CHAPTER -V

PROBLEMS OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION:

Education was officially declared a universal human right in 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. In the 1990 conference on ‘Education for All’ in Thailand, more than 150 governments, including India, promised to provide free and compulsory primary schooling so that by the year 2000 all children would enjoy the right to good primary schooling and illiteracy rates would be halved. That commitment was unfortunately not kept, but it was reaffirmed at the World Education Forum in Senegal in 2000. This was the same year as the UN set the Millennium Development Goals, one of which was to ‘ensure by 2015 that children everywhere will complete a full course of primary schooling’.

India’s commitment to provide quality education to all its citizens precedes it International commitment to the Dakar Declaration of 2000. While successive development policies have accorded high priority to education, with the adoption of the National Policy on Education in 1986, India has witnessed a large number of national initiatives to achieve the goals of universal elementary education and total literacy, with renewed focus on increasing access to and participation of children and improvement in quality of education.

The importance attached to ‘rights’ perspective is also seen in the establishment of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), which considers that schooling of good quality not only shapes the future of an individual child but also of the future of family, society, and nation. The central role of education in national development has also been reflected in the five-year development plans. The Tenth Five Year Plan document has stated explicitly on the instrumental role of education, ‘Education is a critical input in human resource development and is essential for the country’s economic growth’ (GoI, 2002). The linkage of education with social well-being and human development has also been
recognized in the Eleventh Five Year Plan, which has described education as the most crucial input for empowering people with skills and knowledge (GoI., 2007).

In India, a child’s right to free and compulsory elementary education was ratified through the 93rd Constitutional Amendment bill in 2001. The 86th amendment (2002) to the Constitution of India has granted the right to education to all children of 6-14 years. This is renewed promise the country made to 200 million children. The Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 45 of the Constitution of India) provides for care and protection of children from birth until they reach school (0-6 years). This affects 150 million children whose health and well-being is a mandate that the State is obligated to honour.

There is no doubt that India has made considerable progress in elementary education since independence with reference to overall literacy, infrastructure, universal access and enrolment in schools, but in spite of all these efforts the goal of universal access to elementary education has yet not been achieved. In this context, we need to consider our continued failure to universalize school education, at least up to elementary level, to improve the quality of our schools and to transform the Indian educational system so that it is able to realize the vision of society enshrined in the Constitution of India.

In India, there are wide disparities in access to elementary education between states, rural and urban areas, gender as well as different economic classes. In addition, issues of quality such as teacher training, curriculum, pedagogy, school infrastructure and learning outcomes are also the major hurdles in achieving the goal of quality elementary education.

5.1 PROBLEM RELATED TO ENROLMENT:

One of the most important problems with respect to universal elementary education in India is never/non-enrolment of children in schools. Two independent surveys during 2005 indicate that about 7% children are still not enrolled in schools/alternative education facilities. An independent national survey conducted by SRI-IMRB in 2005 estimated that about 1.34 crore children in the 6-14 year age
group are out of school (6.94%). In rural areas 7.80%, children are out of school against 4.34% in urban areas. The proportion of children of children out of schools is relatively higher among those in the age category 11-13 years (8.56%) compared to those in the 6-10 years age category (6.1%).

The level of education is mainly influenced by two important sets of factors, which interact with each other- the supply side factors, including the quantity and quality of schooling facilities that determine the interest or lack of it on the part of children/parents in education, and the demand side factors, including socio-economic factors such as poverty and income levels.

According to NSS (35th round), economic factors and lack of interest in education were found to be the two major reasons for non-enrolment of children in schools (Visaria, et al. 1993). According to the NSS (52nd round), economic factors account for more than 50 per cent of the non-enrolment, while lack of interest in schooling accounts for 30 per cent (Tilak 2002). Several studies have found that participation in schooling is influenced by the following three sets of factors: (a) household economic factors, (b) school environment, including quality of physical and human infrastructure, and quality of instruction, and (c) social and cultural/traditional factors.

The NSS (64th round, 2007-08), found that economic factors and lack of interest in education were the two major reasons for non-enrolment of children in schools. The other major reasons for non-enrolment of children in schools were:

Parents not interested in education of children  33%

Education not considered necessary  22%

Financial constraints  21%

Although, the problem of non-enrolment of children in schools is tackled largely by the efforts of government in this direction and now more than 97 % of children got enrolled in schools. According to ASER 2011, the proportion of children in the 6-14 age group not currently enrolled in school is 3.3%, down from 6.6% in
2006. In 2010, this number was 3.4%. However, it is still one of the major problems of elementary education in certain social groups of population.

5.2 PROBLEM OF LOW ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOLS:

Although there is lot of improvement as far as the Gross Enrolment Ratio is concerned. The number of students enrolled in elementary education was about 1.9 crore in 1951; it was estimated at over 19.5 crore in year 2010, about ten times more. However, the real problem is that, children are not attending the school because of the reason relating to the school environment. These include attitude of teachers, irrelevant curriculum, substandard and uninteresting teaching, teacher absenteeism, corporal punishment, poor school infrastructure, inability to cope with the pace of learning, lack of parental support in the case of first generation learners, maladjustment, etc.

According to ASER 2011, about 96.7% of children are enrolled in Govt. and Private Schools in rural India. However, for rural India, children’s attendance is not improving and remains stagnant at 71.9 per cent with some interstate variations.

5.3 PROBLEM OF DROP OUT:

Universal elementary education included not only universal enrolment, but also universal retention and universal achievement. Unfortunately, not all enrolment rates get automatically translated into attendance, transition, completion and learning outcomes are emerging as bigger challenges. The retention rate of the school system is also very low and the problem of dropout of students is one of the fundamental problems confronting elementary education in India. Acc. to National Focus Group Position Paper 2006, even after six decades of independence, an estimated 100-120 million children between the ages of 6-14 years have either never entered school, or dropped out of it. They constitute almost 50 per cent of our country’s child population. Being out of school, they are subject to exploitation and the drudgery of work with little hope of realizing their full potential. Although the elementary education system of India is one of the largest educational systems in the world, it is woefully wasteful and inefficient. It is indeed a matter of national concern that 54.6
per cent children (56.9 girls) drop out before they complete class 8th. These percentages are appallingly low in tribal areas, backward districts and among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Given the situation on the ground, a child entering class one in a rural government school or an urban municipal school is able to reach class eight by accident, not by design.

