Chapter-I

INTRODUCTION
1.1 Elementary Education in India: Historical Perspectives

The development and well-being of any nation are directly linked to the level of education among its people. Primary education is the framework over which entire building of education is erected. One can not even imagine the development of person, society or a nation without quality primary education. Primary education is an indispensable "Passport to life".

India was the world leader in education. Actual practical education with theories and principles was imparted in India since long, long days, other countries were lagging behind. India was the first to have world level universities viz. Nalanda in Magadh, Vikramshila in Anga and Takshashila in Punjab (presently under Pakistan). Apart from these universities, ancient India witnessed Gurukul system of education. Thus, Indian educational history dates back over 5000 years. Education and education system of India started changing during British period and after independence it has changed completely in various facets. The principal object of this part of introduction is to trace the growth of the modern system of elementary education which came to be established in today's India since ancient period. F.E. Keay, being a man of the west rightly remarks' "Few countries and certainly no western ones, have had systems of
education which have had such a long and continuous history with so few modifications as some of the educational system of India...." (Ghanta and Dash, 2004, p. 229).

1.1.1 Elementary Education in Ancient Period

If we look back to the vedic age, we will find that the concept of universal education is never a new idea in India. It is as old as the beginning of our civilization. The ancient Indian educationists advocated that education should not only cater to the needs and development of a favoured ‘few’, but for the society as a whole. Every boy and girl in this country should be provided with a minimum standard of spiritual education. The grihya sutra states that the three twice born castes were all required to undergo a period of religious studentship. In the Chandogya Upanishad (V. II, 5) king Arvapati Kaikeya states, "in my kingdom there is ...... no ignorant person .....". These are some evidences of a system of universal compulsory education that prevailed in ancient Aryavarta. The course of training and the subjects of study were not, of course, uniform for all the castes. The salient features of vedic system of education (Ghanta and Dash, 2004, pp. 234-242) are:

1. The gurukul system of education was probably the best example of quality management in education, where the students lived with the guru in his family till the time they completed their study.

2. Student life in vedic society began with upanayan, when the student goes to his chosen teacher called Acharya.
After upanayan student emerges as dwija or twice born, known as brahmachari.

3. A minimum age limit was fixed for initiation viz. - eight years, and again minimum period of studentship was twelve years.

4. Guru decided the curriculum suited to the individual disciple's talent, interest and ability. Thus, education was imparted to each individual with their difference.

5. Education of a caste in vedic period was determined to a large extent by the particular occupation and functions assigned to it in society.

6. Education was not denied to women in vedic period.

7. Aim of life determines the aim of education. The aim of life in ancient India was the observation of dharma. Hence, observation of dharma was the aim of education in ancient Bharat.

8. Credit goes to the ancient Indian educators for inventing the monitorial system for the first time in the history of education.

Buddhist education was also a product of the prevailing brahmanical educational system, but it was not based on vedic study and its teachers were not Brahmanas or Brahmans except those few who had
converted themselves to Buddhism. The salient features of Buddhist Education (Ghanta and Dash, 2004, pp. 244-249) are:

1. The ceremony of admission into the Buddhist order was called Pabbajja.

2. According to rules, neither one could receive the pabbajja ordination till he was eight years of age nor the upsampada (the final ordination) till he was twenty.

3. Buddhist education and learning centered round monasteries only. These monasteries were open to all, who accepted Buddhist order. The Buddhist monks monopolised all education sacred as well as secular.

4. The most important aim of education was to obtain Nirvan.

5. The curriculum of Buddhist monks included the subject matters contained in the Tripitaka.

1.1.2 Elementary Education in Medieval period

The beginning of the eighth century A.D. marked the advent of Mohammedian invasions of India. The Arabs and the Turks brought many new customs and institutions to India. Of these, one remarkable institution was the Islamic pattern of education which, in many respects, vastly differed from the Brahmanic and Buddhist systems. Before we discuss the details of the Islamic pattern of education in India, two facts are to be mentioned. First, Muslim
education did not reach such a high point in India as in some other Muslim lands. It is at least partly accounted for by India being separated remotely from the rest of the Muslim world. Secondly, there was no continuous growth and development of Muslim education in India. It was due to the fact that in most cases commendable work done by a ruler had been undone by his successors by their indifference and neglect.

Now, coming to the pattern of education, we find that mosques were centers of instruction and literacy activity. Muslim educational institutions are distinguished as 'Maktabs' (schools) and 'Madarsas' (colleges). The salient features of Islamic elementary education (Ghanta and Dash, 2004, pp. 250-256) were:

i) Maktab (primary school) often attached to the mosque was probably the most permanent of Muslim educational institution in India.

ii) Admission to maktab was a markedly colourful ceremony called bismilah - initiation into religious studies commencing on the day when a Muslim boy would be four years, four months and four days old. This ceremony in the case of girls was called ‘Zarfishani’, that is sprinkling of gold.

iii) Curriculum at the elementary stage was confined to reading, writing, arithmetic and religious education.
iv) It was individual education rather than mass education. Personal relationship between the teacher and the taught was emphasized.

v) Women's education was almost totally neglected in the Muslim period. The 'Purdah' system which shut up all Muslim women, except young girls, in seclusion, made their education a matter of great difficulty. Exceptionally, few Muslim women received education and got distinctive place.

vi) No annual examination of modern type was conducted. Evaluation was a built-in, continuous process, based on assessment by the teacher's themselves.

vii) A notable feature of the Muslim education in India was that it was centered mainly in the town and cities.

viii) Muslim education during the medieval period was not only patronized and subsidized by the state but was also guided and controlled by it. The state schools employed salaried teachers and education was free for poor and promising students. However, schools held in private houses charged fees generally payable in kind.
1.1.3 Elementary Education in Modern India

1.1.3.1 Indigenous Education of India

The introduction of British rule in India brought with it western civilization and culture into the country. The social, political, and educational development in contemporary England had a magical impact on the social, political, and constitutional history of India. A change in the educational policy of England had its echoes in Indian education, sooner or later. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the British administrators began to organise a modern system of education for India, the country had a fairly wide network of indigenous schools which had been evolved through centuries (Ghanta & Dash, 2004, p. 259).

The indigenous elementary school, the main agency for the spread of mass education, was a humbler but far more useful institution (Nurullah & Naik, 1974, pp. 25-26). The instruction given in it was of a practical type and mostly limited to the three R's. It had no religious veneration attached to it, and consequently, it had no endowments either from the State or from the public. As the schools did not have their own buildings, they were housed in a temple or a mosque or some public buildings or under a tree or in the house of teachers themselves. It is worthy of note that the pupils in these schools included a small percentage of girls and children of many communities although the children of the upper classes formed the large majority. There were no printed books and the slates or pencils used by pupils were such as could be easily made in the locality. The hours of
instruction and the days of working were finally adjusted to local requirements. There was no fee in the modern sense, but each parent who sent his child to the school generally made some payment to the teacher - either in cash or in kind. The size of school was generally small. In bigger schools, there was in vogue a system under which the senior pupils were appointed to teach junior ones. It was this system that attracted attention of Dr. Bell, the Presidency Chaplin at Madras, and which he introduced in England as a cheap and efficient method of educating the poor.

The chief merits of the indigenous system of elementary education were their adaptability to local environment and the vitality and popularity they had earned by centuries of existence under a variety of economic conditions or political vicissitudes. Their main defect was the exclusion of girls and Harijan pupils. To these may be added the lack of training or sound education among their teachers, their narrow and limited curriculum and the severe forms of punishment adopted (Nurullah & Naik, 1974, pp. 25-27).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the indigenous system of education was fast decaying on account of the prevailing anarchy or the growing impoverishment of the people under the British rule. One thing is important to mention here that indigenous system of education opened the eyes of the Englishmen for the spread of mass education in their country. The Monitorial system, was the chief method by which England achieved expansion of primary education at a very low cost between 1801 and 1845. It is an irony of fate that the indigenous schools of India should thus contribute
to the spread of education in England and be no avail in spreading mass education in India herself (Nurullah & Naik, 1974, p. 32).

