

**Evaluation Study
on
Impact of Non-Formal Education**



**Programme Evaluation Organisation
Planning Commission
Government of India
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PREFACE

The non-formal education (NFE) scheme was introduced during the Sixth Plan in a few states as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) to meet the educational needs of children who do not enroll themselves in formal schools because of poverty and illiteracy of parents and other socio-cultural factors. Though the scheme was originally conceived as a complementary mode of delivery of educational services for elementary school-age children, the number of NFE centres grew manifold over the years. Its phenomenal growth during the last two plan periods tends to suggest that NFE is being used as a major instrument to achieve UEE. Can NFE meet the educational needs of out-of-school children effectively? Does it have the potential of being a major instrument to achieve UEE? All these are relevant issues in devising an appropriate strategy for achieving UEE in the country.

At the instance of the Planning Commission, the Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) undertook the study to evaluate the performance, methods of implementation and impact of the NFE scheme. Analysis of both secondary and primary data was required to meet the objectives of the Study. The secondary data were collected from official publications and records of government agencies. The major part of the data needs of the study was met through a sample survey of 108 NFE centres and about 1950 households spread over 18 districts in 6 states.

The main findings of study are as follows:

- (a) The financial needs of NFE centres are not being met, as both the Centre and states are not releasing their shares of allocation for NFE fully. Inadequate financial resources and their untimely release have affected the performance of the centres adversely.
- (b) In addition to inadequate resources, the performance of NFE centres is affected by non-availability of TLMs, unqualified instructors, and inadequate supervision and monitoring.

- (c) The NFE system has not made any significant contribution to the realisation of the goal of UEE. Only a small fraction of the out-of-school children have been benefited by it.

These findings tend to suggest that the NFE scheme can not be a major instrument for achieving UEE. However, until an appropriate strategy is devised, NFE may have to be continued with some changes in its design and implementation.

The Deputy Chairman, Members, Member- Secretary and Special Secretary, Planning Commission extended continuous support and encouragement during the course of the study. The Study was initiated by Shri R.K. Sonkar, the then Deputy Adviser (PEO), but was designed and conducted under the direction of Smt. Usha Srivastava, Deputy Adviser (PEO). Dr. S.M. Shirajuddin, Senior Research Officer, PEO shouldered a major responsibility for tabulation plan, analysis of data and report writing. The efforts put in by the officers of PEO (Hqrs.) and Regional/Project Evaluation Offices under the guidance of Shri V.K. Bhatia, Joint Adviser (PEO) in completing the study deserves special mention.

The help and cooperation extended by the officers of Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, NCERT, Education Division (Planning Commission), Departments of Education of the concerned States, National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and NGOs are gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are also due to Shri M.K. Nanda, Shri C.K. Mitra and Staff members of NIC (Yojana Bhavan Unit) who provided the computational help and assistance.

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May, 1958

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To achieve the goal of universal elementary education (UEE) the government has been trying to improve access to education by ensuring availability of schools to all within a reasonable distance from habitations, and by reducing the private direct and indirect cost of education through schemes, like free books/uniforms, mid-day meals, Ashram Schools in tribal areas and the like. Yet, all children in the age group of 6-14 years do not enroll themselves in schools and the drop-out rate at the elementary level is found to be as high as 60% in 1993-94 (Sixth All India Education Survey). It was realised by planners and administrators that even with reasonable improvement in access to formal education, the problems of non-enrolment and high drop-out would continue to exist because of poverty and illiteracy of parents and partly due to other socio-cultural constraints of our society. **The strategy for achieving UEE**, therefore, explicitly recognizes the need for innovative and non-formal approaches to **attract the out-of- school children** and illiterate adults to improve access to education.

The Scheme

The Non-formal Education (NFE) scheme, introduced during the Sixth Plan in a few states as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, was visualized as a child centered system to meet the diverse educational needs of the out-of-school elementary school-age children **to provide part time education for about two hours a day**. An NFE centre can be opened **with 20-25 eligible children** (10 in hilly /tribal/desert areas) **at a place and time convenient to the children** under the charge of a locally selected instructor. The NFE primary level (upto class V level) course is designed to be completed in two years and the middle level course (class VI to Class VIII) in three years. The teaching-learning materials have been specially designed for this purpose and are supplied free of cost to all the learners. The instructors of NFE are given training by District Resource Units in District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs).

The scheme is being implemented primarily through the State administration. In addition to the State and District level officers, an NFE project with 100 centres is looked after by a Project Officer. For 10 NFE centres there is a supervisor in most States. **The scheme is also being implemented on a project basis through the NGOs**. The NFE centres are of two types, viz; co-educational and girl centres. The Central Government meets 60% and 90% of the expenses respectively of the co-ed and girl centres. The entire expenses of

both types of NGO-run centres are met by the Central Government. There are 2.41 lakh NFE centres covering about 7 million children in 21 States. A little less than 50% of these centres are girl centres.

The NFE scheme which was introduced in the Sixth Plan underwent revision in 1992 with regard to cash incentives to instructors, methods of financing, composition in terms of girl and co-ed centres, increase in standard cost of running a centre and the like (Chapter-I). The revised scheme was introduced in the Eighth Plan with the objective of making NFE more effective and complementary to the formal system upto the elementary stage and for encouraging lateral entry of NFE learners to the formal system for higher education.

