Recommendations
RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the current study, the following recommendations are made in order to improve the health, education and social status of school age children with emphasis on the girl child -

9.1 Health

The prevalence of undernutrition, anemia, vitamin A and niacin deficiency can be reduced by improving the intake of the respective nutrients by way of health education and/or supplementation. The existing programs could be modified to provide supplementation as suggested below:

- The energy supplementation provided by the mid day meal program could be enhanced particularly in the middle and high school levels.
- Vitamin A prophylaxis program (administering 6,00,000 i u of vitamin A in oil every 6 months to children between 1-6 years of age and half the dose to infants between 6 months and one year) can be expanded to include children up to 15 years of age.
- Iron and folic acid supplementation which is currently being given to children up to the age of 12 years should be given to adolescent children also.
- Periodic deworming (i.e. twice a year) could be done by school teachers.
- Health education of the children as regards personal hygiene will reduce the prevalence of dental caries and skin infections.
- Education of the community with respect to etiology, prevention and management of the important health problems in school age children like nutritional and infectious disorders will improve the health status of school age children.
9.2 Education

The following recommendations are made with a view to increase the enrollment rate in children and to reduce the dropout.

- The community should be motivated to get more involved in their children's education by way of frequent interaction with school teachers.
- The education system has to be reviewed and revised, to make it more interesting and suitable to children in a rural area.
- The school authorities should not be very rigid in maintaining discipline. Occasional late coming because of preoccupation with domestic work should be condoned. At the same time parents should also be educated about the importance of punctuality and discipline.
- The school physical infrastructure has to be improved so that children can attend school even during inclement weather conditions.
- Free education should be given to girls upto high school level.
- The incentives that are now given for girls who complete the education should be in such a way that they benefit the girl as well as her family soon after completion of education or as they move from class to class and not several years later.

9.3 Social

The need of the hour is to make the community aware of the necessity to improve the educational status of the girl child. Education takes place not only in school, but also outside it. People should be motivated to permit a greater degree of movement to girls outside their homes. Since the educational status of the girl is also indirectly linked with the financial burden in connection with her marriage, active campaigning must be done to reduce the financial burden. These changes require a gradual change in the attitude of the community towards a girl child and can be brought about only by tireless education of individuals and the community.
9.4 Recommendations for future research

Since this was only a case study in a single village, much more work requires to be done on larger scale before generalising the findings. The research also has to be focused on specific important problems in school age children brought out in the current study like malnutrition, school dropout and educational status of the girl child.

This study has shown that school age children have significant morbidity. Their educational and social status are not satisfactory. Further research is required to see whether intervention in the field of health or improvement in the educational system would substantially alter the outcome. It is also very important to find out the type of intervention to be used at the community and the individual level in order to improve the social status especially the educational status of the girl child.