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CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Learning is a Unique Competence of the Human beings through systematic training in educational institution. From time immemorial the role and importance of education has been realized by everyone in the society. As a first step, the elementary education gain significance since it initiates the students to formal education and the upper primary education serves as a continuum of the former. These two are crucial stages in the educational system since the chances of retention and dropout is more frequent at these stages. Naturally, the very objective of Universal elementary education will be defeated if there is little attention at this stage of education.

The Constitutional guarantee of providing basic education for all in India cannot be fully achieved if the students are detained and discontinue studies as dropouts. Hence there is an urgent need to find out the causes for detention at the primary and upper primary levels. This problem has evaded the researchers for a long time. Detention is problem not only to the students, teachers and parents but also to the nation. Further, the students who are detained turn to be dropouts, in due course fall into the category of illiterates. Hence the researcher has planned to analyse the causes for detention from the point of view of the students, the teachers, the headmasters and the parents with a view to consolidate and present the problem and suggest solution. The researcher proposes to collect data individually from each group to get unbiased views. He also intends to analyse, discuss and present statistically valid ideas and suggest effective measures to solve the problem of detention and repetition.
1.2. ROLE OF EDUCATION

Education is a quest and a continuous effort of human beings to live better. It refers to the process by which the society, through its different institutions, deliberately transmits its cultural heritage and its accumulated values to the young. The knowledge and skills from one generation to another. Education is essentially a dynamic process, changing frequently.

The term ‘Education’ is used in a variety of contexts and with different shades of meaning. In its broadest sense, any act of experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual can be called education. Education is the heart and soul of human civilization and so its purity and sanctity have to be maintained at all costs.

Education is a process of human empowerment for the achievement of better and higher quality of life (R.H.Dave 1996). The imperative character of education for individual growth and social development is now accepted by every one. Investment in the education of youth is considered the most vital by all nations.

In confronting many challenges in future, the human kind sees in education an indispensable asset in its attempt to attain the ideas of real freedom and social justice. It does not see education as a miracle or a magic formula opening the door to a world in which all ideals will be attained but as one of the deeper and more harmonious forms of human development and thereby to reduce poverty, marginalisation, ignorance, oppression and war.
The nation is thinking principally about the children and young people who will take over from today’s generation of adults. The latter are too inclined to concentrate on their own problems. Education is an expression of affection for children and young people, whom we need to welcome into society. Unreservedly they should be offered the place that in theirs by right therein. They deserve a place not only in the education system but also in the family, the local community and the nation. Sustained efforts have been made to improve primary and upper primary levels of education right from the British rule till date.

1.3. ELEMENTARY EDUCATION DURING THE BRITISH RULE IN INDIA

In spite of the continuous representation of Indian leaders to the British to provide a comprehensive elementary education, the British Government in India had not made sincere efforts to fulfill the demands. The main concern was the involvement of finance in implementing effective elementary education system in India.

The declaration of 1854, subsequently reaffirmed in 1859 laid emphasis on changes in the educational system. This was followed up in 1871 with some administrative changes in the curriculum and primary schools. This effort had not resulted in any substantial progress in the domain of primary education because the then Viceroy, Lord Ripen could not tolerate the leadership of Sir William Hunter.

The provision of universal elementary education had always been conceived as an integral part of the national system of education in India. The Indian leaders like Shri Dadabhai Naoroji, in his evidence before the
Indian Education Commission (1882), Shri Gopala Krishna Gokhale through his speeches in the Central Legislature (1910-12) urged the British Government to accept the responsibility to provide universal primary education of four years to all children. The British Government in India through an Act of 1919 increased the facilities for elementary education substantially. Gandhiji, the father of the nation put forward the scheme of basic education which was to be provided to every child, for seven or eight years to be equal to the standard of matriculation examination minus English plus a craft.

1.4. PRIMARY EDUCATION IN POST INDEPENDENT INDIA

The provision of universal elementary education received considerable attention from the national leadership in the early years of post-independence period. The post-war plan of Education Development (1944) had proposed that universal elementary education should be provided for all children in the age group of 6-14 in a phased program spread over 40 years (1944 – 84). A special committee under the chairmanship of Shri B.G.Kher (the then Chief Minister of Bombay) examined this proposal in 1950. The committee felt that it was too long a period and recommended that the goal should be reached before 1960. This recommendation was accepted and incorporated in Article 45 of the Constitution.

After Independence the Government of India has given a thrust to elementary education. In 1931 the literacy rate was only 10% among all adults and no more than 2% among women (Prulekar 1957). At the dawn of independence in 1947, less than 15% of adult population was literate.
Rate of Literacy increased slowly over the next four decades, and in 1991 the literacy rate for adults (persons over age 7) was 52%, well below the rates in East Asian Countries. Even in 1961 the Republic of Korea’s literacy rate was 71% and in Thailand 68%. The literacy rate in India has risen to 65.4% in 2001. India’s literacy rate in the colonial period in 1911 was only 6%. In 1931 the literacy rate was only 10%.