The Evaluation Study

At the instance of Planning Commission, Programme Evaluation Organisation undertook the study to evaluate the physical and financial **performance**, effectiveness of the **implementation and delivery system** and the **impact** of the NFE scheme. The study was also required to address some specific issues identified by the Education Division of Planning Commission. These, inter -alia, include: (a) an assessment of the **functioning of centres** and its **impact on enrolment, retention and success rates**; (b) an evaluation of the **performance of NGO run centres**, (c) assessing the extent of **community participation** and (d) identification of **factors that could contribute to success** of the NFE scheme.

The Methodology

An analysis of both **secondary** and **primary** data is required to meet the objectives of the study. Information relating to Central guidelines to States and NGOs, population and literacy rates etc. were obtained from Government reports. **The major part of the data for the study were generated through structured questionnaires** designed for NFE functionaries/officers at the State, District and Village/centre levels, for the parents of eligible learners and knowledgeable people.

These questionnaires were canvassed to sample units, which were selected using a multi-stage stratified random sample design. The first stage sample units are the educationally backward states. Six states, viz, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh covering 91.4% of the NFE centres were selected for the study. The second stage units are the Districts. Eighteen (18) Districts - three from each State representing different

levels of literacy were randomly selected after grouping the districts according to specific literacy ranges.

From the District level lists of NFE centres, **108 centres** (third stage units) were randomly chosen -**90 State-run centres and 18 NGO-run centres**. Once the specific centres are selected, the concerned instructors (108), supervisors, villages (108) and voluntary organizations (18) got automatically fixed.

The elementary school age children of a selected village/block were classified into five categories, viz; **those enrolled in NFE, those enrolled in formal schools, those enrolled in both formal school & NFE, those non-enrolled and drop-outs**. A little less than 1950 elementary school age children (boys and girls) with suitable representation from these five groups were selected randomly (see Chapter-2). In addition to the aforesaid sample units, 221 knowledgeable persons from the selected villages/blocks were approached for their views on the working of NFE centres and the **potential of NFE as a system of delivery**. The details of the sample design and description of the schedules canvassed to different sample units are presented in chapter-2.

Planning, Administration and Monitoring Process

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in consultation with the national resource institutions like NCERT and NIEPA as well as institutions in the concerned State Governments **formulates the long term, medium term and annual plans**. While State level authorities are responsible for planning, monitoring, overseeing and evaluating the programmes, the District level authorities provide technical and academic support to the NFE programme. **The Project Officer** is responsible for educating, orienting and organising training for instructors and supervisors on the concepts, operational strategies and approach for implementation of NFE programme. The last link in the chain is **Village Education Committee, which is required to select suitable location for centres, identify potential instructors, persuade parents to send their children to the centre, decide on timings of centres, ensure effective functioning of the centre and maintain liaison with other developmental agencies at the village level**.

The NFE programme is implemented by MHRD, which is **having an effective strength of 18 staff members to look after** the entire work load including the processing of the project proposals for sanction, providing grants and monitoring/evaluating etc. of **2,41,399 centres in 16 States/UTs and 48,878 centres of 740 Voluntary agencies**. Considering the enormous work load, either

the organisational structure at Centre would need to be strengthened or **States would need to be provided with more powers to streamline the functioning of NFE**. Many State Governments have complained of having no coordination with Voluntary Organizations, since these organizations directly deal with Central Government. For a better **coordination with Voluntary Organizations, MHRD may consider transferring their control to the State Governments**, who would be in a better position to monitor their operations more effectively (Chapter 3).

Though the guidelines clearly lay emphasis on the decentralisation of administrative and financial powers, these are yet to be translated into action in most of the States. Even the staff position is dismal in many States (e.g. Purbi Champaran in Bihar, Sidhi in Madhya Pradesh, Keonjhar in Orissa and Maharajganj in Uttar Pradesh), since instructors and supervisors are not appointed/or not in position due to one reason or the other.

The Department of Education, MHRD has laid down specific guidelines for Management Information System at the Central and State Level. Structured proformae have been prepared to monitor the programme on quarterly basis on various aspects covering financial, management, training, material development, learners participation and community participation. Though filing of reports is a prerequisite for release/grant of funds to States/Voluntary agencies, necessary remedial action is not being initiated by the Ministry seriously. Even in the States, though procedure exists for filing of reports by Supervisors, Project Officers and District Education Officers, it is fraught with irregularities. In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the posts of supervisor have been abolished and the Project Officers have to directly coordinate and monitor the scheme, which is not very effective. **Compared to State run NFE centres, the monitoring and evaluation process in the Voluntary Organizations have been found to be more effective.**

Growth, Spread and Composition of NFE Centres

Since its inception the NFE system has grown in size and coverage over the years. **The number of centres grew from 1.26 lakh in 1986 to 2.41 lakh in 1996 in the State sector alone.** In addition, there are NGO run centres. During the Eighth Plan period, the number of centres grew at different rates in the six States chosen for the study. **The highest growth rate (66%) was observed in Rajasthan**, followed by Bihar (31%), Orissa (28%), Andhra Pradesh (10%), Madhya Pradesh (3%) and Uttar Pradesh (1%). **What is interesting to note is that during the Eighth Plan, the NGO sector has grown by leaps and**

bounds, while the growth in the State sector has been moderate, except in Rajasthan. The highest growth rate of NGO-run centres during 1992-97 is observed in Madhya Pradesh (176.5%), followed by Uttar Pradesh (108.6%), Bihar (95.6%), Andhra Pradesh (92.3%), Orissa (58.7%) and Rajasthan (38.3%). Orissa, however, has the highest number of NGO-run centres (9656 in 1996-97), followed by Andhra Pradesh (5845) and Uttar Pradesh (5581).

