CHAPTER V

SUMMARY - MAIN FINDINGS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS
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In Chapter V let us now summarise the main findings and policy implications of our study. Thus, this chapter has two parts. In part I a summary of main findings of the present study are stated; and in part II an attempt is made to briefly discuss the major policy implications of the study.

PART I: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

1. The continuation and persistence of poverty and inadequate and poor development of school education system are the main causes for the problems of sizeable school dropouts, poor attendance and a low retention rates in schools in many developing countries including India. This association is studied in the present study in a backward district (Hassan) of a fairly progressive Indian state viz., Karnataka. The field data and information as well as secondary data for nearly half a century on poverty and growth rate of school enrollment and retention show that higher and more widespread the poverty level is lower is the school enrollment and lower is also the school attendance and retention levels in higher school grades (standards/classes).

2. Based on the statement of problem (summary proposition 1) and the detailed literature survey a good number of research gaps are identified in general and with reference to India and her constituent State viz., Karnataka. Some of the major research gaps identified include: (a) the greater is the lack of economic and physical access to schools, smaller is the school enrollment at primary education and still lower / smaller is the attendance and retention levels in higher grades of schooling ; (b) The inadequately developed and ill - equipped schools do not attract the parents and children towards the schools and also do not motivate them to pursue their education atleast upto X standard; (c) the number of school dropouts and never attended children is large among low caste low
income, small land holdings families; (d) the girls school enrollment, attendance and retention rates are associated with gender bias, mothers education level and household income level; (e) in Indian context, the socio-cultural factors like caste status, matriarchal status, residential location, family size also influence parents decisions to send their female children to the schools; (f) the poverty and bonded labour systems if perpetuative, become intergenerational in character, which make illiteracy / low-literacy an important component of the poverty burden; so illiteracy becomes intergenerational in nature producing a set of disabilities which deprive the illiterate poor even basic or primary goods; (g) the spatial disparities in education infrastructure produces different degrees of the burden of school dropouts and never attended children; and (h) the government of India and almost all Indian states have been implementing a set of policy initiatives which enhance the quality of schools and increasingly attract children. Their impact evaluation is not attempted. These research gaps are the stated objectives investigated in the present study. (Chapter I).

3. Child labour, it appears, is not the mechanism which keeps the children out of school. The children of many other poor families do work in the household and on the farm and sometimes even as agricultural labourers, but only so after school hours or during the holidays. Some of them have high hopes for the future. Education is perceived as an instrument of Social Mobility. The higher castes want their children to have modern education so that they may equip themselves to face the changing conditions of the modern world and acquire modern urban skills to help their parents in maintaining their privileged status and position. But there is also the fear that lower caste children may use their education to break away from tradition and may thus bring about a disintegration of the traditional social organization (Chapter - II).

4. School attendance by children from the poorer classes has been disabled by the existing power structure leading to exclusion from education. The gradual shift in the power balance has brought the school within reach of the children of poor house holds as well. Gender and class continue to affect attendance but as a
norm it is needed with very few exceptions, all the boys are attending school. Attendance among the girls of the poorest families is mixed. Around one-third of them were not attending school, but non-attendance was mainly in the age group of 10 years onwards. Expenses involved in education as an explanation for keeping children out of school are more often used for girls than for boys. The usually assumed underlying reason is that expenses should lead to returns. The returns of educational investment in a daughter would be low since she will get married and will remain associated with the parents and, if though education they land in a better job, will be of benefit later. (Chapter - II)

5. The enrolment ratio was very poor among both boys and girls in the fifties. By 1990’s the enrollment rate improved at the elementary level while at the secondary and tertiary levels it remained low. The orientation should naturally be towards improving the enrollment and retention for achieving better results in educational sector. The girls enrolment, especially belonging to SC/ST groups in rural India needs to be improved considerably. The gender disparity that persists in enrolment is wide which needs to be bridged. The enrolment ratio of children in the age group of 6-11 years has (primary schools) increased from 43 percent in 1950-51 to 90 percent in the early 1980’s and increased further to a little over 95 percent in the year 2000-01. Similarly about 13 percent of the total children in the age group of 11-14 years were enrolled in schools during 1950-51 and their proportion has gone up to over 58 percent in 2000-01. However, the proportion of female children in the school (both 6-11 and 11-14 years age groups) was lower when compared with male children. The reliability of enrolment figures have been questioned often, especially because primary education is not compulsory for children and it is well known that not all enrolled children attend school. Lack of up-to-date and accurate data makes it difficult to assess actual school retention rates (Chapter II).

6. The paradox of rapid growth of population in the face of rising trend of enrolment can be explained in terms of high dropout rates - out of every 100 students enrolled in class I, only 40 reach class V and 23 reach class VIII. All these
dropouts add to the population of illiterates. The extent of school dropouts between 1960-61 to 1999-2000 at elementary and secondary levels is still high among boys and girls. Thus a significant part of educational investment has been getting wasted without proper utilization. From the figures it could be noticed that more than 50% of boys and girls in the secondary school level dropout while at the primary level it is around 42% for girls and 38% for boys in 1999-2000. For the prevailing dropout rate several social, economic geographic and other factors are responsible. Attainment of early puberty, non availability of school facility in close proximities, early marriage and parental apathy push girls out of school. The percentage of girls leaving schools mid way is higher than those of girls leaving schools mid way is higher than those of boys in all the cases. The high dropout rates at the elementary stage indicate that the system is too weak to retain the children in schools even at the first stage of learning. There are several reasons for this. An analysis by B.S.Minhas of the data on literacy collected by the 42nd round of the National Sample survey (1986-87) showed that nearly 30 percent of those who have 'never enrolled' in schools reported that they were "not interested". It has been argued that secondary education in India still remains "the weakest link" in the system. The All India dropout rates are alarming, around 70 percent children at the secondary stage dropout before completing class X and the share of girls is even higher, nearly 74 percent. Secondary education in India is mainly a responsibility of the state governments. (Chapter - II).

