INRODUCTION

“Education in its real sense is the pursuit of truth. It is an endless journey through knowledge and enlightenment. Such a journey opens up new vistas of development of humanism.”

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (2005)

1.1 Education: A necessity of life:

Bhatia B. D. (1972) explained that education is the necessity of life both biologically and socially. It is needed for living a better life- a socially desirable life, nobody can deny. It is the education which bridges the gulf – the ever widening gulf - between the original nature of the immature child and the standard, customs and exacting demands of society which increase with the growth of civilization. Education renews and rebuilds the social fabric and gives social consciousness. In earlier times, education was primarily meant for survival. But with time it has become indispensible for a more enriched life, better use of leisure time. It is a tool for improvements in social and cultural life.

According Kumar H. (2008) education has always been associated with providing a better quality of life for human beings. It has been regarded as a major means of imparting knowledge and skills to individual and helping the process of social transformation. It is believed to have the capacity to facilitate a flow of vital ideas and information to the masses increasing their awareness of the situation in which they live and of the possibilities and choices before them.
Every child represents the future of the human society. Education bring about the development of innate powers of the child so that he can use them to do maximum extent to contribute to the development of society.

### 1.2 Education as a need and efforts of Nation:

Gaur K. D. and Gupta P. (2008) have depicted that basic education link are the children, whether of cities or the villages. Riding on one of the highest growth rates in the world, at around eight percent in the tenth plan India had launched the most ambitious education project since independence, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), under which primary education was to be provided to all children by 2007. The purpose of education is not only to make our children literate but to make this earth a better place to live in.

Education is the most important element for growth and prosperity of a nation. India is in the process of transforming itself into a developed nation by 2020. Yet there are about 350 million Indian people who need literacy and many more who have to acquire employable skills to suit the emerging modern India and the globe. Children who belong to weaker sections of our society are undernourished, and only a small percentage of them manage to complete eight years of satisfactory education. There is a need to think specifically for them. (Singh P. Singh A. and Lata S. 2008)
1.3 Indian education scenario:

George (2007) has explained that the Indian economy has recently entered a high growth path with the GDP growing at about 9% per annum. The census 2001 results have shown considerable progress in increase of literacy rates.

Table -1.1: *Literacy Rate in India 1951-2001*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Persons %</th>
<th>Males %</th>
<th>Females %</th>
<th>Male - Female gap in Literacy rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>8.86</td>
<td>18.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>28.30</td>
<td>40.40</td>
<td>15.35</td>
<td>25.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>45.96</td>
<td>21.97</td>
<td>23.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>43.57</td>
<td>56.38</td>
<td>29.76</td>
<td>26.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
<td>24.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>65.38</td>
<td>75.85</td>
<td>54.16</td>
<td>21.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, Part III, 2001

Table 1 shows that literacy rate has increased from 18.33% in 1951 to 65.38% in 2001. Male literacy rate has increased from 27.16% in 1951 to 75.85% in 2001 whereas female literacy rate has increased from 8.86% in 1951 to 54.165 in 2001. There has been a continuous progress in total male and female literacy rate in the previous decades. It is evident from the above table that though male and female literacy rates have increased over the period there is an undesirable continuance of gender disparity. There is a long and wide gap i.e. 21.70% in 2001census between male and female literacy rates, which is serious enough to cause concern. High dropout rates may be a reason for this gap between male and female literacy rate. (Rawat D. et al, 2008)
1.4 Definitions and concept of dropouts:

According to dictionary of education dropout is “most often designates an elementary or secondary school pupil who has been in membership during the regular school term and who withdraws or is dropped from membership for any other reason except death or transfer to another school before graduating or before completing an equivalent programme of studies, such an individual is considered a drop-out whether his dropping out occurs during or between regular school, whether his dropping out occur before or after he has passed the compulsory school attendance age & were applicable, whether or not he has completed a minimum required amount of school work.” (Carter V. Good, 1973)

