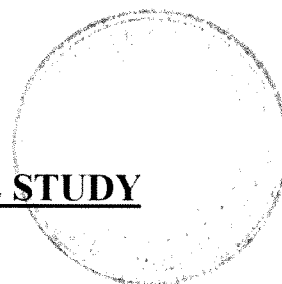


CHAPTER I

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY



1.0 EDUCATION – NEED AND IMPORTANCE

The task of building an enlightened, strong and prosperous nation rests on the shoulders of its children who are to be cherished, nurtured and developed with tenderness and care. Education has always played this important role and has thus emerged as a natural characteristic of human societies. It has contributed to the shaping of the destinies of societies in all the phases of their development and has itself never ceased to develop. It has been the torch-bearer of humanity's most noble ideals. In this sense as an agent for social change, Education necessarily reflects its main ethos, aspirations and concerns (NCF, 2000).

Perhaps the single most important characteristic of our times is that for the first time in man's history, the world has become knowledge-based, largely science and technology based (Kothari, 1986). The main implications of the phenomenon of globalization, typical of our times, is the emergence of 'learning societies' and this gives to education a role and significance as never before in history. Today, Education while not losing sight of its traditional goals (reading, writing, arithmetic, skill development) will also have to equip individuals to live effectively in such a 'knowledge society'- i.e. acquire relevant knowledge and inculcate and interpret new values that will in turn guarantee them the ability to keep pace with the evolution of their environment (NCF, 2000).

School education is acknowledged as an important segment of the total educational system expected to contribute significantly to the individual as well as the national developmental processes (NCF, 2000). The task of building an enlightened, strong and prosperous nation ultimately rests on its future citizens i.e. the children of today, who are to be cherished and nurtured with tenderness and care. It is through Education that every child gets equipped with the skills and competences essential for a future successful life, making a significant contribution to the economic and social upliftment of the nation as well.

The conventional division of Education according to stages – i.e. Primary, Secondary and Higher Education is necessary for the inculcation of desirable study habits in

accordance with the corresponding age of the learner. The Primary stage is more concerned with the tools of learning; acquisition of the fundamental skills of learning and the cultivation of an attitude necessary for future acquisition of knowledge (Jha, 1986). The subsequent stages would rely on this foundation for more refined and complex intellectual processes.

It thus entails that Elementary Education is the base or foundation of learning for all citizens, consisting of basic knowledge and skills for life which is obtained at the elementary level. Provision of Basic Education for All continues to be a matter of grave concern in India as also in other developing countries. The country's commitment to the same is made clear in its various policy statements including the NPE 1986 which explicitly mentions the focus of efforts in this direction as *The new thrust in Elementary Education will emphasize two aspects:*

- 1) *Universal enrolment and retention of children up to 14 years of age.*
- 2) *A substantial improvement in the quality of Education*

1.1 IMPORTANCE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

The initial seven or eight years of schooling can lay the foundation for the development of personality, attitudes, social confidence, habits, learning skills and communication capabilities of pupils. The basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic are acquired at this stage; values are internalized and environmental sensuousness sharpened. The right kind of outlook towards life and society needs to be cultivated at the initial stages of school life so that children could grow up as productive and socially useful citizens of the country (NPE, 1986).

Psychologists believe that the primary stage is the most important growing period for academic achievement and that all subsequent learning in the school is affected and a large part determined by what the child has learned by the age of nine. Thus, the standard and quality of Primary Education needs to be maintained to lay a strong foundation for future Education.

Sustained research on the impact of Education on the social and economic development of a population has yielded two significant findings - Education leads to broad economic and social benefits both for the individual as well as for society and that these benefits

are the greatest once Primary Education has been universalized. Studies have also proved that economic and social benefits of Education are greatest when a country's population has achieved a critical 'minimum' level of Education (PROBE, 1999). Research shows that increasing enrollment in Primary Education, followed by secondary Education has been responsible for sustained high levels of economic growth in East Asian export led economies. This, accompanied by an equitable distribution of benefits has led to visible improvement in the living conditions of these people. Studies conducted within India, too prove that Primary Education has significant benefits and a critical minimum level of Education has a strong positive effect on economic growth; affects productivity in agriculture positively and has visible positive social outcomes as shown by the national Family Health Surveys – reduced infant mortality rates, improved nutritional status of children, lower fertility rates and an overall qualitative improvement in the living conditions of the population (PROBE, 1999).

All the above mentioned facts indicate that Primary Education deserves our emphasis and attention.

1.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN INDIA – A BRIEF RETROSPECT.

In India, the history of Education clearly shows that it was traditional and given to only select members of society. The implementation of an indigenous scheme for mass Education was sabotaged by the anglicized bureaucrats in order to perpetuate an elitist system of Education for a chosen few (Nurulla and Naik, 1962).

The demand for Universal Primary Education (UPE) as a political platform was placed before the Indian Education Commission by Dadabhai Naoroji in 1882. Gokhale's Bill (1910) seeking to permit local bodies to introduce compulsory education in selected areas was ruled out, giving the movement a temporary set-back. During this period itself, Mahatma Gandhi advocated 'Basic Education' as a remedy to eliminate the alienation that existed between individuals educated in an elitist educational system and the large and underprivileged masses that went without it, thereby perpetuating ignorance and illiteracy which were to their detriment.