7. A review of expenditure on education in the pre-reform and post-reform period reveals that;

i. Instead of educational expenditure moving towards the target of 6 percent of GDP, in the post reform period (1991-97), it had declined to 3.62 percent and marginally improved to 4.0 percent in 2001-02,

ii. Per pupil expenditure at all levels more especially at the elementary education level, has shown serious deterioration in the average annual growth rates. These are unhealthy trends, more especially in view of the fact that quite a significant proportion of the children belonging to the middle, upper middle and affluent
sections are going in for enrolment in public schools, since that state is not required to make any expenditure for their education at the elementary level, it could divert the amount thus saved in providing elementary education to the disadvantaged sections of the population to improve facilities in state run schools. (Chapter - II).

8. School retention is an indicator albeit imperfect indicator of the quality of schooling. It is possible that in the rush to expand access to schooling policy makers might compromise the quality of schooling would likely show up in lower rates of student retention and primary school completion. Obviously 12 year olds who never attended school are excluded from the calculation of the primary completion rate. A child is considered to have completed primary school if he/she reported being in middle school at the time of the survey and if he/she was not reported as never having attend school. Nationally, in 1999-2000 the primary completion rate, as calculated above was 61.4% in 1999-2000 only slightly up from 58.7% in 1993-94. (Chapter -II).

9. The Pupil - teacher ratio is often considered an indicator of school quality, one. Might expect this ratio to be associated with primary completion rates. However, the NSS 55th round data do now show any significant association between the two variables. While the primary completion rate for 12 year olds falls as the number of pupils per teacher goes from below 40 to between 41 and 50. The lack of association may reflect other factors at work, such as teacher absenteeism or the socio-economic background of students. (Chapter - II).

10. The high rates of teacher absentees is due to extensive involvement of teachers in politics. Kingdom and muzammil(2003) cite the case of Uttar Pradesh, where there has been significant penetration by teachers into state politics, in large part due to a constitutional provision for their reserved representation in the upper house of the state legislature. This has led to significant lobbying and union activity by the teachers and has earned them substantial salary gains and other monetary benefits from the state governments. The salary gains have crowded out public spending on other items of expenditure, such as instructional materials and supplies.
and scholarships. In addition the increased participation of teachers in regional and local politics has diverted them from their teaching responsibilities, and may in part be the reason for the high rate of absenteeism. Of course, the problem of teachers, it reflects a general lack of accountability of teachers and schools - indeed, the entire educational system - to students and the community. (Chapter II).

11. The family's external environment also influences whether and how much a child works, while we have already discussed the importance of the return to work for child labour, the return to other uses of the child's time, especially schooling, and also play a role in the child labour decision. Poverty often coexists with inadequate local institutions such as schools. When the alternatives to working are expensive or of poor quality, work may be the best use of a child's time although child labour might be compatible with school attendance, this does not preclude the family's schooling environment from influencing child labour. (Chapter - III).

12. The girl child in Karnataka is a matter of concern. An adverse sex ratio high malnutrition and maternal mortality rates, poor school enrollment levels with low value work parental preference for the male child and a belief that girls are more a liability than an assets are found responsible for neglect of the girl child education. This belief has resulted in the perpetuation of socio-cultural practices which affect the entire life cycles of girls and women. The sex ratio in the state has been declining from 1963 in 1981, higher than the 1961 and 1971 rates, it declined to 960 in 1991. Even states such as Andhra Pradesh (972), Orissa (971) and Tamil Nadu (974) have higher sex ratio's than Karnataka. The NFHS reports that preference for sons is fairly strong in Karnataka', among women who want another child, 44 percent have indicated that they would prefer a son while only 16 percent have said they would prefer a daughter, preference for sons is stronger in rural areas (48%) than urban areas (34%) (Chapter - III).

13. Karnataka has made progress in reducing gender disparities in education. However, the performance across districts is mixed. The Government efforts to reduce dropouts and attract students to schools has paid some dividends. Gender disparity in schooling has declined to 0.91 percent. Number of children out of
school has declined from 10.53 lakh in 2001 to 4.05 lakh in 2003. As per the state educational census, about 7.38 percent of 90.22 lakh children in the age group 6-14 are out of school. Still much remains to be done with reference to the social and regional dimension of the problem. The corresponding percentages of children out-of-school for the SC & ST population groups are 10.5 and 12.8 respectively. The number of children out of school is the highest in the seven north eastern districts of the Karnataka State. The percentage out of school varies from 7.61 percent (Raichur), 8.67 percent (Gulbarga) to 13.5 percent (Yadgir) and 10.34 percent (Bijapur). Nearly half (1.91 lakh) of the out of school children (4.05 lakh) belong to the North Eastern districts. The north Eastern parts still lag behind the rest of the Karnataka State with reference to the improvement in schooling. The average literacy of the state is 55.78 percent as against the state average of 67 percent. Female literacy rates in blocks like Devadurga and Shahapur are about 27 percent only (chapter III).