In spite of the rapid growth of NGO-run centres during the Eighth Plan, **the existing NFE centres can accommodate only a small proportion of the out-of-school children (chapter- 4 Table 4.2).** The enrolment in NFE centres as a percentage of out-of-school children is the highest in Madhya Pradesh (51%), followed by Rajasthan (35.8%), Orissa (33%), Andhra Pradesh (24%), Uttar Pradesh (21%) and Bihar (12.4%). It has been observed that **in general the NFE centres are concentrated primarily in areas where formal school is not available within a reasonable distance (as in tribal areas) and where the literacy rate is low.** Thus, the spread of NFE centres seems to be in accordance with the need.

The proportion of girls among the out-of-school children being more, the Government has made special provisions for establishment of girl centres as 90% of the expenses of girl centres is being met by the Centre. In Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh nearly 50% of the NFE centres are girl centres. The share of girl centres in other States is much less. The NFE centres are required specifically to cater to the needs of SC/ST population, as the literacy rates among them is much lower than that among others. **It has been found that in general the percentage of SC/ST students in NFE system far exceeds their share in the state's population.**

Flow of Funds to NFE Centres

As per revised norms, a primary level of centre is entitled to an annual grant of Rs. 9925.00. However, **the actual allocation during the Eighth Plan period varied between Rs. 4305.00 in Orissa and Rs. 7927.00 in Madhya Pradesh.** Both the Centre and State Governments are not releasing their share of allocation for NFE. In 1995-96, the Centre released 81%, 70%, 79%, 48%, 66% and 56% of its share respectively to Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. During the same year, the State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh released 80%, 92%, 52%, 14% and 27% of their share. **Thus, the flow of funds to NFE centres in the State sector is erratic and much less than what is required to run the system.**

Different rates of utilization of funds by the State Governments have been observed. In 1993-94, for example, the utilization rate of Central funds was as low as 19% in Bihar, and the highest utilization rate was 67% in Uttar Pradesh. The utilization rate of Central funds however, was better in 1995-96 when the lowest rate (50%) was observed in Orissa. **Many States have not reported about the utilization rate of their own funds.**

Functioning and Performance of NFE Centres

The success of NFE scheme revolves around the performance of individual NFE centres. The average enrolment per centre was found to be more than 20 learners. **About one-fifth to one-third of those enrolled dropped-out within the same year. The percentage of NFE learners who completed the primary level course** was as low as 12 in Rajasthan, while the all India average success rate is 30%. **About 28.7% of those who complete NFE primary level course get lateral entry into the formal system.** Uttar Pradesh has shown the highest success rate (44.4%) and the lowest lateral entry rate (7.6%). The lateral entry rate is the highest in Orissa (89.3%), followed by Rajasthan (66.7%). However, the success rate as measured by the percentage of learners completing the NFE course is low in both these States (Table 5.2).

The performance of NFE centres is influenced by the quantity and quality of supply of school facilities. In the 108 sample centres, acute shortage of Teaching-Learning Materials (TLM) was observed. The rural centres were not supplied with petrolmax light and classes had to be run only during day time. **The shortage of TLM was because of inadequate allocation of funds by both the Centre and State Governments.**

A large proportion (83% in Orissa and 61% in Uttar Pradesh) of NFE instructors are not even matriculate. The NFE system covers the primary level course in two years and middle level in three years; **Qualified and trained instructors are required to teach these condensed courses.** The availability of qualified and trained instructors is linked with the meagre honoraria paid to instructors. In some States, however, instructors with secondary and higher qualifications were found, primarily **because of their expectation that the NFE experience would be useful in getting a placement in the formal system.**

It was noted that a large number of girl centres were having male instructors and a large proportion of them were below 30 years of age. Given the general weakness of the NFE infrastructure and the fact that the NFE learners are over-aged, **it may be possible that the NFE system could not attract adequate number of out-of-school girls.** (Table 5.4). In fact, the attendance

and **enrolment in girl centres** were found to be **very low** in the sample centres (Chapter-5).

The supervision and monitoring of NFE centres were found to be very weak. As per guidelines a supervisor is required to pay 2 visits per centre/month. However, except in Rajasthan this norm is not being adhered to. In Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, the supervisors, on an average, **did not pay even one visit/ centre in a full year.** Though the instructors claimed that they had evaluated the learners on the basis of written and oral tests, the feedback from learners suggests that examination is not conducted in all centres. **It was also noted that 72% of the centres remained closed for more than ten days in a month.** The learners on the other hand reported that they had attended NFE classes whenever the centres were open. **Thus, the constraint to access is more binding from the supply side.**

The Impact

The objective of the NFE scheme is to improve access to education for the out-of-school children through flexible school timings and innovative teaching methods in an informal environment, and thereby, move closer to the realization of the goal of universal elementary education. To what extent has the NFE system been successful in improving enrolment, retention and literacy among children who do not have access to the formal school system?

The success of the NFE system is to be judged from the **rates of enrolment, successful completion and lateral entry to the formal systems** among the eligible out-of-school children. The requisite data base for computation of these rates was generated through the PEO survey at the village level. **It is noted that only 12.6% of the out-of-school eligible children in the sample villages where the centres are located were enrolled in the NFE centres.** This proportion is likely to be lower if the eligible children in the neighboring villages (without NFE centres) are also considered. **Thus, the NFE system has contributed only marginally towards addressing the problem of non-enrolment among the elementary school-age children.** However, it has been found at the State level that the number of NFE centres is too small to make any perceptible impact on the enrolment rate of the out-of-school children. The number of NFE centres should increase 10/15 times if all the out-of-school children in the age group of 6-14 years are to be accommodated in the NFE system.

