Institute of International Education

Report 122

Indian Village Education for Rural Transformation

ERT Case Studies of Good Practices

Special Issue

Sejal Dave

Financial support provided by Swedish Research Council (VR) and Forum for Asian Studies at Stockholm University

Stockholm, Sweden 2012
Education for Rural Transformation (ERT)

Selected Good Practices
Indian Village Case Studies

Sejal Dave

June 2012
Foreward

The Yellow Report Series is an integral part of the Institute of International Education (IIE) strategy to promote and to disseminate academic writings of national and international nature since the 1970s. This series allows first and foremost academic and research staff as well as visiting researchers to publish valuable research material acquired in the course of research and projects at IIE. This series as all other IIE series, namely: (1) IIE Studies in International and Comparative Education; (2) IIE Master's Degree Studies; (3) IIE Work-In Progress Reports serve to keep updated the institution’s extensive programmes, projects and activities for research, education, training, scholarship, and networking in the field of International and Comparative Education which are always inclusive and connect the Northern with the Southern, the Eastern and the Western hemispheres.

The present Special Edition report, “Education for Rural Transformation (ERT), Selected Good Practices- Indian Village Case Studies” is the 122nd of such report and specifically outlines “good
practices” for Rural Transformation at the relevant village level, within the context of India. Thus, fulfilling one of the key research objectives put forth by the IIE committee for Education for Rural Transformation (ERT) in the long term research project supported and commissioned by the Swedish Research Council with additional funding from the Forum for Asian Studies at Stockholm University. This in collaboration with the on-going series of International Symposiums co-organized and hosted by the institute, makes great strides in both the collection and analysis of the context and current rural situation as well as puts forth exemplars and a platform from which future good practices are able to spring forth.

I would like to express my deep appreciation for both institution’s financial contributions. Most of all, I would like to thank visiting researcher Dr. Sejal Dave of India, for her contribution to the series.

Vinayagum Chinapah
Professor and Head of IIE
Rotla (Indian bread) making competition During Bal-Mela.
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List of Abbreviations

AIE- Alternative and Innovative Education
BRC- Block Resource Centre
BRCc- Block Resource Coordinators
CRC- Cluster Resource Centre
CRCc- Cluster Resource Coordinators
CABE- Central Advisory Board of Education
CTE- Colleges of Teacher Education and Training
DIET-District Institute of Education and Training
DPEP- District Primary Education Programme
DISE- District Information System of Education
EBB- Educational Backward Blocks
EFA- Education For All
EGS- Educational Guarantee Scheme
EU- European Union
IDA- International Development Agency
KGBV-Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalaya
LGP-Learning Guarantee Programme
LJ- Lok Jumbesh
MDM- Mid-Day Meal
MHRD- Ministry of Human Resource Development
MLL- Minimum Level of Learning
MTA- Mother Teacher Association
NFE- Non Formal Education
NPE- National Policy on Education
NPEGEL- National Programme of Education of Girls at Elementary Level
NEEN- National Elementary Education Mission
OBB- Operation Blackboard
OBC- Other Backward Class
PC- Parent Council
POA- Programme of Action
PTA- Parent Teacher Association
RIE- Regional Institute of Education
SCERT- State Council of Educational Research and Training
SIDA- Swedish International Development Agency
SKP- Shiksha Karmi Project
SOPT- Special Orientation Programme for Teachers
SSA- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
RIE- Regional Institute of Education
UEE- Universalisation of Elementary Education
UNICEF- United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
VEC- Village Education Committee
VCWC- Village Council of Ward Committee
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</table>
Introduction

Education shapes the destiny of any nation. The quality of any country ultimately determines the sustainable well-being of its people. In the words of A.P.J. Abdual Kalam, the former president of India, “Education makes an important contribution to the society based on social justice.” Education has been realized as an important change agent for nation development and is considered a fundamental right for all Indian citizens.

Providing educational opportunities to all citizens has become the prime responsibility of the Government and therefore, free and compulsory Primary education is offered to all children as a constitutional commitment. Secondary education is also seen as essential input for development and therefore adequate focus is given to improve the quality of education in India. The National Knowledge Commission categorically stressed the need of establishing educational institutions and enhancing the access of quality education at all levels. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Education for All (EFA) movement in the world have accelerated the efforts of Governments, especially in developing countries for Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). India, in this direction has been striving hard with various development policies and innovative practices. However, there are certain critical issues pertaining to the mission of UEE that still exist in India. These issues are primarily related to access to education, quality, equality and equity. Moreover, a large regional diversity in the above aspects can also be seen.

In Article 45 of the Indian constitution as the Directive Principle of State Policy mentioned, “[t]he state shall endeavour to provide universal, free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years by 1960.” Universal primary education of good quality is a key to boosting economic growth, while also improving equity in India’s liberalizing economy. Completing a good quality primary education and acquiring basic skills will be essential in enabling India’s poor to participate in growth and benefit from health and family welfare services. In the medium term more and better primary education for girls will help families realize their desired size, which will improve family health and slow population growth. Slower
population growth will make it easier for states to mobilize the resources needed to improve and expand educational opportunities (Marline Lockheed, 1997).

During the decade of the 1960s, much effort was expended to improve the education scenarios of rural areas in many developing countries. A further impact was provided at the Jomtien Conference in 1990, when a call to mobilize resources in this direction was made by the international community. Despite this, the fact remains, that the scene today is still not very promising. The slow pace of progress towards universal basic education is largely due to the persistence of low enrolment rates in rural areas. This is obviously overlooked. The breakdown of numbers for rural areas on education indicators are often not reported- a sign of clear neglect. Regardless, it can be safely assumed that non-attendance in school, early dropout of students, adult illiteracy and gender inequality in education are disproportionately high in rural areas-paralleling the concentration of poverty in villages.

Almost three decades ago, the introduction to a study on education for rural development sponsored by the World Bank, noted a conviction among development experts that “greater emphasis should henceforth be given to developing the rural areas of poor nations and that this would require, fresh approaches to meeting the educational needs of rural populations.” The Dakar Framework for Action, adopted by 164 governments in 2000, is one of the most comprehensive, wide-ranging and ambitious of all commitments undertaken by the international community. It pledges to expand learning opportunities for every youth, adult and child-and to achieve specific targets in key areas by 2015.

This paper focuses on the links between education and rural transformation, and seeks to illuminate the forces of change rural communities’ face.

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Greater emphasis should henceforth be given to developing the rural areas of poor nations and that this would require, fresh approaches to meeting the educational needs of rural populations.

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Elementary Education System in India

Formal education institutions, inclusive of Primary schools to Universities, are established to transmit the accumulated knowledge, values, attitude, and skills through the formal teaching learning process. The real process of Formal education begins with elementary education.

In India elementary education is organized into two parts lower primary is for first to forth standard and upper primary is for fifth to seventh standard or in some states lower primary is first to fifth and upper primary is sixth to eighth. The recent amendment made by the Ministry of Education the Government of Gujarat states that in the state of Gujarat the elementary education is consisting of the first to fifth standard in lower primary and sixth to eighth standard in upper primary.

Table 1: Literacy Rate of India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
<td>52.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>75.85</td>
<td>54.16</td>
<td>65.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>82.14</td>
<td>65.46</td>
<td>74.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Universalization of Elementary Education in India implies “Elementary Education for All” (Classes I to VIII) and for every child, without any kind of discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, sex, religion, region, etc. This concept accepts that education is the birth right of every child and it is accepted in United Nations declarations on Human Rights and Children’s Rights. It is universally accepted that the universalization of the elementary education is the true index of the general, economic, political and social development of a country.

*Education is the birth right of every child*
Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) also means free education in developing countries like India. In India, free education is inclusive of free tuition, free Mid-Day Meals, in addition, in some States it also includes, free text-books and scholarships for uniforms. Universalization of Elementary Education involves the following three steps or stages:

- **Universal Access**
- **Universal Enrolment and Retention**
- **Quality Education**

UEE is the single most crucial problem in education in developing countries (Buch M.B., 1991). India being a developing country has been experiencing the same situation. Low enrolment, high dropout and low achievement are all vital challenges in the Universalization of Elementary Education. The causes of these problems are contextual and area specific. A thorough and critical analysis of such problems, by considering grassroots realities to develop measures to improve the situation, is important at this juncture.