1.1.3.2 The East India Company and Education in India (1600-1813)

Western culture and civilization had its beginning in India with the coming of the British in the form of East India Company. Although the East India Company as primarily commercial concern was established as early as A.D. 1600, it undertook no educational activities for nearly one hundred years of its existence. Its attention was first drawn to educational matters by the Charter Act of 1698 which contain a missionary clause. It may be said to have laid the foundation, not of the education of the Indian people, but of the education of the European and Anglo-Indian children who lived in the possession of the company. Circumstances altered considerably by the middle of the eighteenth century. The company had, by this time, emerged successful from the struggle with its European competitors - the Dutch, and the French. The grant of Diwani in 1765 made it a major power in India. The company now began to feel to encourage education among Indian people as the earlier Hindu and Muslim rulers had done to win the confidence of the upper classes and consolidate its rule in India. Therefore, some centers of higher learning such as Calcutta Madarasa (1781) and Banaras Sanskrit College (1791) were established (Nurullah & Naik, 1974, p. 36).

Side by side with these educational activities conducted by the company, a number of other educational activities were also organised by missionaries who ordinarily worked under the shadow of its political authority.
These institutions are of great significance in history of education in modern India as pioneers of private enterprises in education. The reasons, which led the Missionaries to undertake educational activities were:

i) conversion of Indian people to Christianity;

ii) converted population were generally illiterate, and as reading the Bible was held to be essential for salvation, missionaries were required to establish school in order to teach the new converts to read and write. For the same reason, they were also compelled to introduce the printing press and to print the Bible in Indian languages.

In short, the missionaries realised that schools were both the cause and the effect of proselytization and that educational and missionary work had to be undertaken side by side; and it is out of this realisation that the mission schools of modern India were born. The honour of being the first Protestant Missionarie to work in the territories of East India Company goes to Danish Mission.

The attitude of the company was generally favourable to missionary enterprise prior to 1765. But a change began to come about as soon as the company became a political power in India. They had now fully realised the importance of the policy of religious neutrality in consolidating their empire in India and also knew that the missionary with its excessive zeal for conversions invariably got into trouble with the Indian people. Their relationship extremely strained after 1793. A great conflict arised between
missionaries and officials of the company in 1808, when Serampore Trio published certain tracts called *Addresses to Hindus and Mahomedans*. These were so worded as to offend the religious sentiments of the Indian people. In India, the missionaries being powerless to fight against this policy of company, began an intensive agitation in England with the object of persuading Parliament to legislate on the matter and give the necessary freedom and assistance to missionaries. The foremost among those who thus agitated was Charles Grant - the father of modern education in India. It was only after a prolonged agitation that the company was compelled, by the Charter Act of 1813, to accept responsibility for the education of Indian, to incur some expenditure for the fulfillment of this object, and to admit missionaries to its dominions for spreading Western 'light and knowledge'. This was the beginning of the State system of education in India under the British rule (Nurullah & Naik, 1974, pp. 40-57).

1.1.3.3 First Phase : A Period of Neglect (1813-1902)

The Charter Act of 1813 is a turning point in the history of Indian education. It was only in 1813, that for a vast country like India a meagre sum of one lakh rupees a year was provided for the spread of education. So, with their limited resources the East India Company adopted a mistaken policy, for which mass education was obstructed. This policy is popularly known as the 'Downward Filtration Theory'. According to this policy an attempt was made to educate only higher classes, so that education filters down from the classes to the masses. The second major error of British Government was to emphasize higher education through English and to neglect primary education.
Throughout the nineteenth century, "Downward Filtration Theory" was the acknowledged goal of education. It dominated the scene of education throughout the century. The only redeeming features of the situation were two, the large expansion of missionary educational enterprise and the small but valuable beginning of Indian private enterprise in the modern system of education. The period between 1813 and 1853 was the period of controversies rather than achievements. The East India Company was busy with commerce, conquest, consolidation and hardly devotes sufficient attention and money for the cause of education (Nurullah & Naik, 1974, p. 113).

The Despatch of 1854, was at first looked upon as the beginning of a great era of educational reforms under the East India Company. The Despatch's (1854) recommendation about primary education were –

i) the indigenous schools should be incorporated in the official system of education;

ii) larger amounts should be spent on primary education and

iii) a system of grants-in-aid should be evolved for private primary schools on which alone should Government mainly rely for the spread of education among the masses.

Thus, it was the first authoritative declaration by the government of its educational policy. As events actually turned out, the Company ceased to be a political power in 1858 and the Government of India came directly
under the Crown. Broadly speaking, therefore education in India under the East India Company may be taken to have ended with the Despatch of 1854 itself. But as early as 1859, another Despatch reversed these orders, directed that local rates should be levied for educational purposes, and observed that the Department should rely mainly on Government schools for the spread of mass education. Perhaps the contradiction between Despatches of 1854 and 1859 on subject of elementary education, and subsequent controversies that raged round them till about 1870, may be traced to the contemporary controversies in England for the best agency for the spread of elementary education. In England, compulsory education had been universally introduced under the Acts of 1870, 1876 and 1880.

In view of the slow progress of primary education in the period from 1854 to 1882 the Government of India appointed an Indian Education Commission. This commission of 1882 is popularly known as Hunter's commission from the name of Sir William Hunter, the President of the commission. The elementary education was then imparted through two agencies: (i) indigenous elementary schools and (ii) new type of primary schools. The commission (1882) recommended that "while every branch of education can justly claim the fostering care of the state, it is desirable, in the present circumstances of the country, to declare the elementary education of the masses, its provision, extension, and improvement, to be that part of the educational system to which the strenuous effort of the State should now be directed in a still larger measure than heretofore." Inspite of all these
declarations, the progress in primary education continued to be slow and halting (Nurullah & Naik, 1974, pp. 229-30).

### 1.1.3.4 Second Phase: A Period of Intensive Agitation (1902-1918)

Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India from 1899 to 1906, had a passion for all round improvement in the country and a sincere desire to serve the country well. But his political views made the public opinion hostile to him. Hence all policies and actions were viewed with disrupt and suspicion. In higher education, he emphasized quality as against quantity. But in primary education he emphasized expansion side by side with improvement.

On the basis of the Shimla Conference (1901) and the Indian University Commission (1902), the government issued the resolution on Government Education Policy in March 1904, and passed the Indian University Act on 21st March 1904. With regard to primary education, the Resolution made the following suggestions:

(i) Primary education should be made a leading charge on provincial revenues, and that the District and Municipal Boards should spend their educational funds exclusively for primary education.

(ii) Curriculum of the village primary schools should be different from those of the urban ones. The aim of the rural school should be to give to the children a preliminary training which would make them intelligent cultivators.
(iii) There should be provision for the training of primary teachers, and salaries of the teachers should be increased.

(iv) Payment by results system should be abolished.

In spite of the failure in the past, the movement for universal education was not neglected. The progressive ruler, Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda State contributed a lot to this movement. First he experimented with compulsory education in the Amroli division of his State in 1893. When he got promising results, he introduced the same in the whole State in the year 1906. Thus, credit goes to him for introducing compulsory education for the first time in the history of India (Ghanta and Dash, 2004, pp. 277-279).

The public were not slow to point out that what was done by the Gaekwad for his State, may easily be done by the British Government for its own territories. The great exponent of this demand was Shri G.K. Gokhale. Between 1910 and 1913 Gokhale made heroic efforts to make Government accept the principle of compulsory education. Finally, his bill was thrown out by 38 votes against 13 on the 19th March 1912. But Gokhale's effort was not entirely in vain, the great activity of Government in the field of primary education in the quinquennium 1912-1917, was largely the indirect result of the efforts of Gokhale. The work of Gokhale was taken up at Provincial level by Shri Vithalbhaji J. Patel. His bill for the introduction of compulsory primary education in municipal areas was accepted by Bombay Legislative Council.
and became the Bombay Primary Education (District Municipalities) Act of 1918, known popularly as the Patel Act. This was the first law to be passed in British India on compulsory education (Nurullah & Naik, 1974, pp. 287-291).