The vision of education for India is revealed in Article 45 of the Constitution - “Free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14”.

In spite of the priority accorded to the goal of free and compulsory education for all children in the age group of 6-14 under the Constitution, hindsight reveals that the efforts to achieve the goal was not effective. One of the main indicators to come to such a conclusion is the rate of growth of literacy. The selected statistics published by the Ministry of Human Resource Development from the census of India from 1951 to 1991 (GOI, 1996) show that during the first four decades of the constitutional rule, the literacy rate increased from around 25 percent in 1951 to around 64 per cent in 1991. Considering the change in the denominator to calculate the literacy of the population (till 1981 the denominator excluded population of 0-4 to calculate the literacy and from 1981 the age group of 0-6 was excluded for the same purpose reducing the size of denominator), the average rate of growth of literacy was less than 1 per cent. During the same period the population of the average registered a growth rate of around 2.15 per cent per year. Thus till 1991
along with the increase in the number of literates, the number of illiterates also increased.

Article 28 of the convention on the Rights of a child, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in November 1989, declares that education is a fundamental right and emphasized the need to make Primary Education compulsory and free to all.

The conference of Eight Most Populous Countries of the World (1993) noted in the Indian context as follows: “Between 1950 – 51 and 1984 – 85, the number of primary schools increased from approximately 2.1 lakh to approximately 5.2 lakh and the number of upper primary schools from 30.6 thousand to 1.3 lakh. Even so, an exceptionally large number of habitations are still without primary schools and nearly one-third of the schools in rural areas have only one teacher. The emphasis so far has been on the enrolment of children. Approximately 95% children in 6-11 age group and 50% children in age group 11-14 years are enrolled in schools, the corresponding figures for girls being 77% and 36% respectively. However, nearly 60% children dropout between classes I-V and 75% between classes I-III. In Urban areas, there is over-crowding in schools. The conditions of buildings, furniture facilities and equipment are unsatisfactory in almost all parts of the country. Rapid expansion, which was not accompanied by sufficient investment on resources, has caused deterioration in academic standard. A program of non-formal education has been started but in terms of spread and quality it is rather unsatisfactory”.

1.5. IMPORTANCE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Universal Primary Education is Constitutional directive. Further other constitutional rights such as the right to the personal liberty may be considered to encompass the right to education. This point was in fact made in February 1993 by the Supreme Court, which “ensured free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen as a fundamental right”. An explicit recognition of the fundamental right to primary education is embodied in the 83rd Constitutional Amendment. The Constitutional Amendments emphasis the importance of universalising primary education.

1.6. UNIVERSALISING ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

In some of the educationally advanced countries, the age of compulsory education has been raised to 16 years and a provision exists for the supply of books and stationary as well as midday meal or a glass of milk for the younger pupils in addition to tuition fee-free instruction. In India since her independence in 1947, very serious efforts have been made to meet the Constitutional requirement of free and compulsory education. Under Article 45 of Directive Principles of the Constitution of India, the state has to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14.

Today we have realized the need to give top priority to elementary education. Even the UNESCO is firm on it. The Union Planning Commission is also serious about it. The HRD ministry is forging ahead with new schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to accelerate
universalisation of primary education. Also, a new scheme, namely National program for Girls Education (Mahila Samakhya) is now implemented.

1.7. EDUCATION FOR ALL

Education is a powerful instrument for reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and social well being of humans and laying the basis for sustained economic growth. It is essential to build healthy democratic societies which could keep pace with the dynamic, globally competitive economics.

Primary Education is the first phase of a life long experience of an individual. Primary Education influences a child throughout his/her life. It has a lot of impact on the child’s personal, social and cultural life. A nation benefits immensely by investing adequately in Primary Education. Kofi A. Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations has observed that by making a small investment, mainly on Basic Education for girls and boys alike, we can bring all kinds of knowledge within the reach of poor people. The poor countries can make some progress. They can be helped to avoid some of the long and painful stages, which the others had to go through.

Target 3 of Millennium development goal is to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere boy and girl alike, complete a full course of primary schooling.
The International community’s efforts to achieve Education For All (EFA) and the progressive elimination of child labour are inextricably linked. Children with no chance to get quality education have little alternative but to enter the labour market where they are often forced to work in dangerous and exploitative conditions. To achieve the goal of universal primary education by 2015, government will not only need to accelerate efforts to reach EFA, but they will also need to accelerate the efforts to eliminate child labour.

The goals of EFA are:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;

2. Ensuring that by 2015 children with special emphasis on girls, children in different circumstances and from ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;

3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;

4. Achieving 50 percent improvement in the level of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;

5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in
education in literacy by 2015 with a focus on ensuring girls’ full access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;

6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education, and ensuring excellence for all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved, especially numeracy and essential life-skills (UNESCO, 2003/2004:27).