14. Increase in the number of primary schools rapid growth in enrolment and a relatively healthy looking GER do not tell the entire story. Though large number of girls and boys between six and fourteen years are attending schools, an alarmingly high number of boys and girls are out-of-school in 1980-81, out of a child population of 81 lakhs in the 6-14 age group, 53 lakhs were in school. As many as 38 lakh children that in 48% of the children of that group, were out of school. The percentage of girls out of school was as high as 55% with Raichur having the dubious distinction of keeping 65% of its girls out of school. The position has improved significantly. In 1996-97, out of a total estimated child population of 94 lakhs in the 6-14 age group, 86 lakhs are in school. However, though the percentage of children out of school has dropped to less than 28% in 1996-97, in absolute number of the total number of these children continues to be as high as 26 lakhs. The percentage of girls out of school has dropped from 55% to 33% the percentage of boys out of school continues to be high in Raichur, which has 54% of its girls and 33% of its boys out of school. (Chapter -III)

15. Enrolment in primary schools has kept pace with expansion of the primary school
network, from 23 lakhs in 1959-60 enrolment at the primary level now exceeds 86 lakhs in 2004-05. Enrolment of boys and girls had increase from 38.23 and 31.53 lakhs in 1991-92 and to 44.47 and 41.53 lakh in 2004-05 respectively. But comparatively girls enrolment is low than the boys enrolment. (Chapter - III)

16. In keeping with growth in enrolments the dropout rate has fallen very sharply since 1980 both for boys and girls, especially in lower primary sections (classes I-IV). The dropout percentage in classes declined from 69% in 1950-51 to 44% in 1980-81, in 17% in 1993-94 and to 10.98% in 2003-04. The dropout rate for girls has also shown a dramatic decline from 73% in 1950-51 to 18% in 1993-94, 16% in 1997-98. The dropout rate has fallen very significantly since 1997-98 in upper-primary sections (V-VII). The dropout percentage in classes declined from 43.71% in 1997-98 to 17.52 in 2000-01 and 32.93 in 2002-03. It fell further to 12.91 percent in 2003-04. To dropout rate for girls has also shown a decline from 68% in 1986-87, to 46.28% in 1997-98 and 2.18% in 2004-05 at primary level (classes I-VII). (Chapter - III).

17. Expansion of the secondary school network has been even more impressive as compared to the expansion in primary education since 1980's in Karnataka State. There has been a more than fourfold increase in the number of high schools since 1968-69. Their number has gone up from 1830 in 1968-69 to 9051 in 2004-05. (Chapter III).

18. Enrolment in Classes VIII to X has also kept pace with growth in the number of institutions (high schools). It has shot up from 1.6 lakhs in 1960-61 to 21.67 lakhs in 2004-05. The enrolment of girls has moved much faster than that of boys. Only 37,000 girls were enrolled in high school's in 1960-61. This has gone up to 10.14 lakhs in 2004-05. Although the gap has considerably narrowed still, the enrolment level of girls is still much below that of boys. (Chapter - III).

19. Growth in the number of teachers in high schools has kept pace with increase in enrolment. The pupil teacher ratio has remained between 18:1 to 25:1 throughout the period except in 1990-91. It is now 23:1 in 1997-98, 22:1 in 2002-03. However, within districts there is need for some rationalization as there are some
very over crowded schools, while others have very poor strength. (Chapter - III).

20. The dropout rate has fallen sharply since 1992-93 in secondary schools (classes I to X). The dropout percentage in classes declined from 70.85% in 1992-93 to 67.78% in 1996-97, and to 58.65 % in 2001-2002. The figures shows that comparatively in the secondary schools dropout rates were high than the primary level (Classes I to V and V to VII). (Chapter - III).

21. The major occupation of the house hold also affects schooling patterns. Children from house holds predominantly engaged in non-agricultural activities have greater chances of attending school. The gender differential is also quite striking. Girls from cultivator households are less likely to attend school. However, as the size of cultivated land increases, the proportion of girls attending school increases. The schooling pattern of boys is not correlated with the size of land cultivated. (Chapter - III).

22. The social status of household in terms of caste is a major affecting factor in schooling pattern. While most children from upper - caste Hindu households particularly girls, attend school, a mid lower proportion of children from backward caste households attended school. Further, the work participation of children from upper - caste Hindu households is low. This can also perhaps be explained in terms of fewer perceived benefits of schooling and higher opportunity cost of the Childs time in the backward caste households (Chapter - III).

23. The improvements in quality of school education in many developing countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia have improved the student enrollment, attendance and retention rates in schools. This relationship between improvements in school quality and school enrolment and retention rate is found in Karnata State as well. This is particularly true since mid - 1980's in Karnata. The state has come to recognize the school dropouts, low attendance and low retention rates at higher levels of school education as problems in the way of achieving the goal of universalistic of elementary education since 1990's in Karnata. This is an important change in the state policy towards school education (Chapter - III).

24. In Hassan District, Arskere Taluk has the highest gross enrollment ratio of 116.47
in class 1 to 8th and Hassan has the lowest gross enrollment of 113.45 in 1 to 8th Class. The district GER average is 110.7. The district NER works out of 98.26. It is 93.27 incase of SC and 93.90 in case of ST children NER in case of SC and ST is less than district average. (Chapter - IV).

25. The overall participation of children in schooling is higher in the villages of the relatively better developed region; this could be due to better perceived benefits of schooling in this area. Conversely the work participation of children is higher in the villages of the backward region. In low income regions the burden of the costs of schooling and greater opportunity cost of the child's time may better participation of children in schooling the major occupation of the house holds predominantly engaged in non-agricultural activities have greater chances of attending school. The gender differential is also quite striking girls from cultivator households are less likely to attend school. However, as the size of cultivated land increases, the proportion of girls attending school increases. The schooling pattern of boys is not correlated with the size of land cultivated. (Chapter-IV)

26. The total boy girls Ratio regarding block - wise enrolment, the district average is 98.58%. Enrolment is the highest in Hasan Taluk and the Lowest in Arkalagud taluk. Regarding male and female enrolment Hassan Taluk has the highest enrolment and Alur Taluk has lowest enrolment. Regarding the enrolment of SC boys it is the highest in Alur Taluk and the lowest in Arkalagud. Regarding ST boys and girls Channayapatna taluk has the highest and Alur Taluk has the lowest enrolment. (Chapter - IV)

27. Arsikere Taluk has the highest retention rate with 99.86% in LPS and Alur has the highest retention rate and Channaraya patna has the lowest retention rate. In case of ST boys Belur taluk has the highest retention rate and Channarayapatna has the lowest retention rate. In case of SC girls Belur has the highest retention rate whereas Sakaleshpura has the lowest. In case of ST girls Belur taluk has the highest retention rate is 94.81 percent at elementary level. To increase the retention rate at Hassan taluk which has the lowest retention rate in the Hassan district. (Chapter - IV).
28. In Hassan District the 944 out of school children in the age group of 6-14. Out of 994 children, 804 are in the age group of 6 years and 190 children are in the age group of 7-14, 349 children are dropped out of school in the district. Bringing the total out of school to 1343. The out of school children were more in Arakalgud with 1.96 percent and Lower in Alur. In case of male children this is highest in Arakalgud taluk and lowest in Alur Taluk. (Chapter - IV).

