CHAPTER – VI
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.1 SUMMARY

A thematic overview of the related literature suggests that literacy campaigns and other initiatives for educational development have created awareness among the masses and have also contributed towards the educational development of all. Moreover, despite different programmes and interventions at national and state level, Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) is a distant dream and presents a mixed picture of success and failure. Moreover, various research studies and government reports including the Five-Year plans suggest gaps in educational attainment do exist in terms of gender and location. Also, large variations in literacy exist even between contiguous states. Considerable inter- and intra-state variations exist in India in terms of income and educational development. Hence, there is need for region-specific policies in education, as a common policy idea will not serve the purpose and will not lead towards the attainment of desired goals.

A critical study of educational development in India towards education for all (EFA) in terms of universalisation of elementary education and literacy levels is essential to ensure the fruitful implementation of various interventions by centre and state governments for promoting welfare of all people by eliminating inequalities and promoting the social and economic interests of all with focus on disadvantaged sections. To eliminate or reduce gender, location and caste related disparities at the grass root level the trends of educational development need to be studied in regional perspective. Hence, it is considered worthwhile to study the spacio-temporal variations in literacy and elementary education in regional perspective under the research work titled:

“Educational Development in Northwest India with Special Reference to Literacy and Elementary Education: A Critical Study”
Research Questions

The study was an endeavour to answer two research questions.

1. To what extent the goal of universal literacy and universalization of elementary education (UEE) has been achieved in the four states of northwest India (Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan)?

2. Why the various educational interventions have yielded mixed results across states and across districts within each state?

Objectives of the Study

To answer the research questions of the present study, following objectives were formulated:

1. To examine the spatial pattern and temporal trends of literacy in India for the period 1991-2001 and 2001-2011.

2. To analyse the progress made by the state under study in attainment of universal elementary education during the periods 1991-2001 and 2001-2011.

3. To study the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of northwest region of India under study i.e. Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan.

4. To examine the gender disparity in educational attainment of the northwest region of India (inter- as well as intra-state disparity).

5. To examine the location-wise disparity in educational attainment of the northwest region of India (inter- as well as intra-state disparity).


7. To study the views and perceptions of district level education authorities for accomplishment of UEE.

Delimitations of the Study

1. Educational development of selected states in Northwest India was analysed only in terms of literacy rates and participation in schooling at elementary stage. Further the quality concerns in educational attainment were not the focus of the study.

2. The state of Jammu and Kashmir and Union Territory of Chandigarh were not included in the study due to special status given to it by Constitution of India.
3. Only gender- and location-wise disparities were studied whereas the caste-wise inequalities and differences across minorities were not taken into account.

**Operational Definitions**

1. **Educational Development**: connotes two important and fundamental parts—Literacy and Elementary Education.
   
   i. **Literacy**, as defined by Census operations, is the ability to read and write with understanding in any language. A person aged 7 years and above, who can both read and write with understanding in any language, is termed as literate. The exclusion of population in the age group 0-7 is based on the assumption that all the children will be in the schooling process.

   ii. **Elementary Education**: The general pattern adopted at national level is 10+2+3 pattern, which includes 12 years of schooling, followed by 3 years of graduation. Out of these 12 years of schooling, the first eight years are termed as ‘elementary education’ for the children in the age group of 6-14 years. It is divided into two parts with five years of primary education (I-V) for the age group 6-11 years followed by three years of upper primary or middle school (VI-VIII) for the age group of 11-14 years.

2. **Northwest India** refers to the states located in Northwest region in a contiguous manner, namely Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Rajasthan, as have been used in a number of researches (Chathley, 1995; Dogar, 2001; Madhok, 2003; World Development Report, 2006).

3. **Critical Study** refers to attainment of expected targets for literacy for adult population and elementary education for children in the age-group 6-14 years by the states; comparing the achievements with the expected targets on basic parameters of gender and location for Education for All (EFA) and steps/initiatives by education administrators for achieving the targets towards universal education. This is done by analysing the progress in literacy and universal elementary education over the period of two decades i.e. 1991-2011; and through case study of selected districts with the help of secondary as well
as primary data analysis.

Methodology

The present research study was a three dimensional exploration of the educational development trajectory that the States under study have undergone in last two decades since 1991, expressed in terms of literacy and school education till elementary level. First, it incorporated the policy perspective to understand the educational development in India both in literacy and elementary education through critical policy analyses. Second, it analysed the secondary data to examine the inter- as well as intra-states progress made by the Northwest India on different indicators of educational development and literacy from 1991 to 2011. The third dimension involved analyses of the experiences and views of educational administrators of selected districts to understand the factors affecting the implementation of educational policies; challenges faced and good practices that resulted in the high and low literacy levels. This helped in further elaboration and explanation of the trends. Hence the study required critical review of education policies, detailed analyses of the trends in progress of educational indicators and in-depth enquiry into the issues, problems and factors leading to the present education scenario of selected districts from each State.

Research Methods

The study utilized mixed method research design, where the quantitative research traces trends and relationships of different indicators of educational development and literacy. On the other hand, qualitative research provides an in-depth understanding by elaborating and explaining the condensed database from first analysis. The study used historic as well as descriptive method of research for the treatment of quantitative data. Historical research method was used to study the growth trends in literacy and elementary education in India with special focus on Northwest region from 1991 to 2011. Moreover, it was also used for policy analysis in context of educational initiatives and developments that were implemented from time to time. Quantitative descriptive method was used to analyse the disparity in literacy and educational indicators across gender, location and caste. Case study method had been used to present and interpret the issues related to the conditions and factors affecting the educational status of a certain district by in-depth study and analysis of the individual experiences of those directing and implementing the various
measures at administrative level.

**Sources of Data**

The quantitative data was obtained from different sources such as-

i. Census of India conducted by Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India under Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.


iii. Human Development Reports by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)


v. Education for All Global Monitoring Reports published by UNESCO

vi. Data from District Information System for Education (DISE) published by National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), New Delhi.

vii. Large scale sample surveys such as National Sample Survey (NSS) and National Family and Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

viii. All India Educational Survey (AIES) conducted by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

Also, pertinent research studies carried out by government agencies as well as by independent researchers looking into various facets of educational development in India with focus on Northwest states namely, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan were reviewed and used for the discussion of the findings.