1.1.3.5 Third Phase: A Period of Experiment (1918-1947)

The example of Shri Vithalbhai Patel was imitated very extensively. Based on the general plan of his bill, several acts for compulsory primary education were passed before 1921. Thus the programme of universal education was began to actualize. It was at this juncture that the reforms outlined in the Government of India Act, 1919, were introduced and the Department of Education (subject to certain reservations) was transferred to the control of Indian Ministers in 1921. The most important event of the history of Indian education under the diarchy, is the development of mass education. The Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in India, 1922-27, observes the expansion of primary education was very rapid in this period.

The report of the Auxillary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission, popularly known as the Hortog Committee (1929), devoted far more attention to mass education than secondary and university education. The report makes a mention of the great waste of money and effort which resulted because of the pupils leaving their schools before going up to the end of the course. It also criticized the curricula of rural primary schools. The suggestion of Hartog Committee (1929) for the improvement of primary schools (Ghanta and Dash, 2004, p. 285) were-
(i) instead of following a policy of multiplication of schools, the existing schools should be improved;

(ii) primary course should be of at least four years;

(iii) far reaching improvements were needed in the quality, training, status and pay of the teachers before real progress could be made; and

(iv) the curricula and methods of teaching should be related to the conditions of villages in which children live and read.

The combined effect of the lead given by the committee and of the financial stringency caused by the world economic depression was that primary education made comparatively little and unsatisfactory progress in the period between 1927 and 1937.

The Government of India, Act 1935, put an end to the inherently defective diarchical system of administration and Congress Ministries were formed in 7 out of 11 provinces. In the field of primary education, the epoch-making event of the period between 1937 and 1947, was the scheme of Basic education enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi. The All India Educational Conference held at Wardha in October, 1937 discussed the idea of Gandhi Ji and appointed a committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussan. This Committee in its report pointed out the main defects of the existing system of education and came to the conclusion that "the most effective approach to the problem of providing and integral all-sided education" was to educate
"Children through some suitable form of productive work". This work should be "rich in educative possibilities". This Committee, however, did not fully support the "self supporting" clause of the scheme.

The Central Advisory Board of Education appointed a Committee in 1938, known as the Kher Committee to consider this scheme. A second Wardha Education Committee was appointed by C.A.B.E. in 1939 again under the Chairmanship of Shri B.G. Kher. Most of its recommendation were accepted by Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE). The principle of giving free and compulsory education for a period of 7 years (6 to 14 year) on a nation-wide scale was fully accepted. The principles of making mother tongue, the medium of instruction and moving the process of education "center around some form of manual and productive work" have been agreed upon (Ghanta and Dash, 2004, pp. 286-287).

But, unfortunately, this great experiment came to a sudden end when the Second World War broke out and the Congress Ministeries resigned in 1940. The five years (1940-45) of the Caretaker Governments were, therefore, mainly a period of marking time when no new educational scheme were undertaken, but an attempt was made to maintain, as far as possible, the work started by the Congress Ministries between 1937 and 1940. The one great achievement of this period, however, was the preparation of a plan of Post - War Educational Development in India by the Central Advisory Board of Education, which was estimated to cost Rs. 300 Crores. It intended to make India, at the end of 40 years, the stage of educational progress which had already been attained in countries like England and The U.S.A. This
report popularly known as Sargent Report, recommended (Ghanta and Dash, 2004, p. 287) that

(i) a system of universal, compulsory and free education for all boys and girls between the age of 6 and 14 years should be introduced as speedily as possible;

(ii) the standards of the training, recruiting and conditions of service of teachers should be raised; and

(iii) a large number of women teachers shall also be trained.

1.1.4 Elementary Education After Independence

A new era in the history of education in India was ushered in with the attainment of independence in 1947. For instance (Nurullah and Naik, 1974, p. 421), Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru the first Prime Minister of India, observed in his inaugural address to the All-India Educational Conference convened by Shri Maulana Azad, the Union Education Minister, in January 1948:

"Whenever conferences were called to form a plan for education in India, the tendency, as a rule, was to maintain the existing system with slight modifications. This must not happen now. Great changes have taken place in the country and the educational system must also be in keeping with them. The entire basis of education must be revolutionised."

For various reasons, the first four years of independence formed a period of great and unforeseen difficulties. Consequently, not enough
attention could be given to the development of education between 1946-47 and 1950-51. One of the first acts of the independent country was to give a new constitution to itself. This great document was finalised by the Constituent Assembly after months of intensive work and was adopted on January 26, 1949. Realising the importance of universal primary education for the proper development of democracy, Article 45 of the Constitution, a directive principle of state policy, provides that "the state shall endeavour to provide, within a period ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years".

An important administrative issue dealt within the constitution refers to education a state subject except for education in Union territories and centrally administered areas. On the basis of the Sargent Plan, the Ministry of Education appointed a Committee on Primary Education (CPE - 1951) under the chairmanship of B.G. Kher in order to examine the erstwhile setup of local administration of education in different states and the experiments carried out in some of the states. This committee recommended the association of local bodies, creation of education bodies, division of authority, and the responsibility of the Union Government to assign specific grants for universal and compulsory primary education in states.

During 1957-59, a National Committee on Women's Education, in the Chairmanship of Durgabai Deshmukh recommended for primary education (i) About 65% wastage due to economic reasons which can be eradicated by part time instruction and (ii) about 25 to 30% wastage due to
neutrality of guardians and this can be eradicated by a good deal of educational propaganda and enforcement of compulsory education law (Gupta, 2004, pp. 117-119).

In order to give a new shape to our educational system, three education commissions came into being after the attainment of independence (Ghanta and Dash, 2004, p. 288), University Education Commission in the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (1948), Secondary Education Commission in the Chairmanship of Dr. S.L. Mudaliar (1952) and an Education Commission in the Chairmanship of Dr. D.S. Kothari (1964).

The publication of the report of the Education Commission in 1966 is an epoch making event in the history of Indian education from primary to the university level. Regarding education and national objectives the Education Commission (1966) states, "The destiny of India is now being shaped in the classrooms". The commission's recommendations for basic education (Ghanta andDash, 2004, p. 295) were: (i) there should be a common school system at the primary stage, unfortunately this could not be implemented; (ii) correlation of the curriculum with the productive activity and the physical and social environment; and (iii) intimate contact between the school and the local community. The commission also suggested that the productive activity to be introduced in the curriculum, called 'work experience', should be based on modern science and technology and should not, like the crafts, be backward-looking.
A committee for Differentiation of Curricula for boys and girls (DCBG-1964) headed by Smt. Hansa Mehta reviewed the curricula of school education for boys and girls. This committee recommended that no differentiation should be made in the curricula for boys and girls at the primary stage. Women should be appointed at all primary schools. The existing gap between the education of boys and girls should be rapidly bridged.

With the recommendation of Kothari Commission (1964-66), the New Education Policy (1968) was implemented. This policy recommended that strenuous efforts should be made for the early fulfillment of the Directive Principles under Article 45 of the constitution seeking to provide free and compulsory education for all children. The education of girls should receive emphasis not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation.

In 1973, Education Ministry of Government of India appointed a committee on curriculum of school level. This committee prepared an Approach paper for curriculum reformation, which was discussed in a National Conference on Curriculum (1975) in New Delhi. After this, a document on "The Curriculum for the Ten Year School : A Frame Work" was published by NCERT in 1975. NCERT also prepared syllabus, books and teaching materials for different classes in 1976. But, this was criticized on the basis of bookish knowledge only.