In 1921, the then ruling authorities declared their support for a policy of compulsory Education. In 1944, the Sergeant Report recommended compulsory schooling of 8 years

and set (1944-1984) as the period for the achievement of that goal. Later, on the recommendation of the Kher committee, the revised target was set to 1960.

Soon after Independence, a strong demand was made by nationalists that an Education Commission be appointed to look at Education as a whole, looking at the entire national scenario. The appointment of the Education Commission (1964-66) is significant in that it was the 1st Commission to be appointed to comprehensively address and solve the problems particular to a newly independent country – that is, a national Education system suited to the requirements of the nation, which would be under national control and whose main objective would be the attainment of the national goals. Such a system would emphasize Education of its people and Universalisation of Elementary Education would be a necessary component of it (Nurulla and Naik, 1962).

The Commission set up formally in 1964-66 prepared a blueprint of educational development in India, spread over 20 years (1966-86). In the coming decades, one would have to make transformations and improve the quality of the existing Education system. The Programme of Universal Elementary Education and other such programs for the liquidation of illiteracy, would eventually orient our Educational system to the masses instead of to the classes (as was the prevailing condition) and would be instrumental in bringing about the much needed economic, social and political transformation and consequently needed to be accorded the highest priority. The Education Commission emphasized the need to provide Universal Elementary Education (UEE) of at least 7-8 years to all children on a priority basis. It also aimed at Universal Elementary Education to all children, for the first 7-8 years, by 1986 at the latest.

It was the recommendation of the Education Commission that to make education accessible to all, a primary school must be provided within easy walking distance of every child; also, establishment of a large number of middle schools; organization of a multiple entry system and non-formal classes for grown-up children, who have to work alongside with their learning, was recommended. Education of other groups would have to be pursued simultaneously - the ultimate aim being a fully literate population. The Education Commission made several recommendations regarding primary students. These were:

- Abolition of tuition fees at elementary stage,
- Lower secondary education to be made tuition free in all Government, local authority and aided private schools,
- Free textbooks and writing materials to be provided at the primary stage.

The period of about 12 years (1966-78) forms a distinct epoch of our educational history. In 1966, the Education Commission submitted its report. The NPE was declared during this period and both the above were taken as the basis of educational development in the 4th and 5th Five Year Plans. (Nurulla and Naik, 1962).

The National Policy on Education (1986) too envisaged a common Educational structure. Due importance was given towards an elementary system which would comprise of four years of Primary Education and three years of Upper Primary Education thereby emphasizing investment in the development of young children who were the first generation learners. Accordingly, the NPE declared that -

The new thrust in Elementary Education will emphasize three aspects:

- 1) Universal access and enrolment
- 2) Universal retention of children upto 14 years of age
- 3) A substantial improvement in the quality of Education.

Certain noteworthy strategies recommended for achieving UEE were

- Provision of adequate funds and intellectual resources to implement the programme of Universalisation,
- Encouraging innovations by the teachers so as to ensure child-centered and qualitative Education,
- Viewing the goal of Universalisation of Education in two phases – initially, the first phase of Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE) and consequently UEE.

However, the developments in the past and experiences in implementation, necessitated a revision. The revised NPE was presented to the country on 7th May 1992. Taking into

account the experiences gained in the implementation of NPE (1986), the following significant strategies were proposed in the year 1992.

- Adequate incentives to be provided to children from backward sections of society which would be in the form of scholarships, uniforms, textbooks, stationery and midday meals.
- All schools would be equipped with the necessary and essential infrastructural facilities in accordance with the decisions arrived at, as a result of Operation Blackboard.
- Achievement of MLLs to be given utmost importance and effective methodologies implemented for achievement of the same. Imparting education in the learner's own mother tongue would be a significant step towards this.

It was also recommended that the teaching - learning at the Elementary stage should be child centered, activity based and joyful; the teacher training programme be modified in view of changed strategies and methodologies and the launching of a National Mission to achieve the goals outlined in the National Policy.

Emphasis was laid on teacher training programmes. Special orientation programmes for teachers were to be launched and training would be imparted on the use of Operation Blackboard materials and acquisition of MLLs in the children. DIETs / CTEs / IASEs would support the teacher training programmes by providing the necessary training to the concerned teachers.

During this period, MLLs had been developed only for classes' I-IV and for subjects- language, mathematics and environmental studies. It was proposed to develop the same for the remaining classes as well. Since the policy of no-detention was adopted, the main function of evaluation would be diagnostic in nature.

Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) would be adopted at the elementary stage so as to make the evaluation process an integral part of teaching and learning at this stage. The CCE would cover cognitive, affective and psychomotor areas of pupils' growth and would employ different tools and techniques of evaluation to capture different dimensions of pupils' growth at the primary stage.

1.3 PRIMARY EDUCATION: THE POST-INDEPENDENCE SCENARIO

The improvements that India has made in Primary Education since Independence are quite impressive.

