

EDUCATING THE GIRL CHILD IN RURAL UTTAR PRADESH

- An Attitudinal Survey -



Conducted By

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1. INTRODUCTION

Within the field of primary education, education for the girl child assumes critical importance both from the perspective of women's empowerment and universalisation of education. In states, such as Uttar Pradesh, this is particularly so, not only because the overall literacy rates and percentage of school going children are low compared to national averages, but also there are strong biases within society about the role of women in general and the role of education in a girl child's life in particular.

While the above social problem has been appreciated and understood in a general sense by the government, policy makers, and other development institutions, there has been little research in identifying the underlying reasons for this bias against educating the girl child. The result of this is that all primary education programmes and womens' development programmes have started laying stress on girls education at the policy and programme goal level. However when one goes down to specific programme strategies and interventions proposed to achieve this goal, there is very little focus and the goal of educating the girl child is diluted in implementing programmes at the ground level. The reason for this is not so much a lack of commitment by the policy makers and programme managers towards this goal, but a genuine lack of knowledge on what the underlying patterns of bias exist against the girl child. It is only on the basis of this that specific, focused interventions can be visualised to ensure equal education for the girl child.

Towards this endeavour of understanding social realities and problems, before designing policies and programmes for implementation, NALANDA undertook a survey at the micro level, to better understand the attitudes towards educating the girl child in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh. This report is a compilation and analysis of the survey results.

2. SURVEY CONCEPT AND METHDOLOGY

- 2.1 The survey design identified three primary and one secondary stakeholder in educating the girl child. The primary stakeholders are **the girl child herself, the parent of the girl child, and the primary school teacher**. The secondary stakeholders are the village community at large, more specifically **the caste/community group to which the girl child belongs and opinion leaders within them**.

2.2 For the girl child and parent of the girl child, a questionnaire was designed (Annexure 1 and 2) which asked a variety of questions with reference to the reasons as to why they are going to school and/or dropping out or not entering school. The questionnaires are self explanatory as to the issues covered by the survey. For the primary school teacher (an important stakeholder in deciding whether the girl child continues to go to school or drops out), participant observation and dialogue was the methodology adopted. For the secondary stakeholders viz. the community group, an openended semi structured dialogue was adopted as the primary method.

2.3 Five villages each was covered in the two districts of Barabanki and Bhadohi. Both the districts have been identified as weak districts within Uttar Pradesh in terms of overall educational status. Barabanki has an overall literacy rate of **26.27** percent, with women's literacy rate of **14.48** percent. Bhadohi has an overall literacy rate of **22.76** percent, with women's literacy rate of **14.30** percent. In addition Bhadohi is the central district in the carpet weaving belt with prevalence of child labour. Interestingly both the districts have had intensive programmes in primary education. Barabanki has had the Total Literacy Campaign in the last three years, while Bhadohi has an ongoing Education for All project, as well as a variety of efforts directed at education for the child labour.

The villages were chosen, so as to represent a cross section of rural society. In each district an interior village and one close to the road side and primary school was chosen. Similarly villages were chosen so that some were large with mixed castes living in them, while others were small and dominated by one caste.

2.4 Conceptually, the impact or dependent variables were identified as the following :

- whether the girl child had been enrolled in school or not.
- Whether the girl child is going to school or not at present.
- Whether there is a positive attitude towards continuing the education of the girl child beyond the primary school level.

The influencing or independent variables included a variety of attitudinal as well as physical characteristics existing. These included the following :

- the desire to educate the girl child as a socially internalised value.
- the desire to educate the girl child as a means to family progress.
- the influencing decision maker who decides on the issue of educating the girl child.
- the quality of education being provided.
- the ease of accessibility of education for the girl child.
- the community norm/values towards educating the girl child.
- the strength of the demand for educating the girl child.
- the income levels of the families.
- the community group the girl child belongs to.

- 2.5 The total number of households covered by the survey were 630, 300 in Barabanki district and 330 in Bhadohi district. Out of this, 552 respondents were found valid for data analysis. 28 primary school teachers were covered in the survey. Opinion leaders were contacted in the 10 villages surveyed.

3. SURVEY RESULTS

The survey results have been tabulated to identify strong correlational links between impact and influencing variables. Summary tables are provided that discusses each significant result of the survey. From these results certain **hypotheses** are drawn.

3.1 Boys' and Girls' Education : A Comparative Picture

Out of the 552 households surveyed, 463 households also had boy children of school going age. Table 1 below shows the comparative picture of boys and girls enrolment in school.

