found in the families, where the girls were either non-enrolled or had to walk long distances to government schools, and the boys were enrolled in private schools. Juneja opined that universal elementary education would remain a far-fetched dream if the parallel schools for marginalised are continued to be formed and if the quality transitions to secondary are not improved in the schools. Presence of few number of single-sex and affordable secondary schools result in the girls opting out of education at an early stage. (Juneja, 2010).

Government schools with inadequate educational and other infrastructure will continue to be a cause of concern in the underdeveloped pockets of the country. The burden on

government schools see a significant decline wherever the children belonging to powerful groups shift to private schools (Ramachandran, 2004). The proportion of girls remains higher in government schools than in private schools, in spite of the speedy growth of aided and private schools in several areas of the country. The share of girls in the government schools far exceeded their participation in unrecognized schools, the gender bias by the parents in choosing the school is also quite clear (PROBE 2006, Ramachandran & Chatterjee 2013, NCERT 2006). This polarization of schooling is somewhere responsible for widening the gap between girls' and boys' education, creating an imbalance, and consequently hindering the opportunities for girls in the future (NCERT, 2006).

In different research studies, it has been found in most of the states that if the parents are poor and cannot afford private education for every child, the probability is higher for males as compare to females to get a good education (Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanian, 2011, Bandyopadhyay, 2012, Wu et al. 2006). In two educationally backward states, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, it has been found by Dreze and Kingdon 2001, that a lack of meaningful access to schools is a significant concern. However, both states have witnessed a significant expansion of educational facilities and increases in enrolment over the last few decades. Nevertheless, gender equality is still not achieved, and one of the reasons was the proliferation of private schooling and its effect on other underprivileged people, including girls.

An article titled 'Private Schools and the issue of gender discrimination (Mail & Guardian, year, 2014), points out that the issue of gender inequality in choices of school has been raised in United Nations by 13 non-governmental organizations. It stated that privatisation of education exacerbates gender discrimination. This is because poor parents, faced with the prospect of paying fees for a private school in the context of public education systems in crisis, often can only afford to send one child to school – and boys, not girls, are usually the lucky ones. (Victoria John, 2014).

Different studies found that patriarchal thinking of society is hampering the opportunity of girl child in accessing education, whether it is public or private. So, it would be vital to understand how private schools and public schools are managing the equity, what are the practices happening on the field in maintaining gender equity.

Capability Approach and Gender

According to Sen, the capability approach to a person's benefit is concerned with evaluating in terms of real skill to accomplish various valuable functionings. The capability of an individual reflects the substitute combinations of functionings the person can achieve. A particularly valuable feature of the capability approach is the acknowledgment that the possession of resources or commodities may be an inadequate indicator of well-being freedom. Amartya Sen (1985) argued that one should avoid limiting the analysis to the characteristics of the goods possessed. Fundamental disparities in individual opportunities to achieve well-being may exist among persons who possess equal amounts of a primary good. Capability Approach is in contradiction of the dominant emphasis on economic growth as an indicator of a nation's quality of life. Sen insisted on the importance of capabilities, what individual is actually able to do and to be (Nussbaum, 2000). This approach postulates that while constructing normative evaluations, the effort should be on what people are and what they are able to do. It should not be on what they can consume, because this approach is only about the means of well-being. In contrast, evaluation should be based on the understanding of those things that matter intrinsically, which is a person's capability (Robeyns, Agarwal & Humphries, 2005).

Nussbaum (2002) took the reference of Sen (1995. 1), and opined that “Sen also opposes the approaches which quantify the well-being in terms of utility by pointing out the fact that women continuously exhibit “adaptive references,” preferences that are adjusted to their second –class status.” Hence she opined that the Utilitarian approach, where people are being asked their present preferences and satisfaction, proves insufficient and inadequate to deal with the most latent issues of gender justice.

The capability approach provides a framework to analyse various social issues such as well-being and poverty, liberty and freedom, and development, gender bias and inequalities, justice, and social ethics. Several studies have used the capability approach to assess the gender inequalities in human capacities. Robeyns, 2006 argues, to understand and analyse the gender inequalities in human capabilities and functioning, capabilities approach would be more appropriate because it considers the human well-being much better by comparing those things that fundamentally matter. For instance, competence, rather than traditional utility-based instruments, morally focus on the resources or income dimensions.

On Amartya Sen's capability approach, Aikman and Unterhalter consider the development of freedoms of everyone as necessary for the achievement of gender equality in education. It means that every individual should have the freedom to attend school, participate and learn, enjoy, cultural, political opportunities. They opined if gender equality could be placed in the classroom, it would turn in to the key to connect schooling and citizenship with human rights (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005).

Walker (2007), while selecting capabilities for analysing gender equality in education, used ideas from the capability approach. She lists capabilities that apply specifically to education. Since the capability approach attaches great importance to agency, Walker (2007) believes that education in any context should promote agency. As a key element, it should facilitate the development of autonomy and empowerment, economic capability, and affiliation.

According to Walker, education should provide autonomy, which enables students to have choices, have information on which choices are to be made, planning a life after school, independence, and empowerment. The knowledge of intrinsically interesting school subjects should be useful for post-school choices. Girls should have access to powerful analytical knowledge, including knowledge of women's lives, knowledge for critical thinking, and for debating complex moral and social issues. According to Walker, school's responsibility is to provide the environment where a child can make social relations, the capability to be a friend, the capability to participate in the group for friendship and learning, to be able to work with others to solve problems and tasks, being able to work with others and form effective or good groups for learning life at school, being able to respond to human need, social belonging. Inside the school, a child should get respect and recognition, self-confidence, and self-esteem, respect from others, and should be treated with dignity. A student should not be devalued or diminished because of one's gender, social class, religion or race, language. The school space should be provided with inclusivity, for aspiration, motivation to learn and succeed, to have a better life, to hope. Students should have a voice for participation in learning, for speaking and not being silenced through pedagogy or power relations or harassment or excluded from curriculum being active in the acquisition of knowledge (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007). Sen opined that gender inequality could be understood and comprehended much better by comparing those things that are essential, for example, capability and functioning, rather than just the means like resources.

According to him, the concern of gender inequality is ultimately one of disparate freedom (Sen 1992).

Conclusion

Drawing reference from different reports, research studies, books, and data, the above discussion reveals that gender is still a matter of concern for the education system in India. It is understandable that the education system itself is becoming a part of gender socializing institution, and is perpetuating gender division among the students. Gender ideologies have become the basis of social norms, practices, and rules. These processes, in turn, inform masculine and feminine identities and are encrypted in institutions that govern daily life (Subramanian, 2005). As a universal system of stratification, gender has become a set of organizing principles that have now crept into the micro realms of education, but still, it remains untouched. Girls are being oppressed by the society, and to remove this relationship, one needs to understand the structure and environment of the school. This study made an extensive search of related studies. It is revealed that most studies focused on quantitative aspects like gender equity, parity, gender inequality, girls' access to schooling, literacy rate, dropouts, bias in textbooks, etc. There are very few studies that focus on the environment inside the school. For that reason, this study focuses on the enrolment status along with students' participation from the gender perspective inside the school.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

This study is primarily focusing on the gender equity in access to, and participation in elementary schools of Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. It will examine the social factors which are responsible for reinforcing students to play a particular gender role in the teaching-learning process. It also tries to explore the hidden components which are responsible for providing educational opportunities to girls and boys. In order to understand how school practices contribute in reinforcing gendered roles, this study has adopted a mixed method approach as its research design for the collection and interpretation of data.

Design of the Study

In order to explore and understand this process, qualitative as well as quantitative methods are needed for in-depth inquiry to study the situated contexts of gender-based accessibility and participation, as well as how it affects learning for students.

A Mixed method has been used to measure both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the proposed problem. Mixed method combines quantitative and qualitative research methods, in different ways, where each method add valuable inputs to understand the phenomenon (Ary et al. 2010, 559). According to Creswell using both quantitative and qualitative method in combination provides a wider understanding of the research problem and question than either method by itself (Creswell, 2005, 535).

Further, this study has selected Concurrent triangulation type of mixed method for more comprehensive findings. In concurrent triangulation, both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed separately but almost at the same time, and the findings converge in conclusion, in order to answer an overarching research problem (Ary, 2010, 563).

The primary objective of this study is to analyse gender equity in access to and participation of children in elementary education. Accordingly, first, this study has focused on gender equity in access, which will be measured through the available access related secondary data on elementary education, followed by collection of primary data

from the schools by methods like- interviewing school heads and teachers of the selected four schools, and some selected parents of the elementary school-going children who were attending the same schools. Other than that observation method, case study and narratives method has selected for a deeper understanding.

Universe of the Study

The study was conducted in one of the four blocks of Gwalior district of Madhya Pradesh. Two villages have been selected for this purpose by using purposive sampling method on the basis of literacy rate, availability of private and government schools, population, and school enrolment. Four schools: two government and two private schools were selected from the same villages as sample schools. The rationale behind choosing two different villages is to study the diversity and differences in the two different villages and its impact on gender and education.

Sampling Method

For the Selection of research site, purposive sampling method was used. Purposive Sampling involves identifying and selecting samples (individuals or groups of individuals), who have knowledge about or experience with the phenomenon of interest (Cresswell, 2005, 206), and willingness to participate and the ability to communicate experience and opinion in an articulate, expressive and reflective manner.

- First, the block was selected on the basis of literacy rate and educational facilities because the purpose of the study can only be fulfilled when there is some participation of the girl child in schools.
- Then with the help of U-Dise, few villages were selected based on the availability of both private and government schools and, it was made sure that the villages have better literacy rate which would enable them to share their thoughts in a more concise manner.
- Private and government schools were selected based on total enrolment of girl and boy students, numbers of teachers and, co-educational facilities. The criteria were set that the schools should have at least eighty students with minimum of four teachers.

For the selection of Respondent-

- Convenient sampling has been used to select both, the parents and the teachers, from all sampling schools. It is a type of Non – Probability Sampling, where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability of a given time, or the willingness to participate, are included for the purpose of the study (Dornyei, 2007).
- Purposive Sampling is used for the selection of students for informal interaction. From each school students of grades 7th and 8th have been chosen, because it has been assumed that, as compared to the students of lower grades, these students would be more experienced and comfortable in sharing their thoughts.

Data Collection Tools

Primary Data

For the collection of **Primary data** researcher used two primary data collection tools. The first was the structured interview schedule for head teacher, Teachers, and Parents. The central aim of interviews was to understand the perception of heads, teachers, and parents about the gender-based participation of girls and boys. The second tool was the observation schedule, which was divided into specific groups, which were essential to be observed, in order to understand the gender-based practices in school and to verify it with the responses of the respondents.

The interview schedule had various dimensions, including the perception of different stakeholders about the importance of education for both girls and boys, the participation of girls and boys in school extracurricular activities, community environment for the girls' education, school environment for girls education, constituting socialization process in school.

- **Structured Interview Schedule**

To explore the teachers' and parents' attitudes on the gender-based role of students, a few in-depth interviews were conducted. Interview is one of the methods which is used widely by social researchers to obtain qualitative data. It helps in gathering data directly from the people who are the active participants in the field study. The tool gives space

to people where they can share their beliefs, feelings, experiences, expectations about the situation in their own words (Ary. D, Jacob. L.C, Sorensen. C, 2010).

It took 28 days to collect data from each village. The twenty-eight days were further divided into four schools, meaning seven days in each school. In the first two days, only the informal interaction method couples with the observation method was used. After two days, along with the observation method, interviews were conducted with teachers and parents.

Number of Participants

Number of Head Teachers – 4 (1 Head Teacher from each school)

Number of Teachers – 20 (5 Teachers from each school)

Number of Parents– 20 (5 Parents from each school)

Students – 24 (6 students from each school)

Block Officer – 1

Total – 69

Only one respondent was interviewed at a time. During the interview process, the privacy of the respondent was kept in consideration. All the responses of respondents were carefully listened to and, with their permission, recorded.

- **Observation Schedule**

Observation is another form of collecting the information from the field. Besides the competencies of speaking and listening, which are used in interviews, observation is another everyday skill that is methodologically systemized and is applied in qualitative research. It includes not only the visual surroundings but also to collect information based on hearing, feeling, and smell (Adler and Adler, 1998). Participant and Non-participant observation method was used in every school to explore and understand the gender equity in participation. This observation helped in exploring the situations and episodes which students face in day to day life, which in turn reinforces gender-based roles for students in their respective schools.

Participant Observation method was used with students by attending classes and becoming a facilitator for informal interaction. In this process students were asked

about their hobbies, favourite subjects, aspirations and their experiences in school. During this, both, the actions and behaviour of students were observed. Participant Observation was primarily done during day to day interaction with students by engaging in different activities with them. This form of observation is commonly used for the collection of qualitative data. According to Jorgensen (1989, 16) through participant observation a vast array of challenges can be countered, especially when the central theme revolves around the methods used for definition and interaction between the general environment by the people. He stated that its main ambit lies on the personal perspective regarding meaning and human interaction, in the usual everyday circumstances (Jorgensen, 1989, 15).

Non-participant observation was done in the teaching learning process of classroom and in everyday school activities, including prayer, lunch, sports period (if any), festival/national day celebration, classroom teaching-learning process, and social spaces in the villages, like shops, ‘*chaupal*’ bus stand, temple. The observation was scheduled for 28 days in each village.

Observation Schedule

Components of Observation	Activities of Observation	Number of observation	Site and Participants of Observation
Gender-based Participation	Morning Assembly, Informal games, organized events and sports, etc.	28 days in 4 School (7days in each school)	School Playground, other spaces like corridors, Girls and Boys.
Gender-based participation	Classroom Observation	5 th and 7 th grades of two school (1 Private and 1 Government)	Classroom, Teachers, girls, and boys.
Teacher’s attitude towards division of non-academic work	Dialogue between teachers and students	28 days in 4 School (7days in each school)	Classrooms, Corridors, Playground Teacher and Student

Students' behavior towards division of role	Student interaction with one another, their actions in performing the assigned task.	28 days in 4 School (7days in each school).	Classrooms, Corridors, Playground Teacher and Student.
Mutual Respect between Girls and Boys Student	Students' interactions with each other inside the classroom, during games events, lunch break, school break etc.	28 days in 4 School (7days in each school)	Classrooms, Corridors, Playground, Student.

Structure interview was chosen to gather data on teachers' perspectives on girls' participation in school. The observation schedule was used to observe in the gendered environment of schools and villages. It helped in collecting open-ended and first-hand information (Creswell 2005. pg. no. 213) about the behavior and attitude of students and teachers.

Secondary Data

For the **Secondary data**, the researcher used available data from different sources like Census, U – DISE, NFHS, MHRD reports on school education. Moreover, articles, books, newspaper articles, published and unpublished research work, non- government organizations reports, etc., have also been used.

Analysis of Data

Quantitative data was analysed through making comparisons between the two data sets. The analysis is done with the help of graphical representations and discussions. For the analysis of NFHS and NSS reports, surveys, quantitative data related to school access, documents, and other relevant written and verbal data, the Content Analysis Method has been used. It is a method to analyse content that has collected from written, verbal, or visual data. According to Krippendorff (2014, 18), content analysis is a research methodology/technique for creating replicable and valid inferences from different forms of document, reports, videos, pictures etc. to the content of their use. It can be

used in both quantitative and qualitative research analysis. This method found very successful in ethnographic research (Krippendorff, 2014, 19).

The analysis of primary data is divided into three parts. The first part includes the thematic analysis method. According to Braun & Clarke (2006, 72), thematic analysis method particularly use in qualitative data, this analysis is a method to identify, examine, and report the patterns in the primary data. In this study, few themes were pre-decided through literature review and research studies, and few themes developed by the coding of the primary data.

The second part includes theme-based narratives, collected through interviews and informal communications. According to Gibbs, 2007 narrative is one of the ways where people can organize their understanding of the world. In narratives, people make sense of their past experiences. Careful analysis of narratives can reveal people's opinions and the cultural context in which they live. In this study, the purpose of including narrative is to understand the broader perspective of the teachers and parents on gender equality in education. It would help in identifying the underlying reasons and experiences which lead their views on gender equality.

The third part includes case studies, which are relevant for the understanding of gender equity in access to and participation in education. A case study contains an up-close, in-depth, and detailed examination of a particular case. According to Yin (2003, 9), case study explores a phenomenon, describes a situation or test explanation. The reason to choose a case study is to identify and understand the determinants which contribute to the participation of girls' education.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion indicates that the study has been based on triangulation of various data gathering and analytical methods. An effort has been made to provide a deeper insight to the societal context within which a school functions with a considerable impact on day to day life of children, their socialisation and educational attainment. Since the study has borrowed the theoretical framework of Paulo Freire's works, the above mentioned methods have been quiet useful to understand the entire gamut of schooling as well as classroom situation which pose many challenges before different stakeholders including students in ensuring discrimination free and gender

friendly environment in school which is one of the objectives of developing an inclusive educational system.

Freire (1985, 131), stated that formal education works either for the “domestication of learners or for liberation”. According to Stromquist (2014), Friere’s writing, especially in pedagogy of the Oppressed, highlights the ever-sustaining political nature of education and he also shows how education can prove to be an effective catalyst for political transformation. So it is vital to understand the participation of students in the light of his concepts of oppressor and oppressed and culture of silence. These concepts would help in to understand that how students participation and learning is effected within the school.

The subsequent chapters provide an in-depth analysis of children's educational access and their participation in one of the backward states in India which is inhabited by many socially disadvantaged, economically deprived and marginalised groups of population. In spite of witnessing several government initiatives and involvement of civil society organisations, the state is still lagging behind other states in many aspects particularly school education. The state is still striving for bridging the gender and social gaps in school education and ensuring active participation of children in school. While the chapter 4 describes the present status of study area based on secondary data, the chapter 5 is based on empirical data collected using above mentioned qualitative methods from the selected study area and sample schools.

CHAPTER 4

Education Scenario in the Area of Study

Introduction

Previous chapter 3 discussed the methodology which has been adopted to conduct this study. It focused on the design of the study, universe, sample, and tools for data collection and analysis. This chapter analyse the secondary data related to access and participation of students, specifically girls, at the elementary level, particularly in Gwalior district located in Madhya Pradesh. However, the analysis begins with an overview of elementary education in India and to what extent the gender gap could be bridged at the national level.

Education and Gender Inequality in India

As mentioned earlier India has experienced tremendous growth in the schooling system in the past years as it is evident in increase in number of schools as well as enrolment of students. In order to provide access to every child, there has been a considerable expansion of government as well as private schools. In India, according to the 2018-19 data, there are 2.64 lakh total schools located in urban areas and 13.04 lakh schools in rural areas. In these schools, there are 47.08 lakh male teachers and 47.09 lakh female teachers. These teachers teach 12.86 crore boys and 11.93 crore girls in all the schools (UDISE, 2018-19). These data indicate a substantial growth of schools, teachers, and students. However, within these schools, there are high disparities in enrolment, retention, transition, and drop out. As per the 2018-19 U-DISE data, the Gross enrolment ratio at the secondary level is 79.57 per cent, which indicates a disparity between girls and boys. The drop-out rate at the primary level is 2.72 per cent, and it increases to 9.74 per cent at the secondary level.

According to the Human Development Report, 2018, India ranked 122 with a score of 0.501 in the Gender development index. This report indicates a high disparity between men and women (of age 25 years and above) who received some secondary education. It shows that between the years 2010-18, only 39 per cent of women received secondary education against 63.5 per cent male. In 2018 only 23.6 per cent of females participated in the labour force against 78.6 per cent male. In 2015, the Under 5 Mortality Rate rate was recorded 40 for boys and 45 for girls (GoI, 2015).It illustrates the negligent attitude

of most parents towards the girl child. According to Bandyopadhyay (2019), preferences for a boy over a girl are still prevalent in several parts of India, and this contributes to the gender disparity at every level. It leads to discrimination against girls, and they are denied access to their fundamental rights.

Since elementary education is a constitutional commitment in India, the government has a key responsibility of making provisions for education to all the children up to the age of 14. The government is making every effort to expand the educational accessibility to every child, which results in the expansion of school infrastructure. According to Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2010, government is especially focusing on 'backward' locations and marginalized groups to overcome regional and social inequity. As a result of this, India has observed, in recent years, an extraordinary growth in educational infrastructure at all levels, drawing millions of children into organized learning. Despite improvements, there are certain sections of society, including girls who are at higher risk of school withdrawal, absenteeism and drop out due to the cultural beliefs and practices (White & Ruther, 2016). Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2010, stated in their paper 'Education Access in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh' that Madhya Pradesh witnessed a considerable expansion of educational facilities. However, a large number of children are still excluded from school, indicating a lack of meaningful access to education in these states which has been a matter of concern for government and other agencies who are engaged in provisioning of education to fulfil the fundamental right of children for accessing education.

Keeping all these concerns in mind, the objective of this chapter is to explore and understand the educational scenario in Gwalior with respect to gender equity in access. It is focusing on the educational status of Gwalior in particular to India (National level) and Madhya Pradesh (state level). This chapter is divided into two sections; the first section is on the demographic and educational profile of Madhya Pradesh and Gwalior while the second part would focus on different educational indicators which are vital to examine gender equality in school access at the elementary level.

The first section deals with the educational status in the state of Madhya Pradesh and the district Gwalior that is selected for this study. It would also provide a comparative analysis of the status of enrolment in schools of Gwalior and the other two well-performing districts in terms of literacy. The subsequent section will give an overview

of the selected area in terms of different indicators i.e., enrolment rate, Gross Enrolment Ratio, Net Enrolment Ratio, Gender Parity Index Transition Rate, Promotion Rate, Repetition Rate, Drop Out Rate, and so on.

SECTION I

Madhya Pradesh Profile

Madhya Pradesh is the second-largest state in India; it is centrally located and extends between the latitudes 21.2°N and 26.81°N and longitudes 74.69° to 82.10° east longitudes. It shares its borders with Uttar Pradesh in the northeast and Chhattisgarh in the southeast, Maharashtra in the south, Gujarat in the west, and Rajasthan in the northwest. With an area of 3, 08,000 sq.km, it is the second-largest state of the country after Rajasthan (GoMP, 2019).

Table 1: Demography of Madhya Pradesh

TOTAL Population	72626809
Population (Male)	37612306 (51.7 per cent)
Population (Female)	35014503 (48.2 per cent)
Population (Rural)	52557404 (72.3 per cent)
Population (Urban)	20069405 (27.6 per cent)
Sex ratio	931

Source: Census of India, 2011

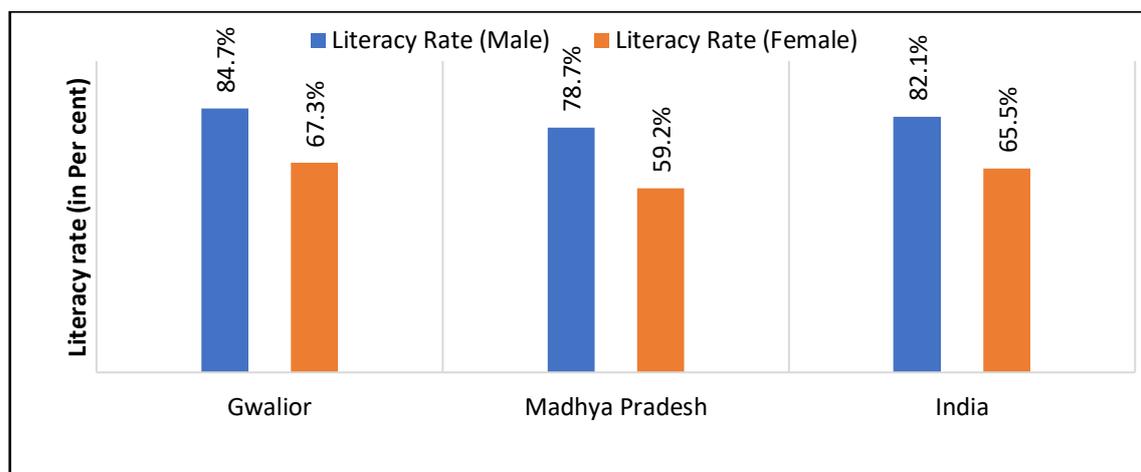
According to the NCERT report, the population of the state is over 81.4 Million, which is making its sixth populous state (NCERT, 2018). 21.1 percent of the state population is tribal population, and the largest tribal group is Gond tribes. The sex ratio of Madhya Pradesh is 931, as compared to the National level (943), while in Gwalior, it is recorded 864, which is very low than the state average. The Child sex Ratio at National Level is 919, in Madhya Pradesh, it is observed as 918, and 840 in Gwalior, it is found to be very low as compared to the state and national level (Census, 2011).

Education Profile of Madhya Pradesh

As per Census 2011, Madhya Pradesh has a literacy rate of 69.32 percent, with 78.73 percent literate male and 59.49 percent literate female (refer figure 1). The gender gap of 24.24 percentage points is quite high. Rural female literacy is 48.49 percent, lower

than the state female literacy rate (Census, 2011). 82 per cent of children between the ages of 6 - 17 years in Madhya Pradesh are attending school. The attendance rate of these children is 90 per cent, in which 62 per cent are girls, as compared to 67 per cent boys who are attending school (NFHS 4, 2016). Out of 23.2 per cent of women with ten or more years of schooling, 43.6 per cent of women are from urban areas, while only 14.1 per cent is from rural areas (NFHS 4, 2016). In Chhattisgarh, the very neighbouring state has a 1,019 sex ratio, and in Madhya Pradesh, the Sex Ratio was 948 in 2016. If we compare women with ten or more years schooling, Madhya Pradesh has 23.2 per cent literate women, and in Chhattisgarh, 26.5 per cent women are with ten or more years of schooling (NFHS 4, 2016). For children under 5 years of age, the mortality Rate in Madhya Pradesh is 65, and in Chhattisgarh, it is 64. There are visible variations in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, in sex ratio, in Literacy rate, and even in U5MR. Chhattisgarh is a small state as compared to Madhya Pradesh, but still, the education indicators are better than the Madhya Pradesh.

Figure 1: Literacy Rate of Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh and India (2011)



Source: Census of India, 2011

Administrative Structure of Education in Madhya Pradesh

The framework of the education system in the state is dependent on the National Pattern of twelve years of schooling. It consists of 8 years of elementary education, five years of primary and three years of middle college education for the age groups 6 -11, as well as 11 -14 yrs. Respectively, accompanied by high school and also higher secondary school training of 2 years each. Administratively, colleges are managed by the Directorate of Public Instruction, Bhopal, and Madhya Pradesh. With district level, the

office of District Education Officer, and also at the block level, the office of Block Education Officer manages and coordinates schooling (GoMP, 2019).

Table 2: Availability of School Facilities in Madhya Pradesh (2016-17)

Available Resources	2016 – 17
Total Government School	114,326
Total Private School	27,562
Madarsas and Unrecognized School	1,696
Government School in Rural Areas	107,416
Private School in Rural Areas	14, 475
School with Playground facilities	67.5Per cent
School with Girls' Toilet	95.0Per cent
School with Boys Toilet/Common Toilet	98.0Per cent
School with Drinking water Facilities	96.4Per cent
MDM Facility	97.9Per cent
Female Teacher	44.0Per cent

Source: U-DISE (State Report Card, 2016-17)

Table 3: Gender Wise Enrolment rate at Primary and Upper primary Levels (Madhya Pradesh)

Year	Primary level		Upper Primary level	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
2009-10	49.32	50.67	48.48	51.51
2011-12	48.83	51.16	50.13	49.86
2013-14	47.73	52.26	49.46	50.53
2015-16	47.29	52.70	48.24	51.75
2016-17	47.47	52.52	47.53	52.46

Source: U-DISE, 2009-10 to 2016-17

Table 3 is depicting the enrolment of girls and boys at primary and upper primary levels. It is evident from the table that girls are lagging behind in enrolment as compared to boys. From 2009 to 2016, the number of boy students is higher at both, the primary and the secondary level, except for the year 2011-12, where the rate of girl students

(50.13) is marginally higher than the boys (49.86). It shows that in Madhya Pradesh, there is a visible gender disparity in the enrolment at primary and secondary levels.

Profile of Area under Study: Gwalior

Gwalior is a historical site of Madhya Pradesh. There are 52 districts in Madhya Pradesh, and Gwalior is one of these districts. It's the 4th largest district of Madhya Pradesh. The city has a rich legacy of the warriors-like Rani of Jhansi and Taty Tope, and musicians like Tansen and Bismillah Khan (District Census Handbook, 2011). Gwalior is bounded by Morena in the northwest, Shivpuri in the south-west, Bhind in the north-east, and Datia in the east, respectively.

Table 4: District Profile

Number of Tehsils	4
Number of Community Development Block	4
Number of Towns	11
Number of villages	655
Total Population	2,032,036
Proportion of Rural Population	37.3Per cent

Source: District Handbook, Census 2011

Education Profile of Gwalior

The literacy rate of Gwalior is 77.9 percent. Gwalior (Grid) is one of the four Tehsils. It has the lowest sex ratio 864, as compared to the other tehsils. As per NFHS – 4 report, out of 67.1 per cent literate women, 47.5 per cent are from rural areas. Out of 32.6 per cent of women with ten or more years of schooling, only 10.8 per cent are in rural areas (NFHS 4, 2016).