- Since the inception of the First Plan until the commencement of the Sixth Five Year Plan (1951-1980), the percentage of the primary school – age population attending classes, more than doubled - the primary stage enrollment increased from 19.2 million (1950-51) to 110.4 million (1996-97).
- There was a corresponding increase in the number of primary schools and its teachers. The number of primary schools increased significantly between 1951-2001.

TABLE – 1.1
NO. OF INSTITUTIONS: 1950-2001

Year	Primary	U. Primary
1950-51	209671	13596
1960-61	330399	49663
1970-71	408378	90621
1980-81	494503	118555
1990-91	560935	151456
1998-99	626737	190166
1999-2000	641695	198004
2000-2001	638738	206269

Source: MHRD, 2001.

- There has been an increased allocation in funds in successive Five Year Plans.
In the 8th Five year plan, the expenditure towards Elementary Education was Rs.4006.55 crores and the same increased to Rs.16369.59 crores in the Ninth Plan. The Tenth Plan provided an allocation of approximately Rs.30, 000 crores in the Central sector for the schemes relating to elementary Education and literacy (MHRD, 2003).

- There have been major initiatives for 'quality' enhancement of the Primary Education program. Some of the noteworthy initiatives were -

Operation Blackboard - for improvement of school infrastructure (books, teaching equipment, additional teachers) and providing training to teachers (SOPT).

Minimum Levels of Learning - MLLs- with the objective of specifying competencies grade wise for selected subjects, thereby identifying and directing efforts where levels have fallen below those prescribed.

District Primary Education Programme to operationalize strategies required for achieving the goal of Universal elementary Education through specific planning and target setting at the district level.

National Programme of Nutritional support - to provide nutritious food to each primary school student.

Non Formal Education to provide Education to those unable to avail themselves of the formal system of school, through institutional arrangements.

The National Council for Teacher Education established as a statutory body to promote planned and co-coordinated development of teacher Education.

These and many more centrally sponsored schemes were implemented keeping the good of UEE in mind.

- The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched in the year 2001 and was intended to specifically achieve the goals of UEE, through a time bound integrated approach in partnership with the States, local Government and the Community.

The specific objectives with which SSA was launched were

- All children to be in schools by 2003,
- All children to complete five years of primary schooling by 2007,
- All children to complete eight years of schooling by 2010,
- To focus on elementary Education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on Education for life,

- Bridge all gender and social disparities at the primary stage by 2007 and at the elementary level by 2010,
- Universal retention by 2010.

The lessons learnt since then are that achievements must not overshadow the fact that there are wide gaps in terms of learners' achievement. The poor quality of Education was one of the reasons for high dropout rates. Improving the quality of Education was therefore, a high priority item for SSA - new schools, additional class rooms, needed infrastructure, appointment of new elementary teachers were major initiatives to ensure quality of the Primary Education system.

1.4 PRIMARY EDUCATION : THE PRESENT NATIONAL SCENARIO.

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) too acknowledges the tremendous contribution that Primary Education has both in individual as well as national growth. It was in recognition of this that three of the 11 monitorable targets of the Tenth Plan focused on elementary Education and literacy - All children in school by 2003; all children to complete five years of schooling by 2007; reduction in the gender gap in literacy by at least 50 per cent by 2007; increase in literacy rates to 75 per cent within the Plan period (MHRD, 2003).

There has been good progress in achieving some of these targets. The enrolment drive launched during the second year of Tenth Plan to bring all children in the age group of 6-14 in schools has resulted in a reduction in the number of out-of-school children from 42 million at the beginning of Plan period to 8.1 million in September 2004.

Elementary Education has been accorded the lion's share of the allocations for the sector on Education – the Tenth Plan provided an allocation of approximately Rs.30, 000 crores in the Central sector for the schemes relating to elementary Education and literacy. Thus, adequate finance has been provided for Universalisation of elementary Education in the Tenth Five Year Plan.

Not only that, certain major initiatives have also been taken to strengthen the possibility of achievement of UEE related goals. These were -

- The 86th Amendment of the Constitution (December 2002) making free and compulsory Education for all children in the 6-14 age groups, made a justiciable fundamental right.
- The Centrally Sponsored Schemes for elementary Education were streamlined and rationalized, through a zero-based budgeting exercise and all the schemes were converged under five major schemes: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA); National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day Meals Scheme); Teachers' Education; Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) and Mahila Samakhya.
- The Mid-Day Meal Scheme was universalized at the primary level, with the Central government providing conversion cost, enhanced transport subsidy in addition to supplying food grains free of cost to States/Union Territories.
- A 2 per cent Education Cess levied on income tax, excise duty, custom duty and service tax since 2004 for financing basic quality Education.
- A Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh, a non-lapsable fund for funding SSA and the Mid-Day Meal was in the process of being established and the proceeds of the Education Cess would be utilized for the above (MHRD, 2005).

The present scenario for Primary Education has been quite promising.

