GENDER PARITY IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SARAN AND MUZAFFARPUR DISTRICTS OF BIHAR

Dissertation

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the M.Phil. Dissertation being submitted by me on the topic entitled '**Gender Parity in Government Schools: A Comparative Study of Saran and Muzaffarpur Districts of Bihar'** has been completed under the guidance of **Professor K. Biswal**. 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.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the M.Phil. dissertation entitled '**Gender Parity in Government Schools: A Comparative Study of Saran and Muzaffarpur Districts of Bihar**' is the work undertaken by **Mr. Govinda Kumar Sah** under my supervision and guidance as part of his M.Phil. degree in this Institute. To the best of my knowledge, this is the original work conducted by him and the dissertation may be sent for evaluation.

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ABSTRACT

Government of India has been working closely with major international agencies which deal with education (most importantly Girls' Education), and has been one of the longest standing partners. However, the status of education especially of girls is not very promising in the country. Education broadens a girl's horizons in terms of her roles, gives a forum for meeting role models, mentors, and classmates, and creates new opportunities for girls to act in and positively affect others. Education is the most significant tool for improving women's socioeconomic status, and it is appropriately associated with better health, lower fertility rates, stronger economic growth, and higher living standards. The pre-existing literature on Gender, Gender Parity, Gender Equality and Equity that there is a sanguine correlation between higher degree of education in women and *growth* in economy and national development, living standard of people, upward mobility and *reduction* in poverty, child malnourishment, child mortality rate and maternal mortality rate. Despite international and state level commitments under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA) etc gender parity in education especially in secondary and higher has been a distant dream for India in spite of its independence being longer than the existence of some of the nations in the world. Following up on the issue, by applying the mixed method approach of data collection and analysis, this study examined the problem of, "lack of gender parity" in primary and upper primary in Saran and Muzaffarpur districts of Bihar.

The study arrived at the discernment that socio-economic factors, early marriage, patriarchy, gender stereotypes and household factors curtail girls' education in these rural areas. Although girls outperform boys in primary and upper primary with better retention and participation rates but lag behind boys in completion rates at secondary level. The aforementioned factors and other local factors restrict Indian girls from gaining gender parity in education.

Majority of girls and boys in the study areas were from socially and economically backward classes of Bihar like SC/ST/OBC/EBC. The study concludes that the educational status of these marginalized groups especially girls could be improved through reforms in educational polices. The findings of the study are expected to contribute towards effective policy planning for improvement of educational stratus of girls, especially those with socio-economic disadvantages.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

"Educate one man, you educate one person, but educate a woman and you educate a whole civilisation." - Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji's this philosophy aptly portrays the need and vitality of female education for the Indian society at present. Education has a key role in female empowerment, and gaining gender equality in homes, communities and society. Prior to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declared education to be a human right, education had long been recognised as a necessary prerequisite for people to achieve their full potential. Education allows people to exercise their other human rights. Education broadens a girl's horizons in terms of her roles, gives a forum for meeting role models, mentors, and classmates, and creates new opportunities for girls to act in and affect others. The beauty of education is that once you have it, no one can take it away from you in life (Moll and Renault, 2014).

The 'Four Pillars of Education for the Twenty-First Century' have welcomed new generations into the period of change, allowing them to realise their dreams by maximising their potential, transforming them into transformational forces of the new world (UNESCO & Ayrton Senna Institute, 2005, p.31). Learning to Live Together, Learning to Do, Learning to Be, and Learning to Know should be the slogan of the "Four Pillars of Education," rather than "instruction." These pedagogical recommendations are crucial for the change of oneself on a micro level and the world on a macro level in the twenty-first century.

Women are critical to the development of a country as well as the economic survival of their own households (Khalid, 2008). Women's contributions to development are rarely acknowledged, particularly in the developing world's informal sector, where the majority of them work. Education is the most significant tool for improving women's socioeconomic status, and it is appropriately associated with better health, lower fertility rates, stronger economic growth, and higher living standards (Khan, 1993, Khalid, 2008). However, exclusion based on gender till date remains a bitter knot in

Indian education system. The barriers are mainly economic, social and cultural, which are gender specific in nature and intertwined and reinforcing in nature.

In 2011, the retention rate at primary level was 75.94%.[1] That is, only 75.94% of those enrolled remained in the school system. Government of India, as it is a signatory of Millennium Development Goals, aimed to achieve universal primary and elementary education for all children between the age of 6 to 14 years by the year 2015. But the facts state otherwise. To assess the situation in India since the Millennium Development Goals were set, the country's gender statistics gives a good overall indication of what has been happening in India since the goals were set by the United Nations and the Government of India and to what extent they are trying to achieve various gender specific goals. Institutional, social, psychological and cultural boundaries limit a female's potential in India (Jain, 2003, Khalid, 2008). Sociocultural norms give rise to many demand-side barriers which are extremely difficult to change (UNICEF, 2014). Although there has been a plethora of policies and programmes to alleviate and improve female literacy over the decades but there are vexing constraints in addressing girls' education from marginalised communities. Even while female literacy has increased from 18 percent to 65 percent in the last 50 years, according to the 2011 Census, the male and female literacy rates are still 22 percent apart, at 82.1 percent and 65.5 percent, respectively. According to the (UNESCO, 2015a) status report, India has significantly increased its Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in elementary education from a low baseline. However, scholars such as G. White (2016) and others are sceptical of these increases in girls' education when compared to worldwide patterns, because Indian females underachieve in reading and math, and these gaps are linked to the cultural, economic, and societal prejudices that they face. Because of their efficient strategies and plans, developed countries have been able to combat female illiteracy. Not only does India lag behind wealthy countries in female literacy, but it also lags behind middle- and lower-income countries like Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. India has performed badly in relation to its BRICS peers in meeting global benchmarks set by the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ranking 131 out of 189 nations in Human Development, the lowest among the BRICS countries (Human Development Report, UNDP, 2020). Even Bhutan, which was placed 129th, was ahead of India.Girls

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[1] http://www.dise.in/Downloads/Publications/Publications%202011-12/Flash%202011-12.pdf

account for 53 percent of the 67 million out-of-school children aged 6 to 10 years, and 52 percent of lower secondary out-of-school teenagers (ACEI, 2014). In India, the situation has been bleak and has stayed mostly unchanged over the years. According to a TIME article (TIME, 2019 June 27), women contribute barely 18 percent of India's GDP, one of the lowest in the world, and according to the McKinsey Global Institute Report 2017, India could add $770 billion to its GDP by encouraging girls to study and work.

Under Article 21A of the Right to Compulsory Education Act of 2009, every boy and girl between the ages of 6 and 14 is guaranteed eight years of education as a fundamental right, which has significantly increased enrolment. Despite the fact that the law has been in place for almost a decade, the situation on the ground remains unsatisfactory. According to a report by the Right to Education Forum and the Centre for Budget Policy Studies, which was supported by the World Bank and UNICEF (Gohain, 2020), only 12 percent of Indians are complying with the Right to Education Act, 2009. This is largely due to a decrease in school education funding from 4.14 percent of GDP in 2014-15 to 3.40 percent in 2019-20.It also pointed out to the per child expenditure with Kerala spending Rs 11,574 with 92.07% female literacy and lowest spending Rs 2,869 in Bihar with 51.5% female literacy rate. It also mentioned studies that found a strong link between public investment in education and children's development and empowerment. According to field research, each extra year of schooling increases earnings by 8% -10% (with women earning more), underlining that education not only strengthens the economy but also alleviates poverty. Despite the fact that the RTE Act has improved the GER of girls in school, the dropout rate at the basic level remains high, at 40%. The dropout rate among adolescent girls in India is roughly 63.5 percent, according to a report (MoSPI, 2012). Because of numerous socioeconomic, cultural, and traditional preconceptions, this is the case.

Inadequate schooling paired with family commitments prevents girls from attending school on a regular basis, thereby impacting their academic achievement. When a result, school dropouts occur as girls are unable to cope with the pressures of school performance. Girls are particularly affected, as they are expected to care for younger siblings and assist their moms with domestic responsibilities. Because the foundation is inadequate at the elementary level, higher classes, which need more time for study

and an unfavourable domestic obligation, demand even more, hampered girls' academic success. As a result, students lose interest in their studies and inevitably fall out. As a result, the RTE Act of 2009 has yet to address this issue. Adolescence is one of the most crucial phases of human existence and development, according to several researchers, because it is during this time that their character and belief system are formed, directing them toward being responsible citizens. If India is to become a global powerhouse of human resources, elementary education is critical. Various programmes have been created in India to encourage girls to attend school. The fundamental purpose of these programmes is to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere for girls, as well as to develop a strong support structure. Special needs of minorities, marginalised populations, most vulnerable parts of society, and teenage girls should be top priority groups as they are the building blocks of Indian society, and a customised government effort and effective interventions are the need of the hour. Government engagement is also required to resolve information asymmetry and aim for social welfare.

Several programmes and policies have been developed and implemented by both the Central and State governments in India throughout the years to increase the participation and completion rates of girls and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. These programmes also attempted to address social stigmas associated with females' schooling as well as poorer sections' economic concerns. For example, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the Ministry of Human Resource Development jointly launched the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign in 2015. It aims to address the lowering Child Sex Ratio (CSR), eliminate female foeticide, raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of girls, lower the school dropout rate for girls, implement the Right to Education Act 2009, and increase the construction of girls' bathrooms. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All) was begun in 2001 with the goal of providing elementary education to all children aged 6 to 14. The Kanya Saaksharta Protsahan Yojana aims to boost tribal girl students' enthusiasm in continuing their education while also trying to reduce the dropout rate. The girls are given cash help of Rs 500 for girls who receive admission in VI, 1000 for girls who get admission in IX, and 2000 for girls who get admission in XI (Gouri, 2017). The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Yojana encourages girls' education in particular by offering residential hostel facilities for girls in grades V through VII. The National Program for Females' Elementary Education (NPEGEL)

intends to reduce dropouts by focusing on academically challenged girls. The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan, which began in 2009, provided facilities for secondary school girls' hostels.

India has unable to realise the goal of universal elementary education, after 75 years of freedom (UEE). Kerala, for example, has achieved extremely high levels of Elementary education for its children. In this regard, several states, such as Bihar, trail much behind the national average. In 2011, the national literacy rate was 74.04 percent, while Bihar's literacy rate was 63.82 percent. In Bihar, girls' education levels lags behind that of boys. In 2007-08, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for secondary education was 0.85, which is the ratio of girls' enrolment to boys' enrolment. Bihar's elementary education, which is still below the national average, requires immediate attention. While the national sex ratio was 940 in 2011, Bihar's sex ratio was 916, according to the 2011 Census. According to the DISE, Bihar had 71,484 schools in 2012-13. In 2011, Bihar's overall literacy rate was 63.8 percent, with male literacy at 73.4 percent and female literacy at 53.3 percent. Bihar struggled with primary and elementary education till 1991. At the elementary level, Bihar's Net Enrolment Rate was 91.4 percent in 2011-12. According to DISE data, the primary school retention rate in Bihar was 62.26 percent in 2012. According to DISE data from 2006-07, 95.15 percent of government schools in Bihar are located in rural areas (District Information System for Education).The ASER (Annual Status of Education Report) findings about the poor learning outcomes of the government schools also are impediments to the UEE (Universal Elementary Education).

Sex-Gender Binary Concept

When it comes to recognising the distinction between male and female, the sex-gender binary is first and foremost. The biological differences that are present from birth are referred to as sex. The biological growth of both male and females occurs as they grow older, and certain physical changes occur, such as the development of reproductive organs. Gender, on the other hand, is entirely socially constructed, as are the functions that are attributed to it.

"One does not become a woman; one is born a woman," says Simone de Beauvoir (Beauvoir, 1949). The society establishes roles for both men and women, which are frequently skewed and dominated by patriarchy (as observed by the researcher that girl children were engaged in performing the gendered roles). As an ideology, patriarchy holds that women are physically and cognitively inferior, and that they lack the intellectual capacity to reason and make decisions. The development of gender roles takes place based on these primordial and illogical assumptions. In other words, the male in the culture has complete control over the female's life, from childhood to adulthood.

"Differences between man and women are both biologically and socially determined. Sex differences are based on biology. Gender differences are socially defined and differ between countries and cultures. This means that they are not fixes and can be changed." (DFID Gender Manual, 2008).

Gender norms

At a particular point in time for a specific society or community these are accepted attributes and characteristics of female and male gendered identity. These are the standards and expectations of a particular society, culture and community at that point in time to which gender identity generally conforms to. Gender norms are ideas about men's and women's expected actions. If these norms are ingrained early in life, this leads to lifelong cycle of gender socialization and stereotyping.

Gender roles

These are social and behavioural norms that are considered socially acceptable for people of a certain sex by a certain culture. The traditional responsibilities and tasks assigned to women, men, girls, and boys are determined by these standards. Household structure, resource access, global economic consequences, the incidence of conflict or tragedy, and other factors shape these gendered roles in society.

Gender equality

According to DFID, "equality of opportunity" means that both genders should have equal rights and entitlements to personal, social, economic, and cultural development, as well as an equal voice in civil and political life. Equality should not be confused with similarities. Diversity in society should be welcomed because it enriches human life and should not be used as a reason for prejudice. Gender equality in all aspects of public and private life is defined by equal visibility, empowerment, and engagement for both men and women. It ensures excellent governance and development by putting both men and women at the centre of policymaking and taking into consideration respective diversity. Gender equality is a long-term development objective. On a political, social, economic, and cultural level, it is believed to indicate that girls and boys have the same position. Only when women and men have equal rights, opportunities, and standing in society will gender equality be completely realised.

Gender equity

The exercise of these rights and benefits should result in fairness and justice. The significance of this distinction is that it emphasises women's rights to set their own development goals and pursue outcomes that are not always the same as those desired and enjoyed by males. Gender equity refers to the distribution of resources and rewards that is fair to both men and women. This necessitates the acknowledgment of inequity and the implementation of actions aimed at achieving gender equality. To attain gender equality, we must follow the gender equity process.

Gender Parity

Gender parity is a purely quantitative notion. It is based on the relative equality of women and men in terms of numbers and proportions. For instance, consider the number of girls and boys enrolled in school. It is a numerical notion that refers to the relative equality of girls and boys in terms of numbers and proportions. It is concerned with a certain indicator's female-to-male value ratio or vice versa.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender equality is ensuring that women's, men's, boy's, girls', and third gender concerns and experiences are integrated into the design, application, monitoring, and evaluation of all laws, policies, and programmes. The goal is to ensure that disparity does not persist, that women's and men's rights and needs are recognised and addressed, and that women and men share gains with the goal of fostering gender equality.

'Gender-Neutral'

"Gender-neutral is used to refer to policies and programmes that are seen to impact equally and in the same way on women and men. According to the DFID Gender Manual (2008), no policy or programme that impacts on people is gender-neutral as it is intrinsic to human life in the real world," (DFID Gender Manual, 2008).

Gender roles and responsibilities are socially produced and taught. They can change over the years, and they differ between and within cultures. It's crucial to acknowledge that stated roles (e.g., 'a woman's role is to care for her family' or 'a man's role is to earn money') can change. It's also critical to pay attention to everyone's understanding of who's doing and why, as well as to find change entry points.

Gender Parity vs Gender Equality

Global Education Monitoring Report (2016) monitoring framework has led to the Gender Report of 2019. Framework evaluates broad socio-economic matters like gender norms and institutions and key education system characteristics (laws and policies, teaching and learning practices, learning environments, and resources) apart from concentrating on gender parity in education participation, attainment and learning achievement. The relationship between education and selected social and economic outcomes are also studied by the framework. For example, a certain move towards parity in education attainment may also lead to increase in women's labour force participation rates, at the same time low levels of labour force participation would result

in constraining expansion of education opportunities for females. Sustained efforts to improve girls' education, including policies and programmes aimed at changing social attitudes, providing financial support to female students and making schools more accessible in the last 25 years substantial progress has been achieved (UNESCO, 2015). Education for All programme missed its 5th goal of achieving parity by 2005; however, through continuous progress in1990s and 2000s, that parity was achieved in the year of 2009 in primary and secondary education and nearly in youth literacy by 2016. Even so, gender disparity could be seen from the fact that among the total number of adult illiterates, 63% were female.

Despite the fact that gender parity has been attained internationally, the situation varies by location. In Central and Southern Asia, India notably dominated the Gender Parity Index, improving significantly at all three levels. The fact that the world has achieved gender parity on average conceals the fact that many countries are still far from achieving it. Gender parity in basic, lower secondary, and upper secondary education enrolment has been realized in a large number of nations since 2000. However, only two out of every three countries have achieved it in basic education, one out of every two in lower secondary school, and one out of every four in upper secondary education.

Disparity increases progressively, where in countries girl have a large disadvantage on their side whereas in some countries boys and girls start primary school at equal footing. Trends of increasing disparity are mostly related to prevalent unfair gender norms and institutions, which generally affect at risk boys and girls in different contexts. Just as gender parity has been achieved on average globally but large gaps remain between countries, the same is true within countries.

 In general, the interaction of gender with poverty or location tends to work to the disadvantage of girls in poorer countries with low completion rates and social expectations that they marry early as these trends dominate low-income countries like India. In primary education, almost all the countries have completion rate below 60%, it clearly shows gender disparity at the cost of the girls, mainly poverty-stricken and rural disadvantaged class girls. According to a new inquiry of completion rates by the Global Education Monitoring Report ("GEM Report") team, data shows that some countries have been performing better than others. For instance, with reference to

primary completion, Burkina Faso managed to overtake Côte d'Ivoire by closing the gender gap and achieving parity, although they were at the same level in terms of gender disparity in 2000. Côte d'Ivoire lost track and its situation deteriorated. There are other success stories as well like Nepal overtaking Pakistan, Mali and surpassing Senegal on the way. The other is of inspiring leaps Afghanistan made in the same arena at a much more faster pace than South Sudan, which currently is the worst performer in terms of gender disparity. This suggests that political will to address disparity, along with effective policies, can make a difference.

International assessments, which show girls having an advantage in reading skills, are mostly administered in upper-middle- or high-income countries, where gender parity in school participation has long been achieved. Talking about gender disparity in low and lower-middle-income countries, their gender parity of youth literacy rate has barely moved between 2000 and 2016.The baseline was 0.93 in 2000 and loitered around at 0.97 in 2016. This clearly states that the gender gap was not bridged yet. In 2016, the global literacy rate was 86%, equivalent to 750 million illiterate adults. Between the years 2000 and 2016, the gender parity index of the adult literacy rate barely moved from 0.88 to 0.92. It has been noted that in low-income countries, women's average literacy rate is always is worse off than that of men by some 16 percentage points, which is equivalent to a gender parity index of 0.77. This clearly states the disadvantage women are at.

"Feminism" emphasises gender equality and advocacy to bring about gender equality for women (Wadhwa, 2000, as cited in Thapa, 2012). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the feminist movement arose in response to widespread disparities, focusing on basic legal rights and educational opportunities (McLaughlin, 2003). In the last three decades, it has been successful in putting the concept of "gender equality" on the international agenda to solve inequities in various areas, including education. Despite these achievements, women continue to fall behind in education. "While considerable strides have been made, just one in three nations throughout the world has reached equity in both elementary and secondary education," says Faye, the Executive Director of UNGEI (UNESCOIIEP, 2011). Many individuals appear to be confused about the concept of "gender equality" even now. To signify 'equality,' the terms 'parity' and

'equity' are used loosely and indiscriminately. As a result, I feel that having a conceptually solid understanding is critical to effectively dealing with any issue.

Gender equality in education is generally described as eliminating obstacles to girls and boys having equal access to and achievement in school (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2005; Subrahmanian, 2005). Despite this, conversations have shifted beyond gender parity to gender equity and equality. Subramanian divides equality in education into formal and substantive categories in accordance with CEDAW, the idea being that formal equality is based on access to and participation in education to close numerical imbalances. Substantive equality, on the other hand, focuses on processes for ensuring equal outcomes (to achieve de facto equality), while keeping in mind that gender inequality is the result of unequal power relations between men and women, and it is recreated in balance in favour of the dominant group via their cultural practises. (Bourdieu, 1977).

Gender discrimination in educational environments is common, according to global research. According to studies and research, teachers treat guys differently than girls, offering them more attention and recognising them more promptly (Mushi, 1996, Colclough, 2004, Kimbal, 2002, Ifegbesan, 2010, Gunawardena, & Jayaweera, 2008, Sadker, 2008, Terry & Thapa, 2012). As a consequence, even parity (numerical equality) in education has yet to be attained. "Girls being disproportionately excluded from school is higher at the secondary level than in elementary education, and climbs further from the lower to the upper secondary levels (2012, p. 58)," according to the World Atlas of Gender Equality study in education. Despite the fact that gender equality is one of UNESCO's six worldwide Education for All (EFA) goals and one of the eight Millennium Development Goals, (UNESCO, 2012, p.8).

Recent reports on the "Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012" indicated that all of the goals of Millennium Development – from reducing poverty and hunger, to achieving universal education and stopping the spread of HIV and AIDS –are interdependent. Those which depend on making progress on gender equality and women's empowerment is holding back progress on others, for instance on maternal health (UN Women, 2012, p.14).

In gender parity in primary and secondary education a real progress has been made, although global or regional averages have masked continuing disparity at the individual country level as well as within countries among particular groups, such as the poor. But gender equality in education is a much broader issue. While the formulation of target 4.5 does not refer to gender equality in education, the Education 2030 Framework for Action explicitly recognizes gender equality as a guiding principle, linked to the realization of the right to education and referring to the need for girls and boys, women and men, to be equally empowered 'in and through education'.

The 2019 Gender Report argues that apparent progress towards gender parity in education is not a sufficiently good indicator of the real progress made towards gender equality in education. Many people still believe it is preferable for a man to receive a university education rather than a woman. Teachers rarely receive training in how to be responsive to gender issues in the classroom. Some countries still ban pregnant girls from school and in India it is frowned upon.

Gender inequality in global health research has primarily focused on issues affecting individuals (age of marriage, literacy, etc.) and households (decision making, household composition[2]), or community level (social norms,[3] access to services[4].

