

## Original Article

### Status of Girls' Education: A Study on Secondary Level of Salchapra Education Block

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#### Abstract

*Education is the base of human and a nation's development. It is a comprehensive concept. In the impressive history of India, women enjoyed a high status. But afterwards the status gradually decreased and women rights have been getting violated and pressurized by the social structure. But in the 19th century, in India, after the efforts of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and his wife Savitribai Phule, girls could get the opportunity to come in the stream of education. In contemporary times, the Indian government has created constructive policies for girls' education. But still the educational status remains poorer than boys. Rural girls were affected by the social, religious systems and economic conditions. Girls' education goes beyond getting girls into school. It is also about ensuring that girls learn and feel safe while in school; complete all levels of education with the requisite skills to effectively compete in the labor market; learn the socio-emotional and life skills necessary to navigate and adapt to a changing world; make decisions about their own lives; and contribute to their communities and the world. It is a strategic development priority. Better educated women tend to be healthier, participate more in the formal labour market, earn higher incomes, have fewer children, marry at an ideal age, and enable better health care and education for their children. All these factors combined can help lift households, communities, and nations out of poverty. In India, secondary education refers to the educational stage that follows primary education and typically covers students in the age group of 14 to 16 years. According to Babylon's dictionary, "Secondary education is the final stage of compulsory education, preceded by primary education and followed by higher education". Secondary education plays a crucial role in the Indian education system and serves as a bridge between the foundational knowledge acquired in primary school and the specialization that comes with higher education or vocational training. Secondary education is very necessary for all to survive in the society properly. Without completion of secondary education, it is difficult to get any job. So, to be self-dependent it is necessary to complete secondary education. This study is going to represent the status of girls' education in the secondary level of Salchapra education block under Borkhola constituency.*

#### Introduction:

India is determined in educating all children, especially the girl child. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan provides free and compulsory education to all the children between 6 to 14 years of age. However, even after declaring education as a fundamental right, the country is facing several challenges in educating the girl child. The biggest bottleneck is the orthodox mentality of families towards girls and their importance in society. In many parts of the country especially rural areas, girls are still confined to domestic drudgery. The government of India has initiated various programs and policies to ensure that a girl must not miss any opportunity of getting an education. But still, a lot more needs to be done for providing education to the girl child.



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It will require a much effective implementation framework along with a greater level of commitment of people in general. Until we create awareness amongst people about the benefits of women's education, all these programs would not bring about the desired result. Education is the most important tool for girls to develop their abilities as to develop the society and nation. For that the Government started many programs for the benefits of girls at various levels (at primary, secondary and higher level). Centrally Sponsored Scheme and National Scheme of incentives to Girls for Secondary Education was launched in May, 2008 to promote enrolment of girl child in the age group of 14-16 years at secondary stage, especially those who are studying and to encourage the secondary level education of such girls.

As compared to the past, large number of girls are getting admissions in the school system, completing primary education and pursuing secondary and tertiary education. Secondary education is provided between the age groups of 14-16 years. It is proposed to bring more and more girl students in the various streams mainly in arts, science, commerce, and vocational streams. Under the control of the Government of India, secondary education is provided by the different organizations like National Council of Educational Research and Training National Institute of Open Schooling, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya. These are the organizations which are providing the secondary education at a large scale to the girls as well as boys and these are making efforts to decrease the gender gap in the country.

### **Statement of the research problem:**

Education plays an important role in the life and evolution of mankind. Education creates knowledge, awareness and attitudes among human beings for the betterment of society. As a human right, in the 21st century, education directs an individual to creativity. The Indian education system is the biggest system in the world where primary, middle, secondary, higher secondary and college plays a vital role in sharpening the personality of individuals. But there are many hurdles in the way of education system of our country and the large numbers of school going children are continuously leaving the school system before completing secondary education. Secondary Education is the mainstream education of all the people in their personal life. Educational development leads to transformation of social structure from one pattern to another, which can be conceived as a process of social change. Educational development is measured by different dimensions. Performance of students is one of them, academic and non-academic performances of students are the soul of educational institutions irrespective of caste, creed, and religion. But it is noticeable that girls' education is lagging behind in comparison to boys till date. This backwardness can be minimized by finding out the causes through proper research. Therefore, the basic problems undertaken for investigation in the present study is to examine all the factors that are responsible for slowing down girls' education. In this study, only the Secondary Schools under Salchapra education block have been selected to study the different issues of girls' education.

### **Objective of the study:**

- 1) To understand the socio-economic condition of girl students in Salchapra block of Cachar district.
- 2) To highlight the present scenario of girls' education in Salchapra education block.
- 3) To assess the implementation status of government programmes for girls' education to the grassroots level.