The school education department handled by the District Education Department for Administrative, Financial, Academic, and Inspection related matters. Under District Education Officer, 6 Block Education Officers are working in Gwalior, where Block Education Officer is responsible for activities related to School Education (GoMP, 2019).

Table 5: Availability of Schooling Facilities in Gwalior (2016-17)

Available Resources	2016 – 17
Total Number of School	3,371
Number of Government School	2,004
Number of Private School	1,317
Madarsas and Unrecognized School	50
School with Playground Facilities	95.1
School with Girls' Toilet	97.9
School with Boys Toilet	99.2
Drinking-Water Facility	99Per cent
MDM Facility	95.3Per cent
Female Teacher	53.2Per cent

Source: U-DISE (District Report Card, 2016-17)

Table 6: Gender Wise Enrolment rate at Primary and Upper primary School Levels (Gwalior)

Year	Primary level		Upper Primary level	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
2009-10	47.22	52.77	47.22	52.77
2011-12	47.56	52.43	48.67	51.32
2013-14	46.39	53.60	47.85	52.14
2015-16	44.60	53.22	44.93	55.06
2016-17	45.01	54.98	44.69	55.30

Source: U-DISE, 2009-10 to 2016-17

The above-given Table 6 shows the gender-wise enrolment at primary and secondary levels in the district of Gwalior from the year 2009-10 through the year 2016-17. It can be observed that there is unequal distribution among the enrolment rates in all the sample years. The enrolment rate of girls is recorded at less than 50 per cent in both, primary and secondary levels in every year. It shows that in the case of gender-wise enrolment, Gwalior follows the trend of Madhya Pradesh and shows gender disparity as well.

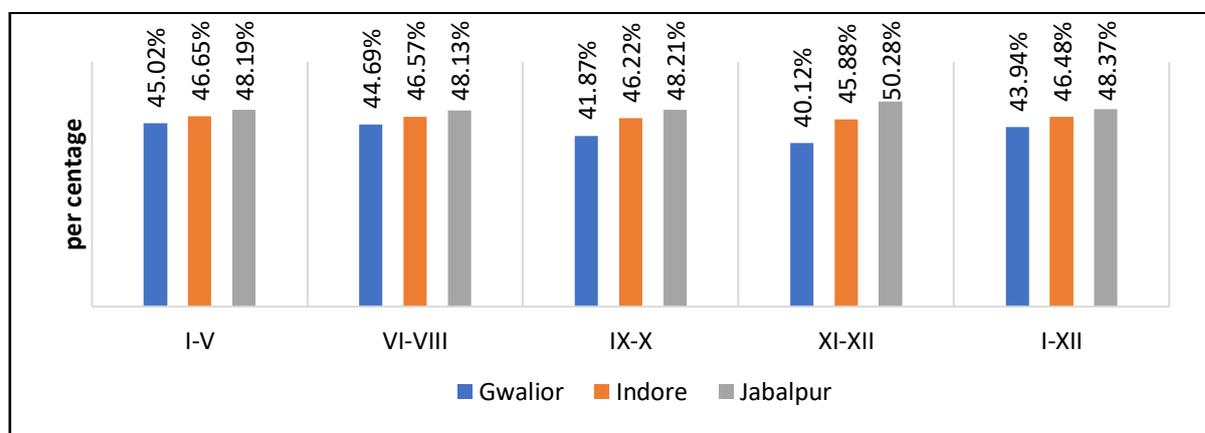
Enrolment Rate of Gwalior against two top Literate performing District of Madhya Pradesh

Gwalior is ranked at the fifth place, in terms of literacy, in top-performing districts of Madhya Pradesh. The other four districts are Bhopal, Jabalpur, Indore, and Balaghat. In this section, the enrolment of Gwalior has been compared with two Districts, i.e., Jabalpur and Indore. The population of Gwalior is 2,032,036, lowest among Jabalpur (2,463, 289), and Indore (3,276,697). The proportion of 0–14 years age group in Gwalior is observed at 30 per cent, while in Jabalpur and Indore, it has been counted at 27. 4 and 28. 4 per cent, respectively. It implies that although the population of Gwalior is lower than the other two districts but the number of children between the ages of 0 to 14yrs is higher. The female literacy rate in Gwalior is 67.3 per cent, in Indore it is 74.9 per cent, and in Jabalpur it is 75.3 per cent (District Census Report, 2011)

Enrolment of Girls and Boys (Gwalior, Indore and Jabalpur)

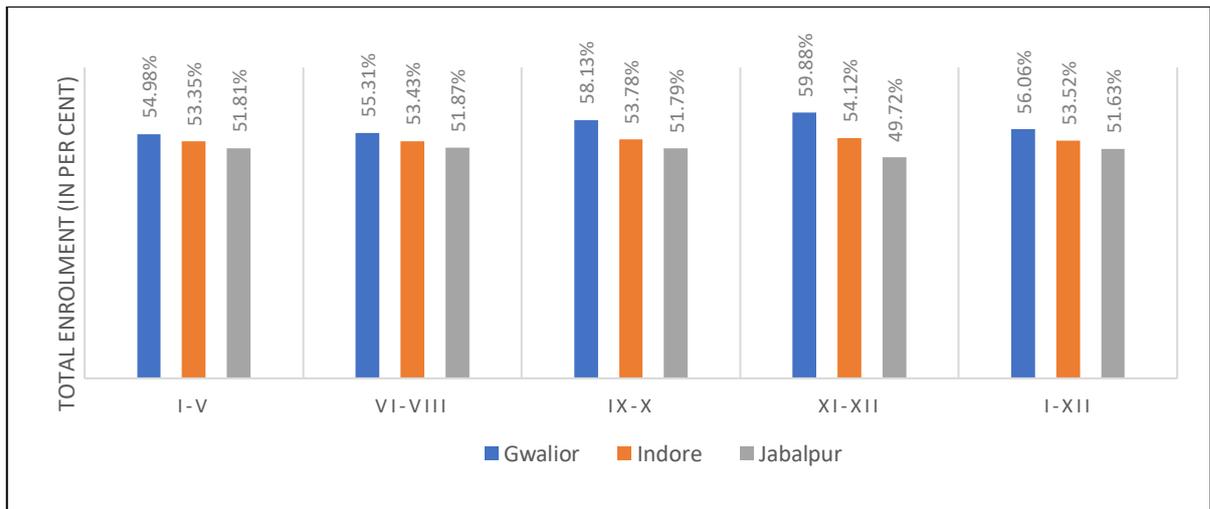
According to the District report card U-DISE 2016, there are gaps between school enrolment of Gwalior, Indore and Jabalpur. As the level of education rises, the difference between the enrolment is also increasing in all three districts.

Figure 2: Per centage of Enrolled Girls (2016-17)



Source: District Report Card 2016-17, U-DISE

Figure 3: Percentage of Enrolled Boys (2016 – 17)



Source: District Report Card 2016-17, U-DISE

As it is evident from the figures 2 & 3, that in all three districts, the enrolment of boys is higher than girls in every stage of schooling, except the higher secondary stage of Jabalpur, where the percentage of enrolled girls is 50.28 and the per cent of boys' students is 49.72. If we look upon the girls' enrolment in Figure 2, Gwalior has the lowest girls' enrolment as compared to the other two districts, and Jabalpur has the highest. Although the population composition also contributes to the enrolment, but it was peculiar to observe that between the three regions, Gwalior has highest (30 per cent) proportion of 0 to 14 yrs. age group, while in Jabalpur the percentage of this age group was counted 27.4 per cent, and in Indore, it was 28.4 per cent. Still, the enrolment in Gwalior is less than the other two districts.

The average enrolment at I – XII level has gender gaps in all three districts. The gender gap in Gwalior is around 13 percentage points. In contrast, the gender gap in Indore is of about 7 points, and in Jabalpur, it is around 3 points.

SECTION II

This part focuses on the educational status of girls and boys concerning different educational indicators that are being analysed from the gender perspective.

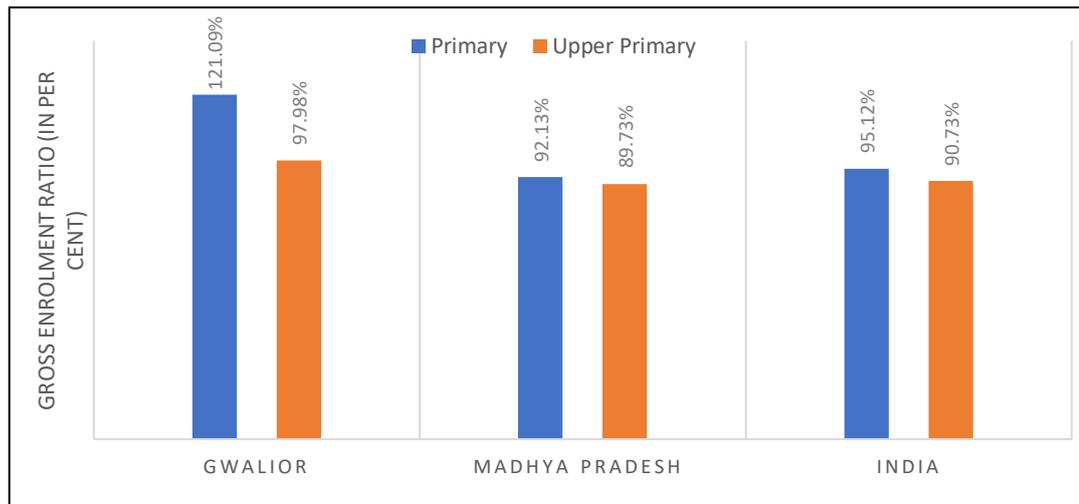
Gross Enrolment Ratio

According to UNESCO, GER indicates the total enrolment in a specific level of education, irrespective of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year. The purpose of GER is to show the general level of participation at a given level of

education. It also indicates the capacity of the education system to enroll students of a particular age group.

If GER value is approaching or exceeding 100 per cent, it means that a country is, in principle, able to accommodate all of its school-age population, but it does not show the proportion of children in the age group already enrolled (UNESCO, 2009).

Figure 4: Gross Enrolment Ratio (2016 - 17)



Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

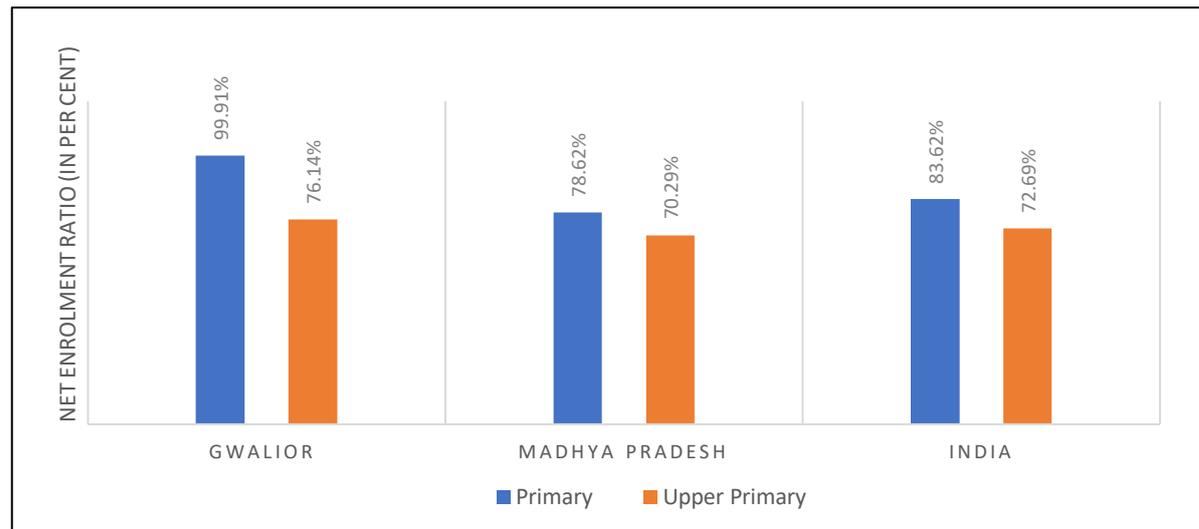
Figure 4 shows the Gross Enrolment Ratio at primary and upper primary levels in Gwalior with respect to Madhya Pradesh and the National level. It illustrates that at the National level, 95.12 per cent of children are in the primary stage of education. In Gwalior, 121.09 per cent of children are in the primary stage, which is higher than 100 per cent. It indicates the higher number of underage and overage children in the district. At the Upper Primary level, this age discrepancy comes down to 90 per cent at the National level and 89.73 per cent at the state level (Madhya Pradesh) and 97.98 per cent in Gwalior. It implies that at the upper primary level, the difference between the children of official school age and children who are under or upper age and grade repeaters have decreased.

Net Enrolment Ratio

Net Enrolment Ratio indicates the enrolment of the children from the official age group for a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.

When NER is compared with the GER, the difference between two highlights the incidence of under-aged and over-aged enrolment. If the NER is below 100 per cent, it shows that all children are not enrolled at the specified level of education. A high NER represents a high degree of coverage for the official school-age population (UNESCO, 2009).

Figure 5: Net Enrolment Ratio (2016 - 17)



Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016-17)

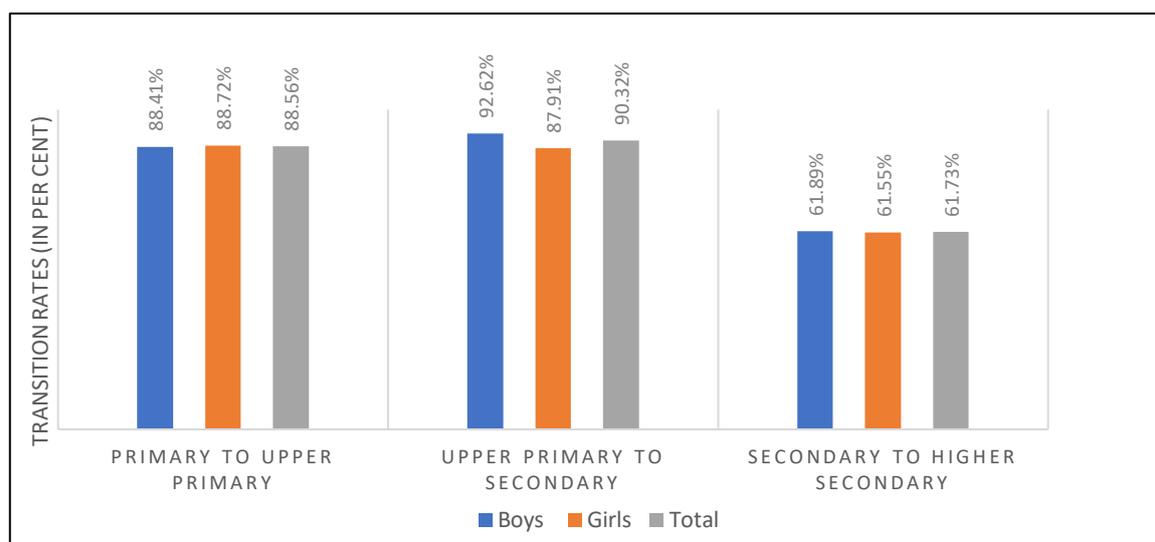
The above figure depicts the Net Enrolment Ratio of National level, Madhya Pradesh, and Gwalior for the year 2016. At the National level, the NER of the Primary stage is 83.62 per cent, and at Madhya Pradesh level, it is 78.62 per cent. In Gwalior, the NER at the Primary level is 99.91 per cent, which means that maximum children who are in official school age are enrolled in the primary section. At the secondary stage, the percentage of enrolment has decreased. At the National level, NER has reduced from 83.62 Per cent to 72.69 per cent. In Gwalior, this percentage has declined significantly, from 99.91 in the primary stage, it has come down to 76.14, the decreasing proportion of NER indicates that a high number of students drop out of school at Upper Primary stage.

Transition Rate

The Transition Rate is the number of students enrolled in the first grade of a higher level of education in a given year and is expressed as a percentage of the number of students admitted in the final grade of the lower level of education in the previous year. The purpose of the transition rate is to convey information on the degree of access or

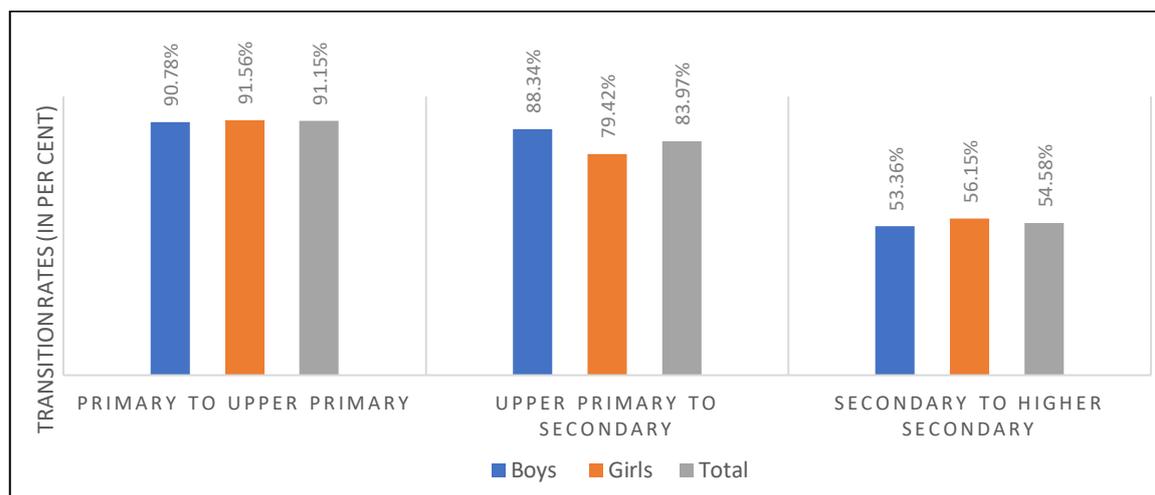
transition from one educational level to a higher one. High transition rates indicate a high level of access or transition from one educational level to the next. Inversely, low transition rates can signal problems in the bridging between two cycles or levels of education, due to either deficiencies in the examination system, or inadequate admission capacity in the higher cycle or level of education, or both (UNESCO, 2009).

Figure 6: Transition Rate at National level (2016-17)



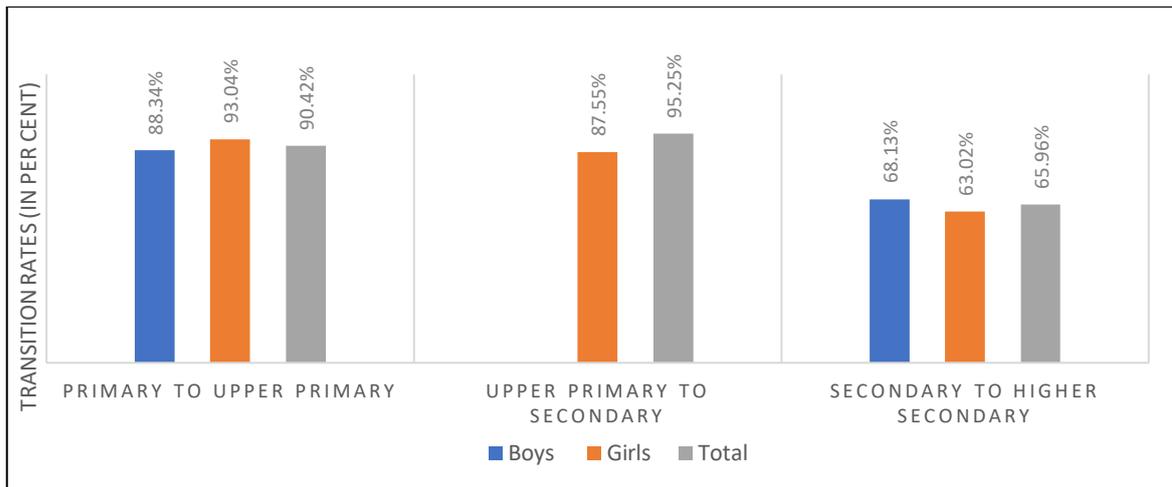
Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

Figure 7: Transition Rate of Madhya Pradesh (2016-17)



Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

Figure 8: Transition rate of Gwalior (2016-17)



Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

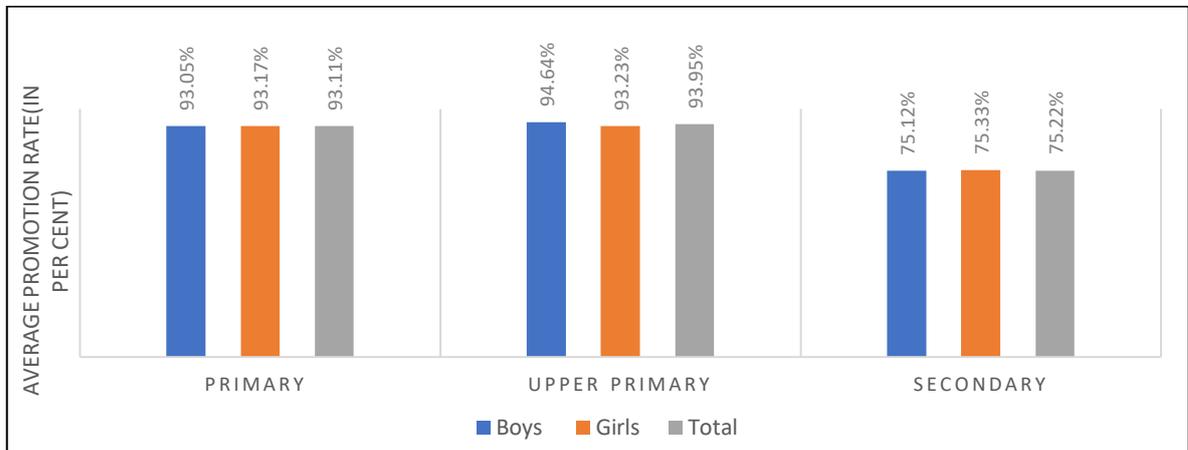
The above figures depict the transition rate of education level in India (National average), Madhya Pradesh, and Gwalior. We can see in figures 6 & 7 that from primary to upper primary level of education, there is very little difference between the girls' and boys' transition rates. According to figure 8, the difference is quite high in Gwalior. If we see the transition rates from secondary to higher secondary level, in figures 7 and 8, the transition rate for girls is better. Still, at the National level, the transition rate of girls who complete secondary to higher secondary level remains lower at 53.36 per cent as in the case of boys, it is higher with 56.15 per cent. These figures reflect that the percentage of students goes down gradually at every level of education, and this could be happening because of several factors. Both state and government schemes are already making efforts to bring more girls into the educational system. As Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2010, argue that meaningful accessibility can be provided only when the hurdles to access education are mitigated and the transition rate is high. Hence, more efforts are needed to work on the latent issues which are holding girl students to transit from one level to another level of education.

Promotion Rate

Promotion Rate is the percentage of students from a cohort enrolled in a given grade at a given school year, continue to study in the next grade in the following school year. The purpose of counting the promotion rate is to measure the performance of the education system in promoting students of a cohort from grade to grade and its effects on the internal efficiency of the educational system. It is also an indicator for analyzing and projecting pupil flows from grade to grade within the educational cycle. The high

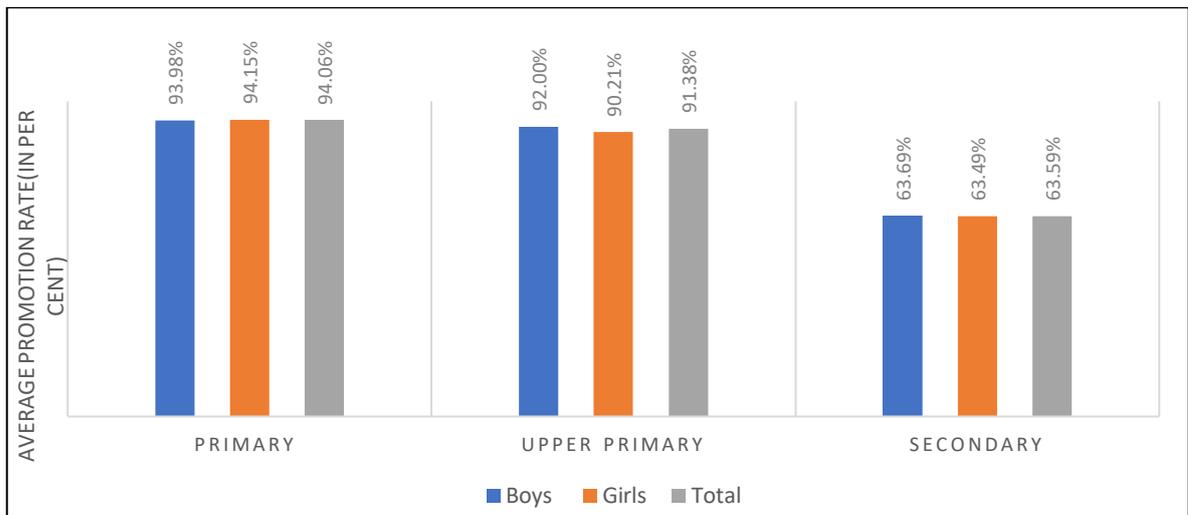
Promotion Rate reflects the high internal efficiency of the educational system. So if the promotion Rate is 100 per cent, it means that all the enrolled children are promoted to another grade (UNESCO, 2009).

Figure 9: Average Promotion Rate at National Level (2016-17)



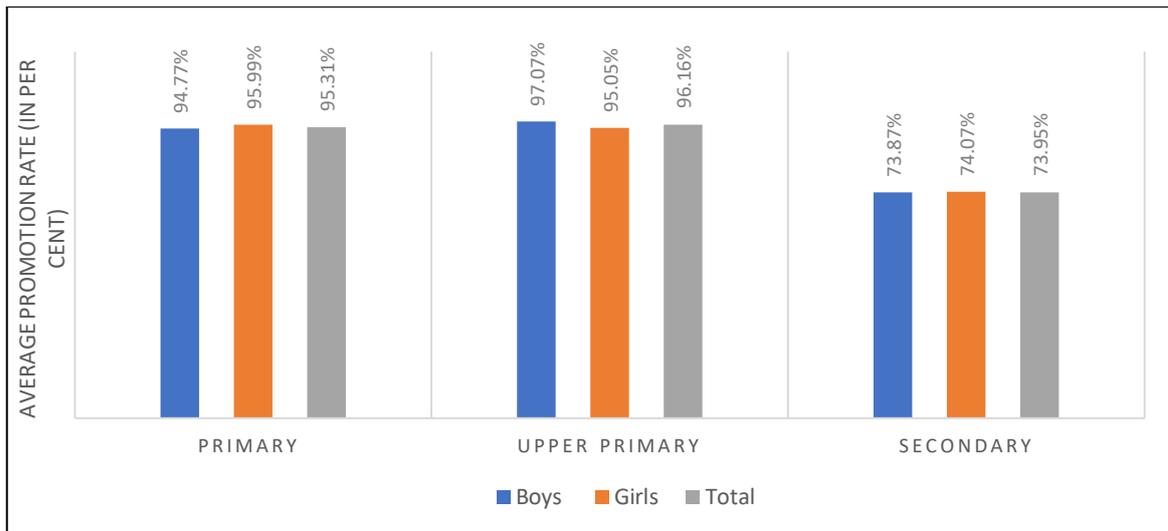
Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

Figure 10: Average Promotion Rate of Madhya Pradesh (2016-17)



Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

Figure 11: Average Promotion Rate of Gwalior (2016-17)



Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

The above figures represent the Average Promotion Rate of girls and boys in the year 2016-17. At all educational levels, the difference in the promotion rate between girls and boys is very little. It means that the number of drop-outs and repetition for both girls and boys students from a cohort in a given grade at a given school year has decreased, i.e., most of the enrolled students are getting promoted to the next grade. The percentage of promoted students at the primary level is 93.11 per cent and at Upper primary level 93.95 per cent, but it goes down at the secondary level, where 75.12 per cent promoting rate is for boys, and with a little difference, 75.33 per cent is girls' promotion rate. The suddenly deflated percentage of promoting rate at the secondary level could be because of drop out and repetition in a particular educational level.