Although gender inequality is felt by and between individuals, it is also the product of power dynamics that determine how societies are organised, laws are made, businesses

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operate, and ideologies are formed[5]. Gender inequalities are particularly damaging to adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health, with long-term consequences. In comparison to their male counterparts, girls are less likely to complete secondary education or find stable employment as they enter adulthood, bear a greater weight of domestic chores, and have less decision-making autonomy, including restricted mobility[6]. Addressing the gendered dynamics that define adolescent health, particularly the sexual and reproductive rights of teenage girls, is crucial if the Sustainable Development Goals are to be met without leaving those who are most in need behind. Adolescent girls have fewer access to health care and receive less instruction and knowledge about sexuality and reproduction than boys. The socioeconomic and political processes that shape hierarchical power relations, stratifying societies based on class, occupational status, level of education, gender, and other factors are known as structural determinants[7].

They shape the surroundings that help or hinder people's power to protect them from illness, as well as their ability to get appropriate healthcare if they become ill. They influence the social circumstances in which people's experiences of illness, health outcomes, and socioeconomic repercussions of illness are formed[8]. Puberty offers varied expectations for boys and girls, according to research conducted with young adolescents (10–14 years old) in six cities throughout the world (Baltimore (US), Ghent (Belgium), Nairobi (Kenya), Ile Ife (Nigeria), Asyt. (Egypt), and Shanghai (China). Girls' worlds are constrained (in terms of look, dress, movement, and information access), but boys' worlds grow[9]. Adolescent females are expected to be virgins, to

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symbolise family or clan honour, to be subservient in their sexual and romantic interactions, and to lack awareness or understanding about sexuality or reproduction in many societies. Girls who seek contraception, get pregnant, or are sexually assaulted are frequently stigmatised by gender standards[10]. Positive role images in families, schools, and communities, as well as access to media and information, influence shifts in gender norms among adolescent girls. Economic, ecological, and biological changes in society (e.g., urbanisation, migration, conflicts, technology, and economic possibilities) have far-reaching consequences[11].

For instance, in South Asia, the drop-in child marriage rates were largely due to increased education and employment opportunities for girls[12]. Similarly, increased female employment was significantly connected with favourable developments in gender norms and stereotypes across 80 countries, independent of regional trends, GDP growth, and the structure of production underpinning GDP (agricultural, industrial, etc). Gender norms were also influenced by regional disparities, GDP growth, and GDP production structures[13]. The global labour force participation rate (a measure of the working-age population in or searching for work) has been declining for some time, with the gender gap persisting. Women's rates were 48.5 percent in 2018, which was 26.5 percentage points lower than men's rates[14]. Women's economic participation, on the other hand, is linked to lower fertility rates, greater birth spacing, and marriage postponement. [15]. Adolescence is the time when most people make the transition from

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[15] Jensen R. Do labor market opportunities a/ect young women's work and family decisions? Experimental evidence from India. Q J Econ 2012;127:753-792. doi:10.1093/qje/qjs002

school to work and begin working. Although this is frequently done to ease household poverty and provide support to families who are under strain, it can also provide them with greater mobility, networks, information, and financial independence and agency. Even when primary and secondary education levels are comparable, however, equal participation in the labour force does not follow. For example, in 28 low- and middle-income countries from 2012 to 2015, the proportion of persons not in education, work, or training was nearly twice as high for female youth (30%) as it was for male youth (16 percent)[16]. Political engagement is the most visible representation of power distribution, but progress has been slow and insufficient. In formal elected and appointed leadership posts around the world, women make up a small minority, with just a few countries approaching parity. While the opportunity to vote and participate in official government procedures through parliaments and cabinets is an important feature of gender equality and women's empowerment, the significance of feminist movements in bringing progressive change to public health objectives is frequently overlooked. The presence of autonomous women's movements has been more essential than women in parliaments or leadership in passing progressive laws addressing violence against women, according to a 40-year analysis of 70 nations[17]. Power dynamics connected to age and sex, as well as other aspects of their social position such as race and class, make it difficult for adolescent girls and young women to participate in legislative processes, social movements, and the creation of health-related programmes. Material access to and control over resources, as well as economic engagement, determine gender norms. Gender norms associated to early marriage and child bearing and raising roles, on the other hand, limit adolescent girls' and women's economic engagement. This means that addressing one facet of gender inequality may have unintended consequences for other aspects of the gender divide. These aspects of

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https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b4d0/734baa4cd30a55274f6a6cbc7b70c3e2ca07.pdf

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changing gender power relations necessitate a greater emphasis on contextual strategic analysis aided by conceptual frameworks, consultative sectoral engagement, and more considerate time frames to track both intended and unintended trajectories of social change in research and policy[18].

This study is trying to combine the Qualitative aspects of Gender Parity Index and Socio-economic dimensions of gender equality which looks inside and outside of education, with the understanding that change in education cannot happen if harmful gender norms are still common, or if there is insufficient political will for change.

Gender analysis

Gender analysis is a method of identifying, understanding, and describing gender differences as well as the significance of gender roles and power relations in a given environment. Gender analysis usually entails looking at how development policies and programmes affect women and men differently, as well as collecting gender-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data. Gender analysis looks at men and women's distinct responsibilities, rights, and opportunities, as well as their interactions. It also detects gender gaps, analyses why they occur, decides whether they are a potential hindrance to attaining objectives, and considers how to overcome these disparities.

Theoretical Frameworks for Gender Analysis- It's critical to go through the major concepts in gender analysis. In the literature, the terms sex and gender are frequently interchanged. However, 'gender' is the social difference between men and women based on actions, duties, and responsibilities concerning males and females, while' sex' is the biological difference between men and women and is concerned with men's and women's bodies. The concept of 'equality' refers to providing everyone with the same resources. The concept of 'equity' refers to allocating resources depending on the needs of the beneficiaries. Gender equality is achieved via fairness and justice in the distribution of opportunities and resources.

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Research and practical experience demonstrate that women have not benefited from development processes, programmes and projects to the same extent as men. Women are frequently excluded from development plan and project preparation and implementation. Development can undermine the role, status and position of women in society and also affecting women and men differently, often with a negative impact on women.

WID (Women in Development) was coined in the early 1970s as one of the frameworks for gender analysis, and was initially used by the Women's Committee of Washington DC, Chapter of the Society for International Development (Maguire, 1984). The name was later adopted by the United Nations and other international aid agencies, notably the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (United States Agency for International Development). The premise behind this method was that women can contribute economically to development even if they are still an underutilised resource. WID (Women in Development) was coined in the early 1970s as one of the frameworks for gender analysis, and was initially used by the Women's Committee of Washington DC, Chapter of the Society for International Development (Maguire, 1984). The name was later adopted by the United Nations and other international aid agencies, notably the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (United States Agency for International Development). The premise behind this method was that women can contribute economically to

development even if they are still an underutilised resource. Put forth with a primary focus of enhancing women's role in economic development, WID led to rendering a high profile to international policies for improvement of educational and employment opportunities for women and enhancement of their political representation for their broader physical and social welfare.

The WID strategy aided in the integration of women into the workforce as well as their productivity, allowing them to better their lives. This technique has been criticised by some as being too western. Because it is a view of the global south from the perspective of the global north, it ignores the collective and cultural concerns of women in the developing world. The strategy has been criticised as being too burdensome for women because it ignores the dynamics of the private sphere in favour of focusing entirely on the public domain. Women in Development (WID) acknowledged a lack of access to

resources as a fundamental factor in women's subordination, but they did not examine or challenge gender social relations, and their assumptions were that gender relations would change as women became full partners in development. (Rathgeber 1990, Kabeer 1994, Razaui and Miller 1995, as cited in Jain, 2003). As a response of criticisms of the WID strategy, the WAD (Women and Development) approach evolved in the late 1970s. The basic premise of the WAD approach, which takes a Marxist feminist viewpoint, is that women have always been a part of the change processes and major economic actors. The labour they conduct both within and outside the home is crucial to society's survival. The WID strategy, which emphasised women's participation in development, was incorrect. Rather than focusing solely on measures to include women into development, the emphasis was on the interplay between women and development processes. Because of difficulties inherent to class and the way income is allocated, the WAD approach saw both women and men as not benefiting from global economic processes. The WAD concept believed that integrating women into development was to their detriment and only served to exacerbate their inequalities. Global inequities were identified as the primary issue confronting poor countries and, as a result, their inhabitants. The WAD strategy has been chastised for presuming that women's status will improve when international frameworks become more egalitarian. Women's roles are seen as predominantly inside the context of international and class disparities as a result of this. As a result, it downplays patriarchy's role in stunting women's growth and

fails to effectively address the issue of male-female social connections and their effects on development.

In the 1980s, socialist feminism pioneered the GAD (Gender and Development) method. It aimed to bring together both the lessons learnt from the WID and WAD methodologies, as well as their limitations. It acts as a transitional point in the feminist understanding of development. It provides a complete review of development's social, economic, and political dimensions. Its roots can be traced back to the DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) network, which was founded in India (Rouf, 2018). In 1986, during the 3rd UN Conference on Women in Nairobi, the DAWN programme was officially recognised. Activists, researchers, and development practitioners from all over the world attended the meeting. This approach's diversity allowed it to be sensitive to the needs and experiences of women in

underdeveloped countries. Its two main goals were to I demonstrate that the unequal connection between the sexes hampered development and female participation; and (ii) convert the power structure into a long-term goal in which all decision-making and development advantages were allocated on a gender-neutral basis. The GAD method focuses not only on biological inequalities between men and women, but also on how social roles, reproductive responsibilities, and economic roles are linked to masculinity and feminine inequalities. The GAD method considers how development affects both men and women. It emphasises equality of benefit and control in order to ensure that both women and men participate in and gain equally from progress. Gender and Development (GAD) took a step further by examining the assumptions that underpin current social, economic, and political structures and policies, and calling for a thorough re-examination of social structures and institutions that promote and sustain gender inequality. (Young 1993, Kabeer 1999, as cited in Jain 2003).

The study would like to adopt GAD framework because its more versatile and multifaceted and takes into various perspectives of gender and its relations with society. It recognises that women may be involved in development, but not necessarily benefit from it. It is not focused solely on women, but rather on how gender relations assign distinct roles, obligations, and aspirations to men and women. It concentrates on men and women's social or gender relations (i.e., the division of labour) in society. It treats development as a complex process that is influenced by political, social and economic factors rather than as a state or stabsenceage of development. The approach, therefore, goes beyond considering development as mainly economic well-being but also recognises social and mental wellbeing of a person as important dimensions of development. Thus, the GAD framework for gender analysis would help to get a nuanced understanding of gender roles and relations in the target districts of the study.

Rationale of the Study

India has 356 million people aged 10 to 24 years, according to the United Nations Population Fund's World Population Report (2014). The Annual State of Education Report (ASER) 2020 study was just issued, providing insight into the degrees of learning loss experienced by kids in rural India, with variable accessibility to

technologies, schooling, and familial resulting in a digital gap in education. As per the ASER 2020, 5.3 percent of rural children were not enrolled in school in 2020, up from 1.8 percent in 2018. It also says that only 11% of the rural children had access to live online classes; and, less than 36% of rural children received some learning materials from the school and the figure for Bihar was less than 8%. Thus, India needs to pay greater attention to this cohort of youth in terms of their education, skill and character development. There is a dire need of attention on the female empowerment and development through education and skill development. As discussed earlier, this age lays down foundation for future citizens, since this is the time to teach them to differentiate between right or wrong through schooling. Therefore, girls' education is of utmost importance. As Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru seconded Gandhiji and reiterated, "*If you educate a man, you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman, you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered.*" As educated women make valuable contributions towards development of family and thereby the society.

Bihar has a very high poverty rate, which is greater than the national average, and a poor literacy rate than that of the national median. Large swaths of the population are compelled to live in poverty. Even the most fundamental educational needs are denied to adolescent girls from marginalized, excluded, minority communities. One of the most crucial factors that can assist them in realising their aspirations is primary education.

The rationale behind the study therefore is to analyze the gender disparity in access and completion of upper primary education in select districts of Bihar. A large section of girls come from the lower strata of society and cannot afford the private schools. If the elementary education is not provided properly to these adolescent girls, which they are entitled to get in a democratic and welfare society, the repercussions could last a lifetime and widen the gender gap even further for future generations. It goes against the fundamental rights and the democratic ethos of the society we live in. The study has potential to change the attitude of the stakeholders involved in providing elementary education to this cohort. It may also impact the programme interventions that may aim at tackling girls' education in these two districts of Bihar, namely Muzaffarpur and Saran.

In the above context, this study would attempt to look into the gender parity in school education in two districts of Bihar – i.e., Saran and Muzaffarpur. It would try to find out reasons behind skyrocketing dropout rates, failing points of government policies to persuade parents to send their adolescent girls to pursue education in upper primary level and beyond. A brief review of changes in curricula and teachers training to handle gender issues and stereotypes more efficiently, state of school infrastructure, and delivery mechanisms of upper primary schools in Muzaffarpur and Saran districts.

Rationale for Selecting the Districts

I selected Saran and Muzaffarpur districts of the state of Bihar in India as my area of study. The reasons for this choice were as follows:

First, the geographical positioning of the two districts. Saran shares its border with the state capital but Muzaffarpur doesn't, which I thought was interesting for the research.

Second, during the pandemic the movement was restricted and I wanted to do research in areas, where I could conduct field work.

Finally, acquaintance with the area's physical, social, and cultural landscape was another consideration. It made me feel more like an insider while undertaking fieldwork and allowed me to conduct it more efficiently.

Statement of the Problem

In the context of the conceptual framework and rationale of the present study, the statement of the problem is as follows:

'Gender Parity in Government Schools: A Comparative Study of Saran and Muzaffarpur Districts of Bihar'.

Chapterization of the Dissertation

There are five chapters in the dissertation. In **Chapter 1**establishes the context for the study, covers the concept and types of gender discrimination, gender stereotypes, and barriers to girls' education, as well as the study's conceptual framework. The next chapter, **Chapter 2** is an extensive review of literature on themes of gender, capability, value of education for girls, education as a right for overall development of the personality of a human being, educational access and participation of girls in education. The review of literature covers a wide range of variables related directly and indirectly with the central question of the study. **Chapter 3** is the methodology which provides details of the sample, tools and techniques of data analysis undertaken in this research. The findings based on the research have been discussed systematically in **Chapter 4** entitled as 'Gender Parity in Primary and Upper Primary Education.' The findings and their analyses have been organized into three parts: interviews, qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The last chapter, **Chapter 5** presents the key findings, policy recommendation and conclusion of this research.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter deals with the existing literature which helps to understand gender and role of education for an individual with particular focus on girls' education and how education helps an individual in upward social mobility and how the vicious cycle of poverty can be broken (Madeshwar and Attewell, 2007). Education not only creates an opportunity of progress but it also reproduces the existing hierarchy and exclusion (Freire, 1968). Literature review provides the basic foundation for any study. It helps to familiarize the researcher with the knowledge of the domain in which the researcher works to contribute his/her additional knowledge.

In India, there are numerous obstacles to girls' learning. Adolescent girls have been dropping out of school due to poor sanitation. As per ASER 2018, nearly 33% schools don't have usable girl's toilets. During menstruation, girls are even more hesitant to attend co-ed schools. As per a National Study by AC Nielsen and NGO Plan India in 2010, girls miss an average of 50 days of school each year and 23% girls drop out when they hit puberty.

One of the variables leading to the high dropout rate among girls is distance. Parents prefer the safety and security of their girls over education, as the instances of eve-teasing, rape and sexual assaults have continued unabated in rural India. The ASER 2018 also states that nearly 40% schools don't have boundary walls, a safety issue for parents for their daughters. As per the Rules of the Right to Education Act 2009, a primary school must be made available within 1 km walking distance and upper primary within 3 km. Secondary schools are to be made available within 5-6 kms of the place of residence of elementary level graduates. This is required in order to improve the transition rate. According to an article in TOI (2020, January 25), while only 44.07 percent of pupils move from secondary to high school, 84.64 percent of students transit from elementary to secondary school. In backward rural communities, social stigma often dictates that a girl's sexual integrity is equal to the family's dignity and respect, therefore honour takes precedence over education.

Girls from marginalised communities find it difficult to get financial support and are unable to garner private expenditure from parents. A number of studies strongly establish the connection between poverty and dropping out of school (Birdsall 2005; Boyle 2002; Dachi & Garrett, 2003). This has led to single sex education preference, where family in financial constraints mostly chooses son's education over their daughter's. Since for ages daughters have been considered as "Paraya Dhan". There is also a stereotype that education may spoil a girl and make her lose out on her basic role of an obedient spouse.

The gender stereotypes at schools are very evident as teachers are not trained well to handle gender complexities prevalent in society and unknowingly end up bolstering them. The aforementioned circumstances are some of the problems faced by the adolescent girls which acting as the glass ceiling which has held them back.

Functionalist Theory

Until the 1960s, it was the dominant paradigm in sociology and education sociology. However, its view, 'inequalities is inevitable and is natural on the ground of sex for maintaining social order' is still pervasive in societies.

Talcott Parsons, one of the functionalists stressed on the importance of clear-cut division of labour based on biology (sex) of the person and said that women are suited in expressive roles, providing care and security to children and offering them emotional support because they give birth and are thus "naturally" suited to look after children (Giddens, 2010). Men, on the other hand, should perform instrumental roles – namely, being the breadwinner in the family. Parson believed that education is a vital part of a modern society that differed considerably from all previous societies, thus need to play important role in maintaining social order. Likewise, John Bowlby, a functionalist and psychologist of 1950's argued that women's role is to be a mother and should stay with young children. Other functionalist theorists, including such as Davis and Moore (1945), claimed that inequalities were both functional and necessary in all cultures since it ensured that the most capable people filled the most important jobs (Learning, 2001, p.17). All functionalists legitimize discrimination on the ground of sex for the smooth

running and integration of the society. In the world, functionalism has been used as a justification for male dominance and gender discrimination.

Conflict Theories

Unlike functionalists, conflict theorists view inequalities as the result of exploitation and oppression of subordinate groups by dominants and it is not natural. They see society as a site where one social class holds over another through the exercise of power. The dominant class (bourgeoisie) maintains its position of power over the subordinate class (proletariat) by extracting as much profit as possible from their work as in Capitalism.

Friedrich Engels, a conflict theorist, views that woman's subordination results not from her biology, which is presumably immutable, but from social relations that have a clear and traceable history and that can presumably be changed.

In his book "The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State," he claims that the economic substitution of herding and farming for hunting and gathering is "the world historic defeat of the female sex," in which men's assets of strength, movement, and technology derived from their hunting roles gave them a systematic advantage over women. As a result, the concept of property was created. Women achieve social, political, economic, and personal independence, according to Engels and Mark, through destroying property rights through class revolution. (Ritzer, 2000, p. 466).

Feminist Theory

Feminist philosophy is critical and activist on behalf of women, attempting to make a better society for women, and hence it advocates for humanity. Feminist sociologist work with double agenda: to broaden and deepen their discipline of origin by reworking disciplinary knowledge discovered by scholars and to develop a critical understanding of society in order to change the world in directions deemed more just and humane (Ritzer, 2000). The contemporary feminist theory begins with a question: "And what about women?" followed by basic questions: Why is women's situation as it is? How

can we change and improve the social world so as to make it a more just place for women and for all people? And what about the differences among women? Answers to these questions evolved the varieties of feminist theories (Ritzer, 2000, pp.488) in different times.

According to liberal feminism, female's unequal placement has led in inequalities. It aspires to achieve full equality in all sectors of life without substantially altering the current socio-political structure by ensuring equal legal rights and educational and employment opportunities for men and women. It asserts that women and men have the same rights and educational and employment possibilities. Due to the rise of liberal feminist ideologies, the concept of WID came into being. While liberals have made significant contributions to women's advancement, detractors argue that they have failed to address the core causes of gender inequality and do not recognise the systematic nature of oppression against women in society.

Socialist feminism (includes materialist and Marxist feminisms) views patriarchy, capitalism and racism are the causes of inequality. It aims to achieve gender equality by defeating patriarchy and capitalism through socialist revolution by men and women together. As they perceive family as a source of women's oppression and exploitation, socialist feminism calls for the reorganisation of the family, the abolition of "domestic slavery," and the adoption of certain collective means of child raising, caring, and housework. Although socialist feminism was able to bring about some improvements, it was unable to effect change.

Development feminism claims that exclusion of women in development has created inequalities further. Thus, aims at equating women's status with control of economic resources (Lober, 1997) by addressing gendered division of labour through gendered economic analyses – analysis of access to and control over resources and benefits- and political issue of women's rights versus national and cultural traditions. As a result, the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, echoed the slogan "human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights" and the Platform for Action (PfA) condemned particular cultural practices that are oppressive to women. Gender and Development approach (GAD) and gender mainstreaming (GM) strategy are credited to this strand.

The resistive feminist philosophy views patriarchy as the root of inequality and emphasises the need of boosting female opinions and perspectives through valuing their nurturing, emotional support, and mothering abilities, encouraging pride in women's bodies, and educating women how to defend themselves.

Radical feminists think patriarchy is at the foundation of injustice because it divides rights, advantages, and power largely by genders, oppressing women and favouring men. As a result, they believe that women can only be free once they have gotten rid of it. Patriarchy is described as a societal system that oppresses and exploits women in both the private and public spheres. (Bhasin & Khan, 1986).

The revolutionary feminist theory of gender inequalities sees domination as the cause of inequality and focuses on multiple sources of inequality (matrix of domination-race, ethnicity, and social class) but the target is the binary gendered social order. They argue that gendered binary categories, norms and expectations give the men of their social group continued patriarchal privileges. Thus, the goal of this theory is to dismantle binaries' gender categories and matrix of domination through de-gendering movement that would overturn the gendered social order and ultimately create a non-gendered social order.

Gendered social order, according to social construction feminism, is the basis of inequality. It claims that gender inequality is a result of gendering and therefore it is so widespread that many people feel it is biological and so "natural." The sex-gender system hypothesis is credited to social constructionist feminists. In other words, they were credited with 'denaturalizing' gender and demonstrating that masculinity and femininity remain inherently unstable concepts that change through time.