### **Review of literature:**

Sharma (1981) in his study, "The factors related to high academic achievement and underachievement of rural girls coming from the secondary schools of Haryana", made an attempt to highlight the specific contributions of variables towards high achievement and underachievement. It was found in the study that poor academic motivation, weak linguistic ability, poor planning of studies, lack of adjustment and emotional insecurity contributed to underachievement. The underachievers were significantly poor in their performance on all these variables. All the variables included in this study were interrelated. Hence remedial programmes for underachievers had to be necessarily global in approach.

Dreje and Sen (1995) pointed out in their study, "Impact of caste and class in the educational development" that in India both ancient and modern biases shape our policies, reflecting prejudices of class divisions as well as of traditional cultures, the reflection of which is also conspicuous in education.

Acharjee and Deb (1998) observed that the drop-out levels slump significantly from 78.49 per cent to 38.88 per cent for tribal boys (1993 and 1994) and 80.46 per cent to 68.97 per cent for tribal girls. This may be due to higher social initiatives and economic incentives inducted in tribal communities during the programme Operation Black Board.

Kathryn M. Yount (2005) stated in her study, "Women's family power and gender preference in Minya, Egypt" that there was an attitude of cultural superiority towards boys in ancient Egypt. But in the present day, inequality in family power has changed to a great extent. Egypt has always regarded rights for women as an important element in the Egyptian society. Women are now very visible in all walks of modern Egyptian life and treated as equal member of society and in family. The percentage of women who gave birth at a age younger than 18 decreased from 23.7 in 1992 to 20.4 in 2000 then to 15.8 in 2005.

Ajiboye, J, O, & Tella, Adeyinka (2006) studied "Class attendance and gender effects on undergraduate students in Botswana" and found that although the difference in the mean scores of male and female students was marginal, their difference was found to be statistically significant at 5% level of significance. It indicated a significant gender effect in

social studies academic performance. It also observed that male students performed better than the female counterparts. It was further reported that students' gender has effect on performance in social studies. Being verbal based subject, social studies predispose gender interest. It was however striking to note that males rather than females performed better in the course. The major explanation for this was that looking closely at the attendance rates; male students have better attendance records than their female counterparts in these courses and hence their better performance.

Saxena (2008), studied "Girls' education: constraints and barriers", and states that girls school, hostel facility, school timing also affects girls education. Social, cultural and physical environment continuously create barrier in girls' education. She also observed inequality at various places in the villages like home, society, school, workplaces and in political decision making. This kind of attitude grows up among the teacher also and that affects the education.

Nair, (2010), studied "Women education in India: A situational analysis." According to her, there is a lot of gaps between the male and female literacy. Girls remain in school less than boys in secondary and higher education, their dropout rate is more and enrolment rate is less. She also elaborated that the level of education in rural areas is three times lower than the urban areas. Overall, the condition of girls' education is very poor in rural areas because of the controversial traditions, religious rituals and customs.

Shahzad (2011) conducted a study on "Community attitude towards female education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" and found that all the parents were interested in education of girls' but they could not do so due to poverty. Major reasons of girls' drop out were poverty, marriage and religious constraints. Factors hindering female education were found to be poverty, lack of awareness or incentives, uneducated parents and early marriage. It also found that majority of parents needed their girls' in homes for domestic work.

Bishnu & Adhikari, (2013) examined gender inequality and the problem with girls' school attendance in Nepal, and explored how patriarchal system specially affects girls' attendance and completing secondary education. It also examined how religious and cultural practices influence girls' dropout and participation of secondary education. It was found that major reasons for dropout girls from school are structural, religious, and social factors.

Komora, (2014), studied the challenges faced by the girl child in education in Kenya. Poor cultural practices affect the illiteracy among the people, resulting in high unemployment. The research focused on examining the effects of socio-cultural factors on enrolment of girls in school, dropout rate of girls, environment of school, socio-economic factors on girls' education. The finding indicates the barriers in education of girls are early pregnancies of girls, sexual harassments, inadequate teachers, poor learning material are the factors that affect performance in school.

Neog, (2015) discusses the condition of girl's education in Nagaon district of Assam. She stated that despite so many facilities from the government still people are not interested in sending their girls to school, owing to various reasons.

Kamble, (2020) stated in the study "Rural girls' education an analytical study of socio economic and cultural barriers at rural areas of Beed district" that due to some local social norms and orthodox attitude, parents are not keen to send their daughters to school.

Kaur (2021) discussed in her study "Educational exclusion of Dalit girls at secondary level in Mansa district of Punjab" that on the basis of caste, girls are deprived from education. They are not getting opportunity to go to school with other upper caste student and to get quality education.

Nath, (2022), also examined the problems of girls' education at the secondary stage in Darang district, Assam. She concludes that due to lack of awareness regarding the importance of education and due to various orthodox practices, girls' education is lagging behind.

Nandini, (2023) explored the development of tribal girls' education in Dindigul District, that in tribal areas people are not adequately aware and conscious about educating girls. Apart from that, the study highlighted that tribal girls are deprived of their rights and facilities.