Summing up the cause of wastage and stagnation, Kothari Commission has remarked, “Wastage and stagnation, like headache and fever, are not diseases in themselves. They are really symptoms of other disease in the educational system, the chief among which are the lack of proper articulation between education and life and the poor capacity of the schools to attract and hold students.”

Acc. to SSE (2007-08) there has been improvement in this sphere during the recent past, the dropout rates continue to be alarming, nearly 25.6 per cent of the children enrolled in Grade I drop out before completing the primary level while 45.9 per cent of these children drop out before the completion of the upper primary level. (Table-1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Dropout in Year 2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rates (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to Class 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to Class 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There are also significant disparities between different regions, and social and economic groups of the population. For example, 53.05 per cent of the Scheduled Caste (SC) children and 62.5 per cent of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) children who enter Grade I, drop out before reaching Grade VIII.
Acc. to a study conducted by Azim Premji Foundation, the reasons for dropouts were as under:

**Table 2: Reasons for dropping out of schools (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropped out of school %</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School far away</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education not necessary</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required for work at home or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outside for cash/kind</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs too much</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested in studies</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated Failure</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Report “The social context of elementary education in rural India”, October 2004, commissioned by Azim Premji Foundation.)
According to NSSO 64th Round Report (2007-08), the major reasons for discontinuance/drop-out were:-

Financial constraints 21%
Child not interested in studies 20%
Unable to cope up or failure in studies 10%
Completed desired level or class 10%
Parents not interested in studies 09%

5.4 PROBLEM RELATED TO AIMS OF EDUCATION:

The aims of education simultaneously reflect the current needs and aspirations of a society as well as its lasting values, and the immediate concerns of a community as well as broad human ideals. The social values within which we locate our educational aims include a commitment to democracy and the values of equality, justice, freedom, concern for others’ well-being, secularism, respect for human dignity and rights. Education should aim to build a commitment to these values, which are based on reason and understanding. Education must provide the means and opportunities to enhance the child’s creative expression and the capacity for aesthetic appreciation.

Although education is considered as development of all round personality of an individual and in this, there should be equal emphasis on all the dimensions of the personality, whether it may be, intellectual, moral, social, spiritual, emotional, physical, aesthetic etc. However, the Indian elementary education system is just emphasizing on the mental aspect of an individual, ignoring the other vital and significant ones and so it becomes a lopsided affair. It does not take into consideration the physical, emotional, spiritual and other aspects of the personality of the child. Affective and psychomotor domains are not given due weightage in the whole scheme of education.
Another problem related with the elementary education is that the prevalent system of education is not character oriented, but information oriented. It is consumerist and makes one selfish, self-centered and cynical. It sharpens reason, but hardens the heart. It lays little or no emphasis on such basic values as truth, love, honesty, humility, compassion, forbearance and justice. It makes one conscious about one’s rights, not duties. It promotes materialistic outlook, and generates unhealthy competition. While the primary task of education is to draw out the best in a person, students overburdened with lengthy and abstruse syllabi and fearful of the spectre of examination find little time to acquire moral virtues or explore their creative potential.

Further, in the present scenario, there is loss of cultural values in our society and schools. The general conduct and behavior of the children is not in tune with qualities of an ideal student. The materialistic outlook of life is dominating the life style of our students. There is drastic change in their way of living, dressing sense, talking, respecting elders and they have less regard for moral and spiritual values, which paves the way towards cultural development.

Another problem that is playing havoc is that men have become self-centred, egoistic, and unsympathetic and have no fellow feelings towards others. Relations are becoming contractual and cold with the element of warmth and sense of belongingness missing. Social cohesiveness is getting diluted. The members of the society have become individualistic in their approach and there is complete loss of feelings of brotherhood, compassion, co-operation and service unto mankind. This individualistic approach of man is creating problems of exploitation, inequality, injustice, violence, non-co-operation and disharmony in the society.

The lack of proper kind of religious and ethical education leads to various kinds of problems i.e. violence, hatred, distrust and disharmony between people of different religions, regions etc. In the present circumstances, India is facing incidents of violence, hatred and clashes due to various diversities in terms of religion, region, caste etc.

Despite its several thousands years old value-based cultural traditions, India is also subject to massive erosion of values. That is why political and economic
corruption, scandals, scams, anti-social and anti-national activities are on the rise in the present national scenario. The rapid degradation of values in the Indian context has posed a heavy challenge before the country. The overall crisis of values in the society has left a negative impact upon the mindset of the student community as well. The youngsters have fallen in the clasp of eroding values, such as dishonesty, insincerity, lack of punctuality, disrespect for elders, disregard for work-culture and entrepreneurial activities resulting in gun-culture, greed for earning money and wealth by easy and foul means, lack of patience resulting in students unrest, absence of the value of true leadership, loss of compassion, lack of concern for the rural background from which they come, absence of sensitivity towards women and so on. The present system of education has ignored instructions in morals. It depends upon western education system, which deals more with concepts and conjectures. Education is based only on material or objective fields of knowledge. Education is soaked in textual scholarships forgetting the values. The age-old culture is ignored and materialism is prevailing in the society.

Democracy demands that education should be useful rather than ornamental. It should prepare the pupil for vocation. The present system of education is not vocational based at elementary stage in our country. It does not develop a positive attitude towards manual work and dignity of labour among children.

5.5 PROBLEM RELATED TO CURRICULUM:

One of the fundamental problems of elementary education is the faulty curriculum having little or no relation with the physical and social environment of the children. Further, it does not fulfill their life needs. The curriculum is bookish, theoretical and overcrowded, without providing rich and significant contents. The curriculum is not comprehensive enough to include various subjects, activities and experiences and there is a negation of subjects like physical education, drawing, fine arts and music, which helps a lot in making the teaching learning process interesting and joyful. It is dominated too much by examinations and devoid of vocational and technical subjects, which are quite necessary for making students self-sufficient in later course of life.
The poor quality of education and its irrelevance to the child’s immediate environment can lead to irregular attendance and eventually, dropping out. According to PROBE report, the main reason for school dropouts is disinterest or a feeling of irrelevance in the child about what she/he is learning (PROBE 1996).

According to Taylor and Mulhall (1997), it is observed that the curriculum is designed for children from the urban context thus intimidating the rural child, especially at the primary stage, resulting in low participation, high dropout rates, and under education of pupils in many cases.

