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SHALA PRAVESHOTSAV- A Successful March of Gujarat

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“Let the campaign of girl child education spread in every home, let the lamp of educating daughters be lit up in every heart, only then will be the vision of Swarnim Gujarat be realized.”

– **Narendra Modi (2009)**

Education is the root of any development; and Gujarat government understood this clearly. In Gujarat, there is an environment of beautiful and decorative schools, attractive classrooms and school building, smiling faces of children with new school kits, bags and uniforms given to them without cost on the first day of school. This day looks like a festival of education. This school festival is called Shala Praveshotsav. It is a statewide drive to welcome newly enrolled students of class-1. The only aim of this drive is to improve the school enrolment ratio in the state. Students seem excited and happy on this first day of their school. Shala Praveshotsav foundation was laid 16 years ago by the then chief minister of Gujarat and present times Honorable Prime Minister of India Shri Narendrabhai Modi. The scenario has dramatically transformed from 2002-2003. So, this sense of celebration started for the better future of primary education in Gujarat. Many years of consistent efforts have good fruits. Almost 99% children in Gujarat are enrolled in primary schools now. Narendra Modi says that school is a temple and that is the responsibility of the society to make sure that every child goes to school and enjoys education. During this campaign government goes out to the doorsteps of the people and urges them to send their little children to school. Government ensuring that children, especially a girl child, goes to school. Government inspires parents and teachers to educate their children. On this day, government urges the people to plant a tree during the Shala Praveshotsav.

Last three years, the novel initiative had a far reaching effect as the state government managed to motivate more parents for sending their children to school. During 2003-2005, the school enrolment ratio increased from 75.07% to 95.70%. This great programme challenged the status-quo and transformed people's perception about education in Gujarat.

While the program managed to improve the school enrolment rates, the drop-out rate stilled posed a challenge for the state government. Various factors including perception towards education, access to school premises, school infrastructure, water and toilet facilities, traditional classes, etc. discouraged children from attending the school. Over the year, the state government has worked on these areas to reduce the drop-outs. Shala Praveshotsav is not just to enroll more children in schools but it also ensures a definite reduction in the drop-out rates. After 15 years of Shala Praveshotsav the drop-out rate of students has been remarkably reduced to below 2%. The drop-out ratio drastically reduced to almost half from 10.16% in 2004-05 to 5.13% in 2005-06.

Since the first drive of Shala Praveshotsav every day of this 3 day drive is celebrated like a festival in the urban and rural areas in Gujarat. The honorable chief Minister, education Minister, Minister of state for Education, cabinet ministers, IAS officers, IPS officers along with a team of dedicated high level officers and ministers supervise and promote this movement. About 3000 officials and office bearers have been working tirelessly every year since last 15 years to accomplish the objective of promoting education. They come out from their air conditioner chambers and see the ground reality of first step of education.

In this current year, Gujarat's Honorable Chief Minister Shri Vijay Rupani inaugurated a seasonal hostel in Poshina Taluko and 50 classrooms in primary schools, during the 16th edition (2018-19) of Shala Praveshotsav. The government covered 32,780 primary schools, 1123 government secondary schools and 5157 grant and middle schools in this year's drive. The rural phase of shala pravesotsav took place on 14th and 15th of june and urban phase took place on 22nd and 23rd of june 2018. During the urban phase the drive Shri Rupani admitted over 100 children in classes 1st and 9th Valsad.

In this programme maximum enrolment in primary schools was not the only task, but to ensure quality education, qualitative school facilities and to improve the education standards. For that the

state government launched “Gunotsav” or “Celebrating Quality” programs. Gunotsav is defined as an accountability framework for quality of primary education which includes learning outcomes of children as well as co-scholastic activities, use of resources and community participation. According to the National Achievement Survey (NAS) conducted by NCERT in government and government aided schools 96% of class of class 8th, enjoyed going to school.

Gujarat has a very diverse socio-economic background of people and thus to cater to the majority of the people of Gujarat, the Government has come up with initiatives like Vidhyalamxmi Yojna (Narmada Bonds), Vidhyadeep Yojna (Students Insurance Policy, Right to Education, Mid-Day Meals, Chief Minister’s Girls Child Development, School Health Check-Up Programme and Computer Training at Primary Level among other to promote education at primary level and also to ensure their safety. These initiatives have granted the children with the gift of education and helped them in building desirable careers.

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