29. The level of school dropout rate is high in LPS+HPS and HS Level respectively in select schools of the Arasikere taluk of the Hassan district. The school dropout rate show variation on annual basis between 1999-2004 perhaps indicating its link with crop success and / or failure in villages. Crop failures increase the incidence of poverty exerting more pressure on need for child labor in employment. Child earnings help the parents to buy the primary goods for life sustenance. The school dropout tendency is almost closely associated with poverty and not with the hierarchical caste status among Hindus. This is revealed from data on dropout rate across the various backward categories. Further two more trends of the dropout rate in Arasikere taluk may also be noted; and they are (a) the school dropout rate among all groups of rural poor is relatively higher at stage I and II (LPS and HPS) than stage III (High School); and (b) the gender disparity in school dropouts is declining rapidly (1999-2004). This shows that the girl child retention rate in schools from I to X standard is rapidly improving (Chapter IV).

30. The school enrollment ratio of boys and girls at stage I, II and III for the period 1998 - 2004 is high in Belur Taluk of the Hassan district. The gross enrollment of students in stage I (Class I-IV) and stage II (Class V - VII) is relatively higher in Belur taluk than in Arasikere taluk. In addition the girls enrollment in schools in Belur taluk is relatively higher than in Arasikere taluk. The gap in school enrollment among SC and ST children in stage I, II and III education is being reduced. In other words, the enrollment and retention ST children is increasing. The incentives impact on Universalization of Elementary Education seems to be more successful in Belur taluk than in Arasikere taluk (Chapter IV).

31. The trends in dropout rate in primary, higher primary and high schools (select) in
Belur taluk during the period 1999-2004. It may be noted that school dropout rate in primary and higher primary schools is high among category I, IIB, III (a) and (b) and also SC and ST groups (Belur taluk). A similar trend, by and large, is seen in case of dropouts in high schools in Belur Taluk. The school dropout rate is relatively higher in SC group than ST group of children in stage III education (VIII -X standard). The school dropout children of both Belur and Arasikere taluks are employed in agriculture, plantation sector in rural areas; and also in the urban organized industrial and tertiary sectors (Bangalore). (Chapter IV).

32. It may be observed that by mid-1990's almost all single teachers LPS were converted into at least two teachers schools; and throughout 1990's the Karnataka Government has given priority for teachers recruitment. The minor variation found in the total number of teachers is due to transfers similar position prevails regarding the teachers recruitment and placement. But there are two problems regarding teachers recruitment viz., (a) the age seniority is given due weightage in teachers recruitment which is a source of obtaining outdated teachers. A good number of them due to unemployment of over 5 or 10 years had forgotten their knowledge of teachers training and motivation for teaching. This is one reason for teachers lack of commitment for their teaching work and increasing absenteeism. (b) There is a general tendency of decay in work ethics of the school teachers. The number of teachers who have indulged in sex scandals with fellow teachers, abuse of girl child, engaging money lending and conducting chit fund activities and participating in local politics is increasing. The teachers unions and their political representatives unfortunately are giving protection to such erring teachers. This problem is widespread in Hassan district (Chapter IV).

33. The teacher - pupil ratio has shown favourable improvement in case study areas (viz Belur, Arasikere) in both higher primary schools and high school 1:38 to 1:29 in primary and higher primary schools of Arasikere taluk. Further, the teacher pupil - ratio is slight by un favorably changed in Belur taluk in case of high schools. It had increased from 1:19 or 1:16 to 1:24 infact the teacher - pupil ratio in high schools of Belur taluk has shown variations during 1998 - 2004. In
case of Arasikere taluk, the teacher - pupil ratio in high schools has shown a gradual decrease from 1:27 or 1:26 to 1:18 during 1998-2004. The teacher pupil ratio is, on an average, favorable to create an effective teaching and learning environment in the case study regions (Chapter - IV).

34. To realize the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), the Government of Karnataka has introduced a special census of school dropout and never - attended children during 2001-2002. Owing to this scheme the children census was conducted in each village of the Karnataka and problem children were identified and persuaded to return to the schools. The never enrolled children were in fairly good number (15 to 20) in sample villages and they belong to very backward (SC & ST) and backward (Category I.IIA, I.IIB) groups. This is an important and effective policy initiative to persuade the parents and children of the poor families to seek UEE. (Chapter IV).

35. According to teachers perceptions the causes for dropouts and never attended children is acute poverty. Parental illiteracy and ignorance, low motivation and low performance syndrome of the children lack of commitment and willingness to sacrifice for the cause of children education by the parents, parents migration and arrogance and poor student performance in the examinations. In Karnataka up to 7th standard all students are promoted to the next higher standard is in vogue; still a good number of children fail in V and VII and X Standard Public Examinations. These children ultimately become school dropouts and child labour (Chapter - IV).

36. The girls also discontinue school education after attaining puberty and they again belong to the poor families with a high level of conservative outlook. Almost all school dropout girls work either on their own family farms/ for wages in other farms within the villages or take care of younger brothers and sisters in the family (Chapter - IV).

