Chapter 2
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN INDIA

The chapter gives an account of historical evolution of community participation in elementary education in India, culminating into the SSA strategies in the late 1990s. The history of education in India began with teaching of traditional elements such as Indian religions, Indian mathematics, Indian logic at early Hindu and Buddhist centres of learning such as Taxila and Nalanda before the Common Era. Islamic education became ingrained with the establishment of the Islamic empires in India in the Middle Ages while the coming of the Europeans later bought western education to colonial India. A series of measures continuing throughout the early half of the 20th century ultimately laid the foundation of education in the Republic of India. Early education in India commenced under the supervision of a guru. The education was imparted on the basis of caste and the related duties that one had to perform as a member of a specific caste. The Brahmans learned about scriptures and religion while the Kshatriya were educated in various aspects of warfare. The Vaishya castes learned commerce and other specific vocational courses while education was largely denied to the Shudra, the lowest castes. The earliest venues of education in India were often secluded from the main population. Students were expected to follow strict monastic guidelines prescribed by the guru and to stay away from cities, in ashrams. However, as population increased under the Gupta empire, centres of urban learning became increasingly common and cities such as Varanasi and the Buddhist centre at Nalanda became increasingly visible (Prabhu 2006). Education in India in its traditional form was closely related to religion. Among the heterodox schools of belief were the Jain and Buddhist schools. Heterodox Buddhist education was more inclusive and aside of the monastic orders the Buddhist education centres were urban institutes of learning such as Taxila and Nalanda where grammar, medicine, philosophy, logic, metaphysics, arts and crafts etc. were also taught. Early secular Buddhist institutions of higher learning like Taxila and Nalanda continued to function well
into the Common Era and were attended by students from China and Central Asia (Blackwell 2004). On the subject of education for the nobility Joseph Prabhu writes: "Outside the religious framework, kings and princes were educated in the arts and sciences related to government: politics (danda niti), economics (vartta), philosophy (anviksiki), and historical traditions (itihasa). Here, the authoritative source was Kautilya’s Arthashastra, often compared to Niccolo Machiavelli’s The Prince for its worldly outlook and political scheming." The Rig Veda mentions female poets called Brahmavadinis, specifically Lopamudra and Ghosha. By 800 BC women such as Gargi and Maitreyi were mentioned as scholars in the religious Upnishads. Maya, mother of the historic Buddha, was an educated queen while other women in India contributed to the writing of the Pali Canon. Out of the composers of the Sangam literature 154 were women. However, the education and society of the era continued to be dominated by educated male population. It is possible that later historians twisted the truth that the so-called lower castes in the society were denied the right to education only in order to pitch for better concessions and create a feel good factor to the leaders of society so that they might corner the valuable mass support. If one did not learn how to kill a wild boar without being gored or gather honey without being strung by it or sow maize and harvest or brew the fine somabanams or make tools and impleiments, the society had perhaps gone without food or shelter. It is wrong to say that the teaching existed only in schools run by the upper caste teachers in their so-called Gurukuls. The society was teaching its subjects in the exact and required skills as appropriate to the time. It is widely acclaimed now that the classroom education does not teach the actual required skill sets either for life as it is perceived now or add value to the humanity at large (Raman 2006).

EARLY COMMON ERA TO HIGH MIDDLE AGE

Chinese scholars such as Xuanzang and Yi Jing arrived in Indian institutions of learning to survey Buddhist texts. Yi Jing additionally noted the arrival of 56 scholars from China, Japan, and Korea. However, the Buddhist institutions of learning were slowly giving way to a resurgent tradition of Brahmanism during era of 1500 BC to 500 BC. Scholars from India also
journeyed to China to translate Buddhist texts. During the 10th century a monk named Dharmadeva from Nalanda journeyed to China and translated a number of texts. Another centre at Vikaramshila maintained close relations with Tibet. The Buddhist teacher Atisa was the head monk in Vikramshila before his journey to Tibet. Examples of royal patronage include construction of buildings under the Rastrakuta dynasty in 945 BC. The institutions arranged for multiple residences for educators as well as state sponsored education and arrangements for students and scholars. Similar arrangements were made by the Chola dynasty in 1024 CE, which provided state support to selected students in educational establishments. Temple schools from 12th and 13th centuries included the school at the Nataraja temple situated at Chidambaram which employed 20 librarians, out of whom 8 were copiers of manuscripts and 2 were employed for verification of the copied manuscripts. The remaining staff conducted other duties, including preservation and maintenance of reference material (Scharfe 2002). Another establishment during this period is the Uddandapura institute established during the 8th century under the patronage of the Pala dynasty. The institution developed ties with Tibet and became a centre of Tantric Buddhism. During the 10th and 11th centuries the number of monks reached a thousand, equaling the strength of monks at the sacred Mahbodhi complex. By the time of the arrival of the Islamic scholar Al-Biruni India already had an established system of science and technology in place. Also, by the 12th century, invasions from India's northern borders disrupted traditional education systems as foreign armies raided educational institutes, among other establishments (Sen 1988).

LATE MIDDLE AGE TO EARLY MODERN ERA

With the advent of Islam in India the traditional methods of education increasingly came under Islamic influence. Pre-Mughal rulers such as Qutb-ud-din Aybak and other Muslim rulers initiated institutions which imparted religious knowledge. Scholars such as Nizamuddin Auliya and Moinuddin Chishti became prominent educators and established Islamic monasteries. Students from Bukhara and Afghanistan visited India to study humanities and science (Sen 1988). Islamic institutions of education in India included traditional madrassas and
maktabs which taught grammar, philosophy, mathematics and law, influenced by the Greek traditions inherited by Persia and the Middle East before Islam spread from these regions into India. A feature of this traditional Islamic education was its emphasis on the connection between science and humanities. During 18th century in Delhi, there was the Madrassa Rahimiya under the supervision of Shah Waliullah, an educator, who favoured an approach balancing the Islamic scriptures and science. The course at the Madrassa Rahimiya prescribed 2 books on grammar, 1 book on philosophy, 2 books on logic, 2 books on astronomy and mathematics, and 5 books on mysticism. Another centre of prominence arose in Lucknow under Mulla Nizamuddin Sahlawi, who educated at the Firangi Mahal and prescribed a course called the Dars-i-Nizami which combined traditional studies with modern and laid emphasis on logic (Kumar 2003).

The education system under the rule of Akbar adopted an inclusive approach with the monarch favoring additional courses: medicine, agriculture, geography, and even from texts from other languages and religions, such as Patanjali’s work in Sanskrit. The traditional science in this period was influenced by the ideas of Aristotle, Bhaskara II, Charaka and Ibn Sina. This inclusive approach was not uncommon in Mughal India. The more conservative monarch Auangzeb also favoured teaching of subjects which could be applied to administration. In fact, the Mughals adopted a liberal approach to sciences as contact with Persia. The middle Ages also saw the rise of private tuition in India. A tutor, or Riyazi, was an educated professional who could earn a suitable living by performing tasks such as creating calendars or generating revenue estimates for nobility. Another trend in this era is the mobility among professions, exemplified by Qaim Khan, a prince famous for his mastery in crafting leather shoes and forging cannons (Kumar 2003).