Table 1 Boys and Girls going to School

	Barabanki		Bhadohi		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Total No. of households with boy children	270	100	193	100	463	100
2. No. of households sending at least one boy child to school	221	81.85	112	58.03	333	71.92
3. Total no. of household with girl children	320	100	232	100	552	100
4. Total no. of households sending at least one girl child to school	191	59.68	66	28.44	257	46.55

The above table shows the following :

- Irrespective of the general status of education (as represented by the total percentage of households sending their children to school), there is on an average at least twenty five percent difference between families sending only boys to school and those sending girls to school.
- The difference between boys education and girls education is lower in those districts (Barabanki) where the overall educational status is better compared to where the overall educational status is very low (Bhadohi).

The following hypothesis may therefore be made :

- H.1 Even at the primary school level, there is a substantial difference between girl children being given the opportunity for education as compared to boy children.**
- H.2 The higher the percentage of children being sent to school in a particular district, the lower the difference between girls and boys education status. This implies that a general educational drive/demand in a location also impacts on the status of girls education.**

3.2 Caste/Community Group and Girls Education

Table 2 Community Patterns in Girls Education

Caste/Community Group	Total Households Surveyed	No. of Households Sending Girls to Primary School	No. of Households not Sending Girls to Any School
1. Schedule Castes	173	96 (55.49%)	77 (44.57%)
2. Backward Castes	146	68 (46.57%)	78 (53.42%)
3. Muslims	233	93 (39.91%)	140 (60.09%)
TOTAL	552	257 (46.55%)	295 (53.45%)

The above Table 2, shows the following :

- On an average 46.55 percent of households having girl children send them to school, i.e. a little less than half the girls of school going age attend school.
- Amongst different communities and caste groups, there is no significant differences in percentage of girl children going to school (maximum difference of 16 percent).
- The maximum number of girl children going to school, in percentage terms, is from the schedule castes. This is approximately 10 percent more than girls from other backward castes (OBCs).
- On the other hand, the minimum percentage of girl children are sent to school from the Muslim families. Considering that a large percentage of them go to the madrasas and not to the normal primary school, the difference is wide between education provided to Muslim girl children and girl children of other caste groups.

We may hypothesise as follows :

- H.3 Over fifty percent of the girl children of primary school going age is still not being provided any opportunity to attend any kind of school in the rural areas of U.P.**

H.4 Within different communities the schedule castes send the maximum percentage of their girl children to school. More than the other backward castes (OBCs).

H.5. The Muslim communities send a very low percentage of their girl children to the mainstream schooling system.

3.3 District-wise Profiles of Educating the Girl Child

Table 3 (a) and 3 (b) below gives the disaggregated district wise profile of education for the girl child.

Table 3 (a) Girl Child Education in Barabanki District

Community/Caste	No. of Households	Households Sending Girls to School	Households not Sending Girls to School
1. Schedule Castes	50	40 (80%)	10 (20%)
2. Backward Castes	72	59 (81.94%)	13 (18.05%)
3. Muslims	198	92 (46.46%)	90 (45.45%)
TOTAL	320	191 (59.68%)	113 (35.31%)

Table 3 (b) Girl Child Education in Bhadohi District

Community/Caste	No. of Households	Households Sending Girls to School	Households not Sending Girls to School
1. Schedule Castes	123	50 (45.52%)	67 (54.47%)
2. Backward Castes	74	9 (12.16%)	65 (87.83%)
3. Muslims	35	1 (2.85%)	34 (97.14%)
TOTAL	232	66 (28.44%)	166 (71.55%)

The above table shows the following :

- There is wide inter district differentials in the girls education status in the two districts. Even though Bhadohi district has a much higher rank in the economic development index, compared to Barabanki, the status of girls education is much better in Barabanki (59 percent girls go to school), than in Bhadohi (only 28 percent of girls go to school).

- The differentials are even more pronounced when we compare the same communities across the districts. Within the schedule castes, while 80 percent of girl children of primary school going age go to school in Barabanki, only 45 percent do so in Bhadohi. This differential is even more marked in the case of OBC. In Barabanki nearly 82 percent of girl children go to school from this group, while in Bhadohi it is only 12 percent. Similarly in the case of Muslims while 45 percent of girl children go to school in Barabanki, only 1 girl out of the 35 Muslim households surveyed send their girl child to school in Bhadohi.

The following hypothesis may be put forward :

- H.6 There is no positive correlation between economic development indexes and girl child education within U.P. Because of the availability of a household based enterprise (carpet weaving), children are more needed at home and forfeit education opportunities even more than when such opportunities are not available.**
- H.7 Wide differentials exist in education of the girl child across districts and hence there is a need for disaggregated analysis and decentralised education interventions required in different districts.**
- H.8 The most pronounced differential in the status of educating the girl child in different districts is amongst the OBCs. For some reasons (to be explored) OBCs in a district like Bhadohi, do not send their girl children to school.**

3.4 Status of Boys and Girls Education amongst different Community Groups

Table 4 (a) bellow gives a comparative picture of boys and girls education amongst different community groups.