Three years ago, the American President, Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) into law. Nearly everybody agrees with the bills’ purpose – “to ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to attain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum proficiency on challenging state academic assessments” (U.S. Congress; 2001), which was to be accomplished by shifting funding formulas and sending more federal resources to high-poverty and struggling schools.

1.8. LEGAL BASIS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

The directive principle contained in Article 45 of the Constitution enjoins that “The State shall endeavor to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution a free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years”. The expression “the state” includes Central, State Governments and Local Bodies.
Article 46 states that “the state shall promote with special care that the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and in particular, of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations”.

Article 29 (2) says that “no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution recognized by the state or receiving aid out of state fund on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

Article 30(1) enjoins that all minorities, whether based on religion or language shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

Article 30(2) says, “The state shall not in granting aid to educational institutions discriminate against any educational institution on the grounds that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.

Article 35 (A) lays down that it shall be the endeavor of every state and of local authority within the state to provide adequate facilities for instructions in mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority group.
The 42nd Amendment in 1976 put education in the concurrent list and empowered parliament with authority to education concurrently with the state.

The National Policy on Education 1986 as amended in 1992 and Program of Action 1992 made there under have been the most notable feature in the evolution of monitoring of education policies and programs.

The 73rd and 74th Amendment to the Constitution provided for decentralization of elementary education to Panjayat Raj institutions and Urban Area committees so that participatory management for primary education could be evolved.

Most of the States and Union Territories passed compulsory elementary education Act including Tamilnadu, whereas it paves the way of fining the parents for not sending their wards to primary school. Elementary Education is free and no tuition fee is levied. In Unnikrishnan VS State of Andhra Pradesh (W.P. NO.607 of 1992) case Supreme Court held that citizens of this country have the fundamental right to education until he/she completes fourteen years of age. This right flows from Article 21 of the Constitution.

1.9. RECENT TRENDS IN LITERACY PROGRAMS

The progress of education is normally measured in terms of stock and flow variables. The literacy rate and levels of educational attainment of the population refer to the former and the number of children studying
in various courses and associated indicators reflect the flow of variables. The educational attainment is usually measured through mean/median years of education. Similarly, literacy rates can be raised through schooling as well as through adult literacy programs. The increase in school participation would lead to a slower increase in the overall literacy rate, although the younger age groups may be fully or nearly universal literate. When these efforts are supplemented by intensive adult literacy programs, the overall literacy can increase significantly.

For the first time, the 1991 census showed that the country achieved a distinction of having more literates than illiterates (52 per cent literacy rate). While this was a positive gain, the flipside of the achievement was that the number of illiterates increased from 305 million in 1981 to 329 million in 1991.

The NSSO data on literacy and educational attainment based on 52nd round of NSS (1995-96) showed a significant improvement in National literacy rate from 52 per cent to 62 per cent. The male and female literacy in 1995-96 were 73 and 50 per cent respectively. The increase of 10 percentage points in national literacy within a short span of about 5 to 6 years was seen as a significant development.

A second source of data on literacy after the 1991 census was National Family Survey (NFHS-2) conducted during 1997-98. The NFHS – 2 estimated a literacy rate of 63 per cent of the total population and 74.5 and 51.6 per cent for male and female population aged six and above.
Table 1.1

LITERACY RATE IN INDIA - 1951 – 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Overall Literacy Rate</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>8.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>28.30</td>
<td>40.40</td>
<td>15.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>45.96</td>
<td>21.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>43.75</td>
<td>56.38</td>
<td>29.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>65.38</td>
<td>75.85</td>
<td>54.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above improvements in literacy rates were further confirmed by the preliminary findings of the 2001 population census. As per 2001 population censuses, the overall literacy rate was 65.4 per cent (male literacy rate 75.9 percent and female literacy rate 54.2 per cent). The time series data on literacy rate is presented in the above table. The analysis of literacy and educational attainment data by age group for 1991 indicates that the lack of successful literacy programs and less than universal coverage for 6-14 age group was responsible for lower distribution of literacy and educational attainment for different age groups, corresponding data for 2001 censuses is not yet available. The results of recent efforts are evident from the figure as the impact of literacy and elementary education development programs.
1.10. SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

The HRD Ministry launched the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) scheme in the year 2002 of the Ninth five-year Plan, which is one of the biggest efforts made by a single country in achieving universalisation of elementary education. The goals of SSA are;

1. All children in school education guaranteed age group and to be centre, alternate school, ‘back – to – school’ camp by the end of 2003.
2. All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
3. All children complete eight years of primary schooling by 2010.
4. Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
5. Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
7. Local self-government cooperation to be enlisted.