**Field Survey**

To gauge the views and perceptions of district education administrators, field survey was carried out as explained below.

**Sampling:**

The district-wise literacy rate varies from 54.08 percent (district Mewat in Haryana) to 88.15 percent (district Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh). Of these 86 districts in 4 states in Northwest India namely Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan, Haryana has 21 districts with inter-district range of literacy rate being 54.08 percent (Mewat) to 84.70 per cent (Gurgaon). Himachal Pradesh consists of 12
districts with literacy rate ranging from 72.17 percent (Chamba) to 88.15 percent (Hamirpur). Literacy rate in 20 districts of Punjab ranges from 61.83 percent (Mansa) to 84.59 percent (Hoshiarpur). Rajasthan consists of 33 districts and the inter-district literacy rate ranges from 54.86 percent (Jalor) to 76.56 percent (Kota).

Based on the quantitative data on indicators of literacy and educational development, one best performing, one average and one least performing districts are selected from each State. The twelve selected districts are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>High Literate Districts</th>
<th>Average Literate Districts</th>
<th>Low Literate Districts</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>Ambala (81.75 per cent)</td>
<td>Kurukshetra (76.31 per cent)</td>
<td>Sirsa (68.82 per cent)</td>
<td>12.93 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>Una (86.53 per cent)</td>
<td>Kullu (79.40 per cent)</td>
<td>Lahaul &amp; Spiti (76.81 per cent)</td>
<td>9.72 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>SAS Nagar (83.80 per cent)</td>
<td>Patiala (75.28 per cent)</td>
<td>Muktsar (65.81 per cent)</td>
<td>17.99 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>Jhunjhunun (74.13 per cent)</td>
<td>Churu (65.13 per cent)</td>
<td>Barmer (56.53 per cent)</td>
<td>17.60 per cent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Tool: Interview Schedule**

One of the objectives of the study was to seek and analyse the views, perceptions, experiences and attitude of educational administrators at the district level, as a part of case study, in order to get a deeper understanding of the factors working in favour of and against the educational development of certain districts within a State. Hence an open ended, semi-structured interview schedule was constructed and standardized as per the methodological rigour as given by different experts (Young, 1939, 1949; Koul, 2009; Best & Kahn, 2006; Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2012). It aimed to understand the views and experiences of district education officers (DEOs)
and their attitude towards the various factors that form an important part in development of education. It also focuses on the attitudes of administrators towards the policy programmes and interventions initiated by the government at different levels to fulfill the targets of universal literacy and elementary education. The questions in the tool are divided into seven themes/categories relevant to the research problem under study:

Table 6.2
Theme-wise Distribution of Questions in Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sequence of Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical underpinnings</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Implementation</td>
<td>3-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Impact</td>
<td>11-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Inputs in School Education Programme</td>
<td>17-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Support</td>
<td>24-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Issues and Challenges</td>
<td>28-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Disadvantaged Groups</td>
<td>35-37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quality Issues: Reliability and Validity

The validity of a research tool is the measure of judging if it measures or describes what it claims to do. Since the questions were framed to get maximum information on different themes related to the relevant research question, content validity was established to ensure that the questions are designed and framed in relation to objectives of the study. An initial try-out of the questionnaire was done on a sample of two district education officers (DEOs) to find out the relevance of the themes and efficacy of each item under those themes.

The next quality concern is reliability. This refers to the degree of consistency of the research if it were done by different researchers or by the same researcher on different occasions (Hammersley, 1992, p.67). According to Best and Kahn (2004),

“questionnaires unlike psychological tests and inventories have very limited purpose. They are often one time data-gathering devices with a very short life, administered to a very limited population. There are ways, however, to improve validity and reliability of questionnaires.”

To establish reliability of the questionnaire-cum-interview schedule developed
for the present study, the following conditions laid down by Good (1966: 237) as quoted by Koul (2009: 178) were addressed as given in the following table:

Table 6.3
Determining Reliability of the Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The desire of many interviewees to make good impressions, particularly in answer to questions relating to generally accepted standards of behaviour.</td>
<td>The inaccuracies in the responses were validated and compared with the objective reality as highlighted in the various data sources through quantitative data analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The reluctance of many subjects (interviewees) to reveal highly personal information that might appear damaging to the interviewee.</td>
<td>The information sought focussed on revealing the social realities w.r.t. educational issues concerning all. DEOs are assigned this responsibility to explore educability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An attitude of confidence in and respect for the interviewer, on the part of the interviewee.</td>
<td>The researcher maintained a good rapport with the DEOs during the conduct of the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Content and form of questions, procedures established for the interview, physical setting, mode of recording, accidental distractions and temporary state of the parties involved in the interview</td>
<td>The questions were formulated on the basis of previous researches done and with suggestions from experts in the field of educations. The time and place of interview was decided by seeking appointment as per the convenience of the interviewee. This also helped in minimising the chances of accidental distractions of any kind.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Validity of the research tool was established by seeking views of experts from the field of education as stated above. Specimen copy of the tool is given in Appendix I.

**Analysis of Data**

The present study used sequential explanatory design where first the quantitative data was analysed followed by qualitative data analysis. Quantitative data was analysed through the techniques of trend analysis and percentage analysis. Modified Sopher’s Index of Disparity was used to assess disparity in school education and literacy level of different groups of population in states under study over the period 1991-2011.

Disparity was measured by using Modified Sopher’s Index of Disparity

\[ D = \log\left(\frac{X_1}{X_2}\right) + \log\left(\frac{200 - X_2}{200 - X_1}\right) \]

Where \( X_1 > X_2 \) and \( X_1 \) & \( X_2 \) are literacy rates of two groups for which disparity is to be measured.

**Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)** was calculated to calculate growth rate of literate population per annum.

**Qualitative Data Analysis** was done using the technique of thematic analysis to draw out information from interview schedule for educational administrators dealing with adult literacy and elementary education at district level. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data collected via in-depth interviews and official documents collected from different sources.

### 6.2 CONCLUSIONS

It is imperative to examine India’s spacio-temporal trends in literacy from 1991-2011 to get a comprehensive picture of current education scenario.