**Profile of Gujarat**

The status of Gujarat as a state came into existence on May 1st, 1960. It is located in the western part of India and it is bound on the west by the Arabian Sea, on the north by Rajasthan and Pakistan, on the east by Madhya Pradesh, and on the south by Maharashtra. The total area of the state is 1,96,024 km, which is 6 percent of the country’s total. It has the longest coastline of about 1600 km, which is the longest among all states in the country. Gujarat ranks seventh in the country in terms of area. There are total 26 districts in Gujarat. The western peninsular zone, popularly called Kathiawar, has a central high plateau in and around Rajkot, which slopes in all directions towards the coastline. This zone comprises the districts of Jamnagar, Amreli, Rajkot, Bhavnagar and a large part of Surendranagar. Gujarat is the most industrially developed state of the country. It provides 19.8% of the country’s total industrial output. Main industries of Gujarat are chemicals, cement, sugar, pottery, petroleum based industries and pharmaceuticals companies. Some famous educationalists of Gujarat are Mahatma Gandhi, Gijubhai Badheka, Nanabhai Bhatt, and Manubhai Pancholi.
Figure 1: Map of India
Source: www.mapsofindia.com
ERT Selected Good Practices - Indian Case Studies

Figure 2: Map of Gujarat

Source: www.tcindia.com/maps/Gujarat
Management of Elementary Education in Gujarat

The Education Department of Gujarat is under the Ministry of Human Resource Management. The Department of Elementary Education works under the Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training (GCERT). Elementary education in Gujarat is imparted through a peculiar channel covering various levels from State to students. The hierarchy of elementary education in Gujarat is as follows:

![Hierarchy of Elementary Education](image)

**Figure 3: Hierarchy of Elementary Education**
Educational Statistics of Gujarat

Table 2: Literacy Rate of Gujarat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>73.13</td>
<td>48.64</td>
<td>61.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>80.50</td>
<td>58.60</td>
<td>69.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>87.20</td>
<td>70.70</td>
<td>79.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to the 2001 Indian census report, Gujarat ranks sixteenth in literacy. Some additional important educational statistics of Gujarat are in the following section specifically reflecting the education scenario.

Problems and Issues of Elementary Education in India

Since the time of independence, the Indian government has tried to improve and expand primary education. However, the desired success has not yet been achieved. Many children leave school without completing primary education, which means wastage of money and energy spent on their primary education.

At the National Level

Researches in the area of Elementary Education highlighted various problems and issues. These problems are contextual in nature and therefore contain regional variance. The researcher has presented below some of the problems that have relevance to the current research study.

- Uneven spread of education
- Low enrolment of the backward section of the society
- Stagnation
- Wastage
- Low enrolment of girls
- Apathy and poverty of parents
- Defective curriculum
- Un-inspiring methods of teaching
- Lack of resources and writing material for children
- Lack of qualified teachers
- Lack of effective inspection and academic guidance by the inspecting staff
- Conservative attitude towards co-education
- Frequent transfer of teachers
- Inadequate and unattractive school buildings
- Poor nutrition
- Existence of a large number of incomplete primary schools


**At the State Level**

The Gujarat Government has also been trying hard for the achievement of universal enrolment, maximized attendance and retention by launching various innovative programmes and policies. But still some problems exist, which affect UEE directly. Some major obstacles that affect enrolment and retention are as follows:

(A) **Economic-Financial Reasons**
- Poverty
- Child Labour
- Migration
- Labourer’s children

(B) **Sociological Reasons**
- Lack of female teachers
- Lack of awareness in community
- Siblings
- Household work
- Child marriage
- Orthodox Society
- Problem of local dialect
- Negative reaction and/or attitude of parents towards education
- Difference between work allotment among boys and girls.
- Homesickness of children
- Lack of inspiration from parents.
(C) Educational Factors

- Un-enthusiastic school atmosphere
- Lack of teaching abilities among the teachers
- Learning with burden
- Irregularity of teachers / Frequent transfer of teachers
- Deficiency of teachers
- Wastage and stagnation
- Lack of basic school infrastructure facilities
- Overload of homework
- Lack of positive attitude among teachers
- Lack of infrastructure facilities for girls
- Less interest among the members of MTA, PTA and VEC regarding their roles
- Over workload of teachers
- Distance of school from home

*Source: Results of workshop on Tribal Education in Gujarat, 2002*

These problems are contextual in nature and are basically rooted in the socio-economic conditions of the different regions. Tribal areas like Dang and Panchmahal Districts have specific problems and coastal areas like Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, and Kutch etc. have different problems pertaining to the Universalization of Elementary Education. These area specific problems need to be studied critically to understand the basic root causes and to develop need-based and area-specific programmes in this regard.
Research Context

From the above description it is clear that the Government of India has been working for improvement in the quality of primary education. There are specific problems in specific geographical contexts that are required to be analysed in order to strengthen the system for sustainable development. The Government of Gujarat has identified some priority areas where the problems of Primary Education are acute and are critical. Bhavnagar is one of the priority areas of Gujarat.

Bhavnagar lies in the southeast corner of the peninsular region of Gujarat known as Kathiawad or Saurashtra. Bhavnagar borders with Ahmedabad and Surendranagar districts to the north, the Gulf of Cambay to the east and south and Amreli and Rajkot district to the west. It was founded in 1723 AD by Bhavsinhji Gohil (1703-64 AD) and was named after its founder and ruler. It is the sixth largest city of Gujarat, and the third largest city in Saurashtra region. The total population of Bhavnagar is 24,69,630. Out of that 15,34,592 are rural dwellers (Census 2001), around 62% of the total population. Along the Asia’s largest ship breaking yard is in Bhavnagar. There are a total of eleven Talukas in Bhavnagar.

Nanabhai Bhatt, Gijubhai Badheka and Manubhai Bhatt (founder of Shishuvihar) are famous educationalists of Bhavnagar. Nanabhai’s Gram Dakshinamurti and Lokbharati have prepared three generations of brilliant workers and leaders engaged in reshaping village India. Gijubhai’s Dakshinamurti became the cradle of the new liberal children’s education and charted new directions in the field.

Table 3 “Education Statistics of Bhavnagar”, illustrates the difference between male and female literacy in rural areas is high. The majority of the people of Bhavnagar are living in rural areas and that is why most of the schools (1064) are in rural areas. The researcher has selected Talaja Taluka of Bhavnagar District for her research study, which is one of the village areas having relatively large amount of education problems.
Figure 4: Map of Bhavnagar
Source: http://Gujarat.bsnl.co.in/search/map-bhavnagar.aspx

Table 3: Educational Statistics of Bhavnagar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy rate</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Literacy Rate</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Literacy Rate</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Literacy Rate</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Male Literacy Rate</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Female Literacy Rate</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of schools in Bhavnagar</td>
<td>1354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of schools in rural area</td>
<td>1064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher student Ratio</td>
<td>1:36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rationale of the Study

Elementary education functions as a strong pillar in the entire education structure. It is necessary to reduce retention and dropouts. It can be done if we understand and develop strategies to solve the problems of Elementary Education. There are many education commissions, committees and programmes at the central and state levels for improvement of quality in elementary education but still UEE has remained as a distant dream in India.

The current Five Year Plan places special emphasis on backward states and districts, specifically seeking to intensify efforts to ensure the education rights of all children, especially girls. It calls for a continued focus on improving the quality of education and learning achievements. It also emphasizes strengthening the educational system’s capability to make it more accountable and relevant to the child’s varying context and elicits active community ownership and involvement in managing education (UNICEF, 2005). There are specific problems in specific geographical contexts that are required to be analysed critically in order to strengthen the system for the development of our state and our nation.