(K.Venkatashubramanian, Former Member, Union Planning Commission)

1.11. UNIVERSAL ENROLMENT

Universal enrolment envisages complete enrolment of all children of the respective age group. The following table presents the progress of school enrolment in India.

Progress of School Enrolments in India During 1951 to 1997
Table 1.2
Progress in Universalisation of Elementary Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys Enrolment (in millions)</th>
<th>Girls Enrolment (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I-V Primary</td>
<td>VI-VIII Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>13.79</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>36.78</td>
<td>9.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>46.71</td>
<td>14.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>58.64</td>
<td>22.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>57.87</td>
<td>21.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>62.50</td>
<td>24.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>61.20</td>
<td>23.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EFA (Education For All) - 2000 Assessment core EFA- Indicators. Growth rate of school Enrolment 1950 -1993 MHRD (Ministry of Human Resources Development).

Enrolment in primary level of education has increased by about five times between 1951-1997 while the enrolment in upper primary level increased by about 13 times during the same period. The increase in the case of girls has been nine times in primary level and about 24 times in upper primary level. This increase at the elementary stage of education has been $6 \frac{1}{2}$ times during the same period.
Once the enrolment is increased in schools, the rate of illiteracy is drastically reduced as shown in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>75.05</td>
<td>92.07</td>
<td>83.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>65.05</td>
<td>87.05</td>
<td>75.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>60.55</td>
<td>81.31</td>
<td>70.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>43.50</td>
<td>70.15</td>
<td>56.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>35.87</td>
<td>60.71</td>
<td>47.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>38.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to various multi pronged actions under formal and non-formal education and National Literacy Mission, considerable progress has been made in reducing the percentage of illiterate population in India. A lot has yet to be done to completely eradicate the phenomenon of illiteracy existing in our country in order to achieve Education for All (EFA).

1.12. ENROLMENT IN UPPER PRIMARY CLASSES IN INDIA

Across the country, enrolment in upper primary school in 1996-97 were 41 million, which is almost exactly double the level in 1980. However, over this period the rate of growth appears to have slowed.
While enrolment increased by an average of 1.3 million a year between 1980 to 1990, the increase averaged only 1.1 million a year over the following six years. The annual average growth rate fell from 5.1 per cent between 1990 to 1995. Even though the growth rate of enrolments has fallen it remains above the rate of growth of the age group and therefore the gross enrolment rate in upper primary schooling continues to increase. In 1995-96 it was 67.6 per cent, in 1985, enrolment was recorded to be 35%. But in 1990, the enrolment has increased to 40%. Forty percent of students are girls, up from 37 per cent in 1990 and 35 per cent in 1985.

According to the sixth All India Survey in 1993-94 across the country 58 per cent of upper primary enrolments are in Government and local body schools, 31 per cent in private aided schools and 11 per cent in unaided schools. The differences between rural and urban enrolments are striking. In rural areas 68 per cent of enrolments are in government and local body schools compared to just 41 per cent in the urban areas. Conversely, only six per cent of rural children are in private unaided schools compared to 19 per cent of urban children.

Overall total attendance in Upper Primary Schooling is equivalent to 65 per cent of all 11 – 13 year olds, which is virtually the same as the officially estimated GER for that year based on enrolment (67.6 per cent). However since there is a significant number of overage enrolment which increased the net enrolment rate (Number of 11-13 years old attending the school are around half of the pupils in upper primary grades. That there
are also very many overage children in primary schools is reflected in the age specific attendance ratio of 72 per cent. Of all 11-13 year olds in school around three fifths are in upper primary grades and two fifths are still in primary grades.

1.13. LITERACY RATES

Provisional results of the census 2001 shows the highest jump of 13.17 per cent in the literacy rate since 1951, with the rate going up from 52.21 per cent in 1991 to 65.38 per cent in 2001. More significantly for the first time the absolute figure of illiterates has gone down by 3.19 crores, inspite of increasing population, while the number of literates went up by a phenomenal 20.36 crores. The state have shown increase in the literacy rate during this decade with the male literacy being 60 per cent in all of them. Another significant feature of the Nineties is the narrowing of the gender gap. While the male literacy went up by only 11.72 per cent in the Nineties; the female literacy rate went up by 14.87 per cent in the same period. This has led to the male-female gap decreasing to 21.70 per cent in 2001 from 24.84 per cent in 1991.

While the increase in literacy rate is very slow, there is another problem of retention, drop-out and wastage. Naturally retention discourages the students and the parents from continuing education. Though the number of retention is low the accumulated failures through out the country could be substantial. In a developing country like India where the investment on education is given top priority, retention further adds to the financial burden. Hence there is an imperative need to analyse
the reasons for retention of the students in the same class and take concrete steps to solve the problem.

1.14. GRADE REPETITION

Grade Repetition, besides elongating the period of schooling for the child concerned signifies wastage of valuable and limited, resources available in the system. The “detained” children add to the “promote-group” coming to the higher grade from the lower grade causing in effect diminishing pedagogic attention and dwindling share of learning and environmental resources available to each child.