#### 6.2.1 Progress in Literacy in India with Reference to Northwest Indian States

1. India’s total literacy rate is 72.99 per cent with inter-state difference ranging from 94 per cent (Kerela) to 61.8 per cent (Bihar). Only seven out of 27 states recorded literacy rate above 80 per cent. These states are Kerala (94 per cent), Mizoram (91.33 per cent), Tripura (87.22 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (82.80 per cent), etc.
per cent), Maharashtra (82.34 per cent), Sikkim (81.42 per cent) and Tamil Nadu (80.09 per cent). Eight states have total literacy rate between 60-70 per cent-- Madhya Pradesh (69.32 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (67.68 per cent), Jammu & Kashmir (67.16 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (67.02 per cent), Jharkhand (66.41 per cent), Rajasthan (66.11 per cent), Arunachal Pradesh (65.38 per cent) and Bihar (61.8 per cent). Rest of the 12 states have total literacy rate between 70-80 per cent. These are Nagaland (79.55 per cent), Manipur (79.21 per cent), Uttarakhand (78.82 per cent), Gujarat (78.03 per cent), West Bengal (76.26 per cent), Punjab (75.84 per cent), Haryana (75.55 per cent), Karnataka (75.36 per cent), Meghalaya (74.43 per cent), Orissa (72.87 per cent), Assam (72.19 per cent) and Chhattisgarh (70.28 per cent).

2. Intra-state disparity in literacy rate is highest in Madhya Pradesh with the difference in districts with highest and lowest literacy rate as high as 44.97 per cent (Alirajpur 36.1 per cent and Jabalpur 81.07 per cent) followed by Orissa with inter-district difference of 40.45 per cent (Nabarangapur 46.43 per cent and Khordha 86.88 per cent). High literate states of Mizoram and Tamil Nadu also have high inter-district disparity of 32.03 per cent and 34.63 per cent, respectively. Only three states have inter-district literacy range below 10 per cent. These are Kerala (8.18 per cent), Sikkim (6.46 per cent) and Tripura (4.03 per cent).

3. Himachal Pradesh is the only state in the northwest India along with Maharashtra from the west which is placed among the high literate states of India comparable with the states from northeast and south region. Literacy-wise the bottom states include those in central, northern and northwest India, except Arunachal Pradesh from the northeast. District-wise literacy profiles show a wide range from as low as 36.1 per cent in case of Alirajpur (Madhya Pradesh) to as high as 97.91 per cent in Serchhip (Mizoram).

4. As compared to India, inter-district gap in northwest region of India is less widening, from 54.08 per cent in Mewat (Haryana) to as high as 88.15 per cent in Hamirpur (Himachal Pradesh).

5. Inter-district disparity in literacy rates is as high in low literacy states as in high literate states. Highest inter-district variation is found to be in Madhya Pradesh (44.97 per cent) and Orissa (40.45 per cent). However for high literate
states like Tamil Nadu and Mizoram, the gap is as high as 34.63 per cent and 32.03 per cent.

6. The gender-wise literacy rate shows that none of the 27 states have male literacy rate less than 70 per cent whereas 14 states have female literacy rate less than 70 per cent. These states are mostly concentrated in North and Central India. A mixed picture emerged in terms of difference in male and female literacy rate. The male-female literacy gap is highest in Rajasthan (27.07 per cent) followed by Jharkhand (21.42 per cent), Jammu and Kashmir (20.32 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (20.1 per cent) and Chattisgarh (20.03 per cent). The gap is less than 10 per cent in Punjab (9.71 per cent), Tripura (8.8 per cent), Nagaland (6.64 per cent), Mizoram (4.08 per cent), Kerala (4.04 per cent) and Meghalaya (3.06 per cent).

6.2.2 Educational Development in Northwest India: Literacy Profile

1. Within Northwest India huge variation lies in four states in terms of literacy rates. In Himachal Pradesh, eight out of 12 districts have literacy rate higher than 80 per cent. In Haryana, seven out of 21 districts; in Punjab five out of 20 and in Rajasthan none of the districts have literacy rate higher than 80 per cent. Similarly, five out of 21 districts in Haryana; seven out of 20 districts in Punjab; 27 out of 33 districts in Rajasthan and no district in Himachal Pradesh have less than 70 per cent literacy rate.

2. Out of total 86 districts in the region, district Hamirpur (88.15 per cent) in Himachal Pradesh ranks among top 30 districts in India whereas the least literate district of the state, Chamba, has literacy rate more than 45 out of 86 districts in the region. It also ranks higher than 30 of the 33 districts in Rajasthan, whereas Lahaul and Spiti with second least literacy rate ranks higher than all the districts of Rajasthan and average literacy rate of Punjab and Haryana.

3. The inter-district gap in literacy rate is highest in Haryana, 30.62 per cent (Mewat 54.08 per cent and Gurgaon 84.70 per cent). Haryana is followed by Punjab with 22.76 per cent inter-district variations. (Mansa 61.83 per cent and Hoshiarpur 84.59 per cent). Difference between Rajasthan’s highest and lowest literate district is 21.70 per cent (Kota 76.56 per cent and Jalor 54.86 per cent).
per cent). The intra-state disparity in literacy rate in Himachal Pradesh is least among the four states, 15.98 per cent (Chamba 72.17 per cent and Hamirpur 88.15 per cent).

4. Interestingly, in 1991 the inter-district gap in highest and lowest literate districts of the four states was highest in Himachal Pradesh. However, till 2011, Himachal Pradesh recorded lowest variation among the four states, reducing the disparity among districts by almost 50 per cent, from 30.18 per cent in 1991 to 19.55 per cent in 2001 and 15.98 per cent in 2011.

5. In 1991, the lowest inter-district variation was observed in Haryana 23.82 per cent that increased to 30.62 per cent in 2011, thus making Haryana with highest inter-district disparity in two decades.