According to ‘Learning without Burden’ Report (1993), the problem of curriculum load is a major flaw of our education system that can be briefly identified by saying that “a lot is taught, but little is learnt or understood”. The problem of curriculum load leads to joyless learning and the reason for this curriculum load is that, knowledge is often confused with information and similarly, understanding is taken to mean the acquisition of facts. Although, there has been improvement in curriculum after the coming of new textbooks based on the guidelines of National Curriculum Framework (2005), yet, there is need of much improvement in this regard so that curriculum becomes joyful, interesting and less burdensome for the students with more learning outcomes in the students.

5.6 PROBLEM RELATED TO METHODS OF TEACHING:

Teaching methods are very important for imparting effective education. There is no denying the fact that even the perfect syllabus and the best curriculum will remain dead if teaching methods adopted are dull and lifeless. Stating the importance of teaching methods, Secondary Education Commission has remarked, “Any method, good or bad, links up the teacher and his pupils into an organic relationship with constant mutual interaction-good methods which are psychologically and socially sound, may raise the whole quality of their life, and bad methods may debase it.”

The teaching methods adopted at elementary level in schools are traditional and mechanical. They make the classroom instruction a dull, uninteresting and dreary experience for the students, fail to create proper attitudes of learning, and work in the
students. They encourage cramming, and excessively dominated by verbalism, which blocks comprehensive learning and fail to develop good work habits and skills in the students and lack the necessary motivation for learning. No creativity is fostered, and activities are provided outside the classroom. They fail to foster the development of multiple interests in the students.

Teaching learning process is teacher-centred rather than child-centred. The entire teaching-learning process revolves around the teacher and less participation on the part of the student is observed. There is no close relation between the teacher and the taught and methods of teaching followed are generally passive and verbal. Spoon-feeding method of teaching and readymade answers for the exams have propelled the scores of the students sans the subjects’ understanding.

Dull and monotonous, lecture method is adopted, with very less scope for activity based learning which creates uninterested among learners with less scope of joyful leaning. The child’s innate nature and capacities have no opportunity to find expression in a daily routine which permits no time to play, to enjoy simple pleasures, and to explore the world, rightly said the Report ‘Learning without Burden’ chaired by Prof. Yashpal.

It is pathetic sight to see boys and girls going to school loaded with books, which they are unable to carry. The current method of teaching wherein teachers only teach by rote and usually do not go beyond what is written in the books is not very attractive for the children.

Various studies analyzes the concerns in universalization of elementary education and as per the researches one of the main reasons of the Government Schools being unable to attract children is the inadequate attention paid by teacher on joyful and activity based learning. Keeping in mind the defective methods of teaching being adopted especially at elementary level, the various educational policies and other policy documents suggested drastic changes in pedagogy. Acc. to NPE (1986), a child centred and activity based process of learning should be adopted at primary stage. As the child grows, the components of cognitive learning will be increased and skills organized through practice. The National Curriculum for Elementary and

The NCF (2005) brought out by the NCERT has made one strong recommendation on creative teaching-learning process to provide overall development of children rather than remaining textbook centric. Teaching should be in the conversational mode rather than in the mode of authoritarian monologue. It is in the conversational mode that the child is likely to grow in self-confidence and self-awareness and will more easily establish connections between the teachings and his own experience. The Tenth (2002-07) and Eleventh Five Years (2007-12) Plans also stressed the need to focus on pedagogic improvement and adoption of child-centered methods to improve the children enrolment, retention and quality of education, particularly in rural primary schools and in the unreached segments.

5.7 PROBLEMS RELATED TO TEACHERS:

Quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens, which in turn depends, to a critical measure, upon the quality of their education, which ultimately depends, more than any other single factor, upon the quality of their teachers. Teachers constitute the most important component of any educational structure. Teachers play a crucial role in the development of the educational system as a whole. In the system of education of a country, elementary education requires special emphasis and has a major role to play in determining the quality of life and the pace of development of a nation and the world as a whole. The quality of elementary education depends mainly on the quality of those, who impart it. Teachers play an important role in maintaining and improving the standards of elementary education. The centrality of the role of the teacher in universalization of elementary education is undeniable.
The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) rightly observed, “We are, however, convinced that the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher, his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his professional training and the place that he occupies in the school as well as in the community.” In the absence of efficient, devoted and dedicated teachers, the best educational provisions such as good building with modern amenities and facilities will fail to yield good results. Prof. Humayun Kabir has rightly stated, “Without good teachers, even the best of systems, is bound to fail. With good teachers, even the defects of a system can be largely overcome.” The teacher is of paramount importance in any system of education. The whole system of education revolves around the teacher.

National Policy on Education (1986) emphasizes, “The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society, it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers”. Such exhortations are indeed an expression of the important role played by the teachers as transmitters, inspirers and promoters of man’s eternal quest for knowledge.

However, at present, the elementary education in India is confronted with many problems related to teachers. Teacher absenteeism, shortage of teachers, lack of trained teachers, high pupil-teacher ratio, teachers overburdened with non-teaching work, shortage of female teachers, unfriendly attitude of teachers towards students and declining of moral values among teachers are some of the emerging problems which in turn effects the whole teaching-learning environment and have an adverse impact on the enrolment, retention and learning outcomes among the children.

5.7.1 TEACHER ABSENTEEISM:

Teachers’ absenteeism has been an acute problem within the school education system all across the globe. The existing literature on this issue shows that the teachers’ absentee rates in developing countries tend to be as high as 27 per cent, which means that almost one-third teachers remain absent from their respective schools in these countries. According to a World Bank survey, the teachers’ absenteeism in India is as high as 25 per cent, which means that one out of four
teachers’ remains absent from the school. As such, India occupies the second place from bottom among the countries with highest rates of teachers’ absenteeism. It is better only than Uganda, which has the highest rate of teachers’ absenteeism in the world, i.e. 27 per cent. In states like Bihar & Jharkhand it is above 40 per cent whereas Punjab ranks III with 34.4 per cent.

Teacher absenteeism is regarded as perennial problem and has been identified as a major impediment to improvement in quality of elementary education in India. Several surveys (for example, PROBE 1996) have reported that teachers do not attend schools on all working days, for reasons such as their involvement in other official/non- official activities, collection of data during the decennial census, and conducting of national, state and local elections.