Of those who enroll in NFE centres 20 to 30% drop out within the year. The proportion of learners who successfully complete the NFE

primary level course is very low, and during 1994-96 varied between a low of 12% in Rajasthan to a high of 44.4% in Uttar Pradesh. The success rate of Madhya Pradesh is also high (36.4%). Another criterion to measure the impact of NFE is **the lateral entry rate of successful NFE learners to the formal system**. The lateral entry rates are high in case of Orissa (89.3%) and Rajasthan (66.7%). In Uttar Pradesh where 44.4% of NFE learners completed the primary level course, the lateral entry rate was found to be the lowest (7.6%). **At the macro level, the NFE system seems to have enabled a little over one percent of the out-of-school children to complete primary level education and get admission in the formal school system**. It has not been possible to estimate what proportion of these formal school entrants actually completed the elementary level education. **Thus, the NFE system has not made any notable contribution towards the realization of the goal of universal elementary education**.

The factors influencing the performance of the NFE system could be classified into three broad categories. First, the **enabling state policies** with regard to the formal linkage of the NFE with the FE system, and special incentives to instructors seem to have a favourable impact on the performance of NFE (as in Orissa and to some extent in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan). Secondly, some NFE centres in areas (villages) **where access to formal education system is either inadequate or non-existent** (as in tribal areas) have shown better enrolment rates. Thirdly, **local level factors**, such as, the effectiveness of the VEC, qualification and training of the instructors, motivation of individual instructors etc. have also influenced the performance of the NFE system. It may be noted that some of the factors affecting the performance of the NFE system are amenable to policy responses, while others are not.

To get the desired outcome from the NFE system through such policy changes may not, however, be a very cost-effective alternative for delivery of elementary education. The potential of other alternative instruments, like bringing about **improvement in infrastructure** of FE system, **reducing private direct and indirect cost** of education for the children of poor families, **changes in school timing of FE, decentralised management of schools etc.** needs to be assessed and their relative cost-effectiveness worked out to decide on the **optimal blend of various alternative instruments of delivery for realisation of the goal of UEE**.

Observations & Suggestions

The findings of the study tend to suggest that the NFE system has not made any significant contribution to the realisation of the goal of UEE. This, however, is not meant to undermine its achievement in delivering **“literacy, numeracy and awareness” to some out-of-school children**. If the NFE is expected to deliver elementary education and /or facilitate lateral entry of learners to the formal education system, major changes in design and implementation of the scheme, and substantial step-up in financial allocation will be required. It is not certain if, with these changes, NFE could be a cost-effective instrument of delivery of elementary education to the out-of-school children. **All this tends to imply that elementary education needs to be delivered primarily through the formal education system**. This, however, is not meant to suggest that all is well with the FE system. The rates of non-enrolment and drop-out for children belonging to some population groups are still unacceptably high in the formal education system.

To devise an appropriate strategy for achieving UEE, it is important to identify the factors that constrain access to education. A review of literature on the subject tends to suggest that the **quality of school infrastructure** (as represented by availability/ adequacy of school facilities, teacher -student ratio, proportion of female teachers, separate schools for boys and girls at upper primary level, qualifications and training of teachers etc.) on the one hand and **cost-benefit of education** (as perceived by parents) on the other **are the most important determinants of access**. Attempts have been made in the past to improve the school infrastructure (e.g. operations Black Board) and to reduce private cost of education through supply of free books/uniforms/stationery, mid-day meals, day-care centres, fellowships etc.. Though these measures have improved enrolment and retention rates, the progress is unsatisfactory partly because of **inadequate financial provisions** and partly due to **inadequacies in planning and implementation**. **If the gaps in resources, administrative planning and delivery system are bridged, there will be perceptible improvement in enrolment and retention rates in formal education system**.

The greatest obstacle to UEE is, however, the **poverty-illiteracy syndrome**. A large proportion of the out-of-school children belong to the poor families. Poor families do not send their children to schools primarily because of **high opportunity cost**, but also due to the fact that they **do not see any immediate gain from education**. Thus, **poor and illiterate parents will have to be made aware of the value of education through awareness generation**

programme. Secondly, for the poor children, the entire private cost of education (both direct and indirect) will have to be borne by the Government.

The above mentioned strategy will certainly attract the majority of the out-of-school children to the formal school set-up. However, such changes in the FE system can not be brought about within a short span of time and hence, the educational needs of the out-of-school children will have to be met partially through NFE during transition. Moreover, NFE may continue to be relevant for some children who, because of economic compulsion, can not enroll themselves in the FE system. Thus, while the role of NFE will get reduced over time, it will continue to be relevant for meeting the educational needs of specific groups. It is with this perspective that the following modifications in the NFE system are suggested:

- (i) The cost of running an NFE centre must be worked out realistically. The NFE-type education can be delivered only by instructors who are qualified and trained. Their honorarium should be commensurate with their responsibility, and regularity in payments to them must be ensured.**
- (ii) It has been observed that both the Central Government and the States are not releasing even the grossly understated "standard cost" of running an NFE centre. On an average, the centres get about half the money they are entitled to. Many of the centres do not get even this much in time. The Ministry should address the relevant issues.**
- (iii) If the NFE system is expected to contribute to the realisation of the goal of universal elementary education, it must be linked with the formal education system through enabling state policies. The experience of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, which made an attempt to do so through common examination and certification, may be studied to derive lessons and to identify the measures and policies that would facilitate lateral entry of NFE learners.**
- (iv) It has been observed that, other things remaining the same, enrolment and retention rates of students are positively associated with the proportion of female teachers. This is true for both NFE and FE systems. If NFE centres are run by female teachers, the enrolment, retention and success rates in NFE are likely to improve significantly.**
- (v) As per the provision of the 73rd Constitutional amendment, the PRIs are required to play a role in the management of school education. Wherever the PRIs are in place, the management of NFE centres along with**

financial resources may be handed over to these institutions. The findings of the study tend to suggest that the VECs are not effective in controlling the functioning of the NFE centres.

