1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education is not only essential for the harmonious development of one’s personality but also for the sustained growth of the nation. Elementary Education in India, therefore, is the foundation on which the development of every citizen and the nation as a whole hinges. Elementary Education is the first stage of compulsory education. It is preceded by pre-school or nursery education and is followed by secondary education. Since independence, the central and state governments have been expanding the provision of primary formal and non-formal education to realize the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). The challenge now is to sustain and deepen the current reforms in education and encourage local planning and management of strategies for expanding and improving elementary education.

Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) is still a distant prospect in substantial part of the world and India is no exception to this. In this direction, the central government and state government, institutions and other organizations have been doing a lot for the progress of elementary education. Still, the achievement in this direction is far away from the goals set for universalisation of elementary education. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002 made education a fundamental right for children in the age group of six to fourteen years, as Right of children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 received assent of President of India on 26th August, 2009 which has been implemented w. e. f. 1st April, 2010 including Haryana State.
1.1 UNIVERSALISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (UEE)

The role of education in the context of social and economic progress is well recognized. It opens up opportunities leading to both individual and social development. Education, in its broadest sense of development of youth, is the most crucial input for empowering with skills and knowledge and giving them access to productive employment in future. Education is not only expected to enhance efficiency but also improves the overall quality of life. The eleventh five year plan places highest priority on education as a central instrument for achieving rapid and inclusive growth. It presents a comprehensive strategy for strengthening the education sector covering all segments of the education pyramid.

Elementary education is the foundation of the pyramid of the education system and has received a major push through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). SSA has been the single largest holistic programme addressing all aspects of elementary education covering over one million elementary schools and education guarantee scheme/Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) centres and about 20 crore children.

Elementary Education plays an important role in developing the cultural, social, physical, moral, intellectual, emotional and spiritual aspects of child’s personality. To achieve the objective of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) various efforts are being made by Government of India. Formerly, Ministry of Education (now designated as Ministry of Human Resource Development) set up a working group on Universalisation of Elementary Education which submitted its report in September, 1977. The working group realized the difficulty of enrolling
the large number of non-school children in formal system and recommended the alternative of non formal education in the country. It was on 30th June, 1978 that the Central Ministry of Education circulated the Scheme of non-formal Education. In this Scheme, the role of different organizations was also identified to provide guidance expertise to the States in implementing this programme. But this directive stayed on paper without giving any directions. Though, our intention, to make this possible, is healthy, yet the implementation aspect got bogged down due to a number of reasons. We have been extending the years of completion of this scheme from time to time. But, now a need is felt to think about some alternatives, so that the objectives can be achieved at the earliest.

1.1.1 MAJOR GOALS OF UEE

Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) is one of the most important goals of educational development in India since independence.

At the time of independence, India’s primary education was characterized by the historical inequalities. Though Article 45 of the Directive Principles of the State Policy is committed to ensure free and compulsory education for all, this did not significantly translate into action and school enrolments and participation remained dismally low for decades after independence. But at present it is pertinent to mention that for Article 45 of the Constitute. The following article shall be substituted namely: “45 The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of years.” Further, in Article 51A of the Constitution, after clause (j), the following clause shall be added namely: “(k) who is a parents or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.”(The Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II-Section I, Ministry of Law and Justice, 86th
Amendment, Act,2002). However, the picture of elementary education in rural India began to change rapidly due to the new thrusts given by the government’s National Policy of Education-1986 and the revised Programme of Action-1992, which aimed at improving access, reducing drop outs and improving learning achievements for all children between 6-14 years of age. Elementary education which has been considered as a fundamental right by the 83rd Constitutional Amendment is expected to improve the enrolment in primary schools. But, still a lot of efforts are needed in the direction as follows:

i) Universal Access:
   a) Universal enrolment of all children including girls and persons belonging to SC/ST.
   b) Provision of primary school for all children within one kilometre.
   c) Improvement of ratio of primary school to upper primary school from the existing 1:4 to 1:2, this being a pre-condition for larger opportunity for widening girl participation at upper primary stage.

ii) Universal Retention:
   a) Reduction of drop-out rate at elementary school stage.
   b) Improvement of school facilities at elementary school stage.

iii) Universal Attainment:
   a) Achievement of minimum level of learning by all children at the primary level, and introduction of this concept at the upper primary stage on large scale.

iv) Universal Monitoring:
   a) Local level committee, with due representation to women and teachers, to assist in the working of primary education to oversee its functioning.
b) Improvement of the monitoring system for UEE to see the achievement of the above mentioned goals.

In order to achieve the goal of universalisation of Elementary Education, there have also been launched District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in our country.

1.2 DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DPEP)

The Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE) compiled the revision of the National Policy on Education (1986) in 1992 calling for an integrated approach to primary education department focused on district level. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) is based on the national experience with the pursuit of UEE has established even in those states where participation is near Universalisation.

POA, 1992 explains that “further efforts would be made to develop district specific projects with specific activities clearly defined responsibilities definite schedule and specific targets. Each district project will be prepared with major strategy frame work and will be tailored to specific needs and possibilities in the district apart from UEE. The goal of each project access the provision of alternative systems of comparable standards to the disadvantaged groups, substantial improvement in the quality of schooling facilities, obtaining a genuine community involvement in running of a school and building up of local level capacity to ensure effective decentralization of educational planning primary education as a whole in selected districts instead of piecemeal implementation of schemes. An inter-related approach is more likely to achieve synergies, among different programme components.”
The DPEP is managed at national level by newly created DPEP bureau in Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). The bureau serves as financial and technical intermediary, appraising, monitoring and supervising state and district action programmes. The DPEP finances 85% of state and district expenditure with the bonus provided by the state budgets on the basis of seven years district and state plans indicators of learning achievements and dropouts are monitored every three years against base line established for each SCERT and such organizations attached to education departments and other state level organizations will participate to achieve the full coverage of districts for lower primary education, it could expand to cover upper primary level.