Post-structural or postmodern feminism believes that fixed binary gender categories brought inequalities. For them gender is not an essential feature of human personhood but is instead a fluid and processual enactment within specific or contextualized interactions (Butler, 1990). They challenge binary gender categories as dual, oppositional, and fixed, arguing instead that sexuality and gender are shifting, fluid, and multiple categories. They say that equality will come when there are so many recognized sexes, sexualities, and genders that one can't be played against the other. They say as gender, sex and sexualities are not binary or fixed, there are at least six

sexualities -- heterosexual woman, heterosexual man, lesbian, gay man, bisexual man, and bisexual woman. Similarly, biological sex is also not binary- male and female. One can add hermaphrodite and transsexual too. Their perspective is consistent with social constructionists, for whom gender is a verb; and is about doing. And it has always been difficult to distinguish among poststructuralism and postmodern thought (Ritzer, 2000, p. 602), Lober (2010) appears to agree that poststructuralism is subsumed under postmodernism. However, I would like to discuss it here as a strand in itself separately as it is considered one of the approaches in gender and development in education (UNGEI, 2012) and I use it as the major lens in this study.

Post-structural Feminist Theory

Post-structural feminism is a branch of feminism that uses insights from post-structuralism, which has its philosophical position based on social constructionist assumptions. It raised critical questions about identity. It views gender as a malleable form of identification rather than a fixed definition present in conventional development discourse. It employs the required and most thorough deconstruction challenge – one of the most powerful post structural analyses – the charge to "consistently criticise a system that one cannot (wish to) inhabit" (Spivak, 1993, p. 284, as cited in Pierre, 2000) by using post-structural concepts such as language, subjectivity, power/ institution and pedagogy to understand the social world of women and men and to transform it. Language is the key to poststructuralists. "Language enables people to think, talk, and give meaning to the world around them," they believe (Weedon, 1987). They claim that language restricts women's lives by framing and inscribing them. Linking to gender, they argue that gender is socially constructed through language and gender differences dwell in language. Language works to both constrain and open up. Second, they argue that gender is made up of moving, fluid, and multiple categories, rather than being dual, oppositional, and rigid. In this approach, they question gender definitions that have been in place for a long time (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005). The archaeology of the human sciences, written by Foucault in 1970, examines the history of how language has been used to establish binaries, hierarchies, categories, and complex categorization schemes that are believed to reflect an underlying, inherent order in the world. Because women are often on the wrong side of binaries and at the bottom of hierarchies, post structuralist

feminists have questioned these conceptions. For example, in binary terms like culture/nature, mind/body, rational/irrational, subject/object," the first term is masculine and privileged, while the second term is female and disadvantaged.

They used Derrida's deconstruction tool to critique these language patterns. Deconstruction is a critical method that tries to "dismantle' [deconstruire] the metaphysical and rhetorical structures at work, not to reject or dismiss them, but to rewrite them in a new way.' Spivak (1974), cited in Pierre (2000). As a result, it's about reconstructing; it's about examining how a structure was built, what keeps it together, and what it creates. It is an affirmative rather than a destructive, negative, or nihilistic practise (Pierre, 2000). Deconstruction, according to post structuralist feminists, emphasises the idea that language does more than simply point to pre-existing things and ideas; it also helps to construct them, demonstrating that the world is constructed through language and cultural practise, and thus can be deconstructed and rebuilt. "The foundations are contingent, not necessary, not absolute, and so vulnerable to change," Butler (1995) writes. Subjectivity is crucial for post-structural feminists. They define "subjectivity" as "the individual's conscious and unconscious ideas and emotions" (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). Subjectivity, they claim, is a result of society, culture, and historical situations. Thus, they recognize subjectivity in the constitution (structure/formation) of gender, and emphasize that gender is a concept that is constantly being reproduced, contested and negotiated and that might yield quite unexpected and contradictory effects such as resistance, indifference or acceptance (Kabeer, 1994).

Power and institutions are important to post-structural feminists. They want to know "how gender power relations are formed, reproduced, and fought" (Weedon, 1987, p. vii). They use techniques of opposition, resistance, and deconstruction to question prevailing masculinist patriarchal ideas of knowledge. For this, Judith Butler, a notable poststructuralist thinker, advocates "troubling the gender categories" that maintain gender order and heterosexuality as a requirement. She also urges people to reject 'performativity,' which she defines as "culturally sustained socially compelled gender performances." She offered parodic activities as performative subversions of gender to denaturalize and re-signify corporeal categories outside of the binary frame (Butler, 1990, p. xxi).

Judith Butler explored the persistence of biological sex in feminist theory as the source and cause of the unequal social treatment and status of women in her book Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. She argued that sex was an effect rather than the cause of social gender difference, and that the fiction of a stable core gender identity was maintained through socially coerced performances of gender.

For post-structural feminists in education, pedagogy is a major concern. It's said to be the place where theory and practise collide. They believe that pedagogy has a significant impact on the production of gendered knowledge and experience (Gore, 1993, p. 26). They endorse pedagogical styles –dialogue, in which teachers/educators are viewed as coordinators who consider how to provide situations and environments in which instructors and learners can engage in two - way exchange, where educators are no longer the transmitters of knowledge, but instead facilitate learning experiences to embolden marginalised people by generating liberatory knowledge – new ways of understanding the world – through both conversation (consciousness) and reflection (reflection) (Andersan, et al., 2001).

They regard education as part of the plan that should help to acknowledge and question preconceived concepts of identity, such as gender and marginalised groups (UNGEI, 2012, p. 4). In truth, patriarchy has transformed it into a social and cultural control machine that has aided in the construction of gender, racial, and class divisions (Gore, 1993). Furthermore, it functions as a post-colonialist institution, disrupting and weakening the strength of indigenous or local knowledge (UNGEI, 2012).

From the above discussion on post- structural feminist perspective, it is clear that gender is a malleable form of identification rather than a fixed identity with its key political and theoretical objectives (UNGEI, 2012, p. 4). A ubiquitous division of people into two unequally valued categories - the gendered social order girds gender inequality. Thus, degendering movement to deconstruct binary opposition (Lober, 2006), and for deconstruction of gender is required. This could be done by resisting 'performativity' - culturally sustained socially coerced gender performances (Butler,1990), for challenging the relations of dominance through discourses/practices (Lather, 1991).

Approaches to Gender and Development in Education

Since the 1970s, numerous approaches to addressing inequities in education have evolved (Maseno & Kilonzo, 2011), just as they have in other development sectors. Gender discrimination against women was not very often seen as 27 forms of discrimination (Tomasevsku, 1993, p. 44) prior to these initiatives since it was so deeply rooted in humanity's history. The Women in Development (WID), Gender and Development (GAD), Human Development Approach (HAD), and Post Structural Approach (PSA) categorisation given by Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) is used to understand distinct perspectives.

The WID approach grew widespread in the development industry in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a response of concerns that women were just being kept out of economic development efforts. The strategy emphasised women's participation in development as a means of improving development's economic and social effectiveness (DFID, 2002, as cited in UNGEI, 2012, p. 4).

In education, according to Aikman and Unterhalter, brining girls and women into school is the central focus of WID framework as it understood 'education' as schooling, gender as women and girls and equality in terms of equal numbers of resources. The WID approach is prominently featured in the concept of gender parity, the notion that an equal proportion of girls and boys should be enrolled in and complete schooling (Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), 2003 as cited in UNGEI, 2012, p. 4). Initiatives linked with the WID approach have focused on improving access for girls by providing scholarships, providing food in exchange for school attendance, developing training or accommodation infrastructure to ensure that more women teachers are hired, digging latrines, and providing water. These are frequently viewed as ends in and of themselves (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005, pp.17-18). The issues of exploitation, subjugation, and social divisiveness, on the other hand, are typically ignored in this approach. In her research, Mary Ann Maslak discovered that the WID framework had a significant impact on EFA papers (CERID, 2005, pp.105-108).

The GAD method arose as an option to WID, which focuses on the social structure of genders rather than women. It focuses on gender interactions that are uneven at all levels of society. By the 1980s, the GAD technique had risen to prominence. This

strategy aimed to address the core causes of gender inequality while also increasing women's access to resources and decision-making power (DFID, 2002). Its thinkers maintained that inequity needed to be addressed politically and that it couldn't just be alleviated through a process of inclusion, welfare support, or a belief in the efficacy of WID programmes (Moser, 1993). However, it does not treat women as a homogeneous group. The goal of this strategy is to bring social life together without domesticating or marginalising either gender (Shrestha, 1994, pp. 31-32). It has created tools like gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in an attempt to make gender central in systematically addressing and redressing inequalities rather than seeing it as a quick fix for a variety of social difficulties (Jahan 1995; Kabeer, 2002; Budlender & Hewitt, 2002, as cited in Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005).

The HDA was developed in the 1990s and is now used by the UNDP to produce annual Human Development Reports (HDR). Amartya Sen's work laid the conceptual groundwork for a broader human development approach, which he defined as a process of expanding people's choices while also improving their skills and freedoms. HDR created and widely used a number of measuring methods, including the Human Development Index (HDI), Gender Development Index (GDI), Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM), and Gender Equality Index (GEI). The 1995 HDR highlighted the unfairness of gender disparity and issued a warning to the globe, saying, "Human development, if not fostered, is imperilled" (UNDP, 1995, p. 1). The PSA emerged to critique to a number of development practices and methodologies, particularly the power relations structure perpetuated by concepts such as 'development', 'development assistance' and 'women' in the developing world (UNGEI, 2012, p. 4). It raised critical questions about gender identity and the binary construct through languages as discussed above (see Post-Structural Feminist Theory).

Bourdieu's Theory on Cultural Reproduction

Culture of reproduction means the generational transmission of cultural values, norms, and experience and the mechanisms and processes (Giddens, 2010, p. 846). In these transmissions, learning and school play a critical part. The reproduction of dominant ideology, forms of learning, and the distribution of skills required to perpetuate the

social division of labour are among the key goals of schools, according to several critical educators (Giroux, 1983, as stated in Poudel, 2007). Pierre Bourdieu, who is the theorist of culture of reproduction, agrees that schooling reproduces inequalities by favouring the dominant group through the use of their cultural capital such as language, ideas, and knowledge of music, art, and literature in school's curriculum that put dominant group in advantaged position. According to him, education is a place where culture is reproduced. It is seen as a place where social and cultural inequities are passed down from generation to generation. Schooling, according to Bourdieu, contributes to the reproduction of dominant cultures, which comprises patriarchal culture.

Various notions employed by Bourdieu include habitus, field, capital, symbolic violence, and practise. Habitus refers to the "mental or cognitive frameworks" that humans use to interact with others. People have a set of internalised schemes that allow them to see, comprehend, understand, and assess the social world. People produce their practises, as well as assess and evaluate them, through such frameworks (Ritzer, 2000, p. 534.).

Habitus is also defined as the learned dispositions/traits adopted by people in connection to the social contexts inside which they dwell and move through, such as physical comportment, methods of speaking, or ways of thinking and behaving (Giddens, 2010, p. 846). "Internalized, embodied 'social systems," according to Bourdieu. The social world both produces and is generated by the habitus. It is, however, a "structured structure," which implies it is a structure that is shaped by the social world (Bourdieu, 1989, as cited in Ritzer, 2000, p. 534).

The field is a web of relationships between objective positions. It's a form of competitive market where various types of capitals (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic) are used and employed (Bourdieu, 1992, p, 97 as cited in Ritzer, 2000, p. 535). Fields are also thought to be the starting point for a never-ending contest for positions in which numerous factors interact with habit to develop, preserve, change, and enhance a perception of legitimate value. Differential access to authority and sources of wealth or resources shapes the battles for positions.

Social capital (a variety of valued relationships with significant persons), cultural capital (mainly valid knowledge of one form or another), symbolic capital (prestige and

social honour), and economic capital are the four types of capital. The school is in charge of cultural capital reproduction among various capitals. Cultural capital, according to Bourdieu, can take three forms: embodied state (as in our methods of thinking, speaking, and moving), objectified state (as in the acquisition of pieces of art, books, or clothing), and institutional state (as in educational qualifications) (Gidden, 2010, p. 847). Schools reinforces cultural capital by replicating the privileged's cultural capital and placing them in more privileged circumstances for success. This idea of reproduction pertains not just to the reproduction of dominant class culture, but also to gender, as it replicates patriarchal culture, which, according to feminist theories, is the underlying source of gender disparity.

Educational institutions transmit dominating patriarchal values and norms through curriculum content and teaching practices. In many instances both the formal and the informal curriculum reinforce traditional gender stereotypes and perpetuate the gender division of labour. Just as girls are socialized into viewing their own subordination as doxa in the family sphere, so do they - in the school system - become socialized into perceiving as natural the conventional female roles and the lower values attributed to these roles? The reproduction of gender inequality occurs at all levels in the educational system.

As poststructuralist feminists think, Bourdieu too thinks that the social basis of male domination is often concealed through powerful ideological mechanisms, such as the naturalization of gender inequality, so that women experience their subordination and men experience their domination as inevitable and natural. Human beings are bound to perceive the world from the perspective of some fundamental dualistic concepts, like public/private, active/passive, strong/weak, male/female/, masculine / feminine etc. which structure people's patterns of thinking, action, behaviour and organisation of life, work and activities. The first term in the binary is male and privileged, whereas the second term is feminine and disadvantaged, according to these terms. Women and men are thus attributed different roles, activities and tasks which legitimise the segregation between the sexes and the subordination of women.   The socially constructed segregation between men and women is perceived as natural because the organisation of the social world is structured according to these dualistic gender principles which, through socialisation, are incorporated into bodily behaviour and into what Bourdieu

calls habitus that is in the cultural schemes for perception, thinking, classification, and action. The masculine dominance is thus naturalised in the social world and incorporated into the habitus of the individuals, since habitus "works at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and acts" (Bourdieu, P.1977). As a result, dominated women and dominating males employ the same dualistic categories. That is to say, women consider themselves to be inferior. They contribute to their own subjection and reproduce gender inequality in this way. This is what Bourdieu refers to as symbolic violence, which is a sort of power that is not based on physical force or coercion, but rather on an invisible form of power in which subjugated women are socialised into doxa, which means taking things for granted (Bourdieu, 1999, as cited in Ankerbo & Hoyda, 2003).

Nitya Rao and Munchi Hossain (2011) talk about education as empowerment and learner's understanding of these constraints and challenging them for a change. They also discuss 'Male-Bias' which exclude women in policies. Education for empowerment builds learners' understanding of how gender, race, and class, as well as other dimensions of identity, limit life possibilities, as well as their knowledge of how to overcome these restrictions, they write. Unless deliberate efforts are made to the contrary, education maintains inequities. Educational institutions do not work in a vacuum from the rest of society; they must be recognised for what they are: a component of a larger network of institutions that define social expectations, as well as educational opportunities and outcomes. "Institutional male bias" (Elson, 1991) means that debates and conversations about education policy can often end up excluding women and other marginalised socioeconomic groups from mainstream educational systems, further entrenching and reinforcing stereotypes.

Summers (1994) discovered that depravation is a vicious cycle at the micro level, i.e., at the household level; parents don't really spend on their daughters because they do not expect them to be able to contribute financially to the family, and therefore the prophecy becomes self-fulfilling. According to Khan (1993), families consider the direct and opportunity costs of schooling to be significant because girls assist in the care of their siblings as well as domestic and farm duties. Because boys can pay to their own maintenance while in school, the direct cost of teaching girls may be higher than those of educating boys. It is tied to the labour market, according to Summers (1994), where

females may make far less than their male counterparts, preventing them from being self-sufficient. Women's education has been proved to give a better rate of return than just about any other investments in the developing world. Girls who are educated have more economic potential, their families have a greater stake in their success and survival, they marry later and thus are better able to participate in household decision - making, and they insist on having fewer children, allowing them to invest more in each child's health and development (Summers, 1994). This demonstrates how one girl's education can have an impact on the following generation of both sexes, if not farther.

According to Jain (2003), girls must be included in as many different professions as possible in society, and the necessity for investments in their learning must be acknowledged. If this occurs, it will alter the overall job environment for women and, as a result, will encourage parents and societies to favour female education. Improving girls' education will help close the gender gap in employment and earnings, as well as provide substantial non-market benefits such as better child nutrition and reduced fertility (Strauss and Thomas, 1995, Khalid, 2008). According to Vella (1993), attitudes toward female labour are what decide human capital investment. According to Vella's (1993) research, women's attitudes toward women's work emerge in their adolescence and can lead to significant losses in human capital investment, supply of labor, and educational returns (Khalid, 2008, pp. 13-14). At a macro level, discrimination in the labour market must be removed if investments in girls' education are to be made, as this makes it much more economically appealing.

According to Parsons (2009), schooling exists in practically every country; sometimes in countries, girls outshine boys, while in others, they are not permitted to attend school. Girls are more likely than males to attend university in the developed world (Parsons, 2009), but many girls in the poor world will not be able to complete secondary school (Marshall, 2014). Gender inequality can take many various forms, especially in poor countries. Females in the Global South encounter impediments to education, which are often the result of deeply ingrained social and cultural norms such as preferring a son's education, abuse against girls at house and in educational establishments, and family tasks and domestic commitments (Marshall, 2014). All of the aforementioned hurdles, as well as a variety of other concerns that occur, such as a shortage of girls' restrooms or female teachers, exist in India.

According to Tilak and Biswal (2015), increased pressure for higher education has resulted from supply-side expansion and reducing poverty rates in India. They claim, however, that the system is held back by a lack of internal efficiency and learning quality. Naila Kabeer (1999) talks about women's empowerment and how it may be assessed by their choices. When considering women's decisions individually or collectively, she differentiates three different aspects that must be evaluated. First and foremost, empowerment implies choice in terms of resource availability; second, it entails agency in decision-making and ability to negotiate; and third, it entails the attainment of valuable outcomes. According to Kabeer, a proper assessment of empowerment necessitates the triangulation of measurements from all 3 sources (Kabeer, 1999). She discusses access to education and resources, as well as how educational decisions are made, with a focus on gender equality, and how empowerment is measured by educational successes.

In developing nations, female education not just empowers women socially and economically, but it also improves demographic outcomes by lowering fertility rates, improving social life, and increasing economic involvement (Schulz, 1993).

Adolescence is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the period between the ages of 10 and 19. Adolescence is characterized by rapid physical growth, social and psychological changes, sexual maturity, development of adult cognitive processes and transition from childhood to socio-economic dependence to relative independence. This is the time when a person's personality develops. Any pleasant or poor life event contributes to a person's lifetime. This is the age when a person's development has the greatest impact. This is an age group marked by multiple issues of psychology and physical traits. According to Erik Erikson (1950), this really is the time when adolescents are trying to figure out who they are, negotiating and battling with social connections, and forming a sense of morality and what is good and wrong. Children that succeed in this phase develop a positive sense of identity and remain faithful to their views and ideals in the face of adversity. Teenagers who battle to develop a good attitude as adults are more likely to struggle. According to Woods (1995), if young girls' relations are suppressive or repressive, development is hindered. Period is characterized by Identity vs. Role Confusion, as per Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory (1950). Ideological viewpoints are established by Erikson's

'related aspects of social order.' Adolescents who succeed at this age have a healthy self-esteem and thus are able to stick to their views and ideals in the face of difficulties and differing viewpoints. Teenagers who struggle to take on a positive role as adults are more likely to struggle to "find" themselves. Because this is the stage of life that shapes an individual's future, it is the responsibility of society and government to provide numerous opportunities, together with education and exposure to adolescents, through their programmes and policies, so that the youth can develop a positive attitude and contribute to the development of a better society.

Amartya Sen (1999) and Martha Nussbaum (2000) proposed the 'capacity approach,' which raised problems about the definitions of educational rights and the political foundations of the desire for gender equality. Sen and Nussbaum have discussed the importance of education like a critical capability. This strategy comes with responsibilities as well, setting and maintaining the conditions for everyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, or region, to achieve desired goals. It may involve guaranteeing that each person achieves a specific degree of educational attainment, which would surely necessitate ensuring the necessary freedoms to communicate and achieve valued results. Education policies form the base for creating a sustainable environment for the support of education. The major obstacle faced by girls is that the education policies are uniform for everyone, which often fails to cater to needs of the specialized groups. Inequality is rooted in the policies itself.

Improved female education, according to Unterhalter et al. (2014), can contribute to overall gender equality by allowing a new generation of educated females to participate in political, social, cultural, economic, and technological spheres, changing gender norms, attitudes, and identities in both sexes, and changing gender norms in a variety of institutions at all levels.

In "Towards Gender Equality In Education" by Vimla Ramachandran, 2009, the author talks about GPI (Gender Parity Index) and its criticism. She says that GPI is like a snapshot of a moment in time; it doesn't capture the fluidity of the transitions happening. It is to be noted here that GPI is the girls to boys' ratio in a given educational setting. She also talks about the access to education for boys and girls and shows that there is clearly a gender gap even at the primary level across India. It talks about how the availability of higher education institutions (like availability of secondary and

higher secondary educational facilities in the same locality where the primary educational facilities are there) in a given setting/locality propels the parents to go for the higher education for their children, for both girls and boys. Presence of higher education facilities act as suction pumps that pull children from the elementary education cycle. The challenges lie in the dropout rates which still ranges from 28% to 50% in the year 2003-04 for primary schools while it was much higher in the year 1990. In the Elementary level, it is a much higher rate. Poverty, hunger and work are the primary reasons for drop outs even at the primary and elementary education across India. Besides, there is a huge difference in the learning levels achieved by the primary and elementary education in terms of educational goals achieved. A high percentage of children fell short of the goals that elementary education seeks to achieve as per ASER data of recent years. ASER data also shows that boys to girls' ratio in the private schools is 60:40 which is disturbing. At post-primary level, the problem of access to education of higher levels is consistent. 'UN girls' educational initiative and EFA fast track initiative, 2010' about equity and inclusion in education worldwide. The '11th five-year plan, 2007-12' focused on inclusive growth as a key to ensuring that all Indian citizens enjoy socio-economic development as part of nation's growth. The '12th five-year plan (2012-17)' emphasised on education: it lays stress on the four key elements of education, namely, Access, Equity, Quality and Governance. The NEP 2020 also lays stress on the learning outcomes at all levels of education.

In India, "Educational Access in India", 2009 (NEUPA), and "Access to Elementary Education in India: Country Analytical Review", 2008 by R Govinda and M. Bandyopadhyay, point out that the major causes of exclusion include:

    i. Gender,

    ii. Coming from Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe community,

    iii. Location of schools, and

    iv. Poverty

Other factors include First generation Learners, Health, Quality of Provisions provided (Like, Poor Infrastructure of schools, untrained teachers, Learning Inputs)[19].