6. The districts with highest and lowest literacy rates in all the four states largely remained the same since 1991, except the ones which were newly carved out from the other districts or the districts from which a new district had been formed. For example, district Mewat was carved out from Gurgaon, which improved the Gurgaon ranking to the top in 2001 and 2011 from 12 in 1991. The new formed district Mewat ranked last among 21 districts in 2001 and 2011. In Himachal Pradesh where there are 12 districts since 1991, no change in the top and bottom ranking districts in terms of literacy rates has been observed. Similarly, the districts with highest and lowest male and female literacy rates also remained same in all the three cut point years.

7. For all the states in northwest region the inter-district variation in female literacy rate was higher than male literacy rate from 1991-2011. However, though the inter-district gap in male literacy rate reduced over these two decades, the gap in terms of female literacy showed mixed trend. In Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan, the inter-district variation in female literacy rate first increased from 1991-2001 and then decreased in 2001-2011. Himachal Pradesh is the only state where the inter-district gap decreased consistently from 1991-2011.

8. In all the four states, districts with low or average female literacy have high male-female disparity in all three years. Also, the reduction in gender disparity got reduced at a higher rate in high literate districts than in low literate districts.
9. In terms of inter-district variations in rural literacy rates in Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan, the variation first increased from 1991-2001 and then decreased in 2001-2011. Himachal Pradesh is the only state where the inter-district gap decreased consistently from 1991-2011. Also, districts with high rural literacy rate have low rural-urban disparity as compared to districts with low rural literacy from 1991-2011.

6.2.3 Educational Development in Northwest India: Elementary Education

1. In all the 18 districts of Haryana for which data was available the number of private schools have increased from 2005-06 to 2011-12. Out of 18, only eight districts the number of government schools have increased. These districts are Ambala, Bhiwani, Fatehabad, Hisar, Panchkula, Rewari, Rohtak and Sonipat. In all the 12 districts of Punjab, the number of private schools had increased from 2005-06 to 2011-12. The number of government schools also had increased but only in six districts. In five districts of Punjab the number of private schools have increased from 2005-06 to 2011-12. The number of government schools also has increased but only in 12 districts. In ten districts decrease the number of government schools was recorded from 2005-06 to 2011-12. The number of government schools was higher than private schools in all the 33 districts of Rajasthan from 2005-06 to 2011-12. However, by 2011-12, there was decrease in number of government schools in 17 districts.

2. Similarly, in rural areas the number of private schools has increased in all 86 districts of Northwest India. In rural area also number of private schools had gone up in all 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh.

3. The districts with low literacy rate in the Northwest region have high net enrolment ratio in the respective states. In Haryana, Sirsa, a low literate district had highest primary and upper primary NER. Also, Ambala and Gurgaon, both high literate districts, had lowest primary net enrolment ratio. Similarly, Chamba, a low literate district in Himachal Pradesh had high NER. District Bathinda in Punjab and Barmer in Rajasthan show a similar trend in literacy and NER.

4. The net enrolment ratio at primary level is less than upper primary level in all
the districts across states. Moreover, the gap between districts with highest primary enrolment and district with highest upper primary enrolment has increased from 2005-06 to 2011-12.

5. In 2005-06, Bhiwani, Mahendragarh, Rewari, Rohtak and Sonipat had more than 50 per cent of girls in total enrolment. At upper primary level 12 districts had NER higher than 50 per cent and three districts had NER more than 60 per cent. In 2011-12, the NER for primary level remained largely unchanged whereas that for upper primary level decreased for eight districts in Haryana. In Himachal Pradesh, only Kinnaur (51.3 per cent) had more than 50 per cent of girls in total enrolment and at upper primary level Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti had NER higher than 50 per cent. In Punjab, none of the districts had girls’ enrolment more than half of the total enrolment at primary level. However, in Rajasthan seven districts had more than 50 per cent girls’ enrolment at primary level and four districts at upper primary level in 2005-06. In 2011-12, 12 districts had more than 50 per cent girls enrolled in total enrolment at primary level. At upper primary level, all districts except Kota (17.9 per cent) had more than 50 per cent girls enrolled.

6. In case of PTR at primary level, almost all districts of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab had pupil teacher ratio less than 30. In Rajasthan 24 out of 33 districts had higher PTR than given under RTE Act, 2009. The PTR at upper primary level is desirably low than 35, as given under RTE Act, 2009 for the Northwest India.

7. In terms of availability of female teachers, only few districts in each state have female teachers more than 50 per cent. Nine districts in Haryana, three districts in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh each and one in Rajasthan have 50 per cent or more female teachers at elementary level.

6.2.4 Educational Administration and Educational Development in Northwest India: Responses of District Education Officers (DEOs)

i) Effective Leadership:
- All the DEO’s interviewed strongly believed that education is important in inculcating social values in the society. Also education’s role in economic development is well established.
• All the administrators were of the opinion that though UEE is not sufficient to make a difference in socio-economic conditions of the society, it is the most important phase in child’s education and hence needs to be strengthened. Some believed that mere UEE in terms of enrolment is not sufficient and learning outcomes are equally important in determining the socio-economic impact of elementary education.

• None of the 12 DEOs stated any special effort made on their part to improve the education standards of the disadvantaged sections. They believed that the sections are still backward due to long history of deprivation as well as inability of government to reach to them and improve the situation.

• Regarding the problems faced by DEOs in implementing the schemes in elementary education, interestingly none of the DEOs from educationally backward districts (Muktsar, Lahaul & Spiti, Barmer, Sirsa) accepted that they face any problem in implementing the scheme. However, DEOs of better performing districts (Mohali, Una, Jhunjhunun, Ambala) accepted that though implementing is not a problem but there are certain factors like more authority and autonomy to work; not having to get involved in other duties help in better implementation.

ii) System-wide Support:

• Interestingly, all education administrators irrespective of their educational status believed that not all initiatives proposed by central government are required or implementable at the state and district level. All the DEOs of educationally backward districts believed that international initiatives do give direction and goals to be achieved at the national level. However, for the educationally advanced districts it is not true. They opined that policies at local level have to be planned while keeping the ground realities in mind.