1.2.1 MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF DPEP

- To reduce differences in enrolment, dropout and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than five percent.
- To reduce overall primary dropout rate for all students to less than 10 percent.
- To raise average achievement levels by at least 25 per cent over measured baseline levels and answering achievement of basic literacy competencies and a minimum of 40 per cent achievement level in other competencies, by all primary school children.
- To provide, according to national norms, access for all children, to primary education classes (I-V), i.e. primary schooling wherever possible, or its equivalent non-formal education.
- To strengthen the state and district capacities for planning, management and evaluation of primary education.
1.2.2 MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF DPEP

- More than 1, 60,000 new schools had been opened including almost 84,000 Alternative Schooling (AS) centres under DPEP in the country. The AS centres covered nearly 3.5 million children, while another two lacs children were covered by Bridge Courses;

- The school infrastructure created under DPEP has been remarkable. Work either completed or in progress included 52758 school buildings, 58,604 additional classrooms, 16,619 resource centres, 29,307 repair works, 64,592 toilets, and 24,909 drinking water facilities;

- The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for Phase-I states was around 93 to 95 per cent for the last three years. After the adjustment for the Alternative Schools/Education Guarantee Centres enrolment, the GER in the 2001-2002 work was above 100 per cent. In the districts covered under subsequent phases of DPEP, the GER including enrolment of AS/EGS was above 85 per cent;

- The enrolment of girls has shown significant improvement. In DPEP-I districts, the share of girls enrolment in relation to total enrolment has increased from 48 per cent to 49 per cent, while this increase in the subsequent phases of DPEP districts has been from 46 per cent to 47 per cent;

- The total number of differently-abled children enrolled is now more than 4,20,203 which represents almost 76 per cent of the nearly 5,53,844 differently-abled children identified in the DPEP States;
➤ Village Education Committees/School Management Committees have been setup in almost all project villages/habitations/schools;
➤ About 1,77,000 teachers, including para-teachers/Shiksha Karmees have been appointed;
➤ About 3,380 resource centres at block level and 29,725 centres at cluster level have been set-up for providing academic support and teacher training facilities.

1.3 SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA)

In 2000, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) has been extended to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a historic stride and the comprehensive and integrated flagship programme of Govt. of India towards achieving the long cherished goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) through a time bound integrated approach, in partnership with State. During the year 2000, there was a conscious effort towards convergence of programmes and approaches concerning realization of the goals of ‘Education for All’- the country has launched the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. This provides the umbrella under which all the programmes pertaining to Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) have been merged. SSA, which promises to change the face of the elementary education sector of the country, aims to provide useful and quality elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age groups by 2010. Firstly, it was implemented up to year 2010 but now it has been extended up to year 2020.

The SSA is an effort to recognize the need for improving the performance of the school system and to provide community owned quality elementary education in mission mode. It also envisages bridging of gender and social gaps.
1.3.1 OBJECTIVES OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

i) All children to be in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternative School, “back to School campus” by 2003.

ii) All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.

iii) All children complete eight years of schooling by 2010.

iv) Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.

v) Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.

vi) Universal retention by 2010.

1.3.2 COMPONENTS OF SSA

The components of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan includes appointment of teachers, teacher training, qualitative improvement of elementary education, provision of teaching learning materials, establishment of Block and Cluster Resource Centres for academic support, construction of classrooms and school buildings, establishment of education guarantee centres, integrated education of the disabled and distance education.

NFE and Alternative Schooling (AS) now form important components of SSA. The Government policy emphasizes the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) would continue to have three components as in the earlier NFE scheme.

- State run EGS Schools or a variety of back to alternative schools, back to school run by voluntary agencies.

- Experimental projects for innovative pedagogical strategies run by VA’s.
The EGS and AIE’s would form part of the SSA. Under SSA, every district would prepare a district elementary education plan. This would include a range of interventions for school improvement in regular schools, ECE along with intervention for education of out-of-school children (SSA, MHRD document, 2001).

Educational scenario in the coming years will provide us clear indication about how far we are from the cherished goal of education for all- quality education for all. Much of it depends upon effective convergence of Non-Formal Education (NFE), Alternative Schooling (AS), Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE). As it transpires Alternative Schooling (AS) is an evolving concept still in the formative stage.

Keeping in view the existing conditions of our country, Non-Formal Education (NFE) system has also been considered very essential particularly in case of such categories of children who can not be benefited through existing system of Formal Education due to their varied problems and limitations which do not allow them to attend the formal school system as regular and full time basis.

1.4 NON-FORMAL EDUCATION (NFE)

In the present time, education is a birth right of everyone because it imparts knowledge, develops various skills, inculcates values and above all it promotes the overall personality of human being. The Non-Formal Education (NFE) system is considered as the complementary of the formal education system as it provides the opportunity for a particular subgroup in the population. The large portion of India’s population is poor, living in both rural and urban areas in pathetic conditions. As a result, a large number of children living in villages, urban slums and inaccessible areas could not join the formal school, due to various
reasons. Thus the Non-Formal Education (NFE) may prove beneficial for this subgroup to improve quality of their life. Hence in 1978 Government of India brought forth a new model of education in the name of Non-Formal Education (NFE). The aims of NFE were to bring the dropouts and non school going children in main stream of education.