Annemie Maertens discusses fairness and inclusion in education worldwide in "Does education pay off- a subjective expectation of return in rural India" in "UN Girls'(UN Girls, 2010) educational initiative and EFA fast track programme, 2010." She also discusses the state of education system in India (Maertens,2010). The subjective expectation of parents in their investment on education of children, and how this expectation leads to different investments and also how it varies with gender is talked about in it. In "Dropout rate at primary level- a study from DISE data in the years 2003-04 and 2004-05" the author Arun Mehta talks about the goals of SSA to achieve Universal Primary education by 2007, and Universal Elementary Education by 2010. It talks about the enrolment rates, dropout rates, and retention rates in the years 2003-04, and 2004-05 state-wise. According to the review, the state of Bihar falls way below the national average in the above-mentioned years.

In her 1996 study, 'Equity In Education: Schooling of Dalit Children in India,' Geetha Nambissan says that, in addition to poor infrastructure, Dalit children's schooling is harmed by a lack of effective pedagogic support to gain linguistic, numerical, and cognitive competencies. The Dalit children's learning experiences are shaped by their instructors' and school administration's indifference. Until now, the variables affecting Dalit children's education were thought to be 'outside' the educational system. She claims that current studies indicate to internal schooling and education system flaws as systemic defects that are to blame for Dalit children's poor performance as compared to other castes. Caste system, she further argues, is the historical reason for the exclusion of the Dalits from the education.

In her work 'The Progress of School Education in India,' Geeta Gandhi Kingdon (2007) analyses school access in terms of enrolment and attendance rates. She looks at literacy rates, learning attainment levels, school resources, and teacher inputs to determine the quality of education. Despite all of the disadvantages, she believes the good news is that primary school enrolment rates have approached universal levels in India. However, attendance and retention are far from universal. Furthermore, secondary

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[19] Educational Access in India, 2009 (NEUPA).

enrolment rates are very low, learning outcomes are poor, and teacher absenteeism is significant. Her research also looks on the role of private education in India. The rise of private schools has sparked concerns about growing educational inequity, as evidence suggests that private schools are somewhat more efficient in inculcating learning levels and also much more cost effective, as they pay market competitive wages to teachers, as opposed to government schools, which pay teachers according to administratively set minimum standards. The scenario is somewhat as follows: government teachers receive about one fifth of what teachers in private schools get. She argues that India's position in terms of education is at par with most backward nations in the world, including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sub-Saharan African countries, while its performance is much below even Sri Lanka and China. India has, she says, 22% of world's population but it has world's 46 % of the world's illiterate. Lack of supply of the nearby secondary schools also plays a big role in the high drop-out rates after primary level of education. There is likely to be a rise in demand for secondary schools as the private schools are rising in number, which the author says is a grave concern, and also because of the perceived benefits of higher education in the minds of the parents. In relation to educational accomplishments, Bihar lags far behind the majority of Indian states. According to the author, a female in Bihar is half as likely as a boy to enrol in secondary school. She also claims that one of the causes of gender disparity is found in the home. The attendance rates, rather than the enrolment rates, are more accurate measure of the schooling participation of the students. Attendance rates show that the student is participating in the educational process, while enrolment rate may be misleading as a student may not be coming to school, or coming to school only a few times per month. Any major improvement in the literacy rates of this nation, according to her, is possible only when the BIMARU states, namely, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh improve their literacy and educational performance at primary and secondary levels. Many studies suggest that the number of years and learning achievements have a direct link with the returns in terms of employment and enumerations. Absenteeism by teachers also affects the learning outcomes of the children. She also argues that the emergence of a large number of private primary schools are an indicator to the fact that the children and parents both take government schools to be of low in quality or below par. Also, she reveals that the true size of the private sector in schooling is three times more than that shown officially. Private school enrolment has risen sharply in recent years, particularly in urban areas. Private schools

are responsible for about 96 percent of the rise in primary school enrolment in rural areas.

According to Prabhat P Ghosh and Kumar Rana's 2006 report "Elementary Education in Bihar: Progress and Challenges," the following factors contribute to Bihar's poor performance in primary and secondary education:

i. Education level of parents: It is one of the most challenging problems. As the first-generation learners, the expectation of their parents is low for girls.

ii. Availability of kits at home: One of the important factors for learning for children are educational help at home and its unavailable to 40 percent of the children.

iii. Parents' gender discrimination due of their attitudes about girls: Parents demonstrate significant gender prejudice in favour of their boys in terms of desired educational levels.

iv. Lack of school buildings and other facilities:

   a. Without drinking water facility within the premises,

   b. Without toilet,

   c. Without separate toilet for girls,

   d. Without blackboards in all classrooms and

   e. Without adequate teaching kit.

v. Insufficient Number of teachers: The average number of teachers in a primary school is only 3.6, against the average number of sanctioned posts of 5.4 teachers.

vi. The prevalence of private tuition: A vital aspect of the dis-functioning of the schools is the insufficient inspection system.

Although, government of India's SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) has done a commendable job, the task is far from being complete. We are still away from the dream of universal education. The girl child is farther away from this dream of getting

universal education. The caste/class nature of society, rural-urban divide, gender, region, and systemic failures of the schools/institutions all add up to make the education of a girl child, her continuance in studies a difficult task. Bihar being one of the underdeveloped states, the rural Bihar being more antagonistic to the idea of education of girls, and then coming down to an SC/ST caste girl, makes her perhaps at the lowermost step of the ladder. She seems to me the last one in the queue to whom the education seems to be a luxury. The state of Bihar, a rural area in it, and looking at the girls will make me see the 'picture from below'.

Educational Schemes of Bihar[20]

- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**

  Free and compulsory education is a fundamental right for kids from 6 to 14 years old under the 86th amendment to the Indian Constitution. In order to achieve this purpose, SSA was established in the year 2000-01.

- **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)**

  The objective of the scheme was to provide access to upper primary education for disadvantaged girls in the age group of 10-14 years.These girls,generally remain outside the educational system due to persistent socio-economic and cultural reasons.

- **Mukhya Mantri Samagra Vidyalaya Vikas Yojna**

  The Chief Minister Scholl Development Plan includes:

  a) Renovation of dilapidated building

  b) Major repairs of School Building Classroom

  c) Additional Class Rooms (ACRs)

  d) Drinking Water/Toilet

  e) Kitchen Shed/Ramps

  f) Boundary wall/Garden

  g) Sport Facility

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[20] https://state.bihar.gov.in/educationbihar/Content.html?links&page=FACTS_SCHEMES

- **Mukhya Mantri Balika Poshak Yojna**

  In order to address the issue of enrolment as well as retention of the girl child, the State government has taken a decision to support the girl child of Classes VI-VII with a pair of dresses to all enrolled girls in 2006-07.

- **Mukhya Mantri Poshak Yojna**

  After the success of the above scheme, the State Government introduced the uniform scheme all students of Classes III-V. The State provides @Rs. 500/- per child for a pair of school uniform with shoes.

- **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)**

  This is a centrally sponsored programme that began in 2009. Its goal is to make secondary education more accessible. RMSA's mission is to make high-quality secondary education available, accessible, and reasonable to all young people between the ages of 15 and 16.

- **Girls Hostel Scheme (GH)**

  Girls Hostel Scheme is under RMSA in which Girls Hostel would be established in each of the 530 educationally backward blocks of Bihar. The Girls students in the age group of 14-18 years, studying in classes IX to X belonging to SC, ST OBC, Minority Communities and BPL families will form the target group of the scheme.

- **Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Yojna/Cycle Yojna**

  Scheme was started with an aim to reduce the gender gap in secondary school enrolment by providing girls who continued to secondary school, financial assistance to purchase a bicycle, that would improve their access to school.

- **Mukhyamantri Kishor Swasthya Yojna**

  One of the reasons that have led to the dropout of girls in secondary schools is their attainment of puberty. The schemes to provide sanitary napkin to girls was started by the State Government in order to reduce this tendency and promote hygiene.

- **Avasar Badhe. Aage Padhein**

  To expand the opportunities for technical and higher educational in the State itself for the youth, the Government would be establishing various new

institutions. Five new medical colleges and nursing colleges in all medical universities would be established.

Important statistics on Indian Education

➢ Girls account for 53 percent of the 67 million out-of-school children aged 6 to 10 years, and 52 percent of lower secondary out-of-school teenagers (ACEI, 2014).

➢ A/t the NFHS 2019-20 women married before 18 years are 43.4% rural areas compared to 27.9% in urban.

➢ The male literacy rate in Bihar was considerably higher, at 79.7% compared to 60.5 percent for females (75th National Sample Survey Round).

➢ 23% of urban households and 4% of rural households possess computers (75th Round of National Sample Survey).

➢ 36% of rural children received some learning materials from the school and the figure for Bihar was less than 8% (ASER 2020).

➢ The report also pointed out to the per child expenditure in Kerala spending Rs 11,574 with 92.07% female literacy and lowest spending is Rs 2,869 in Bihar with 51.5% female literacy rate.

➢ Despite the fact that the RTE Act has improved the GER of girls in school, the dropout rate at the basic level remains high, at 40%. In India, the dropout rate amongst adolescent girls is 63.5 percent (MoSPI, 2012).

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

The chapter discusses in details the research methodology employed for the study. The mix-method research design has been used for the study. The methodology includes sampling technique, data collection procedures, research instruments and data-analysis. A detailed literature review of the academic journals, articles and books has been done as secondary sources to support the study. The primary data collection been done by conducting interviews with 40 stake holders namely parents, teachers and students (10, 20 and 10 respectively). Open ended questions were included in the questionnaire for the deep understanding of the proposed research question and to also assess educational and environmental status of the girls in these two districts. The main purpose of this research is to investigate how gender and socio-economic situations affect gender parity in government schools of the two districts i.e., Saran and Muzaffarpur.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

(i)   To analyze trends in participation, grade progression and completion rates in upper primary education in Bihar with special focus on the districts of Muzaffarpur and Saran;

(ii)   To analyze trends and patterns in gender parity in access, retention and completion rates at upper primary education in Muzaffarpur and Saran districts; and

(iii)   To substantiate the findings of the quantitative analysis of gender parity in upper primary education through case studies of at least one school each from Muzaffarpur and Saran districts.

Research Questions

Given the specific objectives, among others, the study would make an attempt to answer the following key questions:

(i)   What are the trends in enrolment, retention, and completion rates in school education (Grades I-X) in Bihar between 2014/15 and 2019/20?

(ii)   Has there been any trends in these rates between 2014-15 and 2019-20 In Saran and Muzaffarpur districts?

(iii)   Do there exist gender disparities in participation in and internal efficiency of school education (grades I-IX) in general and upper primary education in particular in Bihar and Saran and Muzaffarpur districts?

(iv)   If large gender disparities are found in Bihar and the study districts, what policy and programmatic measures are being implemented in the state to deal with issues relating to gender equity in school education?

(v)   What is the extent of information or knowledge gap of the stakeholders about benefits of education? Has it affected participation of children in any way?

(vi)   What is the household perception about investing in girls' education?
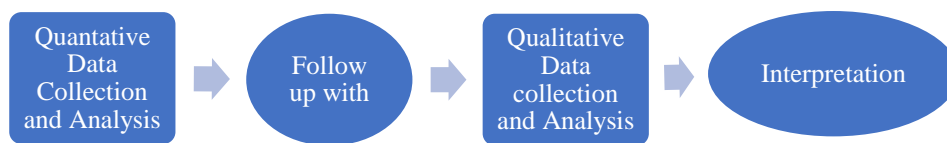
Methodology and Research Design

The study has made use of the mixed method design by combining appropriate elements of quantitative and qualitative research designs. It is a sequential explanatory mixed method research. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design (also called a two-phase model; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) consists of first collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. The rationale to choose this design is that the quantitative data presents general information about the problem and the qualitative data is required to explain, extend the general picture. The quantitative approach in the study is to analyse available school education statistics, including administrative and survey data, using prevailing methods of estimating and interpreting key performance indicators relating access, participation, retention, completion and internal efficiency rates in school education. The study has specifically focused on gender disparities in participation and internal efficiency of upper primary education in Bihar, and Saran and Muzaffarpur districts.

The qualitative elements of the study have been to substantiate some of the findings of the quantitative analysis by adopting qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. For example, case studies of select schools, focus group discussions of key stakeholders, and other ethnographic methods to locate individuals' stories within the context. Accordingly, at the micro level, the study has covered 4 select schools (2 from each district) and key stakeholders of these schools, including parents and community members. The coverage of the case study would be limited to government schools only. The theoretical framework for gender analysis as discussed in the first chapter of this study had been adopted while providing micro level explanations of gender disparities in school education in Muzaffarpur and Saran districts.

Explanatory Sequential Design

In an explanatory sequential mixed methods design (also known as a two-phase model; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), quantitative data is collected first, followed by qualitative data to assist explain or expound on the quantitative results. The justification for using this strategy is that quantitative data provides broad information about the problem, while qualitative data is needed to explain and expand on that knowledge.

This method helped me understand trends and relationships with quantitative data but also, gave explanations and the mechanism or reasons behind the resultant trends. Since it was a two-phase structure, it was straightforward to implement, because it allowed me to understand each phase in a comprehensive manner and collect only one type of data at a time. The design provided me with the liberty to write quantitative section in the beginning followed by a qualitative section, making it straightforward to write and providing a clear delineation for readers.

Quantative Data Collection and Analysis → Follow up with → Qualitative Data collection and Analysis → Interpretation

Adapted from Creswell, 2002, p-541

Sources of Data

The study has made use of the following key sources of **secondary data**, including administrative data:

- The Census of India, including District Handbooks of Saran and Muzaffarpur districts;
- Reports of the Technical Group on Population Projections, MoHFW;
- Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE), NIEPA;
- Unified District Information System for Education Plus (U-DISE+), Department of School Education and Literacy, MoE;
- NSS (75th Round) Reports, including Household Social Consumption on Education;
- Economic Survey of Bihar;
- NFHS reports;
- Statistical Publications of Ministry of education, MoE;
- Policy and plan documents of Bihar, including Annual Work Plan and Budget of Samagra Shiksha in Bihar and Saran and Muzaffarpur districts;
- Available research and evaluation reports.

Primary data, mostly qualitative in nature, has been collected using semi-structured tools for key stakeholders through interviews. The female literacy rate of Muzaffarpur district is 56.82 and that of Saran is 56.89% (Census of India 2011). Both the districts are below the national average of 74 percent. The primary survey entails in depth interviews with the authorities, i.e., Headmasters and teachers. Parents have also been interviewed and their attitude towards girls' education had been collected through the interviews. Lastly, the community attitude towards girls' education was assessed through Quasi-Participant Observation during the interviews with various stakeholders at village or panchayat level and local people will also be interviewed to analyse their opinions about girl education. Most importantly, interaction with young adolescent girls and boys in small groups would be attempted to gather qualitative data on their views of education and household perception of their education.

Map of Saran District
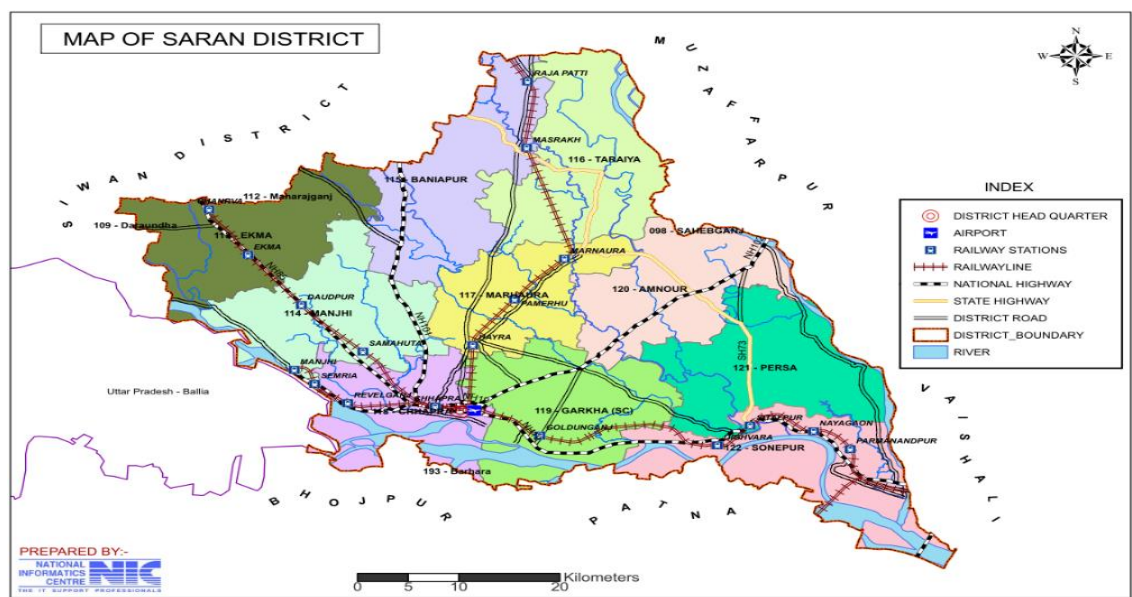
Saran is the seventh-largest city in Bihar, with a population of 39,51,862 people and an area of 2,641 square kilometres. In terms of population density per square kilometre. Saran is the state's eighth most densely inhabited district, with 1,496 people per square kilometre, compared to the state's 1,106. Saran is ranked 3rd in the state in terms of sex-ratio (954 vs. 918). Saran is ranked 29th in the state in terms of child sex-ratio (926) compared to 935 in the state. The district of Saran has 194 deserted villages (of of 1,764 total settlements). The most populous village (27,262) is Sabalpur (under Sonepur C.D. Block), followed by Jazira No.36 (under Sonepur C.D. Block) (Unsurvyed) The

district's least inhabited villages (8) are found in the Revelganj C.D. Block. Block, C.D. The district's biggest number of villages (196) is in Dariapur, while the district's lowest number of villages is in C.D.Block Lahladpur (39). Among the villages in the district, Sabalpur (under Sonepur C.D. Block) has the largest area (2,667 hectare), while Bahora (under Taraiya C.D. Block) and Mirzapur (under Parsa C.D. Block) have the smallest (1 hectare apiece) (DISTRICT CENSUS HANDBOOK OF SARAN, 2011).

Brief History of Saran

In the southern section of the often freshly constituted Saran Division in north Bihar, the district of Saran is located between 25o30' and 26o13' North latitude and 84o24' and 85o15' N East latitude. The Ganges forms the district's southern boundary, beyond which are the districts of Bhojpur and Patna. The districts of Siwan and Gopalganj are located to the north. In the east, the Gandak forms a dividing line between the districts of Vaishali and Muzaffarpur. To the west of Saran is part of Siwan and the district of Ballia in Uttar Pradesh, with the Ghaghra forming a natural boundary between Saran and Ballia. The Ghaghra forming a natural boundary between Saran and Ballia contains three Sub-Divisions: Chapra Sadar, Mrhoura, and Sonepur, all of which have their headquarters in Chapra. Chapra is the district's most populous town. There are 20 Community Development Blocks and 15 Anchals.

Saran is one of the Six Sarkars (Revenue divisions) that make up the province of Bihar, according to the historical backdrop recorded in the Ain-I-Akbari. There were eight Sarkars at the time of the East India Company's diwani grant in 1765, including Saran and Champaran. These two were eventually merged to become Saran, a single unit. When the commissioner's divisions were established in 1829, Saran (together with Champaran) was included in the Patna Division. When Champaran became a distinct district in 1866, it was split from the rest of the state. When Tirhut Division was formed in 1908, Saran was declared a part of it. Saran, Siwan, and Gopalganj were the three sub-divisions of this district at the time. In 1972 each sub-division of the old Saran district became an independent district.

After the split of Siwan and Gopalganj, the Saran district headquarters remained at Chapra. The origin of the name Saran has been the subject of several theories. Saran was once known as Sarana or sanctuary, according to General Cunningham, which was

the name given to a monument (pillar) constructed by Emperor Ashoka to celebrate the conversion to Buddhism of certain fabled demons who ate human flesh. He reasoned that the stupa's location must be near Arrah. Another theory is that Saran is derived from saranga-aranya, which means "deer woodland." In prehistoric times, the region was known for its vast tracts of woodland and deer. Another account worth reiterating is as followsSaran is a derivation of Sakra Aranya, which is yet another nickname for Indra and means "forest of Sakra." This forest is claimed to have blanketed the land near Visala, where King Sumati greeted Lord Ramchandra on his route from Ayodhya to Mithila with Vaishwamitra. Another tale claims that the names Arrah, Saran, and Champaran are corruptions of the old Sanskrit names Aranya, Saranya, and Champaranya, which are derived from the dense trees that cover these locations. (DISTRICT CENSUS HANDBOOK SARAN, 2011).

Map of Muzaffarpur District

Muzaffarpur is the third-largest city in Bihar, with a population of 48,01,062 people and a land area of 3,172 square kilometres. In terms of population density per square kilometre. Muzaffarpur is the state's sixth most densely inhabited district, with 1,514 people per square kilometre, compared to the state's 1,106. In terms of sex-ratio,

Muzaffarpur is ranked 30th (900) out of 918 cities in the state. In terms of child sex-ratio, Muzaffarpur is ranked 36th (915) out of 935 cities in the state. In the Muzaffarpur district, there are 67 deserted villages (out of 1,786 total villages). Under Baruraj, Bariarpur urf Bazidpur (Motipur) The district's most populous village (42,775) is C.D. Block, while the least populous village (four) is Arazi Pirhari (within Gaighat C.D. Block). Block, C.D. Kurhani has the most villages (166) in the district, while C.D. Block has the most. The smallest number of settlements is in Dholi (Moraul) (37). Under Baruraj, Bariarpur urf Bazidpur (Motipur) Among the villages in the district, C.D. Block has the greatest size (3,315 hectare), while Haraiya Chhapra (under Minapur C.D. Block) and Raj Khand (under Katra C.D. Block) have the smallest (2 hectare apiece). Muzaffarpur is known as the district that produces "Lichhi". (DISTRICT CENSUS HANDBOOK SARAN, 2011).