COLONIAL ERA TO INDEPENDENCE

During 1784 to 1854, education helped integrate the diverse elements of Indian society, thereby, creating a new common bond from among conflicting loyalties. The native elite demanded modern education. The University of Madras, founded in 1857, became the single most important recruiting ground for
generations of ever more highly trained officials. This exclusive and select leadership was almost entirely "clean-caste" and mainly Brahman. It held sway in both the imperial administration and within princely governments to the south. The position of this mandarin class was never seriously challenged until well into the twentieth century (Frykenberg 1986).

During the 19th and 20th centuries most of the Indian princely states fell under the British Raj. The British rule during the 19th century did not take adequate measures to help develop science and technology in India and instead focused more on arts and humanities. Till 1899 only the University of Bombay offered a separate degree in sciences. In 1899 B.Sc and M.Sc. courses were also supported by the University of Calcutta. By the late 19th century India had lagged behind in science and technology and related education. However, the nobility and aristocracy in India largely continued to encourage the development of sciences and technical education, both, traditional and western (Arnold 2004). While some science related subjects were not allowed in the government curriculum in the 1850s the private institutions could also not follow science courses due to lack of funds required to establish laboratories etc. The fees for scientific education under the British rule were also high. The salary that one had got in the colonial administration was meager and made the prospects of attaining higher education bleak since the native population was not employed for high positions in the colonial setup. Even the natives who did manage to attain higher education faced issues of discrimination in terms of wages and privileges (Kumar 1984).

One argument for the British detachment towards the study of science in India is that England itself was gradually outpaced in science and technology by European rival Germany and a resurgent United states of America. So, the prospects of the British Raj adopting a world class science policy towards its colonies increasingly decreased. However, Deepak Kumar notes the British turn to professional education during the 1860s and the French initiatives at raising awareness on science and technology in French colonies. The British themselves undertook science initiatives in Canada and South Africa. Growing awareness
for the need of technical education in India gave rise to establishment of institutions such as the Indian Institute of Science, established by philanthropist Jamshetji Tata in 1909. By 1930s, India had a total of only 10 institutions offering engineering courses. However, with the advent of the Second World War in 1939 the War Technicians Training Scheme under Ernest Bevin was initiated, thereby, laying the foundation of modern technical education in India. Later, planned development of scientific education under Ardeshir Dalal was initiated in 1944 (Sen 1989). The Madras Medical College opened in 1835, and imparted medical education to women so that they could treat the female population who traditionally shied away from medical treatments under qualified male professionals. The concept of educated women among medical professionals gained popularity during the late 19th century and by 1894, the Women's Christian Medical College, an exclusive medical school for women, was established in Ludhiana of Punjab (Arnold 2004).

British education became solidified into India as missionary schools were established during the 1820s. New policies in 1835 gave rise to the use of English as a medium of education of western science. Fritz Blackwell writes: 'With the establishment of five universities in major cities in the middle of the century and the increase in primary and secondary schools, political consciousness also increased. The curriculum was Western and the response was impressive; for example, the University of Calcutta in 1900 was reportedly the largest university in the world, with more than eight thousand students. Further, a number of Indians, including Gandhi and Nehru attended university in England. It was in the 11th century that the Muslims established elementary and secondary schools. This led to the forming of few universities too at cities like Delhi, Lucknow and Allahabad. Medieval period saw excellent interaction between Indian and Islamic traditions in all fields of knowledge like theology, religion, philosophy, fine arts, painting, architecture, mathematics, medicine and astronomy (Blackwell 2004). Later, when the British arrived in India, English education came into existence with the help of the European missionaries. Since then, Western education has made steady advances in the country. With hundreds of universities and thousands of colleges affiliated to them, in fact, scores of
colleges in every discipline, India has positioned itself comfortably as a country that provides quality higher education to its people in particular and to the world in general.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS EDUCATION FOR ALL

Free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years is the Constitutional commitment in India (Article 45). At the time of the adoption of the Constitution in 1950, the aim was to achieve the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) within the 10 years that followed, i.e., by 1960. Keeping in view the educational facilities available in the country at that time, the goal was far too ambitious to achieve within a short span of 10 years. To facilitate the achievement of UEE goal, the National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT), the National Institute of Educational Planning & Administration (NIEPA) and many other institutes were set up in 1960s as resource, research and training centers. In order to give access to elementary education for all children up to 14 years of age and for universal participation till they complete the elementary stage of educational programs, the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1968, the NPE in 1986, the Program of Action (POA) elaborated in the NPE of 1986 and the updated form of the NPE in 1992 gave an unqualified priority to the Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) program (Shirname 2007).

At the time of Independence in the year 1947, India inherited a system of education which was not only quantitatively small but also characterized by the persistence of large intra- and inter-regional as well as structural imbalances. Only 14 percent of population was literate, and one child out of three had been enrolled in the primary school. The need for a literate population and universal education for all in the age group of 6-14 was recognized as a crucial input for nation-building and was given due consideration in successive five-year plans. The NPE, 1968 stressed on the elimination of disparities in the educational system and on the improvement in the quality of the school. The emphasis was more on retention rather than merely on enrolment. Between 1950 to 1968, there was substantial increase in the number of primary schools, but record shows that
in 1967-68 the retention rate came down to 35%. This shows that the policy statement did not get translated into a detailed strategy of implementation. As a result, problems of access, quality, quantity, utility and financial outlay, have accumulated over the years, to reach massive proportions (Shirname 2007).

The Fifth All-India Educational Survey 1986 mentions that the disparity in enrolment still persisted between the states at the primary level. To tackle these problems, the Govt. of India formulated a new education policy in 1986. In this policy, along with the universal access, enrolment and universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, a substantial improvement in the quality of education was emphasized. This policy gave the highest priority to solving the problem of children dropping out of the school. This is evident from the emphasis given on non-formal education in the policy (Shirname 2007). At the same time it was decided that the various parameters of implementation of New Policy must be reviewed after every five years. This ascertained the progress of implementation of the policy and focus on the emerging trends in the area of education. The NPE, 1986 which was modified in 1992 as a ‘Program of Action (POA) made certain modifications in the earlier policy. The POA, 1992 emphasized three aspects: universal access and enrolment; universal retention of children up to the age 14 years and a substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning at the primary education levels (Shirname 2007).