Non-Formal Education (NFE) is a tool for social rather than personal or economic development. In other words non-formal approach is an innovation. It is an alternative to the formal system. It is a functional arrangement designed to succeed. In the absence of any rigid programme where teacher could be drafted from any walk of life both in approach and content, it is an innovation of highest order.

Non-Formal Education (NFE) system has certain facilities which are unique to it. The most important is that of time, school hours and holidays can be according to local needs. A Non-Formal Education (NFE) centre does not need a separate building. They may be organized at public places, school buildings or any other space provided by benevolent citizens. These centres can use the facilities available with the local schools. The formal school teacher can also act as an instructor/facilitator in NFE Centres. The rules regarding admissions, attendance are not applicable to the NFE Centres as these are applicable to the formal education system. The instructor has the freedom of adjusting convenient sequences and periodically to speed up the progress of the students. The students are not compelled to finish the course within a rigid time limit.

Non-Formal Education (NFE) in India has been conceived as an out of school programme for the achievement of objectives of Universal Elementary Education (UEE) and therefore, has a limited coverage in comparison to International concept which includes Continuing Education, Adult Education, Distance Education and the like. There is a great emphasis on equivalence with the formal schooling at primary and
middle level. The result is that in most cases the Non-Formal Education Programme (NFEP) happens to be “short duration outside school hour’s school”. In our zeal to achieve the Universal Elementary Education (UEE), the basic characteristics of NFE are - specific, local specific; answering the need of the particular community is thrown in to background. Today Non-Formal Education (NFE) has little coordination with development programmes like Community Development, Agriculture Extension, Health Education Extension, Integrated Child Development Scheme, Indian Rural Development Programme etc. Ideally this should have been so much integrated with these that Non-Formal Education should have been an essential component of the package.

The Programme of Action (POA, 1992) outlined strategies for strengthening of the NFE scheme including:

- Setting up NFE centres based on a micro-planning exercise carried out for UEE.
- Central role for community by involving them in setting up of the centre, identification of the instructor and supervision of the NFE centre.
- Efforts to evolve different models of NFE programme for different target groups.
- Adequate training and orientation of NFE instructors. 30 days initial training of instructors and 20 days in subsequent years etc.
- Linkage with the formal school to facilitate lateral entry of the learners from the NFE stream.
- Efforts to link non-formal courses with formal schools.
- Adoption of learner-centred approach. The learning levels for the learners to be equivalent to the formal system.
The NFE centres function for two hours daily at a time suitable for learners. But in many states the centres have functioned in the evening and night to accommodate children who are working during the day. The NFE Scheme did advocate flexibility in various aspects of running of the centre but the manner of its implementation resulted in a uniformity and rigidity almost across the country. Certain states like Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh could not implement modified approaches which had been worked out by them within the existing NFE scheme. A large number of NFE centres were set up in habitations which had formal schools and therefore the target of small and scattered SC and ST habitations without schools, did not receive a high priority.

Clearly, in its present form the NFE Scheme could not ensure quality primary education for out of school children and the objectives and measures outlined in the NPE and POA (1992) could not be adequately met.

1.4.1 PRESENT SCENARIO OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

As we know that universal access, universal participation and universal achievement for Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has not been achieved. One of the main reasons for this failure has also been high dropout rate of the children before reaching class 5th. A large number of children living in villages, urban slums, hilly and inaccessible areas could not join the formal schools, due to various reasons. Some of the major weaknesses of NFE are managerial lacunae, delay in disbursing honorarium, delay in supplying materials and location of centres not need based. Besides there are some conceptual limitations in NFE, such as completing primary education curriculum in two years providing instruction 2-3 hours daily. These weaknesses need to be tackled from two fronts by improving existing NFE system and by developing a new Alternative Schooling (AS) design which avoid the conceptual weakness inherent in NFE. In this context a new concept of
Non-Formal Education (NFE) was emerged as an alternative approach to formal education to achieve the goal of UEE. NPE-1986 and POA-1992 envisaged a large and systematic programme of Non Formal Education (NFE) for habitations without school, dropouts, working children and especially for girls who cannot be offered full time for regular/formal education.

1.5 EDUCATION GUARANTEE SCHEME (EGS) AND ALTERNATIVE AND INNOVATIVE EDUCATION (AIE)

EGS and AIE are two major components of SSA to bring all the out-of-school children in the fold of elementary education. The scheme envisages that child-wise planning is undertaken for each out-of-school children. EGS addresses the inaccessible habitation where there is no formal school within the radius of one km and at least 15-25 children of 6-14 years age group those are not going to school are available. In exceptional cases remote habitations in hilly areas even for 10 children an EGS school can be opened. Alternative Education interventions for specific categories of very deprived children e.g., child labour, street children, migrating children, working children, children living in difficult circumstances and older children in the 9+ age group especially adolescent girls are being supported under EGS and AIE all over the country. A sizeable number of out-of-school children are in the habitations where schooling facility is available but these children either did not join the school or dropped out before completing their schooling. These children may not fit into the rigid formal system. To bring such children back to school; back to school camp and Bridge Courses strategies have been implemented. Bridge courses and Back to school camps can be residential or non-residential depending upon the need of children.
1.5.1 SALIENT FEATURES OF EGS and AIE

EGS and AIE are based on the assumption that the planning for universalisation of elementary education (UEE) for all children in the 6-14 years age group should be done in a holistic manner. In most states, the planning for NFE for ‘out of school’ children have followed a ‘parallel track’ approach to formal system. The only option for these children is part time non formal education. The EGS and AIE clearly states that every district should initially target enrolment of all children in the age of 6-8 years in formal school only. For elder children (9-11 years), the efforts should be towards mainstreaming through appropriate interventions. For the children of age group 12-14 years, who never been enrolled and certain difficult group like street children cannot be admitted to formal schools and would require alternative interventions for some time. The EGS and AIE would form a part of SSA. Under SSA every district would prepare a DPEP which would include a range interventions for school improvement, incentive for children, recruitment of teachers, quality improvement in regular schools etc. along with interventions for ensuring education for ‘out of school’ children.