Brief History of Muzaffarpur

The district of Muzaffarpur forms part of the North Bihar plains and is located centrally in Tirhut Division. The old Muzaffarpur district was created in 1875 for the sake of administrative convenience by splitting up the earlier district of Tirhut. It was named after its principal city, Muzaffarpur, founded in the 18th century by Muzaffar Khan, an amil (revenue farmer). Muzaffarpur district now has two subdivisions, Muzaffarpur East and Muzaffarpur West, consisting of 9 and 7 development blocks respectively, following the formation of Sitamarhi and Vaishali districts (which were previously subdivisions of Muzaffarpur district) in 1972 as a consequence of re - organization of districts in the State.

Purba Champaran, Sheohar, and Sitamarhi districts border the district on the north, Vaishali and part of Saran district on the south, Darbhanga and Samastipur (part) districts on the east, and Saran and Gopalganj districts on the west. Both subdivisions' headquarters are in Muzaffarpur, the district's largest city and administrative centre.

The name of the district, as stated earlier, has been derived after its principal city, Muzaffarpur. The earlier part of the history of the district as described in the 1961 District Census Handbook mentions that little is known about the original inhabitants of this ancient land of North Bihar. Glimpses of its early history can, however, be had from the accounts and legends preserved in the Vedic literature. According to an

account, the Videhas of Aryan stock accompanied by Agni, the God of fire, marched eastwards from the banks of the river Saraswati. On reaching the banks of Gandak they were told by Agni to settled to the east of that river, which they did. They cleared the marshes and took up cultivation. They also founded a powerful kingdom which later came to be ruled by the great king Janak, whose daughter Sita was married to Lord Rama. The kingdom of Janak, known as Mithila, was the most progressive of the contemporary kingdoms. The court of the king of Mithila was a great centre of learning to which scholars from different parts of the country were drawn. Yajnavalkya, the famous swage who undertook the revision of Yajurveda, was the chief priest of king Janak.

The district's recorded history begins with the establishment of the Vrijjian Republic, which succeeded the Videhan dynasty. The Republic's capital, Vaishali, was also relocated from Mithila to Vaishali, which is now known as Basarh in the Hajipur district. The Vrijjian Republic was a confederation of eight clans, the most powerful of which being the Lichchhavis. They became stronger through time and eventually came into battle with the mighty kingdom of Magadh. Bimbisar (about 519 B.C.), the founder of Magadh empire, had solidified his position by forming marriage connections with the Kosalas and Lichchhavis, two neighbouring estates. Vaishali was invaded after he was slain by his son Ajatshatru, and Ajatshatru expanded his authority over Tirhut. The foundation of Patliputra (modern Patna) was established at the hamlet of Patali on the banks of the Ganga at this period. To keep an eye on the Lichchhavis on the opposite side of the river, Ajatshatru erected a castle here (DISTRICT CENSUS HANDBOOK SARAN, 2011).

Sampling

The universe of the research study was a total of 4 schools in the two districts of Bihar namely Saran and Muzaffarpur. The four schools were:

1. Utkramit Madhya Vidyalaya, Parauna (Saran)
2. Adarsh Madhya Vidyalaya, Taraiya (Saran)
3. Upper Middle School, Bali-Saraiya (Muzafarpur)
4. Uchcha Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Saraiya (Muzaffarpur)

Tools for Data Collection

The study is based on both primary and secondary data analysis. The secondary sources include information obtained from the literature like books, journals, articles. Information was also collected from the registers and meeting with local heads of the selected slums. Primary source includes the data collected through interviews of various stakeholders.

Questionnaire

A detailed questionnaire was developed to address the research questions mentioned for the purpose of this study. Three set of questionnaires was developed for three types of stakeholders like the teachers, parents and students. The semi-interview consisted of open-ended questions pertaining to the importance of the girl education provided at the schools among the excluded and marginalized community. The interview was aimed to derive information about the way the schemes were implemented and how it benefitted their children. The necessary information about the accessibility of the schools was enquired about. How they ensure that the school at village level is working properly. The accessibility includes important aspect of social outreach and inclusion of the marginalized sections of the society. Detailed interviews with teachers, students and parents helped the study to assess the functioning and outcomes of the schools.

To adjudge the success of the schemes, focus group discussions with parents and girls was organized. Their satisfaction level, discontents and recommendations were considered to draw conclusions about the feasibility of the schemes. The question for the parents was focused on the parent's preference of provision of education between their sons and daughters. The attitude of the parents was recorded on girls' education.

Quasi- Participant Observation

In this, the researcher becomes a member of the group while in non-participant observation, the researcher gains information from outside without being a part of the group. For this study, the researcher used quasi participation technique for collecting

information from households. The researcher interacted closely with members of families but certain activities were observed from distance.

Data Analysis

Nationally and internationally accepted key performance indicators have been used for analysing trends and patterns in participation, grade progression and completion rates in school education. The Reconstructed Cohort Method suggested by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is used to estimate indicators of internal efficiency. The education Sector analysis Methodological Guidelines (Vo. 1, September 2014), jointly developed by UNESCO-IIEP, the World Bank, the UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), is the basis for analysing gender disparities in school education. Appropriate methods have been used to analyse qualitative data collected through case study of four schools.

Limitation of the study

Due to limited time, resources and COVID-19 pandemic several constraints were unavoidable. The sample size of the study is small. The primary data are of only 40 participants. Second, it only includes the information as well as analysis was based from only 3 set of stakeholders'-- i.e., parents, teachers and students. It does not include information from school administration and the other administrative bodies due to COVID-19 and suspension of office hours. The perspective of the school administration has also not been incorporated.

Having discussed the methodology used in the study, the next chapter describes the findings of the data collected from sample households.

CHAPTER 4

Gender Parity in Schools of Saran and Muzaffarpur Districts

Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to investigate Gender Parity in the government primary schools of Bihar and particularly in the districts of Saran and Muzaffarpur. The study delves into the hindrances or barriers related to GE (Girls' Education) access and participation living in the rural areas of Saran and Muzaffarpur with three central objectives of the research being: **i)** to analyze trends participation, grade progression and completion rates in upper primary education in Bihar with special focus on the districts of Muzaffarpur and Saran; **ii)** to analyze trends and patterns in gender parity in access, retention and completion rates at upper primary education in Muzaffarpur and Saran districts; and **iii)** to substantiate the findings of the quantitative analysis of gender parity in upper primary education through case studies of at least one school each from Muzaffarpur and Saran districts to point out factors affecting GE (Girls' Education) in these two districts.

In this chapter first section will deal with quantitative data analysis and then it will delve into the qualitative aspects of the research in the next section.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The section of analysis is based on the data from the secondary sources and components like the participation rates, retention rates, completion rates etc are used to analyse the trends between 2014-15 to 2019-20 and have been done thorough the graphical representation using the percentages to show the empirical evidence. The data is for Bihar and its two districts of Saran and Muzaffarpur where the study was conducted.

To answer the first and second research questions about the enrolment, retention and completion rates following data have been collected and will be analyzed :-

Table 1-Participation Rates (NER) (Bihar)

Year	Primary (I-V)		Upper Primary (VI-VIII)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
2014-15	90.23	95.60	78.71	92.61
2015-16	96.55	100	86.32	100
2016-17	88.62	95.26	84.97	100
2017-18	89.47	91.93	67.10	73.46
2018-19	86.73	89.84	67.85	74.36
2019-20	86.58	89.89	68	74.38

Source: DISE, UDISE, UDISE+
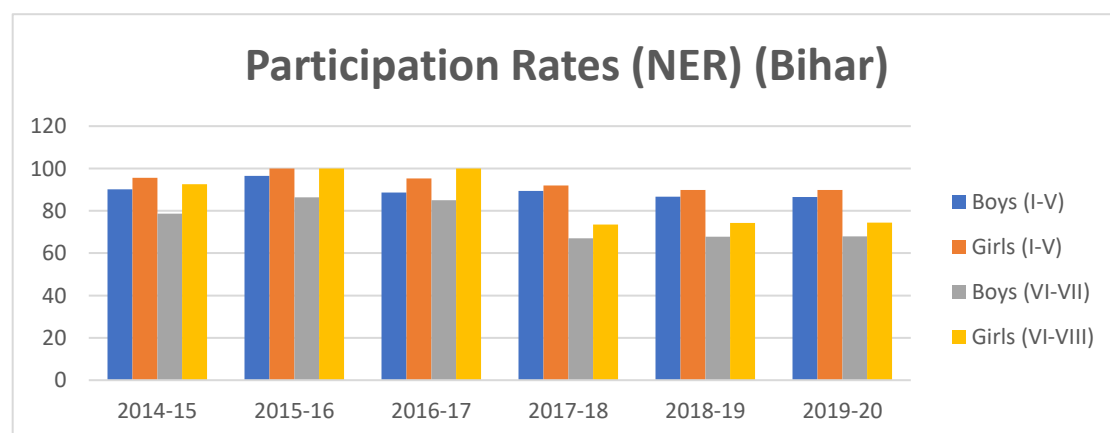
Figure 1: Participation Rates of Boys and Girls in Bihar

Net Enrolment Ratio (NER)

It is the percentage of the population who are enrolled in the official age group for a specific level of schooling. It is used to illustrate the extent to which children and youths in the official age group corresponding to the given level of education are covered in that level of education (UIS Educational Indicators Technical Guidelines).

Calculation method: Divide the number of pupils (or students) enrolled who are of the official age group for a given level of education by the population for the same age group and multiply the result by 100 (UIS Educational Indicators Technical Guidelines).

As per the above Table 1 and Fig 1, the difference in the enrolment between girls and boys could be seen between 2014-15 to 2019-20. The data clearly shows girls participation more than boys. This trend is constant through the given period both in primary and upper primary. Girls have clearly outnumbered boys over the years. This was also found to be true by the researcher during the school visits and interviews.

Table 2- Retention Rates (Bihar)

Year	Grade (I-X)	
	Boys	Girls
2016-17	33.18	36.17
2017-18	36.98	39.33
2019-20	43.1	46.4

Source: DISE, UDISE, UDISE+
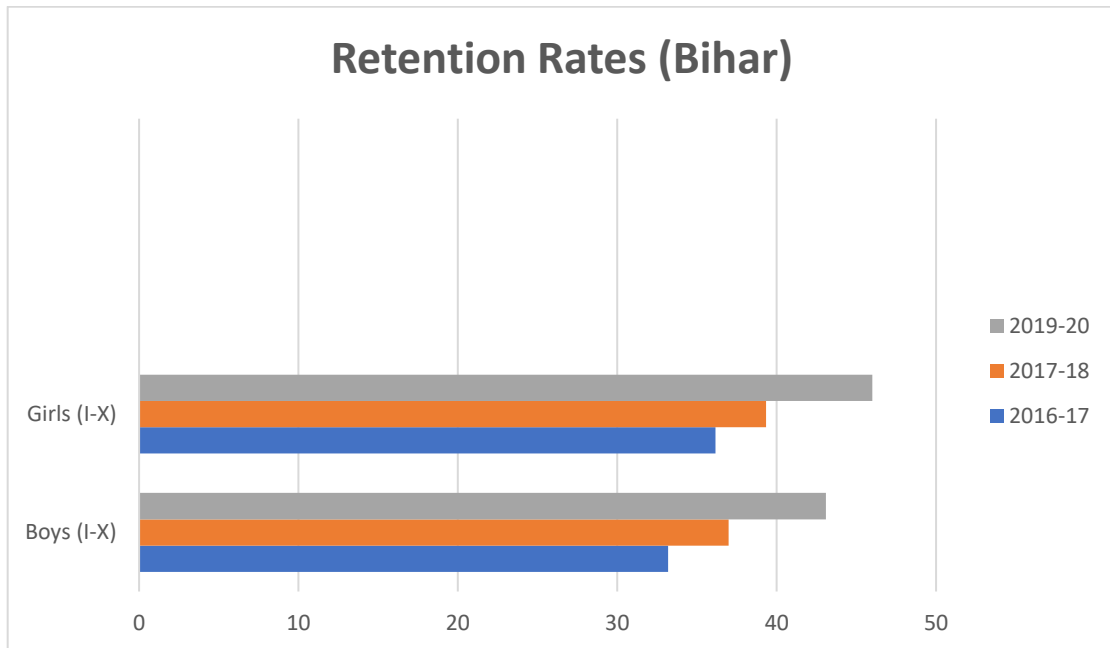
Figure 2: Retention Rates of Boys and Girls in Bihar

Retention Rate

It's the percentage of a cohort of pupils (or students) enrolled in the first grade of a given stage of education in a given school year who are expected to reach the last grade of the stage (UDISE Flash Statistics, 2016-17).

Calculation method: Divide enrolment in Class X excluding repeaters from class X enrolment by the enrolment in class 1, nine years back (Concept and Terms used in Educational Planning and Administration, 2013).

As can be seen from Table 2 and Fig 2, it is clear that girls' retention rates are better than that of the boys between 2016-17 to 2019-20. This means girls have more chances of staying in the primary, upper primary and secondary classes than boys. This continues to be a recurring pattern as the data shows.

Table 3- Completion Rates (Bihar)

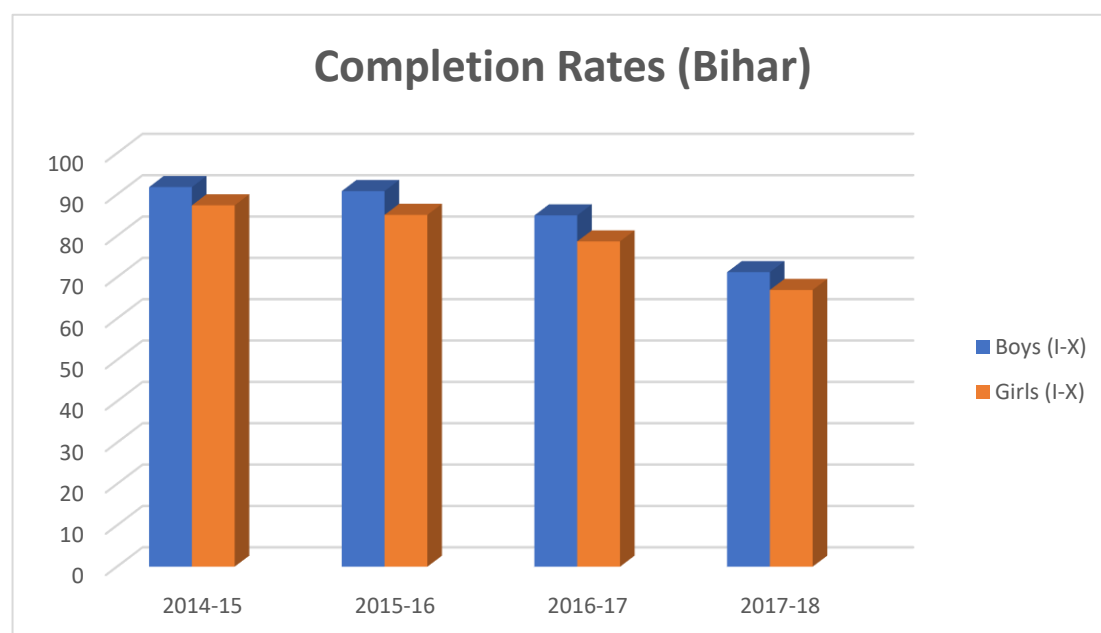| Year	Grade (I-X)	
	Boys	Girls
2014-15	91.80	87.39
2015-16	90.84	85.09
2016-17	84.96	78.66
2017-18	71.23	66.93

Source: DISE, UDISE, UDISE+

Figure 3: Completion Rates of Boys and Girls in Bihar

Completion Rate

It's the percentage of students appeared in the grade X examination during year(x+1) out of the total students enrolled in grade IX during year(x) (UDISE Flash Statistics, 2016-17).

Calculation method:

Number of students who complete a particular school stage of education beginning from initial class of that level of education. Briefly stated, children completing an educational level as a percentage of initial enrolment in the first grade of that level nine years back (Concept and Terms used in Educational Planning and Administration, 2013).

In Table 3 and Fig 3 data shows that although the girls had better participation and better retention at secondary level, their chances of completing Class X are slimmer than the boys. According to the data this has been a constant trend over the years and is worrisome and warrants proper explanations for the particular phenomenon. These questions could be answered as we interpret the qualitative data with the quantitative data.

Trends in Enrolment, Retention and Completion Rates in Bihar (2014 to 2020)

- In enrolment girls have been dominating boys both in Primary and Upper Primary education in Bihar between 2014-15 and 2019-20.
- The retention rates have been available only from 2016-17 to 2019-20, here too girls have out-performed boys over the given period.
- Talking about the completion rates between 2014-15 to 2017-18, here **girls have been left behind** by the boys.

As the third research question is to assess the gender disparities in participation and internal efficiency of school education (Grades I-IX) in Saran and Muzaffarpur, the researcher had used the Reconstructed Cohort Method (RCM), which are as follows:

Cohort Graduation Rate: Total Percentage of pupils enrolled in the first grade of a certain level or cycle of education in a given school year who are projected to finish that grade, regardless of repetition.

Survival rate: Regardless of repetition, the percentage of a cohort of pupils enrolled in the first grade of a certain level or cycle of education in a given school year that are predicted to achieve a given grade.

Years input per graduate: Total pupil years taken by the cohort to complete primary education.

Coefficient of Efficiency

The coefficient of efficiency (CE) is a measure of internal efficiency of an education system which is obtained by –dividing the ideal number of pupil-years required for a pupil-cohort to complete a level or cycle of education by estimated total number of pupil-years actually spent by the same pupil-cohort

RCM DATA CALCULATION (BIHAR)
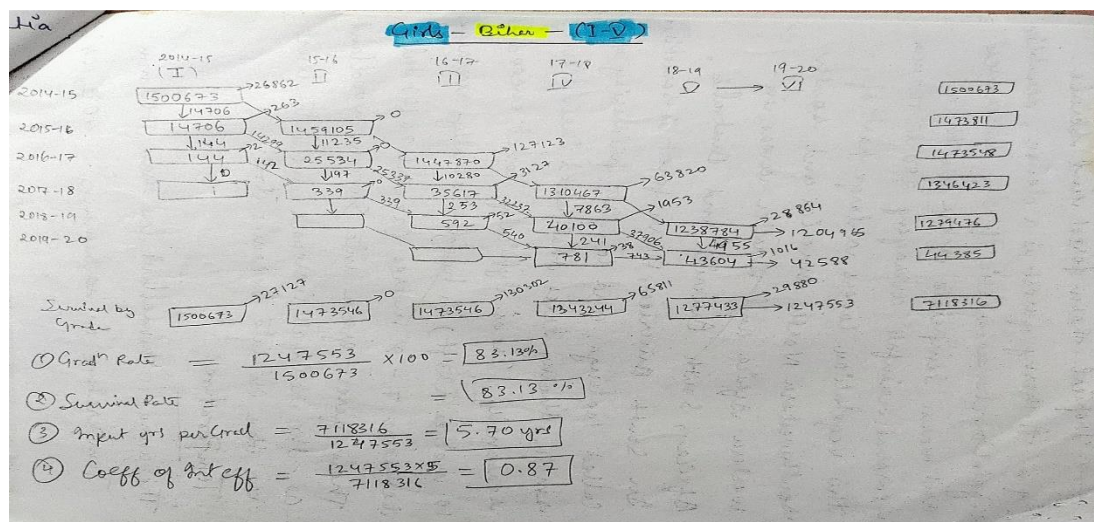
Pic 1- RCM Calculation Girls of Bihar- Grade (I-V)
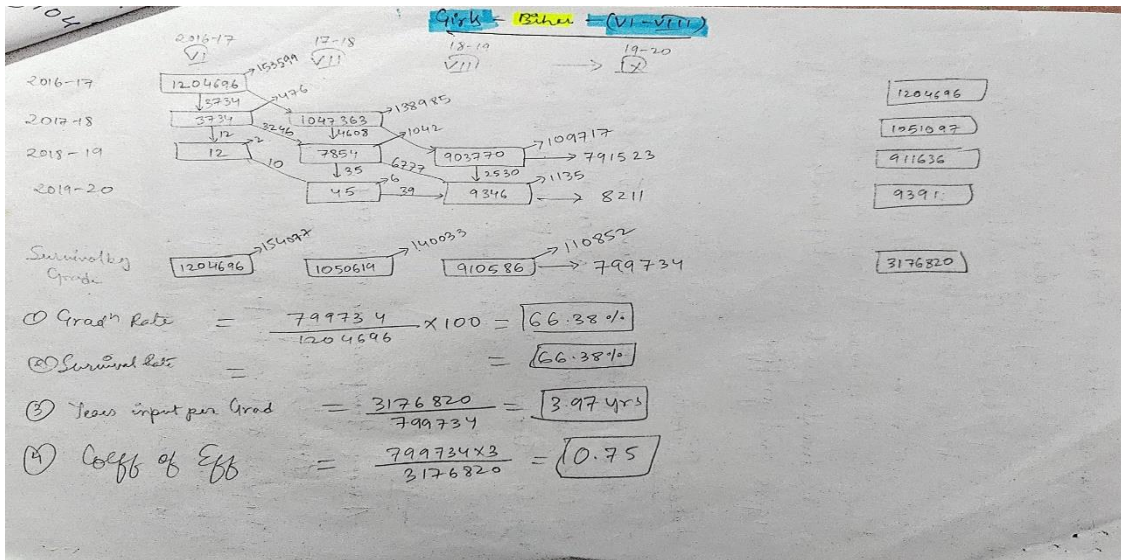
Pic 2- RCM Calculation Girls of Bihar- Grade (VI-VIII)

Girls - Bihar - (VI-VIII)