Table 4 (a) Community-wise Comparison of Boys and Girls Education

Caste	Percentage of Households Educating Girl Child	Percentage of Households Educating Boy Child
1. Schedule Castes	55.49	80.00
2. Backward Castes	46.57	65.64
3. Muslims	39.91	70.31
TOTAL	46.55	71.92

The above table highlights the following :

- Differential between education for the girl child and the boy child is widely prevalent in all caste/community groups.
- Those community groups who send the maximum no. of their boy children to school, also send the maximum number of their girl children to school (Schedule Castes).

A disaggregated analysis at the district level is shown in Table 4 (b) below.

Table 4 (b) District-wise Comparison of Boys and Girls Education

Caste	BARABANKI		BHADOHI	
	% educating boy child	% educating girl child	% educating boy child	% educating girl child
1. Schedule Castes	90.24	80.00	75.75	45.52
2. Backward Castes	93.70	81.94	43.83	12.16
3. Muslims	76.02	46.46	23.80	2.85
TOTAL	81.85	59.68	58.03	28.44

The above Table shows :

- The differential between boy child education and girl child education is more in districts with a low overall educational status (Bhadohi) than more progressive districts (Barabanki). This is so for all community groupings.
- The differential between boy child education and girl child education between districts is highest in the case of the OBC, followed by Muslims. It is the lowest in the case of the Schedule Castes.

The following hypothesis may be put forward here :

H.9 Those communities (SCs) who send the maximum percentage of their boy children also send the maximum number of girl children to school.

H.10. The differential between boy children education and girl children education exists in all caste groups, but is the widest in the case of OBCs, followed by Muslims.

3.5 Reasons for Education the Girl Child

Table 5 below gives the response to questions pertaining to the reasons for sending their girl child to school, amongst different community groups.

**Table 5 Reasons for Education for the Girl Child
Reasons (percentage responding)**

Caste	No. of Respondents	Basic Literacy	Better Grooming	New Occupation	Better Employment Opportunities	More Knowledge
1. Schedule Castes	75	54.66	33.00	69.33	9.33	22.66
2. Backward Castes	59	30.50	27.11	61.79	11.86	41.15
3. Minority	93	36.55	36.55	62.36	11.86	23.65
TOTAL	227	40.96	33.03	66.07	9.25	29.95

Table 5 above shows some of the reasons which people believe in for educating their girl children. It needs to be stressed that **the responses are from families already sending a girl child to school.** The table shows the following :

- The most popular reason for sending their girl children to school is because they believe that education will allow them to go into a new occupation. This is true irrespective of the community/caste group (and present occupation) of the respondents.
- Most people do not think that education will allow their girl children have better employment opportunities. This is so across all caste groups.
- Only thirty percent of the respondents want their girls to be educated because it enables them to acquire knowledge and only forty percent because it makes them literate.
- Only one third of the respondents believe that education will help their children to be better groomed for future life.
- The need for basic literacy through educating their girl child is felt most strongly by the schedule castes, but by itself literacy is given a low value amongst OBCs and Muslims.
- While the acquiring of knowledge through education is not the primary interest for any of the community groups for sending their girl children to school, the OBC have greater expectation of knowledge acquisition form education than the other community groups.

Based on the above data analysis, the following hypothesis may be made.

H.11 Irrespective of community, basic motivation for educating a girl child in the rural areas is that it will enable the child to take up some kind of new occupation in the future. Neither literacy nor immediate employment after completing education nor knowledge gathering are felt to be important enough reasons for getting girl children educated.

H.12 It follows from the above that education is simultaneously perceived as being wider than just literacy on the one hand but also that education is viewed functionally as something that can generate opportunities for new kinds of occupations. This in turn has implications for the content of education to be provided.

3.6 Attitudes towards Educating the Girl Child

Table 6 (a) shows the perception (of those who are sending their girl child to school) of how far they believe that the girl child should be educated in terms of age and level of education

Table 6 Level to which Girls should be Educated

Caste	Age till which Girls should be educated (in %)			Age till which Girls should be educated (in %)			
	10-14 yrs.	15-18 yrs.	> 18 years	Primary (1 to 5)	Middle School (6-8)	High School (8-12)	College
1. Schedule Castes	26.66	69.33	4.00	32.00	37.33	29.33	1.33
2. Backward Castes	10.16	86.44	3.38	13.55	45.76	40.67	-
3. Muslims	23.65	45.16	33.33	58.06	18.27	23.65	-
TOTAL	20.26	63.87	15.85	37.88	31.71	29.95	0.44

The data shows certain distinct attitudes concerning the education of the girl child amongst those families who are already sending one of their girl children to school.