The phenomenon implies inadequacies in learning levels of children and is therefore antithetic to DPEP. Hence capacity-building exercises targeted to teachers and production and use of learner-friendly learning material should be designed among others to combat the problem of grade repetition and to promote pupil learning.

The ways in which the upper primary cycle of schooling relates to the primary cycle and to the secondary cycle are key issues for its development. One important factor in understanding this relationship is the extent to which parents and pupils regard each cycle of schooling as terminal or as an automatic launching pad to the next higher level. Several implications arise from this. For instance, if primary schooling is regarded as a block of education which has obstacles to proceeding, then the objective of universalizing elementary education would require changes in the relative costs and benefits of the upper primary cycle
and/or increased levels of social mobilization. In addition, the primary cycle would need to be designed in a way such that it was self-contained. On the other hand, if the transition rates from the final year of primary schooling to the first year of upper primary schooling drives would be required and the design of a single cycle of eight year of elementary education would be appropriate.

Aggarwal (1999) conducted a study recently covering more than 26,000 pupils in DPEP districts in Tamilnadu and found that only 50-55 per cent of children of the 1993-94 cohort (Grade – I) were able to complete primary education in five years period. The others either repeated or dropped out of the educational system without completing the primary education cycle.

Repetition has shown some decline in DPEP districts, but it still remains a significant concern. Technically, repetition rates should be almost Zero in the primary grades because most states have an official policy of automatic promotion. But in reality repetition is significant especially in the first grade in many districts. Among Phase I districts, the average repetition rate in the primary years, which was 9.1 per cent in 1995-96 was reduced to 5.9 percent in 1998-99. Phase II districts have also shown some significant initial progress, with repetition declining from 9.1 per cent in 1997-98 to 8.4 percent in 1998-99.

Repetition rates continue to be of concern. In three out of the seven districts (Dharmapuri in Phase-I and Pudukkottai and
Ramanathapuram in Phase II), there has been an increase in repetition rates ranging from 29% to 34%. With clear guidelines not yet available, promotion is decided (at the school level) based on the performance in annual exams and attendance. Given the very high attendance rates there is a need to understand poor performance that is often cited as a reason for detention. DPEP has undertaken an analysis of 48 schools where repetition is high to evolve suitable guidelines, which then would be recommended to Government for issuing of common guidelines across the state. The mission urges that the recommendations be finalized and common Government guidelines be sought at the earliest.

The objective of gender equity has been achieved as indicated by the cohort studies. Dropout rates of girls in all the districts are less than that of boys. The repetition rate of girls is lower than that of boys in 5 districts and even marginally higher than boys in 2 districts. Completion rates for girls are higher than boys in all the districts. It is important to note that in Dharmapuri, a Phase I district that has lagged behind all the other districts, the dropout and repetition rates of girls are lower than that of boys and completion rates are higher (Cohort study of 1996-2001).

Social equity goals too appear to be within reach especially in the case of SCs. The difference between SC and all other children in dropout, repetition and completion is well below 5% in all the project districts. The ST population in the project districts to total population is less than 2%. In Dharmapuri and Thiruvannamalai districts the dropout rate difference is by 12 and 23 points respectively. The difference in
repetition rates is below 10%. In 4 districts the gap in completion rates is below 10% and in Dharmapuri it is 12% (Cohort study of 1996 -2001). DPEP has lately developed strategies to address the ST population that is in scattered hamlets. At present the data relating to SC and ST is not disaggregated by gender.

Table 1.4
COHORT STUDY ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Educational District</th>
<th>Repetition Rate (in percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>94-95 to 98-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmapuri</td>
<td>27.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvannamalai</td>
<td>24.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuddalore</td>
<td>29.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villupuram</td>
<td>25.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perambalur</td>
<td>29.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudukkottai</td>
<td>28.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramanathapuram</td>
<td>29.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>27.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Repetition rate has decreased in a consistent manner to 24.20% from 27.88% during the same reference period.
Repetition rates have increased in several states and the high repetition rates have emerged as a major factor affecting school performance and system efficiency. Continued efforts are required to improve transition rates and successful completion.

The DISE data also shows that the share of single teacher schools continues to be high in a number of DPEP districts. In many districts almost 90% of teachers in the single teacher schools are men.

Grade repetition is the outcome of a number of factors namely (a) attendance (b) age (c) parents insistence (d) poor academic performance (e) long term absentees (f) neglect of studies by the learners (g) child not interested in studies and (h) communication problems.

The two factors adversely affecting the internal efficiency of an educational system are dropout and grade repetition. There are various exogenous and endogenous factors due to which the internal efficiency varies from school to school.

The internal efficiency of the education system depends on two factors namely the dropout rate and the repetition rate.

