CHAPTER V

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN
ASIC FEATURES OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an effort to universalize elementary education by community ownership of the school system. It is the response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country. The SSA programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to all children, through provision of community-owned quality education in a mission mode.

- A programme with a clear time frame for universal elementary education.
- A response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country.
- An opportunity for promoting social justice through basic education.
- An effort at effectively involving the Panchayati Raj Institutions, School Management Committees, Village and Urban Slum level Education Committees, Parents teachers Associations, Mother Teacher Associations, Tribal Autonomous Councils and other grass root level structures in the management of elementary schools.
- An expression of political will for universal elementary education across the country.
- A partnership between the Central, State and the local government.
- An opportunity for States to develop their own vision of elementary education.

IMS OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the 6 to 14 age group by 2010. There is also another goal to bridge social, regional and gender gaps, with active participation of the community in the management of schools.

Useful and relevant education signifies a quest for an education system that is not alienating and that draws on community solidarity. Its aim is to allow children to learn about and master their natural environment in a manner that allows the fullest harnessing of their human potential both spiritually and materially. This quest must also be a process of value based learning that allows children an opportunity to work for each other’s well being rather than to permit mere selfish pursuits.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan realizes the importance of Early Children Care and Education and looks at the 0-14 age as a continuum. All efforts to support pre-school learning in ICDS centers or special pre-school centers in non ICDS areas will be made to supplement the efforts being made by the Department of Women and Child Department.
OBJECTIVE OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

➢ All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
➢ All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010.
➢ Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
➢ Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
➢ Universal retention by 2010.

ARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN-A FRAMEWORK, BROAD STRATEGIES OF THE PROGRAMME

➢ To allow states to formulate context specific guidelines within the overall framework.
➢ To encourage districts in States and UTs to reflect local specificity.
➢ To promote local need planning based on broad National Policy norms.
➢ To make planning a realistic exercise by adopting broad national norms.

he objectives are expressed nationally though it is expected that various districts and states are likely to achieve Universalisation in their own respective contexts and in their own time frame. 2010 is the outer limit for such achievements. The emphasis is on mainstreaming out-of-school children through diverse strategies, as far as possible, and providing eight years of schooling for all children in 6-14 age group. The thrust is on bridging of gender and social gaps and a total retention of all children in schools. Within this framework it is expected that the education system useful and absorbing, according to their natural and social environment.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has two aspects-I) It provides a wide convergent framework for implementation of Elementary Education scheme, II) It is also a programme with budget provision for strengthening vital areas to achieve Universalisation of elementary education sector from the State and Central Plans will reflect as part of the SSA framework, they will all merge into the SSA programme within the next few years. As a programme, it reflects the additional resource provision for UEE.

Institutional Reforms - As part of SSA, the central and the State government will undertake reforms in order to improve efficiency of the delivery system. The states will have to make an objective assessment of their prevalent education system including educational administration, achievement levels in schools, financial issues, decentralization ownership, review of State Education act, rationalization of teacher deployment and recruitment of teachers, monitoring and evaluation, status of education of girls, SC/ST and disadvantaged groups, policy regarding private schools and ECCE. Many States have already carried out several changes to improve the delivery system for elementary education.
Sustainable Financing - The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is based on the premise that financing of elementary education interventions has to be sustainable. This calls for a long time perspective on financial partnership between the central and the state governments.

Community Ownership - The programme calls for community ownership of school-based interventions through effective decentralization. This will be augmented by involvement of women’s groups, VEC members and members of Panchayat Raj institutions.

Institutional Capacity Building - The SSA conceives a major capacity building role for national, state and district level institutions like NIEPA / NCERT / NCTE / SCERT / NEMAT / DIET. Improvement in quality requires a sustainable support system of resource persons and institutions.

Improving Mainstream Educational Administration - It calls for improvement of mainstream educational administration by institutional development, infusion of new approaches and by adoption of cost effective and efficient methods.

Community Based Monitoring with Full Transparency – The programme will have a community-based monitoring system. The Educational Management Information System (EMIS) will correlate school level data with community-based information from micro planning and surveys. Besides this, every school will be encouraged to share all information with the community, including grants received. A notice board would be put up in every school for this purpose.

Habitation as a Unit of Planning - The SSA works on a community based approach to planning with habitation as a unit of planning.

Accountability to community - SSA envisages cooperation between teachers, parents and PRIs, as well as accountability and transparency to the community.

Priority to Education of Girls - Education of girls, especially those belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and minorities, will be one of the principle concerns in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Focus on Special Groups - There will be a focus on the inclusion and participation of children from SC/ST, minority groups, urban deprived children disadvantaged groups and the children with special, in the educational process.

Pre-Project Phase - SSA will commence throughout the country with the well-planned pre-project phase that provides for a large number of interventions for capacity development to improve the delivery and monitoring system. These include provision for household surveys, community-based micro planning and school mapping, training of community leaders, school level activities, support for setting up information system, office equipment, diagnostic studies etc.
trust on Quality — SSA lays a special thrust on making education at the elementary level useful and relevant for children by improving the curriculum, child-centered activities and effective teaching learning strategies.

Role of teachers — SSA recognizes the critical and central role of teachers and advocates focus on their development needs. Setting up of Block Resource Centers/Cluster Resource Centers, recruitment of qualified teachers, opportunities for teacher development through participation in curriculum-related material development, focus on assroom process and exposure visits for teachers are all designed to develop the human resource among teachers.

District Elementary Education Plans — As per the SSA framework, each district will prepare a District Elementary Education Plan reflecting all the investments being made and required in the elementary education sector, with the holistic and convergent approach. There will be a Perspective Plan that will give a framework of activities over a long time frame to achieve UEE. There will also be an Annual Work Plan and Budget that will list the prioritized activities to be carried out in the year. The Perspective Plan will also be a dynamic document subject to constant improvement in the course of programme implementation.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN SSA

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan takes note of the fact that provision of elementary education is largely made by the government and government aided schools. There are also private unaided schools in many parts of the country that provide elementary education. Poorer households are not able to afford the fees charged in private schools in many parts of the country. There are also private schools that charge relatively modest fees and where poorer children are attending. Some of these schools are marked by poor infrastructure and low paid teachers. While encouraging all efforts at equity and “access to all” in well-endowed private unaided schools, efforts to explore areas of public-private partnership will also be made. Government, Local Body, and government-aided schools would be covered under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, as is the practice under the Mid Day Meal scheme and DPEP. In case private sector wishes to improve the functioning of a government, local body or a private aided school, efforts to develop a partnership would be made within the broad parameters of State policy in this regard. Depending on the state policies, DIETs and other Government teacher-training institutes could be used to provide resource support to private unaided institutions, if the additional costs have to be met by these private bodies.

FINANCIAL NORMS UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

- The assistance under the programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will be on an 85:15 sharing arrangement during the IX Plan, 75:25 sharing arrangement during the X Plan, and 50:50 sharing thereafter between the Central governments and the State governments. Commitments regarding of sharing of costs would be taken from State governments in writing.
The state governments will have to maintain their level of investment in elementary education as in 1999-2000. The contribution as State share for SSA will be over and above this investment.

The Government of India would release funds to the State Governments/Union Territories only and instalments (except first) would only be released after the previous instalments of Central government and State share has been transferred to the State Implementation Society.

The support for teacher salary appointed under the SSA programme could be shared between the central Government and the State Government in ratio of 85:15 during IX Plan, 75:25 during X Plan and 50:50 thereafter.

All legal agreements regarding externally assisted projects will continue to apply unless specific modifications have been agreed to, in consultations with foreign funding agencies.

Existing schemes of elementary education of the Department (except National Bal Bhawan and NCTE) will converge after the IX Plan. The National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day-Meal) would remain a distinct intervention with the food grains and specified transportation costs being met by the Centre and the cost of cooked meals being met by the State Government.

District Education Plans would inter-alia, clearly show the funds/resource available for various components under schemes like PMGY, JGSY, PMRY, Sunishchit Rozgar Yojana, Area fund of MPs/MLAs, State Plan, foreign funding (if any) and resources generated in the NGO sector.

All funds to be used for up gradation, maintenance, repair of schools Teaching Learning Equipment and local management to be transferred to VECs/School Management Committee/ Gram Panchayat/ or any other village/ school level arrangement for decentralization adopted by that particular State/UT. The village/school-based body may make a resolution regarding the best way of procurement.

Other incentive schemes like distribution of scholarships and uniforms will be continued to be funded under the State Plan. (Vide : Appendix – H)

PLANNING, APPRAISAL, AND FUND FLOWS UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan assigns greatest importance to the preparatory activities as these have been conceived as a necessary condition for quality implementation of the programme. Systematic mobilization of the community and creation of an effective system of decentralized decision-making are part of the preparatory activities. A number of steps have already been taken in many states and it is expected that the State JTs which have not yet decentralized powers to Village Education Committees/panchayats/ Urban local bodies, would do so as a part of the preparation for implementing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
strengthening of the office of the District Elementary Education Officer has also to be under taken in the preparatory phase in order to adequately equip it to handle the exigent tasks during programme implementation. Setting up of an effective information system as therefore been highlighted, besides procurement of essential office equipment and computer hardware. More important than the hardware component would be the need to provide support for involving community leaders at all levels and orienting existing governmental functionaries in carrying out their activities more effectively. An assessment of the additional manpower needs has also to be made during this period. It must be emphasized that setting up of an effective MIS would require contractual engagement of data analysts and data entry personnel, as they are not available in most m-DPEP districts. Similarly, the need for experts on gender, children with disabilities, hermaphrodite groups, civil works, pedagogy and community mobilization and monitoring will also have to be assessed in the light of the specific State/UT.

The preparation of habitation level educational plans through effective community mobilization for micro planning and school mapping is the greatest challenge of the preparatory phase. Since Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has the clear aim of Universalisation of elementary education, it is mandatory to track the progress of each and every child in the 1-14 age group. Preparation of Village Education Registers on the basis of household survey, regular monitoring through Retention Registers and Pupil Progress Cards, could have to be developed in the preparatory phase itself. This calls for a focus on capacity building among the Panchayati Raj Institutions, members of Village Education committees, School Management Committees, and Parents’ Teacher Associations, etc. The preparatory phase provides for a process and activity based constitution/organization of such committees and training of community leaders for better management of schools. Capacity building in the local community will also require a constant interface with the school and the teachers. This is being attempted through a large number of school-based activities in the preparatory phase itself.

Micro planning exercise will include the following:

Through a participatory process a core planning team will be constituted in each village at the habitation level including selected VEC members, selected community leaders, IGO representatives, Headmaster, selected teachers and some selected parents, ensuring participation of women as well as persons from the deprived communities. Parents of children with special needs may be included in the team. The selection of this team is very critical for effective planning.

A number of studies on the Base-line assessment in a district, in order to reflect the current situation with regard to learning achievements, retention, access, gender equity, social equity, physical infrastructure, etc. would also have to be under taken as preparatory activities. Effort should be made to involve regional research institutions in this process. The reports must be diagnostic and should be able to feed into the planning process. Besides these locally relevant studies, baseline achievement tests would be taken for the primary level in all non-DPEP districts by NCERT. Similarly, NCERT, in association with the states, will take up baseline studies for upper primary level in all the
Several available studies that are State specific may also be utilized to determine the baseline status in a State.

or planning to be need-based, it is important that the broad norms for improving school facilities are shared with habitation level planning team. The norms under Sarva shiksha Abhiyan provide the broad framework for such an exercise. The habitation level planning team would comprise of community leaders with a keen interest in the education of children. It must have a large number of parents whose children study in the school whose improvement is being attempted.

Identification of a team at District and Block level would also have to be undertaken during the preparatory phase. Efforts to identify teachers who could serve as Cluster and Block reserve Centre Coordinators could also be taken up during this period. These identified BRC/CRC Coordinators could then facilitate the planning process. Local level non-governmental organization must also be associated in the planning activities and in the process of constitution of VECs. The management needs in a particular district would also have to be assessed by the State level Implementation Society, to determine the kind of additional support required to operationalize the team at the District, Block and the Cluster level. In districts that have already operationalized Block resource, and cluster resource Centres, the formation of such teams would be easier. In other regions, efforts to make an objective assessment of manpower needs and the restructured command system for the education administration would have to be a priority. The National and State Level Mission will facilitate this process of manpower planning for programme implementation through objective assessment by expert teams.

Tasks like rationalization of teacher units as also to be initiated during the preparatory phase in order that deployment of teachers is need based. This will facilitate assessment of additional teacher requirements as also a convergent planning process that appreciates the presence of private schools.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan highlights transparency in programme implementation. All efforts have to be made to ensure that expenditure on elementary education is a public domain subject. The School Display Board has to show all investments being made in the school. Teacher Attendance should be publicly displayed. For improving the quality of school-level data regarding Enrolment, Attendance, Retention, Dropout, etc., besides the mandatory maintenance of Village Education Registers, Retention Registers, and Pupil Progress Cards, any information sent to Cluster/Block/District level, has to be displayed on the School Display Board for public scrutiny. The seeds of the community based monitoring system can only be sown by acceptance of a Right to Information at the school level. Similar efforts at transparency should be made right up to the national level. Copies of all sanction orders for pre-project/ project activities would be pasted on the web site of the Department of Elementary Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resources Development.

Organization of a large number of school based activities, cultural jathas, sports and festivals, have been suggested as preparatory activities under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
Mobilization of community can come about more effectively through a series of school-based activities that opens up the school as a social institution to the community. The objective of all these efforts is to ensure community partnership in the management of the school.

Opening of Bank Accounts of Village Education Committee/ School Management Committee/ Gram Panchayat Education Committee/ School level committee in urban areas will also be monitored as a preparatory activity so that effective decentralization can be brought about. The financial norms clearly state that a number of interventions have to be carried out by the VEC 9or its equivalent).

The preparatory activities must also ensure that the formation of the VECs 9or equivalent bodies in urban areas) is process based. Process-based implies selection through activities and participation rather than by official orders of nomination. Some States have accepted a system of election for School Management committees and the same will be continued. There may be a need to reconstitute such Committees in many places where it had been done routinely in the past. Involvement of the teacher’s representatives of women and other weaker sections, active community leaders, parents of children studying in that school/ EGS, parents of out of school children from poor habitations, has to be ensured in a process based approach. The organization of school based activities and microplanning are ways of identifying active community leaders willing to give time for the educational reconstruction in a habitation. The planning team has to have a role in the process-based constitutions of VECs. Involvement of NGOs will strengthen this community-based approach for organizing the preparatory activities.

In order to ensure an effective preparatory phase, up to Rupees fifty lakhs has been provided for such activities, based on the actual requirement in particular district. Besides provision for training and orientation of community leaders and Education Department functionaries, the preparatory phase provides for the following.

- Office equipment as per need,
- Cultural activities for mobilization for SSA
- Computer hardware and software for effective MIS at the district level
- School-based activities up to Rupees 1000 to a school
- Household surveys and preparation of habitation Plans up to Rs.3 per household
- A set of line Studies, etc.

The preparatory phase is need-based and there is a lot of variation in the demand from districts. Districts that are already implementing DPEP/LJP would require limited resources for the preparatory activities. All districts are expected to prepare District Elementary Education Plans before the end of the IX Plan. During the preparatory phase, States will also make an assessment of manpower needs at the state level. A State component plan will also have to be prepared, highlighting these needs. Assessment of manpower needs would require serious efforts at restructuring of education administration, wherever it has not been attempted so far. State level Resource group are expected to facilitate programme implementation.
The preparatory phase will be monitored by joint teams of resource persons sent by State/ National level mission. Support for planning activities will be provided by District/state/national level institutions. The districts can ask for resource support for carrying out planning activities and NCERT/ NIEPA/ SCERT/ SIEMAT/ TSG-DPEP would provide the capacity support as per requirement. Besides this, the National and the State Mission will have an effective monitoring and operational support group to facilitate capacity building at all levels and to meet specific need of districts. Copies of all sanction orders for Pre-project and Project activities would be posted on the web site of the Department of Elementary Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development.

State governments will work out arrangements for professional and operational support at the State level in order to ensure that the capacity development needs of a district receive top most priority in the preparatory phase.

The preparatory activities are expected to initiate a process of institutional development and capacity building for professional management of elementary education sector at the local level. The focus has to be on capacity building through training, rigorous planning process, focus on community based data collection and its analysis, and most of all, a willingness to allow the local community to manage schools. It is expected that the preparatory phase will take anywhere from four to eight months.

COMMUNITY- BASED PLANNING PROCESS

The success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will depend on the quality of the community based planning process. While SSA is formulated on the premise that the community can plan, it also accepts the tremendous requirement for developing capacities in communities to do so. The heterogeneity of local communities in many regions often poses problems of unanimity on proposed planning criteria. It is important to recognize a habitation, rather than a village as a unit of planning as most habitants have a higher degree of community solidarity. Similarly, in urban areas, a cluster of households in the same slum settlement has to be a unit of planning.

The starting point for planning activities has to be the creation of a core group of governmental and non-governmental persons, entrusted with the task of implementing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The State level Implementation Society has to exercise utmost caution and care in ensuring that the core team at the district and Block level is carefully selected and is committed to the task of Universal Elementary Education. Besides Education Department functionaries, these teams could comprise of faculty members of DIETs, BRCs, CRCs, NGO representatives, representatives of Teacher Unions, representatives of Women's Groups, representatives of Self Help Groups, retired and serving National and State Award winning teachers, local literary figures, Panchayati Raj/ Autonomous council representatives, etc. this list is illustrative as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan recognizes the diversity across regions. The objective is to make district level and Block level core teams competent to take the community along in its agenda for
educational reconstruction. The starting point of the planning process should be an orientation of the District and Block level teams.

These core teams should then undertake an extensive visit of the district, covering every habitation/village/urban slum. The funds provided under the preparatory activities for cultural activities and school-based activities could be taken up to build advocacy for elementary education. These events could be occasions to identify individuals and community leaders willing to undertake the educational activities in the region. Constitution of Mahila Samoohs and Prerak Dal could also be taken up as a preliminary step towards the constitution of the VEC. These identified individuals, with large representation of women and weaker sections, should then be oriented for managing the affairs of the school. The National/State level Mission could extend operational support in building capacities for such activities.

The district team must also work out its information needs and steps to develop formats for household and school surveys should also be taken. This would require capacity support from National/State level institutions. The local context must reflect in all such activities.

The school as to play a critical role in the planning process and efforts to bring community leaders to the school should be encouraged. This will be facilitated by regular activities in the school. The Headmaster and his/her team have to function like the local resource team for planning.

After orientation of community teams, the process of micro planning should be undertaken. This would involve intensive interaction with each household to ascertain the educational status and the educational need. The requirements have to be discussed at the at the habitation level before they are finalized. The broad financial and physical norms regarding school and infrastructure, teachers and teaching learning materials will have to be the basis of the planning exercise.

Requirements of incentives like Scholarship and uniforms will have to be worked out on the basis of State norms. These would be part of the SSA framework but not the SSA programme as funding would be from the State Plan. The planning for midday meal should also be discussed in the planning process, even though it will continue as a distinct scheme.

The habitation level plans should be drawn up on the basis of the microplanning exercise. The Blocks and the Districts should also undertake an exercise to see that all requirements can be fulfilled by redeployment or by schemes under which unspent balances are available with the State governments. For example, teacher deployment could come by rationalization or Teacher Learning Equipment could come from sanctions already provided earlier under Operation Blackboard but not utilized so far. As far as possible, a new upper primary school would be opened by upgrading an existing primary school. The final District Plan will take note of such investments and would also reflect the process of redeployment of facilities, wherever required. The habitation level
Educational plans will be appraised by the Cluster level units, in consultation with the block teams. The District unit will appraise the Block level plans. Due care should be taken to ensure that the demand for teachers, classrooms, etc., are as per the broad norm or Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

The community-based planning process has to result in the effective enrolment and retention of the hitherto out of the school children in school/ an EGS centre/or a Bridge Course. This calls for a child specific monitoring by the local community. Community planning processes must also result in a specific Action Plan.

**PERSPECTIVE PLANS AND ANNUAL PLANS**

Each district will prepare a perspective Plan and an Annual Plan. The perspective Plan will be a Plan for Universalisation within the time frame of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. It will be based on the existing position with regard to attendance, retention, drop out and learning achievement. It will work out the total requirement for Universalisation, spread over a number of years. A clear Plan for improving access, increasing retention and ensuring achievement will be a part of the perspective Plan. The Perspective plan will also be a dynamic document rather than any blue print and would be subject to modifications based on the feedback on the programme implementation. It will also work out the requirement of school infrastructure and teaching learning materials based on these assessments. The perspective plan will follow the broad financial norms set out in an earlier section. The perspective Plans will also take note of the presence of the non-governmental sector and its contribution towards UEE. The perspective plan will not rule out modifications in the Annual Work Plans based on field experience. The projections of the perspective plan are tentative and departures on possible interventions may be made as per need.