- There has been a substantial expansion of Primary and Upper Primary Schools during the post-Independence period. In accordance with the latest reports 66,147 elementary schools have been opened to enable more student enrollment. Supplementing this is the introduction of a large number of non-formal Education centers, alternative and innovative programs for children unable to avail the facilities of the formal system.
- Over a period of time, infrastructural facilities and other facilities have significantly improved due to initiatives both by the Central and State Governments. The number of Primary and upper primary school teachers increased noticeably (3,10,506 additional teachers have been employed in 2004-2005). The qualifications for these teachers was generally 10 years of general Education followed by pre-service training (1-2 years). Today, with an increased availability of higher secondary

school graduates and graduates, many States have now increased their requirement with pre-service training a compulsory requirement for recruitment. Over these years, the number of female teachers too has significantly increased for both Primary and Upper Primary levels.

- Enrollment trends countrywide have been promising. According to provisional estimates of the Seventh All India Education Survey, enrolment in the primary stage increased from 114 million in 2001-02 to 122 million in 2002-03. Dropout rates also declined significantly from 39.03 per cent to 34.89 per cent during this period.
- The number of out-of-school children, estimated at 42 million at the beginning of the Tenth Plan has come down to 23 million in April 2003 and further to 8.1 million in September 2004.
- Various strategies have been evolved to mainstream street children, working children and differently abled children (MHRD, 2005).

1.5 THE WAY FORWARD.....CHALLENGES ET AL

Some of the challenges facing the country in the Tenth Plan were revising the target of enrolling of *all children in schools* from 2003 to 2005 as about 8.1 million children were still out of school as on September 2004 and thus the targets for enrollment and retention needed to be consequently revised.

About 12 million children who were enrolled in Non-formal Education needed to be mainstreamed into the regular schools; the issues of high drop-out and good quality Education needed to be seriously addressed; teacher related issues like vacancies, absenteeism, untrained teachers and ineffective training had to be addressed urgently. Adequate teaching-learning materials and provision of other joyful learning conditions in schools had to be ensured if we were to meet the targets envisaged in the Tenth Five Year Plan.

Over the years, literacy rates have shown a significant improvement in India. The total literacy rate improved significantly from 52.21 per cent in 1991 to 64.84 percent in 2001, a quantum jump of 12.63 percentage points in a decade. The country is expected to

achieve the Tenth Plan target of literacy rate of 75 per cent by 2007 through the combined efforts of the ongoing elementary and adult education programmes.

1.6 THE ISSUE OF QUALITY – WHAT AND WHY?

In our continued commitment to ensuring access for all, the quantitative aspects have been repeatedly emphasized with the consequence that very often the qualitative aspects were ignored - and this has been true at both the National and International Primary Education scenarios. However, experience has proved that the quantitative aspects although very important should not be the only consideration – the qualitative aspects need serious attention as well.

The entire process of Education enables children to develop creatively and emotionally and acquire the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes necessary for responsible, active and productive citizenship. The instrumental role played by Education namely social, economical, cultural and the corresponding objectives would be better achieved if Education is of an acceptable quality. The number of students i.e. the quantity that participate in the process of schooling is by definition a secondary consideration - and would in many cases be tantamount to merely filling spaces while not addressing the objectives and thereby the possibility of no real Education having occurred at all in such situations. (UNESCO,2005). Thus, the issue of quality needs to be addressed more earnestly.

It was in keeping with the same i.e. the issue of quality, that the two most recent United Nations International Conference Declarations focusing on Education gave some importance to its qualitative dimension as well. The Jomtien Declaration in 1990 and more particularly, the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000 recognized the quality of Education as a prime determinant of whether *Education for All* is achieved. More specifically than earlier pledges, the second of the six goals set out in the Dakar Framework commits nations to the provision of primary Education '*of good quality*'. Moreover, the sixth goal includes commitments to improve all aspects of educational quality so that everyone can achieve better learning outcomes, 'especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills'. In 1990, the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) recommended that Education together with being accessible should also be more relevant to the learner and focused on quality as an imperative for achieving the fundamental goals of Education.

The Dakar Framework for Action declared that access to quality Education was the right of every child. It affirmed that quality was 'at the heart of Education' – a fundamental determinant of enrolment, retention and achievement. Its expanded definition of quality set out the desirable characteristics of learners (healthy, motivated students), processes (competent teachers using active pedagogies), content (relevant curricula) and systems (good governance and equitable resource allocation). (UNESCO, 2005)

Thus, the 'quality' of Education provided would be a major determinant in admission, retention, regularity in attendance and Community involvement in any Primary Education program.

The issue of quality has been an issue of concern with policymakers and educationists. This study shares the same concern and focuses on a chosen city in a given State to determine the quality of primary education therein.

1.7 THE STATE OF GUJARAT: EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO

Gujarat is situated in the western zone of India. Its capital city is Gandhinagar and it is well known as an industrially advanced State. It is also renowned for its textile, diamond and agricultural products, both in India and abroad.

The State of Gujarat came into existence on the 1st of May, 1960, as a result of the reorganization of the erstwhile Bombay State into two new States called 'Gujarat' and 'Maharashtra'. It is situated on the west coast of India and extends from 20⁰.7" – 24⁰.43" North latitude to 68⁰.7" – 74⁰.29" East longitude. It falls under the Tropical zone and is geographically surrounded by Pakistan in the North-west; Rajasthan in the North-east; Madhya Pradesh to the East and the State of Maharashtra to the South-east. Physiographically, it comprises The Great Rann, alluvial plains and hills.