So, to review these syllabi and books prepared by NCERT, a "Review Committee on the Curriculum for the Ten Year School" (1977) was
appointed in the Chairmanship of Ishwar Bhai J. Patel. This committee is also named as "Patel Committee" (S.P. Gupta, 2004, p. 128). Evaluating the curriculum of elementary level, the committee gave major emphasis on realism and flexibility and suggested that:

(i) There should be no rigid time-table for lower primary level and teaching time should 2.5 - 3 hours;

(ii) Educational session should be based on local needs;

(iii) Home work should not be given to student, therefore, self study under the guidance of teachers have to be managed in the school;

(iv) There should be only one book of language for class I and II, and three books of language, math and environment study for the classes III, IV and V; and

(v) Need of teacher's guidebooks and assisting materials at this level.

Again, NCERT made a Steering Committee (1984) to frame a national curriculum after a lot of mental exercises and published a National Curriculum Framework (NCF) in 1985. NCF (1985) was based on so many social and educational factors such as equity, national identity, scientific temper, art and creativity, explosion of information and technology to cope with it, inter face between work and education, value education, environment resources and population, centrality to learner, professional role of school and focus on learning. This national curriculum was a step in the direction of a
national system of education. This was also named "Core Curriculum" (S.P. Gupta, 2004, p. 255). It proposed language 30%, environmental study 15%, mathematics 15%, SUPW 20%, art 10% and health and physical education 10% for lower primary education.

In order to meet challenges of dynamic society the Government of India in January 1985 announced that a New Policy on Education would be formulated for the country. After adoption of this New Education Policy, it became known as "National Policy on Education 1986". The cardinal principle of N.P.E. is "Education is an unique investment in the present and future." NPE-1986 was a landmark in Indian education. It advocated a dual track approach designed to promote simultaneously adult literacy and primary education, with a focus on girls and other disadvantaged groups. It also postulated integration of gender perspectives in all aspects of planning. Minimum levels of learning (MLL) were laid down for each stage of education.

Following the policy statement in 1986 on improving learning conditions a number of national level programme were launched which have continued to contribute to improvement of school conditions in the 1990s. For instance, 'Operation Blackboard' launched in 1987, aimed at improving the classroom environment by providing infrastructural facilities, additional teachers and teaching - learning materials to primary schools and by provision of a third teacher to schools where enrolment exceeded 100, has been extended to upper primary schools also.
As envisaged in the NPE-1986, a centrally sponsored scheme of Restructuring and Reorganisation of Teacher Education was launched in 1987 to create a sound institutional infrastructure for pre-service and in-service training of elementary & secondary school teachers and for provision of academic resource support to elementary and secondary schools. The scheme has been revised under the X Plan. Since the inception of the Scheme in 1987, a total of 556 DIET / DRC and 135 CTEs / IASEs had been sanctioned upto 30-11-2005 under the Scheme (MHRD, 2005-06).

A Total Literacy Campaign (TLC-1990) was organised under the National Literacy Mission (NLM-1988) with the objectives of area specific, volunteer based, cost effective, time bound and outcome oriented. An evaluation of these campaign by an Expert Task Force has shown that they have successfully promoted social and economic integration. The impact of women's mobilization was found to be at the heart of the success of the campaign.

Education under the Indian constitution until 1976 allowed the state governments to take decisions on all matters pertaining to school education, including curriculum, within their jurisdiction. The center only provide guidance to the States on policy issues. It is under such circumstances that the initial attempts of the National Policy of 1968 and the Curriculum Framework designed by NCERT in 1975 were formulated. In 1976, the constitution was amended to include education in the Concurrent List, and for the first time in 1986 the country as a whole had a uniform National Policy on Education.
The NPE (1986) recommended a common core component in the school curriculum throughout the country. The Policy also entrusted NCERT with the responsibility of developing the National Curriculum Framework, and reviewing the framework at frequent intervals. NCERT in continuation of its curriculum-related works carried out studies and consultations subsequent to 1975, and had drafted a curriculum framework as a part of its activity in 1984. This exercise aimed at making school education comparable across the country in qualitative terms and also at making it a means of ensuring national integration without compromising on the country's pluralistic character. Based on such experiences, the Council's work culminated in the National Curriculum Framework for School Education, 1988. However, the articulation of this framework through courses of studies and textbooks in a rapidly changing developmental context resulted in an increase in 'curricular load' and made learning at school a source of stress for young minds and bodies during their formative years of childhood and stress for young minds and bodies during their formative years of childhood and adolescence (NCR, 2005).

1.2 Global Concern towards Elementary Education for 21st Century

Over the past few decades the achievement of universal primary education (UPE), under the somewhat misleading rubric of 'education for all', has steadily built momentum as a focus for discussion and action within the international community. The idea of UPE is not, of course, a new one. The foundation of this regime (Mundy, 2006) were laid in the establishment of system of mass public education in western countries in the period between
the late 19th and mid 20th century when many features of the social welfare state were institutionalized and accepted as 'norms' for state behaviour. Not surprisingly, efforts to remake world order following World War II saw the inclusion of education as a universal right in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Right (Article 26), and the establishment of UNESCO with its broad mandate to support (among other things) the Universal right to education. UNESCO became neither center nor coordinator of the new regime. Instead, a rather diffuse regime for educational cooperation grew alongside the emergence of international development as a field of activity for United Nations organizations and for newly formed bilateral aid organizations. These organizations quickly took up the notion that education could be used as a tool in national development, and education aid began to account for something between 5 and 10% of all aid flows.

Three key features of the education for development regime in the period from 1960 to 1995 deserve specific attention. First, although the notion of a universal right to education and of mass public education figured strongly in the international discourse (for example, in the UN Charter, UNESCO's mandate, and host of international declarations at regional meetings of developing country governments in the 1950s and 1960s) this was not what was supported by major flows of funding or technical expertise. Most aid flows to education were focused at levels beyond primary schooling (Mundy, 2006).

The second feature of the education-for-development regime was its profound decentralization and disorganization. No formal system of
governance or coordination among its many actors ever emerged. UNESCO, the putative leader in the field, kicked things off with ambitious regional conferences and targets for educational development. But it was weakened by limited resources and intense politicization in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, UNESCO never developed the political capacity to coordinate the growing number of new agencies interested in educational development. By the 1960s, UNECEF had begun to develop its own distinctive approach to educational development, acting on behalf of the world's children but not in the coordination with UNESCO.

The World Bank entered the arena in the 1960s, and overtook UNESCO in terms of expertise and flows of funding by 1980. But the Bank paid little attention to coordinating the educational activities of other donors, instead concentrating on the development of an economic rationals for its educational activities to support its own distinct approach to educational development. Alongside this fragmented multilateral effort, virtually every industrialized country also inculcated education - sector programs in its bilateral aid program, at widely varying levels of between 3 to 30% of total bilateral official aid. No single bilateral donor outweighed the others financially or could claim to provide intellectual or political guidance to the others - not even the United States, despite its status as hegemon in the global system. The net result was an education for development regime characterized by many small to medium-sized, short-term, bilateral transactions, often working at cross-purposes. For four decades - from the 1960s through the 1990s -
ambitious attempts at global level coordination of education for development activities failed, and usually failed quite quickly.

Thus, despite global commitment to the universal right to education, the highly state-centric structure of world politics limited appetite for collective action or coordination. Flows of expertise and funding were highly fragmented and often based on geo-political or economic interests of the bilateral donors and the idiosyncratic approaches of specific multilateral organizations, rather than on any collective prioritization of global educational needs, or coordination effort within individual developing countries. Finally, this regime had a fairly limited range of actors and a fixed array of aid modalities. It was dominated by 'official actors' - a handful of multilateral organizations (UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank) and bilateral aid organizations (Mundy, 2006).