The above review of literature shows that the research works have been limited to causes of girls' dropout, inequality in education, comparison in rural and urban girls' education and effect of parents' education on their children's education. Very few studies concentrated on social obstacles in girls' education in different areas. Most of the research paper discussed the low enrolment of girls in school, high dropout rates, discrimination between girls and boys, and the financial status of the family which affects their children's education.

## Universe of the study:

The researcher took 5 high schools of Salchapra Education Blocks of rural areas. Girls' all the girl's student of these schools was the respondent of the study. These schools have been taken from different cluster namely Chesri, Borkhola, Dolu, Tarapur-Ramnagar, Jhatingamukh. These schools will cover minority area, tea garden area, SC community. Total population of these schools is: - 500 and sample size of the study is 50.

## Sampling method:

For this study, purposive sampling has been taken. Only provincialized schools were taken from the whole sample.

## Methods and tools of data collection:

This is both a qualitative and quantitative study. This included interview schedule for the girl students of Secondary level and qualitative interview schedules for the teachers of those girl students. The researcher collected both primary

data and secondary data and in accordance with the help of primary data and secondary data, the entire task has been conducted.

### Data collection and analysis

The researcher went to the selected Secondary schools under Salchapra Education Block and collected data from the girl students of those schools. The researcher used interview schedule to collect data and based on that primary data, the researcher got some findings. Major findings of the study are given below-

#### 1. Age

| AGE GROUP | TOTAL NO. OF REPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------|------------------------|------------|
| 14 yrs    | 19                     | 38%        |
| 15 yrs    | 16                     | 32%        |
| 16yrs     | 15                     | 30%        |
| Total     | 50                     | 100%       |

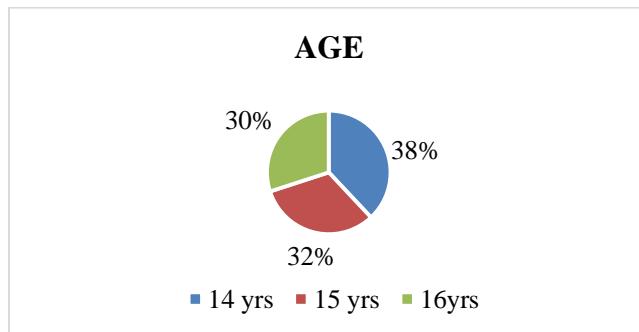


Table no. 1 represents the age of the respondent. As per the collected data 19 (38%) nos. of respondent belongs to the age of 14yrs, 16 (32%) nos. of respondent belongs to the age of 15yrs, 15 (30%) nos. of respondent belongs to the age of 16yrs.

#### 2. Religion

| Religion | Total no. of student | Percentage |
|----------|----------------------|------------|
| Hindu    | 23                   | 46%        |
| Muslim   | 27                   | 54%        |
| others   | 0                    | 0%         |
| Total    | 50                   | 100%       |

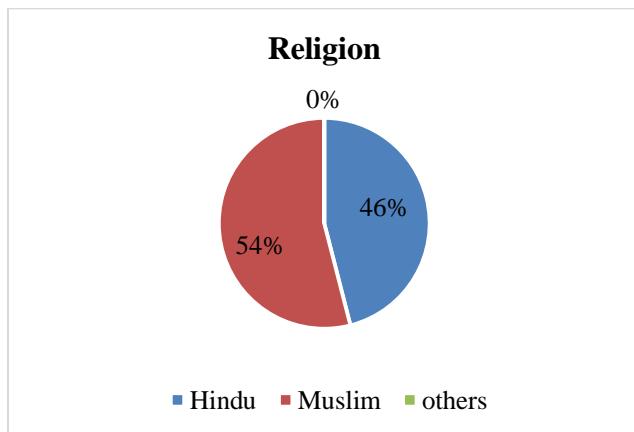


Table no. 2 represents that 46% of respondents belong to hindu religion and 54% of respondent belong to muslim religion.

#### 3. Caste

| Caste   | Total no. of student | Percentage |
|---------|----------------------|------------|
| General | 34                   | 68%        |
| SC      | 12                   | 24%        |
| ST      | 0                    | 0          |
| OBC     | 4                    | 8%         |
| Total   | 50                   | 100%       |

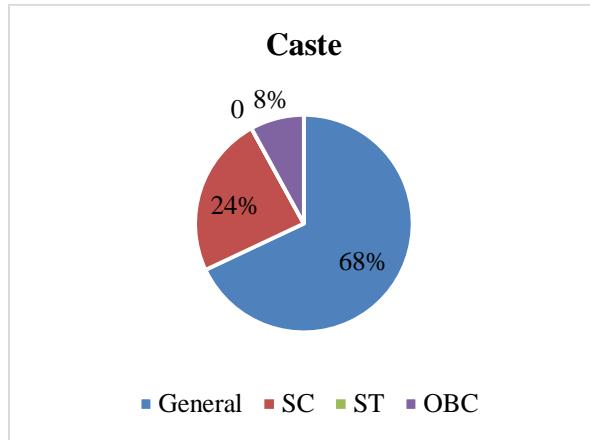


Table no. 3 represents that 34 nos. (68%) respondent belong to general caste, 12 nos. (24%) SC and 4nos. (8%) obc.