• Again the district administrators seem divided on the matter of adequacy of funds under various schemes. The DEOs of all the educationally advanced states felt that funds are not sufficient to cover all the expenditure. Whereas those of educationally backward districts believed that funding is not a problem and is sufficient.
iii) Effectiveness of Policy Initiatives:

- Irrespective of the district’s educational status, all the DEOs felt that the Right to Education (RTE) Act in itself is not sufficient. They also pointed out some issues that do not seem relevant in the local context. However there was also some area specific problems in implementing the norms of RTE. For instance according to DEO of Lahaul & Spiti, district with low literacy levels, the population density is so low that the norm of pupil teacher ratio as given by RTE cannot be adhered to.

- However all DEOs agreed that schemes like SSA and RTE Act have been able to attract children to the schools and also have motivated the administration to do so. Moreover, the MDM has been seen to be effective in retaining the children in schools and also providing adequate nutrition. However some DEOs also felt that in states like Punjab where food is not a problem, MDM has not done much in bringing children to school. However this district (Mohali) is mostly urban and economically developed.

- The views were divided on the issues of appointing contractual teachers and whether this will motivate the teachers for better performance. All the DEOs of educationally developed districts maintained that appointing teachers on contractual basis would improve their efficiency and keep them motivated. DEOs of educationally less developed districts had an opposite view point and believed that teachers’ should be given job security and this does not impact their motivation in a negative way.

- Also, on the matter of decentralisation, DPEP in 1995 was the first initiative in education started at the district level that brought significant change in the planning process. In 2001, SSA also gave opportunity to states to develop their own course of action under the broader guidelines of SSA. However, even today the smallest viable unit of decentralisation planning and management i.e. district does not posses enough autonomy to design their own targets. The DEOs who are in-charge of all the policy execution and planning process at district level believed that decentralisation, though is a good in essence, has not generated desired results primarily for two reasons. First, the authority is limited to utilization of funds allocated by centre and state government under different schemes. In case of Himachal Pradesh the DEOs believed that
decentralisation has helped in improving the situation. Second, the internal village level politics hinders the smooth functioning of local bodies.

iv) Teacher Component:

- All the interviewees acknowledged teachers’ positive role in school and society at large and their significance in the teaching-learning process. Moreover, they all accepted that apart from teaching there are other duties that teachers have to perform such as census surveys, maintaining records, election duty etc. However, on the question whether these issues affect teachers’ performance, the views remained divided. DEO’s from educationally advanced districts believed that these duties do hamper the teaching learning process and teachers should not be given such duties and be left only to teach.

- However, DEOs in the districts where the educational development is not encouraging opined that these duties are a part of teacher’s larger role in society and in no way hinder the process of teaching learning in schools. Further inquiry in to the reason for shortage of teachers in schools, one common reason emerged is that the teacher’s recruitment is a political decision and also a very lengthy one.

v) Local Issues and Challenges:

- When interviewed about the reasons for dropouts and absenteeism in the district one common issue was notable. None of the districts agreed to any major problem of dropout or absenteeism but highlighted the problem of children migrating from other states with their parents for seasonal occupation and then returning back in few months. These children are mostly termed as dropouts. All agreed that private school enrolment has increased over the period of time and surpassed that in the government schools.

6.2.5 Contribution of Elementary Education Towards Universal Literacy

The 7+ population increased from 688.1 million in 1991 to 864.9 million in 2001 (annual growth rate of 2.31 per cent) and to 1051.4 million (annual growth rate of 1.97 per cent). Over the same period the number of literates has increased from 358.4 million in 1991 to 560.6 million in 2001 (annual growth rate of 4.58 per cent) and to 763.4 million in 2011 (annual growth rate of 3.14 per cent). Also the number of illiterates declined from 329.7 million in 1991 to 304.2 million in 2001 (annual
growth rate of -0.8 per cent) and further decreased to 287.9 million (annual growth rate of -16.3 per cent).

The pattern of annual growth in number of literates coupled with decline in number of illiterates suggests that the momentum for moving towards a literate society or universal literacy shows a declining trend, during 2001-2011 as compared to 1991-2001, decade of Education for All. In other words, there is progress in literacy and universal elementary education in northwest India as well as compared rest of India. However, the progress is not as fast as it should have been while taking into account the impetus in state implementation for universal education.

6.3 DISCUSSION

The conclusions pertaining to progress in literacy and universal elementary education that are basic features of education for all in Northwest India, besides national figures, lead us to a few notable observations. Firstly, improvements in literacy attainments in India, particularly Northwest India are linear and status quo (across states and districts) and prevail since last 60 years of governmental efforts. This continuity in inequity status- both district-wise and state-wise in educational development is more disturbing when gender and location are further taken into account. The state interventions, both in education and social sectors have yielded tangible results, which are visible in terms of incremental value in human development index over the previous two decades. However, gender based human development index shows an increasing pattern of gender disparity, a matter of great concern since education is one of its major components. The gender issues have also been one of the MDGs (goal 3) – promoting gender equality and empower women, which is again taken care of in post-2015 development agenda under SDGs.

The state specific progress in literacy as a result of both National Literacy Mission and Saakshar Bharat efforts for eradication of illiteracy and evolving lifelong learning society along with efforts through DPEP in 1990s and SSA during previous decades have been instrumental in enhancing educational development of India in general and northwest India in particular. However, it is also evident from data profiles of districts and states in northwest India that disparities across gender and location have not changed considerably to a satisfactory level. The educational scene in northwest India is miniature India as the variations in literacy status and
elementary education are similar to those that exist in rest of the Indian states.

In other words, if national level planning (at macro level) is to be effective in achieving cherished goals, there will have to be flexibility in implementation of schemes at district level (micro level). This calls for conceded efforts by educational policy makers and implementing authorities to accept diversity in population in terms of geographical, socio-economic and cultural perspective and design education programmes in local cultural milieu, though keeping the new national policy framework.