Venkatanarayana M. (2009) said “if a child had attended school but withdrew after sometime (days/month/years) due to some reason and the child is presently not attending school, then the child is said to be a dropout.” The concept of dropout is very old. It was present, even in those days when there were very little means available for schools, and building designated as school. Students were often taught under the shade of a tree. Students sat on the ground under the tree and lecture was given by the teacher. In the absence of teaching learning material like books and papers, the process of education was carried out, only a very few out of the entire school age population went to do families. The reason was that these people wanted to maintain their distinguished social and educational status in the society. People from low socio-economic status neither thought nor sent their children to school. As the caste system was ingrained in the society they were deprived educationally and socially. Teachers generally used corporal
punishment to make them obedient. Attendance of the students in olden days was often irregular. Student’s absence from the school was a problem even in very old days because compulsion to attend school has a long history. School participation is important for the individual and society. “Students absence from school for unexcused reason is referred to as truancy” It seems that truancy often leads to drop-outs at a later stage (Macdonald, 1972). There are many reasons behind leaving school in middle. Visaria (1993) and Chatterjee (1990) reported reasons of lack of interest and financial strains of family as prominent causes of dropouts. Education is a basic need for a person for leading a worthy human life and one cannot imagine education without school as it plays a major role in moulding the basic ideas, habits and attitudes of a child, with view to producing well balanced individuals.

1.5 Problem of dropouts among boys and girls:

Though the government of India has made earnest effort since independence to improve the educational status of female and met with considerable success, yet there is much to be done to bring them at par with men. Analysis of data from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, two North Indian states, revealed a positive relation between child work and schooling costs, negative relation between school enrolment and schooling costs and that the decrease in schooling costs is comparable in magnitude to the corresponding increase in the probability of school enrollment, implying that children’s work and school attendance are strongly substitutable activities (Hazarika et al 2006). In Tamil Nadu, the work load on girls was found to be marginally higher than in boys. The educational
status of girls was low in school enrollment and attendance as compared to boys (Ananthakrishnan and Nalini, 2002).

At school stage, the progress of girls’ education has not been satisfactory. All the children who are enrolled in primary or elementary school do not complete elementary education. It is evident from table 1.2 that school dropout rates among girls are higher than boys (from 1960-61 to 2001-02).

Table – 1.2: Dropout rates (percent) at primary and Elementary stages of school education from 1960-61 to 2001-05 (India)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary (I-V)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Elementary (I-VII)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1.6 Factors of being dropouts:

Many reasons are responsible for being dropouts as failure in academics, non-availability of schools, inaccessibility of schools, pushing out due to teacher’s behaviour/School environment, financial problem etc according to earlier studies (Roderic 1993; Kronick and Hargen 1998; Khokhar et al 2005 and Bhanpuri and
Ginger, 2006). There are various factors that are responsible for being dropouts. They include:

a. Personal factors

b. Familial factors

c. School factors

d. Socio-economic factors

a. Personal Factors: There are certain factors which affected individuals personally as their interest, their health etc. They have direct impact on one’s personality. They have their significant role in learning process. Sharma et al (2007) concluded some personal factor of being dropouts as lack of child’s interest, low grade of child etc.

b. Familial Factors: The familial factors include the features, which are associated with the family, and its environment in which the individual is brought up. These features have important impact on the development of the personality of the individual specially his learning aspects. Nair (1983) and Karlekar (1985) found that majority of girls dropped out of school as unpaid labourer. Sharma et al (2007) also revealed some familial factors of being dropouts as involvement in household chores, conflicts at home, and prolonged illness in family.

c. School Factors: Roul et al (2005) have explained school factors role of being dropouts of much value. They include various features which are associated with school as distance of school, lack of teachers, lack of physical facilities etc
d. Socio-Economic Factors: There are certain factors associated with social and economic environment of an individual that constantly influence the development of his/her personality. These factors have direct bearing on the learning processes, which are important ingredients of the personality development. Such features are associated with the society and its economic conditions of which the individual is members can be termed as socio-economic factor. Mathur (1999) also indicate that poverty is one of the main cause of dropout of girls. Roul et al (2005) also found that social and economic factors were responsible of being dropouts. They include various features inadequate encouragement from peer group, harassment of school going girls, lack of money etc.