In India the funds allocation to primary education increased at the cost of secondary education in the first year after the introduction of reforms in 1991. Later on, the rise in
allocation to primary education was at the cost of tertiary education. The allocation to secondary and adult education remained more or less the same after the second year of the reforms. This is shifting the right direction with more emphasis on primary education and reduced priority to tertiary education.

Despite the fact that the government initiated a number of schemes such as the Universalization of Elementary Education, Non formal education, Operation Black Board (1986), national Adult Education Programme (1978), National Literacy Mission (1988), Jana Shiskha Nilayam (1988). Shiksha Karmi, Lokbishi etc, progress in literacy has been slow in the past. The literacy rate, however, rose by 19.5% during the decade 1981-91 according to the census of India estimates. Also there seems to be considerable scope in improving the allocation management and monitoring of the programmes. Nevertheless, the literacy level has gone up by nearly 15% in 1996 over 1991.

The primary school enrolment rates have shown increase of 6.7% during 1991-96. This has resulted partially in improving the literacy rates in India. Further, the women literacy has improved by 10% after 1991; whereas the gender disparity in literacy had declined by 16% during 1981-91. During 1991-2001 there is considerable decline in the school drop outs and never attended children in India. Nearly 95% of the ever enrolled in the group of 6=14 are currently studying in Indian schools.

The basic thrust of the reform process in the educational system should be to link structural adjustment in the industry and the skills needs of the labour market conditions to match the speed of transformation in the economic system. The analysis leading to the present strategy in the educational sector remains heavily influenced by supply considerations and little allowance is given to demand for education. It is recognised here that demand rather than supply per se is the primary bottleneck in raising the educational levels of the individuals. At present the state is financing the educational infrastructure. In addition the state is also implementing some welfare schemes to increase demand for education. But they are unable to do the trick. The demand for school education is not increasing. This is because the expected
returns to primary and higher primary education is low and uncertain since there is sizeable unemployment among illiterate, semi-literate labour in India. So the supply factors alone will not help the state to relaize its goal to UEE. A study by Pradhan K. Basant and R K. Roy (2003) based on house hold surveys shows lack of demand as the major reason for poor educational outcomes in India.

The ongoing marketization process in India and her trade liberalization measures gradually shall create demands for skills. This would result in more demand for education and raise the future payoffs of the educated and skilled labour force. Based on this possibility, Pradan K Basant and P.K. Roy (2003:212) have suggested that "Public expenditure in India should first address the issue of enhancing both the quality and quantity of basic education in rural and urban India. Second by orienting the education system to respond to the increased demands for skills as a fall out of the macro economic adjustment and trade liberalization".

In the post reforms period (1992-2005) the Government of India has shown keen interest in tackling the problem of child labour. As per 2001 census there were 1.25 crore working children in the age group of 5-14 as against a total child population of 25.2 crores. The Union Government of India has banned the employment of children below 14 years in hazardous occupations and started regulating the employment of child labour in other non-hazardous occupations. At present the Government of India has been implementing two welfare schemes for child labour viz; National Child Labour Scheme (NCLP) and Grant-in-Aid to voluntary organizations that are working in the field of rehabilitating child labour. During the ongoing 10th Five year plan period 100 NCPs are in vogue benefiting 2.11 lakh working children. The Union Government intends to expand this coverage by establishing 150 more NCLP’s during 2004-07.

In July 2003, Government of India approved a new scheme viz, National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) as an amendment to the existing scheme of Sarva Shiskha Abhiyan (SSA) for providing additional support for education of underprivileged/disadvantaged girls at the elementary level. The scheme is implemented in
Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB's) where the level of female literacy is below, and the gender gap is above the national average in blocks of Districts which are not covered under EBB's but have atleast 5% SC/ST female literacy is below 10%, and also in select urban slums.

An additional sum of Rs 1064.80 crore was provided under Tenth plan to implement a new educational scheme for girls viz Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV). Accordingly 750 residential schools for girls were set up during 2004-05 at elementary level. This is a measure of social justice to usher in gender justice in girls education.

Further the National Literacy Mission (NLM) launched by May 5, 1988 as a technology mission to impart functional literacy to non-literates and modified from time to time, aims at attaining a literacy of 75% by 2007. The total literacy campaign (TLC) has been the principal strategy of NLM for eradication of illiteracy. These campaigns are area specific, time bound, volunteer-based, cost effective and outcome-oriented and are implemented by Zilla Saksharata Samithies (District Level Literacy Societies).

The NLM accorded high priority for the promotion of female literacy. As a result, female literacy rate increased by 14.4 percentage points from 39.3 percent to 53.7 percent during 1991-2001 compared to an increase by 112.2 percentage points for males from 64.1 percent to 75.3 percent over the same period, and thereby reducing the male - female literacy gap from 24.8 percent in 1991 to 21.6 percent in 2001.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), launched in November 2000 as an umbrella scheme, continued to be implemented to support and build upon other primary and elementary education projects. The programme aims to guarantee five years of primary education for all children in the age group of 6-14 years by 2007 A.D. and 8 years of schooling by 2010 A.D. The SSA is, as explained already, implemented in partnership with the states. This programme intends to provide primary education for 192 million children in 11 lakh human settlements and 8.5 lakh existing primary and higher primary schools. This is a gigantic ambitious programme.
of school education, in which 33 lakh teachers are involved. The central government is providing required funds for SSA.

The secondary education sector prepares students in the age group of 14-18 years for entry into higher education and employment. The number of secondary and senior secondary schools increased from 7,416 in 1950-51 to 1,37,207 in 2002-03 with a student enrolment of 3.2 million. As is explained in Chapter II the school dropouts at secondary school level is relatively less than at the primary school level for India as a whole.