For the preparation of proposals under EGS and AIE, conduct of micro planning exercises including house to house surveys, and evidence of demand from the community would be a pre-requisite. Based on this demand, the state would ensure setting up of the EGS schools, if the demand is found valid as per norms and within a reasonable period to be decided by individual state governments.

The state level society appraises and approves these district levels proposals/ demand under EGS and AIE and also include proposals for state run schools/centres and VA projects. The funds for EGS and AIE would be shared on 75:25 bases between the central and state
governments for all state run schools. VA proposals would also be approved by the grand-in-aid committee of the state society and would receive 100% grants. The state society would have the power to approve all proposals which have centre costs within an overall ceiling of Rs. 845/- per child per annum at primary level and 1200/- per child per annum at upper primary level and it should not form more than 15% of the overall budget allocation for a particular year. As one of the first steps, the state government will need to sign an MOU with the Department of Elementary Education and literacy, Government of India. After that funds from govt. of India for state and VA projects would be transferred to a state level society identified for the implementation of the scheme.

1.5.2 EGS and AIE SUPPORTS DIVERSIFIED STRATEGIES FOR OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

i) There is great heterogeneity among ‘out of school’ children. Out of school children belong to remote school-less habitations, working children, street children, deprived children in urban slums, bonded child labourers, children of sex workers, girls belonging to the minority community, girls involved in domestic chores or sibling care, children who are engaged in cattle grazing etc. This heterogeneity demands diversified approaches and strategies for their education.

ii) EGS and AIE would support the following 3 broad kinds of strategies: a) Setting up of schools in school-less habitations (EGS) b) Interventions for mainstreaming of ‘out of school’ children viz. bridge courses, back to school camps etc. c) Strategies for very specific, difficult groups of children who cannot be mainstreamed.
iii) Children in remote, school-less habitation: Alternative schools are opened in school-less habitations not having a school within 1 km with at least 15 children of 6-14 years of age not enrolled at school. These are single teacher schools with an education volunteer from the same habitation.

iv) Strategies for education of children who migrate:
   a) Seasonal community hostels with arrangement for boarding, lodging, coaching and care of children who stay back and continue in schools when the parents migrate (DPEP Andhra Pradesh)
   b) Provision of a mobile teacher along with the migrating families and children.
   c) Setting up of a school at the site of migration (Sugar schools, Brick kiln schools in Maharashtra; salt farms schools in Gujarat).
   d) Organising condensed, bridging courses for children on their return to their village to make up for the schooling time lost during the period of migration (Vocational course in Gujarat).

v) Support to Maktabs / Madrasas in a variety of ways to provide Non-Formal Education (NFE). In cases where children are only receiving religious teaching or Dine-e-Taleem in these institutions, arrangements are made to provide an additional teacher who will transact the formal school curriculum. Wherever possible, children should be mainstreamed into the formal school system.

vi) Bridge Courses / Back to School Camps: These strategies support mainstreaming of children into formal schools. Through
bridge courses ‘out of school’ children are trained up to age-appropriate competency levels through condensed courses followed by their admission into appropriate grades in the formal school. The duration of the bridge course is depending on the age of the children and their prior education. The bridge courses can be residential or non-residential, can be organised in the community or as part of the regular school itself. Several other VAs like Pratham (Mumbai and other cities), CINI-ASHA (Calcutta) are also implementing bridge courses. The government of Andhra Pradesh runs a large ‘back to school’ programme for elder children. Under DPEP, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat are implementing a large number of bridge courses.

vii) Very specific, flexible strategies for certain groups of children e.g. street children, children of sex workers, children on railway platforms, children living in slums, children living on construction sites, children working in shops, dhabas, mechanic shops, as coolies, as domestic workers, in juvenile homes, children whose parents are in jails etc. The strategies can be bridge courses, remedial teaching centres, residential camps, drop-in-centres, half-way homes etc. Strategies for such groups can also include contact based activities e.g. outreach workers to establish rapport with the children, a counsellor to provide emotional support and a doctor to cater to their health need.

viii) Long duration residential camps for elder out of school children: These can be of 12-24 months duration that helps children of ages 12-14 years to complete primary / upper primary education at the camp itself. Balika Shikshan Shivir of Lok Jumbish, Mahila Shikshan Kendras under Mahila Samakhya and several other VA initiatives have implemented
this approach. Since such camp would have high per child costs, they should be adopted sparingly in deserving cases.

ix) Remedial teaching: The scheme allows for the following two kinds of interventions:-

a) For children mainstreamed into formal schools from bridge courses/camps/back to school strategies.

b) Remedial teaching for children in formal schools.

➢ It will includes the proposals from districts with female literacy rates below the national average as per the 1991 census is eligible.

➢ Preference is given to schools in tribal areas, in areas with high concentration of SC and ST population and minority communities.

➢ A district may prepare to cover not more than 5% of the total number of schools in that district (excluding schools located in urban slums). In addition 10% of the schools located in urban slums can also be covered.

These centres are operational before or after school hours for less than 4 hours duration. The EV for these centres is paid an honorarium commensurate to the number of hours the centre is operational.