6.4 EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the educational development in northwest India was studied by analysing the secondary data on literacy and different elementary education indicators. Also, along with the detailed data analysis, the views and responses of district education officers from selected districts were analysed to understand the issues that exist in policy planning and implementation. The results of the above both analyses revealed that the northwest region has though made much progress in terms of literacy and elementary education, the inequalities still persist. All the efforts made so far have not been able to reduce the inter-district variations within a state. Following are the educational implications of the present in light of the findings:

i) School Practices:

The National Policy on Education, as revised in 1992, had emphasized the need for a substantial improvement in quality of education to achieve essential levels of learning. The Programme of Action, 1992, stressed the need to lay down Minimum Levels of Learning at Primary and Upper Primary stage. This need emerged from the basic concern that irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, all children must be given access to education of comparable standards. To achieve this goal of quality education, National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 have stressed on Constructivist approach in the teaching and learning. However, the barriers that existed in implementing this approach like lack of understanding of the approach and lack of autonomy of teachers are to be removed for effective implementation of the curriculum based on the constructivist approach. These have to be done together with a set of systemic reforms and examination reforms.
As teachers learn better by doing, the pre-service and in-service training should orient the teachers towards the constructivist approach by way of demonstrating constructivist practices in their teacher training programmes and simultaneously making them practice it.

Moreover, the co-curricular activities need to be given equal weightage as the academic activities as these also play an important role in overall development of children. All classroom teaching is mostly theoretical. Practical knowledge can be imparted through co-curricular activities. Also, these activities as the name suggests meet the psychological needs of the students, mainly with reference to social demands of the pupils. Co-curricular activities offer many opportunities for the development of self-discipline e.g. NCC, NSS. In addition, they develop in students a spirit of toleration of others' views, healthy exchange of ideas, fellow feeling and accepting victory and defeat with grace.

ii) Teacher Training:

Within a school teacher and teaching quality have a huge impact on the classroom practices as well as overall development of the child. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 places different demands and expectations on the teacher, which need to be addressed both by initial and continuing teacher education. With a view to achieve coordinated development of teacher education, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) took up a number of initiatives during the last decade. It joined hands with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) to foster quality assurance and sustenance and with Distance Education Council (DEC) to ensure integrated development of in-service teacher education under the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode. It also entered into collaboration with the Rehabilitation Council of India in 2002 and in 2005 to develop curriculum on inclusive education and make it a part of the general teacher education programmes.

To contribute in developing innovative strategies those are school specific, it is important for teachers to support their tentative arguments for certain problems through different approaches of research such as case studies, action research and grounded research.

To develop such competencies in perspective teachers, the teacher preparation
has to be substantially strengthened by the teacher training programmes by increasing the duration of teaching practices in natural settings and by developing a effective design for co-ordination between teacher education institutions and schools.

- The success of these programmes also depends on the benefits that both these institutions draw during the time of teaching practice. It is important that the presence of a teacher educator in a school should be an added resource for the school in meetings its learning goals.

- Upgrading elementary teacher education calls for participatory curriculum planning involving all stakeholders, modular organization of curriculum in terms of critically engaging with theory and bringing practice within its perspective and a professional approach to teacher education processes.

- Every aspect of school education involves teachers as a facilitator and backbone of teaching-learning process. However the teacher education system and the school system are not in collaboration and hence despite undergoing training courses, teachers enter in to the workforce with deficient experience and expertise. The teacher education programme needs a complete overhaul balancing the traditional values and the new role of teacher as a professional and humane person to deal with student learning. The colleges of education, DIETs and schools need to come together in an effective networking for more effective delivery process.

iii) Role of Female Teachers in Decision-making:

The National Policy on Education (1986) stressed on the need to have more female teachers at the primary level. According to the latest DISE Report (2013), in 2013-14, there were only 46.7 per cent female teachers at primary level and 32.3 per cent at upper primary level. Though the percentage of female teachers has increased since 1990-91 (29 per cent), the participation of males in administrative roles is still higher. Also, majority of the DEOs in the four states under study are males. These figures speak volumes about the stereotypical role of women as a nurturer and that of men possessing better leadership qualities. Since number of female teachers is on the rise, this underrepresentation of women in educational administration can no longer be attributed to the bias alone. This is also related to the social and cultural influences such as family constraints lack of favorable environment and personal interest and
motivation.

- The female teachers should be given larger administrative goals based on their merits to bring in equal participation which can further help in bringing a different perspective to solve problems at the grass-root.

**iv) School Management Committees:**

One of the key challenges is to have growth coiled with equity and democracy without which the current growth becomes unsustainable. Ensuring good quality education for its population, particularly up to completion of secondary school, is an indispensible step in the direction of bringing equity and enhancing democracy. It is in this context that the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education, (RTE) 2009 Act is landmark legislation. Specific provisions have been made for democratization of schools and for parents and local communities to play their due roles in shaping and running of the schools in the form of School Management Committees (SMC) and preparation of School Development Plan. However, the results show that SMCs have not been effective in playing their role and in delivering the expected duties.

- There is a need for training to build capacity of all SMC members so that they can understand school-level finances and participate efficiently in the planning process. In order to do so, greater in-school support may be required for SMCs members.

- Moreover, easy-to-use planning guidelines and forms can be incorporated to guide SMC members through a step-by-step planning process. In order to ensure participation, clear guidelines regarding dissolving an entire SMC or individual members in case of non-participation should also be outlined.

- Also the school grants reach schools before the starting of financial year in order to enable SMCs to plan expenditure efficiently.

- Though SMCs are formed to increase people participation and ensure decentralisation of power and duties, these have remained largely ineffective. More and more awareness programmes have to be organized to sensitize the SMC members towards their rights and duties.

- Though the broader local issues and challenges are similar in all states. The nature and extent of these problems vary with respect to the social, geographical, economic and cultural dimensions. To address these issues
effectively there is a need to allow enough flexibility in planning and implementation of national schemes at the state and district level and further at block level so as to address the local issues more effectively in the quest for education for all.

v) Community Support:

*Self-help Groups*- The empowerment of women is crucial for the development of any country. In India, where population maintain equal ratio of males and females, the emergence of women entrepreneurs have great relevance and importance otherwise it will be amounting to neglecting 50 per cent of the entrepreneurial talent of the country. Creative entrepreneur is the backbone of a nation’s industrialization and economic development. Bringing women into the main stream of development is major concern for the Government of India. Therefore the Government of India launched a new programme known as SGSY for developing the women entrepreneurship and creating self employment opportunities. Researches show that the social impact of the SHG program increased involvement in decision-making, awareness about various programs and organisations, increased access to such organisations, increased expenditure on Health and Marriage events, there is a Change in the attitude of male members of the families, now they are convinced about the concept of SHG and encourage women to participate in the meetings and women reported that they have savings in their name and it gives them confidence and increased self-respect. Within family the respect and status of women has increased. Children Education has improved significantly. Especially girl education was very low but now SHG members are sending their children including girls to school (Sundaram).