(1) Grad^n Rate $= \dfrac{799734}{1204696} \times 100 = 66.38\%$

(2) Survival Rate $= 66.38\%$

(3) Years input per Grad $= \dfrac{3176820}{799734} = 3.97\ yrs$

(4) Coeff of Eff $= \dfrac{799734 \times 3}{3176820} = 0.75$
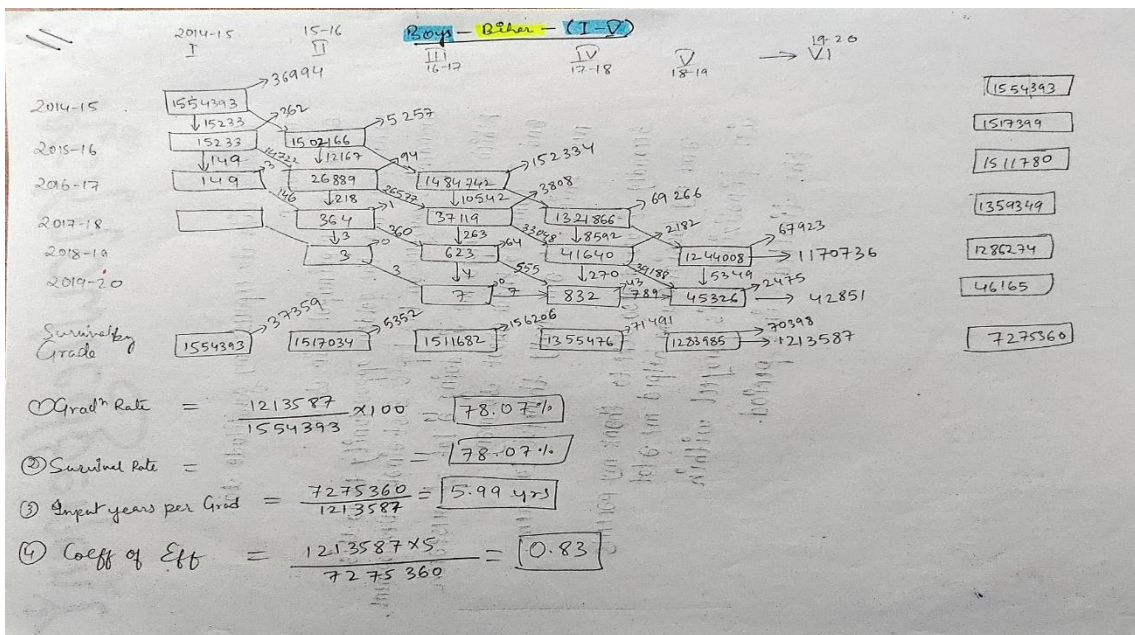
Pic 3- RCM Calculation Boys of Bihar- Grade (I-V)

Boys - Bihar - (I-V)

(1) Grad^n Rate $= \dfrac{1213587}{1554393} \times 100 = 78.07\%$

(2) Survival Rate $= 78.07\%$

(3) Input years per Grad $= \dfrac{7275360}{1213587} = 5.99\ yrs$

(4) Coeff of Eff $= \dfrac{1213587 \times 5}{7275360} = 0.83$

Pic 4- RCM Calculation Boys of Bihar- Grade (VI-VIII)

Indicators of Internal Efficiency (Grade I-V) Bihar (2014-15 to 2019-20)		
	BOYS	**GIRLS**
Graduation Rate	78.07%	83.13%
Survival Rate	78.07%	83.13%
Input Years Per Graduate	5.99Yrs	5.70 Yrs
Coefficient of Efficiency	0.83	0.87

Table 4: Researcher's Calculation (Internal Efficiency for Bihar) (I-V)

Indicators of Internal Efficiency (Grade VI-VIII) Bihar (2016-17 to 2019-20)		
	BOYS	**GIRLS**
Graduation Rate	65.22%	66.38%
Survival Rate	65.22%	66.38%
Input Years Per Graduate	4.01 Yrs	3.97Yrs
Coefficient of Efficiency	0.74	0.75

Table 5: Researcher's Calculation (Internal Efficiency for Bihar) (VI-VIII)

As per the data shown in Pic 1,2,3,4 and Table 4 & 5 and calculations done by the researcher by the researcher, it is in favour of girls and the internal efficiency indicators also point that girls perform better than boys in primary and upper primary in Bihar. It means girls have a better chance than boys in completing primary and upper primary than boys.
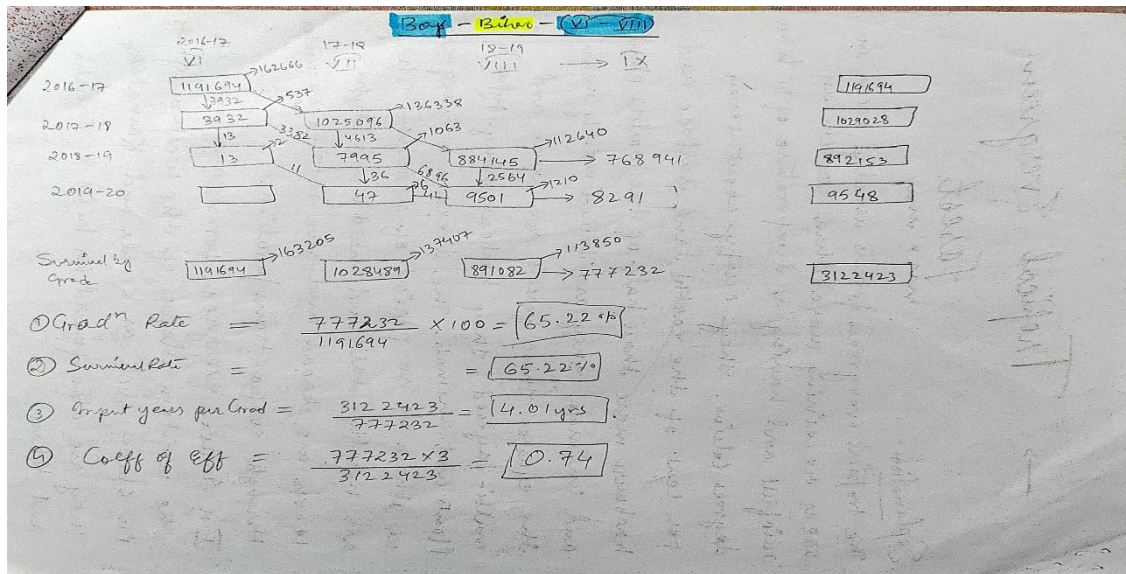
RCM DATA CALCULATION (SARAN)

Pic 5- RCM Calculation Girls of Saran Grade (I-V)
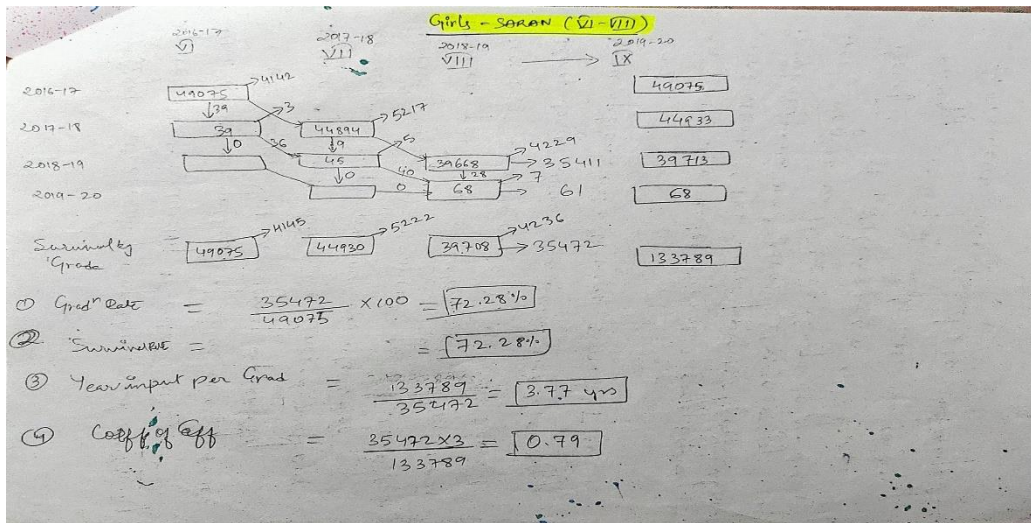
Pic 6 - RCM Calculation Girls of Saran Grade (VI-VIII)
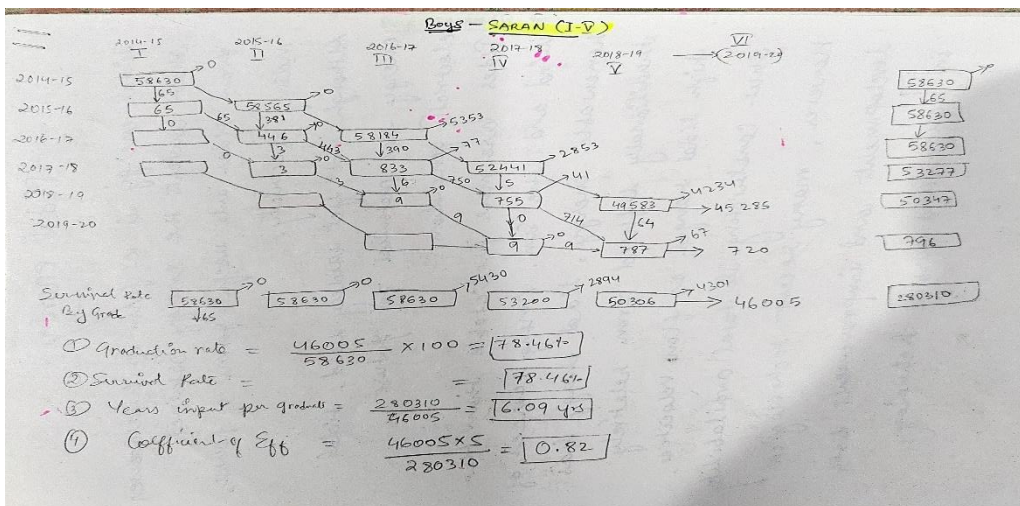
Pic 7- RCM Calculation Boys of Saran Grade (I-V)
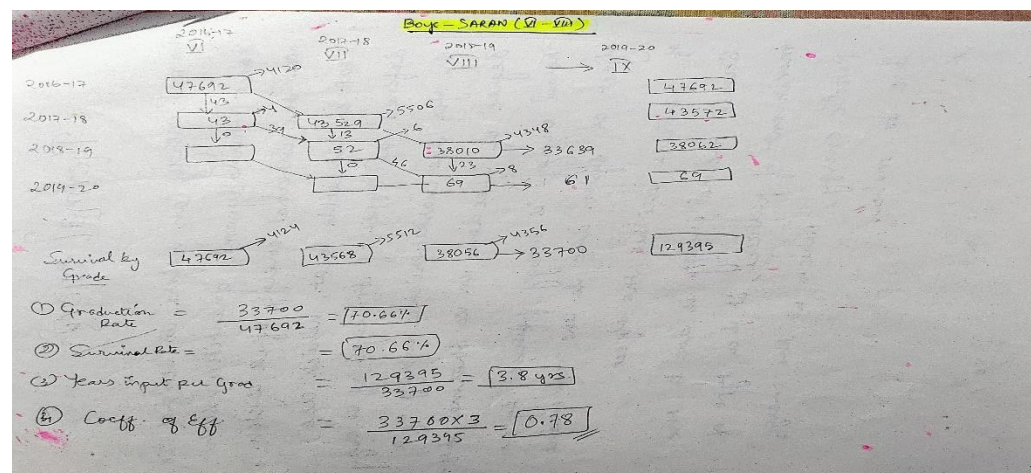
Pic 8- RCM Calculation Boys of Saran Grade (VI-VIII)

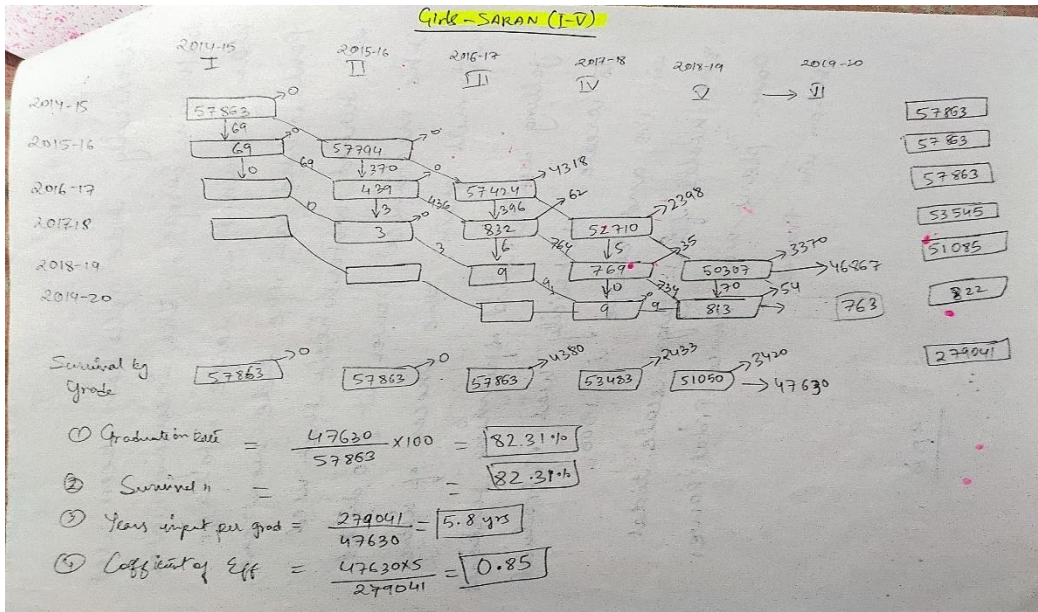| Indicators of Internal Efficiency (Grade I-V) Saran (2014-15 to 2019-20)		
	BOYS	**GIRLS**
Graduation Rate	78.46%	82.31%
Survival Rate	78.46%	82.31%
Input Years Per Graduate	6.09 Yrs	5.8 Yrs
Coefficient of Efficiency	0.82	0.85

Table 6: Researcher's Calculation (Internal Efficiency for Saran) (I-V)

Indicators of Internal Efficiency (Grade VI-VIII) Saran (2016-17 to 2019-20)		
	BOYS	**GIRLS**
Graduation Rate	70.66%	72.28%
Survival Rate	70.66%	72.28%
Input Years Per Graduate	3.8 Yrs	3.77 Yrs
Coefficient of Efficiency	0.78	0.79

Table 7: Researcher's Calculation (Internal Efficiency for Saran) (VI-VIII)

According to data shown in Pic 5,6,7,8 and Table 6 & 7 and calculations done by the researcher by the researcher, it is in favour of girls and the internal efficiency indicators also point that girls performed better than boys in primary and upper primary in Saran in all indicators. It means girls outnumbered boys in completing primary and upper primary than boys.

RCM DATA CALCULATION (MUZAFFARPUR)
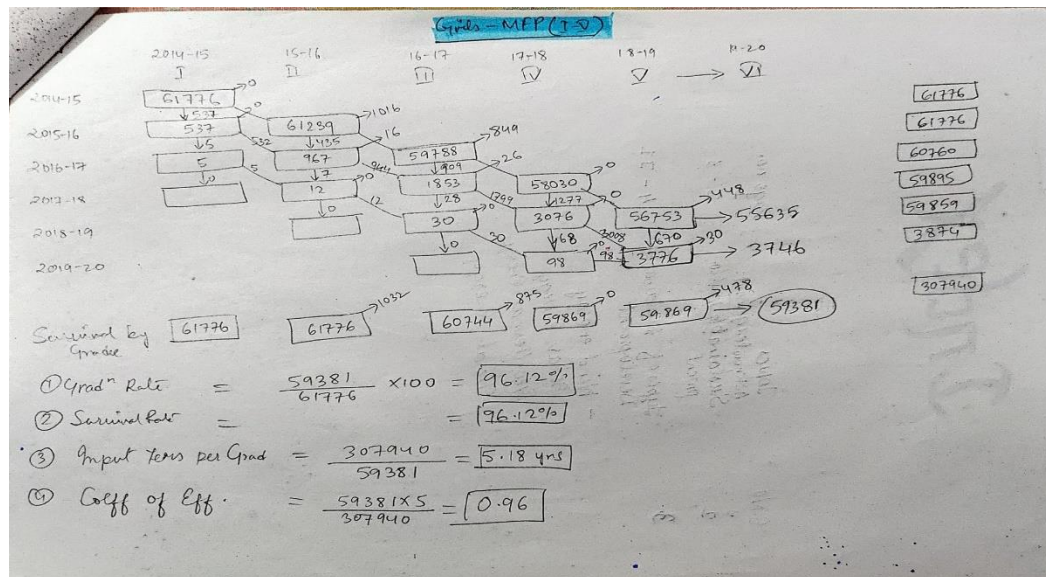
Pic 9- RCM Calculation Girls of Muzaffarpur (I-V)
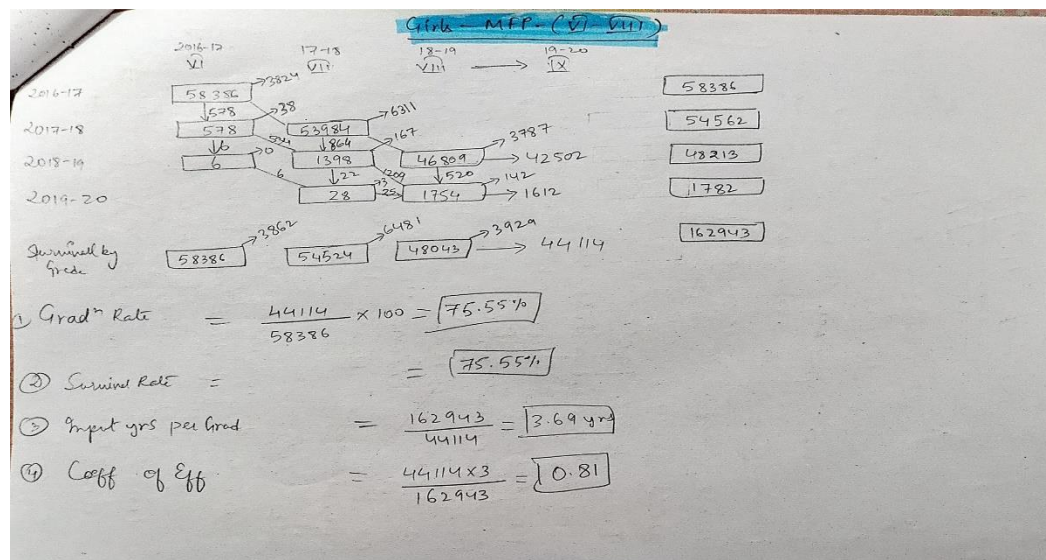
Pic 10- RCM Calculation Girls of Muzaffarpur (VI-VIII)
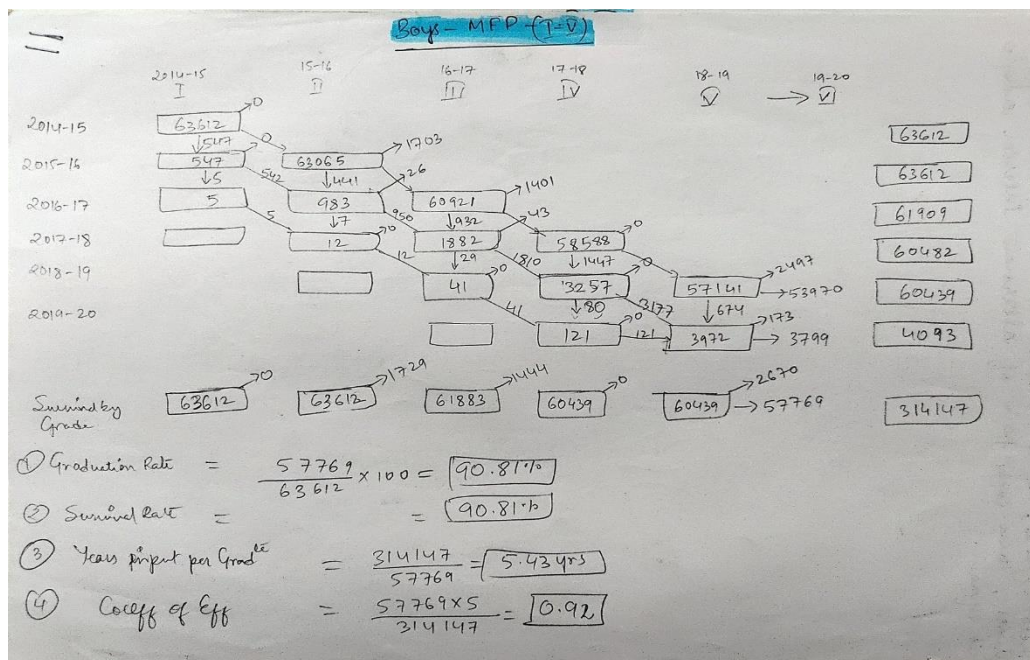
Pic 11- RCM Calculation Boys of Muzaffarpur (I-V)
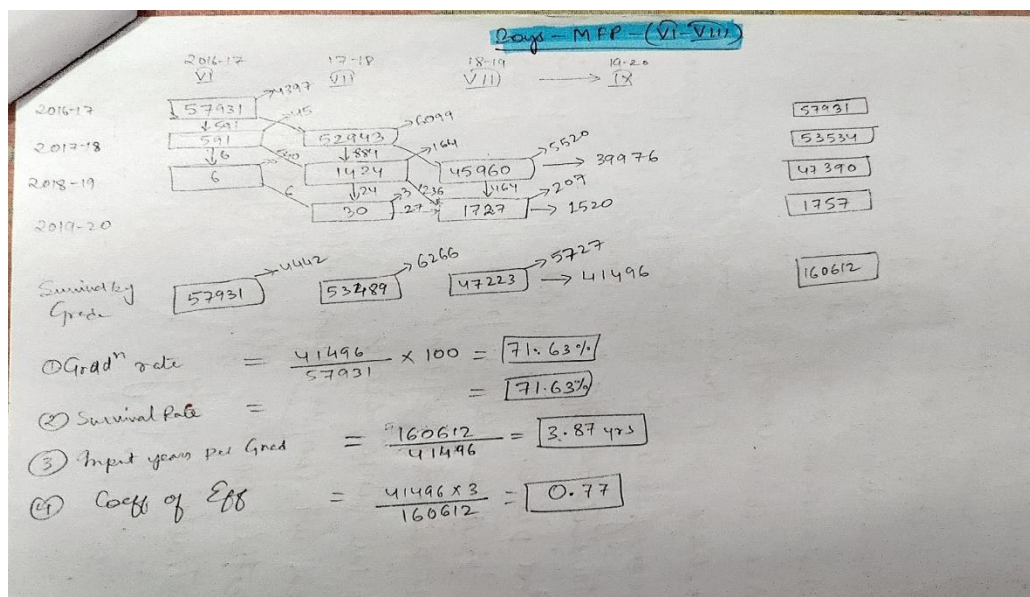
Pic 12- RCM Calculation Boys of Muzaffarpur (VI-VIII)

Indicators of Internal Efficiency (Grade I-V) Muzaffarpur (2014-15 to 2019-20)		
	BOYS	GIRLS
Graduation Rate	90.81%	96.12%
Survival Rate	90.81%	96.12%
Input Years Per Graduate	5.43 Yrs	5.18 Yrs
Coefficient of Efficiency	0.92	0.96

Table 8: Researcher's Calculation (Internal Efficiency for Muzaffarpur) (I-V)

Indicators of Internal Efficiency (Grade VI-VIII) Muzaffarpur (2016-17 to 2019-20)		
	BOYS	GIRLS
Graduation Rate	71.63%	75.55%
Survival Rate	71.63%	75.55%
Input Years Per Graduate	3.87 Yrs	3.69 Yrs
Coefficient of Efficiency	0.77	0.81

Table 9: Researcher's Calculation (Internal Efficiency for Muzaffarpur) (VI-III)

The data shown in Pic 9,10,11,12 and Table 8 & 9 and calculations done by the researcher, it shows tilting towards girls and the internal efficiency indicators also says that girls performed better than boys in primary and upper primary in Muzaffarpur in all indicators. It means girls surpassed boys in completing primary and upper primary than boys.