10. Short duration summer camps or schools to motivate children in the age group of 6-8 years to enroll in schools or even for remedial teaching prior to start of a new school session. Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have conducted such summer schools / camps.

12. Several other strategies may be required depending on the specific target group. EGS and AIE encourages diversified strategies. It should be recognized that some of these strategies require extensive community
mobilization and prior work at the grass root level with parents, children, community, employers, school Education Volunteers etc.

Besides these all, there was a problem to implement the programme in the remote areas. Many children were remained deprived of education in various parts of the country due to their unusual life styles, hardworking and adverse life conditions, e.g., child labour, street children, migrating children, working children, children living in difficult circumstances and older children in the 9+ age group especially adolescent girls are being supported under EGS (Education Guarantee Scheme) and AIE (Alternative Innovative Education) all over the country. To educate these all deprived sections of the society the concept of Alternative Education came in existence which accelerated the mission of UEE. SSA made provisions to educate these deprived sections. The concept is called as Alternative Schooling.

1.6 ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING (AS): A NEW INTERVENTION

As alternative schools began to appear in the late 1960s in the United States, similar development was occurring around the globe. Jerry Mintz's book The Handbook of Alternative Education (1996) identified alternative schooling in twenty-three nations representing the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Russia, Asia, Australia, Micronesia, and the West Indies. Canada, with 114 programs reported throughout its provinces, clearly held the largest number, as most other countries reported five or fewer programs. Most of the programs identified represented the categories of independent, Montessori, Waldorf, open/choice programs, and schools for at-risk students. While the handbook represents the most recent source for documenting the existence of international alternative schools, many schools undoubtedly were not identified. Denmark, for example, has hundreds of Tvind
alternative public schools, and other nations, such as Hong Kong, Brazil, Japan, Russia, and Australia have multiple examples of alternative schools.

In 1970, there were only a few alternative schools in operation in the United States. They originated to serve a growing population of students who were not experiencing success in the traditional schools. Today there are thousands, and the number continues to grow. The term "alternative" is now used to describe nearly every type of school imaginable, but many share certain distinguishing characteristics:

- Small size
- Close student-teacher relationship
- Student decision-making
- Diverse curriculum
- Peer guidance and Parental involvement

This type of school is intended to accommodate students who are considered at risk of failing academically (These students are referred as at-risk students), for one or more of any several reasons such as challenging behaviour; or a school with special remedial programs for students with emotional disabilities. Alternative school is closely associated to a special school however it allows more flexibility.

Alternative Schooling (AS) has been proposed in DPEP as a major intervention for bringing children within educational areas that are not able to participate in formal schooling for a variety of reasons such as being engaged in household activities, working for wages, migration and dwelling in remote inaccessible areas/school habitations. As pointed out earlier, due to major lacunae in NFE these children are also out of NFE system. In response to the learning needs of children who still remain out of school either from formal system or non-formal system an innovative
idea of Alternative Schooling has emerged. However, the schools in that timeframe were mostly designed to serve students who had already dropped out of regular schools. These schools and programme were the primary “dropout prevention programme” of four decades ago. Educational leaders soon found out that the strategy had little effect on the dropout rate and the type of alternative school tended to be discontinued as district budget began to shrink in 1970s. The most common alternative school operating today to serve the youth in at risk situations is designed to be a part of a school district’s comprehensive dropout programme. The alternative school is usually a part of the middle or high school programme offered to secondary aged students. The students attending these schools typically are underachieving and usually are deficient in credits to graduate or to be with their same age students. Yet, they desire to stay in the school and gain their diplomas. In many communities these alternative schools offer unique parenting programme with special opportunities for teenage mothers desiring to graduate from high school, but unable to attend the traditional high school.

1.6.1 EMERGENCE OF TERM ‘ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING’

Today the issues concerning provision of educational programmes to unserved area and meeting the widely divergent learning needs of different categories of learners have sharpened. There is a greater demand to evolve a variety of innovative designs based on open learning approaches so that all the different categories of “out-of-school” children can get opportunity to avail good quality educational opportunity. The focus of this delivery system is to provide more flexibility in the educational content and process to promote the diversity. Close linkage with community in planning as well as programme implementation at the grass root level and decentralization of management are some of essential
ingredients of management Alternate Schooling (AS) programme has a
district delivery system which is different from either Formal Education
(FE) or Non-Formal Education (NFE). In fact the term ‘Alternative
Schooling’ came to stay because of different perceptions of the term ‘Non
Formal Education’ in Western world and India. Today a number of
Alternative Schooling (AS) centres have increased immensely under the
District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) interventions.

1.6.2 NCERT’S CONTRIBUTION IN EVOLVING THE CONCEPT
OF ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING (AS)

From the very beginning, the major thrust areas of NCERT had been
formulation of strategies and programmes for the education of
socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged children. The
priority areas of the National Institute of Basic Education, Department of
School Education, Department of Non Formal Education and SC/ST as
well as Department of Non Formal Education and Alternative Schooling
(AS) were education for children in remote areas, girl’s education, and
education for children belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled
Tribes communities. The priority programmes of NCERT in this sector
continued to remain education of children in urban slum areas, girls
education and those coming from far flung areas not being served by any
school. Evolving integrated curriculum and materials for ungraded school
system, preparation of semester wise learning materials and support
materials for NFE functionaries and giving academic support to
Alternative Schooling programmes had been some of the important areas
of the concern of the NCERT.
1.6.3 PURPOSE OF ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING

Alternative schools came into existence in the 1970s to meet the needs of children and adolescents who cannot learn effectively in a traditional school environment (i.e., conventional public or parochial schools) due to learning disabilities, certain medical conditions, psychological and behavioural issues, or advanced skills. In general, alternative schools have more comprehensive educational and developmental objectives than conventional schools. They often have curriculum elements that focus on improving student self-esteem, fostering growth of individuality, and enhancing social skills. Alternative schools are more flexible in their organization and administration, which allows for more variety in educational programs.