- Irrespective of community groups, a majority of families feel that girls should be educated **at least but not beyond** the age of 18 years. However even amongst those who are sending their girls to school, one fifth of the families felt that their girl children need education only upto the age of 14 years.
- Across communities, the Muslim families who are sending their girl children to school, at least one third feel that their children should be educated beyond the age of 18. However in the other communities this desire is virtually absent.
- In terms of the level of education till which they should be educated, there are no such distinctive patterns, except that virtually no one feels that girls need to be educated till college. Desire to educate the girl child to only the primary level constitutes over one third the families.
- Across communities, the desire to continue educating their girl child to later levels is strongest amongst the OBCs, while over fifty percent of the Muslims would like their children to stop their education after the primary school.

The following hypothesis may be formulated against this data.

- H.13. Amongst those who are already sending at least one girl to school (which is fifty percent of families only); there is a strong desire that the girl child continue her education till. Middle school or 15 years of age. However virtually no family is interested in continuing the girl childrens' education beyond this age and level to go into higher education.**
- H.14 Amongst different community groups, once a girl child has been enrolled in school, the desire to continue her education to higher levels is greater among the OBCs as compared to the Scheduled Castes and Muslims. However the differentials is not very significant.**

3.2 Profile of Families sending their Girl Child to School and not sending their Girl Child to School

It becomes important to know what distinguishes those families who are sending their girl children to school and those who are not.

Three sets of variables were identified to establish this : the income of the household, the age of the girl's parents and the education level of the girl's parents. Table 7 (a) gives the data, distributed by community groups of families sending at least one girl child to school. Table 7 (b) gives the data on families **not** sending their girl child to school.

Table 7 (a) Profile of Parents Sending Girl Children to School

Caste	Income Level (Rs thd/month)			Age of Parents			Education level of Parents			
	< 1	1-2	> 2	<30	30-40	> 40	Illiterate	Primary	High School	Cottage
SC (96)	76.1	23.9	0	26.04	44.79	29.17	54.16	30.20	10.40	5.24
OBC (68)	26.47	50.00	23.53	16.17	48.52	35.29	43.33	18.33	28.34	10.00
Muslims (93)	60.21	33.33	6.45	26.68	35.48	37.63	93.85	3.07	3.08	-
Total (257)	57.19	34.24	8.56	23.73	42.41	33.85	54.08	26.84	11.67	7.41

Table 7 (b) Profile of Parents Sending Girl Children to School

Caste	Income Level (Rs thd/month)			Age of Parents			Education level of Parents			
	< 1	1-2	> 2	<30	30-40	> 40	Illiterate	Primary	High School	Cottage
SC (77)	93.50	6.49	-	28.57	41.55	29.87	76.62	20.77	2.59	-
OBC (78)	96.15	3.84	-	24.35	53.84	21.79	73.07	26.92	-	-
Muslims (124)	54.83	41.12	4.05	15.32	35.48	49.19	91.12	8.88	-	-
Total (279)	77.06	21.14	1.79	21.5	42.29	36.20	82.07	14.69		

An analysis of the above data shows the following :

- A higher percentage of families sending their girl child to school, belong to families above the poverty line, as compared to families not sending their children to school. However this difference is not of a significant level.

- Even though a majority of the families surveyed belong to the poor households with less than Rs 1,000/- month, fifty percent of the families sending their girl child to school belong to this class. There does not seem to be a strong link between income levels and education of the girl child.
- There is no distinctive trend within the different caste groups, that show that as income rises, they are more keen to send their girl child to school.
- There is no distinctive trend linking the age of the parents and their sending or not sending girl children to school.
- There is a strong link between the education level of parents and their willingness to educate their girl child. Amongst families not sending their girl child to school, over eighty percent are illiterate, while amongst families sending their children to school only fifty four percent are illiterate. On the reverse side less than fifteen percent of families with some education do not send their girl child to school.
- The above trend is however different for some community groups. As a majority (over ninety percent) of Muslim parents are illiterate, there is no link between their literacy level and girls education trends.