#### 4. Category.

| Category | Total no. | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| APL      | 3         | 6%         |
| BPL      | 47        | 94%        |
| Total    | 50        | 100%       |

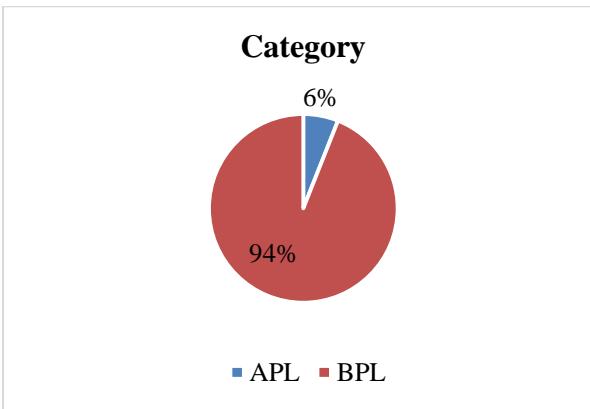


Table no. 4 represents that 47 nos. (94%) of the respondents belong to BPL category and only 03 nos. (06%) respondents belong to APL category.

#### 5. Father's occupation

| OCCUPATION         | NUMBER OF PEOPLE | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|
| DAILY WAGE WORKER  | 29               | 58%        |
| DRIVER             | 9                | 18%        |
| BUSINESS MAN       | 11               | 22%        |
| GOVERNMENT SERVICE | 01               | 2%         |
| Total              | 50               | 100%       |

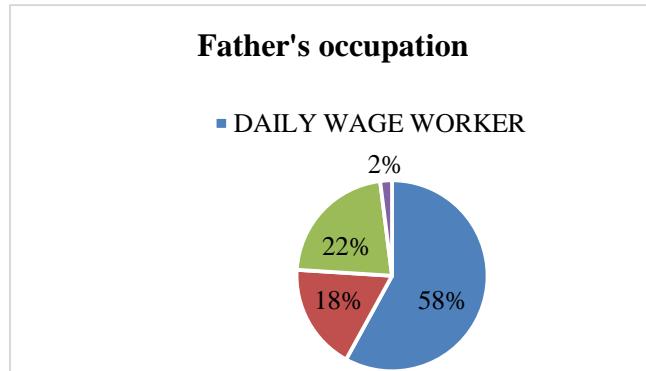


Table no. 5 represents the data of father's occupation of the respondent. Total respondent was 56. It shows the occupation of the father of respondent, and the percentage with total number. As per the collected data 29 (58%) daily wage worker, 9 (18%) driver, 11 (22%) business man and 1 (2%) is belongs to government service

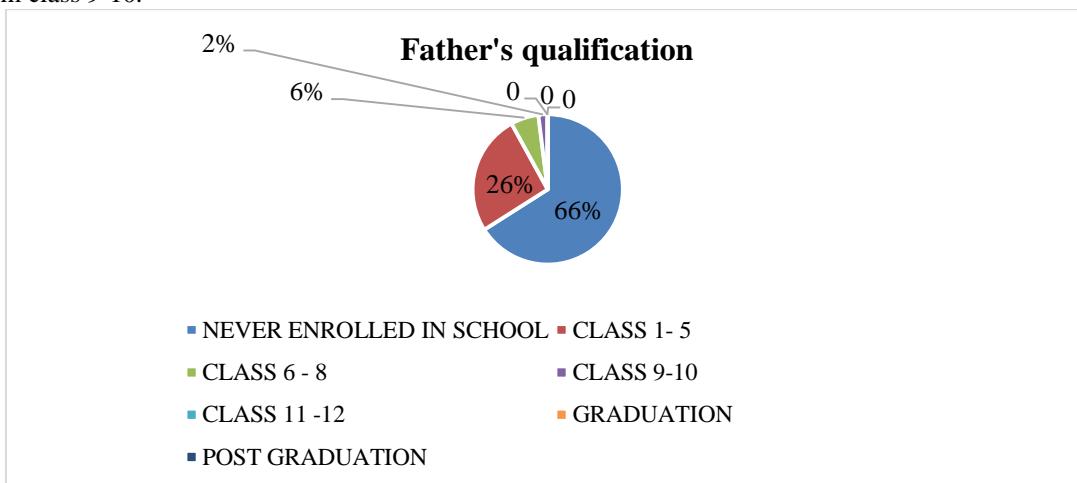
## 6. Mother's occupation

As per the collected data from the respondent it has been found that all the respondent's mother is house wife.