- (vi) Of the two types of centres (State-run & NGO-run) the enrolment/retention rates seem to be better in the NGO-run centres, perhaps because of their ability to mobilise additional resources, attract community participation and impart flexibilities in the functioning of the centres. However, for generalisation of this observation, an indepth study of NGO-run centres **with a much larger sample** (than adopted in the study) would be required, as PEO field teams were denied access to some sample NGOs. Nevertheless, it needs to be explored how the services of the NGOs could be fruitfully utilized in the delivery of education services to out-of-school children and whether **useful lessons could be derived from some of the successful NGOs.**
- vii) If, however, the NGO-run centres continue to play their present role, some changes in the pattern of financing, supervision and monitoring are required. First, the **criteria of selection of NGOs** must be worked out in consultation with the states and their selection must be done jointly. Second, instead of direct flow of funds from MHRD to NGOs, **funds should be routed through the State government.** Third, the **performance of NGOs should be evaluated periodically** either jointly by evaluation organisations of the States and the Centre, or by independent reputed institutions.
- (viii) While the modifications in the design and implementation of NFE system suggested above are likely to bring about improvement in the performance of the system the findings of the study do not lend support to the assumption that NFE system can be a cost-effective and major instrument for delivery of elementary education. **There is need for reassessment of the role that NFE could play in the realisation of the goal of removing illiteracy. Perhaps, NFE should aim at delivering "literacy, numeracy and awareness"** to those out-of-school children who can not be brought to the FE system even at negligible private cost (direct and indirect) of education.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A Directive Principle under Article 45 of the Constitution of India, provides free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14 years. Universalisation of Elementary Education has been a national goal since 1950 and schooling facilities to the boys and girls of 6 to 14 years age group have been increased manifold in the last four and a half decades. The number of elementary schools (primary and upper primary) have increased from 2.23 lakhs in 1950-51 to 7.61 lakhs in 1995-96. The total enrolment of children during this period increased from 22.3 million to 150.74 million. But due to high drop out rates, as per the Sixth Educational Survey, out of 100 children who have taken admission in Class I in the year 1986-87, only 40 managed to reach Class VIII in 1993-94.

1.1.2 It was again and again felt by the planners and administrators that any strategy for Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) should therefore, take in to account a complementary and supportive system like Non Formal Education for a large segment of out-of-school marginalised children, particularly of weaker sections like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, economically backward sections, girls (constituting two third of the total non-enrolled children) and working children needing part time education. Besides there were disparities, variation and regional contrast in educational achievements between States, Districts, male, female, urban and rural areas, disadvantaged sections of population like SC/ST, backward classes, people living in hilly, tribal and backward areas. The Education Commission in 1964-66 advocated development of a part time and own time education on a large scale with the same status as full time education. The Central Advisory Board of Education deliberated on this issue in 1972 and 1977 and resolved that instead of emphasizing on formal system a large element of NFE should be introduced.

1.1.3 The Working Group set up by the Planning Commission in 1978 observed that 70 percent of the children working in or outside the family are compelled to drop-out-of the schools that run on whole time basis. Since 74%

of the non-enrolled children were from the 8 educationally backward States namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal (later Assam and Arunachal Pradesh were added) and the resources available under State Plan were too limited to provide sufficient funds for the NFE programme, the Working Group recommended it as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in the Sixth Five Year Plan in these States.

The Scheme

1.2.1. NFE is visualised as a child centred and environment oriented system to meet the diverse educational needs of the comparatively neglected geographical areas and socio-economic sections of the society, mainly to provide part time education for about two hours a day through NFE centres for a group of 20-25 learners (a minimum number of 10 learners in isolated hilly, desert and tribal areas) at a place and time convenient to the children, under the charge of a locally selected Instructor. The village community is expected to provide space and make other arrangements for running these centres. The NFE course is condensed into four semesters of six months each. Specially developed teaching learning materials and stationery is provided to learners free of cost.

1.2.2. Instructors are provided with training by District Resource Units in District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETS). For supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the NFE programme, a supervisory structure has been developed which includes a part-time supervisor for every 10 NFE centres, a project officer for 100 NFE centres, and District and State level officers.

1.2.3. The States are given 60% of central assistance for co-educational centres and 90% for girls centres for implementing the NFE programme. A large number of non-governmental voluntary agencies (NGOs) have also taken up NFE projects with 100% central assistance. The scheme presently covers 70 lakh children in 2.79 lakh NFE centres (of which 1.18 lakh centres are exclusively for girls) in 21 States and UTs with a provision of Rs. 704 crores in the Eighth Five Year Plan (Rs.625 crores for States and Rs.79 crores for voluntary agencies). Besides these, some NGOs have been

encouraged to take up experimental and innovative projects as well with 100% central assistance.