Once available primarily for disruptive students and those at risk for dropping out of a traditional school environment, alternative schools have expanded significantly in function as educators, parents, and wider communities recognize that many children cannot learn effectively in a traditional school environment. For children and adolescents with psychological and behavioural issues, such as personality disorder, substance use and abuse, depression, and violence, alternative schools can provide a safer therapeutic environment and more individualized attention than traditional schools. For children and adolescents with learning disabilities and certain medical conditions, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, and Asperger’s syndrome, alternative schools can provide integrated education and clinical services in one place to facilitate learning. Alternative school structure and curriculum varies depending on the educational goals and desired student population. Alternative schools may be available and accessible locally or may require additional daily travel or boarding by the student. Usually,
local alternatives to public schools do not require tuition, while private schools do require parents to pay tuition for student attendance.

### 1.6.4 TYPES OF ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Alternative schools are categorised into various types in India and abroad. Some of the categories are given as below:

- **Alternative or optional schools:** A wide variety of established alternative schools serve all levels and kinds of students. These schools range from programs for at-risk, expelled, and violent students to schools for the exceptionally gifted and talented. Many alternative or optional schools serve heterogeneous student bodies with average achievement and behaviour characteristics.

- **Charter schools:** As of 2001 these schools had been approved by legislatures in thirty-eight states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Charter schools exchange many of the rules and regulations of public education for the opportunity to operate with autonomy to demonstrate student achievement.

- **Contract schools:** School districts "contract" with an organization or group (usually private) to provide public education services. Examples of these schools include schools to teach disruptive and/or suspended students, programs to supplement reading services, and in some cases actually contracting out the entire administrative and/or educational operation of a school district.

- **Home schools:** Since the 1970s there has been a dramatic growth in the home schooling of K-12 students. Most states require public schools to offer a variety of services, courses, and programs to home-schooled students.

- **Bridge Courses/Back to School Camps:** These strategies support mainstreaming of children into formal schools. Through bridge
courses ‘out of school’ children are trained up to age-appropriate competency levels through condensed courses followed by their admission into appropriate grades in the formal school. The duration of the bridge course is depending on the age of the children and their prior education. The bridge courses can be residential or non-residential, can be organised in the community or as part of the regular school itself.

➢ Brick –Kiln schools: In India many children living in a scattered form on the brick- kilns. They live with their families helping them in their work and deprived of education. Some schools were set up in India to educate such children on their working place called as Brick-Kiln schools.

Each of these school/program types are represented by established, successful working models. These programs serve as the benchmarks of effective practice in alternative schooling. Alternative Schools are running all over the world. In India these schools are known by different names in every State. In Haryana, these schools are running as Bhatha Pathshalas (Brick- Kiln Schools) as an innovative approach under SSA to cover the children of those Brick-Kiln labourers/workers, for their education, on the worksite i.e. Bhathas.

1.6.5 VARIOUS FUNCTIONARIES OF ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING (AS)

i) District Level Organization:

It is expected that the administrative arrangements for SSA at district level would also cover EGS and AIE. There is a district Advisory Committee headed by the District Collector or the Chief Executive Officer of Zila Parishad as the State Government decides. Representatives
of VAs, Representatives of DIETs, Project Officers of EGS and AIE, education volunteers etc. may be the members of the committee. This committee reviews and guides the implementation of the programme and interacts with other social sector departments and agencies to find maximum areas of convergence. The consolidation of the results of micro planning exercises also have to be done in one place to provide a comprehensive picture of all children who are currently enrolled in schools and those who are not going to schools.

**ii) District Elementary Education Officers (DEEO/DPC):**

District Elementary Education Officers act as the District Project Coordinators (DPCs). They perform the various functions at district level e.g.

a) Consolidation of plans of EGS and AIE received from the BRCs.

b) Analysis of micro planning results received from BRC’s and CRCs. Monitoring and supervision working of BRC’s and CRCs.

c) Undertaking the visits as per norms.

d) Conduct, review and planning meetings of BRCs.

e) Organizing training programmes, maintaining close liaisons with DIET’s, NGOs, District Administration and school system.

f) Supervising the work of VAs running EGS and AIE centres in the district.

**iii) Assistant Project Coordinators (APCs):**

The Assistant Project Coordinators (APCs) may be appointed to support the DPCs at the district level. The number of the APCs may be more than one as per the requirement of the project in the district. Staff recommended at District Level Administration:
➢ Assistant Project Coordinators.
➢ One SO.
➢ One Accountant.
➢ Two clerks.
➢ Two Class IV Employees.

iv) **Block Resource Co-ordinator (BRC)/BEO:**

Block Resource Centre is the most important place where all the activity of SSA is evolved, implemented and monitored. Block Resource Coordinator is the nucleus of all the SSA activities. He would be responsible for all UEE activities including the EGS and AIE centres. A Block Resource Group (BRG) may also be constituted to support the scheme at the block level. In all blocks of every district BRCs buildings are constructed. Various training Programmes are also organized for the teachers and field functionaries. Several meetings are also organized at BRCs. The BRCs are responsible for the following functions:

➢ Consolidation of plans of EGS and AIE received from the panchayats.
➢ Analysis of micro planning results received from VEC’s and panchayats. Monitoring and supervision working of CRCs periodic visits to the centres.
➢ Conduct, review and planning meetings of CRCs.
➢ Organizing training programmes, maintaining close liaisons with DIET’s, NGOs, District Administration and school system.
➢ Supervising the work of VAs running EGS and AIE centres in the block.
v) Assistant Block Resource Coordinators (ABRCs)

The necessity of providing constant technical resource support to teachers at the school level has been strongly felt. Providing academic support to the schools and teachers, VEC/PTA/MTA, ABRCs are appointed after getting the written test by the State Project Office. Selected ABRC are lecturers, Masters and JBT Teachers. Training to the ABRCs is provided by the State Project Office, SIEMT Bhiwani, SCERT Gurgaon and DPIU. The capacity of these ABRC’s is also been developed by organizing various seminars, training, workshops and field interactions.

vi) Cluster Resource Coordinators (CRCs):

A cluster comprises of 20 EGS and AIE centres/Bridge courses camps. The cluster resource coordinator is responsible for:

a) Undertaking the visits as per norms.
b) Liaison with Gram Panchayat/VEC’s.
c) Ensuring timely payment of honorarium to education volunteers.
d) Ensuring delivery and replacements of teaching-learning material.
e) Consolidation and analysis of habitation-wise, micro planning results.
f) Organizing two day monthly meeting with education volunteers for academic review and planning.

vii) Village Education Committee (VEC):

Village Education Committees in the state were constituted under DPEP initially in four districts i.e. in Hisar, Kurukshetra, Jind and Sirsa. The structure of VEC is as under;

In all 12 members, 6 male and 6 female members were selected by the head teacher of primary school in village and the members from each
group was Gram Sachiv/Sevika. These may be Parent –teacher association (2), Anganwari worker (1), Leather worker (1), Mahila Mandal (1), Lady Teacher (1), Head of the School (1), Gram Sabha (3), Gram Sachiv/Sevika (1), Social Worker (1).

viii) Main Functions Of Village Education Committee (VEC)

a) To help enroll and remain out of school children in the group 6-14 years by establishing contact with the parents particularly of non attending children for regularly sending their wards to school.

b) Mass mobilization ensuring participation and involvement of local community in the education process.

c) To help bring about an all round educational development of village.

d) To assist in maintaining discipline and quality of education in school.

e) To help conduct survey of the educational needs of the village with a view to provide schooling facilities where needed.

f) To help providing necessary infrastructural facilities including building, equipments, furniture, teaching-learning materials, drinking water, sanitary facilities and play grounds.

g) To bring the problems of school to the notice of the educational authority and suggesting their solutions.

h) To assist and cooperate with all types of the educational institutes in the village for their smooth and effective functioning.

i) To assist and cooperate in any other educational activities/school building activities.
Now School Management Committees (SMCs) have been constituted for elementary schools under RTE Act, 2009 in place of VECs. 75 per cent of the strength of the SMC shall be from amongst parents or guardians of children studying in school. The remaining 25 per cent of the strength of the SMC shall be from the elected members of the municipality or gram panchayat, teachers from the school and local educationists to be decided by the parents or guardians of the children.

The School Management Committee shall perform the following functions, namely:

a) Monitor the working of the school

b) Prepare and recommend school development plan

c) Monitor the utilisation of the grants received from the appropriate Government or local authority or any other source.

d) Perform such other functions as may be prescribed.

1.6.6 DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING

i) **Access:** Presently all Alternative schools/Bhatha Pathshala are running in Bhathas. These Bhathas are at the distance of 20-40 K.M. from district head quarters and 5-15 K.M. from block. Even the Bhathas are out sides the villages. Therefore, Bhatha Pathshalas are opened in Bhathas for easy access to children.

ii) **Duration:** Bhatha-Pathshalas are generally approved for 6 months; however, duration of these may be reduced or increased depending upon the duration of stay of migratory children on a particular brick-kiln. Time-table of Bhatha-Pathshalas is fixed for 4-6 hours per day and six days in a week except Govt. holidays and Sundays.
iii) **Enrolment and Curriculum:** One of the important objectives of Alternative schooling/ Bhatha Pathshala under SSA is to bridge the educational gap between the children of same age group enrolled in regular schools and those out of school. All the dropouts/out of school children/migrants are enrolled into the Alternative schools. Children enrolled in Bhatha-pathshalas are imparted educational skills commensurate to their respective age groups. Children in Bhatha-pathshlas are of different age group (between 6-14 years) so different methods are used to educate them suitable to their level. As far as learning material is concerned bridging is pre-requisite of it. The curriculum is designed according to the level of students.

iv) **Admissible Grants:** Grant for Alternative Schools is not fixed. This is changed every year according to the requirement of alternative schools for establishing and running every Bhatha-Pathshala enrolling 25 children for 6 months. In case the duration/tenure of any Bhatha-Pathshala is extended by the Department, only honorarium of Instructor would be admissible to the NGOs. In case children to be enrolled in a Bhatha-Pathshala are less than 25, TLM (Teaching-Learning Material) is granted with respect to number of children. Similarly, if children enrolled in a Bhatha-Pathshala are more than 25, TLM would be granted only for the number of children who are in excess of 25. Actual rent of the location, if required, would be admissible to a maximum of Rs. 900/- per month.

v) **Mainstreaming:** The ultimate aim of Alternative Schools is to shift the children to the mainstream those who are either out of schools or drop outs. It is targeted towards the 100 per cent enrolment of these children in to mainstreaming. However, these
schools are run by the Non Governmental Organization/Voluntary Agency. These are strictly directed to ensure mainstreaming of at least 30 per cent of the total enrolled children in the formal schools at their native places/places of their ordinary residence or any other suitable schooling facility. It required follow up of the children and liaison with their parents and Education Department of the sending states/districts.