As per the 2001 India Census Reports, the total population of Gujarat State was 50,671,017 of which the rural population was 31,740,767 and the urban population was 18,930,250 – this accounted for 4.9 percent of the total country's population. The State consists of 25 districts, 226 talukas, 242 towns, 18,539 villages.

The Literacy rate for the State as per the 2001 reports was 69.14 per cent (M-79.7 %, F - 57.8 %). This Literacy rate was higher than the national average of 64.8 per cent in the 2001 census.

Since Independence, Gujarat, then a part of the Bombay State, has made considerable progress in education, especially Primary Education. In keeping with the policy of Decentralization, the responsibility of the management of the Primary School education system is assigned to local bodies – namely the Village Panchayat system and The Municipal Corporation bodies. The State Government is primarily in charge of the overall functioning of this system which includes the prevailing overall academic standard, formulation of the grade wise syllabi and curricula, preparation of the textbooks in accordance with these criteria and finally the conducting of examinations.

1.8 VADODARA CITY – AN OVERVIEW

The city of Vadodara is one of the more well known cities of Gujarat and referred to as the Cultural Capital of Gujarat. It is the administrative headquarters of the Vadodara District.

Vadodara is located between latitude 22-17-59 and longitude 73-18-18 on the map of India. The 2001 census statistics indicate a total population of 1305546 (683803 Males and 621743 Females). The literacy rate of Vadodara city as per Census 2001 was 70.8%.

The city is situated on the banks of the river Vishwamitri and the presence of an abundance of banyan trees gives it its name – *Vadodara* city. It is a cosmopolitan city and is home to people belonging to different parts of the country as well as the globe due to the educational and economic opportunities that it offers to its citizens. Despite the sweeping forces of modernization and the gradual industrialization of the city, cultural and religious traditions are still practiced and cherished.

The official language of Vadodara city, being in Gujarat is Gujarati, but as in other Indian cities the use of English, Hindi and Marathi is prevalent in all industrial and educational organizations. The medium of instruction in the schools run by the Municipal Corporation in the city are Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi and Sindhi catering to the educational needs of the local population.

Major industries include petrochemicals, engineering, pharmaceuticals, and plastics.

Modern Vadodara city is a fitting memorial to its erstwhile ruler Sayaji Rao Gaekwad III (1875-1939 AD) and to the dream he envisioned for the city – i.e. to make Vadodara into an educational, industrial and commercial centre. Vadodara city has a rich historical background with the Gaekwad dynasty having ruled over it for a very long period of time from 1734 to 1949 A.D. The accession to the throne by Maharaja Sayajirao III in 1875 was the commencement of a golden era in the history of Vadodara. He was a foresighted Administrator and initiated futuristic policies for the industrial development of the city and the present status of Vadodara may well be attributed to this visionary leader. He introduced a number of social reforms and gave importance to *education of the masses* - the making of Primary education compulsory was a significant endeavor in this direction. The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda is the outcome of the visualization of the importance of education in the process of social reformation.

Today, Vadodara city occupies a place of prominence in the educational, cultural and industrial map of India.

1.9 THE EDUCATIONAL SCENE AT VADODARA CITY

The city has been an important cultural and educational part of Gujarat state while also being a pioneer in the field of Primary Education. The patronage of education commenced with Maharaja Sayajirao III and the city has built further, the academic edifice initiated during his tenure. Today, the name Vadodara is synonymous with Education. Educational Institutions of repute feature on the educational map of the city. The most well known is The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, the only University in Gujarat with English as the medium of instruction. The University has been divided into several Departments with a number of courses offered in each of the Departments in different disciplines. The M.S.University caters to over a lakh of students.

1.10 STATUS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN GUJARAT AND VADODARA

In Vadodara, the endeavor towards free compulsory and Universal Education may be attributed to Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III of Baroda State in the early twentieth century – 1906. Convinced that Primary Education was essential for the future betterment of his subjects, he introduced the same, purely on a voluntary basis from 1881

to 1892. In 1893, the same was introduced in Amreli Taluka, one of the backward areas of Baroda State. This experiment proved promising and thus he generalized it for the entire state in 1906 by the Baroda Compulsory Primary Education Act, with subsequent modifications in 1910, 1916, 1926.

However, in spite of all the efforts made by this foresighted ruler, the experiment did not succeed due to a general lack of awareness among parents regarding their children's Education.

Today, the very same endeavor is being realized through the efforts of the State in the form of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Majority of the population has been provided with Primary Education facility as a result of the countrywide drive to achieve Universalisation of Education.

1.11 ORGANISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN VADODARA CITY.

Vadodara city has been an important cultural and Educational part of Gujarat state while also being a pioneer in the field of Primary Education.

There are variations in the management of education in the city's education scenario, namely schools which are Private Aided, Private Unaided, Municipal School Board, Central School and State Board schools.

The Vadodara Municipal Corporation schools (VMC) are totally financed by the State Government and are governed by their rules and regulations. The State Government makes provision for all the requirements – be it physical or financial. These schools are under the Municipal School Board which was formed on the 9th of November, 1953 with the goal of providing Primary education to the children in the age group 6-14 in the city of Vadodara.