Revised NFE Scheme

1.3.1. In accordance with the NPE - 1986 and Programme of Action (POA) as revised in 1992, the Eighth Plan envisaged to develop NFE as a complementary system to the formal system and stressed the necessity of making investments for qualitative improvement in the NFE. The aims & objectives of the NFE programme in the Eighth Plan were:

- (a) Improved selection of instructors and their pre-induction training as a pre-requisite for the start of NFE centres.
- (b) Increase in remuneration of NFE instructors to Rs.200 per month with provision of annual increment of Rs.50/- after completion of two years of satisfactory service.
- (c) Opportunities for continuing education, including improvement of qualifications for NFE instructors.
- (d) Much greater investment of resources on production of good quality TLM for NFE programme.
- (e) Continuation of a project until all out-of- school children are covered in the area.
- (f) Admission of children to be made annually and from time to time within the capacity of about 25 children per NFE centre.
- (g) Strengthening of the administrative and technical resource support system.
- (h) Increase in number of women instructors, supervisors and administrators.
- (i) Enlarging involvement of voluntary agencies to run programmes in a creative, flexible and efficient manner and to improve the system of training.

1.3.2 The scheme was evaluated in 8 educationally backward States by some external agencies in 1992-93. The major problems and deficiencies in the programme implementation were found to be rigid centralisation of administrative and financial powers at the Directorate and District level; weak supervision and monitoring; inadequate cost parameters leading to lack of motivation in instructors and supervisors; inadequate technical resource support in terms of development of curriculum, TLM, training and research; non-formation of Village Education Committees (VECs) to oversee the programme; lack of community participation, etc. Further the NFE programme could not emerge as a credible alternative to the primary school system mainly because of insufficient funding, inappropriate organisational structure, inefficient operationalisation etc.

1.3.3 The Scheme was revised in 1992 with the following salient features

- (i) Increase in remuneration of NFE instructors from Rs.105 to Rs.200 per month.
- (ii) Increase in share of assistance for mixed NFE centres from 50% to 60%.
- (iii) Increase in ratio of girl centres to total centres from 25% to 40%
- (iv) Increase in expenditure on NFE centre from Rs.5,500/- to Rs.8,725/-.
- (v) Enhancement in investment on TLM, training and equipment.
- (vi) Introduction of a provision of contingent expenditure of Rs.250/- per annum.
- (vii) Introduction of a system of cash incentives linked to the number of learners qualifying to enter upper primary level in order to provide a degree of motivation to NFE instructor.
- (viii) Emphasis on regular availability of funds, delegation of financial and administrative powers to the project officers.

The Present Study

1.4.1. Department of Programme Implementation, in a communication to Education Division of Planning Commission, emphasised on improving the monitoring system of NFE programme in order to understand as to how and why a programme is successfully implemented in one State and less successfully in other States and the crucial factors which need to be controlled for the programme to be successful. They also suggested that the qualitative evaluation of the progress/ implementation of the programme may be made in order to make the monitoring system more effective in the area of elementary education. Accordingly, Education Division requested Programme Evaluation Organisation to take up an evaluation study on 'Impact of Non - Formal Education on Universalisation of Elementary Education'. The main points to be covered under the study were - how far the scheme was successful in motivating the parents to send their children to NFE centres by relieving them from the household chores; how interesting was the content of education for the children; to what extent the parity been really assured in the content and quality of education of the NFE vis-a-vis the formal stream; what are the fallacies & basic problems which the personnel (engaged in State and voluntary sector) would need to attend immediately?

1.4.2. Secondly, a large number of voluntary organisations have come up during the 8th Plan. Between 1992-93 to 1996-97, the number of voluntary agencies have increased from 236 to 416, i.e. a step-up of 76.27% over 1992-93. During this period, the number of centres have also increased from 15475 to 28138 indicating a step-up of 81.83%. This also necessitated for early evaluation of NFE programme.

CHAPTER 2

THE EVALUATION STUDY - OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

At the instance of the Education Division of Planning Commission, the Programme Evaluation Organisation, Planning Commission undertook an evaluation study of Non-Formal Education Scheme of Department of Education, which has been in operation since 1978 for out-of-school children in the age group of 6-14 years for achieving universalisation of elementary education.

2.1.2 Though the NFE scheme is being implemented in 21 States and UTs, it is largely concentrated in six educationally backward states i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, having large number of non-enrolled out-of-school children.

Objectives of the Evaluation Study

2.2.1 The broad objectives of the study are as under:

1. To assess the performance of NFE in terms of its coverage, enrollment, literacy rate, retention of the out-of-school children in order to achieve the goal of universalisation of elementary education.
2. To examine the organisational set-up, adequacy of the monitoring mechanism and implementation methods in different States so as to assess their impact on performance of the programme.
3. To assess the impact of the programme in terms of the satisfaction of learners and parents about the quality of education and mobility of NFE students to the Formal school.
4. To identify factors contributing to or affecting the performance of the scheme.

5. To examine the effectiveness of Voluntary Organisations in the implementation of NFE programme.

2.2.2 In addition to the above broad objectives; the evaluation study is designed to focus on the following specific issues relating to NFE.

1. Academic aspects like the views of knowledgeable people on the quality and quantity of the Teaching - Learning Material, teaching methodology (not the contents analysis), Instructors' qualifications, Experience, Motivation and Performance.
2. The role of Village Education Committees in terms of motivating the community and overseeing the functioning of NFE Centres.
3. Adequacy of infrastructure in the NFE Centres.
4. Comparison of the performance of State Government run Centres with those of Voluntary Organisations and identify factors contributing to the differential performance.
5. To examine the adequacy of financial allocations, timeliness of their release and other details relating to flow of funds.