A recent study by Devarajan and Shah (2004) has shown that on an average, the teacher absentee rate was around 25 per cent at the national level. ASER (2005) noted that on an average only 75 per cent of the teachers attend schools in rural India. ASER also found no teachers present in 10 per cent of the schools that it visited and in only half the schools were all the teachers present. The situation marginally improved by 2011 as according to Pratham’s ASER 2011.

5.7.2 LACK OF TRAINED TEACHERS:

An important aspect concerned with the elementary education is lack of properly trained teachers. Teacher training is a crucial input for quality elementary education. It is well known that the quality and extent of learner achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation. It is common knowledge too that the academic and professional standards of teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goals. The quality of education in a society depends upon the quality of teachers and the quality of teachers in turn, depends upon the training or education the teachers themselves have had. The training of teachers is a major area of concern at present as both pre-service and in-service training of schoolteachers are extremely inadequate and poorly managed in most states.
Trained teachers are expected to perform better than untrained ones. Accordingly, the need for teacher education and training has for long been emphasized in India, and generally, only formally trained teachers are recruited in schools. However, in recent years, many untrained and part-time teachers, contract teachers, voluntary teachers and para-teachers have been recruited in many states in large numbers. There is scarcity of good teachers, which is usually the consequence of poor recruitment policies and now most state governments seem to favour the appointment of para-teachers, as this helps them save huge resources, on the one hand, and avoid the managerial problems of dealing with full-time teachers, on the other. However, the possible effects of such a practice on the quality of education can be far too serious to bear in the long run, or even in the short run. As Krishna Kumar, et al. 2001 puts that this will necessarily have a serious adverse impact on the quality of instruction. Infact, it is claimed to be leading to ‘rapid weakening and general dismantling of the structure of primary education.’

Regarding the poor quality of teachers, a study conducted by Kingdon and Banerji (2009) in two states of U.P. and Bihar found that only one fourth of the teachers were able to solve sums of 5th grade and less than 50% teachers could meaningfully summarize Class 5th text. Four difficult words from Class 4 level text were selected and teachers were asked to write the meaning of each word in simple language. Less than 50% of surveyed teachers could correctly do this task. The study also observed that the dropout children expressed a poor opinion about their teachers and schools (64.4%). The unfriendly attitude of teachers (58.2%), lack of scope for joyful learning (52.1%) and absence of practical learning experience (49.2%) at schools made their studies uninteresting and uneventful.

A study by M.A. Sudhir (2008) observed that the dropout children expressed a poor opinion about their teachers and schools (64.4%). The unfriendly attitude of teachers (58.2%), lack of scope for joyful learning (52.1%) and absence of practical learning experience (49.2%) at schools made their studies uninteresting and uneventful. Studies conducted in Uttar Pradesh, for example, show that while parents endorse the value of education, cite the quality of teachers as being the main problem behind non-enrolment in and drop out from school (Banerjee 1995; Bashir 1992).
5.7.3 SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS:

Shortage of teachers at the elementary level is playing havoc with the future of the students. While the percentage increase in enrolment from 1993 to 2011 has been 35 at primary, 44 at upper primary, the percentage increase in number of teachers has not kept pace with the increase in enrolment or the percentage increase in the number of schools. The implications of this trend are worrisome as the major brunt of teacher shortages is being faced in rural, remote and tribal areas. Acc. to a recent survey by the Department of Education, over 5.23 lakhs of vacancies for the post of teachers are there at the elementary schools and an additional of 5.1 lakh of teachers would be required in the coming years.

The teacher-pupil ratio is much below than the required norm in many areas, and there is often an oversupply of teachers in many urban schools. Acc. to DISE (2009-10) 12.26 per cent of all primary schools are single teacher schools and overall the percentage of schools with single teacher at elementary stage was 9.71 with 96 per cent of single-teacher schools located in rural areas. This implies that teachers do not have the time and the energy to do all that is necessary to keep all the children in school and learning.

Although, the number of educational institutions and number of teachers has considerably increased after Independence but the higher pupil teacher ratio indicates that the increase in enrolment at each level is comparatively more than the increase in number of teachers.

The total numbers of teachers at elementary level increased many times. However, the number of teachers is still not adequate to meet the needs of the burgeoning student population as is evident from the teacher pupil ratio.

The total number of teachers in primary schools has increased from 5.38 lakh in 1951 to 21.6 lakh in 2004-05 i.e. by more than four times. According to DISE (2009-10) up to elementary stage more than 58 lakh teachers are working in schools, However, the number of teachers is still not adequate to meet the needs of the burgeoning student population as in evident from the teacher pupil ratio.
The National Knowledge Commission Report (2007) has observed that teachers are the single most important element of the school system and the country is already facing a severe shortage of qualified and motivated schoolteachers at different levels.

5.7.4 INAPPROPRIATE PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO:

The number of schools and teachers has considerably increased after independence but the higher PTR indicates that the increase in enrolment is comparatively more than the increase in number of teachers. Therefore, lack of appropriate Pupil-Teacher Ratio in schools is another major problem in schools. According to Statistics of School Education (2007-08), the pupil-teacher ratio in some states like U.P., West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Tamil Nadu is as high as 79, 70, 55, 54 and 54 respectively. More than half of India’s rural government schools do not meet the prescribed pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) norms mandated by the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 and only 3.7 per cent meet the seven mandated infrastructure norms. As far as RTE norms on Pupil-Teacher Ratio are concerned at the All India level, there has been marginal improvement in the proportion of schools complying with RTE norms on pupil-teacher ratio, from 38.9% in 2010 to 40.7% in 2011. (ASER 2011)

5.7.5 PROBLEM OF EROSION OF VALUES AMONG TEACHERS:

One of the emerging problems in teaching profession is erosion of values among teachers. Day by day, there are incidences of immoral acts with students on the part of teachers, which create a feeling of insecurity and distrust among students. Such types of incidences degrade the status of the teachers in the society and become a blot on their profession.

5.7.6 TEACHERS OVERBURDENED WITH NON-TEACHING WORK:

Schoolteachers are overburdened as they are asked to do a range of non-teaching work such as collection of data for rural development schemes, national census, election work and other campaigns assigned to them by the district officials taking them away from the classroom. Indirectly, this legitimizes the non-
performance of the schoolteacher, undermining him/her as a professional. This problem creates hindrance in the creation of conducive environment for teaching learning and thus adversely affects the realization of goals of education.