## 7. Father's qualification

| QUALIFICATION            | TOTAL NO. OF RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| NEVER ENROLLED IN SCHOOL | 23s                     | 46%        |
| CLASS 1- 5               | 12                      | 24%        |
| CLASS 6 - 8              | 12                      | 24%        |
| CLASS 9-10               | 3                       | 6%         |
| CLASS 11 -12             | 0                       | 0          |
| GRADUATION               | 0                       | 0          |
| POST GRADUATION          | 0                       | 0          |
| Total                    | 50                      | 100%       |

Table no. 7 shows qualification of the father of the respondent. As per the data collected from the selected sample 23 (46%) people are illiterate. 12 (24%) belongs to the qualification category class 1- 5, 12 (24%) from class 6-8 and 3 (6%) from class 9-10.



## 8. Mother's qualification

| QUALIFICATION            | TOTAL NO. OF PEOPLE | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| NEVER ENROLLED IN SCHOOL | 33                  | 66%        |
| CLASS 1- 5               | 13                  | 26%        |
| CLASS 6 - 8              | 03                  | 6%         |
| CLASS 9-10               | 01                  | 2%         |
| CLASS 11 -12             | 0                   | 0          |
| GRADUATION               | 0                   | 0          |
| POST GRADUATION          | 0                   | 0          |
| Total                    | 50                  | 100%       |

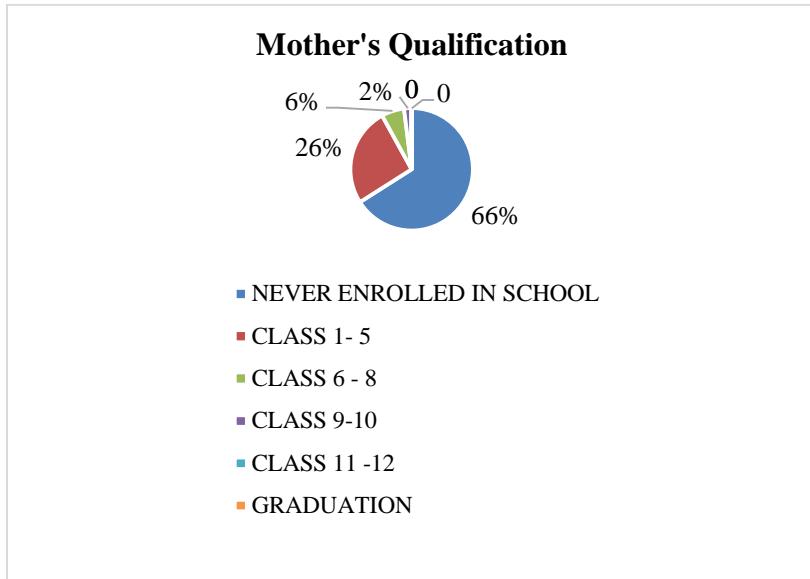


Table no. 8 shows qualification of the father of the respondent. As per the data collected from the selected sample 33 (66%) people are illiterate. 13 (26%) belongs to the qualification category class 1- 5, 3 (6%) from class 6-8 and 1 (2%) from class 9-10.

## 9. Siblings

| NO. OF SIBLINGS | NO. OF RESPONDENT HAVING SIBLINGS | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 1               | 7                                 | 14%        |
| 2               | 13                                | 26%        |
| 3               | 21                                | 42%        |
| MORE THAN THREE | 9                                 | 18%        |
| Total           | 50                                | 100%       |

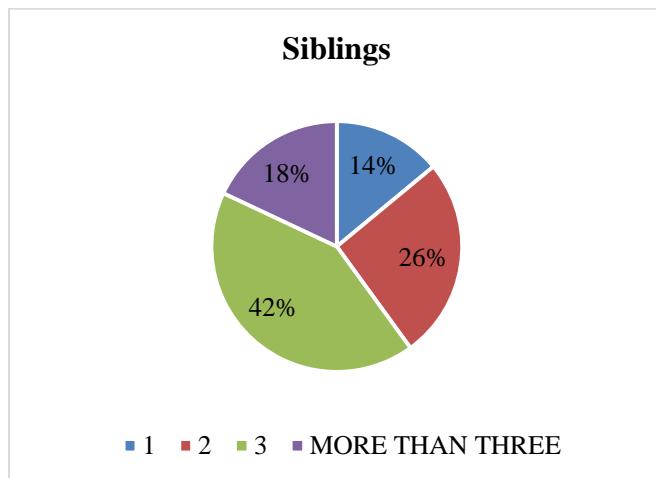


Table no. 9 represents the no. of siblings of the respondents. As per the data 7 (14%) nos. respondent have 1 sibling, 13 (26%) nos. of respondent have 2 siblings, 21 (42%) nos. of respondent have 3 siblings and 9 (18%) nos. of respondent have more than three siblings.