1.7 ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING (AS) IN HARYANA

Haryana is one of the most progressive states of Indian Union. It came into existence on November 1, 1966 on reorganization of the erstwhile state of Punjab. It has managed to make a mark for itself in all fields of human endeavour. Haryana has made rapid strides in the field of education, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Elementary education in Haryana, is directed by the Director of Elementary Education. There has been phenomenal growth in number of schools, enrolment of students, and number of teachers at elementary level.

The scheme of alternative schooling was launched in March, 1997 by opening 94 alternative schooling centres in DPEP implemented Districts in Haryana. Now a strong network of alternative schooling has been established in DPEP implemented districts for the children those who have either dropped out or have never attended the school. So for 1105 alternative schooling centres have been set up in 7 DPEP Districts and 24483 students are enrolled in these centres. Now the AIE scheme of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) covers all seasonal migratory children in the 6-14 age-group residing on the premises of brick-kilns with their parents. During 2009-10, there were 681 alternative schools, known as Bhatha Pathshalas, enrolling about 17,000 migratory children those were set up in various districts.
Table 1.1
Number of Alternative Schools (Bhatha Pathshalas) in Haryana (2009-2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>No. of AS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ambala</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Bhiwani</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Fridabad</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Fatehabad</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Jind</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Gurgaon</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Hisar</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Jhajjar</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Kaithal</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Kurukshetra</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Mahendergarh</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Mewat</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Palwal</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Panipat</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Panchkula</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Rohtak</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Rewari</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Sirsa</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Sonepat</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Yamuna Nagar</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>681</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The Tribune. August 26, 2011.*

These centres are making efforts to provide school equivalent education to get the students accompany mainstreaming which is being done every year. The duration of alternative schooling is three to four hours per day. In present scenario, in Haryana, the scheme of Alternative
Schooling under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been limited to the education of children of Bhatha labour. So the term ‘Alternative School’ today is widely used as Bhathashala or Bhatha Pathshala.

1.8 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Development of a nation depends on the quality of its citizens and the quality of its citizens depends upon the quality of its education system. This is education that makes man efficient, skilled, civilized and an ideal human being. Education as an important tool enables an individual to utilize the maximum of his potential to strengthen the nation. By 86th amendment to the Constitution of India, state must provide free and compulsory education to the Children of 6-14 years age group.

Education is a fundamental human right and very recently, in our country Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 has been enacted after assent of the President of India on 26th August, 2009 which came into effect from 1st April, 2010 including Haryana State. Since independence many programmes have been launched by the Government to make the elementary education compulsory. In the very beginning of 21st century, Government of India launched Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to realize the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). SSA includes various sub schemes. Alternative Schooling (AS) is one of the schemes of SSA. These schools are non-traditional, special type schools which provide education to those children who are never enrolled, drop-outs, working, living in isolated villages specifically girls, need flexibility in school timings to adjust to domestic demands of work, sibling care and household chores. These schools are playing an effective role to achieve the target of UEE. All educational programmes and plans need to be evaluated from time to time in order to
know their effectiveness and to improve their quality as well as workability.

Through the present investigation, the researcher has made an attempt to study the functioning of alternative schools in Haryana. There are various misconceptions among the people regarding the starting and functioning of Alternative Schooling (AS). So it was felt by the investigator that there was a great need to create awareness among the masses about the importance of alternative schooling which has access to the marginalized section of children. The authorities, officers, teachers, and other related bodies to SSA observed only its limited aspects while the investigator got interested to evaluate this programme from various perspectives.

1.9 STATEMENT OF THE STUDY

An Evaluative Study of Alternative Schooling under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Haryana.

1.9.1 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED

i) **Alternative Schooling (AS):** Alternative Schooling is an approach to education that varies from the traditional formal schooling. It is targeted towards the learning of those children who could not join the regular school due to any reason and to shift them into mainstream. In present scenario, especially in Haryana, the Alternative Schooling has been limited to the education of children of Bhatha labour. So the term Alternative School today is widely used as Bhathashala or Bhatha Pathshala.
ii) **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):** Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is Government of India's flagship programme for achievement of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time bound manner, as mandated by 86th amendment of the Constitution of India, for free and compulsory Education to the Children of 6-14 years age group, is now a Fundamental Right.

### 1.10 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

i) To identify and locate centres of Alternative Schooling.

ii) To study the facilities available in alternative schools.

iii) To study the different aspects of Alternative Schooling with special reference to access, duration, enrolment, curriculum, admissible grants, and mainstreaming.

iv) To study the background of Educational Volunteers (EVs) of Alternative Schooling.

v) To study the views of Educational Volunteers (EVs) of alternative schools regarding centres of Alternative Schooling.

vi) To study the views of BRCs and CRCs and district level SSA authorities regarding centres of Alternative Schooling.

vii) To study the problems faced by Educational Volunteers (EVs) of alternative schools regarding centres of Alternative Schooling.

viii) To study the problems faced by concerned SSA authority regarding centres of Alternative Schooling.

ix) To study the views of community members, parents of children studying in alternative schools regarding centres of Alternative Schooling.

x) To suggest some remedial measures to improve the functioning of Alternative Schooling.
1.11 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study was confined to:

i) the state of Haryana only.

ii) three districts of Haryana state i.e. Yamunanagar, Panipat and Sirsa only.

iii) 118 alternative schools i.e. Bhatha Pathshalas under SSA only.