1.2.1 World Declaration on Education For All (EFA)

A meeting of world educators in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 was convened and sponsored by the executive heads of UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank. It was organised by an interagency commission established by them. As many as 155 countries, 20 Inter-Governmental bodies and 150 Non Governmental Organizations participated in the conference. The Conference adopted a epoch-making resolution calling on all member states and agencies to strive for achieving Education For All (EFA) by the year 2000. The ultimate goal affirmed by the World Declaration on Education for All is to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth
and adults. These needs were further specified as consisting of: (a) essential learning tools such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving; and (b) the basic learning content such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Towards fulfillment of these learning needs, the Declaration of EFA took a broadened vision of basic education as consisting of formal schooling, non-formal education programmes as well as open learning system which together attempt to reach basic education to all children as well as adults (EFA-GMR, 2005).

The ideas that culminated in the declaration were not entirely new, but rather a development of the previous declarations: Karachi 1960; Addis Ababa 1961; Santiago 1962; and Tripoli 1966, when participants committed themselves to achieving Universal Primary Education by the year 1980. Much of the rationalisation and justification for the target of UPE was based upon viewing education uncritically as a human right, a good investment, an instrument that promotes equity, helps with national cohesion, reduces population growth rates and improves health.

While it is important not to overstate the case, the education for development regime has experienced some sweeping changes over the last decade. These changes are particularly dramatic when placed alongside what has been was widely assessed to be the failure of the international community to achieve the goals established for education at the World Conference on EFA in Jomtien. These changes may be grouped into categories such as: embedding education in a new consensus on global development; the construction of clear educational targets and monitoring efforts; new forms of
donor coordination at the country level; the emergence of new actors and partnerships within the international education for development regime; and evolution of new aid flows and aid modalities (Mundy, 2006).

1.2.2 Dakar Framework for Action

The World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 provided an opportunity to assess the achievements, failures and initiatives related to education. Across the globe, countries have come together to pursue a common goal and make the world a better place to live in. The World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 noted that despite significant progress made in many countries, the situation was far from satisfactory. It asserted that 'it is unacceptable in the year 2000 that more than 113 million children have no access to primary education, 880 million adults are illiterate, gender discrimination continues to permeate education system and the quality of learning and acquisition of human values and skills fall far short of the aspirations and needs of individuals and societies'. To meet the challenges, the Dakar Forum committed itself to the following six global goals (Shukla, 2006, pp. 1-2) which were considered to be essential, attainable and affordable and act as a framework for national and international actions and monitoring:

(i) expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
(ii) ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory education of good quality;

(iii) ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;

(iv) achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;

(v) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;

(vi) improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

In addition to this, two of these goals, also became Millennium Development Goals later in the same year (2000). The achievement of universal primary education and gender equity in education are Goals Number 2 and 3 in the MDGs. The decade 2003-2012 has been declared as

1.3 Indian Efforts towards Elementary Education

India, in particular, preferred continuity in thinking and programme formulation in this regard, even much before Jomtein, in term of the National Policy on Education 1986, resulting major programmes like Operation Black Board, National Literacy Mission etc. However real changes in Indian education have occurred after the Jomtein Meet. Since India was a signatory of the Jomtien Declaration (1990), so, began working towards the EFA commitment forthwith.

The World Declaration on Education For All and the 'Framework for Action to meet Basic Learning Needs' were considered by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) which is the highest education policy making body in the country, in 1991 and 1992. The CABE endorsed the Declaration and called for further strengthening of the processes initiated through the NPE-1986. Our National Policy on education (1986) was, therefore revised in 1992 to expand the definition of Universal Elementary Education as consisting of not only the universal enrolment and participation but also of ensuring universal achievement of at least a minimum level of learning to all. In this attempt to UEE, India initiated various national, state specific and independent initiatives, before and after Jomtein Meet.
During 1990s, in the changed scenario, primary education in India truly became a subject of international scrutiny (Govinda, 2002, p. 2). So, many programmes were implemented after the Jomtein Conference on 'Education for All' (1990) by the Central Government in active collaboration with State Governments, with substantial financial assistance from international agencies like World Bank, UNICEF, DFID, EC and SIDA. Such National initiatives in India were Non-Formal Education (NFE-1975), Minimum Level of Learning (MLL-1976), Operation Black Board (OBB-1987), Programme of Mass Orientation of School Teachers (PMOST-1987), National Literacy Mission (NLM-1988), Total Literacy campaign (TLC-1990), National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE-1993), Special Orientation Programme for Primary School Teachers (SOPT-1993-94), National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM-1995), Mid Day Meal (MDM-1995), Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education (EGS & AIE - 2000) and recently launched Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA - 2001-02); state specific initiatives in India were - Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP - 1983), Bihar Education Project (BEP-1991), Lok Jumbish Project (LJP-1991), Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project (UPBEP - 1983), District Primary Education Project (DPEP-1994), Janshala, Shiksha Mitra Yojana (SMY); various independent initiatives in India were - Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP-1987), Shikshak Samakkhya Project (SSP-1992), Teachers for Universalisation of Primary Education (TUPE-1992), Prashika of Eklavya (1982), Rishi Valley Education Center (RVEC-1976), Promoting Primary and
Elementary Education Project (PROPEL-1988) etc. Some of the significant initiatives are described below.

1.3.1 District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)

The District Primary Education Programme, launched in 1994, is a centrally sponsored scheme assisted by the World Bank, European Commission, Department for International Development (DFID) of United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). It aims at holistic development of primary education covering class I to V. The three major objectives of the DPEP are to (i) reduce drop-out rate to less than 10 percent, (ii) reduce disparities among gender and social groups in the areas of enrolment, learning achievement etc., to less than 5 percent and (iii) improve the level of learning achievement compared to the base-line surveys. Eighty five percent of the funds for the project come from external agencies through the central budget and the remaining 15 percent is given by the concerned state government. The programme components include construction of classrooms and new schools, opening of the non-formal/alternative schooling centers, appointment of new teachers, and setting up of early childhood education (ECE) centers, strengthening of SCERTs and DIETs, and setting up of block resource centers/cluster resource centers. It also comprises teacher training, interventions, development of teacher-learning material, research and a thrust on education of girls, SC / ST etc. A new initiative of providing integrated education to disabled children and distance education for teacher training has also been incorporated in the DPEP scheme. DPEP at its peak
was operational in 273 districts in 18 states however, with the progressive closure of different phases of the programme, it is now in existence in 123 districts of 9 states only (MHRD, 2005-06).

1.3.2 Shiksha Karmi Project and Lok Jumbish Project in Rajasthan

Both, Shiksha Karmi and Lok Jumbish projects in Rajasthan, are innovative projects aimed at the universalisation of elementary education together with a qualitative improvement in remote and socially backward villages with a primary focus on gender. The projects address some of the major obstacles in achieving UEE, namely, teacher absenteeism, high drop-out rate, working children, uninteresting teaching methods, lack of contextual learning materials, low motivation and competence of teachers, a centralised and inflexible approach etc. There is a special emphasis on community participation in these projects. The Shiksha Karmi project has been responsible for a seven-fold increase in the enrolment of children in schools taken over by the project. The Lok Jumbish project has been able to set up innovative management structures incorporating the principles of decentralisation and delegation of authority as well as building partnership with local communities and the voluntary sector. This project has also made a positive contribution to quality improvement through the development of improved MLL-based text books for classes I-IV, which are being used in all schools of Rajasthan (MHRD, 2005-06).
1.3.3 Janshala Programme

The Janshala Programme is a collaborative effort of the Government of India (GOI) and five United Nations (UN) agencies - UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO and UNFPA. It provides programme support to the ongoing efforts towards achieving UEE. It is a community-based primary education programme that aims to make primary education more accessible and effective for girls and children in deprived communities, marginalised groups, SCs/STs, minorities, working children and children with special needs. The programme covers 139 blocks in nine states - Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh - with a total project outlay of Rs. 103.29 Crore. At the state level, the programme is implemented through existing structures of educational administration. Janshala has started a large number of alternative schools in small and remote habitations in the programme areas, besides evolving strategies and setting up schools with community participation in the urban slums of Jaipur, Hyderabad, Ajmer, Bharatpur, Puri and Lucknow. Other major areas of achievement are in teacher training, multigrade teaching, intervention for education of disabled, setting up of block and cluster resources centres and strengthening capacities at the state, district and block level (MHRD, 2005-06).