5.7.7 LACK OF FEMALE TEACHERS:

One of the problems related to girls’ education at elementary level is that of lack or insufficient numbers of female teachers in schools. Due to this problem, the orthodox parents feel hesitation in sending their girls in such schools. There is imbalance with regard to availability of female teachers in schools in different regions. Acc. to Statistics of School Education (2007-08) there are states like Goa, Kerala, Karnataka, Delhi NCR and UTs like Chandigarh and Puducherry where there are 270, 230, 118, 461, 1017 and 167 female teachers respectively per 100 male teachers and on the other hand states like Nagaland, Tripura, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, U.P., Chattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Bihar where the number of female teachers per 100 male teachers is as low as 19, 26, 23, 28, 39, 41, 41, 44, 54 respectively.

5.8 PROBLEM IN EVALUATION SYSTEM:

In India, the evaluation system at the elementary level is not in tune with the aims and objectives of education. The evaluation system does not take into consideration the scholastic and non-scholastic aspects of student’s personality and thus it becomes a lopsided affair. The evaluation system is mainly examination oriented, more stress is laid on rote learning from textbooks, and thus other important dimensions of child personality are totally ignored. Poor children do not have the support system (such as tuitions, coaching classes, learning environment at home and in schools) to cope with the curriculum that is ill designed and loaded with irrelevant information, especially at the elementary school levels. This results in the failure of roughly 50 per cent of them who take the Board examination. This results in a loss of self-worth, and eventual exclusion from the school system.

Regarding the inadequacies in examination system, the National Policy on Education (1986) postulated that the examination system should be recast so as to
ensure a method of assessment that is a valid and reliable measure of student development and a powerful instrument for improving teaching and learning be developed. The National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education: A Framework (1988) also emphasized recasting of examination system and introduction of continuous and comprehensive evaluation that incorporates both scholastic and specific objectives for each stage of education. Acc. to Learning without Burden Report (1993), much has been written by various official committees on the ills of our examination system. The major, well-understood defect of the examination system is that it focuses on children’s ability to reproduce information to the exclusion of the ability to apply concepts and information on unfamiliar, new problems, or simply to think.

Regarding the current problems in examination system, the NCF (2005) suggested that they should be made more flexible and integral into classroom life. The reforms suggested in the examination system would bring the much-awaited changes to de-stress children from the shackles of examination, which aim to test the memory, thus encouraging rote learning. In view of NCFPP (2006), intelligence is diverse, and pedagogy and evaluation should aim at making it possible for this diversity to bloom. Excellence in diverse areas should be recognized and rewarded. Moreover, it is children’s responsiveness to what is taught rather than just their capacity to retain it that should be the focus of evaluation. Such responsiveness includes their ability to connect their learning to various other experiences in their life. With the implementation of RTE Act 2009, the concept of CCE has taken the place of annual examination but the evaluation done on this basis is still unsatisfactory due to various problems faced by teachers on ground.

5.9 PROBLEM OF INDISCIPLINE:

Problem of maintaining discipline is one of the main problems confronting elementary education. In the present time, authoritarian parents and teachers apply various punishment modes to discipline. Harsh discipline leads to anti-social behaviour, which contributes to academic failure and social rejection, which further affects self-esteem and create depressed mood increasingly the likelihood of delinquency in adolescents (Patterson 1982). Ray and Malhi (2003) also reported that
the frequency of violence experienced and witnessed by the adolescents at school is alarming and consistently higher than at home or in the neighbourhood.

Most teachers claim to be indulging in the practice of punishment behind the mask of disciplining (Ujjwala Rani and Bhadramani 1993) and direct punishment has been found to be the most dominant method of control used by the teachers. The consequences of punishment are; hazards in the child’s development deteriorating his/her performance, which is the main cause of school dropouts. The child who regularly receives corporal punishment develops mental, physical and psychological weakness and remains scared and mentally disturbed due to fear of punishment. The child feel ashamed, disgusted, insulted, becomes shy and frightened and experiences nightmares, loss of appetite or develops inferiority complex and finally a dropout (Yusufzai 2005).

The fact that children continue to be pushed out of schools has also to do a lot with the way children are treated (MV Foundation). Corporal punishment has become so much a part of teaching that it is not even seen as unacceptable. Children are routinely subjected to violence and fear of schools. Not all children are capable of withstanding such insults and humiliations and therefore, choose to leave the school. Many children are not able to perform well due to the unaffectionate & uncooperative attitude of the teachers so they find little charm in school and in due course of time, they lag behind not only academically but also lose interest in other activities. In this way, corporal punishment has become so much a part of teaching for maintaining discipline and children are routinely subjected to violence and fear of schools. But, inspite of continuous adherence to corporal punishment schools are facing problems in maintaining cordial environment in the schools.

5.10 PROBLEM OF WOMEN EDUCATION:

Despite the principles of gender equality being enshrined in our constitution and despite the state being empowered to adopt measures of positive discrimination in their favour, women of India continue to bear the brunt of societal discrimination. Whether it is health, education, mortality rate or any other development parameter, women of India are on very weak footing. Despite efforts to raise the social status of
women for more than a century, India still ranks 118 among 177 nations on gender equity according to the Human Development Index for 2008.

Women constitute about 48.4% of population of India as per 2011 census, but they are not well represented in social, political, economic and religious life as per their numerical strength. There is a gender gap in education where women are lagging behind men. The female literacy rate is woefully lower than that of male. Compared to boys, fewer girls are enrolled in schools and many of them are drop out. Though the literacy level of women according to Census report 2011 has risen from a low level of 8.86 in 1951 to 65.46 but the gender gap between male and female literacy has not still decreased much. This educational backwardness of women can be traced to different social, political, religious and educational factors.

Table 3: Literacy Rate: 1951-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Gender Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>8.86</td>
<td>18.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>40.40</td>
<td>15.35</td>
<td>25.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>45.96</td>
<td>21.97</td>
<td>23.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>43.57</td>
<td>56.38</td>
<td>29.76</td>
<td>26.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
<td>24.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>64.84</td>
<td>75.26</td>
<td>53.67</td>
<td>21.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011*</td>
<td>74.04</td>
<td>82.14</td>
<td>65.46</td>
<td>16.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: India Census Report (2011) Provisional*
In the present time, due to lack of sufficient number of schools for girls and non-availability of female teachers especially in rural areas proves to be a major hurdle in the education of girls, as the orthodox parents hesitate in sending their daughters in co-education schools. Another impediment in the way of education of girls is unhealthy practice of child marriages, which is still in practice in various part of the country. According to recent UNDP report, India ranked first in terms of child marriages. Although child marriage has been banned since 1860 and the Child Marriage Restraint Act was passed in 1929, it is still a common practice. According to UNICEF’s “State of World Children, 2009” report 47% of India’s women aged 20 to 24 were married before the prescribed legal age of 18 years, with 56% in rural areas. About 40% of world’s child marriages occur in India. Studies show that, in some parts of the country, girls are married at the ages of 8 or 9, which prevents them from attending school. Such marriages caused children to be withdrawn from school as early as standard 3 (Gasavi and Chamaraj 2000). It is a custom to marry girls at an early age so that guardian can get rid of their responsibility of protecting their girl child from unsocial elements.