Bhavnagar is one of the priority districts in the state of Gujarat. There are a total of eleven Talukas in Bhavnagar. Among them the researcher has selected Talaja Taluka for her research study due to the certain specific characteristics. Talaja is situated at the distance of about 50 kilometres in south of Bhavnagar. Most of the people of this Taluka are working as Agricultural labourers and some of them are working in the diamond market. Talaja Taluka has a large coastal line and there are certain different educational problems in this region which need an attention at this moment. Child labour, poor socio-economic conditions, early marriages, seasonal migration etc. are the major problems of this Taluka all that affect UEE directly or indirectly.

There are specific problems in specific geographical contexts that are required to be analysed critically in order to strengthen the system for the development of our state and our nation.
### Table 4: Taluka Wise Literacy Rate in Bhavnagar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Name of Taluka</th>
<th>Literacy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bhavnagar</td>
<td>69.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ghogha</td>
<td>54.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Talaja</td>
<td>47.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mahuva</td>
<td>47.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Gariyadhar</td>
<td>59.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Palitana</td>
<td>53.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Sihor</td>
<td>57.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Umarana</td>
<td>58.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Gadhda</td>
<td>54.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Botad</td>
<td>57.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Vallabhipur</td>
<td>59.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The above Table indicates that literacy rate of the Talaja Taluka is less than other Talukas and as a result the Government focuses on this Taluka. The researcher also tried to find out the reasons behind the low literacy. Some important statistical data of Talaja Taluka are given in Table 5.

### Table 5: Demographic Profile of Talaja Taluka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Number of Villages</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Number of Schools</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pay Centres</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cluster Resource Centres</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Block Resource Centres</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Villages comes under low female literacy rate</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Below 35%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Drop-out Rate</td>
<td>10 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Literacy Rate</td>
<td>47.15(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bridge course Centres</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Report, 2006-07, Block Resource Centres, Talaja, District- Bhavnagar
There are a total of 114 villages in Talaja Taluka and out of those 37 villages fall under the low literacy rate (As per the survey of SSA in the year 2004, these villages have low female literacy rate i.e. less than 35%). There are 148 schools in this Taluka including Kanya Shala, Kumar Shala and Mishra Shala. A total of fourteen clusters are in this Taluka, with thirteen to fourteen schools in each cluster. The literacy rate of this Taluka is very low (45%) when compared to the national literacy rate (65%). The researcher selected 37 schools for her research work from different clusters.

Talaja Taluka in Bhavnagar district has different characteristics when compared to other Talukas as mentioned above. As a result it is inevitable to study the critical problems of Primary Education. These problems can only be understood and encountered in a socio-cultural and economic context. Most of the people (80%) of this region are coming under the category of Other Backward Class (OBC).

Despite the indisputable progress made towards literacy attainments during the past decade, many children actually learn little, even after five years in primary school, and a large number are not even able to write their names. Understandably, parents particularly amongst the economically disadvantaged are quick to lose confidence in an apparently ineffectual educational system. Given the extent social and economic hierarchies within Indian society, girls and children belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Castes (OBC), are often the first casualties amongst those who opt-out of school. It is imperative, therefore, to address the ‘lack of interest in studies,’ which must be viewed as a reflection of the critical need to improve the quality and delivery of education, to make it more relevant, joyful, and motivating for children (UNICEF 2005).

The researcher, as a teacher working in a primary school in the Talaja Taluka for over half a decade, experienced the pressing
problems of primary education and realized the importance of conducting a critical inquiry of this kind.

Most of the research conducted in the area of primary education in Gujarat has only focused on the problems in general and studied the progressive development of primary education over the period with respect to physical infrastructure, enrolment rate, drop-out rate, teacher-training programmes etc. But the present study is an in-depth study highlighting the grassroots realities of the management of primary education in Talaja Taluka with a view to critically analyse the problems of primary education from socio-cultural economic point of view. The present study is also aimed at nature of on-going programmes in primary education and their impact on building quality education. Such a study would help in policy making and also help in developing meaningful programmes and their execution.

The State Government has identified Talaja Taluka as a focus area for implementing various schemes to cater to the needs of this region. Talaja Taluka comes under the National Programmes of Enrolment of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) block. The number of Bridge Course Centres is high in these areas, which shows the high drop-out rates and low enrolment. Therefore there is a need to critically analyse the local contextual problems from the perspectives of both functionaries and beneficiaries, by considering the socio-cultural and economic conditions of livelihoods. It is necessary to study the effectiveness of those programmes as perceived by both the authority and the students/parents. Such a study can provide an in-depth understanding on the local specific issues and challenges as well as provide base for further frame of action. Therefore, the researcher intended to conduct a critical study on the problems of elementary education in this region of Gujarat with the following research questions.

The present study is an in-depth study highlighting the grassroots realities of the management of primary education in Talaja Taluka with a view to critically analyse the problems of primary education from socio-cultural economic point of view.
Programmes and Policies of Elementary Education in India/Gujarat

The Universalization of Elementary Education in India implies “Elementary Education for All” (Classes I to VIII) and for every child, without any kind of discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, sex, religion, region, etc. Elementary Education has been one of the focus areas in the successive Five-Year Plans. Important programmes and policies are presented chronologically below which have great importance for leading primary education in the country. Here the researcher selected Talaja Taluka of the Bhavnagar District (Gujarat) as a sample so to see how actually these programmes and policies are working.
Mid-Day Meal Programme

Gujarat government started the Mid-Day Meal scheme in 1984, but officially this programme was launched in the year 1995 all over India. Poverty prevents the underprivileged from getting the full value of their education. Moreover, hunger obstructs education as children are forced to leave schools and take up menial jobs. Because of this programme, enrolment in primary schools has substantially increased and the drop-out ratio has substantially decreased.

Objectives of Mid-Day Meal Programme are as follows:

➢ To improve the nutritional and health standard of growing children.
➢ To reduce the drop-out rate, increase attendance, and attract poorer children to come to school.
➢ To create supplementary employment opportunities at the village level.
➢ To achieve social and national integration.
➢ To supplement state efforts towards the removal of poverty.

A total of 180 grams of food equivalent to 450 calories and 15 grams of protein for standard one to five and 700 calories and 20 grams of protein for standard six to seven is prescribed by the central government. In Gujarat this quantity of raw food is provided to the schools. In Talaja Taluka all the government elementary schools carry out this programme. In every school there is one Mid-Day Meal administrator, one cook, and one helper; in some schools where the number of students is more, two helpers are appointed through the Mamlatdar Office. In the school compound, every day food is prepared by the cook and served to the children during the recess time.
### Table 6: Food Menu for Bhavnagar District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lapsi</td>
<td>Dal, Rice, Vegetable</td>
<td>Mix-Dal Dhokli</td>
<td>Dal Mix</td>
<td>Ormu, Vegetable</td>
<td>Salted Khichadi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Department, Government of Gujarat.

### Table 7: Mid-Day Meal Beneficiaries Students of Gujarat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Beneficiaries (In lakh)</th>
<th>Total Expenditure (In lakh)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>29.56</td>
<td>19,030.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>38.26</td>
<td>26,386.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>39.50</td>
<td>24,435.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Department, Government of Gujarat.
Preparation of Meal Day Meal
Under this scheme one Mid-Day Meal programmer, one cook and one helper are designated in each school. The food material is provided by the government through the Mamlatdar office, Talaja. In each school, food is prepared daily under the observation of the school Principal. In every school the Principal is in charge of the Mid-Day Meal. All the Principals agreed that the Mid-Day Meal is given to the children regularly in the school. According to them from the given Mid-Day Meal, about 80% of students on average eat it. The teachers also supported the fact of about 80% of the children and almost all children benefited from the Mid-Day Meal whenever there was food supplied. In the Talaja Taluka of Gujarat 97% of the school carried out Mid-Day programme in their school successfully and overall the Mid-Day Meal programme attracted the villagers and they sent their children to school. These kinds of programmes increase enrolment and attendance.

**Tarang Ullahasmay Abhiyas (Activity Based Learning)**

From June 1995 “Tarang Ulhasmay Abhiyas” based on the minimum level of learning approach was introduced in primary schools by the Government of Gujarat. Tarang is an activity oriented, play-based, child-centred, joyful, learning approach, which suggests methodology for transacting the MLLs in class one. The process consists of adopting a play-based activity oriented approach for use in large classrooms with limited resources. The basic objectives of this programme are as follows.