## 10. Type of family

| TYPE OF FAMILY | TOTAL NO. | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| JOINT FAMILY   | 11        | 22%        |
| NUCLEAR FAMILY | 39        | 78%        |
| Total          | 50        | 100%       |

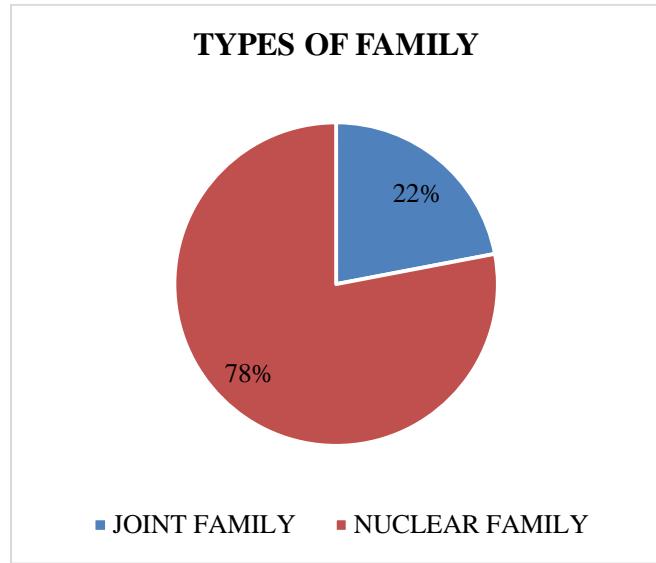


Table no. 10 shows types of family of the respondent. There are mainly 2 types of family such as joint family and nuclear family. As per the collected data 11 (22%) people belongs to joint family and 39 (78%) people belongs to nuclear family.

### 11. Place of living

As the researcher collected data from the respondent of rural minority area so that all the 56 (100%) nos. of respondents belong to village area.

### 12. Type of house

| TYPE OF HOUSE | TOTAL NO. | PERCENTAGE |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| KACCHA        | 42        | 84%        |
| PUCCA         | 08        | 16%        |
| Total         | 50        | 100%       |

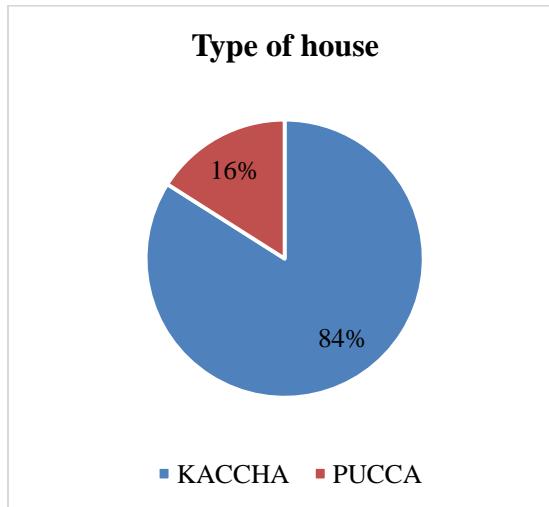


Table no. 12 shows the type of houses of the respondent. As per collected data 42 (84%) people lives in kaccha house and 8 (16%) people lives in pucca house.

### 13. Parents concerned about their daughter's education.

| Parents concerned about their daughter's education | Total no. | Percentage % |
|--|-----------|--------------|
| Yes  | 11        | 22%          |
| No   | 39        | 78%          |
| Total  | 50        | 100%         |

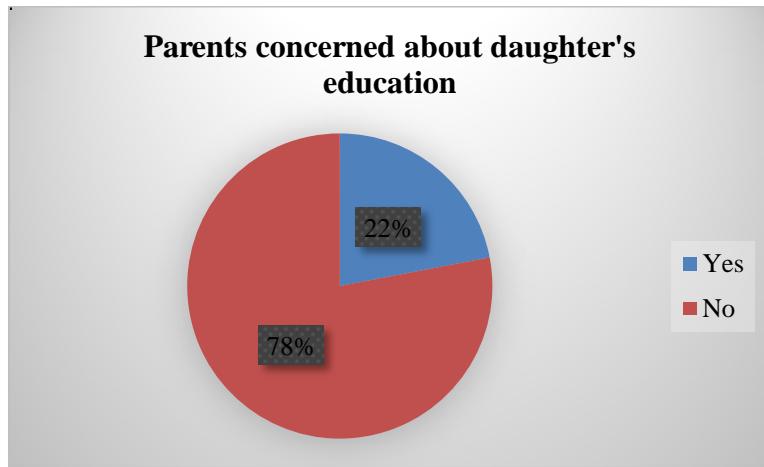


Table no. 13 represents that only 22% parents of the respondent are concerned about their daughter's education and 78% are not concern about their daughter's education.