Another situation arising from these figures is that the girls' promotion rate is higher than boys at the primary level. In Figure 9, it can be seen that 93.17 per cent of girls as compared to 93.05 per cent of boys are being promoted from the primary level. In Figure 10, girls' promotion rate (94.15 Per cent) is higher than boys' (93.98 Per cent), and the same pattern is observed in Gwalior with 95.99 per cent promotion rate of girls at primary level while boys promotion rate is 94.77 per cent. However, at the upper primary level, the percentage of girls is less than boys in all three figures. In Gwalior, 95.05 per cent girls are being promoted at the upper primary level as compare to 97.07 Per cent boys. As the high promotion rate reflects the internal efficiency of schools, so we could say that at primary and upper primary levels, the capability to promote pupil is good, and the No Detention Policy is also contributing at these levels,

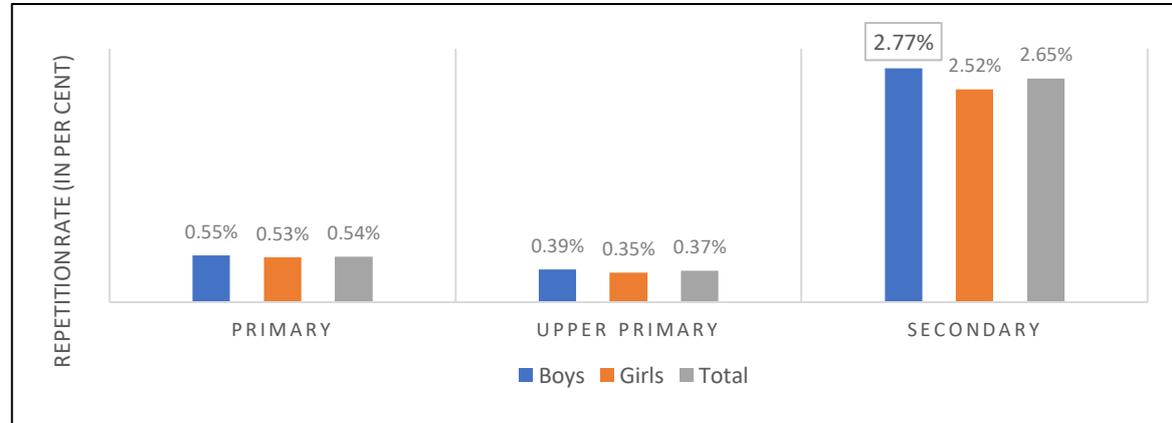
but at the secondary level, there is a need to probe for the possible factors contributing to this scenario.

Repetition Rate

Repetition rate indicates the number of students who repeat a grade in a given school year expressed as the per cent of enrolment in that grade from the previous school year. The purpose of the repetition rate is to measure the rate at which pupils from a cohort repeat a grade and its effect on the internal efficiency of the educational system.

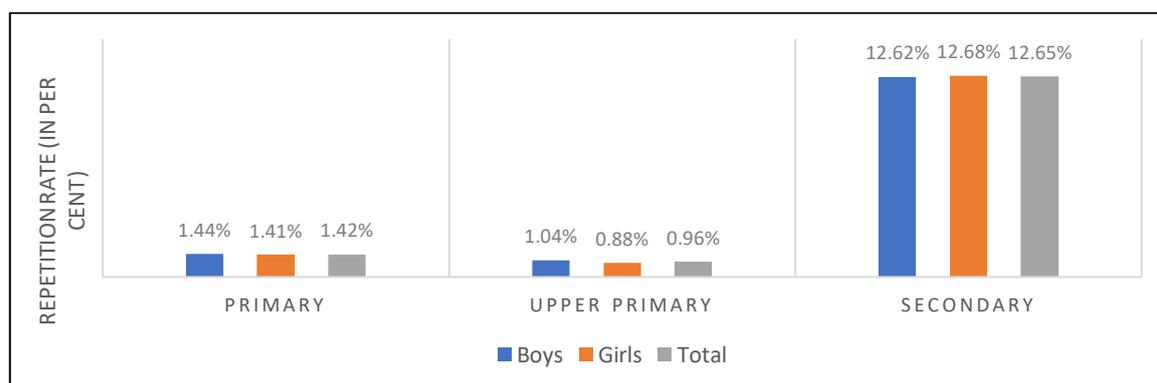
“The repetition rate ideally should approach zero per cent. High per cent rate reveals problems in the internal efficiency of the educational system and possibly reflect a poor level of instruction” (UNESCO, 2009). Repetition Rate ideally should approach zero per cent. A high repetition rate reveals problems in the internal efficiency of the educational system and possibly reflects at the poor level of instruction. When compared across grades, the patterns can indicate specific grades for which there is higher repetition, hence requiring more in-depth study of causes and possible remedies.

Figure 12: Average Repetition Rate at National level (2016-17)



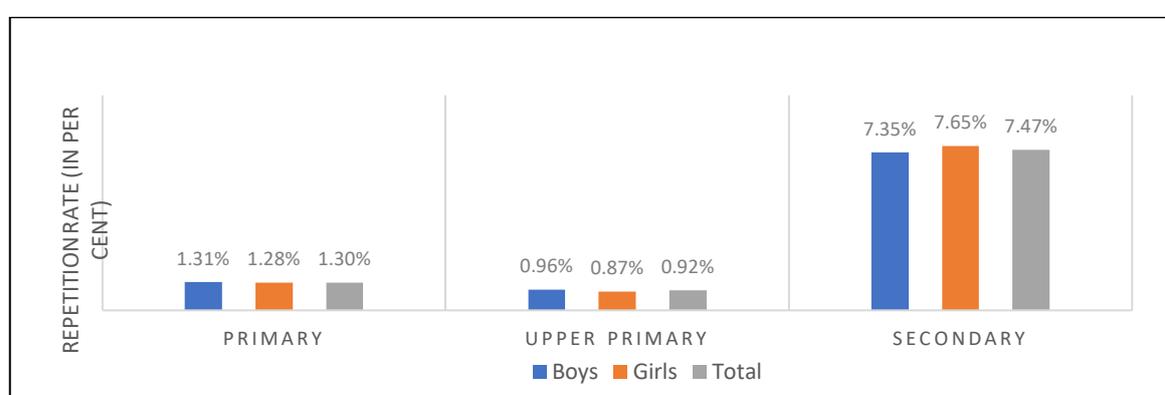
Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

Figure 13: Average Repetition Rate of Madhya Pradesh (2016-17)



Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

Figure 14: Average Repetition Rate of Gwalior (2016-17)



Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

The above three figures (12, 13 & 14) show a comparison of the repetition rates of the year 2016-17, for Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, and the National average. At the primary level, the National average of repetition is almost the same among the boys (0.55per cent) and the girls (0.53per cent). The repetition rate is higher than the national average in the case of Madhya Pradesh (1.42per cent) and Gwalior (1.30per cent). A slight decline is seen in the repetition rate from the primary to upper primary in all the three entities.

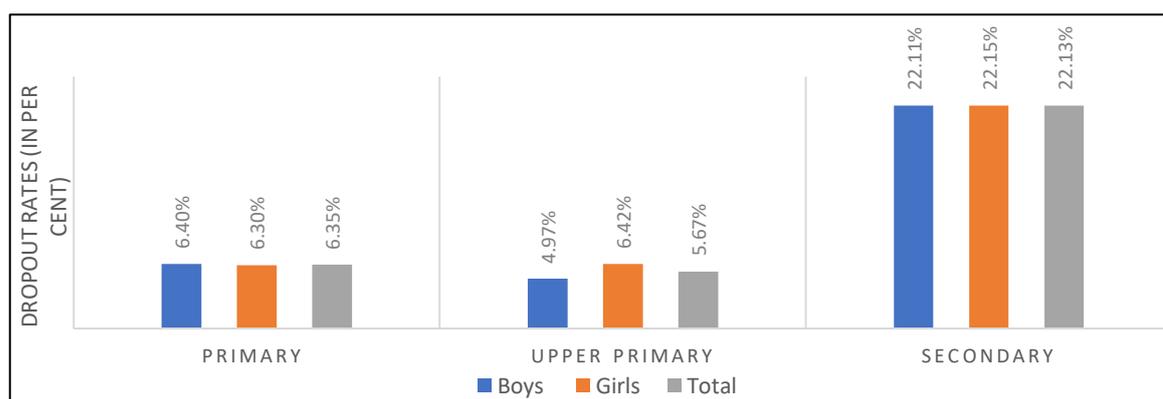
However, the rate of Madhya Pradesh (0.96per cent) and Gwalior (0.92per cent) remains higher than the national average (0.37er cent). There is a drastic increase in the repetition rate of Gwalior (7.47per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (12.65per cent) at the secondary level, and they are significantly higher than the national average (2.65per cent). Such a high repetition rate, especially at the secondary level, is not desirable. It indicates internal flaws in the method of instruction that students are provided with and

highlights the low levels of internal efficiency of the institutions, which may be due to poor infrastructure and poor teaching-learning environment.

Drop Out Rate

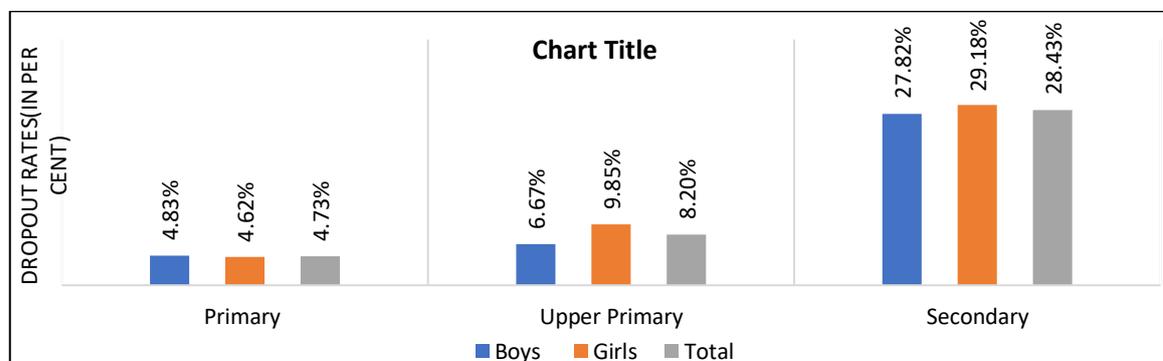
Drop-out rate indicates the proportion of students from a cohort enrolled in a given grade at a given school year who no longer is enrolled in the following school year. The purpose is to measure the phenomenon of pupils from a cohort leaving school without completion and its effect on the internal efficiency of educational systems. Including it is one of the key indicators for analysing and projecting pupil flows from grade to grade within the educational cycle. Ideally, the rate should approach 0 per cent; a high drop-out rate reveals problems in the internal efficiency (like quality of teaching, lack resources, etc.) of the educational system. By comparing rates across grades, it is possible to identify those which require greater policy emphasis. (UNESCO, 2009)

Figure 15: Average Drop-out Rate at National Level (2016-17)



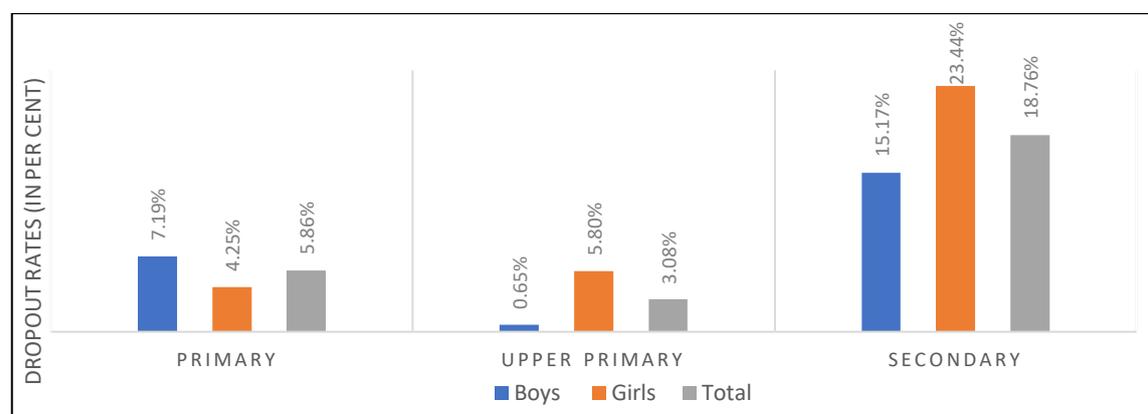
Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

Figure 16: Average Drop-out Rate of Madhya Pradesh (2016-17)



Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

Figure 17: Average Drop-out Rate of Gwalior (2016-17)



Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016 – 17)

The above three figures (15, 16 & 17) show a comparison of drop-out rates, from the year 2016-17, in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, and the National Dropout Rates. At the primary stage, the National level percentage shows that the drop-out rate of boys (6.40 per cent) is around 0.10 points higher than the drop-out rate of girls (6.30), at the state level in Figure 16, Madhya Pradesh, again the percentage boys (4.83) is higher than the girls (4.62). At the district level, in Gwalior (Figure 17), we can see the higher drop-out percentage of boys (7.19) as compared to girls (4.25 per cent) drop out.

At the upper primary level situation is reversed. In Gwalior, the drop-out rate of boys is 0.65 per cent, and for girls, it is 5.80 per cent. At the National level also, the situation remains the same, i.e., girls are holding 6.42 per cent of drop-out rate, whereas for boys it is 4.97 per cent.

At the Secondary level, the National drop-out rate is almost similar among the boys and girls, with a little difference of 0.4 points (Boys: 22.11 per cent; Girls: 22.15 per cent). Even though the drop-out rates in Gwalior (18.76 per cent) is lower than the national average (22.13 per cent) and the state average (28.43 per cent), there is a significant gender divide, with girls having a drop-out rate of 23.44 per cent compared to 15.17 per cent among the boys.

The drop-out rates, as observed, peaks at the secondary level, as per OECD, 2011. The higher the level of education, the wider is the gender gap. Girls dropping out prematurely and lagging behind boys in retention rates are issues of the greatest concern

in all countries. So education stakeholders need to find out the ground realities, which are creating impediments for both girls and boys in continuing their education.

Gender Parity Index

Gender parity index indicates the ratio of female to male values of a given indicator, means it describes the proportion of girls to boys in different level of education. It helps in measuring the progress towards gender parity in education participation and learning opportunities available for girls concerning those available to boys. Value 1 in the Gender parity Index indicates the equality between girls and boys. If the value is less than one, it means that disparity is in favour of boys, and the value is greater than one, it indicates the discrepancy is in favour of girls. (UNESCO, 2009, Kingdon, 2007)

Table 7: Gender Parity Index of India at Different Educational Level (2015 - 16)

Level	All	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribe
Primary (I – V)	1.03	1.03	0.98
Upper Primary (VI - VIII)	1.10	1.10	1.03
Elementary (I - VIII)	1.05	1.05	1.00
Secondary (IX - X)	1.02	1.04	1.02
Senior Secondary (XI - XIII)	1.01	1.04	0.97
Higher Education	0.92	0.91	0.83

Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance, MHRD (2018)

In the above table 7, at the primary level of education, gender parity is 1.03, which means that disparity is in favour of girls. For the ST group, the disparity is in favour of boys (0.98). Further, till the senior secondary level of education, the disparity remains in favour of girls. At the higher education level, the gender parity is below the value 1, i.e., 0.92, which implies that the number of girls is less than boys at the higher educational level.

Table 8: Gender Parity Index of Madhya Pradesh at Primary and Upper Primary Level (2009-10 to 2016-17)

Year	Primary level	Upper Primary level
2009-10	0.97	0.94
2011-12	0.95	1.01
2013-14	0.91	0.98
2015-16	0.90	0.93
2016-17	0.99	1.05

Source: Flash Statistics 2009-10 to 2016-17, NIEPA

The above-given Table 8 shows the gender parity index at primary and upper primary levels in the state of Madhya Pradesh from the year 2009-10 through the year 2016-17. It is clear that in all the sample years, the disparity is in favour of the boys (since the value is <1) at both, primary and upper primary levels. There is an exception from the year 2011-12 (1.01) and 2016-17 (1.05) in the case of upper primary, where the disparity is in favour of girls. The gender parity has decreased at both primary and upper primary level, in 2009-10, at upper primary level parity was 0.94 per cent, it rises between the years of 2011 to 2014, and in 2016-17, it recorded 1.05 per cent, it implies that in year 2016-17, the enrolment of girl students at upper primary level was higher than the boys' enrolment. It does not mean that we have achieved the parity at upper primary level, as from year 2009-10 to 2016-17 the percentage of gender parity is fluctuating throughout the years.

Table 9: Gender Parity Index of Gwalior at Primary Level (2009-10 to 2016-17)

Year	Primary level
2009-10	0.89
2010-11	0.92
2014-15	0.83
2015-16	0.81
2016-17	0.82

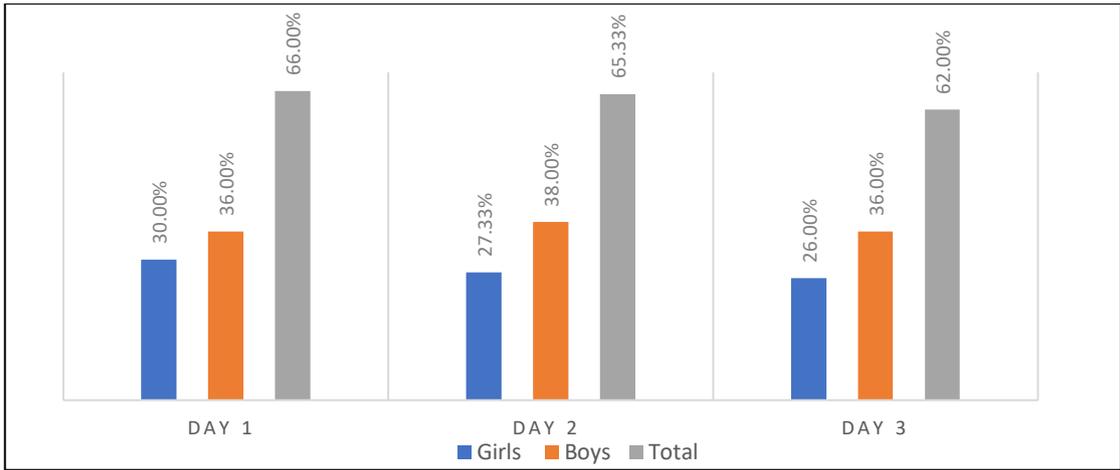
Source: U-DISE, District Report Card: 2009-10 to 2016-17

The above-given Table 9 shows the gender parity index at primary level in Gwalior from the year 2009-10 through the year 2016-17. It can be observed that in the case of Gwalior, the gender disparity gets graver as compared to Madhya Pradesh. The index is heavily tilted in favour of boys in all the sample years. The ratio can be seen to be dropping as low as 0.81 (in the year 2015-16). It is even more concerning that the parity is on the decline constantly since the year 2010-11. Even in year 2009-10 the percentage (0.89) was still better as compared to the year 2016-17 where the percentage was recorded 0.82. It is a matter of concern because both state and central government are trying to make gender parity equal and in endeavour to achieve it, both are implementing a number of programmes for children.

Attendance Rate in all four Sample School

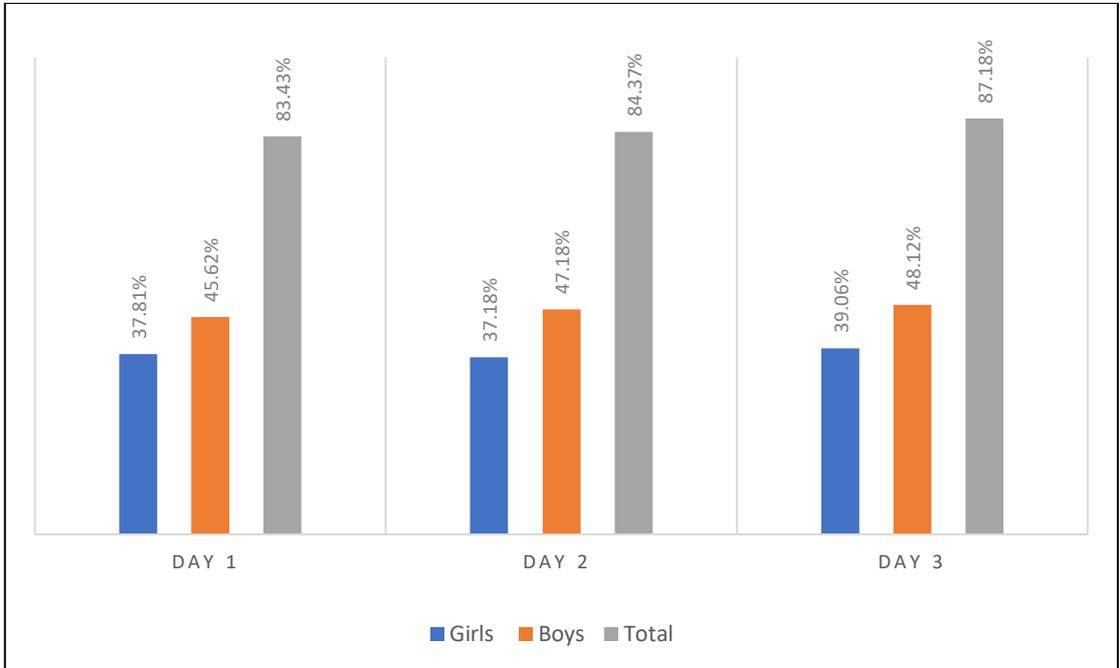
Meaningful access is not only limited to enrolment. It also includes an active participation of students. Coming to school regularly and participating in the learning process is also a meaningful access. To know that how many students remain absent each day and what is the composition of students who are not coming to the school, the researcher selected three random days. In those three days, the attendance of girls and boys in the whole school was observed as follows:

Figure 18: Attendance Rate of Govt. Middle School, Sirol (2019)



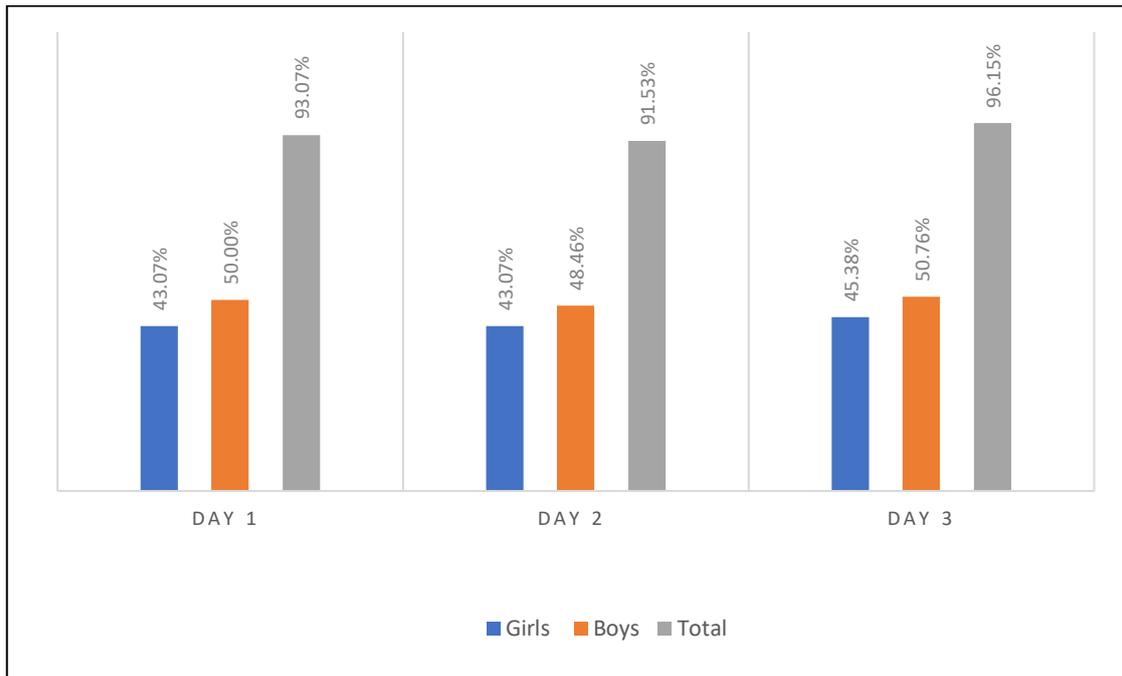
Source: School Attendance Register

Figure 19: Attendance Rate of Govt. Middle School, Utila (2019)



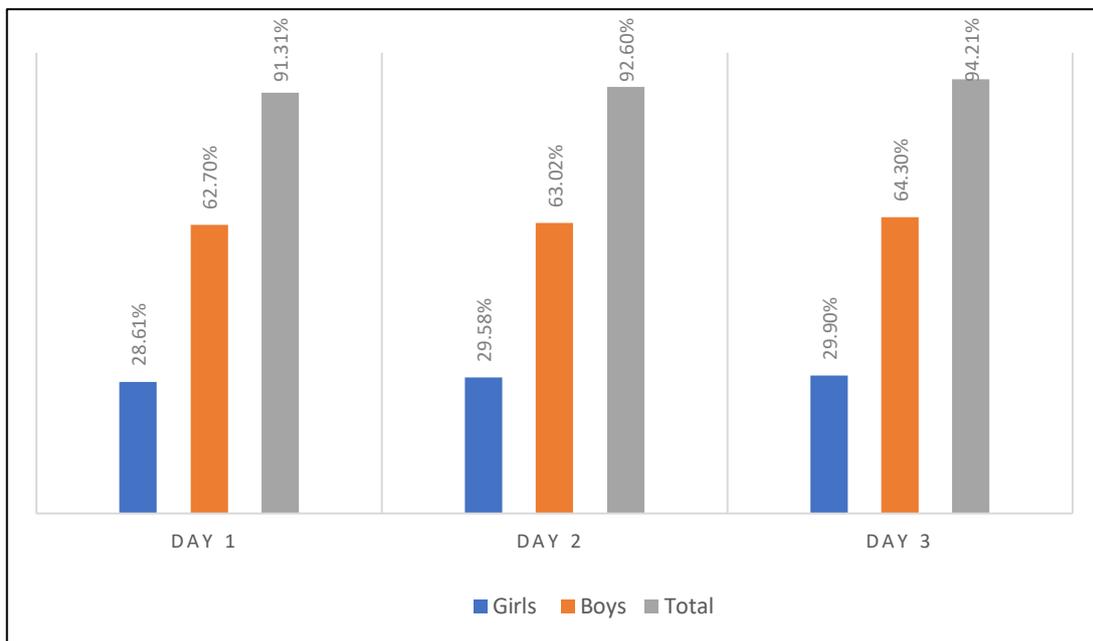
Source: School Attendance Register

Figure 20: Attendance Rate of MS R R Convent School, Utila (2019)



Source: School Attendance Register

Figure 21: Attendance Rate of MS Sant Joseph School, Sirol



Source: School Attendance Register

The above four figures (18, 19, 20 & 21) show a comparison on the lines of attendance in the four schools on three different days of observation. Government Middle School, Sirol, recorded the lowest total attendance (~65Per cent) among the four schools. The rest of the three schools recorded a decent total attendance (ranging from ~83Per cent

to ~96Per cent). Coming to the gender perspective of the attendance, the attendance has been skewed in the favour of the boys in all the four schools, i.e., the number of boys were recorded to be more present in the schools than the girls. There was a heavy disparity recorded in the case of Sant Joseph School, Sirol, where good attendance (total) was recorded on all three days, but the number of boys and girls were highly disproportionate. For instance, on day 1 recorded attendance of girls was as low as 28.61per cent, compared to that of 62.70 per cent of the boys. The other two days of the observation followed a similar pattern. Bandyopadhyay, 2012 also opined on the concern of low attendance rate of girls, as girls in face more difficulty in attending school regularly because they are engaged in household chores and sibling care.

Drop-out Rate in Sample Schools

Drop- out rate provides a picture about the children who are in the education system and who left the system. To understand the status of sampling school, researcher took the drop out data of last academic year, i.e., 2018-19. From the data which was provided by each school the analysis has been done as follows-

Table 10: Drop-out rate of Sample schools 2018-19

Name of School	Girls	Boys	Total
Govt Middle School Sirol	2	0.6	2.7
MS Sant Joseph School	2.2	0	2.2
Govt. Middle School, Utila	2.4	0.3	2.7
MS R R Convent School	1.5	0	1.5

Source: School Documents (2018-19)

Table 10 shows the drop-out rate of four sample schools in the year of 2018-19. In all schools, whether private or government, it is evident that the drop-out rate of girl students is higher than the boys. In both private schools, boys drop-out rate was zero, while in the same schools, the drop-out rate for girls is 2.2 per cent (Sant Joseph School) and 1.5 per cent (R R Convent School). In Government School Sirol, 0.6 per cent boys drop out against 2 per cent drop out of girls, and in Government School Utila, also, the boys had good chances to complete their education as the drop-out rate is only 0.3 per cent out of a total 2.7 per cent drop out. It means in both the villages, girls were struggling to complete education, because of several social and economic factors.

Conclusion

The above analysis is addressing the status of enrolment and student flow, particularly from the gender perspective. It is evident that the overall educational status of Madhya Pradesh is far behind the National average. Within Madhya Pradesh, among top literate districts, Gwalior is particularly facing challenges in providing educational opportunities to girls. There is a significant gap in the enrolment of girls and boys in all three districts of Madhya Pradesh, which is creating the gender imbalance. At the primary level, the transition rate is better for girls, but from primary to secondary level, the transition rate has been dropped. This implies that after elementary education, factors like early marriage, safety, and household responsibilities play a vital role in deciding whether the girl will continue the education or not. From the above analysis, it is found that the repetition rate of girls is lower than the boys, but the disparity in the drop-out rate is very high. The broader gap in drop-out rate indicates that parents and other social and economic factors are not giving opportunities to girls to repeat or to transit from one level to another level of education. This difference was found in sample schools also, where the drop-out rate of girls is higher than the boys. Hence, despite the policies and programs, gender inequality is still a reality which we all need to face. If we look into the situation from Amartya Sen's capability approach and status of gender in education, it would be appreciable if through normative strategies, like providing infrastructure, incentives, and other educational resources, policymakers can increase the quality and can bring the girls into the school, but it cannot mitigate the gender-based practices within the school and society until and unless conscious efforts are made by people at large. Nevertheless, it is important to take various initiatives that can help girls overcome barriers and can complete their education.