The following hypothesis may be formulated on the basis of above :

- H.15 The desire and willingness to send their girl child to school is not necessarily a function of the income level of their parents. Of all the girl children going to school, over fifty percent belong to poor families. However of all the girl children not going to school, nearly eighty percent belong to poor families. This is true for all community groupings.**
- H.16 There is no correlation between the age of parents and the willingness to send their girl children to school. This implies that the awareness to educate the girl child is not growing amongst younger parents.**
- H.17 The prior literacy and education level of the parents significantly contribute to motivate them to send their children to school. This implies that adult/parent education can play a powerful role in motivating parents to send their girl child to school.**

3.8. Influencing Determinants of Educating the Girl Child in School

A variety of factors, both supply and demand driven, would be responsible for influencing parents to send their girl children to school. These include the following :

3.8.1 Distance from School

Table 8 below shows the influence of the distance of the nearest school from home

Table 8 Distance from School and Willingness to send Girl Child to School

Distance of school	Parents sending their girl child to school			Parents not sending their girl child to school		
	Within village	< 1 km	> 1 km	Within village	< 1 km	> 1 km
SC	30.02	45.83	23.95	89.61	10.38	-
OBC	-	20.58	48.52	43.54	-	56.45
Muslims	78.49	-	21.50	-	74.35	25.64
Total	39.68	22.56	29.57	44.08	23.65	32.25

The following conclusions may be drawn from the above table.

- Across communities, the distance of the school from their habitat is not an important factor for sending or not sending their girl children to school.
- However within communities, there is a distinctive preference of the muslims to send their girl children to school, if it is within the village and not send them if it is outside the village.
- With the schedule castes and OBCs, distance from residence is not a major issue and opening a school within a village does not ensure that they will attend it.

From the above data the following hypothesis may be formulated

H.18 The distance of a school from the habitat is not an important determinant of the willingness to send girl children to school. Hence on the one side, opening schools in every village or hamlet is not a necessary condition to get the girl child into school. On the other hand, to get all school going age into school requires changing attitudes of the parents of the girl child rather than only increasing access to schools.

H.19 To enhance girl child education within the muslim community, giving them access to school facilities within their own habitat is an important factor to be considered.

3.8.2 Uptil now we have largely been considering issues of demand, awareness and willingness of parents to send their girl children to school. However there are many supply side factors (i.e. the kind and type of school), which also influence the decisions regarding girl child education.

There are three different types of schooling facilities available to a rural family where **they can send this girl child to school – government primary school, private school and non-formal centres.** Amongst parents sending their children to these different schools, the factors influencing their decisions is analysed below.

Table 9 **Types of Schools and Reasons for sending Girl Children**

		Nearness to Residence	Low fees	Regularity in Teaching	Neighbourhood Girls also go	Quality of Education
Government Primary	120 (52.86%)	37	72	6	34	9
Private School	47 (20.70%)	1	-	41	3	38
Non-formal Centre	60 (26.43%)	46	16	37	19	29
Total	227 (100%)	84	88	84	56	76

(Total No. of Respondents 227 families, out of 552 send their children to school)

From the above table, the following conclusions may be drawn :

- More than half the families who send their girl child to school, do so to a government school. Another twenty percent send their girl children to private schools, while twenty six percent send their girl child to other non-formal centres of education.
- Amongst those sending their girl child to government schools, sixty percent do so primarily because there are no fees, while less than ten percent cite the quality of teaching and the regularity of teaching as reasons for sending them to government schools. Nearness to residence and neighbourhood girls also going to such schools are the other reasons for choosing a government school.
- Amongst those sending their girl children to private schools, regularity of teaching and quality of education are cited as the primary reasons for sending them to private schools. No other factors is cited as being of importance.
- Amongst those sending their children to non-formal centres, a majority of parents cite nearness to residence and regularity of teaching as important reasons for making this choice.

From the above, the following hypothesis may be formulated :

H.19 The primary reasons why girl children go to a government school is because of the low (nil) fees and not because of the quality of education. However if they can afford, they go to private schools because there is regular teaching and better quality of education.

H.20 For those families to whom nearness to schools and other neighbourhood girls going to school are important factors, often chose a non-formal centre or government school, whichever is available (important for the Muslim community).

Disaggregating the above data community grouping wise, Table 10 shows the choice of schools by different community groups.

Table 10 Choice of Schools for Educating Girls by different countries

Type of School Community	Government School	Private School	Non-formal Centre	Total
SC	63	4	8	75
OBC	31	21	7	59
Muslims	26	22	45	93
Total	120	47	60	227

The above table shows the following :

- Over eighty percent of the SC families who send their girl child to school, do so to government schools. While only fifty percent of the OBCs and thirty percent of the muslim families send their girl children to government schools.
- Over sixty percent of the muslim families who send their girl children to school preferred local non-formal schools and private schools.
- However the reasons for this difference is not because of any community factor but because of making a choice between affordability and quality of education. Low fees and nearness to house continue to be the reason why a majority of SC families chose a government school. On the other hand good quality teaching and regularity of teaching continue to be the reason why a majority of OBCs and muslims chose private schools and non-formal centres.