1.3.4 Mid-Day-Meal Scheme

The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education commonly known as the Mid-Day Meal programme was launched
in 1995. It aims to give a boost to universalisation of primary education by increasing enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving the nutritional status of students in primary classes. A Supreme Court order in 2001 makes it obligatory for states to provide cooked meals instead of dry rations within the stipulated time - frame, under the MDM scheme. Under the scheme, cooked meals are served with calorie value equivalent to 100 gm of wheat or rice per student per school day. The honour of starting the Mid-Day Meal scheme in elementary schools in the country goes to Tamil Nadu. This scheme was revised in September, 2004 with these main objectives: (i) to boost universalisation of primary education (classes I-V) by improving enrolment, attendance, retention and learning levels of children, especially those belonging to disadvantages sections; (ii) to improve nutritional status of students of primary stage, and (iii) to provide nutritional support to students of primary stage in drought - affected areas during summer vacation also.

Now, the scheme envisages a provision of a cooked Mid-day Meal with minimum calorie content of 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein, for all children studying in classes I-V in : (i) Government, Local Body and Government - aided schools, and (ii) Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative & Innovative Education Centres. The programme is being implemented in a decentralised manner with the involvement of local level agencies such as Village Panchayats, Village Education Committees, School Management Committees, Parent Teacher Association etc. For effective monitoring of the programme, constitution of Steering - cum - Monitoring Committees at National, State, District & Block level has been envisaged. This
programme, covering nearly 12 Crore children, has emerged as the world's largest school feeding programme (MHRD, 2005-06).

1.3.5 Other Innovative Programmes for Universalisation of Elementary Education

A National Council of Teacher Education (1993) was set up to revamp the teacher education programmes and to achieve planned and coordinated development of entire teacher education system particularly the primary teacher education throughout the country. The regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in the teacher education system is the responsibility of the NCTE.

To achieve the UEE by 2000 A.D. a National Elementary Education Mission (1995) has been setup. The aim of this mission is to mobilize all the resources - human, financial and institution and the partnership with the states, local bodies, teachers and other concerned. This mission ensures free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children up to 14 years of age by the turn of the country.

Various evaluation studies on Operation Blackboard (OB) and reviews of implementation of OB highlighted the need to provide suitable orientation to primary school teachers to ensure effective utilisation of teaching - learning materials supplied under the scheme. Consequently, 'Special Orientation Programme for Primary School Teachers (SOPT) was designed and implemented in 1993-94 to meet this requirement. Doordarshan and All India Radio have been involved in a big way during 1990s in imparting
One of the most comprehensive studies on issues related to the school curriculum and text books in India was conducted by the Yashpal Committee. The Ministry of Human Resource Development had appointed the National Advisory Committee chaired by Prof. Yashpal, in response to a debate in the Rajya Sabha on the issues of the 'load of the school bag'. It was meant to advise on how to 'reduce the burden on school students, while improving the quality of learning, including capability for life long self-learning and skill formation'. The committee was critical of the overarching trend in curriculum and text book preparation to package as much information as possible, in a 'highly compressed and abstruse manner'. It noted that:

"Barring exceptions, our text books appear to have been written primarily to convey information or 'facts' rather than to make children think and explore" and "the language used in text books thus deepens the sense of 'burden' attached to all school related knowledge" (Learning without burden, 1993), (NCERT, 2000).

Inspite of the recommendation of NPE, 1986 to identify competencies and values to be nurtured at different stages and report on 'Learning Without Burden', school education came to be driven more and more by high-stake examinations based on information-loaded text books. Despite the review of the curriculum Framework in 2000, the vexed issues of curriculum load and the tyranny of examinations remained unresolved. Again,

Seeking guidance from Constitutional vision of India, report on 'Learning Without Burden' and constitutional amendment to elementary education, a fundamental right of every child etc., National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005) proposes five guiding principles for curriculum development:

(i) connecting knowledge to life outside the school;
(ii) ensuring that learning shifts away from rote methods;
(iii) enriching the curriculum so that it goes beyond textbooks;
(iv) making examinations more flexible and integrating them with classroom life; and
(v) nurturing an overriding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic policy of country.

1.4 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan of India, launched in 2000, is an outcome of Dakar Framework with an aim to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in 6-14 age group by 2010 as against in Dakar Framework. It is a holistic and convergent program with a time-bound integrated approach, in partnership of Central and State governments to achieve the goal of UEE. The assistance under the programme of SSA was on a 85:15 sharing arrangement during the Ninth Plan and on a 75:25 sharing arrangement during the Tenth Plan, and 50:50 thereafter between the central
government and the state government. The programme became particularly necessary because many states were not covered by any of the externally funded programmes such as DPEP, BEP, Lok Jumbish etc. thereby depriving them of the benefits The programme aims to provide elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010 and is an effort to improve the performance of the school system and provide community - owned quality elementary education in the mission mode. It also envisages bridging of gender and social disparities at the elementary level. SSA has a special focus on the educational needs of girls, SCs and STs and other children in difficult circumstances. A National Mission for SSA was also constituted in 2000 with Prime Minister as the Chairperson and the Minister for Human Resource Development as Vice - Chairperson and operationalised in December 2004.

1.4.1 Objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (MHRD 2002)

(1) All children to be in schools, Education Guarantee Scheme centres, alternate schools, back-to-school camps by 2003.

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

(3) All children to complete eight years of schooling by 2010.

(4) Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.

(5) Bridge all gender and social disparities at the primary stage by 2007 and at the upper primary level by 2010.

(6) Universal retention by 2010.
1.4.2 Basic Features of SSA

Basic features of the SSA (NCERT, 2004) include:

1. Institutional reforms in Centre and States to improve efficiency and delivery system.

2. Sustainable financing—Long term sharing between Centre and States being 85:15 in the IXth plan, 75:25 in the Xth plan and 50:50 thereafter.

3. Community ownership of school based interventions through effective decentralisation and involvement of Village Education Committees (VECs), Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), other local bodies, women's groups etc.

4. Institutional capacity building for improvement in quality of elementary education with NCERT, NIEPA, NCTE, SCERT, SIEMAT and DIET to have a major role.

5. Community based monitoring with complete transparency in all aspects of implementation.

6. Community based and down-top approach to planning with habitation as a unit for planning.

7. A mainstreaming gender approach focusing on girl's education with special component for girls in educationally backward blocks.
(8) Focus on education participation of children from the SC/ST and religious and linguistic minorities.

(9) Thrust on quality and making education relevant, with emphasis on providing education for life.

(10) Recognition of critical role of teachers and focus on human resource development needs of teachers.

(11) Preparation of District Elementary Education Plans (DEEP) reflecting all governmental and non-governmental investments.

1.5 The Quality of Primary Education

The term 'quality' generally refers to high degree of goodness, worth or excellence in an object or system. (NCERT, 2004, P.17) In the social context, it is represented rather an abstract idea, which needs to be exemplified through certain indicators. Quality is an attribute of any object, structure or system that is relative in nature and can not be measured in isolation. The quality is not a totally new concept in India. During Victorian Era (1854-1902) in British period, the official attempts did score a number of minor success in qualitative aspect of primary education in the form of construction of school buildings, improvement in training and qualification of teachers, admission of girls and pupil of low - castes, use of printed books, adoption of new methods of teaching and curriculum, yet, the principal objectives of educational policy had been expansion rather than improvement. But this outlook was entirely changed in the period 1902-21, the initiative in the
matter having taken by Lord Curzon. Thus Curzon was the person, who started a drive for qualitative reform. Therefore official view, as represented by Lord Curzon, stood for quality rather than quantity (Nurullah and Naik, 1974, p. 262).