**14. Stays at home to help her mother in domestic work.**

| Stays at home for domestic help | Total no. of respondent | Percentage % |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Yes                             | 19                      | 38%          |
| No                              | 31                      | 62%          |
| Total                           | 50                      | 100%         |

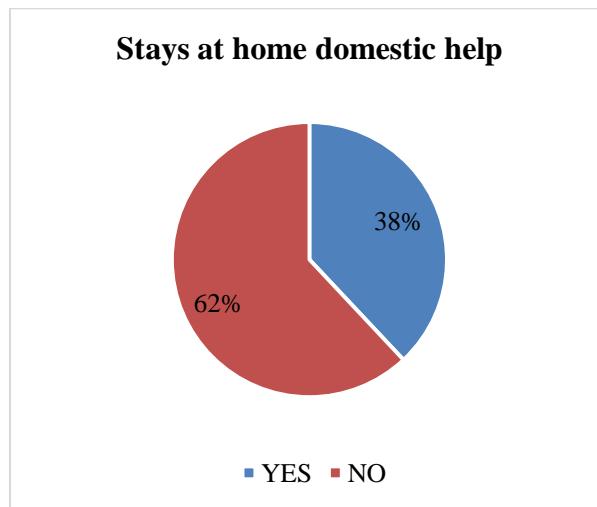


Table no. 14 represents that 19 nos. (38%) of respondents do not stays at home for domestic help but 31 nos. (62%) of respondents stays at home to help their mother in domestic help.

**15. Frequency of attendance in school:**

| CLASS | BELOW 20% | 21% - 40% | 41% - 60% | 61% - 80% | 81% - 100% |
|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 9     | 9         | 6         | 6         | 3         | 1          |
| 10    | 13        | 7         | 3         | 1         | 1          |

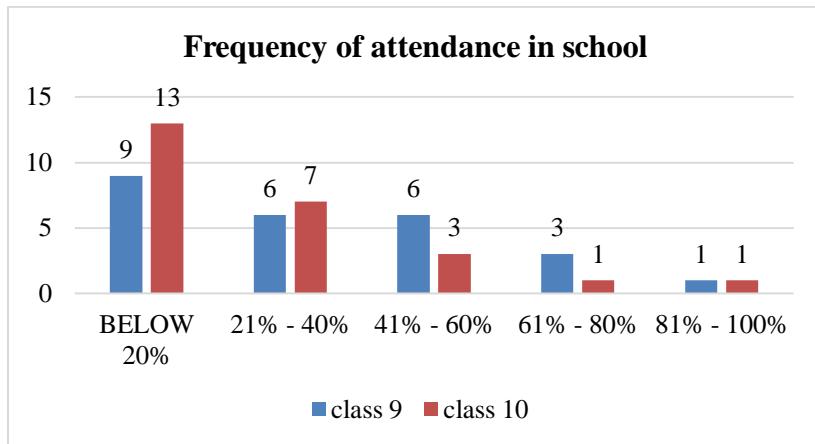


Table no. 15 represents that 22 (44%) nos. of responded having below 20% attendance, 13 (26%) nos. of respondent having 21% - 40% attendance, 9 (18%) nos. of respondent having 41% - 60% attendance, 3 (6%) nos. of respondent having 61% - 80% attendance and 2 (4%) no. of respondent is having 81% - 100% attendance.

**16. Students do not bring sufficient study materials like pen, copy, rulers etc. to school. Siblings who are studying in the same school bring only one copy and share it for writing. It creates a huge problem to teach the students properly.**

| Students bring sufficient study materials to school | Total. No. of students | Percentage % |
|---|------------------------|--------------|
| Yes   | 19                     | 38%          |
| No  | 31                     | 62%          |
| Total   | 50                     | 100%         |

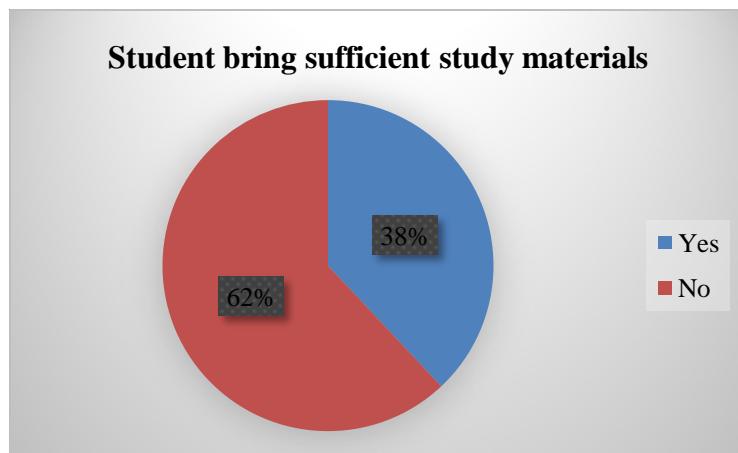


Table no. 16 represents that 19 nos. (38%) of respondents brings sufficient study materials at school and 31 nos. (62%) of respondents do not bring sufficient study materials at school.