The impact of repetition rate is in terms of prolonged stay of students in the education cycle. The more the repetition, the larger is the number of years spent to complete the primary education cycle.
The analysis of repeaters rates was undertaken for all the DPEP districts and for all grades for boys and girls. The repeaters rate for the DPEP districts declined from 8.5% in 1995 to 7.9% in 1996.

1.15. DATA RELATING TO REPEATERS

a. 26% students repeated at least once in five years period.
b. Few repeaters dropped out (less than 10%)
c. Repetition higher in Phase II as compared to Phase I district.
d. More boys repeat than girls.
e. SC students had the highest repetition whereas the earlier analysis showed highest dropout among STs.
f. Inter district variations are not significant
g. Repetition more pronounced among five years old as compared to six year old.
h. Of 68,370 repeaters as many as 42% repeated in Grade I accounting for 11% repetition rate in Grade II
i. 80% of Grade I repeaters were promoted to Grade II after repeating once.
j. About 5% schools showed more than 40 repetition
k. 37.5% schools had Zero repetition in Grade I

1.16. PRIMARY EDUCATION IN TAMILNADU

Primary Education in the state of Tamilnadu has been consistently good and the state Government had been making it easy for even the very poor to attend the school by providing various schemes like mid-day meal, free uniform etc. child centered method is being used and MLL
method is used for evaluation. DPEP which has been initiated by the Central Government is actively carrying out a number of projects in the state.

In Tamilnadu, Sarva Shiksha Abiyan scheme which is proposed by the Central Government is taken up in full measure by the state Government and the policy of the Government is to open a new primary schools where the population is 300 but with no school within a radius of 1 Km. If the above norm is strictly followed, then in a hamlet where the population is less than 300, there is no possibility of opening up a new school. Under the scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, wherever opening of new school is not permissible it is proposed to open an Education Guarantee School (EGS) to cater to the needs of the local people.

The access to Primary Education has been consistently updated and improved and the infrastructure facilities of the schools run by the state Government has also been consistently updated. In spite of all the measures of the state, the dropout rate in the state is not completely eliminated and the investigator is interested in understanding the root of the problem as could be inferred from pupil’s individualized reasons and lack of school facilities affecting the withholding power of schools.
1.17. WASTAGE AND STAGNATION DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD

During the British period, an omnibus question often arose in the name of wastage in education. But the real issue was side-tracked and the fate of actual implications of thousands of non-student youth was hardly assessed. Perhaps the only document of the pre-independence period that ever referred to the problem of dropouts was the Hartog Committee Report. It referred in specific terms to wastage and stagnation in the Indian Educational system. The report defined stagnation as ‘the retention of a child in a lower class for a period of more than one year’.

1.18. WASTAGE AND STAGNATION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN INDIA

The first study was made by the Bombay Municipal Corporation in 1956. The population involved was 7800 in 16 schools. 740 dropouts were studied of whom 16.5 percent left school within six months. The incidence of dropouts in the standard I was alarmingly high. The dropout rate decreased with the increase in the standard, dropouts in two groups 6-11 and above 11 years of age were found to be in the proportion of 72 per cent and 28 per cent respectively. The incidence of dropout of over-age children was very high. Migration was the cause for the dropouts of 43 percent of the students. Truancy contributed to 11.12 per cent and gainful employment 3.11 per cent, illness 2.07 per cent and parental neglect 1.63 per cent. Dandekar (1955), studying the wastage and stagnation in primary education in Satara District, Maharashtra, found that
28 per cent of pupils dropped out in first three standards and another 28 per cent of them repeaters.

The incident of wastage and stagnation at the primary level was studied by the Madhya Pradesh Government. A hand out has been published by Government college of Education, Jabalpur. The investigation observed that the factors responsible for the dropouts were distance, social backwardness, lack of basic facilities in schools, lack of parental interest, poverty, the size of the family, early marriage, household work, teacher irregularity and teacher's failure to use the local dialects.

The Education Commission Report (1964-66) reveals that the all India wastage percentage is 60 by which it means that the retention rate is 40 per cent which compares unfavourably with Japan which has 90 per cent, Malaysia 80 per cent, Afghanistan 74 per cent, Philippines 69 per cent, Ceylon 64 per cent and Thailand 53 per cent. The lowest rates of 26 per cent and 19 per cent are those of Pakistan and Burma respectively.

Khandekar (1974) studied socio-economic and environmental characteristics of dropouts in the age group of 14-21 years in the ten slum areas of Bombay and found that parental illiteracy and poverty were the main reasons for dropping out. Girls’ ratio was less in the dropouts. Venkatasubramanian (1978) discussing the problem of dropout in all its ramification in Tamilnadu indicated the order of priority on the basis of a study by Jayaraman at the Madras Research Bureau (1967) as follows.
Parents engaging children in domestic affairs, parents taking no interest in educating their children, parents taking their children to assist in their occupation, non-availability of reading and writing materials, adverse teacher-pupil ratio and lack of proper clothing.