Difference Between Saran and Muzaffarpur districts in Participation and Internal Efficiency

- **Muzaffarpur** performed better in internal efficiency indicators at **primary level** in terms of graduation rate, survival rate and its coefficient of efficiency was also better than Saran. The boys and girls of Muzaffarpur district also took a smaller number of years per graduate as compared to Saran.

- At **upper primary level** although the boys of both the districts have been more or less equal but girls of **Muzaffarpur** have clearly surpassed girls of Saran in graduation and survival rates.

Thus, we can say that among the two districts **Muzaffarpur** has clearly been the **better performer** in terms of internal efficiency in school education.

To answer the next three research questions qualitative analysis was done. The following section will answer all the three research questions: -

Quasi-Participant Observations

During the collection of data, the researcher witnessed some of the behaviours and daily routine chores in and around the schools and sites of interviews. The observations are cited below:

Gendered Roles

- During one of the interviews, the researcher observed that a 13-year-old girl was cleaning the house but at the same time his younger brother was playing outside. Then after cleaning she started feeding a cow that was at the door. The girl doing the chores was enrolled in a government school in 6th grade.

- At Balli-Saraiya school, the researcher saw a 10–12-year-old girl with sickle reaping wheat and the teacher pointed at the girl and said that she was enrolled in that school but had been missing classes because of the harvest season.

- At Parauna school the teacher pointed out a girl in Grade III who was 7-9 years old and said that she left school every day after the mid-day meal

to take care of her grandmother. Since both her parents were daily wage labourers and couldn't stay at home to take care of the grandmother.

It is a phenomenon in the context of GE (Girls' Education) where girls are less preferred and drop out is high among girls in the poor families (Siddiqui, 2017; Mohanty, 2014). According to the 71st NSSO (2014) the bottom quintile class of UMPCE, females from this particular proportion have around 50% higher chance of never getting enrolled than their male counterparts (p-116). Simone de Beauvoir opines that "one is not born a woman but becomes one" (Beauvoir, 1949). This is determined by the society, roles for both the sexes which are often biased in nature and dominated by patriarchy (as observed by the researcher that girls were engaged in carrying out the gendered roles). Patriarchy believes that women are physically and mentally inferior and lack intellectual capacity to reason and decision making. On these primitive and irrational beliefs, the construction of gender roles takes place.

Qualitative Data Analysis

For the quality part of the research part, the total of 40 people were interviewed. The analysis is based on This comprised of 20 school teachers from 4 schools (two from each district), 10 students and 10 parents from both districts of Saran and Muzaffarpur. In this part of the analysis, it is based on the responses of the respondents that were collected through semi-structured interview method. Qualitative study given the complexity of the problem. It would enrich the study and give an in-depth understanding of the problem. This section answers the last objective of the study:

i.   To substantiate the findings of the quantitative analysis of gender parity in upper primary education through case studies of at least one school each from Muzaffarpur and Saran districts.

Methodology- The interviews are transcribed below. Based on the data collected in the interviews analysis is discussed under 10 themes under which different aspects are discussed. Thematic analysis has been done of the qualitative data.

Interviewing Teachers

Teachers were the immediate link between the school and the community. Thus, talking to the teachers helped me to assess the linkages between the school and the community and how they influence and affect each other. One of the teachers was very open to me and discussed matters regarding the initiatives taken by him, the problems he was facing from the community side as well as from the education department in performing his duties. Other participants were very hesitant at first but when I let them know that this research had nothing to do with the education department and I was not going to disclose any information to the officials of the department, they felt relaxed and participated in the interview more actively.

School No.1

Manoj Kumar Singh

Principal

Age-32

The teacher had been teaching in the school for past 7 years. A/t him there were around 350 girls in the school and more than 80% girls regularly attended the schools as compared to 60-65% boys. When enquired about the attitude of parents towards girls' education he said that the rich were more aware than the parents belonging to the poor and marginalized sections of the community. He said that the common attitude of the disadvantaged classes, "*Kya karengey padhke?"* (There is no point of studying). He opined that child marriage adversely affects girls' education. He also said that there is still caste segregation practised by some of the teachers (hesitatingly and unwillingly). In his opinion there is no issue of distance and access to schools for children. He said that the due to the government measures through schemes the enrolment of the children has gone up but the learning and numeracy skills achievement has taken a hit since there was no detention policy from class I-VIII. Even if they detained any student the responsibility of giving them extra classes top cover their syllabus for re-examining fell on them. So, there is continued practice of promoting children to higher grades without assessing their real learning achievement. When asked about what else can be done to enhance girls' participation in education he pointed that there needs to be more

awareness campaigns to address information asymmetry and counselling of the parents is a must for sending their children especially girls to the schools. Their preference for sending their sons to private schools and girls to government schools needed to be questioned. Infrastructure was also an issue that needed to be upgraded which could compete with the private schools. When asked about his gender sensitization training, he said that he received one in 2019. Regarding functioning of the SMC, he was clearly seemed to be unsatisfied and thought it to be a token identity.

Srinivas Kumar

Maths Teacher

Age-40

He worked in the school for 7 years. A/t him there were around 250 girls in the school out of which around 75-80% attended the school which was more often more than boys. In his opinion community's perspective about girls' education was positive and they viewed girl and boy equally. In his opinion distance was an issue because he told the researcher there were students coming to school from 5 kms away due to lack of good school in their area and thus regularly attending the school was not possible for those students. There was also a safety issue for girls attending schools. Talking about the early marriages he said that he saw 1-2 cases yearly. He said, "*Hum toh shaadi wale dress mein ladkiyon ko exam dete dekhte hai*" (I see girls giving exams in wedding dresses). Explaining about the irregular attendance causes he said that family functions were one of the main reasons, he said that parents valued functions over their daughter's education (disappointedly). He also said that girls and boys both missed schools during harvest seasons. Girls missed schools to care of elderly of the family since parents were migrant workers. In his opinion these issues could be addressed by providing children encouragement to study, no household chores to focus exclusively on education and teacher recruitment of teachers especially female teachers. Pointing towards the SMC he said that it did not function well or focused on school management but on politics in schools and there was no appreciation of teachers on their part. The teacher had NO gender sensitization training.

Dr. Jitendra Prasad Rana

Science Teacher

Age-46

He has been teaching the school for 12 years. He estimated the number of girls attending the school to be around 155 and more 65% girls attended school on regular basis. He thought that the community's perception towards girls' education has changed for better in the past years. He believed early marriages of the overage girl students were common but less in number. The teacher said that sanitation and separate toilets for girls was not an issue for school absenteeism. He also voiced that the government schemes were more than sufficient like the Poshaak Yojana and Cycle yojana. He emphasised that PTR meetings should be increased and held regularly and TLM and infrastructure should be upgraded. He also felt that SMC were a source of corruption and political in nature. The teacher had NO gender sensitization training.

Rakesh Kr. Pandit

Head Master

Age-50

He had been working at the school for 3 years and had no clue about the composition of students in the school. He was very evasive, took less interest in the interview and gave general and politically correct answers like everything was fine with the school and students did not face any problems in their education. When asked about early marriages, he denied and said no such thing happens to the students of this school. Although he said distance was a problem for children to attend the school. Children attended that school after travelling 4-6 kms due to lack of proper schools in their vicinity. He opined that there should no restrictions education of girls from the family side, early marriage should cease and parents should be more involved in their children's education. He stated that government should announce special scholarships for the students from SC/ST and orphan categories. He said he had done the gender sensitization training but couldn't remember when.

Nisha Devi

Hindi Teacher

Age-48

She worked and taught in the school for last 19 years and she was 12th pass. She didn't have any idea about attendance of students or their composition. She performed multiple tasks in the school like taking care of girls' hygiene and health as she was the only female teacher in the school. She appeared very nervous during the interview and hesitated throughout the interview. She said that a lot has changed in a positive sense regarding opportunities and socio-cultural behaviours in terms of girls' education. While talking about the hurdles in girls' education, she pointed me towards a girl of Grade-III and said that she always leaves school post mid-day meal because she had to take care of her grandmother and her both parents were daily wage laborers. On many questions she said, "*Humko nahi pata.*" During this interview I got to know that the SMC was mainly comprised of mothers of students and was known as "*MSS-Mata Shiksha Samiti*". She had a 2-day gender sensitization training long ago and couldn't point out the year.

School No.2

Baban Sahni

Head Master

Age-53

He had been teaching maths and science in that school for last three years. A/t him there were 600 girls in the school and 50-60% of them attended school daily. He believed that perception girls' education (GE) in community has changed for better. He informed during the interview that most of the parents were mainly concerned about the monetary benefits from government schemes and created undue pressure on him for disbursal of those benefits. Hindrances cited by him in GE (Girls' Education) are household chores, free labour during harvest seasons and in agriculture which were responsible for seasonal absenteeism. In marginalized classes like SC/ST he felt that lack of awareness in parents regarding value of education for girls led to absenteeism. He believed most of the early marriages started from Grade X although they are fewer in number. Distance as pointed by him was an issue because children came to school from long distances and for girls it is a safety issue. He accepted that girls do miss school due to

menstruation and not due to lack of amenities in the school. He expressed that government schemes are sufficient and mid-day meal which is to be managed by the head master only creates extra pressure on him as he is accountable for everything and went on to say that it should be scrapped. For improving GE (Girls' Education) he opined that more awareness and information needs to be spread among the general masses regarding the value of education. Regarding MSS or SMC, he said that they had no positive impact on the school and the mothers of the body almost never attended the meeting and the body had been used for political gains only.

He received gender sensitization training in 2015-16.

Shidheshwar Pandit

All Subject Teacher

Age-48

He has been teaching all subjects as he claimed for last 8 years in the school. He voiced that nearly 50% of girls attended school and boys even less. He also expressed that only 5% of the parents were genuinely interested in their child's education but rest only visited school for enquiry of scheme related questions. He believed that distance was not an issue for access to education and girls missed school during menstruation. He said that government schemes were sufficient. At family level elders should encourage and guide children in their studies and enlighten them about the value of education. He also stated that the son preference in studies begins after class X. He voiced that MSS had no positive effect on the school management on the contrary it ran political interferences in government schemes. He had NO gender sensitization training.

Shivnarayan Ram

All Subject Teacher

Age-53

He had been teaching in the school for 19 years. A/t him there were around 800 students, of which only 50% attended school at any given day. He also believed that 90% parents were focused only on the schemes rather than their ward's education. Major obstacles for girls in their education according to him were household and tuition-coaching culture (students complete their syllabus from tuition or coaching centres rather than learning in the school, thus adding to school absenteeism). In his view early marriages

start from class X and he said that teachers should guide parents and counsel them to raise awareness regarding value of GE. He had gender sensitization training in 2014/15.

Premlata

English Teacher

Age-43

She was a newly transferred teacher to the school but had been teaching in rural government schools for 8 years. To the best of her knowledge 75% girls were attending classes regularly. She also said that there has been positive attitude towards GE but it's mainly related to marriage as early as Grade IX and it adversely affects a girl's life. Sanitation and hygiene according to her are a matter of concern and it leads to girls missing school days. She believed that government schemes are sufficient for tackling girls' education. She had no gender sensitization training.

School No.3

Vijay Kumar Singh

Maths Teacher

Age-45

He had been teaching for 15 years in the school. He said that 85% girls attended school as compared to 72% of boys enrolled in the school. He believed that although there is a positive outlook had developed towards GE but the disadvantaged groups (SC/ST/OBC) still lacked awareness. Parents leave children especially girls behind to take care of the house and the cattle. He also opined that there was no caste angle prevalent in the school and community in general about education. He said that girls got married as early as in Grade VIII due to parental or familial pressure as parents viewed them as burdens. He felt there was no problem of distance and sanitation which could hamper the attendance of girls. He also voiced that government schemes were enough but could work in the area of health. He replied that GE could benefit if teachers could counsel parents that education is above all for the girl child and housework should be secondary. At the policy level responded that teachers should be relieved of the burden of mid-day meal scheme, as it interferes with their teaching. He also claimed SMC or MSS didn't have any positive impact on the school. He had received NO gender

sensitization training. He also informed me that there was a position called "Gender Coordinator" in 2010 but the post was terminated.

School No.4

Kiran Kumari

English Teacher

Age-35

She had taught for 8 years and according to her 400 girls, only 60% of them attended the school regularly. She opined that parents were only involved in the schemes of the government. She narrated me a story where she asked a parent of a child who didn't have books, about the scheme money for the books, the parent replied, "*Khet mein paani patana tha toh pump kharid liye*" (Needed pump for watering the field so bought it). She also pointed out that students miss school because they are enrolled in different places like private coaching centres or tuitions or monastery etc. She expressed that household functions were prioritised over a girl's education and their attitude towards girl's education was poor. She stated the girls from disadvantaged groups still get married as early as in Grade VI as they view them as burdens to the family. According to her distance and sanitation were not barriers to GE.

She affirmed that scholarships should be given on meritocracy rather than to everyone freely and minimum attendance be mandatory to avail a scheme. She also expressed her unhappiness over poor infrastructure, absence of grade wise classrooms and 1:140 PTR in the school. She alleged that VSS was mere a token body and husband acted as proxies for his wife in the functioning of the body. She had NO gender sensitization training.

Jaibhuvan Sharma

Head Master

Age-57

He had a teaching experience of 14 years. He said that there were 350 girls in the school and 70% girls attended school on any given day which was more than boys. He informed me about an interesting phenomenon where parents preferred GE over boys. They engage boys in economic activities of small business while providing girls opportunity for education. He remarked parents from disadvantaged classes married off their girls as early as in grade VIII. He also pointed out that there was no issue of distance and sanitation which kept children away from school. He opined the timely

delivery of scheme benefits would be helpful in terms of policy reforms. He also said that at family level parents should be counselled to put education first, awareness about importance of education needs to be imparted and at school level needs to be PTR improved.

Interviewing Students

Interviewing students in the age group of 10 to 14 years was one of the interesting experiences that I had during my fieldwork. My apprehension before going to the field regarding interviewing students proved to be wrong when I actually talked to them. As I interviewed students at the end, i.e., after their parents, I was a bit familiar to them by the time of the interviews which made the girls feel at ease. At first, they felt shy and the interview progressed they talked more freely.

Karan Kumar Singh

Grade- VIII

Age- 14

He expressed that he liked coming to school and he liked teachers in particular. When asked about what was his opinion GE he said that girls should have equal opportunities of education as much as boys. When enquired about who took decisions regarding in house, he said both mother and father. At home he helped with things like going to market for groceries and his sisters cooked and cleaned along with their studies. Regarding difference of treatment between him and his sisters, he said they were treated fairly and equally. He had his elder brother as his role model and blatantly refused having any female role models, this shows male influence in his life.

Pinky Kumari

Grade- VIII

Age- 14

She liked going to school unlike his brother who very often missed school as she pointed out. She liked studying in the school. She wanted to study till B.A. and then get a job. She missed school days due to agriculture and feeding cattle. Her work at home was cooking, cleaning, feeding cattle and help in fields during harvest season unlike his

brother who had no such obligations from the family. She didn't feel any difference in treatment at home. Her father who was migrant worker took all decisions about her education and she also pointed that her **brother** would get opportunity to go out of state for studies. She wanted to be a doctor.

Interviewing Parents

Interviewing women (mothers) had been one of the challenges during my fieldwork as they were pretty shy and refused to talk at many instances. I gathered that due to way of upbringing, my women participants devalued themselves and thought that they did not know anything because they were women. However, men (fathers) were not as hesitant as their female counterpart.

Sunaina Devi Kunwar
Mother- 1Boy/1Girl
Age- Didn't say

She was a widower and was a mother of two. Her daughter left school after grade I after the death of his father and never been enrolled again. The daughter had been in helping in agriculture since then. She wanted her daughter to study till B.A. but due to paucity of resources she was forced to discontinue her studies. Although she chose to let her son continue his studies and he was in Grade III at the time of interview.

Manju Devi
Mother- 2 Boys/ 2 Girls
Age- 45

She had one of the daughters who availed the various schemes provided by government like dress, stationery and cycle. Her daughter did cook and clean as household chores at home. She felt that there had been many positive changes in GE, opportunities and avenues that she didn't have. When enquired about her aspirations for her daughter, she wanted her to study till B.A. and then marry her off.

Theme 1: Education of Girls

The study collected data from 40 individuals. They all had this commonality;

   (i) **Equality:** All the respondents believed that boys and girls are equal when asked about it. They said that they did not discriminate between girls and boys. They supported GE fully.

   (ii) **Jobs and career:** They all believed that education ensured better life security, job security and better career options. They also believed that helped in upward mobility. It also guaranteed better jobs, house, health and other perks of life. This was seen in one of the interviews of a mother: -

   Researcher: "Beti ko padha likha ke kya banana chahti hai?" (What are your aspirations for your daughter after education)

   Mother: "Padh likh ke bada afasr ban jaaye ya police bass yahi chahte haii"(Want her to become a high-ranking official or a police officer)

   In another interview the father wanted her daughter to be a lawyer.

   (iii) **Education for better family:** "Educate one man, you educate one person, but educate a woman and you educate a whole civilisation." - Mahatma Gandhi. As he said an educated woman can manage family well by ensuring better health for her children. It is evident that high maternal and infant mortality rates in India are due to poverty and illiteracy.

   (iv) **Dowry Reduction:** Many parents believed that they would have to pay less dowry if their daughter is educated. It's an evil of the society but still it is prevalent throughout in India.

Theme 2: Education of Boys

As seen from the quantitative data boys lag behind girls in Primary and Upper Primary Education. This is due to various factors as discussed below: -

   • **Role of Parents: -** As pointed out by Durden and Ellis (1995) that parents' education achievement is an important contributing factor to their female

children education. Arellano and Padilla (1996) agreeing with Durden and Ellis, girls whose parents are educated, do well in education.

This points out one of the reasons why boys' fall behind in Primary and Upper Primary in the sample districts because most of the interviewed parents were either illiterate or were primary level dropout (especially mothers).

- **Authoritarian Approach: -** In Canada, United Kingdom and Australia boys' underachievement in education is largely linked with the authoritarian approach for them to be taught (Stormquist, 2007; Younger and Cobbett, 2014). Boys tend to get punished for bad behaviour they portray in the class and dislike the authority of teachers for doing so. Boys react to these types of situations by skipping classes or missing school days, eventually leading to their underachievement in the studies. Alanen and Mayall (2001) further added that in Mongolia such situations in the long run result rebellious behaviour among boys who disobey their teacher in the school, which in return, affect their studies badly.

  Same goes for some of the students I studies in the sample, many boys cited that their reasons of missing the school that they feared teachers or disliked getting punished by the teachers.

- **Too Much Freedom: -** Brown et al. (2010) argues that in Mongolia boys' underachievement in education has greatly associated with their personal freedom and higher status in family which spoil them.

  This has been one of the highlights throughout my interviews, boys missed school playing all day without any reprimands from the parents. Parents enabled their sons and seemed to value more than girls. This is a more common stereotype since girls are "*Paraya-Dhan"*, sons are the only "*Jama-Punji"* of their parents, so boys are valued more in households. This gives them a sense of personal freedom and leeway to do miss school, play all day and fool around all day with any admonition from parents. These factors consequently hamper their studies

- **Helping in Household Economy and Poverty:** - Poverty is one of the main factors in the way of boys' underperformance in education in Philippine. Along with their schooling boys perform labour work to assist their parents in fulfilling the needs of their family. They are helping in the family economy at a very early age Reimer (2012) assert that male child engages in various labour forces which badly affect their educational achievement.

- **Absence of Parents: -** Parents' check and balance upon children significantly affect the educational performance of their children (Rojiani, 2017; Spera et al., 2009). Ogbu (2003) claims that the absence of parents, especially the father being out country/city for job, affects the boys' education in many ways i.e., young boys do not care for their study and indulge in useless activities which, in turn, adversely affect their educational achievement.

  This was a common trait in almost all the interviews where I got to know most of the fathers/husbands of the interviewees were migrant workers and lived out of the state. The boys from these types of families were more often the one who missed school and played whole day, as researcher found same in the fieldwork

Theme 3: Poverty

In the literature review pointed out a number of studies strongly establish the connection between poverty and dropping out of school (Birdsall 2005; Boyle 2002; Dachi & Garrett, 2003) and also in India, "Educational Access in India", 2009 (NEUPA), and "Access to Elementary Education in India: Country Analytical Review", 2008 by R Govinda and M. Bandyopadhyay, they pointed out poverty one of the major reasons for dropping out of schools. Poverty makes it difficult for the parents to send their all children to schools. Even if the schooling is free and there are incentives, the extreme poverty compels the parents to engage their children in household work or work outside to add to the income of the family, after a certain age.