**Literacy**

India’s progress in literacy has been tremendous during the last five decades. However, a feature that remains consistent in the literacy situations in India is the existence of large disparities in literacy achievements between different sections of populations, based on gender and residence. The growth of literacy in India 1951-2001 is shown in the following table:
Table 2.1
Growth of Literacy in India 1951-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Sex disparity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>24.95</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>24.02</td>
<td>34.44</td>
<td>12.95</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>29.45</td>
<td>39.45</td>
<td>18.69</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>36.23</td>
<td>46.89</td>
<td>24.82</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>42.49</td>
<td>52.68</td>
<td>32.52</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>65.38</td>
<td>75.85</td>
<td>54.16</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Participation in Elementary Education: A Socio-Economic Profile**

The National Sample Survey provides valuable information on the reasons for non-enrolment and drop-out. Non-availability of schooling facilities seem to account for only 10 percent of the “never enrolled” in rural India and about 8 percent in urban India; the difference between the sexes is very small in the rural but somewhat larger in the urban sector. However, nearly 30 percent of the persons, both in rural and urban India, gave the reason for “never enrolled” as being “not interested”. The difference between the sexes here is large: A large proportion of “never enrolled” females gave this reason in comparison with the males. About 52 percent of urban males and 29 percent of urban female could not avail of the educational services because of participation in household economic activity and other economic reasons. Attending the domestic chores restrained around one percent males, both, in rural and urban India, from enrolling as students. Most of the young females are denied access to education because they look after their little siblings as well as perform a large variety of domestic chores related to housekeeping. This was observed that with increase in per capita household income the proportion of currently “not enrolled” decreases (Shirname 2007).
Over a period of time, enrolment, both, at the primary and upper levels of education, has increased significantly. This was because of various programs and schemes introduced at policy level, govt. level, as well as various programs initiated by NGOs. In the year 2004, the enrolment ratio (gross) reached to 90 and 71 per cent at the primary and upper primary level of education respectively. The percentage of girl’s enrolment to the total enrolment at the primary and upper primary level of education in year 2004-05 was about 46.7 and 44.43 per cent. Despite improvement in retention rates, the drop out rate is still high at the primary and elementary level of education at 28.49 and 50.39 per cent respectively, in the year 2004-05. Along with retention, the learner’s achievement across the country remained unsatisfactory and a cause of concern (Shirname 2007).

**Education for All (EFA) in the Indian Context**

The Education for All movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. The movement was launched at the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, when representatives of the international community agreed to universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy by the end of the decade. Ten years later, with many countries far from having reached this goal, the international community met again 2000, in Dakar, Senegal, and affirmed their commitment to achieving Education for All by the year 2015 (Shirname 2007). In a bid to translate EFA goals identified at international level at Dakar, India too made a plan of action to achieve the EFA goals. In the Indian context Education for All (EFA) implies:

1. Expansion of early childhood care and development activities including family and communities, especially for the poor, the disadvantaged and children.

2. Universal Elementary Education (UEE), viewed as a composite programme of access to elementary education for all children up to 14 years of age; universal participation till they complete the elementary
stage through formal or non-formal education programme and universal achievement of at least the minimum levels of learning.

3. Drastic reduction in illiteracy, particularly in the age of 15-35 age group, bringing the literacy level in this age group at least to 80 percent in each gender and for every identified disadvantaged group, ensuring that the levels of three R’s are relevant to the living and working conditions of the people.

4. Provision of opportunities to maintain, use and upgrade their education and provision for the facilities for development of skills, to all persons who are functionally literate and those who have received primary education through the formal and non-formal channels.

5. Creation of necessary structure and setting in motion processes which empowered and make education an instrument of women’s equality.

6. Improving the content and process of education, people’s culture and their living and working conditions, thereby, enhancing their ability to learn and cope with problems of livelihood and environment.

Schemes and Programme in Pursuance of National Policy of Education

The goals and objectives of Education for All in India are as follows: (MHRD, Annual Report: 1997-98)

Access

Universal enrolment of all children, including girls and persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; provision of primary school for all children within one kilometer of walking distance and of facility of nonformal education and improvement of ratio of primary to upper primary school to at least 1:2. Various schemes were introduced to improve the enrolment, one of the prominent one was the mid-day meal.
Retention

Reduction of dropout rates between Classes I to V and I to VIII and improvement of school facilities by revamped Operation Blackboard, to be extended to upper primary level also. Policy of no detention up to the Grade V was introduced.

Achievement

Achievement of minimum levels of learning by approximately all children at the primary level and introduction of this concept at the middle stage on a large scale.

Monitoring

Local level committee, with due representation to women and teachers, to assist in the working of primary education to oversee its functioning and improvement of the monitoring system for universalisation of elementary education.

In accordance with the constitutional commitment to ensure free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years, provision of universal elementary education has been a salient feature of national policy since Independence. This resolve has been spelt out emphatically in the National Policy since Independence enshrined in National policy of Education (NPE), 1986 and the Programme of Action (POA) 1992. Over the years, number of schemes and programmes were launched in pursuance of the emphasis embodied in the NPE and the POA. These included the scheme of Non-Formal Education (NFE); Operation Blackboard (OB); Teacher Education (TE); Mahila Samakhya (MS); State Specific Basic Education Projects like the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP); Bihar Education Project (BEP), Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project, Lok Jumbish (LJP) in Rajasthan; National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (MDM); District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Education Guarantee Scheme, Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) (Shirname 2007). These are introduced below.
Non-Formal Education

The Non-Formal Education (NFE) scheme was initiated in 1979 for the children of 6-14 years of age, who remain outside the formal education system due to various reasons. NFE cater to learning needs of working children and children in difficult circumstances. The scheme is recently revised and named as Scheme of Alternative and Innovative Education. The scheme envisages that all habitations that do not have an elementary education centre within a radius of one kilometer have one at the earliest. As a part of the scheme, school-mapping exercise was conducted to identify school-less habitations, which helped to locate habitations where alternative centers are to be provided.

The Scheme of Operation Blackboard

The scheme of Operation Blackboard (OB) was launched in 1987 to improve facilities in schools. The scheme had three components; namely, (i) an additional teacher to single teacher primary schools; (ii) providing at least two classrooms in each primary school and (iii) providing teaching-learning equipment to all primary schools. The OB Scheme seeks to bring both the 11 quantitative and qualitative improvements in primary education. During the Ninth Five-Year Plan, third teacher was provided to more than 22 thousand schools and this scheme covered around 78 thousand upper primary schools and to these schools new teaching-learning materials were supplied.

District Institute of Education and Training

The scheme to strengthen teacher education by establishing quality training institutions, such as the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) was initiated in 1987. The scheme meant to create viable institutional, academic and technical resource base for orientations, training and continuous up-gradation of knowledge, competence and pedagogical skills of school teachers in the country.
The Mahila Samakhya Programme began in 1988 with the broad objective of creating an environment that promote women’s and girls’ education, wherein poor women enabled to identify and overcome the socio-cultural and systemic barriers that inhibit their participation in the education process. The programme itself has gained an understanding of the approach and strategies that facilitate marginalized women in rural areas to take greater control of their lives and to ensure learning environment for themselves and their daughters. The learning process involves information and capacity building, developing analytical decision-making, leadership capabilities and facilitating the agency of women to address their problems to make informed choices and collectively act to bring about change. The educational strategy is built around the issues / needs as articulated by Sangha / Federation women – with a focus on legal literacy (rights and entitlements), health and nutritional education, political education (focus on women in the political process), education for livelihoods, environmental education and basic literacy. The effectiveness of the MS approach and strategy in mobilizing poor rural women around education issues has been consistently commended by successive programme evaluations.