We may therefore hypothesise as follows :

H.21 The perception of parents (from all communities) of girl children going to school is that good quality education is available only in private schools or non-formal centres of education and not in government schools. However because of low fees in government schools those who are poor, especially the scheduled castes, send their children to government schools. If they can afford they send their children to private schools where regular teaching of a better quality is imparted.

3.9 Reasons for not Educating their Girl Child

Uptil now we have been looking at families who have been sending at lest one girl child to school. We now shift our focus to those families who are not educating their girl children (which is more than fifty percent of the total number of families surveyed). Table 11 looks at the reasons cited for not sending girl children from their families to any school.

Table 11 Reasons for not Sending the Girl Child to School

Caste Group	Not necessary to educate	Need their help at house	Long distance from school	Liable to go astray	Cannot Afford Education	Quality of Education is Poor	Difficult to marry Educated Girls	Pressure from Community
Schedule Castes (77)	17 (22.07%)	59 (76.62%)	11 (14.28%)	12 (15.58%)	46 (59.74%)	-	8 (10.38%)	52 (67.53%)
Other Backward Castes (78)	19 (24.35%)	68 (87.17%)	37 (47.43%)	4 (5.12%)	58 (74.35%)	2 (2.56%)	-	57 (73.07%)
Muslims (124)	44 (35.48%)	70 (56.45%)	33 (26.61%)	47 (37.90%)	25 (20.16%)	3 (2.61%)	12 (9.67%)	78 (62.90%)
Total (279)	80 (27.87%)	197 (70.60)	81 (29.03%)	63 (22.58%)	129 (46.23%)	5 (1.79%)	20 (7.16%)	187 (67.02%)

Note: The percentage shown is number of families within each community group responding positively to a specific factor as being important in influencing their decision

Table 11 shows a variety of unlinked reasons that could possibly influence the families not to educate their girl children. The table shows the following factors :

- Across community groups, over seventy percent of the respondents stated that they did not send their girl child to school because they were a helping hand at home.
- The pressure from their immediate community was also found to be an important factor influencing their decision not to send their girl child to school, although a negligible percentage felt that an educated girl will be more difficult to arrange a marriage for.
- Economic reasons were cited as another important reason for not sending girl children to school. Although, paradoxically, this was cited as a more important reason by the economically better off community group (OBC) than the poorer groups (SCs and Muslims).
- The quality of education was not found to be a major factor for **not** sending their girl child to school, although amongst those already sending them to schools this was an important factor.
- Out of those not sending their girl child to school, only a minority felt that it is not necessary for a girl to be educated (28 percent) or that the access to school was not easy ((29 percent) or that the influence of school would affect their upbringing (32 percent).

For each factor the following differences emerged when we compare the attitudes and opinions towards educating their girl child amongst different community groups.

- The need for help at home as being the reason for not sending their girl child to school is strongest amongst the OBCs and SCs as compared to the Muslims.
- The perception of education not being important to girls, was the strongest amongst Muslims, although over fifty percent amongst them did not see this as an important reason.
- The opinion of the community was found to be uniformly important in all community groups, as being an important factor in deciding not to send their girl child to school.

From the above analysis we may formulate the following hypothesis :

H. 21 The strongest reason for not sending girl children to school is the necessity for them to contribute to household work; either domestic work or occupational work done at home.

H.22 The influence of a particular community on moulding attitudes of individual households within that community is still very strong. Hence community opinion leaders and community strategies for enhancing girl enrolment in schools continues to be important.

H.23 No major negative attitudes exist that force individual households not to send their girl children to school such as the belief that it is not necessary to educate a girl child or that education for a girl child will have some adverse effect on their values or upbringing.

H.24 On the other hand, those not sending their girl child to school also did not have strong reasons of concern about the accessibility and quality of education being important reasons for not sending their girl children to school.

3.10 Reasons for Drop-out amongst Girl Children

A large number of girl children join school at the primary school level and then drop out. To explore the reasons for doing so and not doing so, two sets of families were asked questions. Those families where the girl child had joined school but dropped out (66 families out of 552, i.e. 12 percent) and those who have not dropped out (227 families out of 552, i.e. 45 percent).

Table 12, below gives the data on families who have discontinued the education of their girl child.

Table 12 Drop-out Levels and Reasons for Dropping-out (Percentages)

Caste	Education is not useful	Pressure from Community	Marriage	School was far	Too much house work	Quality of Education was poor	Too much expenditures	Other reasons
SC (31)	12.88`	9.67	-	35.48	41.93	3.22	58.06	6.44
OBC (23)	8.69	-	13.04	65.21	30.43	-	17.39	30.43
Muslims (12)	-	8.33	16.66	66.66	58.33	8.33	50.00	16.06
Total (66)	9.09	6.06	7.57	51.51	40.90	3.03	42.42	16.66

Note : Conclusions in this section is based on a sample size of only 66 which may not be adequately large.