- To ensure 100% enrolment of children in class one
- To motivate teachers of class one to initiate child-centred activity oriented joyful learning in order to ensure retention and achievement of MLLs.
- To build friendly school environments, especially for class one through wall painting and the production and use of low cost teaching aids.
- To involve community and Panchayat bodies more closely in primary education for achieving universal enrolment and retention as well as improving quality of education.
Tarang gives guidelines to teachers through which participation of the students could increase. The teacher is expected to perform certain activities for making the learning joyful. It also helps teachers in preparing teaching aids like pictures, flashcards, alphabet cards, letters etc. Tarang was also supported with “Balmitra,” which is a class with a blackboard belt on the walls of the classroom. This enables the children to write freely on it when they want. Such kinds of programmes can help to reduce drop-outs. In Talaja Taluka the concept of joyful learning is applied in the schools.

All principals agreed with the concept of the play-based teaching method and they implemented Tarang-Ulhasmay Abhiyas in the school. Of the teachers of class one and two, 93% implemented this programme in the class with its objectives. While 100% of the teachers mentioned that learning without burden is more important and the play-based teaching method reduced the burden of students as they learnt with fun. Eighty percent of community members also believed that teaching in class one and two was effective and thus, the dropout ratio is less compared to higher classes.
Children made it with Dry leaves

Blackboard belt on the wall for the children
School Entrance Celebration (Shala Pravesh Utsav)

The Gujarat government launched this programme in the year 1998-1999 to make primary education dynamic and progressive, to improve quality, and to reach the 100% enrolment and 100% retention target. This programme has been implemented in all government primary schools of Gujarat having a low literacy rate, at the beginning of every academic year. Under this programme, in some schools children are adorned and brought to school in decorative bullock carts with the drums and dhols being played. It is a programme for the children, by the children with the assistance of teachers and the principal.
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This programme creates a fair like atmosphere in the village, encouraging the villagers to send their children to the school. The children are also very much curious and are lured to the school. Sometimes schools may receive some donations from the public for the development of the school through this programme.

Table 8: Enrolment: School Entrance Celebration in Gujarat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,97,497</td>
<td>2,70,821</td>
<td>5,68,318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hon'able Chief Minister greeting students during School entrance celebration
Table 9: Public Donation through School Entrance Celebration in Gujarat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Donation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate cost of Educational Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,31,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41,00,2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51,31,2695</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


All the schools selected by the researcher celebrate school entrance celebration. 95% of principals opined that due to the school entrance celebration the enrolment ratio has increased and 85% teachers agree with the principal. All the community members reported that school entrance celebration creates awareness among the villagers and all the schools celebrate this programme effectively.
Girls Education Rath Yatra (Kanya Kelavni Rathyatra)

Girls Education Rath Yatra is a programme for the enrolment of girls. This programme is implemented in 2082 villages among all the districts of Gujarat that have a low female literacy rate. During Girls Education Rath Yatra, the villagers are given information and understanding of various schemes and projects of the State Government. The questions and problems raised by the community are heard and solved immediately. This has a very powerful impact at the village level. Local MP and MLAs and various officers of Taluka and district level joined the Girls Education Rathyatra programme and have sincerely contributed to the efforts of the State Government to raise the female literacy level to the highest point. In this programme decorative rath, bullock cart and in some schools - cars are used. Young girls who enrol in the schools are made part of all these fun fares. During this Rathyatra all children eligible for enrolment, especially girls, are enrolled in primary schools, and those children who had left the schools were re-enrolled.
Table 10: Enrolment of the students during Girls Education Rathyatra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>81,715</td>
<td>75,847</td>
<td>1,57,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>108834</td>
<td>103616</td>
<td>212450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>118728</td>
<td>116357</td>
<td>235085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>4,07,635</td>
<td>3,65,573</td>
<td>7,73,208</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The female literacy rate of the selected sample schools is below 35%. So as per the rule, all the schools celebrate Girls Education Rathyatra. Teachers of these schools organize cultural programmes and other additional activities. All teachers and the principal agreed that due to this programme the girl child enrolment has increased up to 100%. Community members also agreed that this programme creates awareness among the people. These types of programme are effective at the grassroots level and are implemented in these schools.

Due to this programme the girl child enrolment has increased up to 100%.

Vidhyalaxmi Bond Scheme

The State Government has introduced the Vidhyalaxmi Bond scheme with the intention to improve the female literacy rate in villages having less than 35% female literacy rate to achieve 100% enrolment of girls in standard one and continuation of studies up to standard seven in the year 2002-03. Under this scheme every girl enrolled freshly in standard one shall be given a bond of Rs. 1000. The girl gets the value of the bond plus interest when she passes standard seven. If the girl leaves the school before completion of standard seven, then she is not eligible for getting the amount of bond. The Vidhyalaxmi
scheme is implemented in all the schools selected by the researcher. The socio-economic condition of these villages is not satisfactory and hence the Vidhyalaxmi bond attracts them to send their children to school. The bond is given to the children at the time of school entrance celebration. The provision of Vidyalaxmi Bonds worth Rs. 15 crores for 150000 girls has been made in the year 2007-08.

**Table 11: Beneficiary Girls of Vidhyalaxmi Bond**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Beneficiary Girls of Gujarat</th>
<th>Beneficiary Girls of Bhavnagar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>1,30,000</td>
<td>2855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>1,51,034</td>
<td>4175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>1,46,200</td>
<td>3654</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Department, Government of Gujarat.

All the schools selected by the researcher provide Vidyalaxmi Bonds to girls. 79% Principal opined that this kind of money incentive oriented programmes attracts villagers, and to get full redemption of money, girl must complete their primary education. So the problem of dropouts has also decreased. 53% of the committee members were not aware of this scheme. 43% parents of school going children were also unaware about the scheme. Most of the parents are illiterate and thus did not understand the scheme. However, from all these programmes improvement in school enrolment is seen.

**Bal-Mela**

For promoting activity based joyful learning in school, Activity Melas were held at 36,000 primary schools across the state. Activity Mela can develop hidden potentialities of students. 14 different types of activities like storytelling, action songs, role-play, puppetry, clay-work, craft-work, pasting, colour filling, educational games, drawing etc. are performed by the students in activity Mela. These types of activities provide children opportunities and freedom to act or perform, which inspires them to create new innovative and original ideas. The grant
for this activity is Rs. 425 for each school, for the improvement of enrolment and retention. More than 6000 Bal-Mela were organized in the year 2006-07.

**Objectives of the Bal-Mela**

- Functionality of children is nourished.
- Curiosity of children is awakened.
- Group spirit of children is developed.
- Creativity of children is awakened
- Thinking power of children is developed.
- Children feel self-satisfaction
- Self-confidence is developed
- Children get opportunities of presentation.
- Development of the characters like management, discipline, punctuality, perfection, cleanliness, etc.

In Talaja Taluka all schools receive the grant of Bal-Mela. 83% of principals replied that they organize Bal-Mela in the school once a year. They said that Bal-Mela is not celebrated properly due to the insufficient amount of grant money. When they organized the functions the children enjoyed it very much and developed their skills to perform at different levels. Children have the freedom to act and Bal-Mela provides them a platform. 73% teachers agreed with the principals. All the CRC coordinators reported that Bal-Mela is successfully organized in all the schools.

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83% of principals replied that they organize Bal-Mela in the school once a year. They said that Bal-Mela is not celebrated properly due to the insufficient amount of grant money.
ERT Selected Good Practices - Indian Case Studies
Earthenware and toys of mud made by school children
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2000) was launched in November 2000, in partnership with the State. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an effort to universalise elementary education through community ownership of the school system. It is a response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country. The SSA programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to all children through the provision of community owned quality education in a mission mode.

Objectives of this programme

- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
- All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010.
Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.

Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.

Universal retention by 2010.

Some important features of SSA

- It has a clear time frame.
- It provides education facilities all over India.
- It promotes social justice by making education for all.
- Importance of community partnership and involvement of Panchayati Raj institutions.
- Partnership between centres/State and local bodies.
- Focus on special groups (SC/ST/Minority/Girls/Deprived children)
- Child-centred education
- Emphasis on innovative teaching aids
- Role of different institutions (NUEPA, NCERT, SCERT, SIEMAT, DIET)
- Importance on quality and quantity in education.