A recent National Evaluation of the programme in 2004 and its key findings substantiate claims of a) reaching the poorest women (primarily from the SC/ST communities and women working as agricultural labour) in its project areas, and in many cases women who have not been reached by other development initiatives; b) a positive response of poor women to the programme efforts to enable their mobilization and participation in the public domain; c) among sangha women, there is a significant increase in the awareness levels and understanding of rights and entitlements as well as government programmes, schemes and resource allocations for women and girls; d) sanghas and federations are quick to raise their voice and act against violence against women, child marriages and in Karnataka and AP against the devadasi system; e) the alternative structures such as the Nari Adalats/ Mahila Panch/ Mahila Court (women’s court) managed and run by the sanghas, have gained in credibility and
recognition at the community level as effective alternative justice redressal mechanisms and f) the impact of women’s mobilization and empowerment is very evident in the decisions taken to educate girls.

The voluntary participation of poor women (the programme offers no incentives), to come together in collectives, address social discrimination and gender barriers, and to ensure education of women and girls, is of particular significance (Shirname 2007).

Total Literacy Campaigns

The significant improvement in literacy rates during 1991 to 1998 is because of the measures that have been initiated during this period. The literacy programmes in India are managed by the National Literacy Mission (NLM) launched in 1992 with an aim to make 100 million literates of the age group 15-35 years by the turn of the century, i.e., 1999. Based on the Ernakulam experience in mobilizing society in the affairs of literacy programs, the NLM launched Total Literacy Campaigns in a large number of districts. Since then a number of districts have become total literate districts. The achievement is also because of the fact that during 1990s, a number of innovative projects and programmes were initiated. The Total Literacy Campaigns mobilize communities and contributed to greater participation of children in schools. The uniqueness of the TLC lies in the fact that it is delivered through voluntarism. The programme is being implemented through the Zilla (district) Saksharata Samities created for the purpose. A little less than 50 per cent of the total population in 1991 was illiterate but since than the country has made considerable progress both in terms of total (7+ populations) and adult literacy (15+) rates (Shirname 2007).

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)

The World Bank assisted District Primary Education Programme launched in 1994 in 42 districts of seven states is currently under implementation in about 150 districts spread over fifteen states. The main objectives of DPEP are as follows:
Emphasizing local area planning with district plans being formulated in their own right instead of being derived from a state plan project document; infusing greater rigor and professional inputs in planning and appraisal; more focused targeting educationally backward districts and districts where total literacy campaign has been successful; More focused coverage initially focused on primary stage (Classes IV and its NFE equivalent) with stress on girls and for socially disadvantaged groups and emphasizing capacity building and networking of district, states and national level institutes in the fields of education management and social services to provide the resource support for the programme.

To make ‘education for all’ successful substantial efforts needed to be made. And this task was challenging given the huge number of target population. First and most important task was to have the reliable information on what is the number we are addressing and how much has already been addressed. To study the progress in Education For All (EFA), reliability of data on education remained the major cause of concern of the data users. To strengthen information system, among which the development of computerized information system under the centrally sponsored District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) is the most prominent and sincere one. It may however be noted that data on learner’s achievement are not available on regular basis. It is only in the recent past (1994) that achievement tests were conducted under the District Primary Education Programme through the Baseline Assessment Surveys (BAS) (Shirname 2007).

- **State specific Basic Education Projects**

The state specific basic education projects in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project), Bihar (Bihar Education Project), Uttar Pradesh (Uttar Pradesh Basic Shiksha Project), Rajasthan (Lok Jumbish & Shiksha Karmi), and the District Primary Education Programme are of recent origin. Decentralized planning in a project mode, disaggregated target setting, community mobilization through Village Education Committees, participative planning process and autonomy to set targets, priorities and strategies are some of
the salient features of DPEP. The programme however confines to only primary level but the Government of India at present is thinking seriously to upgrade it to the upper primary level initially in phases in few districts. Also under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, provisions are made to cover the entire elementary level (Shirname 2007).

**Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP)**

In 1983, India obtained assistance from the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of U.K. for implementing the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP). This project is aimed at the quality improvement of primary education in the project area. The scope of this project did not cover certain components of basic education such as non-formal education and the focus on education for girls. Instead, the project emphasized the enhancement of the teacher’s and the supervisor’s professional competence, and assisted in the construction of primary school buildings (Shirname 2007).

**Bihar Education Project (BEP)**

The Bihar Education Project (BEP) represents the first major attempt in India to include the broad range of national EFA concerns, issues, approaches, and strategies in one large-scale operational program. The Government of India, the state of Government of Bihar, NGO’s teacher representatives and distinguished women and educationists are represented in these bodies so that planning and monitoring are done in a participatory manner. This project covers all components of elementary education and expanded in a phased manner in 20 districts. Village Education Committees play an important role in the implementation of the project at the village level. Initially this project emphasized mobilization and literacy activities in 1991, which has shifted the focus to primary education (Shirname 2007).

**Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project**

The Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project also implemented a participative state level autonomous society, with the Vernacular Education
Centers (VECs) playing an active role in the implementation of the projects at the grassroots level. This project is the first major primary education project funded by the World Bank in India. The project attempts to operationalise the concepts of school complexes to provide resource support to schools (Shirname 2007).

❖ **Community Mobilisation and Participation**

Many educational innovations of recent years are based on the strong foundation of community support and participation. When progress is discussed and analysed at different levels within the project, "people's acceptance and participation" is used as an indicator. Mobilising the village community to take responsibility to ensure quality education for every child is the core strategy of both Lok Jumbish (LJ) and Shikhsa Karmi Project (SKP) in their efforts to universalise primary education and deliver quality education. Thus, it can be said that community involvement has been the key factor for the success of the two projects (Shirname 2007).

❖ **Lok Jumbish**

Lok Jumbish (literally translated as People’s Movement) began as an idea of retired civil servant, Anil Bordia, to mobilize greater public support for education. The original idea was to address the problem of low community interest in education through involving community members in a school mapping process. In doing so, the program stressed the responsibility that community members had in preparing and implementing the school development program. Since then, the project management structure set up for school mapping has formed the basis for series of other activities which target specific needs within the education sector. Lok Jumbish- People’s movement- Project was implemented in Rajasthan since 1992, which is one of the most educationally backward states of India. This project was funded by Swedish International Development Authority (Govinda 1995).

The main objective of LJP is to achieve EFA through people’s mobilization and participation. Some of the main strategies used in Lok Jumbish were:
Environment Building: Mobilization of the community for the program through rallies, cultural programs and folk media such as songs, dances, plays and puppet shows. People’s Participation: Mobilization of the village community to undertake micro-planning, support for community action to ensure all children are in school and accountability of the education system.

Decentralized Management: Devolvement of decision making to block and village level.

Involvement of Teachers: Restoration of teachers’ status and their own pride in their profession, also the involvement of teachers’ organizations in decision making.

Training of Personnel: Training for teachers to support educational reform and training of community members to enable them to play their roles effectively.

Quality Improvement: Improvement of teacher performance, norm-based facilities (e.g., cleaning standards are set for Lok Jumbish schools), modifications to curriculum and pedagogy.