Chapter 5

Gender Equity in Access and Participation: Empirical Evidences

The previous chapter discussed the educational status of girls and boys in terms of numerical representations. It discussed enrolment, students' flow in the system, GER, NER, and many other indicators through graphical and tabular illustration. This chapter is based on the analysis of the data obtained from in-depth interviews with teachers and parents, observations of school activities, and informal discussions with students.

In general, chapter will reflect on the factors which enable both, girls and boys, to participate in educational activities. The chapter is divided into two sections, the first section will talk about the area of study in terms of demography and social environment and the second section will discuss the thematic analysis of data, which will include the understanding of head teachers, teachers, and parents around the themes like participation of girls and boys in extracurricular activities, division of non-academic work etc., narratives of a teacher, a parent, and case studies of girls who had to overcome many obstacles to continue their education.

Over view of Area of Study

About the District and Block

Gwalior district has four blocks – Morar, Ghatigao, Dabra, and Bhitwar.

The Morar block has 118 villages and 60 panchayats. The number of households is 33,511; the total population is 177,921, constituting 55.1 per cent (98,047) males and 44.8 per cent (79,874) females. The Scheduled Caste population is 44,167, with the composition of 54.3 per cent (23,986) males and 45.6 per cent (20,181) females. The schedule tribe population is 2287, with 52.6 (1,203) male members and 47.3 (1,084) female members.

The literacy rate of Morar is 67.42 per cent, the highest among all four blocks. While the male literacy rate of Morar, is 79.69 per cent the female literacy is much less with only 52.37 per cent females are found literate according to 2011 census indicating a considerable (27.32 per cent) gender gap in literacy rate, highest in all four blocks. In addition to lower female literacy rate, the sex ratio has also been recorded as 815 (lowest in all four blocks), and the Child sex ratio is 810 (Census, 2011) indicating lower status

of females in district. This indicates, the Morar block has witnessed considerable disparity in literacy rate. Thus despite being located in Gwalior which is a comparatively advanced district amongst 45 other districts of Madhya Pradesh, the study area of Morar is still lagging behind in education as indicated by the literacy rate particularly of females as mentioned above. It is because of this, this block has been selected for the purpose of this study. It is worthwhile to see how gender plays an important role in access of children to school and their participation and completion. In order to make the study more comprehensive, four schools have been selected from two villages, Sirol and Utila have been selected from this Morar block. The details accounts regarding these villages have been discussed subsequently.

The data has been collected from four schools of the two villages, Sirol and Utila. One government and one private school were selected from each village. Data was collected from teachers and parents from each school by using a structured Interview. The observation schedule and informal interaction method was also used to understand the general perspective.

Village 1		Sirol	
School Name		1. Government Middle School, Sirol	
		2. MS Sant Joseph School, Sirol	
Village 2		Utila	
School Name		1. Government Middle School, Utila	
		2. MS R R Convent School, Utila	

Village 1: Demography of Sirol

Sirol is situated 10 km away from Morar. Gwalior is both district and sub-district headquarter of this village and Morar is the Community Development Block of the Village. This village is connected to the main road which leads to other villages. The local transport facilities are available to commute from this village to other places, and the interstate bus terminal is 15 km away from the village. The total geographical area of the village is 458.74 hectares. The total number of houses is 573. According to census 2011, the total population of this village is 3,302, which constitutes 1830 (55.4 per cent)

male and 1472 (44.5) female. The village has more SC population than STs. While the number of Scheduled Caste Population is 1133, with 617 (54.4) male members and 516 (45.5) female members. The Scheduled Tribe population is 40, composing of 20 (50 per cent) males and 20 (50 per cent) females. The literacy rate is 72.79 per cent, with 84.25 per cent male literacy rate and 58.39 per cent female literacy rate. The Sex Ratio is 804 with the child sex ratio (0 – 6 years). According to local sources, around 600 families are living in the village. Farming and labor jobs are the primary earning sources for the families. It has been reported by members of focus group discussion that most of the families living in this village are from lower and lower-middle-income groups. The village has been provided with several government facilities like one primary health care center, one Anganwadi, one Government Primary school, one Upper Primary or Middle school, one higher secondary school, and three Private schools. The high school was situated in a nearby village which is 3.5 km far away from the center of the village. For the study, one Government Middle School and one private school have been selected as mentioned above. A detailed description of each selected school under study has been given little later.

Social Environment of Sirol

After getting down on the main road from the public transport, one can find three small ration shops, two juice shops, one small internet café, one private clinic adjoined with a medical store and one photocopy cum stationary shop. Both Government Middle School and Sant Joseph School, are located on the sides of the main road. There are a few grocery shops and small clothing outlets, utensils' shop, vegetable vendors and mobile recharge, electrician, and bicycle shops in this village. One can see the fields of corn, mustard, wheat, etc. around the village. There were numerous buildings and road construction undergoing within five kilometers of the village.

There is one main lane and two shortcuts that take you to the village. After entering from the main lane, one can find a small temple, built along a tree. The infrastructure of few houses was of modern styled cemented with attractive paint on houses, with some houses having a two-wheeler or four wheelers parked outside. The villagers claim in the statement “*Dwar se hi toh ghar ki shaan aati hai*” (doors are the glory of the home) reflects at community members' perception on the importance of possessing well built house with beautiful door for a household. There are two private schools which

are being run by the trust, and two coaching centres, one for Spoken English and the other for class I to XII. While interacting with people, it has been noted that there has been a wide gap between the rich and poor people. According to the villagers, the Scheduled Tribe population is very low, and they live in a tightly packed community, which is located on the outskirts of the village. The village was divided into two sections. One section, primarily constitutes of upper caste people who reside in the centre of the village, and another section mainly consists of service castes, including Kumhar(Potter), Nai(Barber), Teli(Oilman), Chamar(Leather worker), who lived on the peripheries.

The milieu of this village has touched urban pictures in terms of the availability of resources and infrastructure of the houses. Since the weather was a bit chilly at the time of field work, the afternoon was chirpy, while younger women and girls were found busy in fetching water from pumps, carrying woods and buying vegetables, older women lounging in *charpais*, knitting cloths. Older men were chatting, playing cards, and some other men were sitting in shops and in front of their houses. Adolescent boys who were not in school could be spotted playing local games, and adolescent girls could be seen doing household chores or playing inside their home. Though generally majority of girls are trained in household chores since childhood, fewer girls also have reported to be engaged in learning various skills like tailoring and beautician in the private vocational centres. Many young men belonging all social groups including Muslim minorities, aged between 17 to 25, were found playing cards and chatting in huddles. They may be engaged in their family occupation as and when required but they never get engaged in household chores which are considered as work of female members of family.

About Sample Schools

It has already been mentioned that altogether four schools have been selected to understand the research problem in context of schools located in these area under study. Although Morar is a comparatively backward area in terms of adult literacy rate but the villages which have been selected for this study are provided with adequate number of government and private schools for educating children. It is worthwhile to see how schools are addressing educational needs of these children and promoting gender as well as social equity in education at the elementary level.

Overview of Government Middle School, Sirol

Government Middle School, Sirol, is located on the main road which connects Morar to the other interior villages. The school has a single one-floor pucca building with a boundary wall and a well-built main gate. It has five classrooms, out of which three are in a good condition, and the other two need renovation. During the school visit it was found that students of primary classes from grades I to III sat together on a carpet (durry) in one classroom and were provided multigrade teaching, and their classroom was rich with different colours. Despite being endowed with comparatively better facilities as highlighted in Table 6, the overall picture of school was not found attractive as the paint on school building's walls was chipped, sand scattered in all the classrooms, the principal office was unattractive (old and dull paint) with two almirahs, two chairs, and a blackboard. The school is devoid of a garden and even no plants could be found on balcony or open space surrounding classrooms. It doesn't have a proper railing making children prone to accident and the platform for differently-abled students was only in front of one class. This school was selected as a sample school because both number of teachers and students were good. Despite being a middle school, this school provides education from grade I to VIII in one building making it an integrated school where children can at least don't require to be transferred after completion of their primary schooling. Such schools are most likely to experience less dropout during elementary cycles. In view of such integration in provisioning school education, this school has been selected for this study to have a holistic understanding about schooling access and participation of both boys and girls. The Table 6 highlights the availability of physical facilities in this school.

Table 11: Physical Resources in Government Middle School, Sirol

Type of Building	Pucca
Number of Classroom	5
Number of Girls' toilets	1
Number of Boys' toilets	1
Number of Water Taps	4 Water Taps (Functioning)
Computer Lab	No
Library	No
Area for Playground	Yes
Availability of Electricity	Yes

Source: Field Observation

Students' Enrolment

The enrolment of students was good, the number of girls were higher than the boys. Total number of students was 150 (Table 7). In which 80 students from general category and 34 were from schedule caste, but not a single student from Schedule tribe was enrolled in this school.

Table 12: Total Enrolment in Government Middle School, Sirol, (2019-20)

Category	Enrolment	In %
Total Enrolment	150	
Primary	80	53.3
Upper Primary	70	46.6
Girls	78	52
Boys	72	48
Category wise Enrolment		
General	80	53
OBC	38	25
Scheduled Caste	34	22
Scheduled Tribes	0	0

Source: School Records (2019-20)

Number of Teachers

Table 8 is describing the total number of teachers. In this school 3 teachers were permanent, while three teachers were on contract. In which 2 were male and the others were female.

Table 13: Number of Teachers, Government Middle School, Sirol (2019- 20)

Total Number of Teachers	6 (3- Contractual, 3- Permanent)
Male	2
Female	4

Source: School Records (2019-20)

From above discussion, it is understandable that this school has most basic facilities including drinking water and toilets for boys as well as girls. It is also to be noted that the proportion of girls is more than boys in total enrolment recorded during the field work and it is also heartening to see the school has four female teachers and the head teacher was also a female, who are expected to be role models for girls and also to ensure a gender friendly atmosphere in their classroom as well as in school.

MS Sant Joseph School, Sirol (private)

Sant Joseph School, Sirol, was also located on the main road. The school building was quite fancy/attractive as compared to the other sample schools. This school had all the facilities, assigned region for the play area, swings and slides for primary students, and proper platform as well as stairs for the smooth movement of every student. There were a number of small plants and assigned dedicated gardener for the same. Along with the twelve classrooms, there was one computer lab with eight computers and one games room, one library facility with proper lights and ventilation. The primary classes were very colourful with proper sitting arrangements for students. There were different indoor games in the primary classes, like blocks and beads, to improve motor skills of students. This school has all the facilities for students and the enrolment of students and teachers were also very good, so this school has been selected for further study.

Table 14: Physical Resources in MS Sant Joseph School

Type of Building	Pucca
Number of Classroom	12
Number of Girls' toilets	4
Number of Boys' toilets	4
Number of Water Taps	8
Computer Lab	Yes
Library	Yes
Area for Playground	Yes
Availability of Electricity	Yes

Source: Field Observation

Students' Enrolment

The enrolment of this school was 311, the total number of girls and boys were 100 and 211 respectively. Out of total enrolment 73.3 per cent students were enrolled in the upper primary section, and 26.6 per cent were enrolled in primary section. Only 23 per cent of students were from schedule caste category, not a single student belonged from schedule tribe category.

Table 15: Total Enrolment of Students (2019 - 20)

Category	Enrolment (In Number)	In %
Total Enrolment	311	
Primary	83	26.6
Upper Primary	228	73.3
Girls	100	32.1
Boys	211	67.8
Category wise Enrolment		
General	249	80
OBC	39	12.5
Scheduled Caste	23	7.3
Scheduled Tribes	0	0

Source: School Document (2019-20)

Number of Teachers

Table 11 is depicting the number of teachers. In Sant Joseph out of 16 teachers, 12 were female, and four were male.

Table 16: Number of Teachers, Sant Joseph School (2019-20)

Total Number of Teachers	16
Male	4
Female	12

Source: School Document (2019-20)

Sample Village 2 – Demography of Utila

This village was situated 20 Km away from Gwalior Tehsil of Gwalior District, which was both district and sub-district of this village. The total geographical area of the village is 1286.5 hectares. The total number of houses in this village is 710, with a population of 4,004 people (2203 males and 1801 females). The population of the Scheduled caste is 783, with 454 male and 328 female members, and the total population of the Scheduled tribe is 368 with 170 male and 198 female members. The literacy rate is 69.01 per cent, along with 81.05 per cent literate men and 54.39 per cent literate women. Most of the people of this village are financially sound, engaged majorly in farming, and most of the youth are employed in private jobs in the urban Morar. This village seems more developed in terms of social resources; it has one Primary Healthcare Centre with three doctors, one maternity and Child Welfare centre, 2 private clinics and one veterinary hospital. This village has one Ashram Shala, three government Primary, one middle, and one higher secondary schools and five private schools along with one pre-primary private school. From this village, the researcher selected one Government Middle School and one Private School.

Social Environment of Village

Utila village is located in the interior of Urban Morar. One can reach here by private buses, jeep, or a tempo. Public transport halts in front of a confectionery shop for boarding and unboarding the travellers. After getting at the bus stand, lane at the right goes towards the Utila village, and lane at left went towards another village, Khera.

While walking towards the village from the bus stand, one can spot many shops on along the road such as that of confectionery, mobile recharge, milk and ration shop, daily essentials vendors, vegetable sellers, and stalls selling fast food, followed by many mustard and wheat fields along the main road. One could easily identify the three main lanes for reaching inside the village. Amongst the three, one is the main lane; this lane has '*Chaupal*,' a big temple, and two small temples, two big, old trees that can be seen from a distance. The village is located in a slightly hilly area, so some houses were on a higher slope than the others. Most lanes have pebbly road, and houses in higher slopes have cobbled path. Most of the houses are made up of old and big stones. The villagers called all big houses as "*haweli*". New homes were quite small with bright paint. People were seen wearing traditional clothes. Women were wearing a sari in traditional style, and old men were wearing 'dhoti' and 'kurta' with a '*Safa*' (a piece of cloth) wrapped around their necks. One can reach Government Middle School, Utila, by walking straight through the main lane. This school was located near a big Banyan tree, locally known as "*Bargad ke ped ke paas vala school*" (school nearby banyan tree). The R R convent school was situated in an interior and higher lane. Private coaching and tuition facility is very less, except two small coaching centres and a private tuition run by a young boy in his house. People from all social categories, including SC, ST, and General, live here. Upper caste people are in the majority. All the big houses that were built along the main and the connected lanes belonged to the upper caste people. Lower caste people reside in the interior areas. Domesticated animals like cows and buffaloes were owned by the upper caste, while lower caste people owned sheep and goats. Some of the households owned private vehicles like motorcycles and tractors.

During the day time, women were busy in household work like cleaning the house and cooking food while the older women could be seen inside the temple. Women were less visible in the streets compared to men, in both, upper class as well as the lower class areas (both areas were divided on the basis of caste). Most of them sat in the courtyard of their respective houses. Old men were spotted outside of their houses, busy in thread weaving and cot making, while chatting in '*chaupal*'. The adolescent boys were seen sitting in the shops near the bus stand, busy on their mobile phones, laughing and singing among each other. Men were seen rearing cattle while chatting with each other. Boys were more visible on the streets as compared to the girls. They were spotted playing local games like '*Kanche*' and '*Gilli Danda*'. According to the community

members, Adolescent girls from upper-class houses never appear on the streets; they can only be seen either going to school or to the market, generally accompanied by their parents. While in the places where lower caste people reside, adolescent girls could be observed doing daily chores, and young girls and boys between the ages of 8 to 15 years go far into the fields to feed cattle. During the visits, few boys were found to be playing cricket in a ground situated on the side of the main ground.

Overview of Government Middle School Utila

This school has recently moved to this village. Prior to that, it was on the main road near the bus stand. Locating this school was quite troublesome, the name of the school was not on display either on the board or on any wall, with no entrance gate and no boundary wall. A designated kitchen was there for mid-day meals, where food for Anganwadi was also being cooked by the helpers. There were two washrooms and anyone could use any of the toilets. Five classrooms and a staff room was there. They had one computer, but it couldn't be operated due to a lack of power. This was the only school where both girls' and boys' students' were studying together, the enrolment was also above the pre-decided criteria (As mentioned in Chapter 3, a school should have Minimum 80 students) for selecting a school. Along with students' enrolment, the number of teachers was also good. Although the number of teachers and students was good and matched with the pre-decided criteria, but the school has a lack of facilities, and in first observation, one can find this school quiet intruding, on these standards, it was decided to study that how this school is maintaining gender equality.

Table 17: Physical Resources in Government Middle School, Utila

Physical Resources	Govt. Middle School, Utila
Type of Building	Pucca
Number of Classroom	6
Number of Girls' toilets	1
Number of Boys' toilets	1
Number of water Taps	1 Handpump
Computer Labs	No
Library	Yes
Area for Playground	No

Availability of Electricity	No
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Source: Field Observation

Students' Enrolment

Table 13 is showing the total enrolment of the school. The total enrolment was 320, highest among all of the sample school. Out of these 146 were girls and 174 were boys. They were categorized into different categories. Two students were from schedule tribe, 40 students were from schedule caste, 168 students were from general class, and 110 were from other backward class.

Table 18: Total Enrolment of Govt. Middle School, Utila (2019-20)

Category	In Number	In %
Total Enrolment	320	
Girls	146	45.6
Boys	174	54.3
Category wise Enrolment		
General	168	52.5
OBC	110	34.3
Scheduled Caste	40	12.5
Scheduled Tribes	2	0.6

Source: School Document (2019-20)

Number of Teachers

In this school total 6 teachers were appointed (table 14), out of it, 4 were male, and two were female. One female teacher was on maternity leave, so only 5 teachers were managing 311 students.

Table 19: Number of Teacher Government Middle School, Utila (2019 -20)

Total Number of Teachers	6
Male	4
Female	2

Source: School Document (2019-20)

Overview of MS R R Convent School Utila

This school is located in the very interior of the village. The head teacher of school owned a private building, which used to be somebody's old house and hence, it resembled a "Haweli." It had a proper boundary and wall, drinking water facility, and two toilets along with eight classrooms in good condition. There was no separate playground for children to play. Since "Hawelis" used to have a big, open courtyard in the centre area, so that space was turned out into a playground by the teachers. The school has one computer lab and an activity room for primary students. Electricity and water facility are also adequate. The head teacher is the resident of the village and used to live in the nearby building. The student enrolment and the number of teachers were good, so this school was selected for the study.

Table 20: Physical Resources in R. R. Convent School, Utila

Type of Building	Pucca
Number of Classroom	10
Number of Girls' toilets	1
Number of Boys' toilets	1
Number of Water Taps	3 Water Taps (functioning)
Computer Lab	1
Library	Yes
Area for Playground	Yes
Availability of Electricity	Yes

Source: Field Observation

Students' Enrolment

At the time of school visit, the total enrolment of R R Convent School was 130, the lowest amongst all sample schools. Out of 130, 62 were girls, and 68 were boys, which is almost equal. 65.3 per cent of students used to study in the upper primary section, and 34.6 per cent were studying in primary section. Out of total students 55.3 belongs from general category, and 17.6 were from schedule caste.

Table 21: Total Enrolment of R R Convent School, (2019 - 20)

Category	In Numbers	In %
Total Enrolment	130	
Primary	45	34.6
Upper Primary -	85	65.3
Girls	62	47.6
Boys	68	52.3
Category wise Enrolment		
General	72	55.3
OBC	35	28.9
Scheduled Caste	23	17.6
Scheduled Tribes	0	

Source: School Document (2019-20)

Number of Teachers

The total strength of teachers in R R Convent school was 10 (Table 17). Out of it, 2 were male, and 8 teachers were female.

Table 22: Number of Teachers in R R Convent School (2019 - 20)

Total Number of Teachers	10
Male	2
Female	8

Source: School Document (2019-20)

All sample schools were different with each other. R R convent school was small but it have all the facilities for students, like activity room, drinking water etc. whereas the other private school (Sant Joseph school) was quite big and have proper garden and space for students. The classrooms were more ventilated and colourful. Government Middle School, Sirol has proper boundary wall, toilet facility but the classrooms were dark with no ventilation. The school was not clean and unattractive. And Government

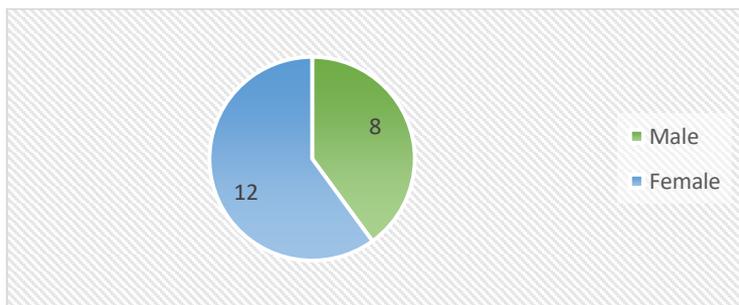
Middle School, Utila has no boundary walls and main gate in front of school, no electricity and clean water facility, students used to share washrooms.

Respondent Profile

Respondent Profile of Parents

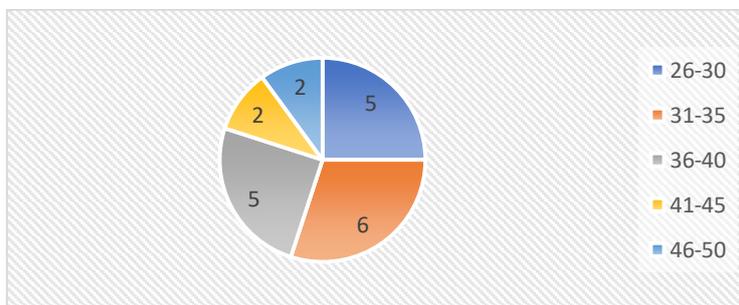
In this study, out of the total 45 respondents, 20 respondents were parents. Out of the 20 parents, 5 were members of the School Management Committee. All of the respondents’ children were either studying in a government school or in a private school. Parents play a significant role in building a gender-friendly environment for children. So, they were chosen to know about their perception regarding the education of their boys and girls. Figure 18 indicates the sex profile. Out of 20 respondents, eight were male, and the others were female. All respondents were between the ages of 25 to 50 years. The maximum number of parents (Six) fell in the age group 31 to 35 years.

Figure 22: Sex Profile of Parents



Source: Interview with Parents

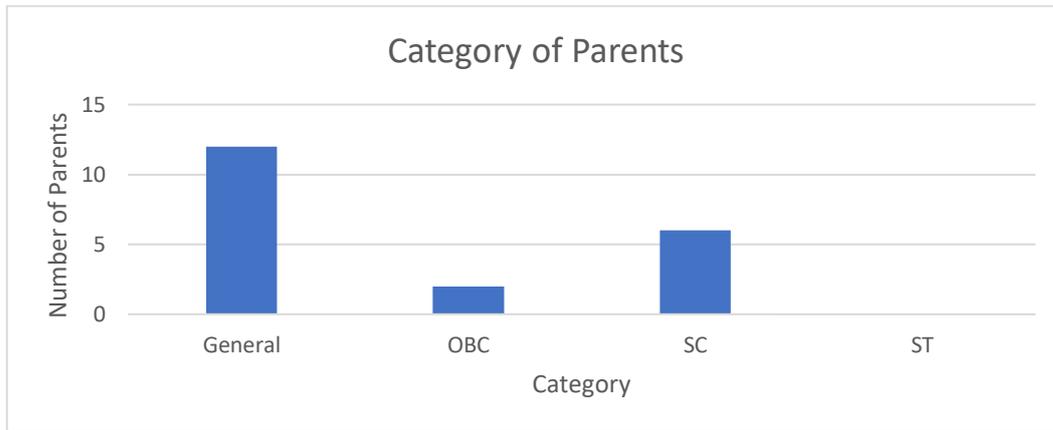
Figure 23: Age Profile of parents



Source: Interview with Parents

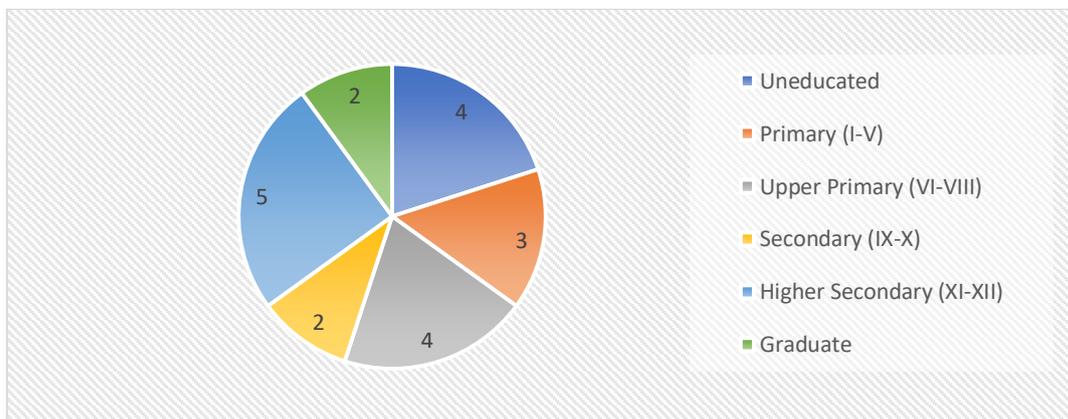
In Figure 20, it can be seen that out of all parents, twelve belonged to the General category, and six were from Scheduled Class. Only one respondent was from the Scheduled Tribe.

Figure 24: Category of Parents



Source: Interview with Parents

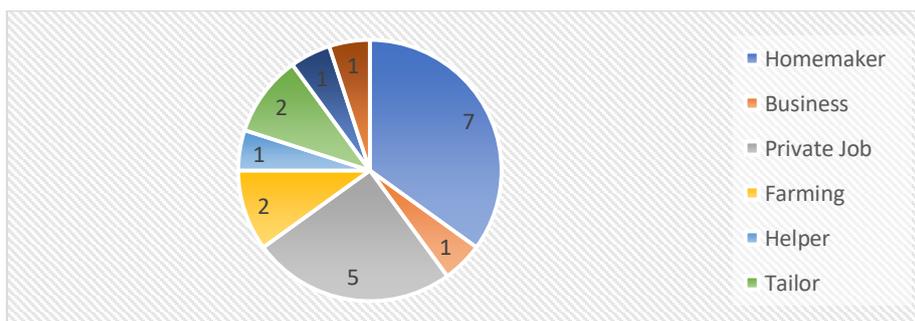
Figure 25: Education Qualification of Parents



Source: Interview with Parents

In figure 21 the qualification of parents has been shown. Maximum respondents have studied up to 5th standard (Primary level). Four parents were uneducated. Out of twenty, only two had graduated.

Figure 26: Occupation of Parents



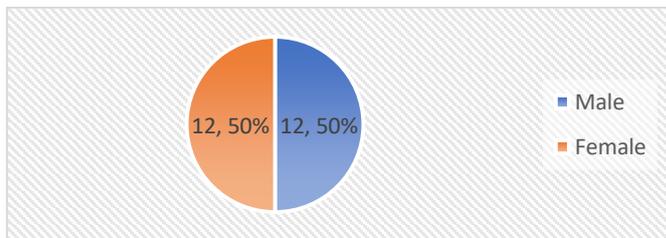
Source: Interview with Parents

Figure 22 projects occupation of parents. Out of all the respondents, the maximum were homemakers, five were doing private jobs, one respondent was a school helper, and two other parents were farmers.

Respondent Profile of Teachers'

In figure 23, out of twenty-four respondents, 12 teachers were male, and twelve were female. Out of which, figure 24 shows seven teachers belonged to the Scheduled Caste category, one teacher was from the Scheduled Tribe, and four belonged to the Other Backward Category.

Figure 27: Gender Profile of Teachers



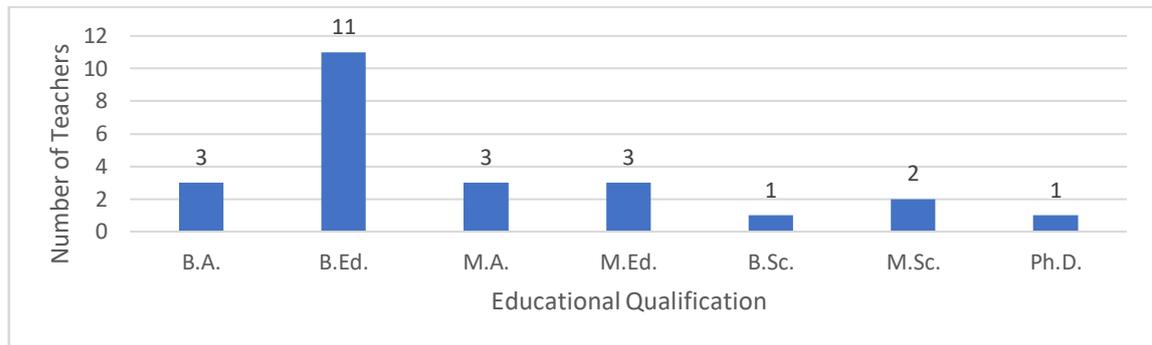
Source: Interview with teachers

Figure 28: Category of Teachers



Source: Interview with teachers

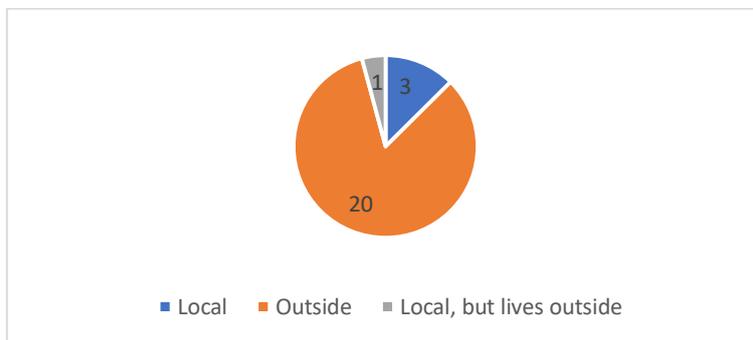
Figure 29: Educational Qualification of Teachers



Source: Interview with teachers

Figure 25 shows the education qualification of teachers. Out of all respondents, eleven teachers had B. Ed. degree, only one teacher had done Phd, seven teachers did not have teaching education. Three of them had a bachelor in Arts (B.A) degree, three had done masters, and one other teacher had done Bachelor in Science (B.sc).