5.11 PROBLEM OF ILLITERACY AMONG PARENTS:

The large-scale illiteracy among parents, especially in rural areas, is another factor that retards the progress of Elementary Education. Uneducated people do not appreciate the value of education, and hence, do not send their children to school. In this context, the education of women is of a special significance. A comprehensive study conducted by Usha Nayar of the NCERT has established that a strong correlation exists between rural underdevelopment and high dropout and low enrollment among girls. In addition, enrollment of girls is strongly and positively correlated with women’s education showing that an educated mother wants to educate her daughter also.

The educational status of both parents is known to have a positive impact on the schooling of children both boys as well as girls. Malathi Duraiswamy (1998) states that not only does parental education lead to an increase in enrolments, but the percentage of dropouts also falls as parental education levels rise. Jha and Jhingran’s study found the important influence exerted by literacy levels of parents on schooling
of children. About 80.5% of households with both parents literate had all children in school, as against only 44.2% with illiterate parents (Jha and Jhingran 2002; Krishnaji 2001).

Another problem, which creates hindrance, in realizing the goal of qualitative elementary education, is illiteracy among parents. As per 2011 census, only 74.04* percent of the people in India are literate. This also includes people who are able to write their name and put in their signature. They do not have any functional education. Education carries a tremendous impact in modernizing the behaviour and the character of the people.

<table>
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Source: India Census Report (2011)* (Provisional)
Different studies conducted regarding role of parents in education of children also found that there is negative co-relation between illiteracy among parents and education outcomes of children. Acc. to a study conducted by (Jha and Jhingran 2002) the high level of parental illiteracy among families and the consequent poor learning environment at home, also constrains the education of children. Lacking an educational background, such children are often first generation learners. The absence of academic support at home forces them to grapple with tasks of mastering language and cognitive skills alone. The fact that the formal schooling system is unsympathetic to their needs often leads to wastage and stagnation amongst them.

An analysis of determinants of children’s participation in school (Dreze and Kingdon 1999) finds that the situation in the child’s household and the decision of the parents are the most influential factors. If parents are educated, it is seldom that the children are not in schools. However, if parents are illiterate, there is a risk to children’s participation in schools. They even find it difficult to compel their children to pursue education, if there is variance of their decision with that of the children to attend school.

5.12 PROBLEM RELATED TO MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION:

The medium of instruction is the foundation of all education. Without the capacity to understand, to speak effectively, to read, and to write correctly and lucidly, no one can develop precision of thought or clarity of ideas. Moreover, it is a means of introducing the child to the rich heritage of his people’s ideas, emotions and aspirations and can therefore, be made a valuable means of social education whilst also instilling right ethical and moral values. Also, it is a natural outlet for the expression of the child’s aesthetic sense and appreciation and if the proper approach is adopted, the study of literature becomes a source of joy and creative appreciation.

The importance of the medium of instruction in the educative process has been highlightened by the Education Commission (1964-66) in these words, “The medium selected should enable students to acquire knowledge with facility to express them with clarity and to think with precision and vigour.” The NPE (1986) and the revised NPE (1992) also recommended mother tongue as the medium of instruction. The NCF
(2005) also clearly articulates the need for teaching in the child’s mother tongue at the elementary stage. There is enough evidence around the world to show that children learn better, when they begin their education in their first language. Acquiring reading and writing skills at the beginning of school is best done in a language familiar to the child. The SSA programme has also emphasized a lot on this aspect and therefore encouraged States and UTs to address the problems faced by children who begin school studying in a completely unknown language, especially in tribal areas. Acc. to RTE Act 2009, medium of instructions shall as far as practicable, be in child’s mother tongue.

ASER 2011 recorded children’s home and school language and the data indicates that children home language was different from the school’s medium of instruction for one out four children surveyed. This figure does not include most states of the North East or Jammu & Kashmir where this can be more. In situations where the children’s home language differs from the language of the school, comprehension is indeed a difficult issue. It is also true that several children drop out of school due to lack of proficiency in the language they are exposed to in the school. Several other studies also found that some children have problems with the language used the textbooks and classroom transactions, because they are different from the dialects they speak at home.

In a multilingual country like India, the medium of instruction from primary to higher education has always been an issue. The magnitude of the problem is evident at different stages of education. Out of total of 1652 languages and dialects, only 67 are used as medium of instruction in schools. English as a medium of instruction continues to dominate over vernacular media in many schools and colleges. Moreover, this has often been a subject of discussion among academicians in spite of certain policy decisions undertaken at the national level. Language has been found to be a highly alienating factor in the education of many schoolchildren, particularly amongst minorities, tribal communities with languages without a script, as well as linguistic minorities in most states. Many children resent the imposition of the state language as the medium of instruction, or a second language in school. For the children of scheduled tribes, the main factor for non-participation is cultural
discontinuity and alien language of instruction in schools. It is true that several children drop out of school due to lack of proficiency in the language they are exposed to in the school. Acc. to recent estimates, about 25% children are not getting education in their mother tongue.

5.13 PROBLEM OF LACK OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:

Parental education and community involvement towards achieving the goals of UEE would be a matter of concern for curricular makers, planners and administrators and for all those concerned with the quality of education at the elementary stage. Community participation is one of the crucial indicators of the success of social sector programmes and an increasingly empowered role in demystifying educational administration, financing and management. Increased role of non-organizations would also ensure that elementary education becomes available to all and is of satisfactory quality that would equip the elementary learner to face the challenges of life in the context of the world as a global village.

According to Ghosh and Mandal (2009), the Community ownership, Community empowerment and active community participation may lead towards developmental success. Community participation is the main area of concern which may help in the formulation of good micro level planning, monitoring and quality education. They must be free to enjoy the power of judgment, which yields a good result in every field of development, more so in the field of education.