Evaluation: Continuity and in-built activity through instructional and school management practice.

A Coherent Gender Strategy: Mainstreaming gender equity in all aspects of the program activities. The need of women and girls was given the priority. Promotion of equal numbers of women at all levels. Special support given for developing women staff and practical needs of women and girls recognized at all levels. Gender sensitive training for all stakeholders and active steps taken for the prevention of sexual harassment. Various approaches were developed towards gender sensitive teaching. In the Lok Jumbish program a Women Teachers’ Forum is created to boost the participation of women teachers in residential training camps and to encourage them to become trainers. Women require support and encouragement to break powerful social norms and to adopt a teaching career (Govinda 1995).
Lok Jumbish has also developed specific responses to problem situations, e.g.,

Problem: Few teachers were willing to take up posts in remote parts of Rajasthan.

Response: Muktaks (literally “one who practices freedom of action”) are recruited in pairs, given about 60 days’ training in basic pedagogy, confidence building and community participation approaches and are then sent to the rural areas to open Muktagans – open schools which allow students to visit school around their work schedule. Initial evaluations suggest that teachers in these schools have high levels of commitment.

Problem: Adolescent girls tend to drop out of school.

Response: Adolescent girls’ camps which impart basic literacy skills and promote health and hygiene issues. Community support for the camps is built through a variety of “environment building” strategies.

Problem: Low levels of literacy and low self-esteem among large numbers of women within the communities.

Response: Women’s Residential Institutes of Training and Education (WRITE) in which women engage in basic education activities in a stimulating and nurturing environment (Govinda 1995).

❖ **Shiksha Karmi Projects**

(Creating an informal cadre of women teachers in Rajasthan)

Shiksha Karmi project is another important programme, which has received attention at the international level and was funded by Swedish International Development Authority. SKP focuses its attention on universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote, arid areas and socio-economically backward villages with primary attention given to girls. The appointment of women teachers has been an important part of the educational discourse in India, and in Rajasthan in particular. In a state where segregation of men and women is strictly practiced and purdah (the system of
screening women from men and strangers by means of a veil or curtain) enforced, one of the major constraints to the enrolment of girls has been the absence of women teachers in schools located in remote areas. There were no women teachers identified in the Shiksha Karmi Pilot Project implemented in 1984. The initial document clearly stated the principle of two Shiksha Karmis, one man and one woman, in each village. It was felt that the presence of women Shiksha Karmis in the village could help to create an environment that would be more conducive to encouraging girls to enroll in the schools. However, identifying and retaining women teachers continue to be challenging, requiring sensitive handling. A series of problems are faced by women Shiksha Karmis, some of which are of a serious nature. Teaching is not a traditional occupation for women in rural Rajasthan, unlike in the urban areas (Shirname 2007).

The Mahila Shiksha karmis have to struggle to establish themselves as teachers, while simultaneously attaining approval from the family and village elders for this role. The fact that women teachers are required to travel outside their villages for training/workshop meetings and to interact with males and children from different castes has necessitated a change in the rules and norms governing households, the community and to some extent, the school environment. In general, where a woman is expected to cover her face and observe purdah in the presence of ‘elders’ and community men, the woman Shikshakarmi’s role represents a step towards equality. It is also evident that the new role has enhanced her personal status and given her a sense of freedom. The Mahila Prasikshan Kendras (training centres for women) were intended to increase the number of women teachers and thus the enrolment of girls in the project schools. They have shown that, given a supportive environment, women can be motivated to become learners. The first internal evaluation carried out by the Shikshakarmi Board in 1992 indicated that most women joined the centres as an opportunity to study and become self-reliant (Shirname 2007).

**National Programme for Nutritional Support (Mid-day Meal)**

The National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (launched in 1995) provides food grains/cooked meals to children in primary
classes. The programme assures 100 grams of food grains per day for children attending schools for at least 80 per cent of the total school days in a month. Annual Report: MHRD, 1999-2000 states that 9.90 million children were covered under the scheme and allocated 2.71 million metric tonnes of foodgrains in that year. Along with teachers, the local community is also given responsibility in the distribution of food grains. In 2001, the Supreme Court ordered that the states should provide cooked meals for all school children up to the fifth standard. The primary objective was to retain the students in the classrooms, rather than lose them to hunger and family pressures for additional income. The Supreme Court issued an order asking the states to implement eight different centrally-sponsored schemes for food security and to introduce cooked mid-day meals in all the government and government-aided schools. Later, in 2003, the Government of India announced that the scheme thereafter cover students up to the seventh standard. The government had budgeted Re.1 per child per meal initially; this was raised to Rs.1.31 per student per day subsequently (Shirname 2007).

Education Guarantee Scheme

The EGS centers in Tamil Nadu deserve special mention as an important new initiative in the 1990s. The remarkable success of EGS has drawn the attention of planners and policy makers and many a programme on similar line was initiated in the year 2004-05. The EGS centers covered 6-11 age groups who did not ever attend the school. The key factors on which EGS hinges are community demand and government guarantee. By projecting community demand as a start-up point, EGS addresses the issue of enrollment and retention.

The EGS is seen as successful mode of reaching the unreached or the ‘hard to reach’. Many of the EGS centers run by NGOs. Duration of the programme is kept at 60-75 days in a year. Schools hours are kept around two to three hours. The number of students per class was kept between 20 and 40; depending upon the facilities (teacher and other administrative arrangements) which were available in that area. Most of the staff/ teachers in this project have
undergone the strategy planning workshop. Every eight to ten schools were assigned separate supervisors. Teaching-Learning Materials were prepared separately in collaboration with NGOs.

❖ **Minimum Levels of Learning**

Significant efforts towards specification of Minimum Levels of Learning (MLLs) were made by the NCERT during 1978 in connection with the UNICEF assisted projects on ‘Primary Education Curriculum Renewal (PECR)’ and ‘Developmental Activities in Community Education and Participation’. As a part of these projects, a “Minimum Learning Continuum’ was drawn indicating the learning outcomes expected to be achieved by all children completing classes II, III, IV and V. The PECR was evaluated in 1984 using a set of achievement tests developed for all the primary classes based on the competences specified in the Minimum Learning Continuum. Utilizing the empirical evidences collected through this evaluation study the NCERT prepared another document entitled, ‘Minimum Levels of Learning at the Primary Stage’. To take the concerted steps to achieve these levels in institutions got a boost after NPE, 1986. A further momentum was provided by the World conference on EFA, held in Jomtein, in March 1990, which emphasized learning achievement. The report of a committee, set up by the Govt. in 1991, under the chairmanship of Prof. R. H. Dave provides a framework and a coherent strategy for achieving MLLs (Shirname 2007).