The Annual Plans have to be based on a broad indication of resource availability to a district in a particular year. The National and State Mission will try and finalize the resource likely to be allocated to a particular district at least six months before the first instalment is released to a district. The district would undertake a prioritization exercise in the light of the likely availability of resources. The annual Plan will be a prioritized plan in the light of the likely availability of resources. The National/ state Mission will appraise by the national State Mission.

While the objective of the Perspective plan is to assess and Plan for the unfinished UEE agenda in a particular district, the Annual plan is an exercise in prioritization. The perspective Plans of districts would be the basics for placing demand for additional financial resources for UEE in the years to come. As stated earlier, these Plans have to be as per broad norms under SSA. The appraisal teams would ensure that planning is as per nationally/State accepted norms.

Preparation of perspective and Annual require creation of capacities at all levels. Besides the teams of resources persons from the National/State missions, efforts to develop State specific institutional linkage for planning support will also be explored.
Consultation with research institutions for undertaking State specific educational agenda has already been initiated. The same would be finalized in consultation with the State governments. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan would require support of institutions of proven excellence for research, evaluation, monitoring and capacity building.

The quality of the planning exercise will depend on the efforts at capacity building and the supervision of the planning process. Institutions like Cluster Resource Centers and Block Resource Centers, already established under DPEP and being established under SSA in non-DPEP districts, have to be carefully nurtured to provide capacity for effective planning. The starting point in any such exercise is for the States to accept the need for careful selection of personnel from the existing governmental functionaries and also to deploy experts on contact from the management costs provided under the SSA. The National/State Mission will have a role in the selection of personnel in order to ensure objectivity in such processes. It must be reiterated that quality-planning process will require institutional reforms that allow local communities to participate effectively in the affairs of the school. The involvement of the teaching community in the planning process would also be necessary to ensure that the school system emerges as the principal institution for community partnership.

The District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) have a Planning and Management unit. These units have to become fully operational. The effort at entering into Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with State governments under the scheme of Strengthening Teacher Education is a step in that direction. As stated in earlier sections, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan encourages institutional capacity development at all levels. Ultimately, no amount of external supervision by monitoring teams or capacity building teams is a substitute for institutional capacity development at all levels. The CRCs, BRCs and DIETs have a large role in the preparation of perspective and Annual Plans and their systematic capacity development has to be a priority in programme implementation.

**ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES AS PER APPROVED PLANS**

As mentioned earlier, the allocation of resources will depend on the following: preparation of District Elementary Education Plans and their appraisal; commitment of the State government with regard to the State share; performance of the state government regarding resources made available earlier; institutional reforms in states to facilitate decentralized management of education; reports of supervision teams regarding the quality of programme implementation; and availability of financial resources in a particular year. The actual allocation of resources will depend on all these factors. It is likely that districts with poor infrastructure will require more resources. However, the release will also be performance linked. If an educationally backward district does not utilize the resources in the manner intended, it is unlikely to continue to receive a priority. All the districts of the country will be covered before the end of the IX Plan. Their Plans will also be appraised and resources made available as per the conditions mentioned above. There are no fixed criteria for allocation of resources, as the actual allocation will depend on a large number of factors, including the availability of resources.
As mentioned earlier, the resources will be allocated in two installments in a year: Once in April and then again in September. The objective is to allow states to fully utilize the allocation for elementary education. The utilization certificates however will only become due one year after the release of an installment. Further release will be stalled if utilization certificates are not submitted as per the schedule.

The expenditure of a State/UT has to be maintained at the level in 1999-2000. The State share for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has to be over and above the expenditure already being incurred at the 1999-2000 level in a particular State. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will not substitute State funding for elementary education. In fact, it is expected to encourage states to invest more on elementary education along side a higher allocation by the Central government. The State level Implementation Society for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will certify that the level of investments are being maintained in the state at the time of seeking further allocation of resources from the Central government. The National level Mission will also monitor expenditure on elementary education. NIEPA will provide professional support for regular monitoring of expenditure on elementary education.

WHAT A DISTRICT PLAN MUST HAVE

i) Large-scale participation of women and other disadvantaged groups in the planning process.

ii) A clear gender focus in all the activities under the plan. Every intervention must be gender sensitive.

iii) Large-scale evidence of school-based activities like Bal melas, Jathas, sports, Maa-beli sammelans, etc.

iv) Evidence of
   • Interface with elected representatives at all levels
   • Process based constitution of committees at each level
   • Institutional arrangements for decentralized decision making
   • Consultation with teachers
   • Community contribution for universal elementary education
   • School mapping and micro planning habituation wise/ village wise/ cluster wise/ urban slum wise/ ward wise
   • Joint bank accounts in each school/ VEC/ School committees to receive community contribution and to spend government grants
   • Focus on making education relevant to life.

v) Survey of
   • Available school facilities, including non-governmental educational institutions;
   • 0-6 age group children and facilities for their education and development.
   • 6-14 age children through preparation of Education Registers and identification of institution for schooling.

vi) Relocation of teacher units taking in to account the presence of the non-governmental sector and its impact on school attendance.
vii) **Assessment of**
- Training needs and survey of capacities for orientation and training with existing institutions;
- Needs, school-wise/ habitation wise or additional school facilities, teachers, etc.
- School wise/ EGS centre wise incentives of meals, scholarships, uniforms, free text books and note books, etc;
- Teaching learning materials;
- Information system;
- Available financial resources and priority of needs.

viii) **Community ownership of the district plan.**

ix) **A plan for quality education including a plan for**
- Early childhood care and education;
- Children with special needs.

x) **Incorporation of issues like local specific school timings, etc;**

xi) **Reflection of all investments in Plan and Non Plan being made in a particular district for elementary education.**

**APPRAISAL OF DISTRICT PLANS**

Appraisal of District Plans is critical to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The National/ State Mission will undertake Appraisal of plans with the assistance of resource teams constituted by the operational support unit of the National/ State Mission. These resource persons will be fully oriented for under taking the task of appraisal. The Appraisal missions will under take regular visits to districts in order to monitor the quality of preparatory activities. The cost of the appraisal teams will be fully borne by the National/ State Mission. The monitoring and operational support teams at the National/ State level Mission will constitute the Appraisal teams.

The National/ State level Mission will jointly constitute appraisal teams. One of the National Mission nominees could be a representative of the research institution that undertakes responsibility for that state. The National Mission will circulate a list of resource persons on the basis of past experience gathered under the DPEP and Lok Jumbish Project. The nominees of the State Mission will also have to be approved by the National Mission. A checklist of activities will be prepared for the guidance of the Appraisal team.

For non-governmental representatives in appraisal teams, besides theta/DA as admissible for government servants, a modest honorarium will be available.

**A few salient features of the appraisal process will be as follows:**

- To be conducted jointly by central and state government representatives in the initial phase, along with experts to be selected by NIEPA/ NCERT/ SCERT/ SIEMAT
States to undertake appraisal after sufficient institutional capacities are developed through networking with national level institutions
- Assessment to ensure that mobilization has been the basis of planning and plan reflects participatory planning process
- Level of community ownership to be the critical factor in appraisal of plans
- Participation of NGOs, institutions, individuals, Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban local bodies
- Assessment of community contributions in school activities
- Assessments of institutional arrangements for decentralized decision making and capacity building in local resource institutions
- Assessment of involvement of teachers in the planning exercise.

DETERMINING THE BASELINE STATUS

Many state specific evaluation studies have been carried out in recent months. The National Evaluation of the Operation Blackboard scheme has generated State specific findings on a large number of parameters regarding elementary education. The Evaluation of the District Institutes of Education and Training has similarly generated State specific Reports. In a manner of these studies give a broad baseline picture with regard to the school system and the effectiveness of the teacher training institutions. The National Sample Survey 52nd Round (1995-96), the National Family Health Survey – I and II (1992-93 and 98-99) also gives us insights on 6-14 age children attending schools in various states. These studies serve as a State specific baseline for the launch of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Besides these, provision for base line studies focusing on the local context has been provided as part of the preparatory activities. Baseline achievement tests would be undertaken by the NCERT in the non-DPEP states on a priority, it ascertains the current levels. The National and the State Mission will monitor on the basis of these established baselines.

Besides the State level Baselines, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan provides for conducting Baseline assessment Studies as a part of the preparatory activities in each district to be covered under SSA. These studies have to be diagnostic in nature so that these studies contribute to the planning process by taking note of the local context. NCERT will provide technical guidance.

SUPERVISION OF ACTIVITIES

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan requires regular supervision of activities. Ideally, the CRCs, BRCs, DIETs have to be developed effectively to carry out supervision activities. Supervision teams will be periodically sent by the National/ State Mission usually once in six months. Such supervision visits would also include the State specific resource institution that has undertaken the task of research and supervision in that State / UT. Theme specific supervision visits besides the overall assessment visits will also be undertaken. Classroom assessment by resource persons has also been provided for. States will work out their supervision/ appraisal/ monitoring and research Plans, based on the indication of resource availability as per the norm approved for such activities under the
receipt of these written commitments. The appraisal and approval of Plans should be completed in time for the first installment, to meet the proposed expenditure of the first six months, to be released by 15 April. Some departure from this norm would be necessitated in the first year of programme implementation.

There would be two installments each year: one in April for expenditure between April and September and the second in September for expenditure between October to March. A supervision visit to the programme implementation districts will be undertaken by a pool of resources persons selected by the National/ State Mission, before the second installment is processed. The second installments will be based on the progress in expenditure and the quality of implementation, the utilization certificates from the districts to the States and to the National Mission for funds released in the first installment would become due at the time of the release of the first installment in the subsequent year.

**MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERGRATION WITH CURRENT EFFORTS**

**MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL**

One of the basic features of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is that the mainstream structures will primarily be used for implementation the programme. A separate Department of Elementary Education and literacy has already been created for this purpose. In order to facilitate convergence and a holistic perspective, a single Bureau of Elementary Education has been constituted. The General Council at the National level will be headed by the Hon’ble Prime Minister with the Human Resource Development Minister as the Vice-Chairman. The Chairman of the Executive Committee will be the Hon’ble Human Resource Development Minister. The Secretary, Department of Elementary Education and Literacy will be the Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Committee. The Joint Secretary (Elementary Education) will also be the Director General of the National Mission of Sarva Shiksha Mission. He/ she shall be the Member Secretary of the General Council and the Executive Committee. The Directors/ Deputy Secretaries of the National Mission will also work as the Deputy Director Generals of the National Mission under the overall supervision of the DG. Each DS/Director shall have specific functional and geographic responsibility. The functional areas may include – 1) Monitoring, MIS, Research, evaluation, and operational support; 2) Gender, ECCE, children with special needs, and special focus groups; 3) Pedagogy and capacity development for quality, Teacher Education; 4) EGS, alternative and innovative education, education of urban deprived children; 5) Teacher recruitment, rationalization and other policy matters; 6) Planning and other community mobilization; 7) Budget, accounts, Annual Reports and Audit; 8) Civil works and development of school facilities.

The under Secretaries and the Section officers in the Elementary Education Bureau, along with the Office staff, etc. will be a part of the National Mission. In order to facilitate effective monitoring and operational support for MIS, a monitoring and
operation support unit will be established from the existing staff and by appointment of a few need-based Consultants as per rules. The management costs approved for the National Mission will be utilized for engaging the Consultants and establishing the monitoring and operational support unit. The operational support unit will work very closely with the National Resource institutions providing the professional support.

The National Mission has a major role to play in developing capacities. In order to facilitate such a process, demand-based capacity development visits would be organized by the National Mission, in consultation with state Missions. State Missions would also play an important role in meeting the capacity needs of the districts as per their requirement. The professional and operational support institutions will also regularly interact with State Implementation Societies and districts to ascertain the capacity development needs. Flexibility in meeting the capacity development needs is critical to the success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

The National Mission has the role of disseminating good practices across the States. This will include encouraging study visits and regularly publishing such good practices. The monitoring and operational support unit of the National Mission will respond to the demand from States and districts. It will have the flexibility of sending monitoring teams at short notice. The National Mission will constantly update lists of experts in functional and geographical areas in consultation with State Implementation Societies. The list of experts would be periodically placed before the executive committee for approval.

STATE MISSION AUTHORITY

There would be a state Mission Authority for UEE. All activities in the elementary education sector, including the implementation of the revised NPE programme, should be under one Society. This would facilitate decision making at the state level. The mission mode signifies a focused and time bound arrangement for decision-making and the presence of Planning and Finance on the bodies at the state level would facilitate this process. The General Council could be headed by the Chief Minister and the Executive Committee by the Chief Secretary/Development Commissioner/Education Secretary. Representation of Finance and Planning Departments on the General Council and the Executive Committee would facilitate decision-making. Department of Rural Development's involvement will facilitate the process of mobilizing additional resources under the rural employment programmes for school infrastructure development. Involvement of NGOs, social activists, university teachers, teacher union representatives, Panchayati Raj representatives, and women's groups would help in ensuring full transparency to the activities of the Mission. Ministry of Human Resource Development would be represented both on the Governing Council and the Executive Committee.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan allows the engagement of professional on contractual terms, subject to the ceiling on management costs. However, the engagement of professionals has to be done after taking stock of the available manpower. The professionals have to work to strengthen capacities in the mainstream. This would require serious effort and possible restructuring of command structures in many states. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
would encourage all efforts at restructuring that contribute to effective decision-making and efficiency. The accountability framework of institutions has to be considerably strengthened. This calls for adoption of strict selection criteria while posting officials to institutions like DIETs and SCERTs. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with States under the scheme of Teacher Education is already highlighting this need for priority to institutional development.

Management cost up to 6 percent of the total programme cost has been provided. It can be used for the following tasks- engagements of experts for specific tasks and specific periods; data collection and EMIS operationalization and maintenance; office expenses like stationary, telephone, fax, photocopyers, consumables, postage, POL, vehicle hiring, TA/DA of functionaries; cost of persons allowed to be engaged on contract basis for the programme duration; recurring contingent and miscellaneous costs. For specific tasks, experts may be hired for a given time frame, to provide support to the mainstream educational management structure. Before hiring experts, it will be mandatory for districts/states to assess the existing strength. There would be areas like MIS, pedagogy, teacher training, research and evaluation, community mobilization, gender sensitization, civil works, Alternative schooling, that may require infusion of experts. The actual requirement would depend on an assessment of the existing structure. In a state where institutions like SCERT, DIETs, etc are already fully and effectively functional, such requirements will be minimal. Experience of elementary education project implementation suggests that a core of 7-8 persons at the district level and a team of 3-4 persons at the Block level are required for effective implementation. This team will be constituted by selection from existing staff, as far as possible. Full time workers on secondment (as in TLCs, with government's permission), deputation from other government departments, would be encouraged to work as part of the district and block level teams for UEE. After assessment of needs and existing availability of manpower, decision regarding contractual appointments would be taken in consultation with the State level Authority. All contractual appointees will be engaged for a specified time period by the State level Implementation Society (and not by the government) and shall work within the institutional framework.

The selection process of professionals hired on contract (within the 6 percent management cost) has to be very rigorous. Selection should be done by expert committees specially constituted for the purpose.

The management costs should be periodically monitored to ensure that it is within the ceiling of 6%. Sustainability of such costs has to be taken into account at the time of incurring them.

An illustrative management structure had been provided under the District Primary Education Programme. Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the effort will be to first identify the existing strengths and weakness of the implementation team at the district, block, cluster and habitation level. The requirement of additional staff will be worked out on the basis of this assessment. In the preparatory phase itself, identification of likely BRC and CRC coordinators from among the teachers should begin. In fact, this
team should start functioning from the preparatory phase itself by deputation, if need be. This team of up to 20 teachers could provide useful support to the planning process at the Block and Cluster level.

Normally, States find lack of sufficiently trained personnel to handle MIS and community mobilization related activities, from the existing staff. Gender related interventions have also required the engagement of persons on contractual appointment. While making an assessment of manpower needs, districts must assign the top most priority to engaging experts for MIS, community mobilization and gender related interventions. In context specific situations, engagement of experts on tribal education, education of SC children, education of children with special needs, etc., may also be considered. Similarly, in States where the institutional capacity for quality interventions is weak, engagements of experts on pedagogy and teacher training may also be considered. Effective management of accounts also requires effective training and occasionally strengthening of the financial management machinery at the district and Block levels.

As regards requirement of vehicles, the policy should be to hire vehicles as per need, unless such a practice is not feasible in any particular area. Even in case purchase of vehicles is permitted, no new post of driver should be created. Such purchase of vehicles would only be as substitution of condemned vehicles. In any case, prior permission of the National Mission will be mandatory for any decision regarding purchase of vehicles.

The implementation team under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will work within a framework of decentralized management of education with full accountability to the community. The Panchayati Raj institutions and school level committees will be involved in the programme implementation, along the mainstream structures.

STATE COMPONENT UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

SSA provides for support at State level from the 6% management cost as also the funds for Research, Evaluation, Supervision and monitoring at State level. The cost of State level orientation and training programmes can be built into the District Plans at the state level. This does not imply that there will not be a state component. The State Component has to be integrated with the needs of the district. Support to SCERT over and above the support under the Teacher Education Scheme can come from the State component under the SSA. The objective of the State component is to facilitate programme implementation and provide support for capacity development at all levels.

Effective monitoring would also require a system of intensive review and planning mechanism at the State level. The State level team will constantly undertake field visits to ascertain the quality of programme implementation. Information systems to monitor progress with regard to SSA objectives, effective structures, for financial management and audit, support to districts for capacity development, are some areas that require continuous partnership with the State level team.
The management structure under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan at all levels has to be accountable to the State specific arrangements for decentralized management of education. This would require full transparency in all activities. Since the effort is to strengthen the mainstream structures, SSA would involve investment for human resource development among the education department functionaries. Exposure visits, orientation programmes for capacity enhancement, working with Non-governmental organizations, developing partnerships with elected representatives for universal elementary education, focus on elementary educational needs of focus groups, capacity for implementation of quality related interventions, will be integral to the management structure. Partnerships like the Total Literacy Campaign management structures within the overall Panchayati Raj/ Tribal 'Autonomous Council set-up will be required to build an effective management system.

The State level team also has to encourage diversity across districts and document good practices so that they could be adopted in other regions.

Managements of Accounts and Audit are also to be an important area requiring attention at all levels. Proper maintenance of books of accounts at all levels, generation of financial progress reports, utilization certificates, financial and social audit of interventions, transparency about findings, systems of continuous improvement will have to be developed to sustain effective programme implementation.

ILLUSTRATIVE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AT STATE, DISTRICT AND SUB-DISTRICT LEVELS

- The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan allows States/ UTs to have their own management structures, respecting the diversity that exists in these structures across the States. This, however, does not mean that decentralization will not be monitored. In fact, the effort is to empower schools to take their own decisions, within the overall management context of a State/ UT.

- The States have to set up the State level Implementation Society. In DPEP states, it is likely that the existing DPEP Society will be suitably modified to meet the needs of UEE. In other States/ UTs either new Societies are being set up or existing Societies like the State level Mission Authorities for literacy are being suitably modified. The linkage with the mainstream educational administration set up has been emphasized.

- The State level Implementation Societies have to have effective monitoring and operational support units. Creation of an effective EMIS unit, a team of experts to provide support in specific functional areas, regular monitoring, supervision and appraisal activities, etc. will have to be organized at the State level Implementation Society. These structures could come up from the 6% management costs available under SSA. While doing so, States have to ensure that the educational mainstream has to be totally involved in programme activities. This however, does not; rule out the requirement for specific strengthening of the machinery by infusion of experts.

- Each State would like to re-organize the State level set up in the mission mode. Like the National Mission, the State level mission will have to carry out a large number of
monitoring and operational support tasks. In the DPEP states, such support may be provided by the existing State level set up. State level Programme Support Unit will have the added responsibility of implementing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

- District and Sub district units will similarly be set up by the State. As mentioned in the section on community planning process, creation of a district, Block and Cluster level teams comprising of governmental and non-governmental persons would go a long way in establishing effective structures. The selection of the core team has to be very careful, as that would determine the quality of programme implementation. Setting up of EMIS team has to be done on priority in order to put in place an effective MIS. The infusion of additional contractual staff will only be after an assessment of the existing staff strength. Effort will be made to involve representatives of Non Governmental Organization with proven excellence while constituting teams for programme implementation at various levels.

ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION IN SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan conceives a vibrant partnership with Non Governmental Organizations in the area of capacity building, both in communities and resource institutions. These partnerships will require nurturing through an on going partnership in activities. The Research Evaluation, Monitoring activities under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is proposed to be done in partnership with institutions/ NGOs. This would improve transparency of programme interventions and would also encourage a more open assessment of achievements.

In the Education sector, non-governmental organizations have been making very meaningful full contributions. Work related to pedagogy, mainstreaming out of school children, developing effective teacher training programmes, organizing community for capacity development for planning and implementation, expressing gender concerns, work in the sphere of disability among children, are some such examples.