**PART - II POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) has many positive externalities which promote economic growth, social change and human choice and human opportunities. Kaushik Basu, James E. Foster and S. Subramaniam (2000: PP 35) have argued that literacy too is a public good and influences the behaviour of illiterate members of a household, by sharing the positive impact of anybody's literacy in the family. This analysis has convincingly argued that: "This could happen for reasons of conscious altruism, unwitting munificence, Osmosis, or socio-cultural dispositions arising from group affiliation. Literate members of the family could be expected to positively affect the literacy status of their respective cohorts. The unit of aggregation within which such external effects of literacy might be expected to be most salient is that of the household. Therefore, there could be many many instances where the literacy of the member could help the other to reap benefits (Kaushik Basu and et.al., 2000: P35-36) have further pointed out that: "In a general way, an illiterate person's ability to transform various kinds of informational inputs into what Amartya Sen (1985) has called functioning's is tied to the literacy status of the household to which he or she belongs. Indeed apart from the sorts of 'direct' effects… it s could also be true that

(a) The respect and consideration with which an illiterate is treated by society at large is an increasing function of the presence of literate members in his own household (b) the person's own sense of advantage and self respect is often mediated by the literacy status of the household to which the person belongs. In the broadest possible sense, the intra household
externality from literacy contributes to an expansion of each illiterate member's capability and welfare". (Ibid, PP36). Further, it is pointed out that: "The crucial role of female literacy in expanding the capability status of a household and, in particular, the superiority of female literacy over male literacy, is revealed, with reference to one specific dimension, in certain statistics relating to infant mortality among households classified by the educational standing of the mother and the father. In general the stronger positive externality of the mother's literacy over the father's literacy has been well established".

Therefore, India shall strive hard to achieve the goal of UEE at least in another 10 years (2015 A.D.) to reap certain major social dividends.

The parents have often expressed dissatisfaction about the quality of teaching and ill-treatment meted out to their children in government schools. The middle and rich class parents from even the rural areas send their children particularly boys to the urban residential schools. Whereas the majority of other parents demand necessary corrective measures to improve the quality of school education in public sector. A large number of parents have supported the constitution of School Betterment Committees (SBC's) to guide and supervise the working of schools. The committees are like OMBUDSMAN use its wisdom and cultural and political-social influence to improve the infrastructure of the schools by raising voluntary donations, supervising the attendance and work of teachers and promotion of cultural values and national integration and secularism. The retired teachers, village panchayat chairman and members, school headmaster/headmistress, senior teachers, local MLA are generally the members of SBC's. These bodies functioning very efficiently without manovering in the Coastal and Malnad districts of the Karnataka State. However, the performance of School Betterment Committees in Belur and Arasikere taluks is not highly encouraging. It is desirable that the village peer groups, village panchayats and cooperatives shall show interest in the better working of the village schools. It is found that:

(a) Net school enrollment increases steadily with standard of living and being a male child and staying in urban places in all the Indian States.

(b) Being a boy of higher age, non SC/ST non Hindu/Muslim (in rural areas) and of
higher economic status significantly increases the chances of school attendance. As a whole individual factors and SLI play more important role than availability of primary school in school attendance among 6-10 years age group children.

(c) In rural areas, among economic factors children belonging to low or medium standard of living Index (SLI) or from villages located distantly from towns or poor transport facilities declines the chance of attending school, significantly.

(d) In urban areas, chances of attending school is found much higher in case of children belonging to high SLI, having electricity in household and staying in pucca houses.

The various types of 'inequality traps' cause disparities in access to good quality education and thereby disparity in the Children's performance in examinations. The income inequality causes such a problem. This point is clearly brought out by the WDR 2006 (2006 : PP.2): "Disadvantaged children from families at the bottom of the wealth distribution do not have the same opportunities as children from wealthier families to receive quality education. So these disadvantaged children can expect to earn less as adults. Because the poor have less voice in the political process, they like their parents will be less able to influence spending decisions to improve public schools for their children. And the cycle of underachievement continues". Therefore, to achieve the goal of UEE in the course of next ten years (2005 - 2015) India should be able to reduce poverty and income and wealth in equality drastically. In other words, many empirical studies, including ours reveal that the supply - side improvements in school education alone is not sufficient to bring down the number of school dropouts and never attended children. Efforts shall be made to improve and increase the demand for school education by the lower strata of the Indian society. The need for increasing the demand for school education by the poor and low income groups in India require the efforts to integrate programmes of poverty alleviation and social sector development. So the integration shall take place in state and district plans.

The Central and State Governments in India may consider a proposal of 'Income Supplement' - providing a specified sum of income per month to avoid child labour in the poor
group - to the poor for promoting school education (upto X standard), among their children. The amount of income supplement may be equal to the income forgone by the parents by sending their children to the school. The social and economic benefits arising from 100 percent school education among all people are much more than the costs of implementing a 'Income Supplement' programme for improving the school enrollment of the children.

Further, to avoid the abuse of the 'Income Supplement' scheme meant to promote the school enrollment, the eligibility may be limited to only two children. The State should popularize the 'two - child' norm quickly which alone could reduce some social evils like illiteracy, child abuse and child prostitution, gender gap in education and child labour. The western countries seem to think and to have perceived a notion that all out of school children are child labourers in developing countries, including India. This is totally a wrong notion. M.Venkatanarayana (2004 : PP 4220 -21) and many others have argued that all out-of-school children are not child labourers.

Firstly, "while suggesting that all out-of-school children are child labourers it sounds as if work and schooling are mutually exclusive activities for children. That is it implies that only out-of-school children are working and school-going children are not working at all. Instead it is evident in both developing and developed country contexts that children are working while attending school". M.Venkatanarayana (2004 : PP4220 -21). This is further corroborated by other studies (Grooteart and Patrinos, 1999; Nieuwenhuys, 1999: 26).

Secondly, "among the out-of-school children, a significant number are disable (cognitive or orthopedics) or unhealthy. For such children it is their deprivation of health that deprives them of education. Therefore, one cannot say that all out of school children are working' (M.Venkatanarayana : 2004:PP4221). We also have found that 10 to 15 percent of the school drop - out children were not working either in homes or elsewhere for wages. They were simply roaming in the villages.