❖ **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 to the Constitution of India making free and compulsory education to the children of 6-14 years’ age group, a Fundamental Right. SSA is being implemented in partnership with state governments to cover the entire country and address the needs of 192 million children in 1.1 million habitations. The programme seeks to open new schools in
those habitations which do not have schooling facilities and strengthen existing school infrastructure through provision of additional class rooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance grant and school improvement grants. Existing schools with inadequate teacher strength are provided with additional teachers, while the capacity of existing teachers is being strengthened by extensive training, grants for developing teaching – learning materials and strengthening of the academic support structure at a cluster, block and district level. SSA seeks to provide quality elementary education including life skills. SSA has a special focus on girl’s education and children with special needs. SSA also seeks to provide computer education to bridge the digital divide. 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. It is also an opportunity for states to develop their own vision of elementary education. The Government of India, dated 2\textsuperscript{nd} January 2001 has set up the National Mission for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA, Assam 2008 News Letter Vol.No1).

**SSA: Mission and Levels**

SSA set up National Mission & State Mission for demand based capacity development. It is an effort at effectively involving the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the School Management Committees, the Village Education Committees, the Parents’ Teachers’ Associations, the Mother Teacher Associations, the Tribal Autonomous Councils in the management of elementary schools. It has also other levels of mission like District level, Gaon Panchayat Education Committee, Tea Garden Education Committee and Ward Education Committee.

**SSA: Role**

The SSA is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children. There is also another goal to bridge social and gender gaps, with the
active participation of the community in the management of schools. It is not alienating which develop the community solidarity. It develops the human potential both spiritually and materially. It is a process of value based learning that allows children an opportunity to work for each others’ well being.

**SSA: Components**

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.

**SSA: Objectives**

1. All Children be in School, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternative School, “to school” camp by 2003.

2. All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.

3. All children complete eight years of elementary 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.

SSA: Structure and Functioning

The Central and State Governments together implemented the SSA in partnership with the local governments and the community. To signify the national priority for elementary education, a National Sarva Shiksha Abhijyan Mission is being established with the prime minister as the Chairperson and the Union Minister of Human Resource Development as the Vice Chairperson. States have been requested to establish State level Implementation Society for DEE under the Chairmanship of Chief Minister, Education Minister. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is not disturbing the existing structures in states and districts but it only tries to bring convergence in all these efforts. Efforts are to be made to ensure that there is functional decentralization down to the school level in order to improve community participation. Besides recognizing PRIs/ Tribal Councils in Scheduled Areas/ including the Gram Sabha, the state is to be encouraged to enlarge the accountability framework by involving NGOs / teachers, activists / women’s organizations etc. In their structure mainly National Mission, State Mission, District Level, Block Level, Village Level Committee, Gaon Panchyat Level Committee are functioning at respective levels.

SSA: National Mission Structure

The Government of India dated 2nd January, 2001 has setup the National Mission for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. The National Mission has a major role to play in developing capacities. The National Mission has the role of disseminating good practices across the state. This includes encouraging study visits and regularly publishing such good practices. The monitoring and operational support unit of the National Mission responds to the demand from states and districts. It has the flexibility of sending monitoring teams at short notice. The National Mission constantly updates the lists of experts in functional and geographical areas in consultation with State Implementation Societies. The lists of experts were periodically placed before the Executive Committee for approval.
Hierarchical Structure of the SSA, National Mission is shown in the following chart:

Chart 2.1
Hierarchical Structure of the SSA, National Mission


The National Mission includes the following bodies:

(i)  The Governing Council,

(ii) The Executive Committee,

(iii) The Project Approval Board.

(i) The Governing Council is headed by the Prime Minister with the Human Resource Development Minister as the Vice Chairman. The Governing council is also associated by the Finance Minister, Deputy Chairman-Planning Commission, three Ministers of state, three M.P’s, six Political Parties’ representatives, six education ministers from States, six teacher union representative, five educationalists or scientists, six NGO representatives, three Women’s Organizations representatives and three institutional members working for SC/ST and ex-officio members.
The Executive Committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Minister of Human Resource Development. The Minister of state for HRD (school education) is the Senior Vice Chairman and the secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy is the Vice Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

The Project Approval Board has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the Department. The Joint Secretary (Elementary Education) has been designated as Director General of the National Mission of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, who is Ex-officio Member Secretary General of the Council and the Executive Committee.

POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNING COUNCIL

The council is the apex policy planning body for elementary education in India. Within the budget provision approved by parliament, the council has full autonomy for their utilization. More specifically, the Governing Council.

(i) reviews the implementation progress of SSA in various states;
(ii) gives overall policy guidance and direction regarding the objectives for better implementation;
(iii) gives directions, as may be necessary, to the Executive Committee;
(iv) calls for special reports on specific issues of national/regional importance;
(v) suggests for convergence, between other programmes and schemes of other departments/ministries that impact on children’s education;
(vi) helps strengthen Centre-State partnership in implementation of SSA;
(vii) helps strengthen the involvement of elected political leadership, voluntary agencies and the private sector in the mission for achieving universalization of elementary education;
(viii) provides guidance and directions to the Executive Committee.
POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee of National Mission for SSA carried out all the functions of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. National Mission in accordance with the policies and guidelines laid down by the Government Council. Powers and responsibilities of the Executive Committee include.

(i) to conduct a regular review of the progress of the implementation of SSA in the country;
(ii) to approve modifications in the norms, including financial norms of SSA intervention, may be necessary;
(iii) to discuss and devise meaningful involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Voluntary Organizations in the planning and implementation of SSA;
(iv) to promote convergence of SSA with other programmes and schemes of the education department;
(v) to provide guidance for functioning of the Project Approval Board;
(vi) to constitute the national level sub-missions and supervise their functioning.

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE PROJECT APPROVAL BOARD

Project Approval Board was constituted in August 2001 mainly for scrutinizing and approving the perspective and annual work plans of states, districts and other institutions implementing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The powers and functions of the National Missions delegated to the Project Approval Board are.

(i) to discuss and approve the annual work plan and budget of SSA (including DPEP, NPEGEL, and KGBV, wherever applicable) for districts, and states/UTS of the country;
(ii) to provide administrative clarifications and instructions regarding SSA norms and implementations procedures;
(iii) to discuss, formulate and recommend changes in norms, including financial norms to the executive committee;
(iv) to review the implementation of SSA NPEGEL, KGBV and DPEP in each state/UT through half-yearly meetings with education secretaries/state Project Directions of each state/UT and/or other mechanisms;

(v) to suggest proposals for modification in the SSA framework for implementation to the Executive Committee as and when required, in consultation with the states and UTs;

(vi) to discuss with representatives of state Government/State Implementation Societies matters of educational policies and reforms that impact on SSA implementation or the progress towards UEE, and

(vii) to discuss in PAB about the matters of inter-departmental coordination and convergence in elementary education.

Functions of Department of School Education & Literacy (Joint Secretary & Director General, SSA)

The Directors/Deputy Secretaries of the National Mission also work as the Deputy Director Generals of the National Mission under the overall supervision of the D.G. Each Director/Deputy Secretaries has specific functional and geographical responsibility. The under secretaries and the section officers in the Elementary Education Bureau, along with the office staff etc are parts of the National Mission. In order to facilitate effective monitoring and operational support for MIS, a monitoring and operation support unit established from the existing staff and by appointment of a few need-based consultants as per rules. The management costs approved for the National Mission utilized for engaging the consultant and establishing the monitoring and operational support unit. The operational support unit works very closely with the National Resource institutions providing operational support. The functional areas may include:

(i) Monitoring, MIS, Research, evaluation and operational support;

(ii) Gender, ECCE, children with special needs and special focus groups;

(iii) Pedagogy and capacity development for quality teacher education;

(iv) EGS, alternative and innovative education, education of urban deprived children;

(v) Teacher recruitment, rationalization and other policy matters;
(vi) Planning and community mobilization;
(vii) Budget, accounts, annual reports and audit;
(viii) Civil works and development of school facilities.