It is in this context, National Policy on Education - 1986 of India, emphasized that the objective should not only to provide access to schooling but also to ensure success: success for all children in satisfying their basic learning needs irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, language or geographical location.

On the global level, although the right to education has been reaffirmed on many occasions since the Universal Declaration of Human Right was proclaimed in 1948, many international instruments are silent about the qualitative dimension of education. Most recently, the United Nation's Millenium Declaration, adopted in 2000, states that all children will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015 but makes no specific reference to its quality. However, the World Declaration on Education for All (1990) and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) - the two most recent United Nations conference declarations focusing on education recognize quality as a prime condition for achieving Education for All.

The Dakar Framework for Action gave new impetus to the question of quality in primary education, based on the consensus that expanding access to education will have a beneficial impact on individuals and on society only if the education is of good quality (Shukla, 2004, p. 6).
Quality is a multi-facet concepts. It encompasses how learning is organised and managed, what the content of learning is, what level of learning is achieved, what it leads to in terms of outcomes, and what goes on in the learning environment. The Dakar Framework for Action affirms that quality is at the heart of education and states: "Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills."

Despite a growing consensus about the importance of quality, there is much less agreement on what the concept means in practice. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report (2005), 'Education for All - The Quality Imperative', two principles, however, characterize most attempts to define the quality of education. The first, which identifies learner's cognitive development as the major explicit objective of all education system, sees the success with which the latter achieve this as one indicator of their quality. The second emphasizes the role of education in promoting commonly shared values, and creative and emotional development - objectives whose achievement is much more difficult to assess. Common ground is also found in the broadly shared objectives that tend to underpin debates about quality: respect for individual right, improved equity of access and of learning outcomes and increased relevance. These principles have been integrated into the aims of education setout in the convention on Rights of Child (1990), which underpins the current positions on quality held by UNESCO and UNICEF.
The convention on Right of the Child (1990), in Article 29, expresses strong and detailed commitments about the aims of education, which have implications for its content and quality (EFA-GMR, 2005):

(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

UNESCO (1996) in the report 'Learning: The Treasure Within' of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, chaired by Jacques Delors advocates for a life long education based on four pillars:
(i) *Learning to know* acknowledges that learners build their own knowledge daily, combining indigenous and 'external' elements;

(ii) *Learning to do* focuses on the practical application of what is learned;

(iii) *Learning to live together* addresses the critical skills for a life free from discrimination, where all have equal opportunity to develop themselves, their families and their communities;

(iv) *Learning to be* emphasizes the skills needed for individuals to develop their full potential. This conceptualization of education provided an integrated and comprehensive view of learning and, therefore, of what constitutes education quality. UNESCO promotes access to good quality education as a human right and supports a right based approach to all educational activities (Pigozzi, 2004).

UNICEF strongly emphasizes what might be called desirable dimensions of quality, as identified in Dakar Framework. It's paper Defining Quality in Education recognizes five dimensions of quality: learners, environments, content, processes and outcomes, founded on 'the rights of the whole child, and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation'. The dimensions of education quality identified by UNESCO

Although opinions about quality in education are by no means unified, at the level of international debate and action three principles tend to be broadly shared. They can be summarised as (i) the need for more relevance; (ii) for greater equity of access and outcome; and (iii) for proper observance of individual rights. In much current international thinking, these principles guide and inform educational content and processes and represent more general social goals to which education itself should contribute. As with all aspects of development, a balance should be struck between ensuring the relevance of education to the social-cultural realities of learners, to their aspirations, and to the well-being of the nation.

The EFA-GMR of UNESCO(2005), on the basis of objectives of cognitive development and nurturing particular sets of values, attitudes and skills that are important aims to all education systems and reviewing of the main elements of education systems and how they interact provides a useful map for efforts to understand, monitor and improve quality. This framework takes into account five major factors affecting quality. It is a comprehensive vision, encompassing issues of access, process and outcomes.
Quality is reflected by a range of indicators, including government spending on education, pupil/teacher ratio, teacher qualifications, instruction time, pedagogy, test scores and length of time pupils spend in the schools. The major factors that influence the quality of elementary education, according to NCERT (2004) are as follows:
Let us see how these factors affect the quality of elementary education (NCERT, 2004).

1.5.1 Basic Infrastructure Facilities

Availability of basic minimum infrastructural facilities are a prerequisite condition for child's leaning. Some of the basic physical facilities, necessary in school may be: classrooms, toilets, drinking water, playground, usable blackboard, seating facilities for children, etc. These facilities play in important role in improving teaching-learning environment and consequently overall school quality.

1.5.2 Learning Environment

Proper learning environment is a prerequisite for quality education. The learning environment available to a child, both in school and outside school has direct as well as indirect influence on her/his learning.
Broadly, learning environment consists of aspects related to physical, social, and educational environment of the children and the nature of support services. An important component of the learning climate is the expectation that the school headmaster and teachers have of the children and their performance. Research has indicated that performance of students is higher in schools where they are expected to have higher performance levels. Some major aspects and indicators of learning environment are:

- **Basic infrastructure-classrooms and teaching equipment**
- **Layout, ventilation and sunlight**
- **Seating and classroom setting**

- **Teacher-Head teacher relationship**

- **Teacher-pupil relationship**

- **Child-Child relationship**

- **Home environment**

- **Preschool facilities**

- **Educational facilities**

- **Trained and committed teachers**

- **Learning materials**

- **Health check up**

- **Incentives (uniform, scholarship)**

- **Mid-day meals**
1.5.3 Teacher and Teacher Preparation

School provides the setting where teachers and students interact, curriculum is transacted and learning process takes place. It is also recognised that teachers influence the learning of students not only through classroom teaching (content and pedagogy) but also through their own personality, behaviour, attitude, experience etc. A teacher’s knowledge of the subject and the mastery over pedagogical skills has a strong and positive effect on students' learning.

1.5.4 Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Material (TLM)

Normally in schools, textbooks are the only available tool for transacting the curriculum. Broadly speaking, teaching-learning material (TLM) includes textbooks, supplementary reading material, teaching-learning aids, teachers' guides, workbooks, educational kits etc. A teacher should make a judicious use of all these materials to make transactional process effective.

1.5.5 Teaching Learning Processes

Teaching-learning is a process that is central for effective teaching-learning wherein learners and teachers get the opportunities for interaction, thereby facilitating and enhancing mutual learning. Ideally, in the normal course of the teaching-learning process, schools are expected to transact the same set of curriculum inputs. But in reality, the teaching-learning situations are not homogeneous. Multigrade setting, high pupil teacher ratio (PTR), large sized classrooms, different learning levels of the learners
(multilevel situations), rural-urban setting, varied transactional strategies, etc make the teaching-learning more complex and heterogeneous.

1.5.6 Teaching-Learning-Time

Teaching-learning time generally refers to the actual time available for transacting the curriculum in a stipulated period. Transaction of curriculum at any stage of education is planned keeping in view the time available for teaching-learning. In reality, however, teaching-learning time is not sufficient for completing the prescribed curriculum. Although, it has been recommended that there should be 220 days of teaching, in actual reality the teachers often get 150 to 180 days only.

1.5.7 Monitoring, Supervision and Evaluation

Regular evaluation, monitoring and supervision are important for ensuring that school functions regularly and teachers perform the ensuring that school functions regularly and teachers perform the assigned functions. They, therefore, contribute significantly to the quality of education. Learner's evaluation should be continuous and an integral component of teaching-learning as it gives the feedback about the learners to the teacher in relation to which she/he can modify his/her teaching style. In order to provide quality education at the school level, there should be a systematic, continuous and comprehensive evaluation of learners.

1.5.8 Community Support

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan underlines the significance of community participation and support for achieving the goal of UEE. The
involvement of community should be ensured in every aspect from micro planning to monitoring and supervision. There would be an effective involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions, School Management Committees, Village and Urban slum level Education Committees, Parents-Teachers Associations, Mother-Teacher Associations, Tribal Autonomous Councils and on the grassroot level structures.