Figure 30: Place of Residence



Source: Interview with teachers

Figure 31: Awareness of Local culture



Source: Interview with teachers

Figure 26 shows the place of residence in which out of 24 respondents, twenty resided outside of the village. Except for just one teacher, (Figure 27), all other teachers were aware of the local culture.

Section I

This section examines the determinants which influences access and participation of girls and boys in curricular and extra-curricular activities. It will include views of teachers, parents, and students on different themes. It is further divided into two sub-sections. Sub-section I will discuss the teachers' experience in enrolment, participation, and drop out from the gender perspective. Second sub-section will analyse the daily school activities from the lens of gender and participation. It will discuss the perception of teachers and parents and the experiences of students, particularly in curricular and extracurricular activities. This part will be helpful in exploring and understanding the factors affecting the access and participation of girls and boys.

Enrolment, Participation and Drop Out of Girls' and Boys' students

Aggregate Enrolment Rate has shown improvement with increased accessibility of schools. However, the impressive growth in numbers of school and Enrolment Rate need to be analysed to understand their impact on the participation of girls and boys. This theme will focus on the view of teachers on enrolment, participation, and drop out of girls and boys.

Status of Enrolment in both Government and Private Schools

According to the head teachers of both government schools, in general, the rate of admission for girls and boys has increased in the state and district during last few years. This had been due to opening of new schools and the implementation of various programs by the state and central government. The enrolment in Government Middle school, Sirol, is also high and the school has shown an increase in enrolment over the years, according to the teachers. They organized Pravesh Utsav and enrolment drive during the months of admission. In Government Middle School, Utila, the total number of girls' enrolment remains less as compared to the boys, while in Government Middle School, Sirol the number of girls were quite higher than the boys. The Head teacher of Sirol said that they faced problems during the admission process of girls from low income families; as per teachers, the number of girls who have experience of distress

migration is higher than boys, this situation was also observed by Smita¹. Most of the labourers migrate frequently and do not prepare identification cards for their daughters, as they only accompany them to take care of siblings and other household chores². As a result, teachers faced more challenges in bringing those girls to school.

At the primary level, the admission of both girls and boys almost remains similar, but at the secondary level, the number of girls admitted was higher than the boys. It indicates that after the primary level more boys take admission in private schools, or some other school.

The head teacher of R R Convent School said that they focus on learning so that the school's result could attract other parents. Both schools organized parent-teacher meetings, which also contribute in increasing enrolment. The enrolment rate of R R Convent School is not very high, as the teachers said that due to the school infrastructure, many parents consider it as a government school. According to the teachers, only lower middle class admit their children. It shows that people belong to higher economic class do not prefer to send their children to small private schools. In both schools, the disparity of girls and boys enrolment was higher at every level of education. This indicates that boys remain parents' first preference to be enrolled in the elite private school. While the constitutional provision mandates that all children have the right to access education up to the age of fourteen³, but certain groups could not send their girls to school because of social and economic conditions (For example, poverty, household responsibilities on girls, etc.). Here the right to access education has been equally given to every child. Still, the equity is forgotten within the process, as discussed above that children from low income backgrounds find difficulties in getting admission. It has also been reported by teachers that, although schools are located in close vicinity, and they also have the right to go to school and study, but due to missing documents like Adhar card or birth certificate etc. many children could not get admission in school.

¹(Smita 2008; Desai, 2005, 13) stated that migration is nearly equal among girls and boys up to the age of 10, but after 10, number of migrate girls increases than boys.

² Smita, (2008, 18) stated, that many parents make their older daughters accompany them to manage household chores and taking care for younger siblings.

³Article 21A: Free and Compulsory education of all children between the ages of 6 to 14 years.

Participation in the Learning Process

After getting enrolled, there are a number of factors that are responsible for the students' flow in the education system. Not every child who enters the education system attends all the stages of education. To understand the situation from gender perspective, the researcher referred secondary data of Morar Block and discussed the issues of drop out and repetition rate with the teachers. According to the teachers, because of 'No Detention Policy', the dropout remains low, and students need not repeat the class. But after the elementary level, the pupil needs to perform better in exams to get promotion in the next grade. If they are unable to perform well, then the school would observe a rise in the number of repeaters and dropouts.

It has been observed that repeating the same class is not always an option for girl students. In the year 2016–17 in Morar Block, the repetition rate of boys at the upper primary level was 1.29 per cent, while that of girls was less (1.18 per cent). The dropout rate of boys at the upper primary level has been observed to be 10.55 per cent, and for girls, it is 15.53 percent⁴. It implies that even though girls are performing better than boys but their chances to drop-out is higher than boys.

Teachers said due to the 'No Detention Policy', many students are not able to perform well in further grades. However, it means that the teachers as usual tend to blame students for not learning in the initial classes but do not find any problem in teaching learning process. As a result, students either struggle in higher classes or choose to leave the education system altogether.

According to the head teacher of Government School, Sirol, both boys and girls accomplish average marks, while at the secondary level, unqualified students, especially girls, drop-out. It is evident from the National Level figures (Refer Ch-4) that in the primary level of education, drop out of girls is lower than that of boys, but the gap is higher in the upper primary and secondary stage. In Morar, the dropout rate of girl students at the primary level was 4.75 per cent, while the boys' rate was 6.83. But the gap increased at Upper Primary Level with girl dropout rate at 15.53 per cent and boys dropout rate was 10.55 per cent. This finding corroborates with study (Ramachandran, 2004), as she stated that drop out increases in secondary education

⁴Source: U-Dise (Reporter Module, 2016-17)

because of a lack of meaningful access. It indicates that along with providing physical access, policymakers need to work on the awareness among teachers and parents.

Table 23: Average Annual Drop-Out Rate of Morar (2016-17)

	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary
Boys	6.83	10.55	35.83
Girls	4.75	15.53	40.96
Total	5.88	12.89	37.91

Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016-17)

The reasons for the dropout of girls depend on the socioeconomic factors found in both, the government and private schools. These factors, collectively, can be categorised into the following-

Migration and Poverty

The workers from the labour class go from place to place in search of work. The girls from this section have a high drop-out rate. However, it has been noted that, most of these labor class families residing in this village do not take their boys with them so they can stay in one place to complete their education⁵. Low-income families with no additional support in their villages have little recourse but to take their children along when they migrate for work. Girl children endure even more deprivations than boys. In the villages, these children find acceptance neither in school nor the larger community and are constantly viewed as outsiders (Smita, 2008). According to NSS 75th round, 18.4 percent girls in India could not complete education because of financial constraints. So in a district like Morar, which is already a part of backward state, the problem of poverty and migration is more affecting the education of girls. Hindustan Times, (2019), reported that Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh accounted for 50 per cent of India's total interstate migration, these figures are stating itself that migration and poverty are majorly contributing in the number of drop-outs.

Child Labour

As informed by the head teachers of all schools, there are a high number of girls who assist their families and contribute to the household as well as in the fieldwork.

⁵As informed by the Block Officer

Consequently, during the months of farming, either the girls do not come to school or withdraw from the school. If we looked into the figures of 75th NSS round survey, at national level 4.4, girls in rural areas dropped out education because they were engaged in child labour, while 31.9 per cent girls reason for dropped out their studies was the engagement in domestic activities.

Safety Concern for Girls

Even though, according to the RTE Act, the distance of elementary school has to be within three kilometers, safety is still a concern for parents. Girls' safety also depends on the location of the schools. Govt. School, Sirol, was located was on the main road, but during summers, the road remains stranded except for a few vehicles plying around. So, schools must take measures to ensure the safety of girls. Safety as an issue for girl students is also discussed by Bandyopadhyay and Subramanian (2008)⁶. The reason for drop out of girls because of safety concerns was observed in the NSS 75th round survey. It has found that at the national level, 0.2 per cent of girls in rural areas do not attend school because of the unsafe environment of the route to schools. The proportion of such girls was much higher earlier as reported by NSSO. However, incidences of violence against minor girls and women are still pervasive across India and are frequently reported in media. This make many parents to withdraw their daughters from school specially if it is located in isolated area and far away from home.

Early marriage

Few teachers from both government and private school informed that there are few cases where girls get married before the age of 18 and drop out early from school⁷. According to NSS 75th survey, at the national level, 12.4 girls in rural areas dropped their education because of marriage. According to the NFHS 4 report, 11.4 per cent of children got married in Madhya Pradesh before the age of 18. These figures are indicating that early marriage plays a vital role in the drop out of girls.

⁶Bandyopadhyay and Sbramanian (2008, 3): Public Space continue to be hostile for the women, and rarely function in a way to make women feel and secure and confident. Going to school and coming back safely, especially when secondary schools are far away, is a matter of concern.

⁷According to NFHS 4 (2015-16) report, in rural areas of Madhya Pradesh 38.6 per cent women ages of 20-24 years married before the age of 18 years.

Girls' Lack of interest in Education

This dropout factor is related to many other factors, such as lack of family support, negligent attitude from teachers, not able to understand the curriculum, absence of supportive environment in schools, etc. All these combined forces push girls out of the school. NSS 75th survey found that at the national level, 15.9 girls dropped out because they were not interested in education. And 4.2 per cent dropped out because they have completed the desired level of education. There are many other reasons behind these two factors which need to be more analysed in order to decrease this figure.

Lack of Support from parents

The patriarchal thinking that girls should do household chores and woman is the responsibility of family. Education is considered of no value for women. This understanding of parents contributes in higher drop out⁸for girls.

All these factors also influence the transition rate of students. According to 2016- 17 data, from upper primary to secondary level, transition rate was 58.90 per cent for girls, and boys' transition rate was 70.89 per cent. The drop out difference is high at the upper primary level; it implies that after the elementary level, girls are facing problem in continuing their education.

Table 24: Transition Rate of Morar (2016-17, in percent)

	Primary to Upper Primary	Upper Primary to Secondary	Secondary to Higher Secondary
Boys	90.60	70.89	37.84
Girls	87.64	58.90	41.70
Total	89.28	65.04	39.29

Source: U-DISE, Reporter Module (2016-17)

The participation of girls gets complicated further by their caste and class. It was observed that in Utila, girls from the lower class were reluctant and introvert. The same situation existed in private school, Sirol. According to the Head teacher of the private school, Utila, the drop out of girls from lower social class is higher in his school. In the year 2018-19, the school observed a 1.5 per cent drop out rate of girls, while boys' drop-

⁸ Probe,(1999, 36). White G. & Rurher, M. 2016. Pointed out that lack of parental interest in girls education is also a one of the reason for never enrolled and drop out numbers.

out rate was zero. It indicates that girls have fewer opportunities to complete their education. In private schools, head teachers informed that female students who get admission through the Economic Weaker Sections usually shift from private to government school within a few years, because of the financial burden on parents. It implies that only entering the education system is not enough; girl students from lower social and economic classes face more discrimination in school because of the prevailing social and patriarchal practices. These students drop out of education at an early stage. Head teacher of Sirol government school said that many girls leave education without learning anything. This section of girls, which is silently excluded (Govinda, 2009) from the system, have never been able to access their fundamental right to education and remains uneducated. Hence, teachers need to be sensitized about the existence of such realities that exclude girls and need to chalk out school specific strategies to make government programmes successful.

Are schools themselves promoting gender roles?

One of the objectives of this study is to explore the contributing factors in accessibility to and participation in education. This theme would help understand the environment of the school, which plays a significant role in enabling the access and participation of students. The first sub-theme will focus on the perception of teachers regarding the role of girls and boys in the society and the second sub-theme would discuss the daily school activities, which includes non-academic work assigned to students by the teachers, and how these works are related to the gender identity of girls' and boys'.

Teachers' perception on the role of Girls and Boys in society

The researcher had discussions with teachers about the roles of girls and boys as members of the society. Through this discussion, the researcher tried to know teachers' thinking and their understanding on gendered roles.

Government Schools

In the process of development, both girls and boys play a significant role. Seven out of ten teachers said that females are the root of every family; they have to be strong for other family members. Two male teachers from Utila School said that girls have the responsibility to create a good society, because they are the mothers. A female teacher from the same school said that girls act as an emotional support system for the other

family members. She said that *“baache kabhi papa se apni baate nahi karte vo humesha maa se he baat karte hai”* (A child does not share things with his father, they only share with their mother). According to her, along with the family, girls should also take responsibility for outside work to support herself financially. She further added that marriage should be her primary concern, and then only she should think of pursuing her economic aspirations.

Out of 10 teachers, 9 said that while female needs to be strong and should take care of the family, the responsibility of men is to support the family financially. According to them, the role of male members is more important because they provide money to the family. The teachers said things like-

“ladki ghar or bahar dono sambhal sakti hai, lekin ladke par pure parivar ki jimedari hoti hai.” (the girl can manage both at home and outside, but the boy has responsibility of the whole family).

“Ghar main Paise kama kar to aadmi hi lata hai” (Men earns money and brings it to home).

“middle class mai ladki naukri se bass apna kharcha nikalti hai, lekin ladke ki salary se pura ghar chalta hai” (in middle class families, a girl just takes out her expenses from the job, but the boy’s salary runs the whole house).

The gender roles which are assigned to both men and women by the society were reflected in their thinking. Teachers see females as a significant part of the family because they support male members in running errands. They are engaged in unpaid household works which are not valued. The primary role of girls is seen as that of a ‘responsible women’ whose priority should be the family, while boys’ role is to bring money and to take care of financial needs.

The boys are considered to carry the name of the family and are treated with sympathy for their hard work as compared to girls. The gender role assigned to females is of a mother and home maker, is seen as insignificant by the teachers. The study shows that the role of girls is taken for granted while the role of boys is seen as that of a hard worker who works to make the family financially stable. It is expected from teachers to respect every work and to teach children the same values, but teachers themselves unaware of the fact that it is the unpaid labor of women on which the economy is based,

and so their contribution should never be taken for granted, Menon (2012) also deliberated on the issues of women unpaid labour within the family⁹.

Private Schools

The Head Teacher of R.R. Convent appointed four female teachers from the same village. He taught them during their school time. According to him, there were many talented children in this village, but most of them were undereducated and unemployed. He also said that even in his coaching centre, most of the girls were more talented and intelligent as compared to the boys. He thinks that if proper guidance and positive reinforcement is given to girl students by the school teachers, they can do well. According to him, females are more confident and responsible, he stated that “*ladko ko sari suvidha or sara pyaar dene ke baad bhi vo bigad rahe hai*” (Even after giving all love to the boys they are spoiled). The researcher observed that the head teacher used to teach music in which he was always trying to include more girls. The teachers from the same schools said that girls could manage both, house as well as office work. One of the female teachers who used to live in the same village and teaches science in the elementary grades said that she herself faced many problems, and that is the reason why she wants to educate every girl in this village.

In Sant Joseph, out of five respondents, two male teachers said that the roles of girls and boys were different in both urban and rural areas. In urban areas, girls are expected to earn something whereas boys have to do a respected job. In rural areas, people feel that it is sufficient for the girls to get educated till 5th or 8th grade, but they must learn household chores as well. In case of boys, it is fine if they study or not, they can always go back to do farming and are not expected to do any household chores (*ek glass paani bhi lekar nahi peeta hai*). All five respondents from Sant Joseph School said that both girls and boys have the responsibilities of family, children, and parents. The difference is only that boys need to find employment so they can earn money while girls need to learn household chores and if they want they can study and get a job, but having a good job is essential and compulsory for the boys but just an option for girls¹⁰.

⁹Menon (2012, 11), comprehensively deliberated, that because of women, men are able to earn money. She argued that families who does not have domestic workers, in those families women are expected to perform every domestic task, according to her if women stopped performing this unpaid labor, economic system would come to halt.

¹⁰Srivastav, 2006 also delved in this concern and opined that boys are pressured to be masculine and stronger, and girls are presented fragile and upholder of family tradition.

Teachers from the Sant Joseph school had a narrow vision. The role of girls and boys are decided by the society in which they are living. The future of a girl and her contribution depends on the family's social and economic status. If the family is doing well, the girl can make her career, but learning household chores remains pre-requisite for her. Boys are seen as independent and ambitious. It was observed that the teachers also subscribe to the idea of considering boy's primary role to earn money and inherit family name and property, while for girls is to take care of children and home.

People see gender's role in society according to what they have experienced. It has been analysed that the teachers from RR Convent were more liberal and optimistic towards the role of girls, as the number of female teachers was higher, and most of them belong to the same village. They all were taught by the head teacher of the school. Their role was not limited to the house and it is evident from the teachers' views that they think girls can do better in society. As Stromquist (2007) discussed that gender identity develops in the schools from the interplay of beliefs of teachers about the roles that students will play in the future and their outlook towards them and their respective behaviour according to them. Therefore the role of teachers is vital because their outlook on gender roles create a gender identity in students. Hence, education, including self-awareness and personal experience, develops a thought process. The awareness and motivation of teachers were given to them by the head teacher. This indicates that students' vision and perspective can also be influenced by their teachers. To make more accessible and to increase the participation of girls, first teachers should understand the gender equality.

Division of Non-Academic activities between girls and boys

Government Schools

In both government schools, a number of non-academic activities were observed during data collection. These activities included moving chairs and tables from one place to another, arranging utensils after lunch, bringing register, copies, chalk or duster from staff room or other classrooms and calling someone parents or some other person from the village, bringing vegetables, sugar, milk, and arranging drinking water, filling teachers' jug/ bottles etc. In both sample schools, out of ten, seven teachers said that girl students were good at managing classrooms, like maintaining discipline, or can look after the primary sections in the absence of a teacher. While some teachers said

that they could not give the responsibility of classes to boys, as per them, boys were stricter than girls, but they cannot handle the primary classroom.

It has been analysed that in earlier statements, teachers said girls are the mother, and they should be taking care of the family members. Due to this thinking, primary classes are assigned to girls. All the respondents said that girls could do work inside the classroom and school, like attending primary class students, bringing water and removing teachers' utensils after lunch. In contrast, boys can do outside's work, which includes calling someone and carrying rations. According to a male teacher of Government School, Utila, "*Sarkar bolti hai baccho se kaam mat karvao, lekin school bhi to ghar he hai agar ladkiya jhadu laga dengi to kuch galat thodi na hai*" (Government ask not to perform any task by students, but girls do work in their home also and school is also their home). Teachers were manipulating their own statements and were giving out responsibilities as per the gendered role. Since there is a culture of not to say anything and listen to everything said by the teacher¹¹, the gender roles are perpetuating through the assignment of non-academic work.

The parents were aware of the work which their children perform in the school, while the parents whose boys were studying in these schools were against this culture. However, out of 10 parents, seven were not against this culture if the task is only being performing by their girl child. A female respondent said that she doesn't like it if her child is asked to lift someone else's dirty glasses or clean the area. She said, "*madam log garib ke baccho ko he kaam dete hai*" (work is assigned to poor kids only), she expressed her dissatisfaction with the kind of work assigned to her child.

School routine used to begin with girls cleaning the room/s and corridors, boys arranging mats or desks. These tasks were assigned to them by their teachers. In Utila, it was the culture of that school that after lunch, all teachers used to sit in the playground and use to have tea, despite having helpers and cooks, senior girls were asked to serve tea. In the same school, girls were engaged in several tasks. They were removing utensils, class 8th sat on the floor, and in that class, it was the responsibility of girls to rearrange the sleepers, and the role of boys was limited to assisting only. The non-academic activities were minimal for boys. They only needed to bring vegetables or call someone. The study showed that gendered roles were being reproduced both at

¹¹Indicating culture of silence in school (Paulo Freire, 1970)

home and also in school. Here, the girl students who could not perform well in studies due to some familial responsibilities, were also not supported by teachers rather used to be assigned with some non-academic work (cleaning floor after Mid-Day Meal, arranging sleepers, cleaning head teacher office) which used to create distractions in their studies. This shows how patriarchy creeps in for girls in every socio-cultural set up including school. Out of 10, only one teacher was against the idea of giving work to the girls, and only three parents opposed the culture of gender-based role in schools. It shows that the majority of people from society, whether educated or uneducated, do not find anything wrong in giving household-related tasks to girls.

This pattern of work was observed in both government schools. The hierarchy of assigning gender-based roles is not only limited between the teachers and students. Students who received tasks from the teachers used to pass on this wisdom on to the primary students. This can be seen from the culture of silence where teachers and parents impart their notions on girls, and girls are receiving them without any questions. Receiving knowledge as it is, is mostly seen in the girls who remain silent and who are from underprivileged category. The experience of these girls further motivate them to drop out. This concern was also discussed in CAGE, 2005 report¹². The environment, language, and attitude of teachers and parents all practice the gender discriminatory practices (NCERT, 2006). It indicates that girls who are already oppressed by their surrounding received knowledge and instructions without any question.

Private School

All the respondents from private schools opined that they don't give any task to students, in Sant Joseph, there were helpers who used to give tea and did the cleaning work, while in R.R. Convent there were two helpers, and the management of resources like bringing chalk, duster and arrangement of seats have to be done by the students. The work was assigned by the teachers to every student. Out of ten parents, nine parents said that they don't send their children to private schools for the purpose of doing chores, while one parent said that "*apna kaam karne mai kaisi burai agar madam kuch bol ri hai to mera baccha kar deta hai*" (What is wrong in doing work, if madam says something, then my child does it). In both schools, students were not doing any

¹²CAGE, (2005, 15): Discriminating, humiliating and isolating experience of underprivileged children not only hurt the emotions of child, but turn out into one of the reasons for drop out.

academic work. In Utila, both boys and girls students were involved in work like arranging the game room or library while in Sant Joseph, except for bringing study materials from the staff room, students were not supposed to do anything else, and this task was being done by both, boys and girls. Unlike government schools, private schools do not give any non-academic tasks to students. The tasks which students need to perform were limited to only bringing the study material. Both private schools had human resources, which performed all the other tasks. Although government schools also have helper but their duties were restricted to Mid-Day Meal only. The parents from private schools also do not support the idea of their children performing non-academic work in the school. It may be due to the higher involvement of parents in private schools as compared to government schools. Private schools are accountable to parents and village, as they were paying the fee (this concern is discussed by the Mehrotra and Panchmukhi, 2006)¹³. This difference between the government and private schools indicate that private schools are more responsible towards studies while government teachers have an irresponsible nature towards student needs. In most of the government schools teachers neglect the need of children while teachers from private school are more accountable and hard worker towards the need of students (Juneja 2010; De et al, 2005). It means that the motivation and accountability of government school teachers is lower than the private school teachers. It could be because of many factors like private schools have to perform better to increase enrolment and parents are more involved in private schools than the government schools, consequently teachers need to perform better. While government school teachers does not feel accountable because parents are not interested in their child's study (according to the head teachers from both government school). This situation can only be changed if parents would track their child's study and teachers will change their attitude towards student.

Gender-Based Participation in extracurricular activities

Games, paintings, singing, organizing functions are the main activities in school. They help the children in their physical and cognitive development. Extracurricular activities help students to open up among themselves, to understand each other, and to develop

¹³Mehrotra and Panchmukhi, 2006 opined that compared to private schools, teachers in government schools might have poor teaching activities because of their low accountability.

physically, socially, mentally, and also emotionally. National Curriculum Framework also emphasises on Art and Physical Education in school. For the same, it has mentioned that a block period of half an hour or one hour is necessary for schools (NCF 2005). This theme will focus on extracurricular activities which were organized by the schools, and the extent of their gender-neutrality. Teachers' view and the researcher's observation on the participation of girls and boys in these activities are discussed in the subsequent section.

An overview on the Extracurricular Activities in Schools

Government Schools

The government middle school (Sirol) does not have a playground. Instead, they have small space between the buildings. Because of this limitation, they do not include sports like race, basketball, etc. However, students play kabaddi and Kho Kho. Festival celebrations have also been a part of extracurricular activities. An adequate playing area was the problem for other Government middle School (Utila) as well. The school does not have a proper boundary wall and does not have a main gate for entrance. So, students used to play all over the area. But that area was covered with small pebbles and so prone to injuries. Teachers claimed that they organize races; students play casual games and local games. They do have a block period of art activities, the games which students played included kho kho, kabaddi and other local games.

Private Schools

Sant Joseph school has a big playground. They have a sports teacher, and every class has a block period, called "games period". The activities which they included were basketball (for senior boys only), and badminton while there were other games like, kho kho, kabaddi, and race in which girls were also participating. There were indoor games as well, including chess and table tennis. In R.R. Convent, the playground was small, so the only activity that took place was kabaddi. There were specific teams of kabaddi of both boys and girls. In extra-curricular activities, they emphasized majorly on music, vocational trainings like weaving for both girls and boys and painting. The teacher said that the head teacher himself teaches music in upper primary sections. They had all the musical instruments. Apart from these activities, during lunch break, students used to play all sorts of local games.

Teacher's view on the participation of students in Extra-Curricular Activities

Government Schools

Three teachers from Government Middle School Sirol, opined that girl students are good in organizing festivals and decorations. The school scheduled one block period of Art and Craft for Upper Primary classes every Saturday. During functions, they promoted girls to use their Art and Craft skills, giving garlands to the guests¹⁴, while the role of boys during celebration days is limited to only moving heavy things like table or chair from one class to another. It implied that only girls are being promoted to learn Art and Craft. The girls are chosen for “feminine” work, which is fragile and doesn't need any muscular efforts, while boys need to perform only “masculine” work, which requires some physical strength. It indicates that decorating homes during festivals or cooking dishes is the duty of women, and the same culture was being followed in the Government School, Sirol.

The same thinking about girls being delicate and boys being muscular was observed during the interviews with teachers in Government Middle School, Utila. Out of six teachers, five believed that boys are more rough and interested in playing harsh games. It included games like *Pakdam Pakdai*, throwing balls at each other, '*kabaddi but in a more intense way*,' running around etc. As one male teacher said “*Kabbadi to ladke, ladki dono he khelte hai, lekin ladke jyada khatarnak khelte hai*” (Both girls' and boys' play kabbadi, but boys' kabbadi match is much more aggressive than girls'). On the contrary, the researcher observed that there were groups of girls in both the Government schools, who were more athletic and were also playing the 'rough games'. Similarly, there were boys in class 5th and 8th who were good at making Rangoli and designing, which, according to teachers, is the expertise of girls.

The perception of teachers is influencing the students' interest, as well. The attitude of teachers taught both girls and boys about gender-based participation in extracurricular activities. One of the female teachers said that her boy is good at crafting Mehndi designs, and she always supports him, but he never shows his designs to other classmates because he has experienced bullying from his peers. This implies that gender

¹⁴Nambissan, 2005 stated that in schools, girls can be found doing 'light' and decorative task, while boys are called when task is perceived as acquiring 'strength'.

roles affect the hobbies and ambitions of students. Society will demotivate a girl if she wants to be a sportsperson and a boy if he wants to become a beautician.

Teachers motivate and reinforce girl students to perform in art and cultural events, and boy students to become more muscular and harsh. These practices affect students' learning and so they imbibe gender-based role division and suppress their aspirations/interests.

It was thus found that most of the male teachers promote gender-based participation of students in extra-curricular activities. Thus, despite government's aim of making school gender friendly, there is a stronger need to prepare the stakeholders- teachers and administrators and parents, who are directly dealing with students.

Private School

In Sant Joseph, the resources for both sports and art activities were available, but the number of girl participants were less. Out of five teachers, four teachers said that they encourage girls to take part in every activity, while one other male teacher said that *"gaon ki ladkiya hai inhe badminton kahan aayega"* (These are village girls, they won't learn to play badminton). The head teacher said that sport teacher is preparing a basketball team of senior boys, so they can participate in inter-school competitions. As per the head teacher, boys were more interested and physically fit for sports games. There were few interested girls, but since the number was so few, they couldn't form a team. He said, *"badi class ki girls student thoda jhijakti hai, or choti class ki bacchiyo ka chot lagne ka darr rehta hai, isliye hum ladko par jyada focus karte hai"* (We focus primarily on the boys because senior girls are hesitant and for primary girls, there is always a risk of injury), *"humne ladkiyo ke liye indoor games ki suvidha di hai"* (we have facilitate indoor games for girls). It implies teachers themselves segregated outdoor games for boys and indoor games for girls. When the researcher tried to know the reason behind low participation of girls, the sports teacher said, *"ladkiya bhi khelti hai, bus unka interest sports mai thoda kam hai"* (girls also play, but their interest is less in sports games).