The above table shows the following :

- The three important reasons cited for dropping out of school was the distance from school; the necessity to do housework; and the expenditure incurred on educating the girl.
- None of the other possible reasons, such as the perception that education is not useful to the girl child; or there was pressure from the community to remove their girl child from school; or that they were reaching marriageable age were significant.
- The quality of education was also not a factor in deciding on dropping-out from school

The tentative hypothesis that can be made from the above are :

H.25 The investment in terms of time and finance are seen to be the primary reasons for girl children dropping out of school.

H.26 Once having begun a girl's education, the community is not an important factor influencing a family's decision to continue or discontinue a girl's education either positively or negatively, even though it is a strong influence before starting a girl child's education.

H.27 Amongst girl children's families, the quality of education is not an important factor for deciding to enter her in the education process, withdraw her or continue her education. The act of sending her to school itself is the main decision.

3.11 Opinions and Expectations of Girl Children

As one of the important stakeholders in their own education, girl children from all the households were also asked a variety of questions as to their perceptions.

Table 13 Tabulates the responses of the girl children who do not go to school

Table 13 Perceptions of Girl Children who do not go to School

(a) Desire for going to School

Caste	Do they want to go to school	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
SC	36.36	63.63
OBC	29.48	70.51
Muslims	32.25	67.75
Total	32.61	67.38

(b) Reasons for wanting/not wanting to go to School

	Those wanting to go to school (%)	Those not wanting to go to school
1. Parents decision	49.45	
2. Better Future	56.04	
3. School environment	27.47	
4. Friends go/don't go	20.87	

Table 14 Tabulates the responses of the girl children who are presently going to school

(a) Reasons for Going to School

Reasons	% responding positively	Major community group response differentials
1. Nice Place	65.19	Most positive response from Muslims (78%); least from SCs (46%)
2. Happy feeling	37.88`	Most positive from OBCs (62%)
3. Make Friends	32.59	Most positive response from OBCs (62%)
4. Good Teachers	25.11	Standard response from all groups
5. Learn new things	38.76	Standard response from all groups
6. Allows escape from home	25.99	Most positive response from OBCs (52.54%)

(b) **Level till which girls desire to study**

Caste	Primary (%)	Secondary (%)	College (%)
SC (75)	48	36	16
OBC (59)	15	71	14
Muslims (93)	67	18	15
Total (227)	48	37	15

- (c) 97.79 percent of the respondents were confident that they would be allowed to study as long as they want to by their parents.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above tables which are self explanatory.

- As much as 67 percent of the girls who do not go to school have no desire to do so, but once having entered schools they wish to continue.
- However of those going to primary school, only a little more than half would like to continue their education beyond the primary school level.
- Of those girl children going to school, a majority go because of the **context of schooling** (nice place, make friends, happy feeling) rather than the **content** as represented by opportunity to learn new things (38 percent positive response) or good teacher (25 percent response).
- There are distinct community differentials in the educational aspirations of the girl children going to school. While 71 percent of OBC girls want to continue their education to secondary schools, only 36 percent of SC and 18 percent of Muslim girls seek to do so (from amongst those who already go to school).

From the above analysis we may hypothesise as follows :

- H.28 Enrolment in a school is a critical decision which influences the perceptions and attitudes of the girl child towards her own education. Once enrolled they wish to continue in school, otherwise their desire to go to school is not kindled.**
- H.29 The context of schooling is as important, if not more than the content of education, as the former is a major motivating factor for girls to continue schooling.**
- H.30 For continuing education beyond the primary school stage, there being wide differentials between communities, a focussed strategy on Scheduled Castes and Muslims would be necessary.**

3.12 Opinions of Primary School Teachers

Although the explicit responses of all primary school teachers were for equal opportunity and continuing education for girl children, two observations were made :

- During teaching in class there are no major biases for or against girl students in terms of interest, response, teaching style etc.
- However a certain stereotyping of roles takes place in other interactions with the teachers. For example, the sweeping of the class floor before class is given to a harijan girl child. After class interaction is limited to higher caste children.

3.13 Opinion Leaders of Communities

A majority of community people/opinion leaders had the following opinion on girl child education :

- Girl's education is important and they should attend school.
- Girls need to attend school only till the primary school level (unless exceptionally talented) as they basically need to be literate but will not use the knowledge gained in school in future.
- There should be special girl schools beyond the primary school level.
- Schools should be for mixed castes and religions and teachers should not have any biases.
- The primary problem in school management is teacher attendance and regularity.

4. POLICY IMPLICAITONS FOR GIRL CHILD EDUCAITON

The hypotheses generated from the data analysis has certain implications for policies and programme strategies to be adopted for promoting education of the girl child. These are structured around each hypothesis.