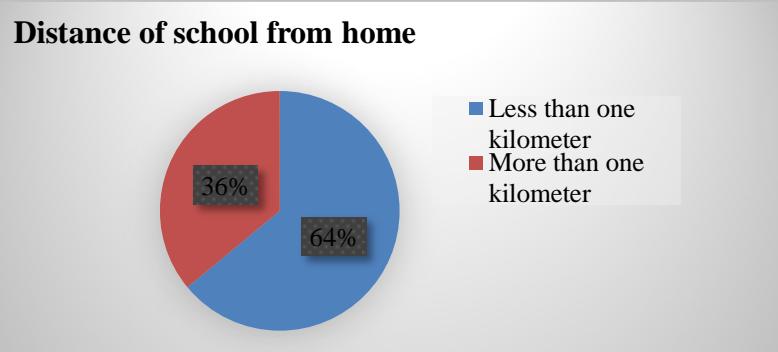
**17. Number of female teachers in school**

| Number of female teachers | Number of respondents having female teacher | Percentage |
|---------------------------|---|------------|
| 0                         | 6   | 12%        |
| 1                         | 9   | 18%        |
| 2                         | 12  | 24%        |
| 3 & ABOVE                 | 23  | 46%        |
| Total                     | 50  | 100%       |

As per table no.17, 6 (12%) nos. respondent have 0 female teacher, 9 (18%) have 1 female teacher, 12 (24%) have 2 female teachers and 23 (46%) have more than three female teachers in their school.

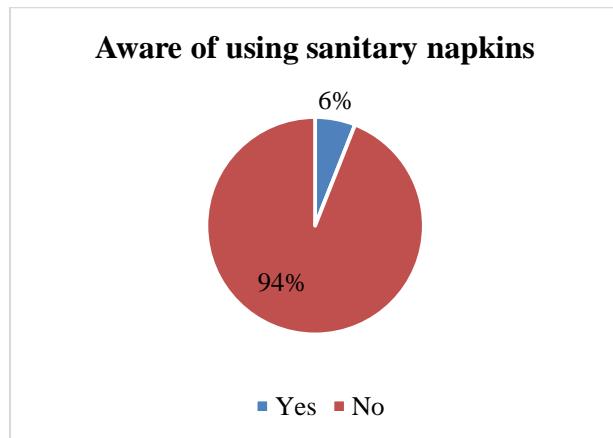
**18. Distance of school from home:** Due to greater distance of secondary schools, parents do not send their daughters to school. In some cases, it has been seen that students take admission in the secondary schools but never go to school except examinations time.

| Kilometer               | No. of respondent | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Less than one kilometer | 32                | 64%        |
| More than one kilometer | 18                | 36%        |
| Total                   | 50                | 100%       |



**19. Menstrual cycle starts in this age group, so most of the students remain absent from schools during these days. They do not even have the awareness of using sanitary napkins.**

| Aware of using sanitary napkins | Total. No of respondent | percentage |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Yes                             | 03                      | 6%         |
| No                              | 47                      | 94%        |
| Total                           | 50                      | 100%       |



As per the table only 6% of respondent are aware about uses of sanitary napkins and rest 94% are unaware about the uses of sanitary napkins.

## 20. Implementation status of government programmes:

| NAME OF THE PROGRAMME | NO. OF RESPONDENT GOT THE BENIFITS | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| FREE TEXT BOOK        | 50                                 | 100%       |
| FREE UNIFORM          | 50                                 | 100%       |
| SANITATION FACILITY   | 50                                 | 100%       |
| SANITARY NAPKIN       | 11                                 | 22%        |

### Conclusion:

Girls' education plays an important role for empowerment, development, and socio- political welfare. There is persistent discrimination with girls in all aspects, namely, educational, social, political, economic, and legal. Naturally in a male dominated society like India, girls are weaker than the boys and they need support to establish themselves in the society. To fight against the socially constructed gender biases, girls and women have to struggle against the system that requires more strength. Such strength comes from the process of empowerment; and empowerment itself will come from education. Educated girls are the weapons who yield positive impact on the Indian society through their contribution at home and professional fields. They are the reason of the improved economy in the country as well as society. Socio-economic condition of the respondents is a big factor in their educational matter. The researcher

conducted the study on the girls student of secondary level and found most of them are belongs to first generation learner. Only 32% parents of the respondents completed their primary education and 2% completed secondary education. Apart from this the girls stays at home to look after their siblings and to help her mother in domestic works. In some cases, distance of the school leads to increase the rate of dropout of girls student. After the all above discussion it may be concluded by saying that the status of girls' education is secondary level is very poor. Specially in rural areas due to many factors, girls students are not interested to go to school and for that drop out rate is getting high. Though government has introduced so many beneficial programmes for the girl students still the educational status is legging behind and for that mass awareness at the grass root level regarding the status of girls education in secondary level is needed.

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