Proper guidance and encouragement are not being given to the girls, and the teacher ends up thinking that girls are not interested in sports. There was a group of five girls from 7th grade whose participation was higher in badminton. Through informal interaction, the researcher found that boys overpowered them in badminton matches,

and it results in girls not getting the chance to play. When this situation caught a parent's attention, she came and talked to the head teacher. From that day, girls also participated in playing badminton. Like this incident, there are divisions at many levels in sports. Boys overpowered girls because they have been taught to do so by their teachers. In the playground, they were dominating and girls are being conquered by them as well as by the teachers. This relation of teachers and boy students with the girl students is discouraging girls from pursuing their interest in every activity and subject, which is dominated by the boy students.

According to the head teacher of R R convent, every student was attracted to sports and cultural activities irrespective of their socio-economic background. He said "*ab to desh mai ladkiya medal le kar aa rahi hai, to fark to nahi hai unme or ladko mai*" (Girls too are winning gold medals for the country, so there is no difference between them and boys). He advised, to increase the confidence of students, the teachers celebrate sports day every year, where in every game, both girls and boys participate. According to a female teacher, every month, the head teacher allotted the duty of organising different games to students. All the five teachers said that while girls are were good at making *Rangoli* and decoration, they all are trying to push girls into sports activities too. One of the teachers said that boys are naturally good in games. She said that they have a "*God Gifted Talent*" to excel in any sport, while girls need more guidance and coaching. Thus, R.R. Convent School was more inclusive and gender-friendly, but there were few teachers believed in following gendered roles for students. Gender-based participation has been found in both private and government schools, although the approach of dealing with it was different in all the schools. The number of activities is limited in government schools, which impacts the participation of girls in school. However, private schools have various extracurricular activities, and with the engagement of parents and teachers' awareness, students are getting the opportunity to participate in all the activities.

Students' behaviour towards each other - outside the classroom

Government School

In both government schools, the behavior of students towards each other was consciously and unconsciously affecting their participation. In sports activities, if a teacher used to organize games, the competition would be between alike groups (girls

would play with girls only and same for boys) not inclusive groups (both girls and boys would be in a same team). During these competitions, even the cheering by the students was gendered, which means girls would cheer only for girl participants. Similarly, boys would appreciate only boy participants. Primary grader too follow this trend. During lunch in 4th grade, a group of boys were playing a game called “ice water”, just to intervene, the researcher asked if she could play with them, one boy said that “*aap ladki ho, ladkiyo ke sath khelo*” (You are a girl so play with girls). This shows that even the young boys carry the idea that girls cannot play with boys, which they observe and learn in school. Outdoor games were generally labelled as boys’ games so girls’ participation was being discouraged in school. Girls who were good in kabaddi said that they don’t like to play in school because other boys make fun of them.

In Government School, Sirol, an idol making competition was organized by the teachers, and all the interested students from class 4th to 8th took part. In each grade, two groups were formed to compete against each other. The groups consist of both girls and boys, but the composition of group members was not equal, the number of boys in each group was less than the number of girls. During the competition, both, boys and girls were supporting and assisting each other. It was observed that during the competition, girls and boys both support each other in order to win.

In Government Middle School, Sirol, senior students treat each other respectfully each other in sports and art and culture. Even though they were having a fun banter during the game, but at the same time they also used to cooperate with each other. However, during the lunch hours, the gender-based comments are common to hear in school. Thus the gendered values attached to school and classroom practices hinders girls’ participation adversely in the same, resulting in suppression of introvert girls and boys taking interest in activities like skipping, rangoli making, singing or decorating.

Private School

It has observed that in Sant Joseph School, the division between the groups was very high. Senior boys used to practice badminton, basketball, and other games in an isolated place where the senior girl students were not allowed.

It has been observed that in the absence of sports teacher, students from class 5th were giving each other an equal chance to play football and badminton. However, in the 8th standard, whether or not the teacher was present, the division of resources was not

equal. Girl students got only one pair of badminton and a skipping rope, while the boys got two pairs of badminton and football or basketball, and nobody raised their voice against this division of resources. It is observed that when students are young, they know the gender based assigned activities but rarely get engage in gender-based dialogues and so discrimination is less, while in adolescent age, students are socialized enough at home and in school to follow the gendered roles and so act accordingly.

In R R Convent, teachers used to organize sports activities after the morning assembly. Each day a different class used to get chance to play. The activity was decided by the assigned teacher, and the games were selected generally according to the age group of the students. The researcher observed that all the students from every standard cheered for each other without making any additional comments on the strength or power of any particular participant. Along with students, the teachers also cheered for everyone. Since the games were organized under the supervision of teachers, students followed all the rules. The same attitude was shown by the students during lunch hours as well; most of the students played fair games. But, students knew the difference between the “girls’ games” and the “boys’ games”.

The behaviour of students towards each other was limited to teasing and laughing, but they show respect for each other as well. Teachers play an important role in building up this nature in the students. In Sant Joseph School, boy students were expected to perform better in sports, which made senior boys act with more privileges and dominating. In Government School, Utila, male teachers were not sensitive towards the gender issue, and it reflects in their day to day actions. Consequently, in that school, boys were passing comments on girls all the time. While in R R Convent School, teachers are more connected with the students and participate in games with them. Students from this school were more humble towards each other. One thing which was common in all students was about their understanding on gender-based roles. The division of sports and games between the students based on gender and the attitude of teachers was perpetuating the masculine and feminine views in students. So it is the responsibility of the teacher that they should have a dialogue with the students about the gender role, so both girls and boys can know the repercussions of the terms which they used with their peers.

Is Introversion a sign of dumbness?

Under this theme, researcher has shown judgemental attitude of teachers and parents affect students' performance in studies.

It has been found in the classroom teaching-learning process Mathematics teacher from Government Middle School, Utila was engaging more with boys as compared to girls. It impacts the participation of girl students in Mathematics, and as a result, they tend to dislike this subject. In the year 2018, in rural areas, at all India level, 50.1 per cent of boys in the age group 14 to 16 could do division, while for girls, the figure was 44.1 per cent¹⁵.

Except for R.R. Convent, boys were being favoured in all the other schools¹⁶. The girls were being discriminated against, and within this category, girls who were quiet, shy, or not good in maths were being pointed out by the teachers specifically. Girls are being discriminated and as pointed out by a teacher as he stated 'their brains are less developed than the boys and they need more assistance as compare to boys. These are the few statements made by the teachers during the teaching-learning process-

“aaj kuch bologi ya aaj bhi nahi” (Will you speak today or not even today?)

“sari ladkiya nalayak hai ganit (Maths)mai”. (All girls are bad in Math).

In the same context, a parent said that his boy is good in Math but daughter is not because of gendered reasons as reflected in his statement: -

“Ye seedhi hai, isliye buddhi thodi kam hai” (She is quiet, and so her intelligence level is low).

“ladka shararti to hai lekin padhne mai bhi utna he tej hai”. (The boy is mischievous, but is smart in studies).

Out of ten teachers, eight said that students who sit behind don't study well. Even if the teachers ask them to sit in the front, they go back to their old space the very next day. According to them, most of the girls who were not interested in studies prefer to sit in the last or in the corner. It has been observed that girls who remain silent, or a bit reserved, like to sit at the back. The number of girls sitting on the last bench was also

¹⁵ASER 2018 (All India Rural Report)

¹⁶OECD, (2011, 14) report found that teachers pay more attention and give more feedback to boys' student.

higher than the boys. It implies that teachers are not trying to involve them in the learning process.

In society, people from lower castes are oppressed by the higher caste. Similarly, in the classroom, students who are not involved much in the learning process are oppressed by the intelligent students and the teachers also. The students who remain silent were from the lower caste, and the vocal children were from the upper class. These children stay silent and never speak against the discrimination, and the culture of silence suppresses them even more.

In Government School, Utila, in Hindi class, it was found that the same students who were quiet and nervous in maths class were participating, even though the element of shyness was still there. The teacher's comments were less directed towards them as compared to the Maths teacher. It means if these children are not pointed out by the teachers with insensitive remarks, they too can participate in the learning process.

During informal interaction, boys who used to get nervous in front of teachers, were engaging in discussions with the researcher, and they also received support from other classmates. During an interaction in Government School, Utila, a girl student, told about a boy that "*natak kar rha hai bahar to udham karta rehta hai or sabko peet ta rehta hai*" (He is only pretending. Normally, he is always venturing out while beating everyone). However, introvert girls remained silent. In Sant Joseph, Sirol, a girl student from class 6th, was not participating in the discussion. She was being encouraged by some students to talk, while the other students kept pulling her leg. The difference between the participation of reserved boys and girls indicates that even boys are diffident or shy. However, they get motivation from the school and their family, but the same does not happen with girls.

It has been analysed that girls who are branded as "*Sharamili*" or "*Seedhi*" (Shy and quiet), have visions also. But they are being suppressed by the teachers and the parents. They don't have the freedom to choose anything, while boys know that they will get financial independence in their future. Girls' responses on their future vision included:

Girl Students

"ghar ka kaam karna hoga" (Will do household chores)

“*Mummy mann jayegi to college jayenge*” (Will only go to a college if the parents allow).

Boy Students

“*mai bade hokar dukann kholunga*”(Will open up a shop).

“*Mai toh Master banuga*”(Will become a teacher).

It has been analysed that because of the discouragement received by teachers and parents, girls lose their interest and hopes for education. After a certain time, it becomes a reality for them that they are meant to take care of the house while boys enjoy more freedom and get **opportunities to choose what and how they want to live their lives**. It is not only creating barriers for girls to receive education, improving the quality of their lives, but also hampering gender equality in education (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005)¹⁷

Loquacious: Sign of “Over Empowerment”

There were few groups of girls in all schools who were dominating and were favoured by the teachers. They were not the class monitors, but an active and intelligent groups of girls. Teachers of Utila symbolized them as “*Neta*”, as according to them, these groups can easily be recognized in a “*crowd*” of students. Two male teachers from the same school said that “*ye ladkiya ne to humare ladko ko bilkul he daba rakhi hai*” (These girls have absolutely suppressed our boys), “*humare school ki ladkiya jyada he empower ho gayi hai*” (Girls of our school are too empowered). Head teacher of Government School, Utila, said that women are dominating men inside as well as outside of the house. The head teacher of Government School, Sirol, said that because of this gender equality, girls are “over-empowered,” and now they are dominating boys. The tradition of being humble and responsible is being forgotten by the girls.

In Government School, Sirol, male and female teachers do not interact informally. One of the female teachers said that the male staff is more arrogant and avoids interaction with female teachers. This gap has been seen among the students as well. The group of

¹⁷According to Aikman & Unterhalter, (2005, 245) development of freedoms against violence and discrimination is vital to achieve gender equality in education.

“Neta” girls were seen as “*batamiz Ladkiyan*,” (ill-mannered girls) by some students. In R R convent, there were active girls group, but they were not being labelled.

Teachers’ attitude towards girl students is very judgemental. Teachers are labelling them, either as “*silent incompetent students*” or as vocal “*Netas*,” while dominating boy students are being ignored by the teachers and students. It implies that boys’ dominating attitude is seen as normal behaviour, but girls’ dominating behaviour is frowned upon. Students are also commenting on these lines, as they are learning it from their teachers. The relations between male and female teachers are also reinforcing students in adapting gender-bias in their behaviour. Teachers’ attitude towards these groups cannot create a gender-just environment. To understand the issue of gender, as has been discussed in NCERT, 2006, that social control of female sexuality and patriarchal ideology determines the access of education to girls. It affects the quality of teaching and duration of education that girls receive.

The view of teachers on gender equality could be understood in one sentence, which was quoted by the head teacher of Utila “*huamri school ki or humari ghar ki aurate dono ne he ladko ko daba ke rakhti hai*” (women are dominating men inside as well as outside of the house). If the head teacher of the school, along with other teachers, was laughing on the issue of girls’ education and gender concerns, his outlook towards gender equality can easily be understood.

Teachers’ remarks on girl students are creating barriers for them to participate in the learning process. Society cannot accept vocal girls, as it is against the patriarchal norms. To make women empowerment a reality, people need to revisit and understand their patriarchal attitude to make a gender sensitive society.

How schools are promoting Gender Equality

Teachers play an important role in promoting a gender-friendly environment in school. The attitude of the head teacher and other staff members can create an environment where each child feels safe and secure. Out of the four sample schools, only R R convent school was promoting gender equality in curricular and extracurricular activities. The Head teacher of R R convent plays a perfect role of a leader and seems dedicated towards teaching. Throughout the data collection period, he was mostly found either in a classroom or in the activity room with students. During informal interaction, it was revealed that he was born and brought up in the same village, and moved to the city

after completing higher secondary. He said that he felt the difference in teaching and participation of children between city and village schools, and it led to him deciding to open a school in his own village. He used to organize most of the extracurricular activities by himself, and trained other teachers also to ensure every child's participation. R R Convent School was gender-friendly to some extent, as compared to other sample schools. The practice of the majority of the teachers included calling children by their proper name, encouraging and sometimes forcing both, girls and boys to participate in activities like kabaddi, singing, and dancing.

The head teachers of the other three schools were found to be very authoritative. They had limited engagement with staff and students. In Sant Joseph School, head teacher used to sit only in his office and had little to no interaction with students. Head teacher of Government Middle School, Sirol had interaction only with female teachers. She assigned gender-based duties to students (like asking the girl students to assist the helper during Mid-Day Meal serving), and was also against the idea of gender equality (discussed in Section II, under the Narrative of head teacher). Head teacher of Government Middle School, Utila, was found to be a little sluggish. He was directing most of his paperwork to other teachers. He was looking a little uncomfortable during the interview. He was observed to be passing insensitive comments on women and said that girls are overpowering men at home as well as in schools.

It has been analysed that the three schools where the head teacher held narrower views on gender equality, and their practices were also promoting gender inequality, students were participating according to their gender role. Teachers who did not value the girl students, were leading their schools in a more gendered environment where both, teachers and students, practiced gendered behaviour either consciously or unconsciously.

These villages were almost like the other villages where girls are restricted and bounded in patriarchal values. Among these villages, a school like R R convent is an example for other teachers. The head teacher and more than half of the teachers were local, most of them coming from lower-middle-class families. Despite the lack of physical and monetary resources, the head teacher was managing the school by giving equal attention to every student.

Role of Female Teacher and Gender Equality

The attitude of female teachers was found to be more gender-friendly than the male teachers. In Government Middle School, Sirol, two female teachers, said that they always tried to create inclusive groups during the activities. However, students themselves were reluctant to play with each other. It has been observed that in Sant Joseph School, there were two sports teachers, both male, while music and dance were taught only by the female teachers. Hence, when teachers themselves would not participate in all the activities, inspiring students to participate in sports and art becomes a difficult task. Sant Joseph school had the highest number of female teachers, but despite that, most of them were a little reluctant.

In Government Middle School, Utila, out of two female teachers, only one used to come while the other was on leave. She was found to be quite gender friendly as compared to the other teachers of the same school. During the classroom teaching-learning process, she taught Hindi to grade 7. It was found that she was making eye contact with the children. In her class, both girls and boys were participating, although the participation of girls sitting in the last rows was low. She did not make any insensitive remarks on students like the other male teachers (mentioned in the above discussion). Both, girls and boys, were found to be more comfortable during her class. Parents also knew her, and she used to have informal interactions with the Mid-Day Meal helper. She was more connected with the students and parents as compared to the male teachers.

In R R Convent School, female teachers were putting in more effort with students during assembly and lunch hours. One of the teachers said that she herself faced problems in getting an education, so she tried her best to provide opportunities to both girls and boys.

It is evident from the above discussion that female teachers were making the school environment more comfortable for girl students. Female teachers were found to be more interactive with every student in R R Convent School and in Government Middle School, Sirol. Although the practices of most of the teachers were promoting gendered behaviour, it has been observed that many girls used to talk to only female teachers. Teachers' behaviour was also affected by their social and cultural environment. For example, in R R Convent School, they were found motivating and giving a chance to everyone, because they have been taught by the head teacher, to make sure the participation of children remains intact. On the other hand, in Sant Joseph School, head

teacher had no such communication with the teachers. His role was only limited to doing paperwork and to manage resources, so in his school, female teachers were more conservative and kept their job limited to teaching only.

Awareness of Teachers and Block Officer on Gender Equality

Teachers were not aware of the term ‘gender equality’ and ‘gender-based participation in education’. One teacher said that gender equality is when all children are attending schools, another teacher said when girls overpower boy students. Except for one head teacher, no one else was aware of the terms like gender parity, gender-sensitive¹⁸. Both, government and private school teachers never attended any workshop on gender issues. They did not know about the girl specific programs being run by the state government. One teacher said that “*han ladkiyo ko cycle to di jati hai*” (Yes, cycles are distributed to girls). Block officer thinks that they have achieved gender equality, as most of the girls attend school. He was familiar with the schemes for girls, and he argued that incentive and scholarship should not be given to students as incentives which are provided to girl students, are further utilized by their parents. He did not seem to be aware of the objectives of providing incentives, as he argued that the scholarships should be given based on the rank of the students. He said that giving scholarships do not make any sense. The main stakeholders who are working on the ground level are not aware of the terms like ‘gender equality’ and ‘sensitivity.’

Although many parents are sending their girl child to schools because of the scholarship, but it is providing the chance for girls to access school. It is the gendered environment that is pushing girls out of the education process. Incentive merely provides the accessibility. The concern of retention can be mitigated only by making people aware and sensitive.

Section II

Narratives of Respondents

Teachers’ Perception Regarding Participation of Students in School

During data collection, the informal conversation was done with most of the teachers in the school. The discussions helped in understanding the culture of the village,

¹⁸OECD, (2011, 13) report has argued that in many developing countries teachers never heard of gender sensitive word.

awareness of education among people, and the attitude of teachers concerning the participation of students. This section will analyze the perception of teachers and parents on gender equality as a whole and the participation of girls and boys, as specific. This section will be understood through the narratives of a head teacher and a parent.

Narrative of the Head Teacher (Government Middle School, Sirol)

The head teacher of Government Middle School, Sirol, was the only female head out of all the sample schools. Manju Sharma (Name Changed), was a 48-year-old Hindu woman. She completed her schooling and graduation from Raipur. After her marriage, she came to Gwalior, and here, she completed her Master in Education, Master in Science, and Doctorate in philosophy. She was the most qualified teacher out of all sample teachers. She teaches science and Hindi from class 5th to 8th. She said that the changes in the attitude of people bring girls outside of home. She experienced changes in the attitude of people for the education of both girls and boys. She joined the school as a teacher at the age of 26 years old. She said in the first five years of teaching, the number of girl students was low. Gradually, there were many tasks given to the teachers to bring the girl child to the school. The tasks included the management of scholarships, dress, books, and cycles for girl students, special focus on girls during ‘*Pravesh Mahotsav*,’ etc. According to her, the education system is not gender-friendly, both, for students and teachers. She said that she is experiencing discrimination by the male teachers not only in her school but in other meetings and training workshops also. The number of female head teachers is less, especially in the rural areas. She said that at every place, whether in the management of physical resources or the management of funds received by the school, she needs to be more vigilant and have to prove herself in front of other teachers that she is doing the right things. She said that she had experienced a “mental torture” by the male teachers. She said that she tried her best to give opportunities to every student without any biases, “Ladko se Jyada Ladkiyo ke liye Education important hai” (Education is more significant for girls as compared to boys).

During conversations with other teachers, it has been observed that the working relationship of the head teacher with female teachers is friendly. With male teachers, the relation is very professional. She used to sit with other female colleagues but not with the male colleagues.

But there were few instances and dialogues where the head teacher was contradicting her own idea of equality. During the informal conversation, she said that the difference between girls and boys cannot and should not be mitigated because it will disturb the hierarchy and values of “Hindu Dharam” (Hindu Religion). She said that “*Samaj mai itne divorce rate or suicide Gender Equality ki Vajah se he Badh raha Hai*” (Increasing Suicide rate and Divorce rate is the result of Gender Equality in Society). She tried to highlight the anatomy of both girls and boys and said that gender equality could not be a reality, and the gap between the genders cannot be breached. According to her, there are differences in the genes of males and females, which make men more intellectual and powerful. She was very conservative and connected her thoughts as per her religion. She said that “*Humare dharam mai aurat Laxmi ka roop hoti hai vo bacche ko janam deti hai or isi karan vo emotional hoti hai*”, “*Motherhood aurat ko fragile banata hai*” (In our religion women are treated as goddess Laxmi; motherhood makes them emotional and fragile). She cited her own example and said that all the members are equal in her house, but, in the morning, when both of them (she and her husband) need to go for work, male can cut the vegetables, but only female have to pack lunch for him. She believed in the gender divided roles and power relations in the society. According to her, in every house, men are holding the power position, while women are subordinate.

During an in-depth interview, she said that her school treats everyone equally. However, it was not reflected in her actions. During observation, it was found that the school-related activities were divided according to gender roles. She used to ask girls to clean her office and boys to move the pile of books from here to there and to ring the bell during lunch hours. Her personality could be analysed as an independent, strong woman, but her thinking was pulling her towards patriarchy. She wanted to enforce a change, but accepted that women could not be equal to men.

Her attitude could be seen from the lens of the oppressor and the oppressed. She is being oppressed by the male teachers of her schools who constantly doubt her skills and harass her mentally through various actions. She has achieved a higher position at her work through educational opportunities provided to her. However, even after that, she was not able to liberate her thoughts and was forced to follow the patriarchal values. Her confused thinking over the need of educating girls and her role in society will never contribute in creating gender-friendly environment in school.

Relationship of Parents with School

In Sant Joseph School, Sirol, during lunch hours, few girls from class 7 were playing badminton with full enthusiasm and energy. An informal conversation was initiated to know more about them. They were asked about the limited participation of girls in outdoor activities, especially sports. Then a girl said, "koi hume khelne hi nahi deta" (no one lets us play). Then she added that till a few months ago, they were not even allowed to play badminton. However, she was really enthusiastic about the sport as she had seen it on television, and went to the sports teacher along with her friends. The teacher gave them the racquets only to take them away after a few minutes, saying that they are too young and do not know how to play. The teacher said that he would let them play by themselves only after he teaches them how to play. Since then, whenever they wanted to play, the teacher repeated the same thing and asked them to go and play in the activity room. One of the girls complained about this to her mother, and her mother came to school to talk to head teacher about letting them play. Since then, around eight girls from different grades play together. However, it was observed that the number of senior girls in outdoor activities, particularly in sports, was less than the boys. Instead of playing with a ball or badminton, they prefer to sit and talk or play local games. However, it was reflected that they had been taught to play other games than sports, and it was also observed that girls stopped participating in games after a certain age.

This incident depicts the power of dialogue to ensure the rights of others. The parent (mother) indulged in a dialogue with the head teacher, and he agreed (either he understands that the girls too have a right to play or he just wanted to save the image of his school). It has been observed that parents who send their children to private schools had more interaction with teachers as compared to government schools.

A communication pattern was detected in both private and government teachers' attitudes. It was observed that government school teachers interact with parents, especially mothers, with the assumption that they do not know anything related to studies. Their interaction depicts that the mother is subordinate, and she does not know anything. The teachers act as a powerful being who has more knowledge and etiquette than her. It was observed in Sant Joseph school that whenever parents needed to have a talk, they sit properly in head teacher's room. In contrast, in Government Middle

School, Utila head teacher does not answer their queries, at first, by herself and instead asks them to go to other teachers, and even if she talks to them, she does not offer them a seat.

It implies that private schools understand their accountability towards children and parents. They conduct classes regularly, provide every possible resource for the development of children, and also respect their parents. Both private schools organised parent-teacher meetings on the last working days, and also invited parents to cultural events (as informed by head teachers). On the other hand, in government schools, head teachers said that parents were not interested in the education of their child, and they also do not have time to come to schools. Here, both, parents and teachers, do not make efforts to communicate with each other.

Narrative of a Parent (Sant Joseph School, Sirol)

Parents play an essential role in the upbringing of a child. To a large extent, their dreams and expectations with their child shapes the child's future. In this study, parents' perception is vital in order to understand that to what extent the gender/sex of a child affects his or her opportunities. Since the objective of this narrative is to understand the determining factors which are responsible for enrolment and participation of a child, Parents were interviewed to reflect on the issue of girls' education.

Rekha (name changed) lives in village Sirol. Her husband has a farm and a ration shop in the village. She used to stitch clothes for extra income. She has two girls and two boys. One of her daughters has dropped out of school after 8th grade. The other two children, one boy and one girl, are attending Sant Joseph School, Sirol, and one of her boys is studying in class 12th in Excellence School, Morar.

She said that during her childhood, girls were not given the opportunity to study so much, and schools were also very far away. Due to the distance between school and house, many parents who wanted to send their daughter to school were reluctant to continue their education. According to her, there are a lot of schools for children to access today. "*Pehle sirf ek School hota tha, aaj to har gao mai panch panch school hote hai*" (Earlier there used to be only one school, but today there are five schools in every village).

She said that now the situation of girls has become very good. Nowadays girls can wear pants and skirts, but the tradition in villages has not changed much as compared to the urban area.

She thought that it was enough for the girl child to get education till tenth standard. According to her, education is important for girls, but only till the class where she would be able to do daily life maths, because after marriage, they have to do household chores anyway. According to her, more than formal education, schools should teach girls stitching so they can assist their families. She said that after marriage, girls have to go to another place, so whether or not educated hardly matters for the family¹⁹. If her husband allows, then the girl can also contribute to the family income (For parents, getting their girls married is the first, and their daughter's economic well-being is a secondary priority. This has been found in PROBE, 1999 report.). About her boys' education, she said that boys inherit family's name, they also need to take care of their wife and children. So, good education is important for them. "*ladke padhenge nahi to kamyenge kya?*" (How will boys earn money without an education?). The pre-decided gender roles play a significant part in determining the access of education to girls, as she said that "*Gaon mai ladkiyo ko padhane ka matlab nahi hai, aakhir mai unki shadi he honi hoti hai*" (There is no relevance to educate girls in the villages, they have to end up getting married anyway). It means that she thinks education does not do any good for girls. It may be because she has never seen any educated female. Her children attended private schools, as according to her, government schools do not teach well.

She studied till the primary level, and then learned to stitch from her mother. She wanted the same upbringing for her girls too. She said that "*humara bhi to kam padh likh kar kaam chal rha hai to humari ladkiyo ka bhi kaam chal jayega*" (If I am doing fine after getting less education, so will my girls). It reflected that her educational opportunities were hindered by her parents, and now she is bringing up her daughters in the same manner. As Frire (1986), said that oppressed could become the oppressor, the above example is also reflecting the same.

She thinks that rural and urban areas are very different. The urban culture is spoiling children. That is another reason she does not want her daughters to get educated after

¹⁹Dreze and Kingdon, (1999, 6) discussed that in India after marriage, a daughter's relation with her parents are quite distant, in the light of this practice parents often consider that they have no direct stake in the education of a daughter.

10th grade because she thinks that modern practices will spoil them. She said that her daughters are well mannered and listen to every command, which is not possible in urban areas. It means that the culture of silence is not limited to the class only. It can also be found in the society, where children are supposed to be silent and receive everything without questioning. According to her, educated girls fight more in their homes, and do not take care of other family members. It implies that educated girls are seen as an irresponsible member of the society.

In girls' education, it is very clear from the above discussion, the family plays a significant role. In this case, education access is given to girls, but the boundaries are pre-decided by the parents. The opportunities are limited to secondary education only. After a certain limit even if the girl wants to continue her education she will not be supported by the parents. Her role in the family is decided by the society, and according to her designated role, she does not need higher education. On the other hand, boys need to be more educated and strong. The roles of girls and boys within the family are decided by the patriarchal practices. It is the reason that even after giving incentives and scholarships to girls, the parents do not want to get her educated beyond the secondary level. Parents prefer to teach their daughter household chores and a quiet behavior so that she can get a good husband. The radical approach is supporting this situation as well, where, along with the accessibility of education, we need to abolish patriarchal values, as this approach believed that only rights cannot empower women. It believes that in order to empower women, there is a need to abolish patriarchal practices.

Section III

Case studies

In this Section, three cases of girl students from both the sample villages are discussed. The first case is from Government Middle School, Utila, and the second case is from Government Middle School (Siro), and the last is from R R Convent School (Utila). The personal information, like name, age, has been slightly modified to respect the privacy of the particular cases.

Rationale behind the case studies

These cases are reflecting on the determinants responsible for the access to education from the gender perspective. These case studies will help in understand the social and economic condition of girls and its impact on their education.

I Case Study (Government Middle School, Utila)

Objective – the focus of this case study was to explore and understand the reasons behind a girl child for not attending school regularly. Case profile

Pooja (Name Changed), a 10-year-old girl, was enrolled in Government Middle School, Utila, in the 6th standard. She lives in a stranded house on the outskirts of the village Khera, a small habitat four km away from Utila. She completed her primary level of schooling from Government Primary school, Khera. At present, she is enrolled in class 6th in Government middle school, Utila. She has one older brother and two younger brothers. Her father is a farmer, and her mother is a home maker. Her father studied up to the secondary level, and her mother till the primary level. Her family belongs to the Scheduled Caste category. She has two elder cousin sisters, and both are school dropouts. Pooja's younger brothers live with their grandmother in another village where the school facility is in the neighbourhood. Both of them attend private schools.