The following are the roles and function of certain aspects of SSA Task Force:

A task force has been constituted for each sub-mission (Executive Committee approved constitution of six sub-mission on 1st meeting held on 23rd March, 2005) with representatives for governments/ ministers/ departments, institutions like NUEPA/ NCERT/ NCTE and individuals representing resource institutions and voluntary organizations and consultants of the Technical Support Group of SSA. Each sub-mission reviews the performance of states on the dimensions allocated to it. Each sub-mission prepares a half-yearly report that has discussed in the Executive Committee. The sub-missions supported by the under Secretaries, Desk Officers, Section Officers and staff in the Elementary Education Bureau.

Resource Groups/ Advisory Committee: National Resource Group for SSA introduced basically for quality improvement and it also introduced for Mahila Samakhya, KGBV & NPEGEL. This group on EGS & AIE for guiding and reviewing interventions under the EGS & AIE Schemes. For identifying subjects for research and approving proposals for conduct of research or evaluation Research Advisory Committee and Research Approval Committee have been formed.

**Technical Support Group (TSG)**

The Technical Support Group in Educational Consultants India Limited (Ed. CIL) is created to provide technical support in the various functional areas of Pedagogy, Alternative Schooling, Civil Works, Financial Management, Inclusive Education, gender, MIS, Planning, Appraisal and Supervision, Research and evaluation, Monitoring, Community Mobilization, Computer Aided Learning, Documentation, etc under SSA to national level and state level. Accordingly, the service agreement between Ministry of Human Resource Development and Ed. CIL for providing technical support at national level for implementation of the SSA programme was entered into for the establishment of Technical Support
Group in Ed. CIL. Technical Support Group is staffed by Senior Technical and Professional Experts to manage various functional areas on contract basis, supplemented, as needed by short term consultants, and support staff. The Technical Support Group also provides capacity building at state/district level to various functionaries in the above functional areas.

All activities in the elementary education sector, including the implementation of the revised NFE programme, should be under one society. This facilitates decision making at the state level. The Governing Council could be headed by the Chief Minister and the Executive Committee by the Chief Secretary/ Development Commissioner/ Education secretary. Representation of Finance and Planning Departments on the Governing Council and the Executive Committee facilitates decision-making. Department of Rural Development’s involvement facilitates the process of mobilizing additional resources under the rural employment programmes for school infrastructure development. Further, for better inter-sectoral convergence, Department of Women and Child Development for early childhood care and education support, Department of Labour for addressing issues of children who are out of school, Department of SC and ST welfare to focus on issue of SC, ST children, Department of Urban Planning and Development for delivery of education in urban areas and addressing issues of urban deprived children form part of the Executive Committee of the State Mission for SSA. Involvement of NGOs, social activists, university teachers, teacher union representatives, Panchayati Raj representatives, and women’s groups help in ensuring full transparency to the activities of the Mission. Ministry of Human Resource Development represented both on the Governing Council and the Executive committee.

**SSA: State Mission Structure**

State Missions plays an important role in meeting the capacity development needs of the districts as per their requirement. The professional and operational support institutions regularly interact with the State Implementation Societies and districts to ascertain the capacity development needs. Flexibility in meeting the capacity development needs is critical to success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. State Mission has also Governing Council, Executive Committee followed by State Project Director. Under the State Project Director
Collector/CEO linked with District Programme Coordinator/DEEO and they also maintain relation with Zilla Parishad and DIET. Block Panchayat Samiti and BRC/URC maintain the relation with Block Education Office. This Block Education Office follows the District Programme Coordinator/DEEO. All above mentioned officials are prepared for school.

The following chart 2.2 shows the hierarchical structure of SSA-State Mission.

**Chart 2.2**

Hierarchical Structure of SSA State Mission

The important functions of SSA at state level

1) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan allows the engagement of professionals on contractual forms, subject to the ceiling on management costs. The professionals have to work to strengthen capacities in the mainstream. This requires serious effort and possible restructuring of command structures in many states. SSA encourages all efforts at restructuring that contribute to effective decision making and efficiency. This calls
for adoption of strict selection criteria while posting officials to institutions like DIETs and SCERTs. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with states under the scheme of Teacher Education is already highlighting this need for priority to institutional development.

2) Management cost up to 6 percent of the total programme cost has been provided. It can be used for the tasks such as engagement of experts for specific periods; data collection and EMIS operationalization and maintenance; office expenses like stationery, telephone, fax, photocopies, consumables, postage, POL, vehicle hiring, TD/ DA of functionaries; cost of persons allowed to be engaged on contract basis for the programme duration; recurring contingent and miscellaneous costs. For specific tasks, experts may be hired for a given time frame, to provide support to the mainstream educational management structure. There are the areas like MIS, pedagogy, teacher training, research and evaluation, community mobilization, gender sensitization, civil works, alternative schooling, that may require infusion of experts.

3) After assessment of needs and existing availability of manpower, decisions regarding contractual appointees are taken in consultation with the state level authority. All contractual appointees engaged for a specified time period by the State Level Implementation Society (and not by the government) and works within the institution’s framework. The selection process of the professionals hired on contract (within the 6 percent management cost) has to be very rigorous. Selections were done by expert committees specifically constituted for the purpose.

4) An illustrative management structure has been provided under the DPEP. The effort to first identify the existing strengths and weaknesses of the implementation team at the District, Block, Cluster and Habitation levels. The requirement of additional staff is worked out on the basis of this assessment. In urban areas academic support are provided by Urban Resource Centre (URC) and Cluster Resource Centre (CRC).

5) The implementation team under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan works within a framework of decentralized management of education with full
accountability to the community. The Panchayati Raj Institutions and school level committees are involved in the Programme Implementation, along with the main stream structures.

6) SSA provides for support at State Level from the 6% management cost as also the funds for Research, Evaluation, Supervision, and Monitoring at State level. The cost of State level orientation and training programmes built into the district plans at the State level. The state component has to be integrated with the needs of the district. The objective of the state component is to facilitate programme implementation and provide support for capacity development at all levels.

7) The management structure under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan at all levels has to be accountable to the state specific arrangements for decentralized management of education. This required full transparency in all activities. Since the effort is to strengthen the mainstream structures, SSA involved investment for human functionaries. Exposure visits, orientation programmes for capacity enhancement, working with Non-Governmental Organizations, developing partnerships with elected representatives for universal elementary education, focus on special educational needs of focus groups, capacity for implementation of quality related interventions, are integral to the management structure. Partnerships like the Total Literacy Campaign management structures within the overall Panchayati Raj/ Tribal Autonomous Council set-up are required to build an effective management system.