1.7 Rationale of the study:
In the present study entitled “A comparative study of dropouts among girls and boys (6-14years) in rural areas of Aligarh District (Uttar Pradesh)”, researcher has tried to investigate demographic characteristics of dropout of target areas, the personal and other factors influencing girls and boys to leave school in middle. As high dropout rate is an obstacle in the path of achievement of goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). The government has provided the constitutional guarantee under article 45 to provide free and compulsory education to each and every individual up to the age of 14 years. After independence various polices and programmes have been developed and target have been fixed and many of them implemented to achieve the goal of UEE. Despite various efforts of the government as well as other social organization,
we are behind this objective. Major factor which is seen to be a hurdle in the path of achievement of the goal of universalization of elementary education (UEE) is the high dropout rate at primary level. It is one of the greatest problems of education. Due to this high dropout rate there has been shift in government policies in recent years to retain students in the school rather than to enroll them. The government has started to pay attention to this wastage of money efforts and resources of the government, public and the students. School Dropouts acts as barrier in this whole process. It is great setback for the nation. Such a study can be a foot forward in analysing the dropout problem and can facilitate better use of economic, social, political scientific, educational development of the country in fruitful manner

1.8 Significance of study:

The significance of present study is in the interest of the entire nation. High dropout rates at the elementary level are the main problem of today. By improving elementary education government can reduce the drop-out rate. The study entitled “A Comparative study of dropouts among boys and girls (6-14 years) in rural areas of Aligarh District (Uttar Pradesh)” would also reveal the existing position of drop-out rates among girls and boys at primary level of education. Such a study will also unveil the causes and drawbacks of absenteeism, failure, wastage and stagnation in primary schools in addition to the reasons of higher dropout rate. After analysing the data valuable to improve the existing condition of elementary education. The statistics from the study may be converted into an effective tool to help reduce dropout rates and thus fulfill the
educational goal of the nation at the elementary level. The problem of dropouts related to most of people in our society. Therefore information, figures and findings will benefit all the sections of the society. It is only education which can convert this country into a prosperous, developed and socio-economically advanced nation.

*In brief the study will have its impact on the following:*

*The Students:* Children of today are the builders of the nation of tomorrow. Therefore the children should receive education according to their interest, needs and abilities. This may be helpful for their welfare as well as the welfare of the nation. If we are able to retain the students in age group of 6-14 years in school from becoming potential dropouts. The talents of these students may be put for better scientific and technological development of the country.

*The Parents:* This study will give valuable suggestions to the guardians so that they can understand their duties and responsibilities towards the education of their wards. Thus they may provide suitable environment conducive for proper education. Generally “don’t care attitude’ of the parents, in relation to the education of their children contributes towards the higher drop-out rates among them. Through this study parents will be made conscious to look after the education of their children so that it may be helpful to retain students in school longer and reduce dropout rate.

*The Society:* This study will help to understand the role of the society towards its members and vice-versa. The schools reflect the image of the society. Society demands its members to bear the responsibility collectively and the duties
An individual is a social unit of society. Good relations between schools and demands accelerate the process of development which also includes development of education. Education may help to bring about prosperity in the society. Therefore efforts are necessary to educate every member. The society should be made aware about the higher wastage at primary level of education.

**Achieve the goal of Universalization of education:** Provision of compulsory and elementary education for each and every individual up to the age of 14 years is still as aspired dream and a cherished desire of the nation. Merely to establish more elementary school is not going to solve the problem. Retaining the students till the completion of the course is also equally important. Answers to questions like, what are the reasons of higher dropout rates? How to reduce rate? How to retain the students in schools? Have to be found out. The present study is an attempt to know the answers to the above questions therefore suggestions from this study if implemented can be helpful in retaining the students in school for a longer period, hence reducing dropout rates and a foot forward, achieving the UEE. Students leave the school without completing the course for which they were enrolled. This is a waste of money, efforts, energy and resources for the Nation. At present, efforts are needed to retain the students in order to the reduce the wastage on elementary education. Reduction in the dropout rate will help reduce wastage.

This wastage of money, efforts, energy and resources if utilized properly either at some other place where there is a much greater need for it, or for some other programmes and activities related to education may bring about development and
expansion of literacy and education. The present study is an attempt to find out the causes of this wastage and to suggest, suitable course of action for better utilization of elementary educational facilities to achieve the goal of universal primary education. Keeping the rational and significance of the present research work in mind; the study was conducted with following objectives.

1.9 General Objectives:

To study causes and characteristics of dropouts.

Specific Objectives:

1. To identify the demographic characteristics of dropout of target areas.

2. To identify personal factors influencing girls and boys to leave school in middle.

3. To highlight other factors giving rise to dropout among boys and girls.

4. To identify characteristics of dropouts.

5. To establish a relationship (if any) between parental and teacher attitude towards school dropout.

1.10 Hypothesis:

1. There is no significant gender difference among school dropouts.

2. There are no significant differences of personal factors and other factors influencing girls and boys to leave school in the middle.

3. There is no relationship between parental and teacher attitude towards school dropouts.