Data Requirement

2.3.1 To realise the above objectives of the study, information relating to a large number of parameters on physical and financial performance, implementation and impact of the programme, qualitative responses from various functionaries and beneficiaries were required to be collected and analysed. Primary level data were collected through structured schedules (both open and close ended questions) at the State, District, NFE Centre, selected Villages, eligible children/learners (beneficiaries), selected centres, instructors and supervisors, knowledgeable persons and Voluntary Organisations. Qualitative notes were prepared based on extensive discussions with NFE functionaries at State and District level. Secondary data relating to central guidelines to the States and Voluntary Organisations, population and literacy rates were obtained from Government reports, educational statistics, NCERT educational surveys and State evaluation reports. etc.

2.3.2 As the parameters that determine the performance of the NFE scheme are likely to vary across States, Districts and NFF centres, it was decided that the study should cover as many States, Districts, Centres, functionaries and beneficiaries as possible. However, given the time and resource constraints and the fact that the study is a diagnostic one for improving the performance of NFE Scheme, a balanced approach was adopted to meet the objectives of the study. Moreover, as the study required generation of primary data at the District, village, household and individual levels, it was not possible to extend the coverage of the study to a large number of States, Districts and centres. Therefore, it was decided to generate the data base for the study through the sample survey approach.

Sampling Design

2.4.1 A multi-stage stratified random sample design has been adopted in the study. In the first stage, six States which account for 91.5% of NFE centres (2,40,787) during 1995-96 were selected. These States are: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Districts

2.4.2 The second stage units in the sample are the Districts. The Districts of a selected State were arranged in terms of the literacy rate and two Districts were selected at random from among those with literacy rates below the State average. For assessing the performance of NFE centres in urban areas, the capital city of the State was selected. The 18 Districts selected along with literacy rates (1991) are shown in Annexure 2.1.

NFE Centres

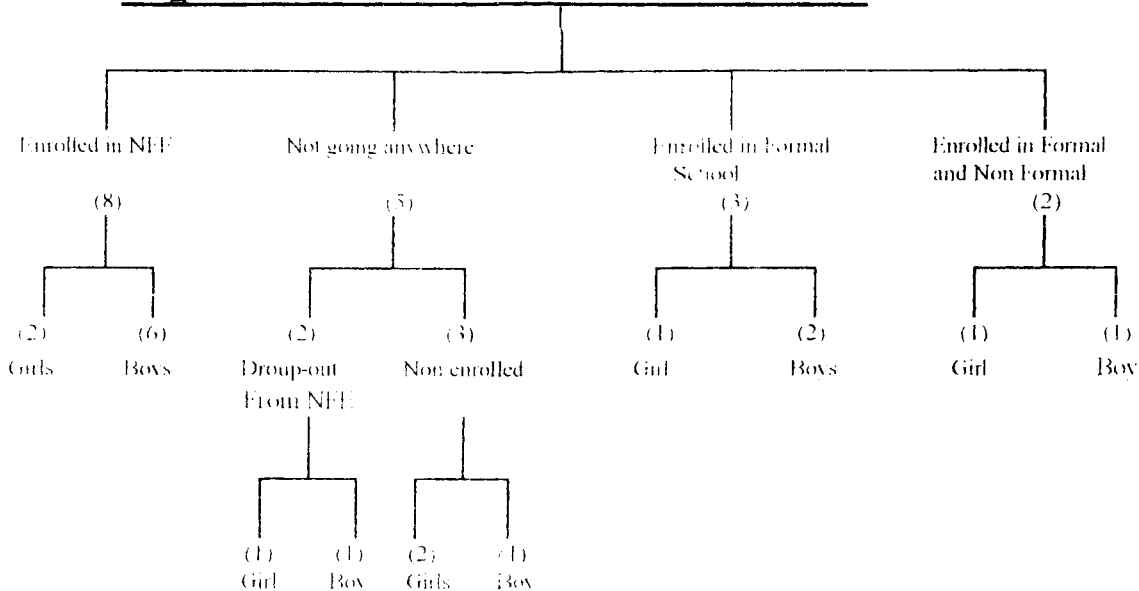
2.4.3 The third stage in the sample units are the NFE centres. All the NFE centres in a District were stratified first into two groups, viz. the Govt-run centres and NGO-run centres, which were further classified into co-education and girl centres on the one hand, and primary and middle level centres on the other. Six NFE centres were selected randomly from each District, 4 of which are co-educational and 2 are girl centres. Out of the 4 co-educational centres, 3 are Govt-run centres and one run by an NGO. Of the 2 girl centres, one State-run and one NGO-run centre were selected. Wherever girl centres were not available, they were substituted by co-educational centres. Out of the 6 selected centres, 2-NGO run centres were selected subject to their availability in the

selected District. In case of non-availability, they were substituted by Govt-run centres. Primary and middle school level NFE centres were selected in the ratio of 90:10, subject to their availability in the selected District. Altogether 108 NFE centres were chosen from 6 selected States of 18 districts. Once the NFE centres were selected, the villages in which these centres are located, were also selected for collecting the requisite village and household level information for the study.

NFE Learners/Eligible Children

2.4.4 To broadly cover the children of 6-14 years age group in the selected (NFE centre) villages, a detailed multi-stage sample design was drawn up. The target group comprised five distinct categories of children viz-(i) those enrolled in NFE centres (ii) those attending formal schools (primary and middle stage), (iii) drop-out children, (iv) never enrolled children and (v) children enrolled both in NFE Centres and Formal schools (boys and girls) from different socio-economic background. From each selected village, 18 eligible children (learners, drop-outs and non-enrolled) were selected as shown below.

Eligible Children/ NFE Learner 18 Households



The figures in parenthesis are the number of sample units per NFE centre/village.