Thirdly, parents perception of school going age differs between Indian states and within the various regions of the same state. The perception of appropriate age varies from 6
to 10 years across different social groups and regions in India. Thus it is very difficult to send all children into school.

Fourthly, many primary data based surveys reveal that only about 25% of the out-of-school children were working. That means the lack of interest among children to study and lack of parents control over their children is the reason for a good number children not attending schools. So the attitudes of the parents and children towards education shall be drastically changed immediately.

Thus, M. Venkatanarayana (2004:4221) rightly suggested that:

"Ideally, all children in the age group of 5+ must be in school irrespective of caste, gender, region and any other specificity. Those children are to be given a minimum level of education. Education is a prime requirement for them. Those who are not able to attend school due to economic, health or school-related problems to as educationally deprived children". However, all of them, are not the child labourers.

Better and Strong Political Commitment is Required for Improving School Education:

The present United Progressive Alliance Government (UPA comprising Congress, RJD and Indian communist parties) has reiterated many promises made earliest. The most prominent promises reiterated include (a) raising the allocation of funds to the 6 percent of GDP on education thereby trying to realize the goal of UEE; (b) Providing more funds for Midday Meal Programmes; (c) imposition of a education cost to raise more resources for financing education; further, on a controversial subject like receiving external aid for elementary education the UPA Government has remained silent.

These aspects of Indian educational policy are criticized and changes in policy initiatives are suggested from various scholars and research institutions. J. B. G. Tilak (2004:PP4718) an leading expert on Indian education system from NIEPA, New Delhi has very critically reviewed the UPA policy on education and has suggested the following policy changes:
(1) A detailed financial plan is to be formulated specifying intrasectoral shares of funds for primary and secondary school education vis-à-vis higher education. Imbalances among them are to be avoided.

(2) The centre's commitment to continue the Midday Meal Scheme is appreciable; it is more important to (a) allocate more funds for the scheme based on its needs; and (b) to extend it to upper primary schools as well.

(3) The idea of raising additional funds by a levy of educational cess in vogue in India since 1960. But no effort was made to implement it till 2005. In India, efforts were not made seriously to estimate the investment needs of elementary educational sector till 1990's. The additional resources raised by a levy of educational cess and the usual allocation of funds from the general revenue account of the government shall continue. The Tapas Mazumdar Committee in early 1990's had estimated that Rs.1,37,000 crores is required to realize the goal of 'education for all' - as a fundamental human right once in 10 years. The government of India levied a 2 percent educational cess on the payable income tax of the individuals and companies in 2005-06 budget.

(4) J.G.B. Tilak rightly draws the attention of the nation towards the problems created by the emerging para teachers and education guarantee scheme schools in India. He is very critical of the Union Government on this:

"In recent years there has been a significant growth of under-qualified and under trained teachers, under different names, para teachers, shishka karmis, gurujis, sahayaks, vidya volunteers etc. similarly, there has also been a wide acceptance by union and State Governments of the education guarantee scheme. Sarva Shikshan Abhiyan and even the proposal draft bill relating to free and compulsory education have accorded a status to these schools and teaches equivalent to normal formal schools, and fully qualified and trained teachers. Most state governments favored the scheme of para teachers and EGS schools, as they save huge resources on the one hand and avoid managerial problems of teachers, on the other. At the same time, governments can claim to have marched a long way towards fulfilling the constitutional directive on universal elementary education."
But the likely effects on quality of education can be too serious to bear in the long-run or even in the short-run. The underlying view is the elementary education does not require a qualified and trained teacher, nor does it require good infrastructure! The barefoot teachers and barefoot schools may finally produce a 'barefoot' system of education!"

Therefore, it is not just sufficient if we are able to eliminate the out-of-school and never attended children in India, we should be able to retain them in schools and give them a good quality school education.

Social Value of Midday Meal Programme:

The Mid-Day Meal Programme need further state support by way more funds, more allocation of foodgrains and more political commitment. Because the Mid Day Meals Programme has substantially increased the school enrollment of children in majority of Indian States where it is efficiently implemented. Many empirical studies [Jean Dreze and Aparasita Goyal (2003); Agarwal D.K., S.K.Upadhyay et. al (1987), Bhardwaj, R.K. (2003); Brahman, G.N.V. (2003), Usha Chandrashekahar (2003) Jean Dreze and S.Vivek (2002)] have shown a close association between provision of Mid-Day Meal and increase in school enrollment. Our study also revealed the positive links between the two in select schools of the Arasikere and Belue taluks of the Hassan District in Karnataka State.

Jean Dreze and Aparajita Goyal (2003 : PP 4681) suggest the following policy initiatives to improve the implementation of 'Mid-day Meal Scheme' in India:

(a) Financial allocations needs to be raised
(b) The infrastructure for Midday Meals Programme shall be quickly expanded and improved.
(c) "The monitoring system needs to be over hauled close supervision and regular inspections are essential to achieve higher quality standards. Better monitoring would also help to eradicate petty corruption, such as pilferage of food by various intermediaries" (Jean Dreze and Aparajita Goyal, 2003, PP 4681).

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(d) "The socialization of value of Mid-day meals can be enhanced in various ways. Instances of social discrimination at school have to be firmly dealt with; clear guidelines for the selection of cooks need to be issued and enforced. And the lunch time routine can be used to impart various good habits to children, such as washing one's hands before and after eating" (Ibid).

(e) "The issue of dalit cooks calls for specific attention.

(f) Expanding the Menu at schools.

(g) The laggad states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand need to be persuaded to start Mid-day meals in schools. In these states, the size of out-of-school and never attended children is very high and also the nutritional status and school attendance of the children is very low. Therefore, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand are educationally very "problem states'.