Since the involvement of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in elementary education has been ensured through 73rd/74th Constitutional amendments by emphasizing the need for local bodies to play a greater role in the development of education, but it is observed that the local bodies or PRI’s do not participate in decisions regarding attendance and regularity of teachers and children, or the problems encountered by children in school. Various studies conducted in this field highlighted that the local bodies or PRI’s do not participate in decisions regarding attendance and regularity of teachers and children, or the problems encountered by children in school. They are not concerned with the problems faced by teachers, the day-to-day issues that may arise; they do not liase with authorities or elected bodies to
bring to their notice the difficulties children or teachers face such as lack of textbooks, physical infrastructure, public transport and so on. Thus, community participation in school functioning is not on the desired lines which proves a barrier in the achievement of educational goals.

5.14 PROBLEM WITH REGARD TO SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES:

Learning takes place in a web of social relationships of formal and informal interaction between teachers and children. Schools are institutional spaces for such community of learners. Physical and social environment of the school significantly influences the teachers’ activities and the children’s learning. The enhancement of physical space can bring about not only cosmetic improvement but also transform the curriculum and pedagogy that the child experiences. The physical building and grounds around the school is its most expensive physical asset; creative and practical solutions can help to maximize their educational value. Sufficient number of well qualified, trained, dedicated teachers and well lit, ventilated, clean classrooms organized with adequate shelf, spaces or storages, comfortable and well maintained furniture have a positive impact on the whole teaching-learning environment and on the other hand, unqualified, untrained teachers and dilapidated dingy buildings, with small or no play grounds and located in unhygienic settings presents a dull, un-stimulating and de-motivating environment for children and teachers.

The phenomenon of dropping out from school can be seen as a reflection of the failure of the school system to retain children in the school until they complete the given level of education. The mere provision of a school facility is not adequate. The school should not only have reasonably good physical infrastructure and committed teachers, but should also provide an attractive learning environment. After all, there is a strong positive correlation between the availability of adequate school infrastructure and infrastructure surrounding the school and enrolments in school, especially of girls’ children (Dreze and Kingdon 2001). As mentioned earlier, all these factors are inter-related; for instance, interest in education can be created by providing a good schooling facility and/or by enabling the children or parents to demand education by
improving their economic conditions and by reducing the need for household expenditure on schooling.

It is commonly known that schools exert considerable influence on the attendance, continuation and performance of the children. Some of the studies have tried to estimate the school influence after controlling for the individual characteristics of students (Lee 2000). As the children living in slum areas are primarily going to the government schools, school quality indicators such as the kind of infrastructure, availability of ancillary facilities like drinking water and toilet, female teachers, regularity, motivation and attitude of the teacher adversely influence the continuation of children in the schools (Chugh 2004, PROBE 1996).

Acc. to DISE (2010) and ASER (2011) reports found that there is lack of basic infrastructure facilities as well shortage of human resources in the schools at elementary level. More than 10% are single teacher schools, 25% schools have lack of proper drinking water facilities, 40% of rural schools lack separate toilet facility for girls, and large number of schools are lacking playground for physical development of children. The present conditions in elementary schools shows that there are inadequacies even with regard to basic facilities in schools and these are adversely affecting the teaching-learning process. The lack of physical and human resources creates hindrance in attracting and holding children in the school as they feel no charm and joy in attending such schools. The NCF (2005) states that it is very important that school teaching and learning take place in an environment that is aesthetically pleasing. It is also essential that children take an active part in creating such an environment for themselves. Similarly, RTE Act, 2009 recommended that special provisions be made with regard to basic facilities in schools for better teaching-learning environment in terms of availability of teachers and other such required infrastructure.

5.15 PROBLEMS RELATED TO EQUITY IN EDUCATION:

‘Equal Education for all’ is an essential component for human and sustainable development. A shift from education exclusion of the deprived sections of the society to education inclusion is necessary and need of the hour for socio-cultural and
politicodemvelopment of the society in all spheres. Equal diffusion of education is essential for the development of an egalitarian society.

Considerable improvements in the number of schools and enrolments have been observed in the last few years. Yet even after more than six decades of Indian Independence, there exists large scale variations among education among various sections of society especially among the SC, ST, OBC’s, Girls, Children with disabilities and Minorities and a large number of children are still remained out of school education. These are indeed children who have historically remained excluded from education and are at a high risk of dropping out even after enrolment if special attention is not paid. Acc. to Shanta Sinha, the biggest challenge of Indian Education System is the integration of children from the marginalized and deprived sections of the society into the school system.

It is important that access and equity go together in order to make UEE a reality. Almost all programmes and plans aim at bridging gender and social gaps in enrolment, retention, and learning achievement.

The recent years have witnessed some positive developments with respect to girls’ education. Since the beginning of the 1990s, progress in girls’ enrolment has been faster than that of boys (Govinda and Biswal 2006). However, gender disparity does not seem to have reduced significantly over the years.

Census, NSSO and NCAER data all show that members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who have been historically disadvantaged socially, economically and educationally, have had lower school participation in terms of enrolment and retention compared to the general population. The 1991, 2001 and 2011 provisional census data shows that crude literacy rates for both men and women belonging to SC and ST were significantly lower, compared to the general population. Data available from census and surveys clearly point out that SC, ST children have lower school attendance, and higher drop out rates compared to the general population.
Many studies have noted that the educational status of Muslims is probably the lowest compared to other major religious communities in India. To quote Jha and Jhingran, “Muslims are also educationally one of the most backward religious communities. They have apparently not taken to secular education in a big way even the past decade when there has been considerable expansion of school facilities and significant increase in enrolment.”

Physically and mentally challenged children are effectively excluded from the schooling process due to lack of support services and inaccessibility as both in terms of physical access and pedagogical strategies. Barriers to their learning and participation in the schooling process have seldom been addressed, leaving such children uncared for, and quite beyond the school. Acc. to NFGPP (2006), such children are grossly neglected and they face enormous difficulties in getting any kind of schooling.

5.16 PROBLEM RELATED TO ABSENCE OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION:

Research in the field of neuroscience found out that early phase of child are globally acknowledged to be the most critical years for lifelong development since the pace of development in these years is extremely rapid. This stage in life is also important as a foundation for the inculcation of social values and personal habits, which are known to last a lifetime. Therefore, it is of crucial importance to give special attention on the education of early childhood with suitable environment.