It is a holistic programme to provide good education for the elementary level. Emphasis is on 100% enrolment and retention of the children. Some important programmes implemented under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are as follows.
The Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education

The Education Guarantee scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) are an important part of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). It provides avenues for children in the age group of 6-14 years. This programme was designed to cover those children who are inhabitants of remotely located, inaccessible habitations, who never have been to school, drop-outs or could not continue/complete their elementary education because of one or other reasons.

EGS is an innovative step to provide educational opportunity to all the children of India. It guarantees to open a primary school within 100 days if there is a need of education of at least 20 students. It must be in the same area, and managed by local administration. It also ensures a local teacher is appointed and provides a minimum of teaching learning materials to the school.

The schools are meant to educate the children of slum dwellers, scavengers, and bonded labourers, sex workers etc. Its objective is to bring all children from every nook and corner of society into mainstream education. It also emphasizes on establishing ‘Back to School Camps’ and ‘Bridge Courses’ for the dropouts. EGS and AIE programme also envisages centres for street and slum children, remedial coaching for children enrolled in Formal schools and short duration summer camps. Under the scheme of Alternative education, Bal-Mitra Varg and Bridge Course Centres are carried out.
Bal-Mitra Varg

Bal-Mitra is called the children’s friend. For those children who left school or are not studying at all from the age group of 6-14, the Mitra Varga is established by the SSA. Under this programme, after conducting the exams, the students are entered into the mainstream. The Bal-Mitra Varg is carried out at the nearest place from the student’s residence. A maximum of 20 students are studying under one Bal-Mitra Varg. There are total 44 Bal-Mitra Varg in Talaja Taluka. Local village members appointed as Bal-Mitra have the minimum qualification of Higher Secondary School Certificate (H.S.C).

Table 12: Students of Balmitra Varg in Selected Sample Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Centres</th>
<th>No. of Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bal-Mitra Varg acts as an alternative school. Those students, who are unable to attend the regular schools, or left school, are made to attend Bal-Mitra Varg. Bal-Mitra Varg is conducted in places, which are nearer to the residence of the students. Every day, excluding Sundays, one Bal-Mitra teaches the students for three hours. In most cases a local person, whose qualification is of the minimum H.S.C, is selected as the Bal-Mitra. In each centre a minimum of five and a maximum of 20 students are taught. All CRCc reported that this programme is working as per its objectives. 70% of the principals reported that during the migration period, children are not enrolled in the Bal-Mitra Varg. However, apart from the migration period 73% of the community members are aware about this programme and send their children to the Bal-Mitra Varg.
Bridge Course Centres

Due to the problem of migration, some students do not attend schools, fail the examination, and subsequently leave school, perpetuating the problems of stagnation and drop-outs. To reduce this problem SSA introduced the Bridge Course Scheme. Back to school is one of the aims of SSA. Vacation schools, farm schools, seasonal hostels are all different Bridge Courses. In Talaja Taluka, a vacation school programme is operated. The duration of the Bridge Course is from May to July. In Talaja, students who failed can repeat the same class for three months and after the examination, if the child passes, proceed to the next standard. A total of 17 Bridge Course Centres are in Talaja.

School programmes are offered during the vacation in the Talaja Taluka under the scheme of alternative schooling nominated as Bridge Course Centres. Details of Bridge Course Centres in sample schools are in the following Table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Centres</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All principals reported that Bridge Courses are extremely beneficial for students who failed. One teacher from the same village having the minimum qualification of HSC is appointed for every 20 students. All CRCc agreed that the Bridge Courses are working effectively. According to all the principals, this programme is beneficial in decreasing the failure ratio and hence the drop-out ratio.
National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL, 2003)

The Government of India approved a new programme called National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) as an amendment to the existing scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) for education of underprivileged/disadvantaged girls at the elementary level. The scheme is implemented in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) where the level of female literacy is low and the gender gap is above the national average. In blocks of districts that are not covered under EBBs, but have at least a five percent SC/ST population and where the SC/ST female literacy is below ten percent it is also implemented. Under this scheme selected urban slum areas, at the cluster level, Model Cluster Schools are established.

Model Cluster Schools (MCS)

Child friendly schools at the cluster level were opened in all selected districts/blocks where the scheme is operational. MCS have facilities in terms of teaching learning equipment, books, games etc. resources available like books are being be circulated to the schools in the same clusters. The facilities utilize learning through computers, film shows, reading material, self-defence, life skills, riding bicycles, reading, games etc. Instructors are hired for the day or on contract for imparting vocational and other training. A cluster comprises of about five to ten villages, with each block having about eight to ten clusters. The girl child friendly infrastructure is used by all the schools in that cluster, by rotation. The criteria for selecting schools are those that show the best performance; are accessible to around 10 village /school (from same cluster); whose girls can use this infrastructure; and that have land for additional civil work. While selecting the location of the model cluster schools, the criteria of SC/ST population would also be taken into consideration. A Model Cluster School for girls have the provision of an additional classroom, supply of drinking water, electrification and toilets for which a one-time grant up to a maximum of Rs. two lakhs is provided.

In the Talaja Taluka one school from each cluster is selected as a model cluster school under this scheme one classroom especially for the activity of girls and one computer is given to these schools.
Community Mobilization

Community mobilization enhances the quality of education in the school, and hence the government has established this. Active community members can improve enrolment, retention, and learning. In every school there are MTA, VEC, PTA, PC, and a VCWC committee.

Some grants given by the government for the development of the school include school repairing grants, school development grants, teaching learning material grants, different programme grants etc. all to be received in the account of the VEC and can only be used by the school with the signatures of the VEC members. The committee members are trained at the Cluster level, the Block level and at the Gandhingar level.

These committees were established in all the schools that were selected by the researcher. Community participation plays an important role in the school. The benefit of establishing these committees is that the community members assist in the school programmes and can thus utilize the grant money more effectively.

All the principals reported that they organize committee meetings on time and discussed the problems of schools like irregularity of the students, use of migration card, and for construction work, taking into account the perspective of committee members. The majority of committee members admitted that the meetings are not organized regularly and 18% of the committee members do not know whether they are members of committee or not. While a few of them do not even know that they are members of a committee nor which committee they are on. Some principals received the support from committee members, while others mentioned that they do not have full support. Sometimes community members created problems regarding the utilization of money, which is received in the account of the VEC, and the VCWC, and is withdrawn by the permission of community members only.
Discussion with Parents

Discussion with VEC members with teachers
Meena Manch

This programme is carried out in the school under the umbrella of SSA with the help of UNICEF. The main objective of this programme is to improve girl child enrolment and reduce drop-outs at the elementary level with the help of community members. U.P. Orissa, Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat carry out this programme very effectively. In this programme the hypothetical character of “Meena” is designed, fun loving, enthusiastic, energetic and always ready to serve others. This character of Meena is introduced in cartoon film by the government and is frequently advertised on television. In schools undergoing this programme, picture story-books of Meena and cartoon film Compact Discs are provided. In every school the principal, with the help of teachers, show the cartoon films to the parents to create awareness of girl child education. Under this programme different activities are carried out like, Dadi-Nani Day, Maholla Bathak, Meena library, Meena Cabinet etc.

In the first phase a maximum of four schools from one cluster were selected, among them one school must be Model Cluster School. One in-charge teacher handles this programme in the school.
In the Talaja Taluka under the first phase, 56 schools were selected. Among the 37 schools selected by the researcher, only 13 schools follow the Meena programme. 35% of sample schools carried out this programme by one in charge coordinator who received special training of this programme at the Block or Cluster level. The majority of the principals (85%) and all the CRC (90%) coordinators mentioned that this programme is effectively implemented in the schools. 69% of the teachers replied that the objective of the programme is really praiseworthy, but paperwork is a little difficult. Under this programme many schools celebrated Dadi-Nani day and Meena Mela. During these activities, coordinators of this programme explained the character of Meena through the Cartoon film to the community to convince them of the importance of girl child education. Apart from this, it involved lots of activities that have been merrily performed by the children. 60% community members and 41% parents were aware of this programme through participating in the different activities. This programme really helps a lot to increase the ratio of enrolment.