Reason for not Attending School

She was absent from school on all three days when the investigator recorded the attendance. According to the class teacher of 6th grade, she hardly attended school for more than one week every month. During occasions like marriage and festivals like Diwali, she remains absent for whole month. After an interaction with her parents, it was found that Pooja worked on the farm along with her older brother and father. According to her mother, it was easier for pooja to attend school regularly when it was nearer to their house. She said that now it's hard to send her school because it is in another village. The reasons which she shared included no conveyance from her place to school and that no one from her family, mainly grandfather and her father, wants to educate her, and there are certain household responsibilities which she needs to take care of. Her mother also said that Pooja is not good in studies. Even though she passed 5th grade, she still cannot read Hindi fluently. They live in a family of twelve members, and only two people are wage earners. Consequently, Pooja has a lot of responsibilities besides her studies.

Pooja is facing not only economic but social barriers as well, to access education. Because of the poor condition of her house, she has a number of assigned duties like fetching water, rearing cattle, and assisting her mother in cooking and cleaning. Her school, which is three kilometers away from where she lives, is far. According to her mother, in contrast, she goes across the village to feed cattle. It implies that either household chores are more important than getting an education. Her mother played a very small role in deciding whether or not to send Pooja to school. It implies that the role of a woman in making decisions about her child is almost negligible. Even though child-rearing was the responsibility of the mother, but the decisions about her child is taken by the father²⁰. Her brother's education is preferred over hers. Patriarchal values are playing a vital role in deciding whether education is essential for her or her brothers. Parents' expectations are meagre with the education of their girl child that as soon as the need to make a special effort (either physically or economically) rises above an already low threshold, they decide not to send her school²¹.

II Case Study (Government Middle School, Sirol)

This case is majorly focusing on how society and poverty are preventing a girl from accessing education. The mother of the girl wants to support her in getting education.

Case Profile

Pooja Singh was a student of 7th class in Government Middle School, Sirol. She was 13-years-old. Her father died when she was 9. Her mother was studied till 4th grade. She was the single parent and the only bread earner of the family. She was a laborer and a helper in the school. Their family income was Rs. 3,000/month. Pooja was an average student, and very good at painting. Her mother migrated from their ancestral village. She was the helper in the same school where Pooja studied.

Struggles for Education

Her mother is the only earning member in the family. She has no contact with her family members or her in-laws. Pooja used to attend a small private school in Morena (another block of Gwalior), where she studied till 5th standard. She was a good student. Her

²⁰Padma Saranagpani (2004, 34), stated that child rearing left to mother only, and the father has an absolute authority in all the other matters of upbringing.

²¹Probe Report (1999,22), reported that when Parents' expenditure and efforts involved in sending a daughter to school rises, they give up on her education.

mother said that she played different games in the school like every other kid, but her strong area was painting. Her mother said that when her husband died, her in-laws asked them to leave their house, so she went to her parents' house. Due to that, the distance from Pooja's school to the home increased substantially, which resulted in her drop out of the school. Due to the financial constraints and mistreatment by the family members, she left her parents' house as well and migrated to Morar, Gwalior. She got a labour job and a kaccha ghar to live, nearby her working site. She saved money and admitted her daughter under the RTE Act in a private school. She got Pooja admitted in the 6th standard. Her mother told that in the starting, as Pooja was new in the school so she did not like to go. She used to say that she did not want to study. Her mother said that after dropping out from the previous school, her interest in studies declined. However, gradually, she became the part of the school. But after six or seven months, Pooja was facing various problems, like other students were more clean and resourceful compared to her. Her mother was also facing challenges. At her workplace, other parents did not send their daughters to school, while on the other hand, she lent money from her colleagues to send her daughter to a private school. She said that through RTE, Pooja got the admission without any money. Still, there were other events where the school asked to bring additional resources like colours, drawing books, different coloured pens, and different dresses and, many other things. She said that her colleagues started asking for their money back as they thought, Pooja going to a private school implied that she has money. Pooja was doing well in studies, but she fell behind other students as most of them attending tuition classes, and she could not. After finishing one year of schooling, her mother shifted her to a government school.

Being a single parent, her mother had to struggle a lot to give education to her child. She understands the value of education. At present, she is doing a helper job in the same school. Because their house is quite far and the school is on the main road which is not safe for girls, she took this job so her daughter could study without any fear²². Pooja said that she wants to become a teacher. Both mother and daughter are struggling to get a good education. The girl is trying to perform good so that she can prove that she can also help her mother. Her mother is fighting with everyone because she understands

²²The issue of safety is a major concern in rural areas. The teachers also informed about the unsafe environment on the main road (especially during summers). Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanin, (2008, 3), "Public spaces in India continue to be relatively hostile to the presence of women, and rarely function in a way to make women feel secure and confident".

how important is it to get her daughter educated²³. Mahajan also found that mother's wanted to educate their daughter so they won't work minial jobs.

It implies that in a female-headed household, the chances of girls to get an education is higher. Females who participate in the decision-making process tend to choose to provide a good education to their daughters and they are more empowered than the other women who do not get a chance to participate in household decisions. In the above case, even the education qualification of the mother was very low, she understands how vital it is for her daughter to get an education, and so she decided to educate her. As she was managing both outside and household work, she seemed to be more rational, stern, and strong because she always had to make decisions for herself. It shows that when a woman faces challenges and have a chance to stand for herself, then she becomes more empowered.

III Case Study (R R Convent School, Utila)

The objective of selecting this case is to focus on the elements of society (which in this case, are school teachers and family members), and to discuss that through their cooperation and positive reinforcement, Anjali has been able to participate in the learning process. This case concludes that if society can understand the importance of education without any discrimination between girls and boys, then every child can actively participate in education.

Case Profile

Anjali was a 12 years old girl, the youngest child in her house. She studied in 8th standard in R.R. Convent School, Utila. Her father was a farmer, and her mother was a homemaker. Both of her parents are uneducated. She belongs to Scheduled Caste category. She had two elder brothers, one of them works in a factory and has studied till 7th standard, and another one was an uneducated farmer. Her parents are quite old. Her brother was the only earning member in the family. They fall under the Economically Weaker Section.

How is Anjali getting Education with the support of Society?

²³V. Mahajan (2003, 276) discussed that a mother's rationale for educating the girls was, 'If our daughters are educated, then they won't need to work as domestic servants'.

Anjali was an intelligent student of her school, till 5th standard, she studied in a government school in the same village (Utila). As she was the only girl child in her family, she was loved by everyone. But as a girl, her family and she faced many challenges in getting education. Her mother said that she never wanted to give higher education to her girl child, because of their lower social and economic background. Her mother was concerned about Anjali's future, as she said what if her education creates a problem in her marriage. She said that in the present time, they are not discriminated against much, like it was ten years ago, but if a girl child belongs to a low caste and class, she becomes the subject for bullying by the others as well for her own caste people. Her relatives don't support her education; few older relatives always suggest her father to get her married. According to her mother, many relatives used to help them financially, but now they also don't lend them money because their daughter is going to a private school.

Anjali's brothers support her education more than their parents. Her one brother (22 year old), was educated till 7th standard, he dropped out early because he used to work in farms, and Anjali's second brother (26 year old) never went to school, because of unawareness about the importance of education. They believe that their financial status could have been better if both of them were educated. So her both brothers wanted their sister to be educated and independent. One of her brother (who studied till 7th grade) said that during his childhood, his class teacher was a female, and he always admired her because he had never seen a woman with that personality, so he wanted her sister to become a teacher. After the 5th standard, both of her brothers decided to send her to the R. R convent school. She got admission under the EWS category, but in the following year, her family started facing financial problems. Besides her admission fee, her education demanded other resources like proper school dress, resources for projects, as her home was quite far, so transportation fee was also added. As a result, her family decided to move her out for this school. However, as she was an intelligent and engaging student, her school Principal decided to exempt her van fees and decided to give her learning resources every six months. At present, she is in 8th standard. According to her teachers, she is very active and participates in all the sports and other activities. They said that among all the parents and guardians, only her brothers are the frequent visitors of the school, and they regularly check on her studies.

Anjali's case is unique. Every human being who has a direct or an indirect relation with her or her family is impacting her life. Some are motivating her, while others are discouraging her. She is getting education because her family and teachers were supporting her. She was active in every learning activity, particularly in dancing and singing. She has never been discriminated in her home, which gave her confidence so she can speak and participate in school. Every teacher knows her because her brother always visits the school, which impacts her participation in a positive way.

From the above two cases, it is very heartening to see that few girls are supported by their parents, family members, and by schools. In a block like Morar where most of the girls do not get a chance to go to school and complete their studies. In those places, few girls have the opportunity to attend the school. In Anjali's case, both her brothers wanted her to become a teacher, whereas in their caste, most of the girls either drop out or never get enrolled at all. While in Pooja's case, her mother, all alone, is doing everything to provide her with good education.

It appears from the above cases that because of poverty, there are many children, both girls and boys, who are struggling to not only access education but also to get food in their stomachs. Formal education is not always possible for these children, so state and the central government should develop a child tracking system, in which the children facing poverty can be tracked, and all the affected children can have access to education through non-formal education, remedial classes. Those who are going to schools should be provided additional academic support in the form of evening or extra classes.

Link of Theoretical Framework with the empirical evidence

As it has been mentioned in chapter 1, to understand the access to and participation of children in school, this study has tried to look into the situation from Paulo Freire's concept "Pedagogy of the Oppressed." This section would link the theory from the empirical evidences.

Oppressor and Oppressed

It has been observed in both the Government Middle Schools that few teachers were playing the role of oppressor and were oppressing the girl students. For example, teachers from Government Middle Schools, Utila, used to say derogatory words

(discussed above) against girls who used to remain silent and never encouraged them to participate.

In Sant Joseph School, Sirol, girl students were deterred by the sports teachers from playing games, and were told that they should be engaged in indoor games instead.

In Government Middle School, Sirol, head teacher, who was already oppressed by the male teachers (discussed in the narrative of a teacher, ch-5), believed that girls should not have higher aspirations. She said that the efforts for equality are creating an imbalance in society. She used to assign work to students according to their gender. It was observed that after Mid-day Meal, she had never asked boys to clean the space or to assist helpers; only girls were supposed to perform that duty. It resulted in girls losing their time to do other activities during lunch hour.

Oppressor and oppressed relation has been observed in the students' relationship also, as mentioned above that in government Middle school, Utila, girls who liked to play Kabaddi, usually do not play because other boys made fun of them. Boys preferred to play in an isolated place, so girls would not disturb them. Consequently, most of the girls who did not get a chance to play at home because of other household responsibilities do not get to play in schools as well because, in school, they are being oppressed by the fellow students.

Culture of Silence

As discussed in chapter 1 that according to Freire (1970), the culture of silence reflects the oppressive nature of society, where the teacher knows everything, and students know nothing, and the teacher chooses to enforce her choices, and students act in accordance with the instructions.

It was observed that except R R Convent School, in all three sample schools, students were not querying about the instructions which they used to receive either in the classroom or in extracurricular activities. In Government Middle School, Utila, during the maths class, it was observed that both girls and boys were not discussing, talking, or asking any doubts, clarifications, or giving any answers. When the teacher was asking, only then the children were allowed to speak. This system was effecting girls' participation particularly because, the teacher was giving chances to boys only and girls were only at the receiving end. In all the four schools, both girls and boys were receiving

roles and responsibilities without their consideration. This process was compelling students to accept gender-based duties and obliged them to fulfill that role without learning anything.

This culture is not limited to the school processes only. It can also be seen in the relationship of a girl child with her family members. The case study of an irregular girl student has been discussed in the above section. It has been found that the girl was unable to attend school regularly because, apparently, the responsibilities assigned to her were more important than education. It means her parents decided that she won't attend school regularly and will take care of the cattle and other household chores. Her choices and opinions were never being asked, and she silently accepted everything. She was a 10-year-old girl, and at such a tender age, Pooja was being taught never to question the authority of her parents. Hence, she accepted that rather than school, she needs to go to the field.

The relation between oppressor and oppressed and culture of silence has emerged in another narrative of a parent (discussed above, under the heading of Narrative of a Parent). It implies from the narration that the respondent's education opportunity was oppressed by her parents. She was forced to drop out after the primary stage and taught stitching by her mother. Now she also thinks that girls should only have a limited education, and more than formal education, they should be taught vocational skills like stitching and tailoring. She was playing the part of the oppressor who knows everything, and her girls were playing the role of oppressed who were on receiving end and accepted every decision made by their parents. She has imbibed everything because she learns the same in school and her home also, where her eldest sister also went through the same process.

Both concepts taken from the pedagogy of the oppressed can be understood in the realm of society and school, in which girls are taught how to walk, how to eat, what to aspire, how much to think, among many other things. In this process, most of the girls are being suppressed by power or dominance of the society, and they never become empowered. According to Freire (1970), oppressed has to lead the struggle for the protection of humanity. Only then will he not turn in to oppressor. So to mitigate the culture of silence first, the oppressors (in the case of education- Parents, Teachers, and Students) need to retain the humanity so this process can be stopped. The culture of silence from society

and school can be alleviated if an oppressed person, instead of turning in to an oppressor, would preserve the humanity. It will lead to a break in the power structure between men and women, and everyone will be equal. According to Stromquist (2014), breaking the culture of silence is the only method through which gender-based discrimination can be ended.

Conclusion

From the above discussion on different factors which are determining the access and participation of children, it is evident that both parents and school administration play significant roles in creating gender friendly environment. Through the analysis it is found that school administration and parents are reproducing the gender roles in children. The parents are preferring boys over girls in giving education due to patriarchal set up of the rural area. Many researches (Dreze & Kingdon, 2001, Nambissam, 2005, Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanin, 2008, Ramachandran et al., 2008) have already discussed about the preferential treatment of sons by parents as they tend to provide better opportunities to their sons as compared to daughters and do not prefer to spend money on girls' education. Many instances are found where parents send their sons to fee paid private schools but prefer free education for their daughters in government schools. The above analysis depicts the power structure and gender biasness of rural society, where girls are being oppressed by the patriarchal norms which have serious consequences on their educational opportunities and wellbeing. Schools are also operating in the same set up and it is socialising children with similar gender stereotyping and biasness through different curricular and co-curricular activities and it is continuing in vicious cycle generation after generation.

As mentioned in chapter 4 that the national figure of drop out girls at the upper primary stage was 6.42 per cent over 4.97 per cent boys in 2016-17, while this disparity has increased in Gwalior where 5.80 per cent girls were dropped out in 2016-17 over 0.65 per cent boys. And the drop-out rate of Morar in 2016-17, was calculated 15.53 per cent girls over 10.55 per cent boys. These visible variations are the evidence that in Madhya Pradesh, girls got less opportunity to complete their education as compared to boys. The drop out reasons discussed above depicting that girls are being discriminated based on their gender by parents and society in general. As discussed earlier that most parents prefer to provide an excellent education to a boy, and for girls, their first preference was

marriage rather than education. This thinking decided the educational future for most of the girls. According to NSS 75th report 12.4 per cent of girls had to drop out from schools because of early marriage. While inside the school, girls were discriminated based on the gender role, in home too they faced several restrictions. In fact, they were not provided with adequate time to do home works given from schools and often get punished in school for not completing homework. In this study, out of four sample schools only R R Convent School, Utila, was practicing gender-friendly approach to some extent in the teaching learning process. In other schools, girls were restricted to participate only in homely and feminine activities. And within this process, girls who were from Schedule castes and Schedule tribes they were facing more challenges, like it has been discussed that they were treated as 'dumb headed', uneducable by their teachers. Parents and teachers were playing the part of oppressor and students especially girls were being oppressed by them, as discussed above, girls were being restricted by teachers to play sports games. Head teacher (female) of Government School, Sirol was giving the task of cleaning area to shy and introvert girls only. They don't see any demerit of such gender based division of work as they have seen it from their childhood and internalised in their own behaviour. This is how within the school premises, girls were oppressed by the teachers because of their gender.

It is evident from the above analysis that parents decide the threshold for girls', they choose the type of school for girls, whether they will attend the school regularly or not, and also decides that till how many grades she will attend the school. And the girls who were attending the schools, for them, teachers were selecting the sports which they will be interested in, non-academic work which they need to perform. These governing factors not only affecting girls' educational rights but also their human rights. The preference for son is responsible for prevalence of female feticides; early marriage is accountable for illiteracy, higher child mortality rate, malnutrition, anemia in young women, and many other things. Hence it is vital to act upon the concerns of gender-based access and participation of students in education. From above analysis, it is discernable that India specially the state like Madhya Pradesh need to walk a long way to achieve gender equity in its educational institutions where girls face many barriers since their early grade to fulfil their educational needs. While several girls from disadvantaged section of society are double disadvantaged, girls from disadvantaged groups and also with disabilities face multiple disadvantages while accessing and

continuing education. In this backdrop, policy makers and planners need to be more proactive to make schools discrimination free as well as for improving quality of education particularly in government schools which are attended by more girls from poor and socially disadvantaged groups. This can help in paving the path for promoting gender equity in and through school education by upholding rights of girl child everywhere.

Chapter 6

Findings and Conclusion

This study examined how gender influences the access of children's to school education and their participation in schools. Previous chapter 5 analysed the empirical evidences on access to and participation in elementary school. Four schools have been selected as samples for this study to examine how they are attending in these schools (two government schools and two private schools) in two villages located in the Gwalior district of Madhya Pradesh.

It has been observed that gender plays a decisive role in determining who is accessing which school located in the villages under study, as reflected in the school enrolment and their participation in school. It was found during the school visits that classroom practices, under the guidance of teachers, are largely guided by unwritten patriarchal norms. Despite state's agenda on educating girls to empower them, school practices show a narrower approach in offering gender-friendly environment in school. The study has revealed that socialization is gendered at home and is also reproduced in school in day to day lives of girls living in the two villages of Madhya Pradesh. These practices are creating obstacles for girls in accessing education. This chapter will discuss the major findings on pre-decided themes and newly emerged themes, in the light of the research questions and concluding the importance of gender equity in access to and participation in the elementary school of Gwalior.

The discussion begins with the findings pertaining to the first research question regarding the present enrolment status in the area under study as well as select schools as mentioned in the chapter 1.

The status of the enrolment of boys and girls in elementary school

- Gwalior is ranked at fifth position among the top five literate districts of Madhya Pradesh. According to census 2011, the Literacy rate of Gwalior is 77.9 per cent as compare to Jabalpur (82.5 per cent), Indore (82.3 per cent), Bhopal (82.3 per cent) and Balaghat (78.3 per cent).
- According to the 2011 census, Gwalior recorded the worst sex ratio (864), among its peer district of Madhya Pradesh, such as Bhopal (918), Indore (928), Jabalpur (929), and Balaghat (1021). This disparity gets even more concerning

due to the fact that Gwalior has the highest proportion population in the 0-14 age group, i.e.30 per cent, compared to Bhopal (29 per cent), Balaghat (29 per cent) Indore (28.4 per cent), and Jabalpur (27.4 per cent).

- From the past two decades, Gwalior records a trend of increasing literacy rate in every subsequent census. For example, 58.4 per cent in 1991, 69.4 per cent in 2001 and, 76.65 per cent in 2011. Even though the literacy rate records a trend of increase, it still lags behind the other districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- The Gross Enrolment rate of Gwalior is higher than the state and national average. According to U-Dise, 2016-17, at the primary level, it has counted 121.09 per cent which is much higher, as compared to the national average (95.12 per cent). There is a significant proportion of child population of Gwalior who are not enrolled at upper primary level of education, as the Net Enrolment rate was 76.14 per cent at upper primary level (U-DISE, 2016-17). In the same year at the state level, the Net Enrolment rate was 70.29 per cent at upper primary level.
- The Average Repetition rate of Gwalior is higher than the national average. At secondary level, the national average was observed 2.65 per cent, while in Gwalior it was 7.47 per cent (U-DISE, 2016-17). The difference between the students on the basis of gender was quite low, boys' repetition rate was 0.96 per cent and girls' was 0.87 per cent. In Morar, girls' repetition rate was 1.18 per cent, contrary to boys' (1.29 per cent) repetition rate (U-dise, 2016-17).
- It is mentioned in chapter 4 that the transition rate, which indicates the opportunity of students to access one level of education to another level, was found quite satisfactory at primary to upper primary level. According to U-DISE, 2016-17 data, 88.72 girls transit from primary to upper primary, while at the state level (Madhya Pradesh), 91.56 per cent girls got the opportunity to access upper primary level of education, and in Gwalior 93.04 per cent girls in contrast to 88.34 per cent boys, transit from upper primary to secondary level. However, in the same year, it was found that from upper primary to secondary level, the transition rate of girls has decreased. At the national level, the transition rate of boys was recorded to be 92.62 per cent as compared to 87.91 per cent girls. At the state level, 88.34 per cent boys could access to secondary education as compare to 79.42 per cent girls.

- After upper primary level the promotion of students drops very quickly. As according to U-DISE (2016-17), the promotion rate of girls at the upper primary level was 95.05 per cent in Gwalior but it declined to 74.07 per cent at the secondary level. It is mentionworthy that higher proportion of boys than girls could transit to upper primary grades after completion of their primary education in the Morar Block. While 83.29 per cent girls transited to upper primary schools in Morar, the proportion of such boys was 88.16 per cent.
- There is a high disparity in the dropout rate. It is mentioned in chapter 4 that according to U-DISE (2016-17) data, at the upper primary level, nationally, drop-out rate was calculated 5.67 per cent, constituting 4.97 per cent boys and 6.42 per cent girls. In Gwalior, the difference between the boys and girls was particularly high; While average annual dropout rate for all children was 3.08 per cent it was 0.65 per cent for boys and 5.80 per cent for girls which was much higher than boys..This variation was visible in the dropout rate of Morar. In the year 2016-17, at upper primary level, girls' dropout rate was counted 15.53 per cent, as compared to boys' (10.55 per cent) drop out, with a gender gap of 4.98 per cent. Not a single boy dropped out in 2018-19 as per the record of both sample private schools, whereas nine girls dropped out from these schools in the same year. The overall girls' dropout rate in Sant Joseph School was (2.2 per cent, 7 in number), and in R.R convent school was (1.5 per cent, 2 in number) in the year 2018-19. In Government Middle school, Sirol the drop-out rate was (2 per cent girls (3 in numbers) and 0.6 per cent boys (1 in number)), while in Government Middle School, Utila was (2.4 per cent girls (8 in numbers) and 0.3 per cent boys (1 in numbers)). The reasons were found to be the patriarchal attitude of parents, early marriage, household responsibilities, and lack of safety of girl students. Each reason is briefly discussed in chapter 5.
- In chapter 4, the attendance rate of sample school has been discussed. It is mentioned that to know about the regularity of the students, attendance was collected on three random days. It was found that Government Middle School, Sirol recorded the lowest total attendance (65 per cent) among all three days. In all four schools, the attendance has been skewed in favour of boys. In Sant Joseph School, Sirol, the attendance rate was good on all three days (between 91 to 94 per cent), but the number of boys and girls were highly

disproportionate. On day one, very few girls (28.61 per cent) were present in contrast to boys (62.70 per cent). This indicates that even though some girls get opportunity to access to private schools but they face difficulties in attending schools regularly and it seems schools as well as parents remain indifferent towards girls' educational needs and do not encourage them to attend schools regularly. This must have considerable impact on their learning outcome.

- It has been discussed in chapter 4 that gender parity index (GPI) indicates equality between girls and boys. According to the MHRD 2015-16 data, at the national level, the disparity was in favour of girls (1.03 per cent) at the primary level of education. For scheduled tribes, it was calculated 0.98 per cent at the primary level and 0.97 per cent at the senior secondary level. It indicates that in the scheduled tribe, girls get less opportunity to access education.

According to the data available on U-DISE (2009-10 to 2016-17), in Madhya Pradesh, gender parity remains in favour of boys in primary section. As discussed in chapter 4, the gender parity is fluctuating over the years. In 2009-10 it was calculated at 0.97 per cent, in 2013 -14 it was 0.91 while in 2015-16 gender parity remained 0.90. In upper primary level in 2011-12 it was calculated at 1.01 per cent while in 2015-16 it was at 0.93 per cent and in 2016-17 it was at 1.05. The data shows that the disparity continuously remains in favour of boys in Gwalior also. At primary level in the year 2009-10, the parity was calculated to be 0.89 per cent. In 2014-15, gender parity was 0.83, and in 2015- 16, primary level observed 0.81. It was found that the GPI was in favour of girls at the national level, while in Madhya Pradesh and Gwalior, GPI remains in favour of boys. This implies that girls have fewer opportunities to access education as compared to boys in the state as well as in the block under study. The next section is devoted to answer the second research question which deals with the determining factors for enrolment and participation of children in schools, From above analysis one can understand that continuation of education not very easy task for girls in the study area. They face discrimination at the entry level and then tend to remain absent even though they manage to get enrolled in school. So, during the study, primary data was gathered from school teachers and parents at home to explore the reasons behind such gender disparities in enrolment and attendance. An effort was made to understand their perspective on educating girls. The significant findings included in the following sections

- **School Infrastructure**

The educational facilities, however have been increased in the area under study, but with significant variations in the distribution of educational resources. Out of four schools, only Sant Joseph School, Sirol had proper academic and physical resources, including a sport room, classrooms with appropriate sitting arrangements, and separate toilets for teachers, girls, and boys. R R Convent School, Utila running in a house owned by the head teacher, it had proper boundary, open courtyard used as a playground, computer lab and an activity room. Government Middle School, Utila has a small building, no electricity, and shared toilets. While the other Government Middle School, Sirol has faded and chipped paint on the walls, and two out of five classrooms were in dilapidated condition.

Furthermore, due to the limited number of classrooms, few classes in both government schools were being conducted in multigrade setting. Even after receiving funds from central and state governments, facilities available in sample government schools were found non-comparable with those of private schools. Private schools had better resources, though one private school (R R Convent School, Utila) was running in a home, still it provided all the needed resources, like separate toilets, lights and fans, drinking water facility, attractive classrooms for primary sections and plants in every corner of the school indicating better management and optimum utilisation of resources which ensure an effective teaching learning environment for its students

- **Enrolment Status**

As discussed in chapter 5, according to head teachers of government schools, in the last few years, the enrolment number of girls and boys has increased due to the implementation of various programs.

It was found that admission process was tiresome for girls from labor class. As head teacher of Government Middle school, Sirol, informed that the number of migrated girls is higher than the boys and their parents usually do not carry proper identification cards (like birth certificate and Adhar card) of their girls, which creates problem during the admission process.

- **Girl Students' Flow in schools**

It was found that apart from Government Middle School, Sirol, in other three schools, girls' enrolment was less than the enrolment of boys. As mentioned in the chapter 5, in Sant Joseph School, only 100 girls were enrolled in contrast with 211 boys. The same variation was visible in the enrolment of Government Middle School, Utila, where the number of enrolled girls was 146, and the number of boys was 174. In all sample schools, girls' dropout rate was higher than the boys' dropout rate. According to the teachers, the girls' dropout rate increases after the elementary level of education. According to them, the main reasons for girls' dropout are the economic status of families, most of the low-income family does not give preferences to girls' education. It was revealed in an interview with a parent, that in impoverished families, girls have more responsibilities like seasonal farming jobs, cattle rearing, taking care of siblings etc. Safety of girls is another concern for families, because, after the upper primary level, the schools are generally located far from the houses. Teachers reported that they experienced some cases of girls dropping out because of early marriage. It is found from parents' interviews that after the elementary level, parents prefer to train girls with household chores.

- **Parents' Perception on Girl's Education**

The study showed that 17 out of 20 (numbers of respondents mentioned in chapter 3) parents showed their preference to enroll their son in private school. Girls could get the opportunity to study in private schools only if the family is financially stable or is aware of the importance of girl's education. Parents invest less in girls' education because of low economic returns from girls' education. Before making girls financially independent, marriage was the first choice of parents for their girl child.

Most of the parents endorsed patriarchal norms while addressing the issue of educating daughters by sending them to government schools. They would not have any issues if their girl child are found performing non-academic work in school specially those which are considered as female's work in home, i.e helping in cooking and distribution of mid-day meal, cleaning utensils, brooming and so on. It is mentioned in chapter 5 that out of 20 parents, only two parents complained or protested, if the teacher has asked their daughters to perform non-academic work.

Furthermore, out of 20 parents, only four parents were in favor of sending their daughters to another village or town for inter-school competitions while all twenty parents were in support if their sons would go to another village for the same reason.

On the level of intelligence of children, it was found that parents think their boys are more active, reliable, and intelligent than their girls. It has been mentioned that seventeen out of twenty parents believed that boys are talented in academics and sports. Except for two parents, all think that girls should learn household chores and have shown lower aspiration for their daughters than their sons.

- **Division of Non-Academic Activities between girls and boys**

It was found that girls are assigned work based on their gender role in school. Government schools promoted gender-based roles in non-academic activities, in contrast to private schools. The division of work was gendered, in both government schools, girls were assigned homely activities, including cleaning head teacher's room, serving tea, filling water glasses/jug etc. At the same time, boys performed tasks related to outside of school like carrying ration or calling someone. As discussed in chapter 5, that non-academic activities were minimal for boys and higher for girls.

It was revealed that in private schools, students were not assigned any non-academic activities except bringing study materials from the staff room. Both private schools had human resource to perform other tasks. Albeit, government schools had helpers, but they were restricted to Mid-Day Meal related work only.