The Nagar Prathamik Shikshan Samiti (NPSS) was set up in 1953 in and for the education of citizens of Vadodara city. The responsibility of primary education of Vadodara city was taken up by NPSS which still functions as per the Mumbai Prathamik Shikshan Adhiniyam -1947. The Samiti comprises of a total of fifteen members of which twelve are elected members of the Municipal Corporation and the other three are State Government representatives.

In Vadodara city, the Nagar Prathamik Shikshan Samiti runs a total of 124 Primary schools comprising 40356 students and 1193 teachers. The medium of instruction in the schools run by the Municipal School Board (NPSS) in the city are Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi and Sindhi catering to the educational needs of the local population.

1.12 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The need to focus the study on primary schooling in Municipal School Board schools was felt for a number of reasons. They are enumerated as follows –

Primary Education is referred to as the base or foundation of learning for all citizens consisting of basic knowledge and skills for life, which is obtained at this age, 6-14 years. There are obvious and evident justifications for the increased investment in Education—especially Primary Education—first, an educated populace is essential for modern societies to function and especially so in this era of information explosion and globalization; second an educated population makes better use of the fruits and is more productive than an uneducated one; lastly, schools and their curriculum play a crucial role in transmitting social and national values thereby promoting social and national integration. Macroeconomic models, across the globe, indicate that Primary Education plays a very significant role in laying the solid foundation that later culminates into enhanced economic growth, poverty reduction and improved living standards among its people. Especially with respect to social outcomes of Education, the National Family Health Surveys (1992-93) indicate a very strong positive relation between Educational levels and fertility levels, child mortality rates and the nutritional status of these young school going children. (PROBE, 1999)

The above discussion indicates that for all these societal effects to be visible a ‘critical threshold’ of schooling is essential and thus the government’s role in making Primary Education compulsory so that the benefits of Education accrue firstly to the child, his immediate family and then to society at large. The support extended by the Government in all aspects is the outcome of Education being made a fundamental right in Article 21A of the Constitution. It also centers on the issue of social equity and national development. In the absence of Government support, these parents would be required to shoulder the responsibility of educating their children which would be an enormous economic burden on them, which in all probability they would find difficult to shoulder. Thus, government

financial support is absolutely essential to enable this student population to attend school. This would in the long run enable social equity, improve productivity and consequently the economic scenario and the entire Indian population would benefit.

Looking to its long-term significance, Universalisation of Primary Education seems an appropriate decision. However, this has been a long pending Constitutional promise to the nation. Enrollment rates and literacy rates are indicative that much progress has been made in the direction of translating a fundamental right into reality.

The quantitative expansion of the system appears quite impressive but despite this the goal of Universalisation appears elusive. This experience has made it clear to Educational planners that linear expansion of facilities alone would be insufficient to bring all the children within the fold of Elementary Education. The 'qualitative' aspect too would have to be critically reviewed. Not only this, several new challenges were emerging as a consequence of the impact of science and technology and the changing socio economic scenario and Education needed to be responsive to these contemporary realities. Vital inputs have been provided for improving school environment, facilities and strengthening the Teacher Education Programmes in order to ensure enrolment, quality and retention.

The researcher wishes to take up this study at this point of time, to ascertain the status of Primary Education as it is now and study the quality of the existing Primary Education scenario in the light of efforts made for UEE by 2010 AD. The rationale for focusing the study on Primary Education in Vadodara is that it has been a pioneer in the field of Primary Education and is an important cultural and Educational part of the Gujarat State. Going by the Constitutional Directive, the State is committed to universal elementary Education and the government is obliged to translating this right into reality. The present study is confined to studying the status of formal primary schools under the MSB of Baroda city.

According Primary Education of good quality is the central goal of Indian Education Policy. The issue of quality needs to be addressed not only for this system but for any system because quality implies the effectiveness of the concerned system and its capability to measure up to its predetermined objectives. The test of any Educational system is best judged by the achievement of its students because achievement is the end product of all educational endeavors. In this study, quality is understood as a

conglomerate of several factors, how these function and what results these produce because it is these results which are an indicator of quality. It is pertinent to mention here that through this study an attempt has been made to view the different inputs and then study the outcome of schooling which would reveal the quality of the present primary school Education system.

Organization variables are significant because it is within these that the learning processes take place. It thus follows that though not lavish, a congenial atmosphere is necessary if we expect children to come to school and be present for all the school hours. Effective transaction of the curriculum and other inputs are possible only if the school atmosphere is conducive to learning. Giving due consideration to this, 'Organizational variables' was taken up as one of the vital inputs and a significant determinant of quality. The school environment, condition of classrooms, facilities such as electricity, library, playground, urinals, laboratories, drinking water facility need to be explored and their status ascertained. In a policy paper on Primary Education issued by the World Bank (1990), it was highlighted that student's learning is greatly influenced by family background and school inputs. It therefore becomes even more essential to collect information about these.