*Community Learning Center (CLC)*- Due to the lack of a permanent institute at the village level, Literacy and Non-Formal Education (NFE) program could not provide functional education based on needs and problems of villagers. The Literacy and NFE program should be need based and should help the villagers to identify their real problems and help them to solve the problems through learning new knowledge and skills. CLCs help the villagers to learn new skills and technology to improve their profession and their earning capacities.

- Implementation of CLCs should be strengthened through the training of personnel, undertaking researches and conducting various skill training
programmes including computer-based activities. Based on the successful experiences in individual CLCs, linkages and networking with other development programmes have to be developed in view of the National and state Education for All policy and strategies. In particular, coordination between Continuing Education Centres and CLCs need to be promoted at the local as well as state and national levels.

vi) Convergence of Schemes:

Education is an essential component to facilitate the holistic development of an individual. Recognizing the importance of education, the Government of India has taken several initiatives to ensure that each individual is able to access educational facilities thereby contributing to economic growth of India. Improving the quality of education in schools with a special focus on capacity building of teachers, infrastructural improvement and greater ownership of community are some of the domains where the various educational schemes aim to bring about a change. In addition of schemes targeting specifically the educational aspect of development, there are number of social sector schemes that affect different indicators of educational development.

- The commonalities of these schemes should be assessed in order to mark out the areas where these schemes can have collective impact and bring maximum output. For instance, MG-NREGA is significant for various reasons, it is one of the few experiments in the world to provide alternative source of livelihood that will have an impact on reducing migration, growth in education and healthcare spending.

- The disadvantaged groups in Indian society include girls, SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities and children with special needs. These groups are not always distributed evenly but share common issues and challenges. There is a need to bring a comprehensive course of action for these groups in collaboration with other social sector schemes such as MG-NREGA.

vii) Role of Political Leadership:

It has been more than six decades that the education scenario in India is full of discrepancies and disparities at all levels and in all dimensions. Since, education is a subject of concurrent list, role of political leaders is one aspect that has to be critically analysed for its inability to bring in required changes. Despite of all the resources,
authority, power and obligation, the interventions either do not yield desired results or take too long to show the changes and results. Hence, systemic change in education require a strong top-down push to overcome the barriers.

- Strong political leadership at local level play a critical role in steering the educational reforms through legislation, proper utilisation of funds and effective leadership. For instance, the Saansad Aadarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) encourages MPs to develop one village from their constituency to develop into model village covering broad development indicators including education by focussing on improving MDM schemes, setting up smart classes with information technology (IT) enabled classrooms and e-libraries. However, since the main focus of this scheme is on IT and MDM, the other major issues of accessibility, shortage of teachers and learning outcomes are not put high on agenda and hence may get neglected.

- Seeing the urgency of making substantial changes in less time but with long term effect, it is important for the political leaders to get involved at a deeper level by giving focus on specific pockets where educational deprivations are high and identify the causes and efforts of under-development.

- The local level leadership is entrusted with important responsibility of executing all the schemes and decisions taken at the centre and state level. However, there is little flexibility in the role of district education officers (DEOs) to make necessary changes in the given guidelines/instructions. Also, the role of DEOs is limited to policy execution and implementation and has not been extended to the policy formulation at the local level. Hence, it is important to make amendments in the existing role and responsibilities of DEOs in order to ensure increased participation at the planning level with greater authority.

viii) Inclusive Education with Special Reference to Children with Special Needs:

Education for children with special needs (CWSN) has been repeatedly stressed since the First Five-Year Plan (1951-56). It was initially addressed through the “special schools” programme, and later moved to the model of “integrated education”, and finally became a part of the inclusive education system. The initiatives before 1970s were based on welfare approach and encouraged special school system. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) was the first education
commission, which brought up the issue of children with special needs (CWSN) in the Plan of Action (Gupta, 1984, Jangira, 1995) and gave strong recommendations for including CWSN into ordinary schools. However, the idea of integrated education was primarily introduced through the programme called Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) in 1974. The programmes introduced in the 1990s by the Government of India touched the idea of inclusive education at a basic level. However, the last four decades have seen a spurt of policy and legislative initiatives aimed at addressing the educational needs of a very large forgotten and invisible population of children with disability. The recent Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2010 discusses the spirit of inclusive education and emphasises educating every child in the age-group of 6-14 years within the elementary education system.

Education of disabled children does not fall within the purview of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, but is instead the responsibility of the omnibus Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E). The prime focus of the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is rehabilitation, not education, and education is not part of its agenda. The MoSJ&E have formulated three major proclamations to ensure rights of PWD. These three main national edicts pertaining to this dialogue are: (a) the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act, 1992; (b) the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995; and (c) the National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999. The ultimate goal of inclusive education is a school where all are participating and treated equally. However, it is important to remember that inclusive education is a constant process to ensure that education for all really is for all.

- When looking to reach the students who do not participate fully, it is important to give attention to the forms of education provided for all children, including a consideration of which children are given the opportunity to participate in school and which children are excluded and on what basis.
- Care has to be taken when looking into which children come to be categorized as being in some way “special” or “excluded” within particular contexts. In communities where all children, including children with disabilities, are sent to the local school, the community and the school take responsibility for all
children. It is also important to remember that a child categorized in one context as “special” might not be so in another and that children categorized within one “group” might have more different than similar needs. Experiences in different countries show that it is not sufficient to look at how to integrate one particular group of children, such as children with disabilities.

- There is a growing gap between private schools and government schools in terms of enrolment and quality parameters. The school education is getting more and more privatized which is also adding up to widen the gap. Private school enrolment of 6-14 year olds has risen steadily from 18.7 per cent in 2006 to 29.0 per cent in 2013 (Economic Survey, 2013-14). Though this is seen as a positive change, the public education system should be strengthened equally to provide larger choice to parents in educating their children.