Their partnership is conceived in three ways:

- Through direct funding by Central and State government;
- Through funding activities by identified National and State Resource Institutions;
- Through participation in community activities funded by Village Education Committees.

NGOs can discharge a very useful role in advocacy as well as accountability of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE), it has decided to fund NGOs (other than experimental and innovative Projects) through State Implementation Societies. It will also be possible to record the contribution of NGO Projects in the Districts Elementary Plans, as their interventions would also be made in the DEEP. It will facilitate transparency of NGO activities also. Substantial partnership of NGOs is conceived through community organizations like...
VEC, PTA, MTA, SMCs, etc. This suggestion so that NGOs actually participate in building capacities in the community. Efforts to explore a longer-term partnership with NGOs with a well-defined arrangement for continuity will be encouraged. 

**MAJOR CENTRAL INTERVENTIONS AND THEIR INTERGRATION WITH SSA**

There have been several innovative schemes in the sector of elementary education following the National policy on Education in 1986 such as Operation Blackboard, Teacher Education, Non formal Education, Mahila Samakhya, National programme for Nutritional Support for Primary Education, State Specific Education Projects in Bihar, Rajasthan, UP, and Andhra Pradesh and DPEP in 248 districts of 18 States. It is proposed to integrate these in the fold of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the following manner:

i. **Operational Blackboard:**
Operation Blackboard aimed to improve physical infrastructure of education whereby school space was expanded and more teachers provided. However, Operation Blackboard could not cover the entire spectrum of schools. The SSA will qualitatively improve and expand the existing structure. No fresh teacher recruitment will take place under OBB once SSA programme is operationalized. Support for teacher’s salaries under OBB will, however, continue as per the OBB scheme where teachers have already been appointed under that scheme, till the end if the IX Plan. Efforts to access funds for classrooms from rural/urban employment schemes will continue to be made, even though earmarking is no more applicable to these funds.

ii. **Strengthening of Teacher Education:**
The revised scheme of Teacher Education provides for a memorandum of Understanding with the states in order to ensure that they receive priority attention of state governments, especially with regard to filling up of vacancies through a rigorous selection criteria. The scheme will be a part of the SSA framework till the end of the IX Plan, after which it will merge in the SSA programme. This will supplement the DIETs, which provide guidance at district level. The revised Teacher Education provides for strengthening of SCERTs. Support for SCERT will continue under the Teacher Education Scheme.

iii. **National Programme of Nutritional Support for Primary Education:**
Evaluation of the National Programme of Nutritional Support for Primary Education indicate that the supply of food grains leads to improvement in student attendance while raising their nutritional standard. It is proposed to continue the scheme with suitable modifications, in consultation with States.

iv. **Mahila Samakhya:**
Evaluation studies on the Mahila Samakhya approach indicate the progress made in empowerment of women. This in turn generates demand for elementary education of girls. There is a need to further strengthen these linkages with basic
education of girls by giving women’s groups a more active role in the management of the school. Though the scheme of Mahila Samakhya will retain its distinct identity at the State and District level, it will provide support for the planning and implementation of SSA in districts implementing Mahila Samakhya.

v. Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education:
Studies on the Non-formal Education Scheme have pointed out the lack of flexibility, which impedes effective implementation across different States. Efforts to provide for a diversity of interventions have been made in the revised scheme that has been approved recently such as setting up of Education Guarantee Schools, Alternative Schooling facilities, Balika Shikshan Shivir, ‘Back to school’ camps, etc. the restructured NFE scheme called EGS and AIE will be a component of the SSA and be absorbed in it by the end of the IX Plan. SSA programme will provide planning and management support to operationalize the EGS and AIE scheme.

vi. District Primary Education Programme (DPEP):
DPEP districts indicate that decentralized planning and implementation facilities, community involvement in the process of school management. DPEP has met with varied degree of success in different States. Some have availed of DPEP benefits and have improved their elementary education sector. A large number of teacher vacancies have been filled up in many DPEP states. Setting up of Block and Cluster Research centers has facilitated academic interaction among teachers. Development of new textbooks with the participation of teachers and experts has been encouraging in most DPEP states. All DPEP districts would also be part of the SSA framework. Efforts to prepare comprehensive District Elementary Education Plans will be made in DPEP districts. The focus will be on vertical expansion into Upper Primary Education and on consultation of the primary schooling efforts.

vii. Lok Jumbish Project:

Under the LJP, evaluation studies indicate the positive impact of micro planning and school mapping in which the community is involved. There are specific interventions for girls’ education through Balika Shiksha Shivirs and Sahaj Shiksha Kendras. While there has been improvement in enrolment and retention, the actual learning achievements have been modest. LJP will be implemented in 13 districts of Rajasthan and holistic District Plans will be prepared for these Districts also. LJP will be a part of the SSA framework.

MONITORING OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION COMMUNITY BASED MONITORING, EMIS, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will have a community-based monitoring system. The Education Management Information System (EMIS) will incorporate provision for correlation of school level data with community-based information from micro planning
and surveys. Besides this, every school will have a notice board showing all the grants received by the school and the details thereof. All reports sent to the Block and District level with regard to enrolment, attendance, incentive, etc., shall be displayed on the school notice board. Reporting formats will be simplified so that the output is demystified and anyone can understand the data. A school will be required to display the information it sends up so that attendance and performance of pupils in public knowledge. The EMIS shall form the basis of the periodic reporting system. Besides this, trainers will act as classroom process observers to record changes in classroom practices. Periodic monitoring teams will make random visits to selected schools and these will be discussed at various levels. The basic principle in monitoring will be its community ownership and periodic quality checks by external teams – external to the activity but internal to the system. To encourage independent feedback on programme implementation, research and resource institutions with proven excellence will be involved in monitoring at all stages.

The State Implementation Societies (SIS) will also undertake intensive monitoring. Representation of National Mission for UEE and National level institutions like NCTE, NIEPA, and NCERT will also undertake periodic monitoring and provide resource support to the SIS to strengthen appraisal and monitoring systems. Efforts to associate autonomous institutions willing to take up state specific responsibilities for research and evaluation will also be made. Many independent institutions would also be associated in developing effective tools for conducting achievement tests, monitoring quality aspects of programme implementation, evaluation and research studies.

A total provision of up to Rs.1500 per school per year has been made for community-based monitoring, research, evaluation etc. Rs.100 per school will be available at the National level. The state will decide on the division of resources at various levels, from the state to the school from the balance Rs.1400 per school.

The funds for monitoring will be used for carrying out the following activities:

- Creating a pool of resource persons at National, state, district, sub district level for effective- field based monitoring.
- Providing travel grant and a very modest honorarium (as per state specific norm) to resource persons for monitoring.
- Providing regular generation of community based data.
- Conducting achievement tests, evaluation studies.
- Undertaking research activities.
- Setting up special task force for low female literacy districts and for special monitoring of girls, SCs, STs.
- Incurring expenditure on Education Management Information System.
- Undertaking contingent expenditure like charts, posters, sketch pen, OHP pens etc., for visual monitoring systems.
- Assessment and appraisal teams and their field activities.
- Analyzing data at sub district/ district/ state and national level.
Besides community based monitoring, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will encourage independent research and supervision by autonomous research institutions. Institutions of proven excellence have been requested to take up State specific responsibilities. The focus in partnership with institutions will also be on developing capacities through the interaction in SCERTs/ SIEMATs/ DIETs to carry out research and evaluation tasks. Faculty of Education in Universities, Departments would also be requested to participate in such activities under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The Regional Institutes of Education (RIE) of NCERT will also be associated in these tasks.

Effective community-based monitoring requires demystification of processes. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will make efforts to develop partnership between communities and research institutions in order to improve the quality of monitoring and research.

Since quality is a major concern under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, its monitoring will be a priority. Monitoring of quality will require an understanding of processes of programme implementation. Process and quality indicators would have to be developed as per felt needs in order to track the quality of programme implementation. Such efforts would require partnership with institutions, PRIs, School committees, etc. Training and orientation programmes to develop appropriate monitoring formats, qualitative monitoring through process documentation, case studies to understand issues comprehensively, will be required. The monitoring system under SSA will be multi pronged so that a constant strive for quality is maintained.

The system of financial monitoring would also be important in developing demystified community based approaches that allow for social audit. All financial monitoring has to work within a system of social monitoring with full transparency. Joint training programmes for auditors, community leaders, teachers, etc to understand and appreciate the context of universal elementary education would be made under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

NCERT will undertake base line assessment of learning achievements at primary level in the Non-DPEP States and at upper primary level in all states in order to provide a base line for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. These assessments must also take a larger view of the assessment process rather than simply a one-time assessment of achievements. Efforts to develop context specific item pools for competency testing must also be simultaneously made.

MONITORING OF PROGRAMME

- Joint review by Government of India and the State Government
- Community based monitoring with full transparency
- Continuous visit to field by resource persons and suggestions for improvement
- State specific responsibilities to research and resource institutions for supervision, monitoring, evaluation research
- Community ownership mandatory for preparation of district elementary education Plans
- Statement of expenditure in each school to be a public document
- Mandatory implementation of many activities by VEC

**COVERAGE OF SPECIAL FOCUS GROUPS**

**Education for Girls, Scheduled Caste and Tribal Children**

**Girls Education**

Education of girls, especially those belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, is the primary focus in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Efforts will be made to mainstream gender concerns in all the activities under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme. Mobilization at the habitational/village/urban slum level, recruitment of teachers, upgradation of primary into upper primary schools, incentives like midday meals, uniforms, scholarships, education provision like textbooks and stationery, will all take into account the gender focus. Every activity under the programme will be judged in terms of its gender component. Besides mainstreaming, special efforts like the Mahila Samakhya type of mobilization and organization, back-to-school campus for adolescent girls, large-scale process based constitution of Mahila Samoohs, will also be attempted. The selection criteria take into account the low female literacy among the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan recognizes the need for special efforts to bring the out-of-school girls, especially from disadvantaged sections, to school. This would require a proper identification of girls who are out of school in the course of micro planning. It also calls for involving women through participatory processes in the effective management of schools. Experiences across the states under the Mahila Samakhya and under the District Primary Education Programme have suggested the need for a clear perspective on women’s issues. The provision for girls’ education would have to be situated in the local contexts and interventions designed to suit the specific community needs in these regard. Special interventions need to be designed to address learning needs of girls and relating education to their life. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is committed to making these interventions possible.

**LESSONS FROM PAST PROGRAMMES LIKE DPEP AND LOK JUMBISH**

The conduct of various previous programmes in the field of elementary education, like DPEP and Lok Jumbish, have thrown up interesting and successful lessons on gender intervention for improvement in access, enrolment, retention and achievement of girls. Some of these, which can be adopted by the states in SSA, are as follows:

**Access and Enrolment**

- Regular enrolment drives conducted in most States. In Uttar Pradesh, a 23% increase has been recorded in girls’ enrolment in 2000-2001 over last year’s enrolment figures.
- Conducting special camps and bridge courses for girls to mainstream them
Setting up special models of Alternative Schools exclusively for girls-angana vidyalayas, bal vidyalaya, bal shalas, Sahaj Shiksha Kendras, AS cum ECE centers.

- Balika Shikshan Shivirs (Camps for adolescent girls)
- Providing formal schooling facilities in centers of religious instruction viz, Maktabs and Madarsas.
- Intensive mobilization efforts among the resistant groups.
- Working with close collaboration with the community in identified pockets.

Using women's groups (both formed under the programme and those already existing), VECs, MTA, to follow up issues for girl's education.

Retention

Monitoring attendance has been high on the agenda in all states where micro initiatives for girls' education have been taken up. Community involvement is high in this process, particularly in mobilizing parents for regular attendance of their children. Follow up of drop out girls to bring them back to school either through camps or bridge courses.

Organizing retention drives to put regular pressure on parents and the school system to ensure retention of girls. These are not one time drives but are organized at regular intervals to sustain the pressure and take up corrective measures as may be necessary.

In pockets identified for intensive activities, attendance of each child is monitored to prevent dropouts.

In Uttar Pradesh, children are awarded graded colours for their monthly attendance- green for the best, yellow for the mediocre and red for the deficient. This system is showing results. Children want to achieve the green colour.

It is proposed to publicly felicitate the children with good attendance records at local level functions. This has not only enthused the children further, but has also instilled a sense of commitment and responsibility among parents and guardians.

Achievement

Special coaching classes/ remedial classes for SC girls.

Creation of a congenial learning environment for girls in the classroom where they are given the opportunity to learn. This is being done through special inputs to teachers either in selected pockets or across the programme districts.

Remedial classes being organized by VFC/MTA members for girls who are not faring too well at school.

Improved classroom environment to provide equitable learning opportunities to girls. Most interventions have been through teacher sensitization programmes. There are examples of States
that have tried to address the issue of providing congenial learning environment of girls in the schools/ classrooms although the approaches have been varied. States like Karnataka and Gujarat have taken a lead in this process.

Kerala undertook a study on classroom processes with a gender focus in 168 schools. Thus formed the basis for the teacher-training module developed on this theme. Almost 28,000 teachers have been taken through this training and have been given reference material.

Planning and implementation
- States have been sensitized on the use of available data for local level planning for girls' education with community involvement.
- Field-based trainings have been conducted in Assam, Kerala, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. States have been building on these skills and are concentrating in certain very deprived pockets. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu have also initiated focused interventions along similar lines.

EDUCATION OF SC/ST CHILDREN

The education development of children belonging to the scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is a special focus in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Every activity under the Project must identify the benefit that will accrue to children from these communities. Many of the incentive schemes will have a sharper focus on children from these communities. The participation of dalits and tribals in the affairs of the school will be especially encouraged to ensure ownership of the Abhiyan by all social groups, especially the most disadvantaged.

The interventions for children belonging to SC/ST communities have to be based on the intensive microplanning addressing the needs of every child. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan provides flexibility to local units to develop a context specific intervention. Some intervention could be as follows:

- Engagement of community organizers from SC/ST communities with the focus on schooling needs of children from specific households
- Special teaching support as per need
- Ensuring sense of ownership of school committees by SC/ST communities
- Training programmes for motivation for schooling
- Setting up alternative schooling facilities in unserved habitations and for other out of school children
- Using community teachers
- Monitoring attendance and retention of school children from weaker sections regularly
- Providing context specific intervention in the form of a hostel, an incentive or a special facility as required
- Involving community leaders in school management
The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will develop context specific interventions, over and above the mainstream interventions, to tackle the problems in girls’ education. All successful interventions so far will serve as the guiding principle for preparing such interventions. The provision of expenditure up to Rs.15 lakhs per year given in the norms can be used for taking up innovative interventions relating to SC/ST under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

INTERVENTIONS IN TRIBAL AREAS

The problems faced by children in the tribal areas are often different than that faced by children belonging to Scheduled Castes. Hence, special interventions may be needed for such regions. Some of the interventions, which can be considered, are:

- Textbooks in mother tongue for children at the beginning of Primary education where they do not understand regional language.
- Bridge Language Inventory for use of teachers.
- Anganwadis and Balwadis or crèches in each school in tribal areas so that the girls are not required to do baby-sitting.
- Special training for non-tribal teachers to work in tribal areas, including knowledge of tribal dialect.
- Special plan for nomadic and migrant workers.

PROVISION UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

All the interventions listed above can be undertaken in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The following provisions have been made for girls’ and education of Sc/ST children:

i. Interventions for Early Childhood Care and Education

ii. School/EGS like alternative facility to be set up within one kilometer of all habitations.

iii. Up-gradation of EGS to regular schools.


v. Mahila Samakhyאון interventions from the innovation fund.

vi. Provision of process-based community participation with a focus on the participation of women and SC/ST.

vii. Provision of context specific innovative intervention of girls’ education and, education of SC/ST children- up to Rs.15 lakh per intervention per year and up to Rs.50 lakh in a district in a particular year. The innovative programmes can include:

- Enrolment and retention drives.
- Special camps and bridge courses.
- Setting up special models of Alternative Schools.
- Strengthening of madarsas and maktabas for formal education to girls.
- Community mobilization including setting up new working groups and working with existing working groups.
- Monitoring attendance.
- Remedial/coaching classes.
- Providing a congenial learning environment inside and outside the school.

viii. Training programme for community leaders to develop capacities for school management.
ix. Setting up of Block and Cluster Resource Centres for effective academic supervision.
x. Free textbooks to all girls/SC/ST children up to class-VIII.
xi. Mid-day-meal programme to continue as at present.
xii. Incentives like uniforms and scholarships to be funded from State Plan only.
xiii. Adequate Teaching Learning Equipment for all Primary and Upper Primary schools.
xiv. At least 50% of the teachers to be appointed have to be women.
xv. Provision for
  - School and teacher grants for all teachers
  - 20-day in-service training each year for all teachers.
  - All children with special needs.
  - Community-based monitoring, partnership with research and resource institutions, and periodic feedback on interventions.14

INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

SSA will ensure that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided education in an appropriate environment. SSA will adopt 'zero rejection' policy so that no child is left out of the education system.

Approaches and Options:
The thrust of SSA will be on providing integrated and inclusive education to all children with special needs in general schools. It will also support a wide range of approaches, options and strategies for education of children with special needs. This includes education through open learning system and open schools, non formal and alternative schooling, distance education and learning, special schools, wherever necessary, home based education, itinerant teacher model, remedial teaching, part time classes, community based rehabilitations (CBR) and vocational education and cooperative programmes.

Components: The following activities could form components of the programme:

a) **Early detection and identification:** A concerted drive to detect children with special needs at an early age should be undertaken through PHCs, ICDS, ECCE centers and other school readiness programmes. Identification of children with special needs should become an integral part of the micro-planning and household surveys.
b) **Functional and formal assessment** of each identified child should be carried out. A team should be constituted at every block to carry out this assessment and recommend most appropriate placement for every child with special needs.

c) **Educational Placement:** As far as possible, every child with special needs should be placed in regular schools, with needed support services.

d) **Aids and appliances:** All children requiring assistive devices should be provided with aids and appliances, obtained as far as possible through convergence with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, State Welfare Departments, National institutions or NGOs.

e) **Support services:** Support services like physical access, resource rooms at cluster level, special equipment, reading, aterial, special educational techniques, remedial teaching, curricular adaptation or adapted teaching strategies could be provided.

f) **Teacher training:** Intensive teacher training should be undertaken to sensitize regular teachers on effective classroom management of children with special needs. This training should be recurrent at block/cluster levels and integrated with the on-going in-service teacher training schedules in SSA. All training modules at SCERT, DIET and BRC level should include a suitable component on education of children with special needs.

g) **Resource support:** Resource support could be given by teachers working in special schools. Where necessary, specially trained resource teachers should be appointed, particularly for teaching special skills to children with special needs. Wherever this option is not feasible, long-term training of regular teachers should be undertaken.

h) **Individualized Educational Plan (IEP):** An IEP should be prepared by the teacher for every child with special needs in consultation with parents and experts. Its implementation should monitored from time to time. The programme should test the effectiveness of various strategies and models by measuring the learning achievement of children with special needs periodically, after developing indicators.

i) **Parental training and community mobilization:** Parents of children with disabilities should receive counseling and training on how to bring them up and teach them basic survival skills. Strong advocacy and awareness programmes should form a part of strategy to educate every child with special needs. A component on disability should be included in all the modules for parents, VEC and community.

j) **Planning management:** Resource groups should be constituted state, district levels to undertake effective planning and management of the programmes in collaboration with PRIIs and NGOs. An apex level resource group at the national level to provide guidance, technical and academic support to children with special needs under SSA may be constituted.

k) **Strengthening of special schools:** Wherever necessary, special schools may be strengthened to obtain their resource support, in convergence with departments and agencies working in that area.

l) **Removal of Architectural barriers:** Architectural barriers in schools will be removed for easy access. Efforts will be taken to provide disable-friendly facilities in schools and educational institutions. Development of innovative
designs for schools to provide an enabling environment for children with special needs should also be a part of the programme.

m) Research: SSA will encourage research in all areas of education of children with special needs including research for designing and developing new assistive devices, teaching aids, special teaching material and other items necessary to give a child with disability equal opportunities in education.

n) Monitoring and evaluation: On going monitoring and evaluation should be carried out to refine the programme from time to time. For this, appropriate monitoring mechanisms should be devised at every level and field tested at regular intervals.

o) Girls with disabilities: Special emphasis must be given to education of girls with disabilities.

Convergence: All activities, interventions and approaches in the area of education for children with special needs will be implemented in convergence with existing scheme like Assistance to Disabled Persons for purchase/ fittings of Aids/Appliances (ADIP), Integrated Education of the Disabled Children (IEDC) and in coordination with the Ministry of social Justice and Empowerment, State Department of Welfare, National Institutions and NGOs.