This was observed by the researcher in the field as well as mentioned before. This is one of the probable answers for to the **trend in completion rates** where girls were performing worse than boys at secondary level. In one of the interviews the mother said, "*Jahaan tak shakti hoga waha tak padhayengey, baaki bhagwaan jaane iske*

kismet mein kyaa haii" (I will support (financial support in studies) as much as I can, rest is on god or girl's destiny).

Theme 4: Patriarchy

Stephens (2000: 33) observed that „from birth, a child's position within society is governed by specific rules and patterns of behaviours and by reciprocal duties, obligations and responsibilities" and argues that the gender of the child and the gendered nature of relations between family members define his/her identity and opportunity. This is particularly evident in the strongly patriarchal cultures that dominate in many developing countries, particularly in South Asia. As a result of "patrilineal principles of succession of property," "a patriarchal structure of power," and a Patri-local system of marriage, patriarchy as well as its economic structures produce circumstances of all-around "dependence of women" (UNESCO, 2007). Patriarchy was evident as I interviewed the girl students and mothers about decisions taken in the family.

Researcher: "Aapke ghar mein beti ke padhaai ke baare mein faisla kaun leta hai?"
(Who takes decisions regarding your daughter's education in the family?)
Mother: "Oo toh wahi(husband) lete hai" (He only takes the decisions)

Theme 5: Early Marriage

Girls are married off at an early age for both cultural and economic reasons (Herz, 2006; Colclough, 2004; Karlekar, 2000; Sudarshan, 2000; Colclough, Pauline and Tembon, 2000). These studies highlight that due to the cultural importance attached to marriage and the shame attached to pregnancy before marriage, parents tend to give their daughters in marriage as soon as they attain puberty or even earlier. They assert that the practice of early marriage is the manifestation of various cultural beliefs, social circumstances and economic pressure. There is a strong belief that girls should not be kept unmarried after they attain puberty. This is due to parents" concern for the sexual safety of girls. The fear that girls would be sexually harassed made their parents withdraw them from school and marry them off early.

This is one of the probable answers for to the **trend in completion rates** where girls were performing worse than boys at secondary level. Early marriage was also mentioned by many teachers in their interviews about incidents of marriage as early as

in Grade VI-VII. Karlekar (2000) quoting official statistics related to child marriage in India, said that out of the 4.5 million marriages which take place per year, 3 million involved girls belonging to 15-19 years age group.

Theme 6: Socio-cultural factors

According to Jha and Jhingran's study (2005), they found that Indian men were not interested in marrying women who were more educated than themselves. The maintenance of male sovereignty in the family required husbands to be more educated than their wives. This has led parents to discourage higher levels of education for their daughters. Daughters with a higher level of education incur higher dowry expenses for parents, as parents would have to pay more dowry highly educated grooms, so they prefer to keep their girls out of school from elementary schooling only. Thus, practice of dowry is against GE (Jha and Jhingran, 2005).

This is also one of the probable answers for to the **trend in completion rates** where girls were performing worse than boys at secondary level.

The conservative attitude of parents, especially of father is one of the reasons for girls dropping out after V, after VIII and after X. It is more prevalent in disadvantaged classes as it was indicated in the interviews by various teachers.

Theme 7: Home Environment

Girls having to take household responsibility from a young age, absence of encouragement and learning environment at home are major reasons for girls' low participation and performance in education. The girl students, even of grade two at seven or eight years of age, come to school after finishing their household chores at home, while it is not the case for boys (As pointed out in **one of the interviews** where a Class III girl used to look after her grandmother). Boys do not feel that cleaning is their job. In my opinion such attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of boys and girls are learned by children leave a negative effect on the impressionable mind of the young children. This would precipitate into future generations if it is not curtailed at the earliest.

Taking up household chores at a young age can also be one of the reasons for the **trend in completion rates** where girls were performing worse than boys at secondary level.

Theme 8: Lack of Role Models

According to The Global Campaign for Education and Jahan, 1998, "the presence of female teachers tend to make schools more girl-friendly and provide role models for girls". In the interviews conducted neither boys nor the girls had any role models in their lives.

Theme 9: Safety

Safety is one the major concerns restricting girls' education in many rural and urban parts of India. According to Human Rights Watch (2001) found that harassment of girls by fellow male students quite intimidating and it negatively impacted girls' schooling. Unterhalter (2003) showed how schoolgirls in South Africa were deprived of schooling due to sexual harassment by teachers and male students. Along with a fear of safety, the lack of transportation facilities could easily heighten this problem (Rose and Subrahmanian, 2005). Karlekar (200) found that the availability of a school close to girls' homes did not always guarantee the enrolment and retention of girls. Her study, conducted in a southern state of India, pointed out that although there was a school within a radius of one kilometre of the habitation, girls' dropout rate still was at 50%. These findings reveal the fact that the mere presence of a school does not ensure girls' participation (UNESCO, 2009; Ramachandran, 2003a and 2003b) and highlight the vitality of the safe school environment, effective teachers, dynamic classrooms and a gender sensitive atmosphere to ensure girls" participation (UNESCO, 2009, 2008, and 2007).

There was no such safety issue reported in my interviews but the fear was still there, when one of the mothers said she got worried whenever her daughter was late even for half an hour.

Theme 10: Teachers

As discussed earlier, teachers are the link between the school and the community. According to Hussain (2005) they are regarded as role models who set good examples through their behaviour- the words spoken and the actions performed by them in and outside school. As per Erik Erikson too students in their behaviour formation stages, tend to emulate the behaviour and mannerisms of the teachers as they spend most of

their school time with teachers. The value system learned in this period play a crucial role in forming in the adult mind (Hussain, 2005, p. 30).

Around 70% of teachers in my interviews revealed that they had **no gender sensitization training** of any kind. Some of the teachers were startled (as if I uttered a taboo word) when I asked them about menstruation and female hygiene, if they missed school. This only goes on to show how ill equipped these teachers are to handle and guide girl students when they hit puberty and have a lot of questions. They might knowingly or unknowingly bolster gender stereotypes due to lack of their training.

This could also be one of the reasons for low completion rates of girls at the secondary stage.

Teachers in their interviews criticised and described mid-day meal programme as one of the problems as well as an attractor of pupils in the school. It's a problem since their attention, huge amount of time and energy is invested into the preparation, distribution, cooking and maintenance of the food ration. Consequently, they are not able to focus on the teaching which is their most important job in the school.

Theme 11: Infrastructure

The DPEP's and the recent SSA's gender and equity strategies encompasses the improvement of school infrastructures and the provision of toilets. It was assumed that improving the school infrastructure might lead to enhanced enrolment and the retention of children in school. As per ASER 2018, nearly 33% schools don't have usable girl's toilets.

During my school visits in the interviews, I enquired about the sanitation and hygiene of girls and separate toilets, every teacher of the school said that the facilities were fine. But the researcher saw toilets in poor condition and not maintained or cleaned, some of the toilets had locks and smelled badly clearly was a health hazard.

The teachers complained about the poor classrooms infrastructure and some said there were no classrooms for several grades and they had to sit together.

The teachers also pointed out lack of teachers and in Saraiya school the teacher said that the PTR was 140:1, this only describes the peril the elementary school education system of Bihar is in.

COVID-19 and Women

The Beijing Platform for Action's 25th anniversary was expected to be a watershed moment for gender equality in 2020. The Covid-19 epidemic has worsened the situation, putting even the modest advances gained in previous decades in jeopardy. The epidemic is exacerbating existing disparities by revealing weaknesses in social, political, and economic institutions, which exacerbate the pandemic's effects. Several women are being compelled to 'lockdown' at homes with their abusers, while assistance for survivors is being interrupted or rendered inaccessible. COVID-19 is a test of our humanity as well as a barrier for global health systems. Recovery must result in a society that is more egalitarian and more robust to future disasters.

Many nations have implemented fiscal stimulus packages and extraordinary measures to alleviate public health deficiencies in order to alleviate the effects of COVID-19. In developing countries, the great majority of women's work – 70% – is in the informal economy, with little safeguards against dismissal or paid sick leave, as well as restricted access to social safety. Many women will be denied access since safety nets usually rely on formal labour force participation. Over 80% of women in non-agricultural occupations in South Asia are in informal employment; 74% of women in non-agricultural jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa are in informal employment; and 54% of women in non-agricultural jobs in Latin America and the Caribbean are in informal employment. The COVID-19 epidemic, as well as its social and economic consequences, has produced a worldwide catastrophe unlike any other in UN history—one that demands a whole-of-society intervention to meet its scope and complexity. If we chose to replicate past practises rather than seizing this opportunity to establish more fair, inclusive, and resilient society, we will be doomed. Every Covid-19 response strategy, as well as every rehabilitation package and resource budgeting, must include the pandemic's gender implications. This means:

(1) putting women and women's organisations at the centre of the COVID-19 response;

(2) transforming the inequities of unpaid care work into a new, inclusive care economy that benefits everyone; and

 (3) developing socio-economic plans with a deliberate focus on the lives and futures of women and girls.

Putting women and girls at the centre of economies will, as a result, fundamentally generate better and more sustainable development outcomes for everybody, enable a faster recovery, and put us back on track to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (POLICY BRIEF: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN,2020).

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CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

Key Findings

The concept of gender, gender equality, gender parity in schools and factors affecting girl education has been discussed at length in this research. This gap in gender parity at secondary level in particular and in school education in general has occurred due to various socio-economic barriers, cultural stereotypes and policy lacunae in the system. The objective of this research has been to investigate and understand the gender parity in school education in Saran and Muzaffarpur districts of Bihar. The study looked at the issues related to access and participation in education of the girl child of these two districts. This chapter delves into the major findings of this research in light of the objectives. Besides, the policy implications of the study have also been discussed in this chapter.

Socio-Economic Status of Children

Most of the students among the 4 schools covered under this study were from disadvantaged classes like SC/ST/OBC and same was informed during the interviews by the teachers. In one of the schools in Saraiya, Muzaffarpur the headmaster informed the researcher that around 90-95% of students of his school belonged to disadvantaged groups like SC/ST/OBC and came from poor families.

Functioning of SMCs

In all the interviews conducted teachers of all the schools complained that the SMC/Vidyalaya Shiksha Samiti/Mata Shiksha neither focus on the betterment of the school or children nor the upgradation of the school infrastructure. One of the headmasters informed that the body had become a means of corruption and interfered in government schemes as well and became a tool of politics in the school. The head

(one of the mothers) chosen by the parents. But in practice the head's husband acts as her proxy and discharge duties that she was supposed to do. And the main agenda of the education and betterment of school gets lost in this politics.

Access to Education

During the interviews it was informed by all the teachers and parents that distance was no issue in access to education. However, one of the students I interviewed he said that he has to commute daily 5 kms to attend the school. There were no schools in his locality but as per the RTE distance rule Grade VI-VIII school should be within 3 km radius. Many teachers confirmed (proudly) this and said that students come from 5-7 kms distance their school.

Sanitation/Separate Toilets

All the teachers in study confirmed that there was no issue with sanitation and separate toilets for girls but the researcher observed that the toilets were dirty and stenchy. In 3/4 schools, toilets were locked while the schools were in session. The researcher also observed some of the boys peeing in the open.

Completion Rates Data Conflict

As seen earlier in the data from the secondary that girls participated more than in schools (also confirmed by field visit) and better retention rates than boys, girls' chances of completing or passing the secondary (X) grade were slimmer. This could be attributed to many socio-economic factors; the researcher came to the conclusion after the qualitative analysis of the data: -

- Social- As discussed earlier, the stereotype that girl should not be kept unmarried after they hit puberty or "certain age". Therefore, we still witness instances of (confirmed by interviews) girls getting married in Grade VI. This completely throws girls passing Grade X if they get married in Grade VI.

- Patriarchy- As girls hit puberty their movement is restricted in the name of family honour and it supersedes her education too. So, they often drop out of schools as the male members of family deem fit for her.
- Poverty- Girls coming from disadvantaged and poor families, her parents try to get rid off her as soon as possible because they daughters are a burden and "Paraya Dhan" and there is no point of feeding one more mouth. Therefore, we see cases of child girl marriage at the age 12-13.

Findings Based on Field Observations

The four observations from the field have been taken into consideration for this study by the researcher and classified them in two broad categories as follows:

Girl vs Boys Bias

- At one of the sites of the interview, a 13-15 girl was doing household chores before she joined the interview. On the other hand, the girl's brother was playing outside with his friends. When asked about it, the girl said that his brother didn't do anything or helped in the house, missed school a lot and played, messed around with friends all day. She was cut short by her mother during the interview saying (smilingly), "Oo ta laika baa, okar kaa lele baani, jaaye di" (He is a boy, let him be). This is one of the reasons why boys don't do well in primary and upper-primary because their parents are negligent, careless and shrug off this behaviour just because he is a boy.

  This was very common sentiment and practice in the areas I interviewed. This roots from the patriarchal social belief-system that sons are the medium of salvation, breadwinner, old-age support of the parents and thus gets to get away with almost anything because his gender.

Child engaged in laborious work

- Among the interviewees was a 12–13-year-old boy and his father was no more. His older sister was illiterate. The boy said that he had been working in the fields since he was 9-10 years old to help the family. He

was enrolled in the school in Grade VI but missed school for agriculture and taking care of the cattle.

Knowledge Asymmetry

- There is a considerable information gap between the different sections of the society. The researcher through interviews of teachers and parents gathered that people from socially and economically disadvantaged classes were the ones who were least informed and thought education only means to an end. For boys to get jobs on the basis of basic education and for girls it was marriage. They don't understand the real value of education and this gap needs to be bridged for good.

Policy Recommendations

The findings revealed that there are number of hurdles in GE to achieve minimum elementary education. This gender discrimination, social stereotypes and other social evils need to be eliminated. The following recommendations are based on this research:

- Since, boys have been lagging behind in the primary and upper primary education to increase their attendance a curriculum must be developed that would involve them physically and mentally. There should sports based curriculums for learning to pick their interest and keep them in the school system.
- Vocational Training for the boys should be started at the elementary level so that they have better job prospects after school.
- Special attention to boys lagging behind should be provided by the school, for the betterment of the students coming from the socially and economically backward classes.
- Policies should not be biased only to the girls, there should be fairness in their formulation. Focus should be on the students lagging irrespective of the gender.
- Functioning of SMCs should be put to better use and transparent and accountability in their functioning must be ensured. External inspections

must be conducted to monitor and evaluate the workings of the committee.

- To ease the burden on the girls coming from the socio-economically should be given more attention in terms of financial help and special scholarships should be disbursed to these SC/ST/OBC category girls.

- There should be a mandatory gender sensitization training of teachers before they start teaching in schools. So, that they are better equipped to address and tackle gender sensitive issues.

- There should be urgent recruitment of more female teachers because as discussed earlier female teachers could assure safety of the girl students to their parents and also act as role models for them.

- Teachers should not be burdened with administrative duties and allowed to teach with free minds which is their core job.

- To improve the deteriorating scenario of PTR imbalance more recruitment of teachers is the need of the hour.

- Clean and hygienic separate toilets for girls need to be guaranteed. No toilets should be locked during school hours.

- SMC should play a key role in tracking and retaining students who have low attendance or dropped out and use suitable means to bring them back in the education to complete their minimum education.

- To spark creativity and positivity in the minds of the children, extra-curricular activities should be encouraged and made part of the curriculum and encouraged by the schools on regular basis.

- There should be teacher for each subject and not one teacher for many subjects.

- To bring more children in the ambit of elementary schooling, government should upgrade their infrastructure so that they can compete with private schools. There should be separate classroom for each grade and not be cramped in a single room.

- As per the suggestions of the teachers, scholarships should be given on merit and so minimum attendance should be made mandatory in order to avail these schemes.

- To bridge the language gap, every school should have one hindi and one english teacher and the classes should be held regularly.
- There should be a revision of gender curriculum and of TLM of the schools.
- There should be a government appointed counsellor in the school who can address the needs of the students and clear the apprehensions of the parents about the safety of their girl child.
- Government should not only plaster the walls with posters regarding GE, they should involve local people to create awareness about the value of girls' education rather than blindly spending millions on advertisements. Awareness drives should be organized involving the local school management and students.

Concluding Remarks

The central objective of this research was to assess the gender parity in government schools of Saran and Muzaffarpur and the factors affecting boys' and girls' access and participation in education. This research has demonstrated that if girls could stay in the schools for longer period, it would benefit the entire society at macro level. Most of the students in the classrooms of government schools in the study belonged to SC/ST/OBC community and they faced a lot of hardships to gain access to education. They faced social and gender discrimination at every step. They belonged to poor families.

Gender parity in government schools cannot be analysed in isolation because various aspects such as socio-economic conditions, home environment, teacher's response, security while commuting to school and lack of infrastructure in schools ascertain their destiny in the education system. These characteristics complement and reinforce each other. The crucial question to ask is to what extent the system provides equal avenues to these disadvantaged children to educate themselves and lead a honourable life. The main focus of the government was on the enrolments, which increased but at what cost? The quality of education was compromised, quantity over quality policy was used.

The study has also found that girls outperform boys in primary and upper primary with better retention and participation rates but lag behind boys in completion rates at secondary (X) level. Boys had been lagging behind girls in the Primary and Upper Primary stages due to various factors like too much of freedom, rebellious nature, defiance to the authorities of the school, lack of parents' attention especially fathers and lack of parents' education as discussed above. There needs to evidence-based intervention tools to help these children to stay in the system and complete their studies.

As the study found that girls are not able to complete Class X, this is in sync with the studies and research-analysis conducted by World Atlas of Gender Equality which says that Girls being disproportionately excluded from school is higher at the secondary level than in elementary education, and climbs further from the lower to the upper secondary levels (same was informed in interviews). Geeta Gandhi Kingdon (2007) in her paper 'The progress of school education in India' has also pointed out the same thing that a girl in Bihar is half as likely to enrol in the secondary school as a boy, as discussed in the literature review.

Disadvantaged class students/girls' dropout of school for many reasons like poverty, patriarchy, early marriage, eve-teasing, household chores, gender discrimination and many more reasons. The study also found out instances of early marriage and poverty which led many girls to drop out of school. The disadvantaged class students don't have an equal head start like others do, sometimes they are the first-generation learners of the family. Lack of support from parents, impending household responsibilities and the home and surrounding always pulls them down. This type of marginalization only drives them further from education and a dignified life.

The study brought forward the fact that poor and deprived class children are totally at the mercy of the government schools for education. It is the duty of the state under Article 45 and right of the children under RTE Act,2009 for the provision of basic minimum infrastructure, motivated, trained and gender sensitive teachers which is crucial for children to remain in the schooling system. Unless this system is improved, revitalized and re-energized, the glorious visions of Education for All and Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan will remain a distant dream for India.

The study brought to the surface the social evils, gender discriminatory practices and other factors which curtail girls' leap towards education. In conclusion I would like to say that as New Education Policy,2020 envisages making, "**India a knowledge Superpower**" which can be achieved through the overhauling of elementary education system, changing socio-economic-cultural paradigm and maintaining sustainable educational roadmap for the future. All of the above is and will be possible only through the equal participation of both the genders of the society.

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Annexure

Interview Guide for Teachers

Disclaimer: This study is undertaken by Mr. Govinda Kumar Sah for pursuance of MPhil Programme at National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi.

Date			

Name: **Name of the School:**
Village: **Designation:**
District: **Qualification:**
Sex: **Age:**

1. How long have you been working in this school?

2. How many girls are there in the school in the age group of 5-14 year?

3. How many of them though enrolled are not attending school?

4. In your opinion what is the parents' attitude/perception towards girls' education?

5. How does the local community perceive the education of girls?

6. In your opinion what are the main reasons for girls not coming to school? Please state the social, economic and cultural factors that affect girls' participation in education.

7. Do you think the practice of early marriage contributes adversely to the education of girls?   (Yes/No)

8. Do you think the distance between school and home is a deciding factor whether to keep girls in or away from school? (Yes/No)

9. Does lack of sanitation and water facilities in schools act as barriers for girls attending school when they hit puberty? (Yes/No)

10. Do you think government has done enough to encourage girls' education?

11. What else do you suggest could be done to increase girls' participation in education?

    a. at family level
    b. at community level
    c. at school level
    d. at policy level
    e. any other areas

Annexure

Interview Guide for Parents

Disclaimer: This study is undertaken by Mr. Govinda Kumar Sah for pursuance of MPhil Programme at National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi.

Date			

Name: **Name of the School:**

Village: **Grade:**

District: **Sex:**

                                                              Age:

1. List the educational programmes/incentives from which you or any member of your family have benefited (investigator to probe in case of ignorance of beneficiary).

2. Does your daughter go to school? (Yes/no)

3. If no, why is she not going to school?

4. What are the activities she is engaged with/ what are the responsibilities she is sharing at home at present?

5. Do you think girls should not be educated at all? State reasons for the answer.

6. What are the general perceptions prevailing in the community/society regarding girls' education?

7. Is there any change in the role of girls and women in the family when we compare between your daughter and her grandmother?

8. Do you think these changes are in favour of or against girls?

9. What are your aspirations for your daughter/s?

10. When are you planning to marry her off?

Annexure

Interview Guide for Students

Disclaimer: This study is undertaken by Mr. Govinda Kumar Sah for pursuance of MPhil Programme at National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi.

Date			

Name: **Name of the School:**
Village: **Grade:**
District: **Sex:**
   Age:

1. Do you like/enjoy coming to school?

2. What did you like/not like in the school?

3. Do you think girls should study? State reasons for the answer.

4. Do your parents want you to study? Up to which level and why?

5. Who takes decisions in your home regarding your education at home?

6. Are the boys/girls treated differently in the school/classroom? How?

7. What chores do you do at home?

8. Do you think girls are treated differently at home?

9. Who is your role model in your life and why?

Field Visit Photographs

Utkramit Madhya Vidyalaya, Parauna (Saran)

DIRTY AND UNHYGIENIC TOILETS

DILAPIDATED BUILDING FOR COOKING MID-DAY MEAL

MID-DAY MEAL AT SCHOOL

Adarsh Madhya Vidyalaya, Taraiya (Saran)

ADARSH MADHYA VIDYALAYA (AMV)

LOCKED AND POORLY MAINTAINED TOILETS AT AMV

Uchcha Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Saraiya (Muzaffarpur)

BETTER CLASSROOM INFRASTRUCTURE