69% of the teachers replied that the objective of the programme is really praiseworthy, but paperwork is a little difficult.
Programme regarding awareness in society under Meena Manch
Sakhi

Sakhi is a vernacular word, meaning “Friend” in English. This programme launched in the year 2007-08 under the umbrella of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the NPEGEL Blocks. A conversation between two children of equal age is understood by both of them very easily. A maximum of four schools from one cluster are selected under this programme. The chosen schools get Rs. 600 as a grant to carry out this programme in each school. This programme involves a group of children who communicate with each other and to create a friendly atmosphere between them.

Main objectives

- To create a friendly environment between the students
- To develop communication skills and leadership qualities
- To develop healthy competition among the children
- Children can share their subject knowledge with each other and develop self-confidence.
- Team spirit develops in children by working in groups.

Under this programme the class is divided in groups. A maximum of eight students (including boys and girls both) in one group is prepared by the teacher as per the number of students in classroom. Each group contains children of all levels (average, below average, and above average) students. The SSA has suggested the title of the groups as Bul-bul, Swan, Peacock, Mogra etc. In classes I to IV mathematics and language and in classes V to VII mathematics, science, Gujarati and English are discussed by students with each other. The teachers provide them an atmosphere to discuss the difficult points of these subjects. This programme is carried out for three hours fortnightly.
There are 56 schools in Talaja Taluka, commencing the Sakhi programme. Among the sample schools selected by the researcher only 12 schools in Talaja Taluka underwent this programme. 80% of the teachers replied that the objective of this programme is effective. The principals and all the CRC coordinators agreed that this programme is carried out effectively in the schools.

**Kshitij (Horizon)**

Kshitij means horizon in English. Sarva Shiksh Abhiyan introduced lots of programmes for improving the quality of education of which, Kshitij is also a part of. It started in the year 2007. Under this programme the school establishes a “Library Corner.” The government provides books sets for each selected school.

**Objectives**

- To improve the reading ability among the children.
- To develop communication skills.
- To develop leadership quality.
- To hold the power in language.

In this programme students read storybooks, poetry and then discuss the stories with each other. At the cluster level three schools are selected, among them one school is a Model Cluster School. A grant of Rs. 500 per school is given by the SSA under NPEGEL for carrying out this programme activity. The books for classes I to IV and V to VII are different. One teacher in-charge handles this programme in each school. Teachers also provide assistance to the students participating in this activity. In Talaja Taluka, 42 schools have this programme. Ten schools out of the 37 schools selected by researcher carry out the “Kshitij” programme.
Ramta Ramta Bhaniye

To attract the students to school and enhance the rate of retention in classes one and two, a play-based teaching method was introduced in the year 2007-08 called “Ramta Ramta Bhaniye.” A maximum of eight schools were selected receiving a grant of Rs. 1000 from each cluster. The duration of this programme is one month. “Moti Bahen” and “Mota Bhai” are selected as leaders from class three to seven and select “Vahali Bahen” and “Vahala Bhai” from class one and two. These older children help the younger children in their studies and extra co-curricular activities.

The main objective of this programme is that the selected “Moti Bahen” and “Mota Bhai” encourage the younger students to come to school and also help them in their studies. The class teacher of class I and II is the in charge coordinator of this programme and undertakes different activities like teaching through storytelling and rhymes.

This programme is followed in 108 schools in Talaja and among the 37 schools selected by the researcher this programme is followed in 18 schools. Most of the schools (60%) carried out this programme. 88% of principals and CRCc, and 67% of teachers mentioned that it is difficult to attain the objectives of this programme due to the severe problem of migration, since the main aim of this programme is to improve the regularity of children in the school. Stories, Bal-Geet (rhymes) and different games, which are given in the module are very interesting and fulfil the objective. 83% teachers used the same module in the classrooms. As play-based teaching methods are best for lower classes, all the teachers agreed with this and implemented it in the classrooms.

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It is difficult to attain the objectives of this programme due to the severe problem of migration, since the main aim of this programme is to improve the regularity of children in the school

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Free scholarships

The government grants free scholarships to all children according to their caste. Once a year, scholarships are given for two purposes, one for purchasing study related material and another for purchasing school uniforms. The school uniform grant is the same for all students but the usual amount (Rs. 150) differs based on standard and caste. SC and ST students receive a higher amount of money than the OBC and General Category students. In special cases (sweepers, and sanitary workers) SC students receives special amount of scholarship, for classes I to V Rs. 950 and for classes VI and VII 1150. To be benefited by scholarship, it is compulsory for students to come to school regularly and pass the examination. To take advantage of this money, parents send their children regularly to the school and ultimately the government can improve the quality of education. In Talaja Taluka all schools receive the scholarships.

All the students received scholarships from the school. All the committee members and 95% of the parents are aware of this scheme. The main aim of this programme is to increase the enrolment ratio, which is shown in the school.
Free Textbooks

The concept of free and compulsory education is fully derived in our classrooms. The government provides free textbooks to all children attending the government primary school. Apart from the textbooks, in few schools notebooks are also donated by donors with the help of community members and principals. These kinds of benefits attract students as well as parents to the school. The positive impact of this scheme can be observed in both the enrolment and retention of children.

Apart from the above programmes, the Gujarat government, with the help of the central government, implemented various programmes to achieve the goal of universalization of elementary education. GCERT introduced traditional village games and has increased the impact to the overall development of the children. Games that feasible in backward areas are given priority in ‘Bal-Ramat Utsav.’ The main aim of this programme is to develop latent abilities in children and improve their physical health. To improve the quality of education “State Mathematics / Science Exhibitions” are organized in every cluster at the Taluka level, Taluka to District and District to State, since 2005. Under NPEGEL additional scholarships for girls are provided in backward areas. Other basic facilities such as separate sanitation units, compound walls, the establishment of new classrooms, electricity, drinking water, libraries, games equipment and First Aid boxes have been provided to upper primary schools in the State. Computer facilities are also set forth in such schools that have electricity.

An endless number of programmes and initiatives are operated within the school but still the State is unable to achieve the goal of UEE. It is very necessary to look after the reasons behind this failure.
Major Findings of the Study

It was found from the study that the majority of schools in Talaja Taluka, where the problems of universalization of elementary education are acute, have contextual issues related to socio-economic and demographic factors. It was found from the study, that child labour, seasonal migration, early marriages, illiteracy and low economic status are some of the major problems adversely affecting the goals of universalization of elementary education.

- Migration is an issue in 82% of the village schools, which has been affecting the education of the children during the period of migration from one place to another for livelihood. While, child-labour is in practice in most of the sampled villages and is the major source of income; due to the child labour children do not attend the schools regularly. Most of the students (85%) in the schools come from the low socio-economic background, among these the majority are below the poverty line. In addition, the majority of the students (80%) come under Other Backward Cast (OBC).

- Most of the villages (89%) have one school, but in some places the coverage of the village is more than three kilometres. Especially where the Vadi zones are allotted and where Plot Shala is allotted to avoid the problem of seasonal hazards, it is very difficult for the students to reach the school during the monsoon season.

- With respect to the on-going programs on UEE, it was found that in majority of the schools (88%) produced a varying quality of improvement programmes such as Sakhi, Kshitij, Ramta-Ramta, Meena Manch and ADEPTS.

- It was found that the number of female teachers in the sample schools was found to be less than 43% of the school and this was an additional cause for an increase of the girls’ drop-out rate. In some schools the requirement of teachers was also found. Professional development programs for the quality improvement of teachers have been organized at the Cluster level, Block level or in some cases at the District level. Training is based on academic and education related areas.
With respect to enrolment, it was found that there was a general increase in the enrolment in lower primary classes, while in upper primary classes the enrolment showed a gradual decrease. It was surprise to note that as per the parents mentioned, being a girl child was not a barrier to education and in some of the sample schools the population consisted slightly more of girls than boys.