4.1 Even at the primary school level, there is a substantial difference between girl child education level and boy child education levels

This has the obvious implication that special focus and policies need to be formulated for promoting girl child education.

4.2 The higher the percentage of children being sent to school in a particular location, the lower the difference between boys and girls education

This implies that universalisation of education should continue to be the overarching goal to be pursued, which in itself will over time have an impact on lowering differentials between boy and girl child education levels, i.e. **universalisation of education is as important an issue as girl child education, even for achieving the latter.**

4.3 Over fifty percent of the girl children, is still not being provided any kind of education in rural U.P.

This implies that a focussed approach for educating girls is required in rural U.P., particularly amongst specific communities like the OBCs and Muslims. Focussing on demand generation for girl child education amongst the scheduled castes only is inadequate, i.e. **programmes focussing on girl child education need to cover all community groups.**

4.4 Economic development or poverty reduction is no guarantee for education of the girl child. In fact in the case of growth of household enterprises this may have an adverse impact on girl child education

This implies that education needs an independent policy and programme thrust and not as a part of poverty alleviation programmes. Such focussed educational programmes are even more necessary in economically developing districts and amongst economically rising community groups.

4.5 Wide differentials exist in education of the girl child across different districts

This implies that a centralised programme strategy for universalisation of education and girl child education is likely to fail and mechanisms and instruments for decentralised strategies need to be evolved for promoting girl child education. Such a strategy needs to take into account local contexts and local community differentials.

4.6 Different Community groups have different patterns of educational status of boys and girls school

Demand generation and awareness building strategies for promoting education of girls need to focus on different groups (e.g. OBCs), which may be very different from groups to be focussed on for social rights (SCs) or economic empowerment (poor) or human rights (Muslims).

- 4.7 Irrespective of Community, the basic motivation for educating a girl child is that this will enable an occupational shift for the family, rather than immediate employment or knowledge acquisition.**

This implies that educating the girl is not seen as of immediate short term functional value but of a wider long term beneficial process. Hence **demand generation strategies for promoting girl child education need to stress longer term progress of the family rather than short term functional skills/literacy.**

- 4.8 There is a strong desire amongst those already enrolling their girl child in school to continue their education only upto middle school and not higher levels**

This implies that continuing education for girls is an important issue, and families with adolescent girl children need focussed attention for generating demand in them for higher education. This is so across communities and hence such programmes need not have a particular community focus.

- 4.9 While there is no link between the desire to educate a girl child and age of parents, those parents who have some education tend to have a stronger desire to send their children to school**

This implies that adult education, across all age groups, could be a valuable instrument for investing in the education of future generations. **A positive demand loop is created for girls education by educating adults.**

- 4.10 Distance of school (or access to schooling facilities) is not a major factor in deciding on education for the girl child, except in the Muslim community**

This implies that access to schooling without supporting demand generation for schooling will not ensure girl child education. Every hamlet does not need a school but needs to be motivated to send their children to the nearest school. However the Muslim dominated villages may need a more habitat focussed school strategy.

- 4.11 The perception of parents, from all communities, of girl children going to school is that good quality education is only available in private schools and not government schools and they only send their children to government schools because it is low cost.**

This is a major problem for the state managed basic education system. It implies that if and when peoples' income rises and they want to send their children to school, private schools will replace government schools. A major reform in the government school system is therefore required if they are to continue being perceived as useful in society.

- 4.12 The strongest reasons for not sending a girl child to school today is the opportunity cost of time (household work) and money (income) foregone and not any attitudinal reasons or even perceptions of the quality of teaching.**

This implies that demand generation strategies focussing on awareness building (that girls need to be educated) is actually redundant. What is required for generating demand is practical solutions to make education low cost in terms of time and money. **Flexible, shorter hour schools** can be an effective demand generator for girl children to join school.

- 4.13 The key decision for the family is whether or not to enrol a girl child in school. Once having enrolled them, community opinions, distance form school and even quality of education are not important factors for withdrawing a girl child from school. The key factors continue to be investment of time and money.**

This implies that increasing the enrolment of girls in school has to continue to be the focus in girls education programmes. And for doing this the opportunity cost to the family of doing so must be brought down; more than any attitudinal change.

- 4.14 The context and environment of schools are the most important factors influencing the girl child's attitude and decision to continue in school. A positive and happy experience is critical to retention of the girl child and increasing the desire to continue schooling. This is even more important than the classroom content of education.**

This implies that programmes focussing on girl child education must give due priority to improvements in the school environment rather than narrowly focus on curriculum improvement or teaching skills. Time for socialising, extra curriculum activities, school facilities etc. are critical in retaining a girl child in school.