Together with organizational variables, other significant determinants of quality which need due consideration are the human and instructional resources and significant process variables like the actual time spent on subject matter of the lesson – especially when we consider the fact that in the existing scenario with severe shortage of staff and a financial crunch, the administrative work is often done by the academic staff themselves. It would be worthwhile to know whether or not academics suffers due to this additional administrative workload; whether continuous monitoring of student progress is done keeping in mind that in this system a single teacher is trained to teach all the curricular subjects and conduct extra activities in addition to the above; whether the subtleties of language teaching can really co-exist with the rigors of science and math teaching - does not the discipline itself demand a unique methodology and can the teachers of this system be expected to conform to the demands of different disciplines at the same time? - does such an arrangement affect the quality of teaching?

The textbook is the single most important instructional aid in the Indian classroom and most definitely in the schools under study – it needs to be looked in with detail whether

or not the textbook is a reflection of the objectives laid down by the MSB; whether or not this important instructional aid is supplied to the children on time and a careful study too needs to be done regarding the difference aspects of the textbook and how far it is in accordance with the laid down objectives as also the competencies specified for each grade as a prerequisite for promotion to the next.

The number of teachers present in the school has direct bearing on the organization of teaching activity and consequently affects the quality of the teaching – learning process. In the case of very few teachers present, they would be over burdened and may even in certain cases have to resort to multi-grade teaching. Also significant is the fact that although there may be one teacher per grade, the teacher – pupil ratio may be very large in which case the teacher may not be able to accord attention to each student or his individual progress. Besides, teachers in these schools face enormous challenges – overcrowded classrooms, multigrade teaching, administrative workload and poor community involvement.

The researcher also feels the need to find out more about the academic and Professional qualifications of the teachers, their years of experience and the frequency and nature of their in-service training programs. It would be necessary to find out whether the headmasters have had any training related to institutional planning and management because this too would ensure smooth management of all activities within the particular school and thereby affect quality.

International experience reveals that in order to develop sustainable basic skills in Language and Mathematics about 4-6 complete years of instruction are needed. When children drop out after 1-2 years, the sustainability of the learning automatically reduces and ultimately the learning becomes redundant. Families aware of the importance of schooling can contribute significantly towards their child's achievement in school. International evidence shows that student enrollment, attendance and completing various levels in school were affected due to the above. Studies show that a supportive family environment is significantly co-related with children's achievement. The positive effect of regular attendance on academic achievement and the role played by parents to ensure this, was noted by Dave (1992) for grade I students, in nine States. The researcher felt that it was important to elicit the views of the community members (here parents) regarding the quality of primary schooling and to what extent did their children benefit

from the existing facilities because their views would have a significant bearing on both enrollment and retention of children in the system, in future.

The researcher was also keen to know the status of retention i.e. the number of students enrolled and the number that discontinued at the end of that academic year. And, if at all the drop-outs were desirous of continuing after some time period, what were the necessary remedial actions taken to bring them on par with the other students and thereby restore them to their expected levels of learning?

It follows that mere assessment of the status of existing facilities may not be sufficient to give a clear picture of the quality of primary school – it is the efficiency with which these factors are put together, that determines quality.

While the facilities accorded may be uniform, these represent only one dimension of the curricular inputs provided in the schools. Student learning is largely influenced *also* by the actual curricular transactions and thus each classroom becomes a unique learning environment depending on the manner in which the instructional processes are visualized, designed and organized by individual teachers (Govinda & Varghese, 1991). Organization of classroom teaching may vary depending on the methodology required and considered appropriate for certain chosen subjects, specialization of teachers in the subjects taught, availability of sufficient number of teachers, additional duties conducted which are subtracted from instructional hours, etc. These and related issues were considered to have a significant bearing on the quality of the education provided and thus *observation of instructional processes* was taken up.

Finally, quality of school education has to be seen in terms of student academic achievement i.e. the extent to which students have learnt what they had to, at the end of each grade – here the same may imply as to how well have the competencies been mastered at the conclusion of each grade?

A more comprehensive evaluation would ideally cover cognitive, affective and psychomotor areas of pupils' growth and would employ different tools and techniques of evaluation to capture different dimensions of pupils' growth at the primary stage. However, this study has restricted itself to the study of student academic achievement in chosen areas such as literacy and numeracy and in non-cognitive areas it has focused on the nature of activities designed and the extent of student participation therein.

The rationale behind the selection of Mathematics and Language is as follows – Learning is a complex process of discovery and enquiry facilitated by Language. Language is an unmistakable mark of personal identity and is essential for aspects such as interpersonal relationships, understanding and interpreting social situations and thus is the primary instrument of thought. Language learning is an active process that begins at birth and continues ever since. Students learn language to communicate their thoughts, feelings and experiences as also to learn other subjects.

Thus, language, thinking and learning are interrelated. Students use language to test relationship with prior knowledge, experiences and beliefs; examine new ideas; establish connection, question and reflect upon these ideas and thereby determine different courses of action. Language development is integral to their success in every area of their school life and even in the future if they wish to extend their knowledge, skills, strategies and interests.

Keeping this importance of language development in mind, the researcher decided to assess the extent of achievement in the ‘specific language of instruction’ in the concerned schools.