Expenditure up to Rs.1200 per disabled child could be incurred in a financial year to meet the special learning needs of such children. The ceiling on expenditure per disabled child will apply at the district level.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

Realizing the crucial importance of rapid physical and mental growth during early childhood, a number of programmes of ECCE were started particularly after the National Policy for children for Children (1974). The existing ECCE programmes include:

i. Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).

ii. Scheme of assistance to voluntary organizations for conducting Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers.

iii. Balwadi and day-care centers run by voluntary agencies with Government’s assistance.

iv. Pre-primary schools run by the State Governments, Municipal Corporations and other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

v. Maternal and child health services through primary health centres and sub-centres and other agencies.

The National policy of Education (NPE) has given great deal of importance to Early Child Care and Education (ECCE). It views ECCE as a crucial input in the strategy of human resource development, as a feeder and support programme for primary education and as a support service for working women of the disadvantaged sections of society. It has also taken into account the holistic nature of ECCE and has pointed out the need for early care and stimulation of children belonging to the vulnerable sector. Since the
age span covered under the ECCE is from conception to 6 years, emphasis has been given to a child-centred approach, play-way and activity-based learning in place of formal methods of teaching and early introduction of three R's. The importance of community involvement has also been highlighted. Emphasis has been given to establishing linkages between Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and other ECCE programmes.

The Revised Policy of Formulation reiterates the postulates of MNPE, 1986 on ECCE. The prescriptions of POA, 1986 continue to be of relevance. What is attempted here is to update the POA, 1986 taking into account the developments since then and the need to strengthen the programmes by, inter-alia, improving the programme components, coordination mechanism and enlisting community participation in mobilizing resources, planning and monitoring.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan realizes the importance of pre-school learning and early childhood care and its role in improving participation of children in schools. In order to facilitate a greater convergence with the Integrated Child Development Services, efforts to strengthen them in the area of pre-school education will be made. Specific support will be available to existing ICDS centres.

In habitations not covered by the ICDS and wherever the State government is desirous of starting a pre-school education centre in the primary school, support from the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan could be accessed. In case of a new ICDS centre coming in such a habituation, the pre-school facility will necessarily have to work in conjunction with the ICDS.

A provision of up to Rupees fifteen lakhs per year in a district for any innovative intervention including for Early Childhood Care and Education has been made. The District Elementary Education Plan has to have a Plan for Early Childhood Care and Education. It also has to list the facility already created under the ICDS. The supplementary support for ECCE will always be in conjunction with the ICDS. Provision of honoraria for pre-school teacher, training of Aanganwadi Sevikas for Pre-school learning, activity materials, play items, etc., could be provided as support for ECCE.

Recognizing the continuum of learning and development, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan would make all efforts to develop an integrated approach to meet the educational needs of the pre-schoolers. Some illustrative interventions could be as follows:

- **Strengthening pre-school component** in ICDS by need-based training of aanganwadi sevika, provision of additional person, learning materials etc.
- **Setting up Balwadis** as pre-school centers in uncovered areas.
- **Generating awareness** on importance of early child development through advocacy programmes
- **Organizing training programmes** for community leaders.
- **Providing for intensive planning** for ECCE.
- **Development of materials** for ECCE related activities.
• Promoting convergence between the school system and the ECCE arrangement.

STRATEGIES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN: Education Guarantee Schools in unserved habitations and alternative and innovative education for out of school children including children in difficult circumstances.

The Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education scheme is a part of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan framework. Guidelines issued separately under the EGS & AIE shall apply. The management structure for implementation of EGS&AIE will be incorporated in the management structure of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Planning; appraisal and supervision processes will also be the same.

The new scheme makes provision for diversified strategies and has flexible financial parameters. It has provided a range of options, such as EGS, Back ot school Camps, Balika Shivers, etc. there are four broad focus areas:

i. Full time community schools for small unserved habitations

ii. Mainstreaming of children through bridge courses of different duration

iii. Specific strategies for special groups like child labour, street children, adolescent girls, girls belonging to certain backward communities, children of migrating families, etc.

iv. Innovative programmes- the innovation can be in the areas of pedagogic practices, curriculum, programme management, textbooks and TLMs, etc.

All habitation not having a primary school within one kilometer and having school age children will be entitled to have an EGS type school. Children who have dropped out-of-school will have an opportunity to avail of bridge courses, aimed at their mainstreaming. The objective is to see the EGS and AIE as integral to the quest of UEE. The linkages with CRC/BRC/DIET/SCERT will be required for EGS and AIE.

URBAN DEPRIVED CHILDREN

There is an urgent need to focus on the educational needs of deprived children in urban areas. Recent studies indicate the growing problem of schooling of poor children in urban areas. On account of different administrative arrangements for the management of schools in the urban areas, often a number of initiatives for UEE do not reach the urban area schools. Some significant efforts have been by NGOs like Pratham in Mumbai in partnership with the Municipal Corporation and the City Level Plan of Action in Calcutta. The Municipal Corporation of larger cities will be considered as “district” for purposes of preparation of Elementary Education Plans. The arrangements for decentralized management will also apply to these proposals. These proposals can be developed by Municipal Corporations and the State government will have to recommend these for funding under SSA, clearly specifying wherefrom the State share will be provided. All norms of SSA will apply to urban areas.
Urban areas have special problems like the education of street children, the education of children who are rag pickers, children whose parents are engaged in professions that makes the children's education difficult, education of children living in urban working class slums, children who are working in industry, children working in households, children at tea shops, etc. A diversity of approaches is required to tackle the educational problems in urban areas. On account of separate administrative arrangements of schools in urban areas, there is a need to coordinate and converge interventions across Departments and local bodies responsible for elementary education in urban areas.

This calls for a provision of planning distinctively for the urban areas either as separate plans or as part of District Plans in the case of smaller towns. In either case, this would require partnership with NGOs, Municipal bodies, etc.

QUALITY ISSUES IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

PEDAGOGY, TEACHER TRAINING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

GANDHIJI ON EDUCATION

Real education has to draw out the best from the boys and girls to be educated. This can never be done by packing ill-assorted and unwanted information into the heads of the students. It becomes a dead weight crushing all originality in them and turning them into mere automata.

Mahatma Gandhi (Harijan 1 December, 1933)

THE NATIONAL POLICY RESOLVE

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 of sex, all children must be given access to education of comparable standards. The MLL strategy for improving the quality of elementary education was seen as an attempt to combine quality and equity.

The main indicator of the quality of elementary education can be visualized in terms of its product—the learners' achievement both in scholastic and co-scholastic areas i.e., the performance in various subjects of study and habits, attitudes, values and life skills necessary for becoming a good citizen. The factors associated with success in these areas, which relate to conditions of learning and learning environment, are also sometimes considered as indicators of quality of elementary education. Thus ensuring quality in the inputs and processes becomes necessary of quality achievement is aimed at.
MAIN STEPS FOR OPERATIONALIZATION OF MLLs AS LAID DOWN IN THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION 1992

- primary assessment of the existing levels of learning achievement;
- modification of the MLLs to suit local situation if needed;
- initial and recurrent orientation of teachers to competency based teaching;
- preparation of teacher training handbooks for MLL based teaching;
- introduction of continuous and comprehensive evaluation of students and using evaluation results for remedial action;
- preparation of unit test and other evaluation materials and putting them in an item pool for using as and when required;
- using MLL norms as and when textbooks are revised;
- provision of competency based teaching learning materials to make the educational process activity based and joyful.

Quality issues in elementary education will therefore, revolve around the quality of infrastructure and support services, opportunity time, teacher characteristics and teacher motivation, pre-service and in-service education of teachers, curriculum and teaching-learning materials, classroom processes, pupil evaluation, monitoring and supervision etc. indeed improvement of quality in these parameters and its sustenance is a matter of grave concern for the whole system of education. Some issues are mentioned below:

i. Providing for reasonably good school building and equipment to all schools and centers for alternative schooling;

ii. Providing quality ECCE to all children until 6 years of age;

iii. Ensuring a minimum of 4 to 5 hours per day of meaningful stay of each child in school;

iv. Providing trained and committed teachers in all schools and really interested and oriented instructors for all non-formal education centers (EGS & AIF);

v. Improving the quality of existing pre-service teacher education;

vi. Organizing quality in-service teacher education to all teachers on a periodical basis and with a follow up mechanism;

vii. Creating and sustaining teacher motivation;

viii. Revitalizing supervision system for quality elementary education;

ix. Re-organization of curriculum to imbibe local needs and in-corporating the concerns of the National Curriculum Framework 2000;

x. Development of competency based and contextual teaching-learning material;

xi. Improving teaching learning processes to make them child centered, activity based, masterly learning oriented;

xii. Providing for remedial teaching and enrichment programmes at the occasions in all classrooms;

xiii. Introduction of formative evaluation and grading system to make it stress free for children;

xiv. Reduction of curriculum load; and

xv. Introducing participatory management of elementary education with community support.
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will make efforts to take a holistic and comprehensive approach to the issue of quality. Efforts to decentralize the whole process of curriculum development down (grassroot level) to the district level will be made. Reducing the load of non-comprehension by facilitating child-centred and activity-based learning will be attempted. Learning by doing, learning by observation, work experience, art, music, sports and value education shall be made fully integral to the learning process. Appropriate changes will be made in the evaluation system to make it more continuous and less threatening. Performance of children will be constantly monitored in consultation with parents but shall not be restricted only to cognitive areas. Teachers’ role in preparation of textbooks and secondary learning materials will be enhanced. School timings will be made contextual. Based on a broad curriculum framework, districts would be free to define their content areas in their local contexts. State and national level institutions will facilitate this process of decentralized arrangements for development of curriculum and evaluation systems. Some guiding principles in curriculum and evaluation reform will be as follows:

- Teacher community participation in material preparation and in developing a school vision;
- Focus on good quality printing, illustration for books along side improvement in content; freedom from ‘cheapest syndrome’ in matters of children’s books;
- Use of dialects as language in classes one and two;
- Community-based and school-based projects for work experience;
- Association of local artisans workmen in school activities;
- Primacy to cultural activities, art, sports etc;
- Content based and motivational training for teachers;
- Continuous assessment of students for all round development;
- Facilitating child-to-child learning;
- Looking upon quality improvement as integral to a holistic School Improvement Programme.

Norms approved under the scheme of Restructuring of Teacher Education will apply. Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres will be set up as per the norms mentioned earlier. They will function under the guidance of DIETs.

Efforts to identify teachers as resource persons will be attempted through adoption of objective criteria. Teachers as resource persons could then interact with pedagogy experts and other teacher educators to develop useful learning approaches for children. Efforts to recognize the unique learning needs of children must be made. The diversity of learning environments and learning approaches should be encouraged and teachers should have the freedom to experiment on a much larger scale.

The effective interface of teachers and teacher educators is critical for developing a context specific intervention. Study tours of teachers will be encouraged. NGOs with experience in pedagogy will be associated in developing capacity among teachers for innovative practices.
The distance education mode will continue to be an important input in the in-service education of teachers and other personnel in the area of elementary education. It will supplement the face-to-face training by using multimedia packages like audio-video programmes, radio broadcast, teleconferencing, etc. This will also facilitate dissemination of innovative practices of one region to others. DIETs would be the centre of activity at the district level. The state coordination would be done by SIETs/SCERTs. These state level organizations would take up capacity building activities of DIET personnel.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT, RATIONALIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

States have their own norms for recruitment of teachers and a lot of diversity exists in payments being made to new recruits. In many cases the appointing authority is the local Panchayat. The States will be free to follow their own norms as long as these consistent with the norms established by NCTE. There will be no compromise on standards even though payments of less than the State pay scale as an interim measure may be adopted in states with large-scale vacancies. Rationalization of existing teacher units will be a priority. The presence of the non-governmental sector has to be taken note of before working out vacancies.

The programme will provide for Primary and Upper Primary schoolteachers to ensure that there are no single teacher schools. Overall, the effort will be to provide at least 1:40 teacher pupil ratio. Qualifications of Upper primary teachers will be as per state specific norms and the number of Upper Primary schools will be broadly as per the national policy norm. The practice of at least 50% women teachers will be strictly followed.

The support for newly appointed teachers’ salaries (on a reducing basis) under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will be for a ten-year period. The sharing arrangement will be 85-15 in the IX Plan, 75-25 in the X Plan and 50-50 in the XI Plan period and thereafter. Long term sustainable financing of teachers’ salaries is likely to enthrone states to fill up teacher vacancies as per requirement. Assistance will not be available for filling up existing vacancies that have arisen on account of attrition. States that did not utilize the support under Operation Blackboard for a third teacher in Primary or an additional teacher in Upper Primary will be eligible for assistance for new posts created to meet the rising enrolment of pupils.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will encourage decentralized management of teacher cadres. The local government should recruit and the community should have a say in the selection process. The Gujarat model of recruitment fully trained teachers on fixed pay as an interim strategy could be adopted in states with large-scale teacher vacancies. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan would like to improve the accountability of the teacher vis-à-vis local community without diluting the standards for selection of teachers, as laid down from time to time by the National Council of Teacher Education.

Opportunities for the professional development of teachers have to be encouraged and all efforts to provide effective in-service training and orientation have to be made. The Budget for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan provides for effective in-service teacher training.
Arrangements for classroom observation after training programmes, by the Resource Persons will be encouraged.

QUALITY ISSUES AT UPPER PRIMARY STAGE

Since Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan covers the upper primary stage also, the focus in quality interventions would have to be on meeting the complex needs of this stage in terms of teacher qualification, competency, subject specific deployment in schools, academic support through BRCs/CRCs, training needs of teachers, classroom based support and supervision issues. Since SSA will be one of the first major programme interventions at Upper Primary stage (OBB, LJP, BEP, EFAUP had Upper Primary components), greater clarity with regard to the specific needs of this stage will emerge in the course of programme implementation.

USEFUL AND RELEVANT EDUCATION AND EDUCATION FOR LIFE

One of the goals of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to promote education and for life. The debate on learning skills and life skills is an old one in India. There is a lot to learn from the Basic education system advocated by Mahatma Gandhi and the 'Nayee Taleem' advocated by Dr. Zakir Hussain. The whole issue of relevance of education has been raised in the context of education for life. A lot of experts feel that education is not just the process of imparting literacy and numeracy. It is actually a process of socialization that helps children cope with the natural and the social environment. They have therefore, emphasised the need to develop a school system that builds on the solidarities in societies and tries to learn from the natural environment. The pursuit of useful and relevant education would imply a much greater focus on integrating physical and mental development.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan would encourage States to focus on total development of children. Encouragement to sports, cultural activities, project work involving interaction with social and natural surrounding, activity based learning, exposure to life skills with regard to health, nutrition, professions etc. Such a focus will entail looking upon a school as a social institution that is the hub of community activities. Encouragement to work experience would require the attachment of children with professionals, farmers, artisans, in order to master the social and natural context.

The shift in focus should result in a greater involvement of a number of extension workers in schools. Agriculture Extension Workers, extension workers in artisan based programmes, activities of the Khadi and Village Industries Corporation, learning from traditional wisdom by interaction with the respected senior citizens in an area, etc should form an integral part of the strategies of education for life. Children should be encouraged to think and observe independently and the classroom should be a forum for interaction.
RESEARCH, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

As Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan emphasizes quality education, it is necessary to periodically monitor and evaluate all aspects of pedagogical inputs like curriculum and textbook book development, teacher training packages and classroom processes, amongst others. In his effort the role of community assumes paramount significance. The community leaders and groups need to be sensitized on issues related to monitoring of children’s progress and other quality related school activities. Existing VECs, OTAs, SECs, MTAs, SMCs, etc, should be involved in this process by organizing fortnightly/monthly meetings in the schools.

In order to assess children’s learning achievement and progress, after the launch of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a periodic assessment every three years should be done at the primary and upper primary stages, using the BAS findings as a reference point.

Research groups at the state, district and sub-district levels would be constituted to facilitate quality improving in teaching learning. State, district, block and cluster resource groups and function in collaboration with the SCERTs, DIETs, BEOs/BRCs and CRCs respectively. Information regarding the constitution and functioning of these groups would be incorporated into the Project Management Information System.

RESOURCE GROUPS AND RESPONSIBILITY CENTRES

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan emphasizes quality improvement in elementary education for which it deems necessary that resource groups and responsibility centers from national to sub-district levels are identified. These groups would oversee the policy, planning, implementation and monitoring of all quality related interventions. Their major role would be to advice and assist at various levels in curriculum development, pedagogical improvement, teacher education/training and activities related to classroom transaction.

In order to facilitate a decentralized mode of education, these groups would need to be constituted at various levels, namely- national, state, district and sub-district. The following could be involved in the groups:

National level – NCERT, NIEPA, Ed Cil (TSG), Universities, NGOs, experts and eminent educationists.
State level – SCERT, SIEMAT, Universities, IASEs/CTEs, NGOs, experts and eminent educationists.
District level – DIETs, representatives from DPEP District Resource Groups, higher educational institutions, innovative teachers from the districts, NGOs.
Sub-District – BRC/BEO, representatives from CRCs, innovative teachers.

IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOL FACILITIES AND OTHER CIVIL WORKS

Community participation should be the only means of undertaking any civil works in improvement of school facilities. Experiments in community participation under Lok
Jumbish and under DPEP in many States have been very encouraging and such experiments will be further carried out. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan would first of all try to mobilize resource under Rural Employment Programme and other developmental schemes for constructing school buildings. The community have to come forward to maintain school facilities if any investment is proposed in a village. An annual support to the community for repair and maintenance is envisaged under the SSA. The upper ceiling is Rs.5000 per year, based on the actual need and the willingness of the community to contribute. The Lok Jumbish Project has had significant success by adopting this procedure.

The allocation for civil works will not exceed 33% of the perspective and the Annual Plan. The elementary education becoming an obligation of the state (including the local government), the Panchayats could even be directed to priorities construction of facilities where it does not exist.

The participation of the community in all civil work activities will be mandatory in order to ensure a sense of ownership and a departure from contractor driven approaches. Engagement of contractors will not be allowed under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. School Management Committees/ Village Education Committees/ Gram Panchayat Committee on education will have to carry out the civil works activities through a transparent system of account keeping. The DPEP and Lok Jumbish Project have developed effective community based approaches for civil works. These will be mandatory in all Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan districts.

The principle of social audit could be accepted for minor repairs. The school management committee/ Village Education Committee could certify the maintenance and repair work undertaken in a school. For larger repair and maintenance as well as new construction, technical provisions will be followed. The technical provisions however, have to be totally demystified (as has been done under the Lok Jumbish Project) and the communities' right to know the cost parameters has to be fully respected.

Efforts to improve the school environment by addition of a few inexpensive internal and external elements will be made. New building designs developed in Lok Jumbish and and DPEP would be adapted to promote child centred learning. Use of local materials and cost effective technologies will be encouraged. A civil works innovation fund will be set up in each state/UT to encourage experimentation with design. Repair and maintenance of buildings will be given the top most priority.

Large number of (more than 100) building designs for schools have been developed in DPEP districts. These designs, apart from being attractive, are child centred, functional and in tune with the new pedagogical concepts. The publication called “Building rural Primary schools” published by the Ed CIL and the building construction manuals developed by the Lok Jumbish Project may be utilized by all the States/districts to develop their civil works plan. The States may make use of designs already developed under DPEP/Lok Jumbish Project in their specific local contexts. Incorporation of child-
friendly internal and external elements will be mandatory in all the new construction and repair works.

SSA will encourage use of local construction of materials and low cost technologies. This would require a large amount of capacity building, including training of engineers and masons in these technologies. Apart from the Technical Resource Group of DPEP, assistance of Resource institutions like HUDCO may also be sought for this purpose.

There will be a Civil Works innovation fund of Rupees fifty lakhs in each State. This will be used for civil works innovations, demonstration buildings, and capacity building.

Civil works under SSA should start with a proper assessment of the infrastructure requirement for each district. There need to be a school-wise compilation of physical and monetary requirements. The attempt should be to find out the minimum money required to provide adequate infrastructure to each school including repairs, toilets, drinking water, boundary wall, etc. Provision of additional classrooms is to be considered only after exploring possibility of repairs and double shifts. Once the total requirement for the district is obtained, one needs to find out how much of this requirement can be funded through the on going schemes and therefore what is the gap that is required can be funded through the on going schemes and therefore what is the gap that is required to be funded through SSA.

There should be a single agency in each district to manage all funds related to school construction. Ideally, it should be an engineering cell in the district team. All school infrastructure works should be executed by the single agency.

Each State must formulate a strategy for repair. The Rupees five thousand per year available to a school for regular maintenance and repair could be used to create a maintenance corpus in a school. The money will be credited to the VHC and the VEC could decide to use only part of the funds and use the rest to create a corpus. Community involvements is a must if the school infrastructure has to be well maintained.
Endnote

CHAPTER VI
UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION – A MYTH OR REALITY
POLICY AND PLANNING FOR EFA IN INDIA

EDUCATION IN INDIA: A BACKDROP

India is a vast country extending over an area of 3,287,263 Sq. Km. from the snow-covered Himalayas to tropical rain forests of the south. India’s population, as on March 1, 1991, was 846.30 Million (439.23 million males and 407.07 million females). Recent estimates indicate that the population of the country has crossed one billion. As the second largest populous country, India is the home for 16 per cent of world’s population.