Jean Dreze and Aparajita Goyal (2003 :PP 4681) emphasise the significance of Mid-day Meal Scheme as under:

"Universal and nutritious midday meals would be a significant step towards the realization of the right to food. This is an important terrain of future engagement not just for the state, but also for social movements and indeed the public at large. The challenge is particularly relevant to anyone concerned with social equity".

The Midday Meal Scheme is more successful in Karnataka compared to its implementation in Madhya Pradesh or Andhra Pradesh. It is first, implemented in Karnataka in July 2002 in 7 backward districts of north Karnataka. Later on another 20 districts were brought under its fold. For each student 100 grams of rice, 20 gms of pulses and 25 gms of vegetables is made as a provision. This package is greater in terms of its nutritional value compared to Suruchi Bhojan or Daliya of Madhya Pradesh State. The Karnataka's Midday Meals Scheme has better community participation than elsewhere. Therefore the Midday Meals Scheme shall be implemented very efficiently and expanded upto high school level in all Indian States. For this purpose a separate fund may be created and administered in all the states. (Farzana Afridi : 2005 : PP 1535). Thus, Farzana Afridi suggests that:
As the scheme becomes more successful in raising enrollment and attendance rates, the pressure on the existing school system would be even greater. Along with higher expenditure on the school meal programme, additional resources will have to be provided for a concurrent increase in teacher-student ratio, the size of class rooms, and other infrastructure facilities to meet the increased demand for schooling.

Reduction in Dropouts and Reduction in Unit Costs of Primary Education:

Appropriate measures for reducing school dropouts and wastage is essential since it helps to reduce the unit cost of primary education. We may suggest the following policy initiatives in this regard:

(a) Utilising the existing school resources more intensively. Since the child population is increasing, instead of conducting two-three classes in one room, double shifts can be a remedy for utilizing the existing school space most efficiently;

(b) Increasing the student-teacher ratio.

(c) Creating community awareness to mobilize more resources for schools if not in financial terms, but in terms of physical human resources.

(d) Banks shall be used to mobilize resources for funding school education system by way of loans and subsidies. The educational loans may be given for private/public schools and subsidies for economically poor and merited students;

(e) Encouraging more private schools in urban areas, so that the state resources may be used for setting up and running public sector schools in rural areas.

Dropouts problem and Non-Formal Education system

The dropouts and never attended children represent a 'low skills or no skills' component of human resource/labour in India, the Indian state which is soft regarding some basic human rights like education has opted for 'Non Formal System of Education' to improve the literacy status of the school dropouts. So the National Policy on Education of 1986 also had emphasized significance of Non Formal Education for educating the school dropouts. This has led to duality in Indian school education system viz a good quality school system for the rich and urban middle class and the poor and ill equipped rural schools and non formal educational
centers for the school dropouts and never enrolled children. This is viewed rightly as a dichotomy and a social problem by analysts like R.P. Singh (1991: PP411-416). There is no solution to this educational dichotomy in the short run. It can only be resolved by drastically reducing the dropouts and eliminating never enrolled students, which is possible only in the long-run through successful poverty reduction programmes on one hand and improvements in the school quality, on the other hand.

Further, it is very important to remember that the success in poverty alleviation is to a large extent shall encourage/induce parents to enroll their children for schools and give adequate attention to the childrens regularity in attending and learning in schools. Thus, the programmes of rural development, wage employment, self - employment, group employment like Self-Help Groups shall be efficiently implemented. Similarly adequate efforts shall be made to increase farm productivity programmes of women empowerment shall be implemented efficiently. It is well known that the income earned and received by women is used in general to buy food, housing and clothing and educational output for the family. Therefore it may be argued that the success in reducing human poverty and income poverty shall create more genuine demand for primary, higher primary and high school education for children.

The Union Government of India has launched an Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme in 1975-76 on a nation-wide basis to provide for the health, nutrition and educational needs of the children. The ICDS provides a package of services comprising: (a) supplementary nutrition; (b) immunization; (c) health check-up, (d) referral services, (e) pre-school non-formal education; and (f) nutrition and health education. The ICDS is 100% central programme, which means the Government of India funds it totally and also is responsible for its formulation. The States are responsible for the implementation of ICDS and providing for additional nutrition with their own funds. A total number 5274 ICDS projects were implemented as on 31st August 2004, benefiting 380 lakh children (0-6 years) and about 76 lakh pregnant and lactating mothers through a network of 6.74 lakh Anganwadi Centres. Further, the National Common Minimum Programme of the present Union Government envisages universalization of the ICDS scheme to provide a functional Anganawadi in every
village and guarantee full coverage for all children. The NCMP has proposed to provide adequate nutrition for all girl children throughout the country.

The scheme for Ccrèches/Day Care Center for the children of Working and Ailing Mothers is being modified so as to merge the National Creche Fund with the Scheme for Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for running crèches. The revised Scheme envisages increase in financial norms from Rs. 18,480 per crèche per annum to Rs. 45,780 per crèche per annum, increase in honorarium for crèche workers and enhancement in the provision for supplementary nutrition. The revised scheme provides coverage to more number of children by increasing ceiling for eligibility from Rs. 1800 per month to Rs. 12000 per month per family. By the end of tenth five year plan, it has been proposed to increase the number of crèches from the present 15000 creches (app.) to 30,000 creches by increasing 5,000 creches in a year. A national charter for children has been notified in the Gazette of India on 9th February 2004. The document emphasizes Government of India's commitment to children's rights and development. A National Commission for Children is in the process of being established. The initial proposal to set up the commission has been revised in order to give more powers to the commission for effective implementation of existing laws and schemes for children. A draft National Plan of Action for children has been prepared taking into consideration the goals for children set in the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children held in May, 2002 and the monitorable targets set in the Tenth Five Year Plan, and goals for children in related Ministries/Departments.