The educational significance of this stage is being increasingly realized. Modern researches have shown that the years between three and ten are of the greatest importance in the child’s physical, emotional and intellectual development. It has also been found that children who have been to a pre-primary school show better progress at the primary stage and help in reducing wastage and stagnation. The modern trend in educational policy, therefore, is to emphasize pre-primary education, especially for children with unsatisfactory home backgrounds. Pre school learning is vital component of education, which can go a long way in improving school preparedness of such children, and in bridging the absence of a learning environment at home.
Pre-Primary Education is essential for compulsory primary education. Adequate and satisfactory provision of pre-primary education is conducive to the effective enforcement of compulsory education. It contributes to its success. It will minimize the ‘wastage’ in elementary education. The absence of early childhood care among the 3-6 years old children also has implications for elementary education. Absence of pre-school learning often tends to lead to poor school participation by the children. Very often, the first generation learners from very poor families have inadequate home environment, which cannot provide them with supportive experiences. Household observations in various studies have found little monitoring by parents of children’s activities.

Different studies conducted signifies that pre-school learning is vital component of education, which can go a long way in improving school preparedness of such children, and in bridging the absence of a learning environment at home. The Education Commission (1964-66) also stressed the importance of pre-primary education in these words, “Pre-primary education is of great significance to the physical, emotion and intellectual development of the children, especially those with unsatisfactory home backgrounds.”

Recognizing the critical relationship between early years quality of life and its impact on schooling access, a UNICEF report, State of the World’s Children (UNICEF 2005), identifies good health, nutrition, and educational participation as critical components of an ‘ideal childhood’. It also points out that health and nutrition are prerequisites for ensuring effective participation in schooling. The report states that of the millions of children under five who die each year from diseases easily preventable by vaccines, many are from India. In addition, hunger, starvation, and malnutrition are prevalent in varying levels among young children, particularly in poor families.

The Indian Constitution guarantees the right to education from the age of six years. However, for many children, reaching primary school age may be too late, and attention should be paid to ensuring that children have access to facilities that improve their quality of life in the early years, which enable meaningful access to schooling. However, in the present circumstances more than forty percent of children in the
relevant age group are out of the reach of ICDS programmes such as Aaganwadis, Balwadis and pre-primary schools.

5.17 PROBLEM RELATED TO HEALTH, HYGIENE AND NUTRITION:

One of the main problems in India is ill health, unhygienic atmosphere and malnutrition among children, as hunger and deprivation affect about 260 million people in the country. India is home to 40% of the world’s underweight children and ranks 126 out of 177 countries in the UNDP Human Development Index. The country is also the home to the largest number of poor and malnourished people in the world, it is looking difficult to reduce hunger, and poverty by half by the year 2015 as expected under U.N. MDGs.

Pinpointing the dismal state of health and nutrition in Indian children, a UNICEF report says that the country has a whopping 61 million stunted children, the largest in any country. In other words, 3 out of 10 stunted children are from India distantly followed by China that has 12 million children.

Recent evidence has shown that most poor children are malnourished and have no access to safe water, sanitation and health care, leading to frequent bouts of illness like infections, stubborn coughs and cold and other chronic illnesses. An overwhelming proportion of children in government schools are from poor situations; poor nutrition and frequent bouts of illnesses (due to poor sanitary conditions and lack of access to healthcare) affect the ability of children to attend school regularly.

Since majority of students belong to poverty ridden families so due to their low family income, they did not get proper nutrition and they have to live in unconducive and unhealthy environment, which further affect their health. It has been found that poor health and low nutritional status of the mother and child can actually prove to be a barrier to children’s school attendance and educational attendance.

Studies by Vimala Ramachandran and Jean Dreze show how the nutritional status of children affects their school participation. Many children were reported coming hungry to school. Hunger is seen to be major limiting factor responsible for children remaining out of school and being responsible for low levels of learning
within the school. Vandana Prasad studied the impact on health of children and their ability to access and retain education. It is clear that a major cause of child absenteeism is health related problems and illness, not to forget the mental and emotional health issues of a child. A study by M.A. Sudhir (2008) found that the out of schoolchildren were found malnourished and found deficient in micronutrients of Vitamins A, iron and iodine (76.4%) and many of them were found to be stunted in growth, which further effects their learning outcomes. Thus, different studies confirm that malnutrition, poor health and unhygienic atmosphere create obstacles in the enrolment, retention and learning outcomes of children.

5.18 PROBLEM RELATED TO PEACE EDUCATION:

Education for peace seeks to nurture ethical development, inculcating the values, attitudes and skills required for living in harmony with oneself and with others, including nature. It embodies the joy of living and personality development with the qualities of love, hope and courage with respect for human rights, justice, tolerance, cooperation, social responsibility, and respect for cultural diversity, in addition to a firm commitment to democracy and non-violent conflict resolution. Equality, Social justice and a concern for non-exploitative relations with the underprivileged are important aspects of peace education. Education for peace is holistic and it embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children within a framework of human values. Every culture regards peace as a noble ideal to attain. The need for peace education is compellingly clear in the light of the escalating trends of, and taste for, violence globally, nationally and locally. Education can significantly contribute to the long-term process of building up peace-tolerance, justice, intercultural understanding and civic responsibility. It is a long-term proactive strategy to nurture peaceful persons, who resolve conflicts non-violently. It is a concern cutting across the curriculum and is the concern of all teachers.

In the present time, education now has become a vested interest and an instrument of exploitation, which is the expression of violence. We live in an age of unprecedented violence: locally, nationally, and globally. It is a serious matter that schools, which are meant to be the nurseries of peace, become transmission points for violence. Acc. to study on schools stated that there is a quantum leap in violence in
school setting. The words children use are violent. Their tastes and games are violent. Their relationships are violent. The increasing intolerance among the school going students, as manifested in various forms of violence and also the deterioration of many other human values have necessitated us to engage ourselves to promoting peace. The peace among the students is felt more today when children are exposed to the violence born out of human intolerance. The competitive, highly individualistic and nationalistic education given today is a threat to peace at all levels-personal, social and global.

Keeping in mind the rising tendencies of violence, intolerance, disharmony, aggressiveness among school going children the NCF (2005) also endorses that there is a dire need for education for peace in the fast changing society. The discipline of peace must shape our way of life. For this to happen education has to go beyond the warehousing of information to a celebration of awareness, which is best facilitated through education for peace.