For the purpose of governance, India is divided into 28 States and 6 Union Territories. States and the Centre function under a federal relationship. The Centre governs certain subjects such as defense, railways and finance while several other subjects are the responsibility of the states. Union Territories are administered under the direct control of the centre. Education is on the concurrent list though major responsibility for school education lies with the state governments. Under this arrangement the central government and state governments are expected to have a meaningful partnership for educational development in the country. In some of the states, local self- government bodies, namely, Panchayati raj institutions in rural areas and municipalities in urban areas have also been associated with school education in order to make the system of administration sensitive to local conditions and also to facilitate the community participation.

The constitution of India makes an elaborate distribution of governmental powers - legislative, administrative and financial- between the Union (Centre) and the states. Adequate mechanisms exist for sharing of resources and responsibilities, between the Union and states, or harmonious exercise of their powers in larger national interest. A major challenge in national planning is to reconcile the planning priorities of states with the national plan frame. The National Development Council (NDC) imparts a national character to the entire process of planning. In the education sector, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) plays a lead role in the evolution and monitoring of policies and programmes.

Expanding System of Education:
During the post-independence period, there has been considerable expansion in educational facilities and enrolment at the elementary stage as revealed by successive surveys of educational facilities. Consequently, literacy rate has improved in every decade. Table 6.1 depicts the rise in literacy rates and the expanding system of primary education. Recent estimates indicate a significant rise in the literacy level. According to the National Sample Survey estimates, the literacy rate has increased by about 12 percentage points in a period of six years from 52.21 percent in 1991 to 64.20 percent by 1997.
Table 6.1: Literacy Rate and Number of Primary School (1951-1991)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EAR</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Literacy Rate (%)</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>8.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>28.31</td>
<td>40.40</td>
<td>15.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>45.95</td>
<td>21.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>43.56</td>
<td>56.37</td>
<td>29.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: - Literacy rates of 1951, 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged five years and above. The rates for the years 1981 and 1991 relate to the population aged seven years and above.

Organization and Structure of School Education

There are broadly four stages of school education in India, namely, primary and upper primary, secondary and higher secondary. In pursuance of the National Policy on Education of 1968 and of 1986, there have been attempts to evolve a uniform pattern of school education with 12 years of schooling, commonly known as 10+2 pattern. The ‘plus two’ stage refers to classes XI and XII, which constitute higher secondary stage in all 28 states/UTs. (In some states, higher secondary stage is part of collegiate education known as junior colleges.) However, for first ten years of schooling, the organizational patterns differ considerably among States/UTs. While in some States/UTs, secondary stage consists of classes IX and X and in some states it is classes VIII. IX and X. The initial schooling stage up to Class VII or VIII (as is the case in many states/UTs) is generally called ‘elementary Stage’. The patterns of schooling in all states/UTs and the variations therein are shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Structures of School Education in Different States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States/ UT</th>
<th>Age of Admission to Class I</th>
<th>Structure of school education in India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>I-V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>I-V I-IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>VI-VIII I-VI-VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>V-VII V-VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>IX-X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>VII-X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States/UT</td>
<td>Age of Admission to Class 1</td>
<td>I-V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; K</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A &amp; N Islands</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandigarh</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D &amp; N Haveli</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daman &amp; Diu</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakshdeep</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondicherry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table indicates the structure of school education in India, with columns for different classes ranging from I-V to VII-X.
Decisions regarding the organization and structure of education are largely the concern of the States/Union Territories. Within the overall policy of the national policy on education, each State/Union Territory has been independently determining the educational structure to be adopted. This is particularly true of the school stage. However, there is almost complete uniformity in the pattern of educational structure in particular state or Union Territory and also a broad consensus has emerged for adoption by all States.²

UNDERSTANDING GROUND REALITIES/FACTS ABOUT EDUCATION

It is important to understand and ascertain the facts about the education system and education experience in India. One must not be dependent on anecdotes, gut feelings, conventional wisdom and must not be the prisoners of the past in the critical task of formulating national education policy.

Size of the private sector supply of education
Private medical and engineering colleges, schools, and vocational training institutes are growing at a rapid rate. But there has been lack of comprehension of the picture of total supply of educational services by the private sector. In addition to the standard colleges and schools, the study should focus on all other types of educational services provided by private sector including coaching classes, private tuition by teachers and professors, preparation classes for various exams. It is critical to understand the current role and extent of the private sector supply of educational services.

Reach of Education
Several state governments, particularly of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and TamilNadu, have undertaken schemes to assure access to education even for remote areas. The Education Guarantee Scheme of Madhya Pradesh, for example, promises to help open a school up to the third Standard if there is no such school within 5 Km distance and there are at least 10 School-age children in the village or the hamlet. One needs to have a better understanding of the reach of the educational system. Ground research is important in developing an accurate and true picture of the access to basic education in the country. If the schools are already made available to all within a reasonable distance, then the focus can be on the next step of improving the quality of education. This information is essential in policy making.

Quality of Education
The primary focus of the public education system has so far been on access to education. The quality of education has been a rather distant concern. There is a need to launch a major project to assess the quality of public and private education institutes and then monitor the quality over a period of time. There is also a need for an extensive data bank on the quality of education at primary, secondary, as well as college levels. This is indeed a massive research and data collection effort that would need ongoing support. The databank thus created would be a treasure-trove for researchers and would provide critical input in policy formation and in evaluating effects of policies.
Table 6.3 Achievement Marks by School Management, Chennai, 1994-95 (Higher Secondary Level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private Aided</th>
<th>Private Unaided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ICSSR should fund such comparative evaluative projects; only then there will be a possibility to base policies on facts rather than assumptions and prejudices.

Poverty and access to education

Several issues are related to the theme of poverty and access to education: whether Government schools provide really free education, whether the poor can spend any money on their children’s education and how much they are already spending, whether the children are required to work and therefore are unable to attend school, are few of the pressing issues.

It is generally assumed that government schools are free and therefore affordable for the poor. But a detailed analysis of the NCAER and NSSO studies led Professor J.B.J. Tilak of NIEPA to the following conclusion: “Households spend large sums of money on acquiring primary education; a sizeable number of students do not receive primary education free, in contrast to the claims made by the government.” The NCAER (1994) and NSSO (1991,1993) studies suggest that in a given year people spend anywhere from Rs.100 to more than Rs.4000 per child on primary education. For the year 1986-87, the total household expenditure on primary education was Rs.7388.5 Million. This private spending on primary education is not just by the rich and the middle class in urban areas. Out of the Rs.7388.5 million, rural areas spent Rs. 4204.5 million, more than half of the total private expenditure. In that year, the total government expenditure on primary education was Rs.17,000 Million. So the private expenditure is by no means an insignificant amount; it was more than 40 percent of what the government spent on primary education. The NSSO study also points out that households in Indian villages on average spend about Rs.104 on fees, Rs.42 for books and supplies, and Rs. 107 for private coaching to provide primary education to their children. States, in which governments spend more on education, people also spend more. If one interprets higher spending by governments as a little better quality of education, then it is apparent that parents are willing to spend when they are offered the kind of education they desire. The poor in Kerala, for example spend the highest proportion of income on primary education.
(NCAER 1994). Kerala is well known for the reach of its education system; less than 2 percent of the children in the age group of 6-14 never enroll in school. This is true even when the poor there spend far more than in any other state. Public and private spending seem complementary and not a substitute.

It is widely believed that one reason for non- enrolment and dropping out is the need for children’s financial contribution at home. This certainly was true in the past; a large proportion of children worked. What is the current situation? What proportion of children stay out of school because of work? What type of work do they perform? How long do they work? The estimates of child labour have been consistently declining since the 1981 Census of India.  

**Table 6.4 Estimates of Child Labour (All-India Rural)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion (%) of Children aged 5-14 who are in the workforce</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Census of India, 1981</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Sample Survey, 1993</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCAER Survey, 1994</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A recent PROBE study (1999) is another way of understanding the ground reality. Instead of national surveys, it focuses on selected states in India. In the PROBE states, the worst performer BIMARU states, among the out-of-school children in the age group of 6-12, only 5 percent of the boys and 1 percent of the girls engage in wage labour. The median work hours for boys are 3.3 and for girls 4.8. However their cohorts who actually attend school also work on average 2 hours a day. Is it possible that parents keep their children out of school for the benefits of two extra hours of work?  

**Table 6.5 Work Patterns of Out-Of-school Children (PROBE States)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of children who performed wage labour on the day preceding the survey</th>
<th>Boys 5%</th>
<th>Girls 1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average time of work on the day preceding the survey*</td>
<td>4.2 hours (3.3 hours)</td>
<td>2.2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra time of work, compared with children who are attending school</td>
<td>2.1 hours</td>
<td>2.2 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PROBE Survey (random sub-sample of 333 out-of-school children by the 6-12 age group)

The PROBE study concludes that only a small minority of children is full-time labourers and most of them work not as wage-labourers but as family helpers at home or in the fields. Moreover, the presumed causation that child labourers are unable to go to school because they have to work may actually be reverse, that is, they work because they have dropped out of school for other reasons.
It is extremely important to understand the ground realities so that we would not prescribe solutions for non-existent problems and overlook the real problems that confront suppliers and one who demands education. False solutions would not only delay achievement of our goals but also waste our scarce resources.

Cost per student spent by the government for providing primary, secondary, higher, and vocational education.

A plethora of government programs and schemes address the educational need of the people. Various departments and agencies at different levels of government manage these programs and schemes. One needs to have accurate financial accounts to figure out the total public spending and then per student cost of government education. The focus should on various levels of government (local, state and central) and fixed as well as recurring costs. A clearer and exact picture of government spending in education is necessary.

Amount spent by households for sending children to government, private aided, and private unaided schools.

Several estimates exist but none are consistent and therefore reliable. We need accounts of actual amount spent by households for educating their children.

### Table 6.6 Household Expenditure on Elementary/ Primary Education (Rs. Per student)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Maharashtra</th>
<th>Karnataka</th>
<th>Rajasthan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>1194</td>
<td>809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Aided</td>
<td>4033</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>2185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Unaided</td>
<td>2452</td>
<td>2530</td>
<td>7514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Unrecognised</td>
<td>2467</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bihar</th>
<th>Kerala</th>
<th>Delhi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCAER (1994)</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>1029</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One District in UP</th>
<th>One District in Kerala</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNDP (1999)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panchmuchi 1990 (Elementary Education, 1988-89)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tilak (1996) Based on NSSO 1986-87 (Primary Education)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Schools</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Manabi Majumdar (1999:32)

**Understanding Kerala’s Success**

It is generally assumed that Kerala’s success in literacy is due to the historical education movements in the state and Marxist governments’ commitment and substantial expenditures on education. Preliminary research suggests that Kerala’s success can be explained by very high proportion of privately managed education institutions in the state, and by the nature of government spending and not by how much it spends. For the state of comparison, the other Marxist State of West Bengal is presented.

**Table 6.7 Distribution of State Education Spending**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>West Bengal</th>
<th>Kerala</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Primary Education in Government Schools</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Primary Education in Private Schools</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant of Scholarship</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Subsidy</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Private (aided) Primary Schools</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is surprising that in a thoroughly Marxist state like Kerala, 60 per cent of the primary schools are private, as compared to only 11 percent in West Bengal. The proportion of private Primary schools in Kerala is the highest in the country; the second highest in Meghalaya at 21 percent, and the national average is only five percent. The government of Kerala also pays expenses of almost half of the students enrolled in private primary schools. The number in West Bengal is 15 percent which is the third highest in the country (Tamil Nadu is at 20 percent); the national average is again about five percent.

Kerala has the highest proportion of private primary schools and it also subsidizes the highest proportion of students in private schools. Both of these facts give the citizens of Kerala wider effective choice in selecting primary schools for their children. Kerala uses its public funds to encourage competition among schools. To avoid transportation costs,
most parents generally send their children to the nearest school, resulting in "geographical clustering" of schools and their children. Since most of the private schools run by various religious groups in the state, they are generally more likely to be successful in exerting pressure on parents to send their children to school. The choices available to parents must increase attendance as well as retention rates in state.

The focus on how the two governments spend their education income indicates that Kerala by offering more choices to parents and increasing competition among schools actually practices market principles. Kerala's Citizens have received far better educational services than those of almost any other state in the union. The Kerala model of education- of choice and competition- is unique in the country, and so is Kerala's educational performance. It is not just how much a state spends on education but how it spends that determines efficiency and effectiveness of the education system.6

Indian Strategies to Achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education
Four and half decades ago, India had taken a pledge through our constitution that within a period of ten years from 1950, free and compulsory elementary education would be provided to all children up to 14 years of age. Since 1950, determined efforts were made towards the achievement of this goal. Over the years, there have been very impressive increases in the number and spread of institutions as well as enrolment. Today, India has about 574,000 primary schools (Classes I-V) and 156,000 upper primary stages are 109 million and 40 million respectively. The Indian elementary education system is thus one of the biggest such systems in the world, providing accessibility within 1 Km to over 825,000 habitations covering 94 percent of the country's population. During the past one decade the enrolment rate has grown close to 100 per cent at the primary stage.

However, Universalisation of elementary education (UEE) in its totality is still an elusive goal and much ground is yet to be covered. Dropout rates continue to be high (36.3 per cent in classes I-V and 53 per cent in classes VI-VIII), retention of children in schools is poor, achievement levels are low, and wastage is considerable. Despite increased participation of girls, disparity still exists, more particularly among scheduled castes (SCs) and Schedule tribes (STs). In the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, with revised modifications in 1992, it was resolved to achieve the goal of UEE by the turn of the century, emphasizing three aspects: universal access and enrollment and universal retention up to 14 years of age and a substantial improvement in the quality of education. The resolve is spelt out unequivocally and emphatically in the programme of action (POA) 1992, which gave unqualified priority to UEE. One is therefore pinning great hopes on the new innovations and alternative strategies which are being applied to ensure that the shortcomings and inadequacies, which did not allow us to realize this goal so far, are overcome, and the new resolve will not have to be extended further.

The Education for All (EFA) Summit of the nine high- population countries held in New Delhi in December 1993, which an offshoot of the World Conference on Education for All was held in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990, culminated in a policy declaration and framework of strategies for its implementation. The policy declaration called for providing basic education facilities for every child and consolidating efforts towards
basic education for children, youth and adults. In the context of an integrated approach of basic education for all people, literacy and adult education programmes are to be improved and extended, eliminating disparities of access and improving the quality and relevance of basic education. It can be said that the Indian NPE 1986 and its POA 1992, while resolving to ensure free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children upto 14 years of age by the year 2000, adumbrated the policy statement made at the EFA submit.

This chapter briefly describes some of the new innovations and strategies that are being applied in India today to achieve UEE in this century.

New Innovations and Alternative Strategies:
Some of the Major initiatives and Strategies are

- Disaggregated target setting and decentralized micro planning, which will provide the framework of universal access and community participation.
- Strengthening alternative channels of schooling such as the non-formal education (NFE) system for those who cannot avail conventional full-time schooling.
- Introduction of minimum levels of learning (MLLs) at primary and upper primary stages to improve learner achievement.
- Improvement of school facilities by revamping the scheme of Operation Blackboard (OB) and connecting it to the MLL Strategy.
- Establishing linkages between programmes of early childhood care and education (ECCE), Primary education, literacy and UEE.
- Addressing the more difficult aspects of access, particularly to girls, disadvantaged groups and out-of-school children.
- Restructuring of teacher training in view of the changed strategies and programmes.
- Availing of external financial support for basic education.
- Launching the National Elementary Education Mission (NFEM).

Disaggregated Target Getting and Decentralised Micro planning
Our experience with UEE encompasses the entire Third World experience. On the one hand, there are states like Kerala, which have achieved universal literacy as well as UEE in terms of School participation with social indicators as good as those of the best among the Third World Countries. On the other hand, we have states like Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, with indicators as bad as those of the Sub-Saharan Countries.

One of the new strategies to achieve UEE is adoption of disaggregated target setting and decentralised planning. The long experience with the pursuit of UEE has established that UEE is contextual. The contextuality varies widely across the country. Even in a state like Kerala, where participation is near universal, much requires to be done in respect of quality and achievement. In such states, the pursuit of UEE would be mainly in the areas of quality, facilities and achievement, while in other states participation and demand aspects would need more attention. Therefore, the attempt would be to prepare district-
specific and population-specific plans for UEE within the broad strategy frame of micro planning through people's participation. Micro planning has been defined as a family-wise and child-wise design of action to ensure that every child regularly attends a school or an NFE center and completes 8 years of schooling at a pace suitable to him or her and attains an essential level of learning.

Guidelines for operationalising micro planning have been prepared and distributed to the state governments. The concepts of micro planning and local level capacity building have been given currency and efforts launched to decentralize educational planning and management. Micro planning exercises have already been undertaken in several states to ensure that all children receive primary education of satisfactory quality either through formal schools or through part-time NFE centers.

To operationalise the strategy for UEE through disaggregated target setting and decentralized planning, the new scheme of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) has been evolved. The concept of DPEP is a beachhead for effecting improvements and full-scale development of the entire elementary education sector. The overall goal of the programme reconstruction of primary education as a whole in the districts instead of piecemeal implementation of the various schemes. The fundamental principle of DPEP is capacity building at all levels to evolve further strategies, which are replicable and sustainable. The specific objectives of the programme are:

- To reduce differences in enrolment, dropout and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than 5 percent.
- To reduce average the overall primary dropout rate less than 10 per cent.
- To raise average achievement levels by at least 25 percent over measured baseline levels and ensure achievement levels in other competencies by all primary school children.
- To provide, according to national norms, access for all children, primary education (I-V), i.e., primary schooling wherever possible or its equivalent non-formal education.

The Programme would strengthen the capacity of national, state and district institutions and organizations for the planning, management and evaluation of primary education. NEEM has recently been set up to oversee, among other things, the implementation of this programme throughout the country.

Alternative Channels of Education such as the Non-Formal Education (NFE) System

Non-Formal education has become an accepted alternative channel of education for children who cannot attend full-time schools due to various socio-economic constraints. To reach this large segment of marginalized children, India adopted the programme of NFE, since 1979-80, for children in the 6-14 age group, who have remained outside the formal system. These include drop-outs from formal schools, children from habitations without schools, working children, children who have to remain at home to do domestic chores, and girls who are unable to attend formal schools for a variety of reasons.
The enlarged and modified version of the NFE programme now in operation visualizes NFE as a child-centered, environment-oriented and flexible system to meet the diverse educational needs of the geographically and socio-economically deprived sections of society. Non-formal education is designed to overcome the shortcomings of the formal school and make education a joyful activity.

Decentralised community participation through village education committees (VECs) in planning, running and overseeing the programme has been considered crucial for its success. Although the focus of the programme is on the educationally backward states, it also covers urban slums and hilly tribal and desert areas in other states as well. Today, the programme is being implemented in 20 states and union territories through the state governments and voluntary organizations. While there are more than 226,000 NFE centers in the state sector, there are about 29,000 run by voluntary agencies. About 44 per cent of all the NFE centers are exclusively for girls, who are the main victims of socio-cultural and socio-economic factors. The estimated enrolment capacity is about 6.3 million children. Under the NFE programme, efforts are now being made further improve quality, allow greater flexibility to implementing agencies and relocate NFE centers on the basis of microplanning/area survey. The NFE programme is being linked to ground realities, allowing for continuous experimentation. Development and scaling-up of effective NFE models that can help the learners to learn at their own pace is a major thrust area.

Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL)
The need to lay down minimum levels of learning (MLL) emerged from the basic concern that irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, all children must be given access to education of a comparable standard. The MLL strategy is an attempt to combine quality with equity. It lays down learning outcomes in the form of competencies or levels of learning for each stage of elementary education. The strategy also prescribes adoption of measures that will ensure achievement of these levels by children both in formal schools and in NFE centers.