1.19. DROPOUT AND FIRST TIME REPEATERS

The children who do not successfully complete the primary education cycle in five years would have either left the school system (dropout) or may be repeating in one or the other class. In the case of dropouts it is important to analyse the Grade at which the child left the school. A child who leaves the school after completing Grade III/IV would retain some literacy and numeracy skills when compared to child who drops during the first or second year of primary education. Few children, who dropped out earlier might subsequently, come back to the same or the other school but the chances of this happening are remote.

The repeaters, if they remain in the system, will spend more than the required number of years to complete the primary education in six or seven years instead of five. Some may even take longer. Some repeaters might leave school without completing primary education after spending a few years in the school. How much time various types of repeaters take to complete primary education, or leave the system without completing it, is not known.

For the educators, the implications of dropout and repeaters are somewhat different and call for different analysis of the two situations.
While dropout is a social phenomenon and the solutions may partly lie outside the school system, the Grade repetition is essentially a school related phenomenon and the solutions may be well within the domain of the school. Repetition may be the result of long absenteeism, poor academic performance or under achievement in one or more subjects.

The continuation of a child in the school in itself is an expression of the family’s commitment for the child’s education. Viewed in this context, poor academic performance or long term absenteeism from the school are the two most important factors responsible for Grade repetition. It is in this context that the school has a larger role to play in reducing the repetition rate. Pupils who are likely to perform poorly can be detected at early stages of an academic session. Remedial or supplementary education can be arranged for such children. Special attention by the teacher may encourage such children to do well in studies and help restore their confidence in the school education.

In order to improve the survival rates, both the dropout and repetition have to be reduced to the minimum and both require different strategies. The external pulls and pressures on the child have to be reduced so that he/she can concentrate on studies. Along with these measures, improvement in school environment, teachers’ availability and classroom process are equally important. Multi grade teaching, teacher’s absenteeism and lack of instructional materials are other factors affecting the learning outcomes.
In Tamilnadu the values of overall Repetition Rates are in the range of 7% between 11% in 1998-99. Their values were of the same order in 1997-98 also in every district. The values of ORR in 199-2000 were also almost the same as in 1998-99 in every district - which implies that not much change has taken place in the overall repetition rate in any district between 1997-98 to 1999-2000.

1.20. QUALITY IN EDUCATION

The U.E.E. emphasises the quality as an important component. After enrolment and retention, the quality level of the children's education who completed the primary or Upper primary level gets importance.

Elementary education has been mainly textbook centred and teacher centered. Children are overburdened with more textual materials with more and more information added in repeated textbook revision. The model of conveying of textual information by the teachers and memorization of concepts and content matter without much comprehension on the part of the children is evident. Through the Research studies this snubs the creativity and thinking potential of the children. There is no scope for originality, self-expression and imagination on the part of the pupil in the process of knowledge distribution.
To overcome the above problem, the teachers are given in-service training in the pedagogy of the following subjects

1. Language
2. Mathematics
3. Science
4. Sensitizing the community on child labour and educational issues.

**DIET** (District Institute of Education and Training) is established as per **N.P.E (1986)** in each district to extend academic support for primary education in the district.

Quality improvement programmes focus both on the academic as well as on the administrative aspects of primary education.

For every 10 to 15 schools one Cluster Resource Centre (CRC) and in each block, a Block Resource Centre (BRC) are established to cater to the academic needs of the teachers under Sharva Shiksha Abhiyan Scheme.

Once in 4 weeks a one-day meeting of all teachers in the cluster schools is arranged. In the meeting, model teaching takes place for the benefit of newly appointed teachers. The C.R.C. and B.R.C. play a vital role in updating and in exchange of academic skills of the teaching community.
In addition to the academic support, teachers are involved in institutional planning. The textbooks reach the schools before the start of the academic year. Moreover infrastructure facilities such as furniture, building, toilet, drinking water, playground are provided. Schools are provided with teaching learning materials. Teachers are also given training to make the Teaching Learning Materials as needed.

To evaluate achievement of the children the MLL (Minimum Levels of Learning) method is used. Adequate number of teachers are appointed to pay individual attention to students in the classroom.

1.21. THE CHALLENGES

Though there are nearly 150 million children currently enrolled in primary schools, there are an estimated 35 million children who are still not going to school in 1997.

1. **Quality concerns:** Elementary education has always been dominated by poor quality. The Government should improve the infrastructure at once.

2. **High dropout rate:** The dropout rate in primary classes is still high at 40.25 per cent (1999-2000) in spite of various welfare inputs.