1.6 Achievement of Students as a Measure of Quality

In order to talk seriously about educational quality, it is important to be able to define it and to measure it. The quality of education needs to be assessed in the context of its agreed objectives. They are most easily expressed in terms of academic achievement (sometimes as test grades, but more usually and popularly in terms of examination performance), though ways of assessing creative and emotional development as well as changes in values, attitudes and behaviour have also been devised.

In 1990s, India witnessed a high level of importance and attention given to the assessment of learner achievement. The first prompting for this came from the special emphasis given to learner achievement in the NPE-1986. However, the main thrust for activity in this regard came from the specification of minimum level of learning at the national level through an expert body set up by the Government of India (Govinda, 2002). Following this, most of the state government with the help of NCERT and SCERTs not only revised their curriculum and textbooks but also initiated programmes for measuring learner achievement on a regular basis. A second set of efforts in
this direction emerged with the launching of EFA projects which carried out baseline studies to assess the achievement of learner in various classes of primary school.

Therefore, it is clear that, quality of school education has to be understood in terms of the extent to which children learn what they are supposed to be taught in the school. Thus, student learning outcomes constitute the primary measure for determining the quality of school education. Learning outcomes should actually refer to development of children in cognitive as well as non-cognitive domains. Therefore, in order to fully evaluate the outcomes of primary schooling one should be able to devise measures to assess the progress made by the learners in all aspects of their development by using a variety of evaluation tools and techniques. While such a comprehensive assessment should be carried out in the schools internally, it would not be practical to embark on such evaluation in a research study with a limited time span, such as the present one. The focus of assessment in the present study has been only on certain selected areas of cognitive development. Therefore, achievement scores obtained by learners on the achievement test administered under this study should be taken only as indicator of the level of performance of the various school, and not as measure of total learning acquired by the students through the various experiences provided at school.
1.7 Importance of the Study

Primary education is the most crucial stage of human life. It is the milestone to build up the beautiful building of total education process, and over all development of personality of human being depends on primary education.

During last two decades entire world has focused its concern on universalisation of elementary education through different programme. Recently, the world accepted the Millennium Declaration and Dakar Framework of action in 2000, to meet the goals upto 2015. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in our country is an outcome of the Dakar Framework with an aim to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in 6-14 age group by 2010 as against 2015 in Dakar Framework. The ground realities of achievement of objectives of SSA are still far from satisfactory. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007 has put India in Category III of Education for All Development index. This group includes twenty-nine countries which are very far from meeting the goals by the target date i.e., 2015.

In the present scenario, though the enrolment target is likely to be achieved during the stipulated period, the state of quality education and retention of students is still far from satisfactory level. Also, the government schools are facing a lot of threat from the private schools, mainly due to the lack of facilities and poor quality of education. In such a situation, this is a great challenge before all of us from grassroots to top level. Due to these reasons and my personal experience as a primary teacher, I planned to
undertake a study to investigate the quality of primary education of Varanasi district.

1.8 The Problem
1.8.1 Statement of the Problem

The problem of the present research work has been specified in the following words:

"A study of the Quality of Primary Schools of Varanasi District and Achievement of Students of these schools."

1.8.2 Operational Definition of Terms

Operational definition of key words of the statement of the problem helps in clear understanding as well as in problem distillation. It also helps in establishing the frame of reference with which study was approached. In the following lines only the key words, which have been used in a specific sense and meaning might be ambiguous to some readers, have been clarified. Other terms in this study carry their usual meaning as are prevalent in the educational and related fields.

(a) Quality Of Primary Schools

Quality of primary schools for the present study comprises of following factors:

(1) Physical Infrastructure of School

Status of following facilities have been considered in this work:

School Building, Cleanliness, Playground, Drinking water, Urinal, Blackboard, T-L Material, Seating arrangement for students etc.
(2) School Management

The following activities pertaining to school management have been considered for the purpose of present research work:

Discipline, Punctuality, Morning assembly, Co-curricular activities.

(3) Teaching - Learning Process

The following aspects of Teaching Learning Process have been considered during the present work:

- Availability of Teacher.
- Qualification and Experience of Teacher.
- Content, communication, training
- Pupil participation and Interaction.
- Use of TLM/Reference books

(b) Primary Schools Of Varanasi District

Primary schools of Varanasi District refers to government primary schools of rural area of Varanasi district run by Basic Shiksha Parishad, Uttar Pradesh.

(c) Achievement of Students

Achievement of students refers to scores obtained (on the achievement test) by students of class IV of primary schools of Varanasi
district in academic session 2005-2006 on the achievement test constructed and administered by researcher.

1.8.3 Delimiting the Problem

Due to limitation of time, money and several administrative factors, the present study has been delimited as under:

(1) The study was confined only to primary schools of rural area of Varanasi district run by Basic Shiksha Parishad, Uttar Pradesh.

(2) The study was limited to students of class IV of the academic session 2005-2006.

(3) The study was further limited to physical as well as human resources observed during the academic sessions 2005-2006 and 2006-2007.

(4) Assessment of the quality of primary schools has been done in the light of indicators of quality such as physical resources, academic resources, human resources, teaching - learning processes and achievement of students.

(5) Due to scarcity of time, views of parents and grampradhans could not be taken in this investigation.
1.9 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the present investigation is to see the quality of primary schools of Varanasi district based on the availability of physical infrastructure, teaching-learning process and human resources and find out the relationship of quality of schools with the achievement of students of these schools. The main objectives of the present investigation were:

1. To develop a comprehensive achievement test in Hindi / Mathematics / Social Studies / Science and languages (Sanskrit & English) for class IV of primary schools.

2. To develop various tools for assessment of quality of Primary schools such as School Management Questionnaire, Teaching-Learning Process Observation Schedule, Physical Infrastructure Checklist, Human-Resource Performance and Student Interview Schedule.

3. To assess the quality of Primary schools on the basis of physical infrastructure, management, school-community relationship, teachers, teaching - learning process.

4. To classify the schools on the basis of their overall quality.

5. To compare the achievement of students studying in various schools of Varanasi district.
(6) To compare the achievement of students studying in various blocks of Varanasi district.

(7) To compare the achievement of students studying in good, average and poor quality schools of Varanasi district.

(8) To compare the achievement of female students studying in good, average and poor quality schools of Varanasi district.

(9) To compare the achievement of male students studying in good, average and poor quality schools of Varanasi district.

1.10 Hypothesis Tested

Objectives 1 and 2 were attained during the development of tools for the purpose of data collection in this study. Objectives 3 and 4 were realised by analysing the data collected using various tools and evolving a criterion to assess the overall quality of the schools. The rest of the objectives i.e. 5 to 9 were realised by testing the following null hypotheses.

\[ H_1 : \text{The mean value of total achievement scores obtained by students of various schools does not differ significantly.} \]

\[ H_2 : \text{The mean value of total achievement scores obtained by students of various blocks does not differ significantly.} \]
H₃: There is no significant difference between mean total achievement of scores of students studying in good, average and poor quality schools.

H₄: There is no significant difference between mean total achievement of scores of female students studying in good, average and poor quality schools.

H₅: There is no significant difference between mean total achievement of scores of male students studying in good, average and poor quality schools.

1.11 Limitations of the Research

Limitations are those conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may place restrictions on the conclusions of the study and their application to other situations.

(1) The research study can be organised on country/state/division level. But due to lack of man power, money, time and administrative ground etc. could not be prepared at country, state and division level. So the report has been prepared on district level only. Though this report has been prepared so sincerely and correctly that it may serve as an yardsticks for such larger scale.

(2) While I was on the stage of data collection, I am not fully justified about the real responses given by the school
staffs because they were interested to present themselves in positive way and hiding negative aspects.

(3) I have only presented the ex-post-facto conditions of the schools, which were coming since long, regarding the socio-economic conditions and family background etc. Such variables are not manipulable because their effects on the quality of primary school children have already occurred.