The focus of the MLL strategy is development of competency-based teaching and learning. Preliminary assessment of the existing levels of learning achievement has revealed that they are quite low across several districts. Minimum levels of learning in respect of three subjects, namely language, mathematics and environmental studies, have already been laid down for the primary stage. It has been stressed that the emphasis should be on concept formation rather than on content. The burdens of non-comprehension and overload of content are forcing children to resort to rote memorization. The issues of content versus concept, understanding versus rote memorization, unachievable content load versus achievable set of competencies, have been integrated into the new MLL approach. Minimum levels of learning have been specified in terms of competencies expected to be mastered by every child by the end of a particular class. The programme has been initiated throughout the country with the help of voluntary agencies, research institutions and others concerned. Minimum levels of learning for the upper primary stage are now being finalized.
Revamping the schemes of operation Blackboard (OB)

Recognizing the unattractive school environment, unsatisfactory condition of school buildings, inadequate physical facilities, and insufficiency of instructional materials in primary schools, which function as demotivating factors for enrollment and retention, a scheme symbolically called Operation Blackboard was introduced in 1987-88 to bring all existing primary schools in the country to a minimum standard of physical facilities. Under this scheme, each school is provided with (i) at least two reasonably large all-weather rooms along with separate toilet facilities for boys and girls; (ii) at least two teachers (one male and one female); and (iii) essential teaching and learning materials including blackboards, maps, charts, a small library, toys and games, and some equipment for work experience.

External evaluation of the scheme indicated the lack of training of teachers in using the teaching materials, specification of a large number of uniform facilities to be provided without modification according to local needs, and lack of provision for breakage of equipment. Effective steps have since been taken to remove these drawbacks. The scheme of Operation Blackboard has also been modified and expanded to provide a third teacher to primary schools where enrolment exceeds 100, and it has been extended to upper primary schools. The scheme is concentrating on rural areas and SC/ST areas, and girls' schools are being given the first priority.

Establishing Linkages between Programmes of early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Primary Education, Literacy and UEE.

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is viewed as a crucial input in the strategy of human resource development, as a feeder and support programme for primary education, and as a support service for working women of the disadvantaged sections of society. Since the age-span covered by ECCE is from conception to 6 years, emphasis has been given to a child-centered approach and play-way and activity-based learning in place of formal methods of teaching including introduction of the 3 Rs. Keeping in mind the role of ECCE as a support service in UEE, it is deliberately directed to the most underprivileged groups, those who are still outside the mainstream of formal education. The aim of ECCE is that every child should be assured access to the fulfillment of all basic needs. It involves the total development of the child in every aspect including the physical, psychomotor, cognitive, language, emotional, social and moral. The present ECCE programme includes:

- The integrated child development service (ICDS)
- The scheme of assistance to voluntary organizations for running early child education (ECE) centers.
- Balwadis and day-care centers run by voluntary agencies with government assistance
- Pre-primary schools run by state governments, municipal corporations and other agencies.
- Maternal and child health services through primary health centers, sub-centres and other agencies.
The ICDS is today the biggest programme of early childhood development, serving about 15 million children and 3 million mothers. Appropriate linkages are being established between ECCE programmes, primary schools, NFE centers and other related schemes of UEE.

Promotion of Access to Girls and Disadvantaged groups:-
As with all educational indicators, gender disparities are conspicuous in regard to enrolment and retention. Over the past 25 years, enrolment of girls at the primary stage has grown from 5 million to 47 million and at the upper primary stage, from 0.5 million to 16 million. But disparities persist. Today girls account for only 46 percent of the enrolment at the primary and upper primary stages are higher than those of boys. Regional disparities are also conspicuous. The very low female literacy (20 to 29 per cent) in some of the major north Indian states causes grave concern. The rural girls are doubly disadvantaged by non-availability of educational facilities and by their domestic chores.

Concerted efforts are now on to reach out to the girl child in rural and remote areas and urban slums by designing special NFE programmes with a view to getting them back into the formal stream. The NFE programmes are being dovetailed into the total literacy campaigns (TLC) to reach out the girls in the 10-20 age group. Programmes for continuing education are being designed to ensure that neo-literates and school-going girls have access to reading materials.

An important constraining factor for female education is the lack of women teachers in rural areas. Therefore special efforts are being made to recruit women teachers and to augment teachers training facilities for women so that adequate numbers of qualified women teachers are available. Coordinated efforts are also on to provide the necessary support services to enhance their participation and performance.

We in India are unambiguous about removal of disparities and attainment of equality of education opportunities for SCs, STs and other backward sections including girls. A number of strategies aimed at accelerating their rate of enrolment and retention have been detailed and are being implemented. Because of the affirmative policies of the government, the enrolment of these categories has increased considerably at the primary stage. The participation of SCs and STs at the primary level is more or less in proportion to their share in the population. Dropouts, though declining, continue to be significantly large [primary stage (classes I-V), SC 49 percent, ST 64 per cent, upper primary stage (classes VI-VII), SC 68 per cent, ST 79 percent]. Gender disparities are conspicuous among SCs and STs.

To ensure universal access and enrolment of SC children in rural areas, priority is given to the needs of SC habitations and hamlets in opening primary and upper primary schools. For SC children access and enrolment are assured primarily in the formal schools. Where they are not able to attend these, provision is made for non-formal and distance education centers. Every ST habitation is being implemented in an integrated manner. Pre-school education, non-formal education, elementary education and adult
education are being organically linked and integrated to ensure achievement of total literacy of the entire population.

Adequate incentives are given to the children of SC, ST and other backward sections in the form of scholarships, uniforms, textbooks, stationery and midday meals. All schools, NMR centers and pre-school centers in SC/ST habitations are being equipped with necessary infrastructural facilities in accordance with the norms laid down for Operation Blackboard and for achieving MLL. Operation Blackboard has already covered almost all schools in tribal areas. Indigent SC/ST families are given incentives to send their children, particularly girls, to school.

Restructuring of Teacher Training

Teacher performance is the most crucial input in the field of education. In the ultimate analysis, the national policies on education have to be interpreted and implemented by teachers as much through their personal example as through teaching-learning processes. With a view to improving the quality and competence of teachers, a centrally sponsored scheme of Restructuring and Reorganisation of Teacher Education (RRTE) was launched in 1987.

During the period 1987-90, nearly 1.8 million teachers were trained under the Programme of Mass Orientation of School Teachers (PMOST). Most of them were primary and upper primary teachers. The main objective of the programme was to orient teachers in the main priorities and directions envisaged in the NPE 1986 and to improve their professional competence.

Among the other main components of the RRTE, as far as elementary education is concerned, are:-

1. Setting up of district institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) in all districts to provide good quality pre-service and in-service training to elementary school teachers and adult education/non-formal education personnel and to provide resource support to these systems.

2. Organising Special Orientation Programmes for Primary Teachers (SPOT) with a view to providing training to teachers in the use of OB materials and orienting them towards MLL strategy with a focus on teaching of language, mathematics and environmental studies.

More than 300 DIETs have already become operational and have started conducting training programmes. The SPOT launched in 1993-94 is now going on in almost all states and more than 115,000 teachers have already been trained. A National Council for Teachers Education (NCTE) was set up in 1993 with statutory status for the effective implementation of all teacher education and training programmes and to achieve planned and coordinated development of the entire teacher education system throughout the country. The regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in the teacher education system is the responsibility of the NCTE.
Availing of external Financial Support for Basic Education
As a matter of policy and principle, India had not been seeking financial support from external agencies to implement its programmes of basic education. This situation changed in 1991-92. When a conscious and strategic decision was taken to avail of external assistance to achieve the goal of Education for All (EFA).

Today a number of agencies including the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), International Development Association (IDA), and the British Overseas Development Agency (ODA) are sharing our concerns in the area. A new phase has, therefore, emerged - a phase of partnership between the inherent potential of the country and financial and other support from external agencies.

Launching the National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM)
With the objective of mobilizing all the resources-human, financial and institutional -necessary for achieving the goal of UEE by the Year 2000, a National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM) was set up in August 1995 with the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) as its core. This mission will monitor and implement all the meticulously formulated strategies based on micro planning, and will ensure that free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality is provided to all children up to 14 years of age by the turn of the century.

WORLD BANK PLANS UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION BY 2015
World Bank plans universal primary education by 2015, a new plan to achieve full primary education for all children by 2015 has been launched at the just concluded spring meetings of the World Bank and the international Monetary Fund (IMF). Currently 125 million children globally receive no education at all. The bank’s Development committee, comprising 24 finance Ministers, including India’s Yashwant Sinha, approved the proposal.

The education initiative, taken at the two-day semi-annual spring meetings that concluded 21st Apr 2002, is expected to cost about $1 billion on its first year.

World Bank president James Wolfensohn said the plan set out framework for channeling money to developing countries with sound education policies. He said the initiative was within commitments made at the recent financing for development conference in Monterrey, Mexico.

The international Community is at a point where it either supports these initiatives or fail. In Monterrey there is already evidence of real money coming forward. And the amount is between 9 and 20 billion dollars a year.

The meeting stressed the need for new funding along with accountability about the manner money was utilized.
UNIVERSALISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Right to Education

The Right to Education should be examined for inclusion amongst the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India. All the socio-economic measures, without which realisation of this right will not be possible, should be taken.

Thrust Areas

The Policy Statement of NPE should be modified to incorporate the following three areas of concern as thrust areas:

(a) Convergence of services,
(b) Linkage between the school and the community, and
(c) Decentralised and participative mode of educational planning and management.

Lacunae in NPE 1986

The policy has certainly done well by emphasising child centred approach to education and by pointing out that it is the best motivation for the child to attend school and learn. The Committee's perspective in this regard is presented below:

Although implied in the warm, welcoming and encouraging approach mentioned in NPE, it would be better if the policy would explicitly refer to the elements of joy, fun, and exploration and play as integral to learning in the early stages of primary education. This explicit mention is required because the prevailing educational practice in the school system not only excludes these elements, but it seems to consciously resist their introduction in the learning process. Similarly, the policy statement should emphasise the role of singing, drawing, clay-modeling, games and particularly all forms of folk-art and folk-lore in enriching the learning process. It is not clear why the benefit of being allowed to set their own pace and be given supplementary remedial instruction is restricted only to the first generation learners. By implication, the policy would deny the other children the advantage of setting their own pace. The policy emphasises the need to increase cognitive learning and the skill component with the growth of the child. In the same spirit, the policy should have emphasised the role of the affective domain and psychomotor skills at the earlier stages.

Whereas the Committee endorses the declaration of retaining the policy of non-detention at the primary stage, it is presented in the negative framework of detention versus non-detention. Instead, a positive concept of continuous, disaggregated and comprehensive evaluation as a means of improving the quality of learning should have been emphasised, with a clear understanding that the concept of a terminal examination has no place in child-centred education (the widespread antagonism amongst the teachers to the non-detention policy in vogue in several States probably has its roots in this negative presentation and teachers lack of appreciation of the tool of continuous evaluation for quality improvement).

The policy declares that corporal punishment will be firmly excluded. While welcoming this assertion, it may be noted that corporal punishment is already excluded on paper in
most of the States/UTs. Yet it persists in most parts of the country. Therefore, the policy would have done well by emphasising measures to control the sociocultural, psychological and educational factors that justify corporal punishment in the minds of the teachers.

Similarly the policy declaration to adjust school timings as well as vacations to the convenience of children has been made time and again from several public forums. The policy should have, instead, spelt out its strategy to mitigate the reasons that have not allowed this to happen so far.

The Policy Statement on Child-Centred Approach of NPE should be modified in order to remove the inconsistencies and/or lacunae, as pointed out above. While giving due importance to the provision of additional facilities to the schools, the Policy must also stress the role of the teacher, the community and the social environment as key factors in improvement of the quality of school education. Since the present enrolment data are not reliable the policy should stress a continuing concern for improving both enrolment and retention, as distinct from enrolment to retention.

The curriculum at the +2 level should not be allowed to determine the content and process of education at the primary and middle school levels. The curriculum development for the primary and middle school stages should aim at evolving a self-sufficient model of knowledge, skills and attitudes so that the majority of children who would not proceed to the high schools would be fully equipped to enter the ‘world of work’ and continue self-learning throughout life.

NPE’s ‘Resolve’ should be modified to:

(a) emphasise both enrolment and retention in the school;
(b) relate fixing of targets to ground-level realities through a decentralised and participative mode of disaggregated planning, rather than fixing targets in an ad-hoc fashion; and
(c) integrate non-formal and formal education systems over a period of time such that their cadres, infrastructure and management structures would form an organic whole.

Non-Formal Education - Over a period of time non-formalise the formal school in the following ways:

(a) Shifting of the school timings to early morning hours, afternoons or late evenings, as per the convenience of the majority of children and in consultation with the Village Education Committee and the Educational Complex;
(b) Adjusting school calendar to agricultural activities, local cultural engagements and the weekly markets with a view to optimise school attendance;
(c) Introducing child-centred approach with concomitant reduction in school hours, but an increase in the learning hours. This would come about through utilisation of improved pedagogic practices involving elements of inquiry, play-way, activity,
creative writing, peer group learning, experimentation etc. Creative use of singing, drawing, story telling and particularly of folklores and folk-arts would enrich the pedagogic practices.

(d) Linking at least one day care centre, providing holistic services for children in 0-6 age group, with the school in both physical as well as programmatic terms; the school should adopt the play-way and activity-based approach of ECCE from the day care centre; the Anganwadi workers may be viewed as associates of the school staff.

e) Wherever required and feasible, holding of classes twice in the day-mornings for the written tradition and evenings for oral tradition, games and cultural action;

(f) Introducing ‘ungraded class room’ which would encourage all children at different levels of learning to set their own pace;

(g) Relating content and process of learning with environment and life of the community; and

(h) Allowing all working children, particularly the girls, to drop-in the school at any time of the day or the year they want; also encouraging the children of migrant families from other villages/habitations/towns to similarly drop-in (this flexibility becomes possible as a direct consequence of the ‘ungraded class room’ approach). For the purpose of non-formalisation of the school, it would be essential to restructure the appointment, placement and training of teachers in the following ways:

(a) In addition to the regular teaching staff, empower the Head Master/Head Mistress to recruit ‘parateachers’ (Shiksha Karmis)* for the early morning or evening classes and/or habitats/villages/mohallas still unserved by a school;

(b) Although the appointment of the ‘para-teachers’ would be probationary for a period of two to three years, she/he shall be paid a respectable emolument, which in no case shall be lower than one-third (preferably, it should be one-half) of the salary of the school teacher or the local minimum wage level, whichever is higher;

(c) As far as possible, the ‘para-teacher’ should be recruited from the local community, with preference.

The concept of a ‘para-teacher’ is somewhat similar to the concept of Shiksha Karmis practised at present in Rajasthan on an experimental basis with a view to reach-out to unserved habitations, being given to women; if necessary, young persons with commitment and aptitude for working with children having even less than minimum qualifications could be recruited, provided they are willing to upgrade their educational qualifications within the probationary period through the open school system;

(d) The regular school teacher and the ‘para- teacher’ shall be inter-changeable in terms of teaching responsibilities;

(e) At the end of the probationary period, the ‘parateacher’ should be absorbed as a regular school teacher provided she/he has been able to upgrade her/his educational qualification to a certain minimum level (say, class XII) and ensure a concrete move towards enrolment and retention of all children in the community who were earlier outside the ambit of the school; and

(f) Organise the training of the ‘para-teacher’ along the lines of the ‘Internship Model’ wherein the training emerges from and is integrated into the empirical
experience of the classroom; a sandwich programme of internship and in-service
training would be evolved by the DIET in consultation with the Educational
Complex; the training staff would comprise of the senior teachers of the local-
school as well as the Educational Complex and also the DIET personnel.

In order to non-formalise the formal school, the following package of measures would
have to be adopted as a 'pre-condition':

(a) Handing over the effective control of the school, including the appointment,
posting and promotion of teachers, to a coordinated management system
involving the school, Village Education Committee and the Educational Complex;
(b) Empowering the local community, especially under-privileged sections of the
society with assignment of specific role to women groups, to monitor and support
the school;
(c) Develop the school into a community school which would take active interest in
social and cultural life of the village and welcome contribution by members of the
community in both the planning and the teaching process; the school would also
act as a nucleus of multiple social welfare services provided by the Government,
including health, early childhood care and education, women's education, adult
education etc.

Modern technological aids should be introduced only when their role is established on the
basis of the classroom experience through a participative mode involving teachers and
teachers-trainers; any hasty measure to introduce such aids (e.g. radio cassette player, TV
or VCR) would only lead to waste of valuable resources. These should be introduced
only where teacher asks for the same based on full needs.

Operation Blackboard
The question of continuance of Operation Blackboard as a centrally sponsored scheme
may be treated in the light of recommendations made by the Committee in regard to
Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

The State Governments should devolve all decision making powers concerning Operation
Blackboard to the Educational Complexes which would seek consultation from DIETs on
the one hand, and the concerned school and the Village Education Committee, on the
other hand, for planning and implementing the scheme. The schools and the Village
Education Committees, made fully responsible for UEE in their respective areas, should
undertake a micro-planning exercise for working out their requirements under Operation
Blackboard and be accountable for its implementation.

Operation Blackboard must be given the status of one of the priority strategies for UEE,
but, at the same time, it should be ensured that investment is made only on those items
whose need has been established by the teachers and other related persons on the basis of
micro-planning and class room requirements.
For posting women teachers in the villages, it would be best to select them locally, wherever possible, or else make provision for their accommodation, security and other support services.

Measure to 'Reach Out' to Children

Provide each habitation with a population of 300 or more with at least one Primary School by the year 2000 (this implies an additional 1.22 lakh schools as per 1986 data). In the meantime, each such habitation may be served by a 'para-teacher', linked to the nearest Primary School.

Provide each habitation with a population of 500 or more with at least one Middle School by the year 2000 (this implies 2.5 lakh additional schools as per 1986 data). In the meantime, each such habitation may be served by a 'para-teacher', linked to the nearest Middle School.

A network of 'para-schools', linked to the nearest Primary School, should be started such that all unserved habitations with population of less than 300 would be served by at least one 'para-school'.

A network of 'para-schools', linked to the nearest Middle School, should be started such that every child has access to a 'para-middle school' within one km. of residence. In starting 'para-schools', whether at primary or middle level, priority should be given to the habitations having enrolments and retention rates for girls below the State average.

In order to reach out to the children who are engaged in the workforce during the daytime or the girls engaged in domestic chores, it would be necessary to organise 'para-schools' either early in the morning, afternoons or late in the evening, depending upon the convenience of the children. The schoolteachers who reside may run these 'para-schools' in the same village or nearby. Alternatively, the school may recruit fresh 'para-teachers' even for the habitations which have a school.

For children who are engaged in wage labour in organised or unorganised sectors for durations extending beyond the stipulated 8-hour period and especially for those children who are engaged in hazardous industries, it would be necessary to go beyond the measure of opening 'para-school' within the habitation or in the evenings. For this 'hardcore' measure involving provision for opportunity costs and mid-day meals may become necessary. In addition, strict implementation of child labour laws in such 'hardcore areas' would become an essential 'educational' task.

Strategies and Measures for Achieving UEE

Make each school, primary or middle, fully responsible accountable or formulating and implementing strategies for UEE in villages/habitations/mohallas in the area under its coverage. For this purpose, vest the school with the necessary authority and autonomy to decide upon their mix of strategies and measures (e.g. adult education, para-schools, Operation Blackboard). Provide each school through the avenue of the Educational
Complex adequate funds and intellectual resources to implement its programme of universalisation.

Authorise the school Head Master/Head Mistress to recruit 'para-teachers' (Shiksha Karmis) for reaching out either to unserved habitations or to those children who cannot attend the school in the day hours. The issues of emoluments, rules governing their probationary Period and eventual absorption in the school, and their training in an 'Internship Model', have already been dealt with in this chapter.

Encourage innovation by teachers themselves in building up diverse models of child-centred approach to education and create mechanisms for collating, integrating and disseminating the growing experience of the teaching community within and among Educational Complexes.

In order to increase the relevance of education from the standpoint of working children, especially girls, it would be necessary to emphasise vocationalisation of the entire educational process upto Class VIII level.

The goal of universalisation of education may be viewed in two phases—the first phase of Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE) and the second phase of UEE. While the school shall be expected to undertake micro planning for UPE in association with the Educational Complex in the first phase itself, UEE may be allowed to grow organically out of the development of Primary Education. In the second phase, after achieving the goal of UPE, micro planning for UEE would also become necessary and viable.

Adopt the principle of differentiated or disaggregated targets and pluralistic educational strategies for achieving UEE. This mode of decentralised and participative planning provides scope for gender-specific, community-wise, block-level and district-level, and regional parameters to inform the planning process. The national and State targets of UEE as well as resource allocation shall emerge from collection and integration of the disaggregated targets.

Monitoring of the move towards UEE shall be integral to the planning process and may operate at three independent but co-ordinated levels—
(a) Within the Educational Complex, of individual schools;
(b) Within the district, of individual Educational Complexes; and
(c) Within the State, of individual District Boards of Education.

The reports of monitoring shall be made available publicly and discussed at specially organised fora with a view to build up public pressure for achieving UEE within this century.

Express the learning outcome expected of schools and other educational programmes in concrete and easily communicable forms such that these would inform the public criteria and process of monitoring, questioning and intervening in the system. This may take the shape of monthly or yearly community functions in which the general public may participate in collective evaluation of children and the school, and also offer concrete
support, financial and otherwise, for the improvement of the school. In this way, create community-based mechanisms and structures for organising a nation-wide process of community empowerment and thereby build a countervailing pressure on the school system to perform and achieve UEE.