Teachers believed in the power structure of the family, which means girls are the subordinate, and boys are considered the influential members. It was found that teachers from three schools believed in gendered roles, where boys' role is to take care of matters related to public sphere, and girls' role is to take care of household work. This unequal division of labor in school as well as in home, affects girls' performance in studies. Many girl students shared that they get spare time only in school, because of the absence of domestic chores in school. The primary data based on interviews and observations in school and in the community showed that patriarchy has been the main guiding force influencing parents' preferences, division of work for girls both at home and school, and the

main reason behind girls' low learning level, poor completion, transition and eventually dropping out from education.

- **Participation in Curricular and Extracurricular Activities and Students behavior with each other**

In schools, the division of games and sports was extremely gendered. It was found that out of four, only R R Convent School included both girls and boys in sports as well as in art and culture activities. While in the other three schools, most of the boys' students were playing sports (like basketball, badminton, race, football, kabbadi etc.) and the maximum number of girls playing other games (like local games, skipping, kabbadi, indoor games etc.). It is found in Sant Joseph School, teachers gave proper guidance to boys and taught them to play fast, in contrast, girls were suggested to play only indoor games. Gender division in sports implies that adolescent girls do not prefer to participate because they were conditioned to play indoor games and remain shy and calm. The study revealed that inside the classrooms, teachers gave preference to boys and vocal and intelligent girls. It was observed in three schools, teachers' preferred to listen to very few students, they were nodding to boys, and most of the time, making eye contact with boys only.

This study revealed that most of the students were aware of and practiced gender roles. It has been mentioned in the analysis that during lunch hours, the conversations amongst boys and girls showed use of gendered terms and statements. Students do not prefer to play in inclusive groups instead, both play in separate groups. The classrooms also reflected gendered sitting arrangement as girls and boys were used to sit in different rows. In the teaching-learning process, the number of girl participants was found lower than the boy participants. It was found that boys use derogatory terms for girls who remain calm and quiet and due to that girls expressed apprehensions in participating in school activities. It was found during the observations and informal interaction, that girls from unprivileged sections were targeted more by boys as well as from some talkative girls. Schools thus in a way reproduce gendered values by assigning them gender specific tasks. For example, boys were never found to help girls in cleaning the classroom or doing it themselves. During the curricular activities, boys were more loud and enthusiastic in doing work as compared to

the girls. The dominance of boys over girls was also reflected in out-door games and sports as well as in academic activities inside classrooms.

To some extent, these situations also contributed to girls' dropout rate, because girls do not get attention in classrooms. It was observed that teachers prefer to ask questions to boys only. Such instances contribute to low motivation, particularly from underprivileged classes, to perform well and to participate.

The study found that amongst four schools, there was only R R Convent School, where extracurricular activities were inclusive, they included every student in every activity, for instance in sport as well as in stitching. In this school, to some extent, the behaviour of students was respectable to each other. It was found that science class teacher's approach was gender friendly as compared to that in other schools. She used to ask questions to students irrespective of gender by calling their names. According to Freire (1970), disadvantages arise from class, race, and gender, as observed in this study, girls are facing discrimination because of their gender, in schools, and have no autonomy in making choice. It has revealed that silence is making these gender discriminatory practices even more authoritative and that lead to a culture of silence in schools and outside.

- **Participation of girls from disadvantaged section**

It was revealed that in two schools, the quiet and silent girls were facing more discrimination. It is mentioned in chapter 5, that teachers in Government Middle School, Utila, were also found to be using derogatory terms and statements for girls. They were tagged as dumb, and segregated by the other classmates and teacher. In all schools, it was found that quiet and ignored children were always sitting at the back or in corner of the classroom, while witty and vocal children always used to sit in the front rows.

Out of twenty, fourteen teachers (10 Male and 4 female) favored boys over girls and vocal girls over quiet and silent girls. Girls from lower social and economic classes, especially from labour class, were facing more challenges in every stage of school. In most cases, children from scheduled class category, who were also economically weaker, remained silent and introvert, as observed during classroom observations.

Furthermore, all head teachers experienced that girls from disadvantaged sections leave the education system early as compared to the other girls. As per Walker (2007), to bring equity, school's responsibility is to make the child

comfortable, should give respect and recognition, self-confidence, and self-esteem, but the findings show that child is a subject of mockery for some teacher and peer groups specially boys.as discussed in chapter 5.Few instances showed that teachers were using statements like “*Ye sidhi hai, is liye buddhi thodi kam hai*” (She is quiet, and so her intelligence level is low). “*sari ladkiya nalayak hai ganit (Maths)mai*”. (All girls are bad in Maths). It is needless to say that such attitude has serious consequence on teaching learning process in classroom where girls struggle vto survive and overcome exclusion from the system.

- **Teachers Perception on Gender and Education**

It was found that private school teachers were more responsible and gender inclusive as compared to government school teachers in terms of assigning curricular and extracurricular work, verbal communication and engagement with children. In government schools, among male and female teachers, the attitude and language of male teachers was more disparaging and gendered.

Additionally, government school teachers blamed policies and programs of government. According to them, the paperwork has increased due to the Continuous Comprehensive Assessment, consequently, they did not get a chance to prepare lessons. The teachers shared that No Detention Policy has ledto learning crisis after elementary classes. According to teachers, students who dropped out, particularly girls, do not learn anything in elementary sections, and due to No Detention Policy, teachers cannot fail them, hence after secondary level dropout rate increases.

Furthermore, it was found that out of twenty-four teachers, only one teacher was acquainted with the term gender-sensitive. Maximum teachers do not know the meaning of gender-based role, gender-sensitive environment, and gender parity. Except head teachers, government teachers do not know the names and objective of the educational programs and the policies which are being implemented by their schools.

Teachers’ perception about the role of girls and boys in society

Most of the teachers believed in propagating gender roles of girls and boys. It was found that government school teachers think that females are the roots of the family, so they have to be strong for other members. As discussed in chapter

5, two male teachers from Government Middle School, Utila believed that girls are the mothers and that their role is to create a good society.

It was revealed that although the female being is seen as a mother and a strong pillar of the family, teachers see male members as the essential unit of society, as they provide money and are bread earners. Teachers see females as a significant part only because they support male members as wife, daughter, mother, sister and mainly work as home makers and caregivers.

Chapter 5 has discussed that head teacher of R R Convent School treated girls equally. According to him, if girls would get proper guidance and reinforcement, they can do anything. In Sant Joseph School, teachers believed that the roles of children could be decided based on their location. If a girl is located in the urban area, she would be expected to earn and support her family, and if she resides in a rural area, then household chores would be considered more vital.

- **Teachers' behavior in promoting participation of girls and boys**

It has been found that teachers from government schools think that girls are good at art and cultural activities. As discussed in chapter 5, teachers from Government Middle school, Sirol, promoted girls to use their artistic skills in functions. In Government Middle School, Utila, teachers were found to believe that boys were rough and hence, promoted them to play harsh games.

Most of the teachers from Sant Joseph School showed that boys performed well in sports. Teachers segregated outdoor games for boys and indoor games for girls. It is discussed in the previous chapter that the sports teacher was preparing a basketball team of boys, while girls were provided activity room to play indoor games. It is revealed that teachers were not giving proper guidance to the girls and ended up thinking that girls are not good at sports.

- **Students' behavior towards each other**

It was found that the behaviour of students towards each other was consciously and unconsciously affecting their participation.

As discussed in chapter 5, students used to play in the sex-segregated groups. Girls would play with girls only and boys would also do the same. This segregation between boys and girls was followed by the students from primary sections too. It is mentioned in the analysis chapter that in Government Middle

School, Utila, when the researcher asked few boys if she could play with them, one boy replied that you are a girl, so you should play with girls only.

In Government Middle School, Sirol, senior students treated each other respectfully during competitions. However, it was revealed that children used gender-based comments during lunch hours. It was found that due to such comments, few girls had stopped playing Kabaddi.

It was found that gendered socialization gets strengthened with each transition, i.e. primary to upper primary and so on. As observed in Sant Joseph School, primary students were playing with each other in a mixed groups while senior students preferred to play in sex segregated groups.. The resources like badminton, ball, skipping ropes were also distributed by the teachers to each group. While in R R Convent School, students were playing together. As discussed, teachers organized games, and they assigned the activities too. During the lunch hours, it was found that most of the students were playing fair games with each other, but they knew the difference between the “girls’ game” and “boys’ game”, because, during lunch, very few senior girls were engaged in games, while most of the boys were out of their classrooms.

Silver Lining

It has been found that out of the four schools, only R R Convent School, Utila was promoting a gender-friendly environment in more efficient manner as compared to all other sample schools. It was good to see that despite being located in a village-like Utila (discussed in Chapter 5 also), which is situated in interiors of Morar, follows a patriarchal system, divided into different social categories and where only 54.39 per cent females are literate, a school like RR Convent school was promoting girls' participation not only in school but is also encouraging them to become a part of social and economic development.

Instead of hiring teachers from the city, this school preferred local teachers so that students can make connections with the teachers, and teachers, too, can understand students’ social and cultural profiles (As mentioned by the head teacher). It was also supporting few students who could not afford the price of stationery and other yearly activities. This school could be a role model for the other schools, which are working

under a shortage of resources. They can take inspiration from this school that even in the dearth of resources, gender equality can be achieved.

The two case studies mentioned in chapter 5 are showing a ray of hope in the deserted situation. In the case of Pooja, her mother is doing every possible thing to get her daughter educated. It indicates that if a woman is not ruled by patriarchal thinking, then she would do everything in her capacity to get her child educated. In the second case, Anjali is supported by her brothers, who themselves did not get the opportunity to get an education. It was found that even after living in interior villages, where most of the girls either go to government schools or drop out after elementary level, there existed a family that dreamt of their girl becoming a teacher.

It is heartening to see girls performing well in board exams. A news report from 2014 took the data from 2009 to 2012 of CBSE 12th and 10th results and found that in all the years, the pass percentage of girls was higher than the boys. This report stated that even though there are enormous odds against girls to get education, they still managed to outperform boys (Scroll.in, 2014). The same trend was reported by another online news portal. In 2016, they also found that girls outshined boys in overall passing percentage (Your story, 2016). According to Hindustan Times, in the 2019 CBSE 12th result, 88.70 per cent of girls passed against 79.4 per cent boys (Hindustan Times, 2019). Hence, it won't be a surprise if girls who reside in rural areas, face exclusion, lack of access to participate in school, can also perform well and aspire to become what they want if they get an equality of opportunities. It is just because of gender based norms and beliefs which are still prevailing in society particularly in rural areas of Madhya Pradesh, the girls are vulnerable to educational and social exclusion. So the next section throws some light on what are the initiatives to be taken for further improvement in promoting gender equity in schooling of children, the third research question the study needs to answer now.

- The findings from the other two research questions revealed that meaningful access of education to girls is still a concern, though the enrolment of girls in some schools has increased, while in some schools, boys enrolment rate was higher. Nevertheless, their rate of moving from one level to another level is less than the boys. Girls' school participation was also affected by their gender role expectations. Amartya sen has argued that “the question of gender inequality can be understood much

better by comparing those things that intrinsically matter (such as functioning and capabilities), rather than just the means (to achieve them) like resources” (Sen, 1992 as referred by Robeyns, 2003, 62). Drawing from Freire’s work (1974), the study finds that school environment lacks constructive dialogue with the child, like by talking about the existing stereotypes inhibiting girls’ participation in school. Dialogue thus as an element of pedagogical communication, as stated by Friere, can transform the persisting authoritarian teacher-student relationship. In the light of above discussion, the study offers following suggestions/ initiatives that can be taken to work towards achieving gender equality in school. In the school curriculum, local specific and grade wise intervention in curricular content and pedagogy can be modified, as also suggested by NCF, 2005 to inculcate gender sensitivity among students and also among teachers. Like, in grades 2, 3 & 4, teachers could introduce gender-inclusive pictures like both males and females are drivers or both are doing household chores. This is because even today, many states are reluctant to follow the NCF, 2005 and so textbooks largely reproduce gender roles for students. As Walker (2007) also suggested by referring the capability approach, according to her girls should have access to knowledge of women’s history and struggle, and they should learn to be able to respond to human needs. Hence, Students need to understand the values and ethics; they will not discriminate against each other if they understand how their actions, language are harmful for another being. Some of the examples like by having dialogue or discussion on existing perceptions of masculinity and femininity followed by relevant school and classroom practices, gender sensitivity can be developed within and outside the school. Along with these questions, schools need to be more inclusive and work on how well the students are received by school and teachers, how far children’s general health and wellbeing are addressed as an integral part of promoting learning, how far is the school environment is safe and gender inclusive. This approach would help the school’s administration to know the capability of a child, and they would be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of students, which will help further in deciding pedagogy and extracurricular activities for all as per their interest.

- The language of a teacher plays a significant role; it can perpetuate gender role, or it can promote gender equality. Despite extensive gender inequalities outside the schools, teachers can make a big difference. Through dialogue with students, teachers can alter the language of their lesson to help expand students’ perspective

beyond gender stereotypes. It requires a well-planned extensive program to inculcate gender sensitivity among teachers, in which they can be oriented about the status of girls' education and how gendered socialization keep girls' educational status followed by possible school based initiatives that can be taken to make school gender friendly. In teacher training curriculum (pre-service training), instead of introducing gender and education as an optional paper in one semester, it can be included as a major subject. Gender equality aspect should be an important component of in-service and pre service training programs. At the administration level, it requires consistent support from the concerned authorities in organizing leadership development programmes for head teachers to acquaint them with the policies and programs targeted to achieve gender equality in and through school management. District officers can organize workshops for head teachers as well as teachers for their attitudinal development that can facilitate them to deal with all forms of inequality and discrimination including those which are based on gender. Schools are now need to be free from discrimination and stereotyping rather it should be a child friendly place ensuring equal treatment of all children, whether they are boys or girls, socially advantaged or disadvantaged, rich or poor and so on. Such trainings may motivate them to understand the underlying causes behind unequal educational status between girls and boys in their community and in terms of participation in school and the role of schools in promoting gender and social equality in school as well as in larger society. The programmes can also help them to reflect on their own values and cultures, reproducing gender based participation in school. Consistent efforts can empower the administrators and teachers to analyse and challenge gender stereotyping and gender bias in curriculum material, language, activities in their school.

- The above point needs to be followed by preparing teachers to adopt appropriate pedagogy in classrooms to ensure all children's active participation in discussions during teaching learning process. School space should be used to offer opportunities to all, especially girl students, to ensure greater participation in school and classroom practices. For this, educational administration should provide more opportunities to teachers, parents, and students to communicate with each other. Through communication and dialogue administration can identify the need and capability of girls, their participation in school according to teachers and expectations of parents. The government could appoint a social worker specializing

in gender studies, in each block or village, to observe and guide school practices with gender concerns. Both students and teachers could share their views and concern regarding gender with the social worker. The social worker role will be to promote gender neutral activities in the school, so the division of work and disappointments of girls with the school environment and patriarchal environment may not become the reason to drop out for girls.

- State governments could link with organizations working in the field of gender. They can bring awareness about the gender discrimination and can have a discourse in community, on how patriarchy decides the access of education to girls.
- Schools can invite the women role models in village to bring awareness and to change the perception of people about the gendered role. To make them understand that women can also support their family in many other ways, other than household works.
- Block officers and schools should come together and organize activities at village as well as at block levels, where both girls and boys are participating together or taking part in activities together. They should promote cooperative learning, because unless girls and boys will not understand that both are equal, they cannot learn and practice gender equality.
- Teachers, NGOs, and local government can coordinate to work on creating strategies to bring gender awareness in the community as well as in the school. Such initiatives can bring down the number of drop outs after elementary and secondary education.

Link of Theoretical framework with Findings

- It has been found that the practices of oppressors and oppressed are still prevalent in schools. As discussed in chapter 5, the method of a few teachers was more dominant on the children. It was indicating that teacher was giving all attention to imbibing information, without having any discussion with students. Within this process, already socially deprived girls, who remain silent and reluctant, face discrimination and are taunted by the teachers. It was found that relation of oppressor and oppressed was not only limited to solely government schools. It has been practiced in private schools as well, where girls being stopped by male teachers to participate in sports activities.

- The attitude of the Head teachers including a head mistress was also found to be that of an oppressor. She was being oppressed by the others, but now she had become an oppressor. As discussed in chapter 5, she faced discrimination by male teachers, and even after facing the discrimination personally, she believes in gendered roles.
- It was found that male students from Government Middle School, Utila were learning gendered behavior from male teachers. They were overpowering girls and creating impediments for them. As discussed in chapter 5 that girls were being deterred by boy students whenever they used to play Kabaddi. Due to the oppression by the boys, girls stopped playing in school.

Culture of Silence

- From this study, it was found that except for R R Convent School, the other three schools were practicing a culture of silence. As discussed in the analysis (chapter 5) section that in Government Middle School, Utila, Math teacher didn't explain math problems in class and expected questions and answers from boys only. The teaching learning process thus was discouraging girls from participate in classroom.
- The culture of silence was practiced in homes as well. It was understood from one case study of an irregular girl student and from one narrative of a parent that parents decide the roles and responsibilities of their daughter. In the case study, Pooja, a ten-year-old girl, was not regular in school because she was being asked by her parents to do cattle rearing and other household chores because her parents wanted her to do household work over studying. Pooja had accepted the given norm and was so irregular in school.

While in the narrative of a parent, it was found that the parent (Mother) had already decided that her daughter will go to school till 8th grade only. After that, she would prefer to teach her householdwork. She has decided everything for her daughter, and her daughter also accepted it without questioning.

Conclusion

After independence, India endeavoured to provide education to all by transforming the colonial and elite school system inherited from the past. Policymakers implemented several educational programs with the commitment to provide education for all. Since

independence till now, India has achieved significant growth in education. The number of schools and teachers has increased with other essential resources like classrooms, drinking water, toilets, electricity, etc. Education is now a fundamental right, according to Article 21A, for the age group of 6 to 14 years. Due to the expansion of school infrastructure, the non-availability of primary schools is no longer seen as a foremost cause for the low participation of children (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2008).

But even after the growth of the national education system, the participation of girls remains low. According to Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanian (2008), most of the girls still find impediments in entering schools and continue their education. Situations in states like Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are the worst in the matters of girls' participation. These states are also infamous in terms of violence against women and girls. Security of school going girls and female teachers is a matter of concern in many areas of these states.

The primary objective of this study was to understand the gender-based determinants which are responsible for the access to and participation of children in elementary education in Gwalior. This study demonstrates that in Morar block, there are visible disparities in student flow in school education, and the participation in curricular and extracurricular activities is still based on the gender of the student. In school education, the attendance and transition of girls still pose serious concern. The gender gap in transition, repetition was visible in Gwalior as well as in Madhya Pradesh and also at the national level. But in the case of dropout rate, the disparity is significantly high in Gwalior. Even after implementing numbers of scholarship programs, expansion of secondary and higher secondary schools, girls' hostels, incentives, mid-day meals and so on, the disparity is exceptionally high. Schools have become additional space where gender stereotypes are reproduced. As observed in the study that teachers force girl students remain preoccupied by engaging them in gender-based non-academic work of school leading to loss of precious time that they could devote to academic purposes. This discrimination is not visible not only in the classroom but also in the playground, in terms of participation in sports and games, as sports teacher also reinforce gender based selection of activities. For example, in Sant Joseph School, boys are expected to become good players and girls are suggested to play indoor games. The students are not allowed to make choices by selecting the type of the games, or even while choosing their favorite subjects. The study shows that the prevalent patriarchal values pushing

the girls out of education system (Sinha and Reddy, 2010) and forcing them to follow gendered roles constructed by society. Most of the parents interviewed in the study shared their preference to educate their sons over their daughters. Parents expressed their preference for daughters to first fulfil domestic responsibility over their education as reflected in the reasons behind not attending school regularly or dropping out from school after completing elementary education. Early marriage is also a common reason for girls to drop out early, as teachers said that there are cases of early marriage (after 16), which contributes to lower enrolment at secondary level of school education. The stakeholders, like teachers and local administrations showed ignorance towards the existence of any gender discrimination, they didn't even were aware of the terms like gender parity, gender-sensitive, and gender equality. Despite many government programs on improving girls' education status, there has been a narrower approach at the implementation level, so fails to serve the purpose of achieving gender equality in school education.

Indicators like enrolment, drop out, and the transition rate only tells us numbers. However, to retain a child in the education system where she can actively participate, and make herself capable of contributing in nation's development, policymakers need to understand the system which pushes child out of the system. Each case of not enrolled, drop out, poor performance needs personal attention. It does not merely seek the attention of parents or teachers, but demands tracking of such cases for over a period of time, so the events around a child can be captured and analysed. Thus, the mere provision of incentive is not helpful in retaining girls' students at higher level of education. The fundamental educational problem for women, whether poor or rich, concerns with unquestioned, non-problematized gender biased nature of schooling. Policy makers and school administrations should understand that gender equality is not an add on in their work, instead, it needs to be in the understanding and in practice (Bandyopadhyay, 2019; Stromquist). Although the review of literature in chapter 2 suggests that many studies have already been conducted in the field of gender and education, many more studies are still needed because gender inequality is caused by several factors and it manifests in several fronts (Sen, 2001). To understand and mitigate those factors, we need many more such researches in this area.

We need more studies in the field of gender and education, which can track the progress of children in school and within the family and can explore the processes involved in

the lack of access to and participation of girls' in elementary schools of Gwalior. More studies are needed on the interrelation of patriarchy, poverty, and location, which affects the education of girls. In these areas, boys are also socially disadvantaged, so it highlights the need to conduct studies that can analyse these issues in greater depth and also look into complex relationships (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2008). The private institutions (NGOs), external forces have a good impact on the education sector (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2008). Hence, more studies are required to explore the potential of NGOs in dealing with the issue of equity and how they can work with the community and schools. Although some previous studies have been done, but we need more studies to explore the areas where NGOs can be involved to participate in elementary education, without diluting the commitment of the state to give free and compulsory education (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2008) and making rights to education in realities for all children irrespective of their sex, caste, class, ethnicity and location. This study is expected to be useful for further policy planning and administrative reforms and for undertaking various other initiatives including capacity building of teachers and other stakeholders. In nutshell, the onus is on governments to ensure equitable access for all children to quality school education at the elementary as well as higher levels.

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Appendices

Interview Schedule of Block Officer

NAME

AGE

SEX

1. Do you think our educational system is gender friendly in terms of accessibility and participation in learning process?
2. As an educationist will you share your experience towards the participation of boys and girls student in curricular and extracurricular activities?
3. What is the attitude of the people of urban and rural areas in this block towards education for boys and girls?
4. Do you think that girls and boys student have equal opportunities of participation in educational activities?
5. As a block officer what are your suggestions for the teachers to make gender friendly environment in education?
6. In your opinion what measures can be taken by the government and educational stakeholders to promote gender equity in education?

Interview Schedule for Teachers

1. Name
2. Age
 - 25 – 35
 - 35 – 45
 - 45 – 55
 - 55 – 65
3. Sex
 - Female
 - Transgender
 - Male
4. Religion
 - Hindu
 - Muslim
 - Christian
 - Jain
 - Buddhism
5. Caste
 - Schedule Caste
 - Schedule Tribe
 - OBC
 - General
6. Highest level of Education achieved by respondent
 - Graduation
 - B.ED
 - M.ED
 - M. Phil
 - PhD
7. Subject and class taught (for teacher)
8. Where does the teacher leaves
9. If outside the Village (How does she/he came)
10. Awareness of local culture

Structured Interview Schedule (Teacher)

1. In your opinion why education is important for both girls and boys?
2. Which type of schools are better for children and why?
3. What is the attitude of parents towards their children's education, specifically girls? Please share your experience?
4. What are the activities conducted by your school to increase the enrolment? Do you face any challenge particularly for the admission of girls' student?
5. What is the status of drop out of students, is there any difference in between girls' drop out number and boys' drop out numbers?
6. According to you what could be the possible reasons for the drop outs?
7. In your opinion what should be the roles and responsibilities of girls and boys?
8. According to you who can maintain/manage discipline of a classroom and school? Please support your answers with examples?
9. What are the sports activities organizing by your school?
10. In which sport you have seen more participation of girls?
11. In which sport you have seen more participation of boys?
12. Do you include art and cultural activities along with sports event? If yes, please mention the activities?
13. In which kind of activity student works in groups?
14. Does the groups for team work are inclusive (Includes both girls and boys)?
According to you who perform better in group activities?
15. In which activities boys participate enthusiastically?
16. What are the activities in which girls' participation always remains high?
17. Which type of activities do you think school should organize for the inclusion of both girls as well as boys?
18. What are the pattern of assigning the work to students? According to you which type of work should assign to whom?
19. What are the central and state level programs and policies are implementing in your school for the promotion of gender equity in education?
20. Do you think that local people, including Panchayat, SMC members and parents and school can work together for gender equity? Please support your answer with examples?

21. In your opinion what measures can be taken by the government and educational stakeholders to promote gender equity in access to and participation in education?

Interview Schedule for Parents

1. Name
2. Age
3. Sex
 - Female
 - Male
 - Transgender
4. Religion
 - Hindu
 - Muslim
 - Christian
 - Jain
 - Buddhism
5. Caste/Category
 - Schedule Caste
 - Schedule Tribe
 - OBC
 - General
6. Highest level of Education achieved by respondent
 - Primary
 - Secondary
 - Higher Secondary
 - Graduation
 - Post-Graduation
7. Occupation
 - Business
 - Private Job
 - Government Job

8. Family Income (Per Month)
 - < 10,000
 - 10,000 – 20,000
 - 20,000 – 30,000
 - > 30,000
9. Number of Children
 - Female
 - Male
 - Transgender
10. Which type of school attended by children
 - a. Boy -
 - b. Girl -
 - c. Transgender -

Structured Interview Schedule (Parents)

1. Do you think education is important for your children?
2. Which type of school do you prefer for your boy and girl?
3. If you have situations where you can send your only one child to school and not the other one, who would it be?
4. Does your children like to go to school? Do they share their experiences with you or anyone?
5. In which type of educational activities does your child/ Children engage most? Mention about both boy and girl?
6. What is the behaviour of teacher towards your children?
7. How does your child perform in curricular as well as extra-curricular activities?
8. What type of duties and responsibilities assigned to your children in school?
9. In which subject and activity your child's interest most?
10. Do you allow your child to talk to opposite sex children?
11. If your girl child get an opportunity to participate in state level competition in curricular or extra activity will you allow to participate her, if no why?
12. Will you appreciate your boy child if his interest fall in to activities like dance, painting or singing?

13. According to you in which type of extracurricular activities your boy and girl should participate?
14. Do you think that education will be helpful for your children in future perspective?
15. What are your opinion towards girl's education?
16. Do you think your community and schools treats students equally?
17. What are the activities organized by the community and schools where both girls and boys participate?
18. According to you what might be the reason for people who don't send their children specifically daughter to school?
19. Do you think that local people, including Panchayat, SMC members and parents and school can work together for gender equity? Please support your answer with examples?
20. In your opinion what measures can be taken by the government and educational stakeholders to promote gender equity in access to and participation in education?

Interview Schedule for Head teacher

1. Name
2. Age
 - 25 – 35
 - 35 – 45
 - 45 – 55
 - 55 – 65
3. Sex
 - Female
 - Male
 - Transgender
4. Religion
 - Hindu
 - Muslim
 - Christian
 - Jain

- Buddhism
5. Caste/Category
 - Schedule Caste
 - Schedule Tribe
 - OBC
 - General
 6. Highest level of Education achieved by respondent
 7. Subject and class taught (for teacher)
 8. If the teacher is local or outsider
 9. Where does the teacher leaves
 10. Awareness of local culture

Structured Interview Schedule (Head Teacher)

1. What according to you gender equality in education is?
2. What are your strategies to increase the enrolment in your school?
3. What is the attitude of parents towards their children's education, specifically girls? Please share your experience?
4. Does your school organize activities to aware community to send their daughter to school? If Yes, how and what kind of responses you get from community?
5. What is the status of drop out of students in your school? Is there any numerical difference between girls' enrolment and boys' student?
6. According to you what could be the possible reasons for the drop outs?
7. According to you is the present school system is gender friendly? In terms of enrolment, infrastructure and attitude of parents and teachers?
8. Do you think in your school both girls and boys are getting same freedom and opportunity in participating learning process? Please share examples?
9. According to you what is the perception of community towards education? Specifically towards the girls education?
10. In your opinion are the subjects like mathematics, science are helpful for girls but necessary for boys, if yes, please give reason?
11. What are your opinion on the statements like "boys are more intelligent and strong and girls are average, shy and fragile"?
12. How your school teachers distribute the work among students?

13. In events and annual functions in which type of activities both boys' and girls' take participate?
14. According to you, does the both girls' and boys' student like to participate in same activities or different? Support your answer with examples?
15. Have your school teacher ever attended any gender sensitization workshop?
16. If yes where and which type of workshops? Whether it was in service or pre service?
17. Are the practices of your school's teacher is gender inclusive? If yes, highlight some instances?
18. What are the activities organize by your school and community to promote gender equality in education?
19. What are the central and state level programs and policies are implementing by your school for the promotion of gender equity in education?
20. Do you think that local people, including Panchayat, SMC members and parents and school can work together for gender equity? Please support your answer with examples?
21. In your opinion what measures can be taken by the government and educational stakeholders to promote gender equity in access to and participation in education?