- There is a need to strengthen the aanganwadi system under ICDS and should be collaborated with the primary school system in order to ensure that children do get enrolled in primary school at the right age without drop-out and wastage of resources.

ix) Non-governmental Efforts in Educability:

The influence of the non-government sector, i.e., people from outside the administration, in shaping the policy and approach to the literacy movement was far greater than that witnessed in primary education. No other government funded programme had so much say for social activists, NGOs, and progressive minded individuals in civil society in the leadership, planning, management and monitoring as in the TLCs. In fact, the very concept of TLC itself came from the non-government side. The KSSP in Kerala and its counterpart at the national level, the Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS) were the architects of this approach, and BGVS remained the official partner of NLM till mid-1990s. The Nongovernmental organizations working in education in India are professional resource centers and innovators able to reach children who are educationally disadvantaged. The Indian government could improve the effectiveness of primary education by increasing its collaboration with such organizations. NGOs extend education to underprivileged children in India and develop innovations that improve the quality of primary education. The government can support the efforts of NGOs to bring out-of-school children into schools through timely supply of teachers, classroom space, and other resources.
• Targeted action is needed to reach different types of out-of-school children—those who work, those who live in slums, those on the street, those who are members of tribes or of migrant families, and those who live in places without schools.

• To encourage young, first-generation learners to stay in school requires a supportive and nurturing environment. To help make learning interesting and worthwhile for such children, teachers in government schools could receive special training in new methods developed by NGOs.

• Improving the quality of education requires working closely with key agents of change, such as teachers, school heads, school management committees, and village education committees. To develop a cadre of trainers for primary school teachers, teacher training institutes would do well to evaluate and learn from NGO models for teacher training.

• There is a need for plurality of institutional partnerships is required for the realisation of the goals of UEE - between different agencies and institutions of the Government- between the Government and the NGO sector, between the Government and the private sector.

x) Research and Development:

• The database explaining progress in attainment of targets, either for adult literacy or elementary education need to be cross-validated with the help of independently conducted sample based surveys on the lines of national Sample Survey (NSS). This is needed to focus on marginalised sections such as migrant population, street children, orphans, children of sex workers etc. Similarly, impact assessment of different social and developmental interventions need to include indicators of educational development to reflect their impact on education.

• Continuous evaluation of programmes for promotion of educability, both at micro and macro level, need to be conducted.

xi) Literacy and Education:

The country has achieved a literacy rate of 72.99 per cent as per the Census 2011, an increase of 7.61 per cent over Census 2001. The gender gap in literacy has reduced from 21.59 per cent in 2001 to 16.25 per cent in 2011. However, the scene is not same in all states. Punjab and Haryana are among the states where the Saakshar
Bharat scheme has under-performed with respect to other states in India. Also the MDGs data (2014-15) suggest that India is off-track on the targets to achieve universal enrolment and completion. Large numbers of children still remain out-of-school and fail to complete primary education. Though India is on track to achieve gender parity at all education levels, having achieved it at primary level already. Women’s literacy rates lag that of men, indicating women’s poorer learning outcomes and opportunities.

Adult Education is a major catalyst to inclusive growth. The 12th Plan aims to provide functional literacy, with focus on women, SC, ST, Minorities and other disadvantaged groups and weaker sections. The thrust is also on providing basic education to ensure seamless transition to learning equivalent to classes V, VIII and X. Relevant skill development programmes will also be undertaken with support of institutions in the public, NGO and private sector, and in keeping with the National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework. Continuing Education programmes will provide opportunity for adults to pursue education through short duration courses in life skills.

- There is a need to launch new interventions as well as expansion of the ongoing programmes. It is therefore imperative to provide sufficient funds to achieve the challenging tasks of universal elementary education and literacy. Policies should also focus on overcoming the existing gaps in the educational field.
- There is a need for intensive planning, re-surveys and re-estimation for number of semi-literates, out-of-school population and neo-literates for evolving life long learning programmes.
- Strengthening of full-time structure in literacy programmes at various levels by filling in the existing vacancies and replacement of non-functioning coordinators along with re-orientation of literacy workers should be done at the administrative level.

The post-MDGs agenda translated in form of SDGs that aim at completing the unfinished MDG agenda with a higher level of ambition of ending – not just reducing all deprivations; and strengthening critical development drivers such as economic growth, industrialization, employment creation and reduction of inequality within and between countries, basic infrastructure including energy, and governance and
institutions, without which many social and environmental objectives would not be easy to reach.

6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. The present research study aimed at finding out the extent of educational disparities in terms of literacy and elementary education across gender and location in northwest India over the three decadal cut-point years i.e. 1991, 2001 and 2011. Similar researches need to be carried out for different dimensions of educational development at secondary stage of school education with a focus on infrastructure—human and non-human—along with student participation, for the northwest region as well as other regions.

2. Programme evaluation studies need to be undertaken to gauge the role of various initiatives in adult literacy as well as elementary education in the context of achievement of Millennium Development Goals as well as Human Development Index.

3. Role of non-governmental initiatives in school education, both at elementary and secondary stage, need to be explored in terms of quantitative and qualitative inputs.

4. There is a need to assess the impact of other social sector schemes on education and identify the ways in which the convergence of these schemes may facilitate in improving the education scenario.

5. There is a need to assess the role of DIETs and SCERTs across all the states in achieving the goal of universalization of elementary education as a step forward to universalisation of school education.

6. There is also need to study the trends in funding allocations of each state and district for elementary education and the utilization pattern thereof to improve educational planning for achieving the goal of universal schooling.

7. A comparative study of learning outcomes of students at different school stages across different geo-cultural settings needs to be undertaken to give new insights into the effect of school inputs on learning outcomes.

8. The role of local bodies including panchayats in contributing towards the school effectiveness needs to be evaluated in context of RTE Act 2009 and PRI Act in order to evolve decentralised planning programmes for increasing
the educability of all children.

9. There is a need to evaluate the inclusive practices in classroom to identify the causes of exclusion at micro-level--across gender, caste and poverty--to sustain the governmental efforts for universal school education.