3. **Out of school children:** Out of a total population of approximately 20 crores in the age group 6-14, there are 4.2 crore children who are out of school. These are mostly girls, SC/ST children working children, urban deprived children etc.
4. **The girl child:** We cannot achieve the goal of EFA (Education for All) till all the girl children are educated. It is estimated that around 11 million girls within age group of 6-11 remain un-enrolled. The corresponding figure for the 11-14 age group is around 16 million girls.

1.22. ISSUES IN REPETITION

In India, the state Government has laid down the norms for students evaluation at the end of each academic session. Generally the students are not promoted to the higher grade for two reasons, namely the poor academic performance and unsatisfactory attendance. Many states are also implementing no detention policy, whereby the students are not detained in particular grades due to poor academic performance.

There are two other factors that affect the school performance and leads to wastage of gear resources. The first is when a child leaves the educational system without completing a particular cycle of education and the second relates to under achievement of the prescribed competencies and skills even after the child has successfully completed the upper primary education cycle. This former phenomenon is usually referred to as dropout and the latter as low achievement.

There could be a difference of opinion as to how the dropout and repeaters students should be accounted for especially in terms of their literacy and numeracy achievement and other development skills. In the educational planning literature, these are known as components of
wastage. The profile of repeaters and dropouts is thus an important area of study in educational planning.

The two factors adversely affecting the internal efficiency of an educational system are dropout and grade repetition. There are various exogenous and endogenous factors due to which the internal efficiency varies from school to school. Among the school-related factors, grade repetition is negatively correlated units of school effectiveness. In order to overcome the problem of grade repetition among first generation learners, many states are following a policy of no-detention for the first few years of schooling.

This was considered necessary to ensure that all children, especially the first generation learners are not detained due to poor academic performance. Under the policy a child can only be detained in a school if he/she fails to complete a specified proportion of attendance, usually 80%. The no detention policy was based on assumption that once a child stays for 2-3 years in school, the chances of dropping out or grade repetition reduce considerably. Therefore, under the no detention policy, the repetition rates should be practically Zero in those states where such a policy is in operation.

Repetition rates continue to be of concern. In Tamil Nadu in three out of the seven districts (Dharmapuri in Phase I and Pudukkottai and Ramanathapuram in Phase II) there has been an increase in repetition rates ranging from 27% to 34%. With a no detention policy and no clear
guidance promotion is decided at the school level based on performance in annual exams and in attendance. Given the very high attendance rates there is a need to understand poor performance in annual exams and attendance. Given the very high attendance rates there is a need to understand poor performance that is often cited as a reason for detention.

1.23. INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO DROPOUT

Physical facilities available in the school as well as many of the useful practices adopted in schools are likely to affect the learners in the schools. Absence of congenial climate in the school can create aversion in the minds of the children and prompt them to discontinue their studies.

The physical facilities like proper class room, furniture facilities, laboratory and library facilities, toilet and drinking water facilities are important for attracting and retaining students in schools. In addition to the physical facilities the activities of the school like Morning Prayer, physical exercise activities, sports and games celebration of national functions are also factors, which contribute to retention of students in school.

1.24. PUPIL RELATED REASONS FOR DROPOUT

The individual pupil, who is dropping out of school, may be doing it out of his own individual reasons, which are many according to various studies done. In this investigation, the pupils along with their parents are contacted to collect information about the reasons. The actual reasons given by individuals are considered as valid.
1.25. **LACK OF COMMUNITY INTEREST AND SUPPORT**

Nearly 80 percent of the teachers in the Government school complained against the community by which they actually meant parents who according to them did not take enough interest in their child’s education. Most of the teachers say ‘We knew exactly how much child knows, who is good, clever and their weak points’ without any testing. When asked if they provided feedback to the parents, many were quite amused as they felt feedback is of no use to the parents as most of the parents are uneducated and cannot do anything to help their children’s improvement.

1.26. **LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES**

The teachers complained about the lack of sufficient number of classrooms, adequate space within the existing classrooms, lack of space in the form of a playground.

According to DPEP. Fourteenth joint review mission the performance of schools as a whole many states have made considerable progress and again indicators being developed for grading schools are attempting to capture a whole range of variables including overall levels of school infrastructure, teachers attendance and performance, quality of the classroom environment, school-community interaction and general school functioning.
1.27. CONCLUSION

The Government of India, considering the necessity to provide elementary education in every nook and corner of our country allot substantial money in the budget every year. The allocation is made on the basis of expenditure per students, which includes expenditure towards salary, buildings, teaching aids and other administrative expenses. When a student is retained or repeats the course the burden of further allocation for the same student has to be borne by the government. The situation is worse in the case of dropout and wastage, because the money spent towards their education turns out to be a gross waste. Hence the reason for repetition should be analysed so as to find out the steps to be taken for arresting repetition. The researcher, after careful scrutiny of the problem, has chosen to conduct a survey involving the teachers, headmasters, parents and the students. Before proceeding further the researcher has attempted a review of the related literature. In the next chapter the review is presented.