It was found from the study, that the facilities provided by the government through the various programs are sufficient in terms of developing infrastructure as opined by the principals. However, it was also opined that the resources provided are inadequate for the local contextual needs. It was observed that there is a uniform government policy regarding the distribution of resources to all schools under various schemes equally without considering the local variations and contextual needs.

Regarding the physical facilities, it was found that 56% of schools do not have a playground; only a few have a small playground or enclosed structure where usually the morning assembly was conducted. The availability of sports equipment too was found very scarce.

Sanitation facilities, in terms of toilets, were found in all the schools. However, they do not have separate sanitation facilities for boys, girls and teachers and it was also found that 67% schools do not have a water facility in it.

Regarding the Library Facility, it was found that 92% of the sample schools have a Library Facility but the library books were not circulated among students frequently. It was found that teachers are not utilizing the reference books in their daily teaching. 81% schools have basic science laboratory equipment in their schools but are rarely used or not used at all in many schools.

It was found that there is a shortage of classrooms (34%) in the schools but in some schools construction of classrooms are taking place, while the remaining schools are found to use Sintex ready-made classrooms. Most of the schools (88%) have pucca buildings in the school. Certain basic facilities like electricity, drinking water were provided in most of the schools. A total of 90% of the sample schools have drinking water facility within the school campus. The majority of children in the school
sit on the floor (sometimes on cement floor) without ‘Aasan Patta.’

- It was found that the constitution of VEC, PTA, and MTA are not organized systematically in some schools. In some cases (18%) committee members were unaware of their roles and/or responsibilities.
- The majority of the Principals (61%) have organized PTA, VEC, MTA, and PC meetings in their schools but duration of these meetings were not fixed or sometimes meetings were not organized as per the schedule.
- It was opined by the principals the construction work in schools was challenging for them as it takes more time and more all the school grants come to the account of VEC and with only their signature and approval the money can be utilized.
- It was found that multi-grade teaching is being practiced in some of the sample schools.
- Regarding the awareness about the on-going programs related to Universalization of Elementary Education, it was found that 27% of teachers were not aware about the objectives or the implementation of the programme. It was expressed by the teachers that school staff meetings are rarely held and such programs are discussed among the teachers.
- It was found from the study that the majority of the schools, especially in upper primary classes’ homework is a regular practice. The self-learning material provided by the government of Gujarat has been used as homework. It was observed that there is irregularity in doing homework among the children.
- It was observed by the researcher that there is a lack of proper co-ordination between the administrators and teachers. It was found that teachers are not aware about many programmes of UEE.
- It was observed that school teachers have been performing multiple roles in the schools and due to this sometimes they get distracted from the academic duties.
- Regarding the training programs for the teachers, it was opined that (43%) they were forcibly sent for the training. Hence, they did not have any interest in learning.
- The majority of the teachers (70%) and principals (80%) did P.T.C just after secondary school education. A very small number of
teachers (10%) were graduates with an advanced professional training (i.e. B.Ed).

- A majority of the teachers (70%) and principals (80%) have P.T.C as their academic qualification or to just after secondary school education. A very small number of teachers (10%) were graduates with an advanced professional training in teaching.
- Most of the schools principals have (63%) more than 20 years of school experience. In government schools the post of principal is derived only on the basis of work experience in teaching.
- It was opined by the principals (59%) and teachers (71%) that in-service training programmes organized by SSA and the Gujarat Government under various schemes were found ineffective. Most of the principals opined that the resource persons in the in-service training programme need to be well qualified, experienced and experts in the subject area. The resource persons in the training programmes do not have a thorough knowledge on the subject and therefore, sometimes unable to explain critical content related points. It was observed that usually the resource persons are drawn from a group of teachers.
- The majority of the principals (98%) opined that they have to perform multiple roles such as administrative work, election duty, construction work and look after many programmes like Mid-Day Meal, Bal-Mitra Varg, Bridge Course Centres and as a result, could not focus on the academic matters of the school.
- It was found that the Vidhya Laxmi Bond has improved the enrolment of the girls in the schools. However, most of the times the names of the students are wrongly printed and in some cases children who enrol after the survey are not benefited by this scheme.
- Most of the principals (90%) do not have any problem in auditing their accounts, but found a problem in the maintenance of the dead stock because audits of these dead stocks do not take place for the long time. In the schools, there is no separate room for dead stock material, so it is difficult to maintain.
- In some villages, principals receive donations from local community members for the development of the school and to spread the value of education in the society. During the school
entrance celebrations and in girls’ education Rathyatra donations are received by principals.

- The majority of the principals have problems with the enrolment survey due to not getting the actual birth date of the children, because parents do not have a birth certificate of the students.
- All the administrators of Talaja Taluka as well as D.P.E.O of Bhavnagar reported that they all are satisfied with the working efficiency of teachers and principals as well as with the progress of elementary education.
- All the administrators of Talaja Taluka as well as DPEO of Bhavnagar mentioned that direct interaction between teachers and community is not possible but still they believe that all the committee members are aware about the programmes which are carried out for the benefits of their children.
Discussions of the Major Findings

From the above major findings of the study, the researcher has presented a detailed discussion with respect to the problems of elementary education in Talaja Taluka. The enrolment data revealed that there has been an improvement over the years in both boys and girls, but in upper primary classes’ the drop-out ratio was found significant. Despite this, a positive scenario is observed by the researcher that the increase in the girl child enrolment indicates the gradual awareness in society for the education of the girls.

With respect to the provision of the infrastructure facilities, it was found that most of the schools have well-built classrooms and certain essential common facilities like sanitation, drinking water, and electricity facility. However, facilities like a separate sanitation facility for boys, girls and teachers; a library; school playground; and sports equipment are not available in some schools. In most of the cases the library is not frequently used by the students or by the teachers. Science laboratory equipment is also rarely used. It was observed by the researcher that having resources in the school is not sufficient for quality education but how those resources can be better utilized determines the quality.

With regards to financial resources, principals opined that they were getting regular government grants except in some cases. School repairing grants, school development grants, and teaching learning material grants come into the accounts of the VEC. However, the grants received were not enough in some cases, especially in terms of school development grants, which now-a-days is the same for all the schools, irrespective of number of classrooms. By considering the local variations and contextual needs the government must take some action in this regard. However it is a welcoming feature that the problems had reduced after implementation of the SSA programmes.

In the case of the Mid-Day Meal scheme it was found that food material and the quality of food prepared were not satisfactory. Because of this, many students were not ready to take advantage of the programme. Therefore, communities can be involved in this programme to make the scheme more successful and impact oriented.
Through the SSA programmes, computer education has been introduced in schools and teachers were trained. However, the computer facilities are found inadequate not only in terms of number of computers but also in the infrastructure facilities and computer literacy skills on the part of the teachers.

Due to migration, children are not able to attend schools regularly, so academic achievement of these students is very poor often resulting in failure of their final examinations. After which, they stop coming to school and the problem of stagnation is raised. It affects the quality of education directly.

There is an urgent need to spread awareness among the community. Community members also have to take interest in the progress of their own child. The Village Education Committee (VEC), Mother Teacher Association (MTA), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and Parent Councils (PC) are made at every level, but in most cases, the community is not aware about this. In the case of committee meetings, many members remain absent due to their labour work and are unaware of their role and rights.

With regards to the number of teachers, it was found that, there is a teacher requirement in the sample schools. Even when a teacher goes for a long leave, or in case of delivery (maternity) leave, the situation becomes more serious. Therefore, the government should introduce the policy of substitute teachers or in every village where there is a Gram Mitra (education) the local authority should give this responsibility to them.

The majority of principals revealed that the construction of classroom work is difficult for them. All the principals mentioned that there is a heavy workload on them, and in some cases there is unnecessary interference of community members in school activities. The study also revealed that teachers of the sample schools also faced problems during the classroom transaction. It is very difficult for them to teach migrating students mixed with a regular batch. Bal-Mitra Varg and Bridge Course Centres are carried out for students who
failed but after attending this course there remains no improvement in the student’s academic record.