Mathematics too, is a vibrant subject connected to the real world at every level. At the Primary level, students should develop a sound knowledge of core mathematical concepts, which they would use to understand more advanced topics in the future. They should see the usefulness and applicability of mathematics in real life situations as also its relationship with other subjects in the curriculum. A complete study of the subject in future must necessarily enable every learner to relate the subject to the immediate environment as also to the development of his thinking and reasoning skills. Keeping the above in mind, it is necessary to determine the understanding of students of basic mathematical concepts and thus in addition to the achievement test to assess literacy, an achievement test to assess ‘numeracy’ was also designed and implemented.

In addition to the above, in today’s modern and technologically advanced world, the knowledge and skills most required are that of problem-solving, meaningful organization and interpretation of data, the abilities to evaluate and make future predictions on the basis of this data....the skill of appropriate communication for the effective dissemination of knowledge.....all this is indicative of the important role played by the two subjects – Mathematics and Language and hence their inclusion in the study.

Finally, any conclusive statement on 'quality' would be possible only from the active Functionaries and the immediate beneficiaries. Hence, their views regarding the present functioning and suggestions for improvement needed to be considered and they too constituted a significant source of data for this study.

It is against this backdrop that the researcher proposes to take up this study to ascertain the status of the present scenario and whether or not we are actually progressing towards a long pending goal or still far away from achieving it.

1.13 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study of the Quality of Municipal Corporation Primary schooling in Vadodara City.

1.14 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The Objectives of the present study are -

1. To study the status of Municipal Corporation Primary Schools in terms of facilities available.
 - Infrastructure facilities
 - Teaching Materials
 - Enrollment and retention at the end of the academic year (2004-2005).
2. To Study the status of Municipal Corporation Primary Schools in terms of Human Resources
 - Qualification and experience of teachers.
 - Type and duration of in-service training availed by teachers.
 - Frequency and nature of teacher appraisal programmes.
3. To study the teaching-learning process in the schools through
 - Analysis of the text book,
 - Organization of the time-table,
 - Mode of classroom transaction
 - Methods adopted by the teachers,
 - Teaching aids used by the teachers,
 - Evaluation mechanisms,
 - Remedial classes conducted for weak students.

4. To study the outcome of schooling through
 - Students academic achievement (Math and Language),
 - Participation in different co-curricular activities.
5. To study the views of Administrative Officers, Headmasters, Teachers, Students and Community Members regarding quality of Primary Schooling.

1.15 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Municipal Corporation Primary Schooling

The study restricts itself to the schools under the Municipal School Board of Vadodara City.

Primary Schooling refers to the schooling in the Primary Grades, which comprise

Primary Grades	Lower Primary (Std. I-IV)
	Upper Primary (Std. V-VII)

The Study however restricts itself to the Upper Primary Classes i.e. Std. V, VI, VII.

Quality

Quality refers to the present condition of things, how these function and what results these produce. To understand and analyze quality, the 4 quality indicators are

- Infrastructural facilities
- Human – Resources
- Teaching Learning Processes
- Achievement in curricular and co-curricular areas.

Achievement

For the purpose of this study, an assessment of the outcome of primary schooling (achievement) was meant to connote -

- Measurement of literacy and numeracy skills in the learners, in all the medium of instruction (Gujarati, Marathi, Sindhi, Hindi) for classes V, VI, VII, for the academic year 2004-05.
- Participation in various co-curricular activities for the academic year 2004-05.

1.16 THE ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study has been organized in the following manner of Chapterisation –

Chapter One.....is the introductory chapter and gives an overview of the Primary Education scenario in the country and Vadodara city today, the historical perspective, the various initiatives initiated since Independence to achieve a long cherished goal, the present scenario and the various challenges encountered on the road to Universalisation. The Rationale for the conducting of this study too has been detailed herein.

Chapter Two.....is a review of related literature - the purpose being to critically analyze a segment of a published body of knowledge through summary, classification and comparison of prior research studies and related publications in an attempt to show how the problem under investigation is related to previous research studies or otherwise. Thus, literature review in Chapter two is an active process of construction, giving valuable insights into aspects of the chosen topic which might be worthy of exploration and future research.

Chapter Three.....is a statement of the design adopted by the investigator in the realization of the objectives. The study is a survey of the existing scenario of Municipal Corporation Primary Schooling in Vadodara city and the methodological details adopted to comprehend this scenario have been detailed herein. It contains the Research questions, the delimitations of the present study, the overall approach adopted, the nature of data required and its sources, the instruments used for data collection and their construction and finally the manner in which the data were analyzed.

Chapter Four.....gives details regarding the setting of the study i.e. Vadodara city. A brief historic profile of the city is provided followed by the description of the status of Primary Education in Gujarat and Vadodara city.

The organization of primary education in Vadodara city is discussed which gives the following details - current literacy status of the city, the organization of the different schools in the different zones of the city, the different mediums of instruction in which instruction is imparted and the recent status regarding the different facilities provided .

Chapter Fiveis an analysis of the collected data. The data has been analyzed objective-wise followed by the researcher's interpretation of the same.

Chapter Six..... is a discussion of the major findings. Keeping in view the major findings and the interpretation that emerged, herein is presented a discussion of the study and its various aspects; implications for future research in the same or similar areas and a concluding statement on the study which was taken up.

Chapter Seven..... Is an overall summary of all the preceding chapters.