8) Management of Accounts and Audit has to be an important area requiring attention at all levels. Proper maintenance of books of accounts at all levels, generation of financial progress reports, utilization certificates, financial and audit of inventions, transparency about findings, systems of continuous improvement have to be developed to sustain effective programme implementation.

9) The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan allows states/UTs to have their own management structures, respecting the diversity that exists in these structures across the states. The effort is to empower schools to take
their own decisions, within the overall management context of a state/UT.

10) The states have to set up the state level Implementation Society. The existing DPEP, it is to be modified to meet the needs of UEE. The state level Implementation Societies have to have effective monitoring and operational support units. Creation of effective EMIS unit, a team of experts to provide support in specific functional areas, regular monitoring, supervision and appraisal activities, etc have to be organized at the state level Implementation Society.

11) Each state likes to re-organize the state level setup in the mission mode. Like the National Mission, the state level mission carries out a large number of monitoring and operational support tasks. District and sub-district units similarly are set up by the state. The academic support at the sub-district levels is provided Block Resource Centers (BRC) at Block level and Cluster Resource Centers (CRC) at Cluster level. In urban areas the academic support at sub-district level provided by Urban Resource Centre (URC) and at cluster level by Cluster Resource Centre. If the municipality or town development authority has academic staff, they are deployed in the URCs/CRCs. The District Project Office (DPO) in association with DIET/DRC in the district collaborate with all these URCs/BRCs and CRCs for planning and implementation of activities.

12) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Conceived a vibrant partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations in the areas of capacity building, both, in communities and in resource institutions. These partnerships require nurturing through an ongoing partnership in activities. The Research, Evaluation, Monitoring activities under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is proposed to be done in partnership with institutions/NGOs.

13) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan emphasized the need for participation of civil society, NGOs and other expertise outside government in implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

14) A component for Assistance for Experimental and Innovative Programmes for the education at the elementary stage including non-
formal education is being implemented by the ministry directly to fund the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) for implementing a variety of experimental and innovative projects. The overall aim of this scheme is to promote experimentation and innovation for the achievement of goals spelt out in National Policy on Education (NPE) for Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE).

15) The scheme envisages constitution of Grants-in-Aid Committee (GIAC) at the national level which includes representatives of different Ministries/ Departments of the GOI experts and representatives of resource institutions and a few voluntary agencies. The GIAC is chaired by Secretary, School Education and Literacy.

16) Under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE), it has been decided to fund NGOs (other than Experimental and Innovative Projects) through State Implementation Societies.

17) For participation in NGOs the mechanism is decentralized in different programmes- The state society constitutes a Grants-in-Aid Committee (GIAC) which includes two representatives of the Government of India.

18) The GIAC at the state level should consider all Voluntary Agency (VA) proposals that are sent to the state level as a part of the district plan. If some VA proposals are not recommended at the district level, they are still be forwarded to the state level by the District Committee, with clearly recorded reasons. After GIAC recommendation, the entire district proposals are considered by the State Society.

19) An MOU was signed by the State Implementing Society and the VA which clearly states the terms of reference regarding implementation, academic support and monitoring, release of fund to the VA etc.

20) Major Central Interventions and their integration with SSA- There have been several innovative schemes in the sector of elementary education following the National Policy on Education in 1986 such as Operation Blackboard, Strengthening of Teacher Education, National Programme of Nutritional Support for Primary Education, Mahila Samakhya, Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education,
District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Lok Jumbish Project, Janshala (GOI-UN) programme. These programmes concluded on 31.12.2004.

Every state of India has some specific SSA organization. The SSA, Assam, is constituted in more or less similar lines with that of other states.

The Structure of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission in Assam is shown in the following chart:

Chart 2.3
The Structure of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission in Assam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component in charge</th>
<th>Mission Director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sr. Administrative Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Officer on Special Duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountants</td>
<td>Designation of Official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit</td>
<td>Chief Accounts Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Schooling</td>
<td>State Consultant (AIE),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Consultant (EGS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Works</td>
<td>State Project Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Mobilization</td>
<td>State Programme Officer (CM &amp; SFG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Consultant (SC, ST, &amp; Minority Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Consultant (SFG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>State Programme Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprived Urban Children</td>
<td>State Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>State Programme Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Education for Disabled</td>
<td>State Programme Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KGBV, Girls Education, NPEGEL</td>
<td>State Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Information System</td>
<td>System Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>State Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Monitoring</td>
<td>State Programme Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>State Programme Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Training</td>
<td>State Programme Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water &amp; Sanitation</td>
<td>Senior Consultant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SSA: District Level Structure

Organizational structure of SSA in all districts is not the same but district level structure always works for the capacity development needs. In Cachar district SSA structure is presented in the chapter that follows.

In conclusion, the history of education in India began with teaching of traditional elements such as Indian religions, Indian mathematics, Indian logic at early Hindu and Buddhist centres of learning such as Taxila and Nalanda before the Common Era. Islamic education became ingrained with the establishment of the Islamic empires in India in the middle Ages while the coming of the Europeans later bought western education to colonial India. Education in India in its traditional form was closely related to religion. During the early common era-late Middle Ages Chinese scholars such as Xuanzang, Yi Jing and others arrived in Indian institutions of learning to survey Buddhist texts. By the time of the arrival of the Islamic scholar Al Biruni India already had an established system of science and technology in place. During the late middle ages to early modern era in India the traditional methods of education increasingly came under Islamic influence. Pre-Mughal rulers such as Qutb-ud-din Aybak and other Muslim rulers initiated institutions which imparted religious knowledge. Scholars such as Nizamuddin Auliya and Moinuddin Chishti became prominent educators and established Islamic monasteries. The education system under the rule of Akbar adopted an inclusive approach with the monarch favoring additional courses: medicine, agriculture, geography, and even from texts from other languages and religions, such as Patanjali’s work in Sanskrit. Later, from the colonial era to post colonial era, English education came into being with the help of the European missionaries. Since then, Western education has made steady advances in the country. With hundreds of universities and thousands of colleges affiliated to them, in fact scores of colleges in every discipline, India has positioned itself comfortably as a country that provides quality higher education. At the time of the adoption of the Constitution in 1950, the aim was to achieve the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) within 10 years that followed, i.e., by 1960. In order to give access to
elementary education for all children up to 14 years of age and for universal participation till they complete the elementary stage of educational programmes. The Education for All movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. The 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 to the Constitution of India making free and compulsory education to the children of 6-14 years’ age group, a fundamental right since 2003. The programme seeks to open new schools in those habitations which do not have schooling facilities and strengthen existing school infrastructure through provision of additional class rooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance grant and school improvement grants. Existing schools with inadequate teacher strength are provided with additional teachers, while the capacity of existing teachers is being strengthened by extensive training, grants for developing teaching– learning materials and strengthening of the academic support structure at a cluster, block and district level. SSA seeks to provide quality elementary education including life skills. SSA has a special focus on girl’s education and children with special needs. SSA also seeks to provide computer education to bridge the digital divide. 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 and to develop own vision of elementary education at state level.