Monitoring and Data Gathering
In order to monitor progress towards UEE, it is essential that we move beyond the stage of enrolment and retention. Data must be gathered on actual attendance in class rooms, attainment in learning and equally, if not more importantly, on aptitude towards productive work and attitude towards society. It is only by perceiving UEE in terms of such attributes of education that the whole exercise would acquire a social significance. (Vide: Appendix – 1)

CHALLENGING THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

The reasons why so many children are out of school, as suggested by the PROBE survey, may be helpful to debunk a few myths that have clouded clear thinking on this subject. Each of these myths contains a grain of truth, but this grain of truth has often been floated out of proportion in public debates, leading to much confusion.

MYTH 1: Parents are not interested
One common myth is that most Indian parents have little interest in their Children’s education. This Myth of parental indifference remains astonishingly widespread (especially in official circles, where it provides a convenient rationalization for India’s low schooling levels). To illustrate, in its golden-jubilee analysis of India’s failure to achieve universal elementary education, The Times of India (15 August 1997) confidently asserts- ‘without evidence’ – that ‘illiterate and semi-literate parents see no reason to send their children to school’. On the same day, a similar article in Indian Express (written by a leading expert on the sociology of education) states: ‘Although there is general awareness that literacy is a basic need and right of every person, it is not perceived as such by every individual. The vast majority of adult illiterates belonging to the poor economic stratum are not convinced of it.

In contrast to this supposed indifference, the PROBE states (Where parental apathy is likely to be most widespread) most parents attach importance to their children’s education. For instance, in response to the question ‘is it important for a boy to be educated?’, the proportion of parents who answer ‘Yes’ is a high as 98 per cent. This is not to deny that parental indifference does exist in specific cases-this is the ‘grain of truth’ in the myth of parental indifference. Parental motivation for the education of girls, in particular, is lacking in a significant proportion of families. But the general pattern is not one of parental indifference. On the contrary, the ‘Typical’ father and mother are very keen that their children should receive a good education. It is another matter that they do not always have much faith in the schooling system’s ability to impart such education.

Surveys to investigate why some children are never enrolled in school find that more children or parents are “not interested” in education. The finding is used that people do
not really understand the importance of education and therefore cannot educate their children.

Work patterns of Out-of-school children (PROBE states) the boys and girls proportion who work as daily wage labourers on the day preceding the survey 5%, 1% respectively.

The quality of infrastructure (buildings, furniture, supplies), teaching, and the concern for learning which is so poor, have been rectified due to the initiative of some individual teacher, or principal, or bureaucrat, enrolment dramatically. (In the Total Literacy Programme, a few districts performed exception because of particular individuals.) People do not lack understanding of education as they simply cannot be fooled into spending their time and money for a mediocre. The PROBE study finds that almost 90 percent of the parents are keen to send them to school, and that the gender discrimination desire to educate boys more than the girls is generally assumed.

**MYTH 2:- Child Labour is the main obstacle:-**

Another myth is that most out-of-school children are unable to study because they have to work. This widespread belief has been fuelled by shocking cases of full-time child labour in specific areas and occupations, such as carpet-weaving in Mirzapur or bangle-making in Firozabad. Some organizations claim that 65 million children in India are ‘forced to work for more than eight hours a day’, or even that India has 70 to 80 million child labourers, working 12 hours a day on average (Coalition Against Child Labour). Following that, the question is often asked: “How can we make our country fully literate when 60 million of our children are engaged in full-time jobs as child labourers?” (National Herald, 2 January 1997).

The Plight of full-time child labour is indeed distressing, and the above statements may have some shock value in helping to draw attention to this issue. However, as a factual description of the problem of child labour and its relation to schooling, these statements are mis-leading; they vastly exaggerate the magnitude of the problem.

This is one of the most pernicious beliefs that pervade the education establishment surveys including the recent study provide data to challenge this widely. Nonetheless the belief controls much of education policy discussion. Its acceptance is the sign of one’s genuine concern for mass education, and its rejection as elitism or extremism.

In the past children were required to help the family, but the current realities are rather very clear. One must not be the prisoner of the past, especially in such a critical task of formulated education policy.
### Table 6.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROPORTION (%) OF CHILDREN AGED 5-14 WHO ARE IN THE WORKFORCE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Census of India, 1981</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Sample Survey, 1993</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCAER Survey, 1994</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MYTH 3: Elementary education is free:**

Another myth is that elementary education in India is free, as directed by the constitution. It may well be free, or nearly free, in the restricted sense that admission fees in government schools are negligible. But that does not mean that education is free in the more relevant sense that it involves no expenditure for the parents. Recent surveys indicate that the cash costs of education play a major role in discouraging poor families from sending children to school, especially when the quality of schooling is low.

**MYTH 4: Schools are available:**

Much progress has been made, since independence, in the provision of schooling facilities. For instance, the number of primary schools has nearly tripled. In 1993, 94 percent of the rural population lived within one kilometer of a primary school. Clearly, physical distance between home and school is much less of a problem than it used to be. Some go so far as to conclude that the problem has by and large been solved. According to the Department of Education's latest (1997-98) annual report, for instance, 'accessibility of schooling facilities is no longer a major problem'. This is another myth, for several reasons.

First, what needs to be considered is not just physical distance but also 'social distance', taking into account various barriers that may prevent a willing child from reaching the local school. In many areas, for instance, villages are divided into separate hamlet may be reluctant or unable to go to school in another hamlet, e.g. due to caste tensions.

Second, in assessing the physical adequacy of schooling facilities, it is crucial not to lose sight of the constitutional objective of universal education until the age of fourteen. This calls for the convenient availability not only of primary schools, but also of 'middle' (sometimes called upper primary) schools with classes up to grade eight. Once the attention shifts to middle schools, the inadequacy of the schooling infrastructure re-emerges as a major problem.

Third, even the basic problem of physical distance from primary schools persists for a significant minority of families. The most obvious aspect of this problem is the absence
of any school in some villages. In addition, adverse terrain is sometimes a major obstacle (especially to small children) even when a school is available within the village. In the Himalayan region, for instance, primary school children often have to walk long distances uphill, or through forests and across streams, to reach the village school. These hurdles are no joke, particularly in the winter. If schooling is an inalienable right of all citizens, these outstanding problems of physical distance have to be resolved.

It should also be borne in mind that even when school facilities are available and convenient distance, they are often inadequate, in terms of both quality and quantity. It is little use living within one kilometer of a primary school if the school is already overcrowded, or if it has a single teacher, or if the school is deprived of basic facilities such as blackboard. As shall see, these circumstances are unusual.

Myth 5:- People do not have money or are unwilling to spend on education:-
The NCAER (1994) and NSSO (1991,1993) studies suggest that in a given year percentage spent on primary education is anywhere from Rs. 100 to more than Rs. 4000 per child. In 1987, the total household expenditure on primary education was Rs. 7388.5 million. The spending on primary education is not just by the rich and the middle class in urban areas which amounts to Rs. 7388.5 million, Rs. 4202.5 million were spent by rural areas also. So the private expenditure is by no means an insignificant amount, as 40 percent of what the government spent on primary education.

The NSSO study also points out that households in some villages on average spend a reasonable amount on fees, Rs. 42 for books and supplies, and Rs. 107 for private coaching to provide education to their children. The poor have already been spending on education. States in which governments spend more on education, people also spend more. (Vide : Appendix – J)

Proposed solutions
Make elementary education compulsory:-
A lot of ink has been poured and throats have become sore demanding urgent passage making elementary education compulsory. Proponents claim that it would force parents to send their children to school and the government to make schools available in all parts of the state and above all, the contention goes, it would signal society’s sincere commitment to basic education to all.

The compulsory education law would just create opportunities for more commissions, international seminars, and pious declarations. Sure, more money would be spent on education, but not on education. If we are going to measure government’s resolve by the education budget, it is rather easy to spend more money that will keep all stake hold education system happy - politicians, bureaucrats, and educationists. Except of course children, in whose name the money will be spent. The experience all over the world suggests that it is not so much the size of the government’s education budget but how they spent that determines the efficacy of the education system.
Practical difficulties aside, one must not forget the distinction between laws and morals, that would legislate moral behavior. India no different as history stands as a guide. Rise of the mafia, street violence to capture markets, corruption of legal system, and the bureaucracy, untold deaths due to illicit liquor. The prohibition has done more damage, not just to the treasury, which is of the least concessions to families and communities, but they are the alleged beneficiaries of the ban. The law of consequences is far more potent in case of good-intention laws.

Education is undoubtedly critical for the child, but so in nutritious diet, healthcare environment. Education, even a good education, without the other necessary ingredient makes the child only marginally better. Our concern is with all-round welfare of the children sensible and active parenting for all the children. If sincerely and genuinely the law is implemented and effective enough to address social problems, then making education compulsory may be considered.

**Take education out of the Directive Principles and put it in to Fundamental Rights.**

It is forgotten that the Articles 23 and 24 of the Constitution guarantee a fundamental right against Exploitation. Article 23: Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour-trafficking of human beings and beggars and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and Article 24 prohibits employment of children in factories. No child below the age of fourteen years shall work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.

It is important to note that these Articles do not impose any positive obligation on the public and the government simply prevents certain activities, namely, forced and employment of children in hazardous jobs. They do not mandate the government alternative means of survival to those who are forced into labour (beggars for example and children who are in hazardous jobs). They do not ask the government to provide for these unfortunate people, nor do they require the government to even offer safe remuneration for such hazardous employment. They mandate only prevention, not provision. Despite mandate, the government has miserably failed to live up to the promise made by the Article. The proponents of the fundamental right to education actually stipulate that government is required to provide necessary schooling facilities.

**Increase government spending on education to 6 Percent of GDP**

The almost doubling of government expenditure on education is bound to have some impact. There is probably no government, particularly a democratic one, which is so corrupt as to eat up all the increase in spending without any impact on the quantity and spending.

Several of the countries that achieved high literacy rates in the post-war era, are close to the 6 percent of their GDP. South Korea has spent about 3.2 percent and China 2.6 percent on education. Student expenditure in the United States of America is one of the highest but student performances in mathematics, language, reasoning skill geography is far below world standards. International evidence suggests that it is not what the government spends on but how it spends determines the quality of its education system.
Though the domestic discussion on broken promises and setting new targets had died down, the Dakar Global Conference on Education in April 2000 brought back to the promises made at the international forum in Jomtien. A review of the progress had to be made. It was clear that the country was nowhere near the target of UEE. The assessment highlighted the same old problems—regional and gender disparities, continued low participation of marginalized sections, and poor quality of education provided. But there were positive signals from the field in the form of average statistics. The EFA 2000 assessment report could refer to such positive features as accelerated growth of literacy rates, the male-female literacy gap showing a convergent trend (though the gap was still large), and participation of girls in schooling showing significant increase. Of course, no regrets were expressed for unkept promises. The new millennium began with new promises. The revised framework of the NLM promises to reach a literacy target of 75% by the year 2007. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan which the flagship programme of the national government promises to achieve the goal of universal primary education by 2005 and the goal of UEE by 2010 (five years ahead of the international commitment made at Dakar). This would mean that all children (in all states!) would complete at least five years of schooling (or its equivalent through non-formal means) by the year 2005. All of them would transit to upper-primary schools and complete at least another three years of schooling by 2010. Are these targets reasonable? Can they be achieved without changing the strategy of intervention? Is it not necessary to focus on equity concerns and build state-specific strategies for overcoming regional disparities and meeting the educational needs of the marginalized?


3 NIEPA and MHRD, Education for All: India (New Delhi: NIEPA and MHRD, 2000) 20-29.


6 Govt. of India, DPEP, Making a Difference: Primary Education in Kerala (New Delhi: MHRD, 2000)


9 Yash Aggarwal, “Which Districts Gained the Most from DPEP” DPIP Calling Vol.6 no.10 (2000).

10 “Which Districts Gained the Most from DPEP” DPIP Calling Vol.6 No.12 (2000)
CONCLUSION
Having celebrated the Golden jubilee of our independence, it is time we took stock of our achievements and failures since then in all fields affecting our nation.

The main area of concern ever since independence was Universalisation of primary education. This seemed to be the cornerstone of our country’s development. We inherited an imperialist system of education and a system for which the foundation was laid in 1824 by Macauley, law member of the then Governor General of India’s Council. Macauley made his intentions clear, when he wrote that the new system would produce a class of persons, “Indians in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in moral, in intellect”.

Macauley succeeded in designing and creating a system of education, which served well, the imperial interests. A pertinent question that is often asked in our country is, have we succeeded in replacing the imperialist legacy in education, with a system which is in tune with our national needs and aspirations? While the assertion of some, that the Macauley system of education, still reigns in India, is in exaggeration, it may not be far from the truth, if we state that we have still not been able to evolve an educational system suited to our national requirements.

In 1947, when we became a sovereign nation, we had an opportunity to completely throw away the old system and introduce a new one. But as it happened in many fields, in education also, the old system, procedures and practices were continued and slowly changes were introduced bit by bit to adapt to the new conditions.

Serious efforts to transform the education system into a tool of national development started only in 1964, with the submission of the Kothari Commission Report. The Commission for the first time in independent India, emphasised the importance of education and projected it as the main instrument of change.

But the revolution in education has not occurred leaving the education system to move almost in a snail’s pace, giving rise to serious doubts as to whether event after 56 years of freedom we have a system of education capable of taking the nation towards the goals which sovereign, free, democratic India has set to herself.

But the silver lining is that there has been rapid expansion in the number of educational institutions and the number of its beneficiaries. While the quantitative expansions have satisfied many aspirants of education in our country, it is not an achievement, which can make us rest on our oars.

The Indian Constitution, adopted in 1950, directed the State to ensure provision of basic education for all children up to the age of 14 years within a period of 10 years. The struggle to achieve this basic commitment began immediately. During the last fifty-six years, several milestones in this regard have been crossed. Beginning with a situation where four out of five persons were illiterate, and only two out of ten children went to school, it has not been an easy task to meet the constitutional commitment. The country began its journey towards the goal of universal elementary education for all by opening
more and more primary schools across the country. The system has grown huge in size and coverage. Today nearly four out of five children in the age group 6-14 years are in the school. Two out of three persons are functionally literate. Progress achieved is by no means small. But it falls short of meeting the goal of Education For All.

The whole world is talking about education as a Human Right. In the meantime a large number of interventions have been made in the elementary education sector since the 1986 National Policy on Education. Various schemes like Operation Blackboard, teacher Education, Non-Formal Education, Mahila Samakhya, National Programme for Nutritional Support for Primary Education, the District Primary Education Programme, and other state specific education projects. A large number of these interventions have also been subjected to evaluate the impact studies.

This research work was undertaken to study one of the internationally acclaimed project called the District Primary Education Programme that was launched in the year 1994, with the main objective to achieve Universalisation Of Primary Education, satisfying all the basic criteria of access, efficiency of human agencies improved learning achievement and other reforms to enable higher enrolment and reduction in dropout level so that all the school age children are enrolled in schools. The study was conducted in the district of Dharmapuri, the state of Tamil Nadu.

The information gathered about the effectiveness of the programme were more suggestive and positive. But however, every system has its drawbacks and this project is no exception. The following findings and suggestions and mainly based on the responses gathered during the survey where the focus is totally on the DPEP schools. 80% of the teachers, head teachers and parents stated the following about the DPEP functioning proving the hypotheses two, three, four and five:

**Findings- Positives**

- The infrastructure facilities in the DPEP schools are good.
- Vacant post for teachers has been duly filled
- Joyful learning method has proved to be an effective teaching mode and it has made teaching easier.
- Teachers have shown more creativity in their work.
- Quality of teaching has improved considerably.
- Regular in-service training has helped teachers in their work and gather more information and meet other teachers and officers.
- Teachers are able to prepare question papers independently.
- The higher officials duly solve their problems.
- Teachers are able identify slow learners or students with learning problems and give them individual attention. They are also able to pay special attention to disabled and special children and channelise their way of learning.
- Teachers are able to deal with the problems faced by children independently.
- The enrollment of students has increased considerably due to the proximity of the schools and students are more regular in their attendance.
- There is reduction in the dropout rate.
- Children have become more responsible and focused in their studies and this has increased their confidence and improvement in the learning achievement.
- Students are able to comprehend their subject well due to the use of play way, method and other teaching aids.
- Evening tuitions has improved their learning.
- Children are issued free books and uniforms.
- Sufficient funds are available for the schools to purchase teaching learning materials and other equipments.
- Provision of tables and cupboards has helped to keep the teaching aids safe.
- Quality of education has improved.
- School atmosphere has improved.
- Satisfactory functioning of the BRC, CRC, and other educational officers.
- Continuation of girls education
- Inspection of schools by the higher officials and regular meetings has become a source of encouragement for the teachers as well as the students.
- Regular Parents Teachers Meetings has created awareness among parents and they take more interest in their child’s education. They are also aware of the happenings in school on timely basis.
- There is improved coordination of work between the parents and teachers and children and teachers.

Drawbacks
The drawbacks mentioned below are totally in contradiction to the above mentioned advantages of the DPEP system. This clearly indicates the opinion of the human agencies and their adaptation to this project.

- Infrastructure facilities are not sufficient. Some schools does not have drinking water and toilet facilities, electricity, compound wall, enough chairs and desks, separate toilets for girls etc.
- Some schools do not provide noon meals for the children.
- Exams have become quite difficult and regular assessments are not sufficient.
- Lack of good officers has affected the teacher performance. They are irregular in their inspection are not able to help teachers in solving their problems.
- The awareness about this programme has not reached all the people and they are very critical about this project as it is implemented only in a selected few districts and this would delay 100% literacy or UPE.
- Funds allocated to buy teaching learning aids are not sufficient as these aids do not last long and during transfers teachers tend to carry the aids that they have prepared which becomes more time consuming for the other teachers.
- Vacant posts of teachers are not being filled on time.
- Though there seem to be more scope for employment the need and necessity of the hour is not being met and due to less manpower the teachers lack interest in performing well.
- The sudden change in the method of teaching is not welcomed by many teachers as they claim that this has created lack of interest among apart from:
- Bad quality of books
- Lack of concentration
- Play way method makes children very tired
- Reduction in their memory and retention
- Rote learning has become totally difficult for the children
- Lack of practice in writing
- More workload for children
- No computer education
- Lack of comprehension of English language
- Not able to concentrate on the whole lesson.

- Though training is offered for teachers irregularity and delay in the conduct of meetings affect their working.
- Most of training programmes are scheduled during exam time.
- Last minute assessment becomes a stress for teachers.
- Preparation of teaching aids and maintaining them for long time is time consuming and tiring process.
- Lack of time, increased working hours, imbalanced student-teacher ratio has increased the workload of teachers and inability to pay individual attention to students.
- Teachers need more training to comprehend the subjects. They are not satisfied with their trainers and there is no enough place for their seating arrangement.
- They are not able to fully implement whatever is imparted during their training and this has resulted in lack of planning and coordination.
- Lack of parent-teacher cooperation and difference of opinion has led to less concentration on their wards. Poverty also is the main factor that triggers this condition.
- All teachers do not attend seminars regularly.
- Sudden transfer of teachers has affected the quality of teaching in schools.
- Then thu zhi is a magazine that publishes articles by the teachers but the complaint is that the articles are not published.

With the system afflicted with so many maladies it requires immediate and effective treatment. It is true that the system is part of the society and what afflicts the society attacks the education system also. But any effort can commence only at the foundation of this particular system where men of character and intellectuals are found in greater number. In the pursuit of the goal of providing basic education for all, the National Policy on Education and the follow up actions on the recommendations of the policy in 1986 has been a major landmark. The World Declaration on Education For All adopted soon after in 1990 gave further boost to the various processes already set in motion in the country. As the analysis presented in the document demonstrates, the last decade of the century has witnessed tremendous progress in the area of basic education in the country. Yet, it is realised that the journey is not yet over. The main task is not to lose the momentum created by the progress made in the last decade. It is necessary to consolidate the gains and capitalise on the enlarged base created by the progress. It is realised that the methods hitherto adopted may not be appropriate for crossing the difficult hurdles in the last leg of
the journey towards EFA. The strategy has to be such that the goal is achieved within the first few years of the next century. The future policies and programmes are to be guided by this perspective. The researcher has taken up the task of providing few suggestions in this line so the long lasting dream of the country would become a reality some day.

Suggestions

Provision of Elementary Education for All - Continuing the Unfinished Task

Approaches to achieve the goal of universal elementary education in the years to come have to measure upto the magnitude and complexity of the task, which has so far remained incomplete. Efforts to pursue this goal should be guided by three broad concerns:

- The national resolve, as stipulated in the National Policy on Education, to provide free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children upto the age of 14 years.
- The political commitment that has made the right to elementary education a Fundamental Right and enforcing it through necessary statutory measures.
- Enactment of 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments which have set the stage for greater decentralization and a significantly enhanced role for local bodies, community organizations as well as voluntary agencies in the efforts towards UEE.