The Universalization of Elementary Education is an unfulfilled agenda in India but the efforts put forth by both the State and Central Governments and the consequences are largely satisfactory. Awareness among people at large has been created through the various programmes, but accountability must be developed in them to educate their children. The Right to Education Act is a flagship in this direction and the success of it can only be seen with more community ownership. Resource mobilization and distribution have been done in a big way through the various programmes over the years however, monitoring the extent of utilization and its impact also needs to be done to make educational programmes and policies successful.

Achievement of students in various subject areas in schools has been the indicator for quality elementary education. This perspective needs rethinking on the imperatives of education and their relevance to life and living. Ensuring students learning is also a major concern for the quality improvement of UEE. In this context, the capacity building of the teachers in innovative teaching practices is important for joyful learning. Only well designed professional development programmes for teachers can make an impact on teacher development.

All stakeholders need to actively participate in this mission and perform their responsibilities. Such an environment should be created in the villages where parents hold the responsibility of the education for their wards, teachers perform wilfully, and children learn joyfully. Only then can the universalization of elementary education become possible.

Suggestions to Overcome the Problems of Elementary Education in the Talaja Taluka of Bhavnagar District

After a thorough investigation of the contextual problems in Talaja Taluka in the area of elementary education, certain suggestions were drawn from the researcher’s observations and opinions of the key personnel in the management of elementary education and are presented below:
A thorough impact analysis of the on-going programmes of elementary education is considered important to plan and execute the other relevant programmes that make impact on the goals of UEE.

Administrative delays in the implementation of certain schemes needs to be addressed. Under the scheme of Vidhyalaxmi Bond, the name of the girl child, printed in the bond should come directly from the State Office as per the local survey. In most cases the names printed on the bond is wrong and when sent for correction it takes too much time to come back. Another problem is that only those students who are present during the survey are considered for the Vidhyalaxmi Bond. So many students who attend the schools, but are absent during the survey, are not benefited by the scheme. So Vidhyalaxmi Bond should be given after the end of August when actual student registration is completed in the schools so all the students are benefited by the scheme.

There is a need to minimize the work responsibility of the school principals thus shifting the focus more on school development. Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan infrastructure, facilities are improved in terms of classrooms, sanitations etc. In many schools new classrooms are constructed under the responsibility of the principal. Most of the principals are troubled by this duty and are unable to manage the academic duties along with this. It creates a lot of problems, as the grant for classrooms comes in account of Village Education Committee and can only be withdrawn by the signature of the committee members. Sometimes community members create issues and do not sanction the grants. The problem can be minimized by not involving the principals in this matter. Technical Resource Person (TRP) and VEC members can be made responsible for these kinds of activities.

Surprise inspections can be introduced to improve the quality of work in remote areas where there is a lack of frequent inspection and supervision.

Classroom activities of the teachers and principals are affected due to the additional duties entrusted by the Government. For example, Election duty, population counting, survey of illiterates,
enrolment survey etc. Apart from this many additional programmes like “Shaksharta Deep” are to be carried out after school hours. If this kind of workload is decreased then teachers and the principal can concentrate better on the teaching process.

- The government gives training to teachers twice a year before vacation, related to the Kathin Bindu of Mathematics, Science and Language, and training for introducing new programmes in the school. In most cases teachers receive this training but do not implement new techniques or methods in the classrooms. Thus, the actual beneficiaries are not benefited by the training programme. If the principal and CRC strictly take follow ups from teachers than fruitful results can be achieved.

- In most of the villages, community members are not active and do not know anything about their roles. SSA involves community members in different committees but some of the members are ignorant about these committees and do not know they belong to a committee. If awareness among the community is provided then the community can also help in school activities.

- Community meetings are not organized as per rule. VEC, PTA, MTA, and PC meetings should be organized every three months and during emergencies. The main aim of these meetings is to introduce different programmes at the elementary level, discuss important issues and provide knowledge about the importance of girl child education. Unfortunately, in many villages the main agenda of the meeting is only focused on how to utilize different grants. To make the community aware about the programmes, the meetings should be organized properly.

- The ADEPTS programme includes a lot of paperwork, apart from ADEPTS, Sakhi, Kshitij, Meena Manch and many other programmes involve paperwork and filing. Every programme
report has to be submitted at the Cluster level. So sometimes the in-charge teachers of these programmes are busy in maintaining the attractive programme file only. In many cases these programmes are on paper only. Instead of giving so much emphasis to the paperwork the government can emphasize on practical work. The implemented programmes can be documented.

- The Mid-Day Meal programme has a positive impact on enrolment of children in elementary schools. Community members can come to the school to check the quality of the food. Packed food can be provided instead of raw material, which will be a better alternative. So the food menu and uniformity may also be maintained.

- In every school the government gives scholarships to students for uniforms. Often parents use this money in another way. Instead of giving cash money the principal with the help of community members could distributes uniforms to the students and then the dress-code will be maintained.

- In the coastal villages of Talaja Taluka there is a severe problem of migration and people of these villages along with their school-aged children migrate for four to five months. If the government starts Seasonal Hostels/Nivasi camps than the problem can be reduced.

- In the “Nivasi Camp” only boys can stay, hence it is needed for girls to also have a “Niwasi Camp.” The intake capacity of Niwasi camp can also be increased in needy areas.

- At least one female teacher in each school can be appointed because in rural areas communities have an orthodox mind-set. So by appointing female teachers, the enrolment of girl children could be increased.

- Sanitation facilities for girls need to be updated in schools. In each school separate sanitation for boys and girls can be constructed to overcome this problem.

- Master Trainers appointed for in-service training programmes are not very effective and in some cases they do not hold any power, and lack subject knowledge. Only interested candidates can be sent for training to be a Master trainer so they can develop their ideas.
Technology integration in the teaching learning process needs to be promoted in schools to make learning more joyful and meaningful. Accordingly specialized training for the teachers in computer education can be organized at the Block levels.

A local teacher can be appointed in every school in classes one and two. In each district of Gujarat the language tone is different and if a local teacher is appointed with the use of local dialects, it will be easier for students to understand at earlier stage and this can increase their interest in studies.

In every Cluster under the NPEGEL one Model Cluster School is established. Other schools of the same Cluster have use of the computer, library and other facilities at least once in a week. The schools are not using these facilities and even in MCS for vocational training programme a special tutor is appointed, but this facility is also not provided to the school. The principal with the help of teachers can look after these facilities and can improve the quality of education by using these resources.

In government schools teachers may go for long holidays (leave without pay) or sometimes female teachers go on maternity leave for long time. At such times the Gram Mitra should be appointed for teaching.

Most of the teachers face problems while they are taking the classes of Vanchan Lekhan Ganan Abhiyan because it is every day for at least two hours during the school time, for three months. It disturbs the regular timetable and regular students suffer a lot. So there could be a separate teacher or among the teachers, one teacher can be the responsibly of handling such programmes.

Most teachers use stereotype teaching methods in their classrooms and in most cases use a blackboard as a teaching learning material. Due to this, sometimes students lose their interest in learning so to improve the quality of education play-based teaching methods in lower primary sections and project methods in upper primary sections should be regularly used by the teachers.

Subject specific teachers are needed to teach in the upper primary schools as well because the subjects like English, mathematics, and sciences require specific competencies on the part of the teachers.
There is a lack of frequent use of libraries in some schools. There is a need to increase the utilization of library on a daily basis to improve the reading skills, and language skills among the students. Apart from this, the teacher also needs to increase their usage of the library.

Decentralization of administration is a better way to improve the quality of education. The administration should be decentralized as far as possible. The inspecting authorities should provide leadership to the schools.

Through community participation, schools can use local resources to help primary teachers. For example, if there is a good artist available, his knowledge can be utilized for teaching the children.

**Conclusion**

The study on the whole, revealed that the problems of elementary education are still persistent in Talaja Taluka and remain unsolved in spite of the implementation of many developmental programmes and government policies. In the Indian subcontinent, due to large geographic distribution and discrimination, some problems are area specific as per the climate and geographical conditions and local needs, programmes and policies need to be developed and rigorously implemented.

*The problems of elementary education are still persistent in Talaja Taluka and remain unsolved in spite of the implementation of many developmental programmes and government policies.*
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