Further, recognizing the importance of the primary education sector, the Central Government has been working with the state governments on a principle of shared responsibility for achieving the goals of UEE. This becomes even more important in the context of the commitment to make ‘right to elementary education’ a fundamental one. With the magnitude of the unfinished task, the Government of India needs continue supporting the initiatives in primary education while promoting the capacities of the State Governments to meet the challenges effectively. Mobilizing additional resources to reach the critical mark of 6 per cent of the GDP for education is a goal towards which the country will continue to strive.

Meeting the Concerns for Equity

Broad-based efforts made during the last fifty-six years have resulted in a massive expansion of the education system in the country, raising the overall status of educational provisions in terms of accessibility and participation. The efforts were guided by concerns of equity. Yet, a closer analysis of basic statistics reveals glaring disparities in the progress made. Certain sections of population and certain geographical pockets in the country have failed to fully benefit from the investments made in education. Keeping this in view, the approach during the years to come will have be to specifically deal with the question of equity with focus on the educational needs of the following categories:

- women and girls
- scheduled castes and scheduled tribe groups
- working children
- children with disabilities
Convergence in Management and Delivery of Education Development Programmes

With the expansion of the education system in the country, the administrative machinery has also expanded tremendously at all levels (separate directorates for school education, higher education, technical education, adult education, etc.) Separate administrative structures are found to be doing tasks, which have a common goal and even common set of activities. This is clearly evident in the case of primary education, non-formal education, and adult education. This trend towards creating parallel administrative machinery has not only over-expanded the bureaucratic machinery, but also the very burden has made it counter-productive. It is against this backdrop that the goal of integrated planning and convergence in delivery has to be pursued in a three-fold manner:

- Creation of parallel structures for implementation of different development programmes will be avoided;
- Effort will be made to reexamine the norms and patterns of operation specified under different Schemes and Projects to ensure greater convergence; and
- State governments will be encouraged with adequate support from the Centre to reorganize the education management structures so as to achieve greater coordination in planning and effective convergence in implementation of education development programmes.

The task of achieving convergence may not be easy. It may, therefore, be necessary to support national and state level institutions to experiment with possible alternatives for field level integration in selected locales across the country and also to examine the possibility of involving NGOs and private initiative in such area specific explorations.

Quality Improvement

Beginning with the Operation Blackboard Scheme to equip all primary schools with at least a minimum level of infrastructure and human resources, the 1990s also witnessed major initiatives in the area of quality improvement. However, it is realised that the task has only begun and has to continue to be one of the major goals to be pursued. It is recognized that quality improvement has a significant impact not only on enrollment and retention of children in the school but also on the possibilities of further education for increased productivity and exercise of citizenship rights and responsibilities. The task of quality improvement will have to be pursued through:

- Qualitative improvement in content and process of education;
- Reorientation and strengthening of teacher education, both pre-service and in-service;
- Provision of appropriate infrastructure facilities;
- Focusing on strengthening the institutional management processes; and
- Establishing a reliable system of learner assessment.
In spite of several large-scale initiatives, quality of functioning of schools has remained far from satisfactory. Studies on the subject have highlighted the need for a more direct action to be initiated at the school level in a need-based manner. Keeping this in view, efforts will be made to strengthen the internal management of schools; and to improve the quality of teaching-learning processes. The focus has to be on streamlining the regular management practices within the school giving a direction to school development processes through ‘institutional planning and monitoring mechanisms.’ This is to be coupled with adequate locally based support services in pedagogic as well as planning and management dimensions. Towards this end, the programme already initiated to give localised support to teacher and head teachers through block resources centres and cluster resource centres will be further strengthened.

Decentralized Planning and Management
The National Policy on Education 1986 had proposed decentralization as a fundamental requirement for improving the efficiency of the educational planning and management system and creating a meaningful framework for accountability. Several state governments have already initiated the process of decentralization of the primary education management framework. New legislation has been adopted to provide for the changed framework to operate effectively. Some states have also gone for much closer collaboration and involvement of the community in decentralizing the system of education management. On the whole, this has not been an easy task with deeply entrenched centralized mechanisms. The country will continue to work towards the goal of decentralization by initiating processes of community involvement and gradually shifting the locus of decision making from state to district level and downwards through panchayati raj bodies.

This shift in planning and management strategy also requires a vast effort to train and continually give support to educational bodies constituted under the urban local governments and panchayati raj institutions. Efforts need to be made to reorient the programmes of various resource institutions at national and state levels to meet this requirement. Towards this end, the local level institutions in the education and allied sectors must be strengthened adequately. Besides, it is envisaged that distance education mechanisms will play a significant role in the task of building capacities among personnel working at local levels. The distance education programmes already launched for inservice education of teachers will be strengthened to play this enhanced role.

Pursuing the goal of decentralization along with the principle of partnership between the centre and the states demands careful orchestration of the policies and programmes particularly in the area of elementary education. As envisaged by the National Policy on Education and reiterated by several bodies subsequently, the national government will have to continue to play a major role both for coordination and capacity building. It will continue to monitor the progress of reaching national goals in the field of elementary education.
District as the Unit of Planning

Traditionally, planning for development of education has been done at the state government level. The National Literacy Mission changed this trend and adopted district level campaign mode. All assessment for action was done from within the district. Following this, planning for primary education particularly under the DPEP has been firmly anchored at the district level. It is recognised that planning at the district level has several advantages: (a) It helps in making the plan strategies and approaches more locally relevant; (b) It promotes participation of local people in planning process and therefore develop better commitment and accountability for its effective implementation; and (c) It helps in addressing the issues of inter district disparities within the state more effectively. Keeping these factors in view, the country proposes to adopt an integrated approach for planning at the district level for development of elementary education. This approach it is envisaged will help identify districts needing more attention and varied types of inputs, thereby tackling the question of equity in an appropriate manner. Movement towards planning at block and cluster and village levels in partnership with NGOs will be encouraged and supported.

District Primary Education Programme- An Effective Scheme To Achieve Universalisation Of Primary Education

Right from independence India has preserved the goal of UEE; even though substantial progress has been achieved the goal still seems to remain elusive. The additional participation in elementary education has to come from social strata and regions which are more difficult to reach. Therefore the path that lies ahead in the march to UEE is more arduous; the journey ahead is marathon calling for a higher intensity of effort and more systematic planning and implementation.

The District Primary Education Programme is based on the above national experience and seeks to operationalise the Plan of Action of 1992 which reads as follows:

"Further efforts would be made to develop district specific projects, with specific activities clearly defined responsibilities, definite time schedule and specific targets. Each district project will be prepared within the major strategy framework and will be tailored to the specific needs and possibilities in the district. Apart from effective UEE, the goals of each project will include the reduction if existing disparities in educational access, the provision of alternative systems of comparable standards to the disadvantaged groups, a substantial improvement in the quality of schooling facilities, obtaining a genuine community involvement in the running of schools and building up local level capacity to ensure effective decentralization of educational planning. That is to say, the overall goal of the project would be reconstruction of primary education as a whole in selected districts instead of piecemeal synergies among different programme components".

The programme also builds upon the experience gained in

- The implementation of Bihar Education Project (with UNICEF assistance) and the Lok Jumbish Project (with assistance)
- The planning of basic project in Uttar Pradesh (with IDA assistance)
• The implementation of Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (with ODA assistance), Shiksha Karmi Project (with SIDA assistance) and Mahila Samkhya (with Dutch assistance).

The DPEP has been approved as a centrally sponsored scheme of the Government of India for primary education development. DPEP has been developed and implemented successfully in the districts selected. It has been a sustainable and a cost effective programme.

The programme has successfully met all the parameters set for achieving the goal of UPE in Dharmapuri district. Planning, management and evaluation has been strengthened and it has shown considerable success. The district has achieved 98% Universalisation with the effective implementation of the programme. The district project office has worked hard and planned accordingly for the success of this programme in their district. This project has gradually transformed into the Sarve Shiksha Abhiyan – Education for All which is also working on similar grounds.

**Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)**

It is now globally recognized that systematic provision of ECCE helps in the development of children in a variety of ways such as group socialization, inculcation of health habits, stimulation of creative learning process and enhanced scope for overall personality development. In the poorer sections of the society, ECCE is essential for countering the physical, intellectual, and emotional deprivation of the child. ECCE is also a support for universalisation of elementary education and it also indirectly influences enrollment and retention of girls in primary schools by providing substitute care facilities for younger siblings.

At present, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is the most widespread ECCE provision. Besides, there are preschools, balwadis and so on under the Central Social Welfare Board, in addition to some state government schemes and private efforts. Efforts have to be made to achieve greater convergence of ECCE programmes implemented by various government departments as well as voluntary agencies by involving urban local bodies and gram panchayats. Further, ECCE will be promoted as a holistic input for fostering health, psycho-social, nutritional and educational development of the child.

**Promotion of Alternative Delivery Systems**

The school system has expanded multifold at all levels during the last five decades. Yet it is difficult to conclude that the system has been able to meet the educational needs of all. This is particularly true of the elementary education sector where it is recognized that a single track approach of formal primary schooling will not help achieve the national goals in a speedy manner. The school education programme has to look beyond the rigid formal framework in a flexible and adaptive fashion. Part-time formal, or non-formal education, seasonal learning centres for the children of migrant labour, voluntary schools by NGOs, post primary ‘open’ learning system, the camp approach for adolescent girls, etc. will have to be systematically promoted.
• The implementation of Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (with ODA assistance), Shiksha Karmi Project (with SIDA assistance) and Mahila Samkhya (with Dutch assistance).

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The programme has successfully met all the parameters set for achieving the goal of UPE in Dharanapuri district. Planning, management and evaluation has been strengthened and it has shown considerable success. The district has achieved 98% Universalisation with the effective implementation of the programme. The district project office has worked hard and planned accordingly for the success of this programme in their district. This project has gradually transformed into the Sarve Shiksha Abhiyan – Education for All which is also working on similar grounds.

**Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)**

It is now globally recognized that systematic provision of ECCE helps in the development of children in a variety of ways such as group socialization, inculcation of health habits, stimulation of creative learning process and enhanced scope for overall personality development. In the poorer sections of the society, ECCE is essential for countering the physical, intellectual, and emotional deprivation of the child. ECCE is also a support for universalisation of elementary education and it also indirectly influences enrollment and retention of girls in primary schools by providing substitute care facilities for younger siblings.

At present, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is the most widespread ECCE provision. Besides, there are preschools, balwadis and so on under the Central Social Welfare Board, in addition to some state government schemes and private efforts. Efforts have to be made to achieve greater convergence of ECCE programmes implemented by various government departments as well as voluntary agencies by involving urban local bodies and gram panchayats. Further, ECCE will be promoted as a holistic input for fostering health, psycho-social, nutritional and educational development of the child.

**Promotion of Alternative Delivery Systems**

The school system has expanded multifold at all levels during the last five decades. Yet it is difficult to conclude that the system has been able to meet the educational needs of all. This is particularly true of the elementary education sector where it is recognized that a single track approach of formal primary schooling will not help achieve the national goals in a speedy manner. The school education programme has to look beyond the rigid formal framework in a flexible and adaptive fashion. Part-time formal, or non-formal education, seasonal learning centres for the children of migrant labour, voluntary schools by NGOs, post primary 'open' learning system, the camp approach for adolescent girls, etc. will have to be systematically promoted.
The non-formal education programme that has been in operation in many parts of the country with support from the central government has been a mixed bag of success and failure. While the programme has been effectively implemented by many NGOs, the state sector could not show expected results. Nevertheless, the last decade has witnessed the emergence of alternate models for implementing the programme in a local specific manner. Lessons from these efforts along with the experience gained in the NGO sector will be used to reformulate and strengthen the programme of non-formal education.

Open learning system (OLS) will form an important dimension of the efforts during ninth plan to reach school education to all. OLS at the school level will be strengthened for providing education from the elementary stage and above to meet the needs of those who are unable to seek education through full time institutional system, with assured equivalence with institutional learning in terms of certificate, degree, etc. Scope of the OLS channel will be expanded to bring more academic and vocational areas into its fold and cater to a larger student population from various segments of the population both in school and adult education sectors.

Partnership between Public and Private Sectors
The task of implementing educational programmes in the country is so stupendous that it is difficult to expect the public sector to meet the burgeoning needs of the society effectively. Even though private initiative has always been a part of the school education endeavour, it is often felt that the country has not been able to fully exploit the potential of the private sector. Possibilities in this regard will have to be actively explored. It should be noted that private sector can contribute not only in monetary terms but also in the forms of expertise for quality improvement through effective management of the system and development of locally relevant teaching-learning material. As mentioned earlier in the analysis of progress, some efforts in this direction have already taken place. More collaborative efforts at institutional level as well as programme implementation level will be designed in order to expand the profile of private initiative in the elementary education.

Increased Role of NGOs
As mentioned earlier, the government views NGOs as partners in the process of moving towards the goal of education for all. As a broad policy, the country proposes to promote the role of NGOs at all levels in the social sector with a view to achieving participatory development and unburdening the administration which is unduly loaded with implementation of development programmes. This approach will be followed in enhancing the role of NGOs in education development programmes also. At present, involvement of NGOs is generally limited to running NFE programmes and implementing small scale innovative experiments in schooling. However, it is recognized that the NGOs have tremendous creative potential to contribute in innovating and implementing education programmes. While continuing with existing programmes of NGO involvement, effort will be made to identify technically competent NGOs and enable them to assume a larger role by functioning alongside government agencies in a significant manner.
Literacy and Continuing Education

Literacy and Continuing Education will continue to receive increased attention so as to achieve the goal of complete eradication of illiteracy in the age group 15-35 years and to enable the neo-literates to retain, improve and apply the newly acquired literacy skills for improvement of the quality of life. The emphasis will be on consolidation and sustaining of the adult education processes through increased participation of NGOs, panchayati raj institutions, youth organizations, teachers and student volunteers.

The focus of the adult education programmes will be two-fold. While the post-literacy and continuing education needs of the neo-literates will be taken care of through provision of opportunities for self-directed learning, equivalency programmes based on open schooling, job oriented vocational education and skill development programmes, a fresh momentum will be given to basic literacy programmes. This is essential in order to take care of the backlog of non-literates viz., those who are the dropouts and left-outs of the literacy campaigns and those out-of-school children who constitute new accretions to the adult illiterate population.

Launching a national Campaign for Education for All: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

The last decade has witnessed a number of new initiatives to improve the access to and participation of children in elementary education as well as for improving the quality of education provided in the primary schools. The proposed Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will be implemented by Government of India in partnership with the state governments with a long term perspective on cost sharing and through district level decentralized management framework involving local bodies. It is envisaged that the Campaign, to be launched in a mission mode, will move towards achieving the following four goals:

- providing access to all children in the age group 6-14 years through formal primary schools or through other equivalent alternative delivery means by 2003;
- completion of five years of primary education by all children by 2007;
- completion of eight years of elementary education by all children by 2010; and
- provision of elementary education of satisfactory quality for all by 2010.

The programme will be implemented in a manner that will provide adequate opportunities for NGOs and private sectors to contribute towards the achievement of these goals and lead towards a community owned initiative for universalizing elementary education. Keeping in view past experiences, efforts under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will be underscored by effective decentralization, sustainable financing, cost effective strategies for universalization, interesting curriculum, community owned planning and implementation and focus on girls, marginalised caste groups and ethnic minorities.

Over the last decade however, a consensus has grown concerning why the objectives of Education For All have been so hard to achieve - along with the kinds of changes that will be necessary to improve educational quality.
People must be educated. Education is not solely a means to an end, a tool of
development or a route to a good job. It is the foundation of a free and fulfilled life. It is
the right of all the children and the obligation of all governments.

Into the 21st century with a quarter of the world's children denied education is shameful.
But those dedicated to Education For All - educators, development workers, parents and
others - have cause to optimistic and proud. Spurred by deeply involved families and
committed people in thousands of communities around the world, exciting innovations
are taking shape. These efforts are part of an education revolution that is promising
profound change - and is already well under way. We can move swiftly ahead knowing
that Education For All- making the education revolution a global reality- is the soundest
investment in a peaceful and prosperous future that we can make for our children.

The present study has been a topic of discussion and research ever since independence
arising doubts and demanding clarification for a prospective future for the country i.e.,
the urgency to enable the country to achieve the Universalisation of Primary Education,
the factors that cater to reach this long standing and most awaited reality that can lead
India through the 21st century with its head held high, provided sustained commitment of
the state to child welfare and basic education as evident form the introduction of schemes
and spending priorities, regardless of the party in power, is a unique feature of Tamil
Nadu, which others can emulate by plugging the loopholes. If this uniqueness is expected
to make schemes work better in Tamil Nadu more so, when education was part of the
movements for self-respect and equality, and for generally coping with the much
politicized affirmative action, Tamil Nadu's failure to emerge as a 'model' state though
its performance cannot be dubbed a dismissed as a failure, is an important issue for
consideration.

The DPEP project has very satisfactorily achieved its target in Dharmapuri district
showing 98.9% enrollment which indicates the effectiveness of the programme and
proper effectiveness of the programme and proper functioning of the human agencies.
This study was undertaken to test the hypotheses as to whether Tamil Nadu will achieve
UPE by 2010. However, it is quite evident that if the government follows uniformity in
choosing the districts and implementing the programme in rest of the 23 districts without
any disparity there is a good chance for Tamil Nadu to near the goal of UPE. Due to the
implementation of DPEP and as a result of the programme activities undertaken,
enrollment has increased. Decrease in the drop out rates is also considerable. The
increase in the enrollment of girls can be termed as a special achievement.

Cohort study conducted in all the 106 blocks in 2000-2001, reveal that completion rate is
sufficiently high in all the districts and if increasing the achievement levels of children
reduces the repetition rate, the dream of providing quality education to all school going
age children will become a reality. Impact of the programme is perceptible in all aspects
and every step will be taken to bring a definite change in classroom environment and in
enhancing the achievement of children.
With restricted external financial assistance and constrained local investment there are so many unturned pages that need to be perused. Just a superficial face lift of UPE cannot stand as a justification with promises made by every new government coming in. the country needs to surge forward and open to more positive economic investments only then the thrust at the grassroots level would pave way for the growth of the state.

The educational experience of any state has to be located in its own matrix of bureaucratic, socio-economic, and political complexities and diversities, and replication of successful schemes depends on nature of this matrix in the region where it is to be replicated. In Tamil Nadu the areas which need close scrutiny for identifying the problems in its education system are the following:

- The state’s fast degenerating political culture which looks upon education in a mere quantitative sense and as yet another political constituency, and does not attach the needed importance to education per se in terms of quality and intrinsic values.
- Nexus between the education system, bureaucracy and politics.
- Imperfections and inadequacies in the delivery systems.
- The efficacy of the educational system in terms of teacher effectiveness.
- State’s failure to follow up with implementation its enactment on Compulsory education in the early 1990s as the first-ever legislation in India.
- Persistence of caste, communal and gender prejudices and inequalities.
- Highly skewed distribution of resources.
- Lack of social awareness, social mobilisation and most important of all, civil space, without which democracy is at best a rhetoric of expectations.

Tamil Nadu could achieve the goals of EFA which is quite clear from the vision outlined in the Policy Note, which includes:

- Formulation of schemes taking into account the characteristics of the uneducated.
- New guidelines for appointment of teachers according to students’ strength in primary schools.
- Intensification of steps to enroll all, particularly those from economically weaker sections, and ensure their retention through the special programme called ‘Elementary Education Movement’.
- Making lessons and teaching methods and techniques interesting for both the teachers and learners.
- Modification and revision of the teacher training programmes, learning methods, and syllabus so as to enable children to learn enthusiastically.
- Improving the attainment of minimum levels of learning.

The World Bank aided District Primary Education Programme launched in the mid-1990s is India’s most ambitious, internationally assisted, primary education programme conceived as a ‘beachhead’ for overhauling the primary education system in the country, and aimed at operationalising the strategies for achieving UEE through district-specific planning and disaggregated target setting. The DPEP specifically focused on districts
with female literacy below the national average, and where total literacy campaigns (TLCs) have stirred up a demand for elementary education.

Having failed to achieve Universalisation of basic education in 56 years despite several statements of intentions, our stand now seems to be more confident. The target of achieving Universalisation by 2005 does stand as another milepost to postpone Universalisation, but it shall indeed be achieved.

The state of Tamil Nadu stands in the forefront in achieving this goal by 2010. But the study intends to open up more areas to be analysed and surveyed. The reality to achieve the constitutional directive now a fundamental right, which is 'destined in the classrooms' will always remain a question to resolve and work on constantly paving way for future research.