2.4.5 As per the attendance register of the selected NFE centre, 8 learners, comprising 6 boys and 2 girls were chosen randomly. Similarly, from the attendance register of formal school, 3 children (2 boys and 1 girl) were chosen randomly. A separate list of students, attending both Formal and Non Formal education centres were prepared and out of this, 2 students (1 boy, 1 girl) were chosen randomly.

2.4.6 A separate list of non-enrolled children and drop-outs from the households in the village within a radius of 1 km from the selected centre was prepared and alphabetically arranged. Out of these lists, 5 children (3 non-enrolled and 2 drop-outs of NFE) were chosen randomly. They comprised 2 boys and 1 girl of non-enrolled and one boy and 1 girl of drop-outs. In case of non-availability of children in any category, they were substituted by learners of selected NFE centres. Thus a total of 1943 children were selected for the study.

Instructors

2.4.7 Instructors of NFE centres are vital and instrumental in the success of the NFE scheme. All the Instructors of the selected NFE centres were selected for the study. The total sample comprises of 108 Instructors.

Supervisors

2.4.8 All the Supervisors who were having the supervisory role over the selected NFE centres and Instructors were covered for the study. However, since Supervisory posts in Bihar and U.P. States have been abolished recently, these could not be covered. A total of 72 Supervisors from 4 States comprise the present sample.

Other Sample Units

(1) Knowledgeable Persons

2.4.9 Besides the target group and functionaries, 2 to 3 knowledgeable persons from each sample village were selected to elicit their awareness and views on the educational facilities, functioning of NFE centre and its functionaries, community awareness and participation. Knowledgeable persons were selected from among the school teachers, health officials, members of Panchayat, Mahila Mandal, NGO, etc. A total of 221 knowledgeable persons were selected for the study.

(2) **Voluntary Organisations:**

2.4.10 Depending upon their availability and in accordance with the sample design, NFE centres being run by the Non-Governmental Voluntary Organisations were selected for obtaining information on their activities, modus operandi of NFE scheme, functionaries, etc.

The total coverage of the sample under this study is as follows:

1.	States	:	6
2.	Districts	:	3X6 = 18
3.	NFE Centres	:	6X18 = 108
4.	Eligible children/learners	:	18X108 = 1944
5.	Instructors	:	6X18 = 108
6.	Supervisors	:	18X4 = 72
7.	Knowledgeable persons	:	221
8.	Voluntary Organisations	:	18

Instruments and Respondents

2.5 The following instruments were designed for collection of both quantitative and qualitative data from the selected samples.

1. State Level Schedule

State Level Schedules were designed to generate data on administrative structure of NFE scheme, physical and financial parameters, training of personnel, linkage between FE and NFE, developing TLM, monitoring and evaluation process, certification, etc.

2. District Level Schedule

District Level Schedules were designed for collecting data on population, Formal schools, NFE centres, administrative structure, financial and physical

parameters, training of personnel, certification, monitoring, supervision, strategies, etc.

3. NFE Centre Village Schedule

NFE Centre Village Schedules were designed for collecting information about the NFE centre, Village details on population of 6-14 years age group, SC/ST households, public amenities and services, Formal schools, etc.

4. Instructor Schedule

Instructor Schedules were designed for covering Instructors' socio-economic background, qualifications, training, NFE centre admissions, drop-outs, physical facilities, TLM, course particulars, methods of teaching, VEC and community's role, monitoring, etc.

5. Supervisor Schedule

Supervisor Schedules were designed for getting information on socio-economic background, qualifications, training, functions and role in the management and control of NFE centres, etc.

6. Eligible Children/Learners Schedule

Eligible Children/Learners Schedules were designed for generating data on learner's family, socio-economic background, their views and aspirations, availability of schools, reasons for admissions and drop-outs, performance of NFE centre and instructor, method and quality of teaching, etc.

7. Knowledgeable Person Schedule

Knowledgeable Person Schedules were designed for eliciting information on NFE centre and Instructor's performance, learner's background response, VEC and its role, community participation and NFE scheme, success and modifications, etc.

8. Voluntary Organisation Schedule

Voluntary Organisation Schedules were designed for collecting information on VO-run centre, organisational set-up, functionaries, innovative

methods of teaching, linkage with VEC, community and Government, physical and financial performance, etc.

9. Guide points

Guide points were provided to the field teams for developing qualitative notes at State, District and Voluntary Organisation levels with regard to implementation, training, monitoring and evaluation, curriculum, TLM, certification and community participation and suggestions for improvement, if any.

Reference Period

2.6 The reference period of the study is four years of Eighth Five Year Plan i.e. from 1992-93 to 1995-96.

Orientation of the field team and Survey

2.7.1 The study design, the draft schedules and guide points for qualitative notes were discussed first with the REOs at New Delhi in September, 1996 and then in an Orientation Programme for the concerned PEOs, investigators and other field staff held at Bhubaneswar in January, 1997. All the aspects of the study, instruments prepared, code key, instructions and the type of data to be procured, selection of respondents were explained in detail to the field teams. Field visits were also paid by the Project Director to get the first hand information from the NFE centres and inputs from officials of State and Voluntary Organisations.

2.7.2 After the Orientation Programme, the survey was initiated in the first week of March, 1997. Data collection was completed in the second week of July, 1997 in all the 6 States. State level data were collected from the respective State Governments by the Regional Evaluation Officers of PEO. The PEO field teams had visited 108 NFE centres in as many villages of 18 selected Districts and canvassed the schedules at various levels and also held discussions with Instructors, Supervisors, Project Officers, VEC members, knowledgeable persons, District officials and heads of Voluntary Organisations for recording their observations on issues relating to NFE scheme. Qualitative notes have been used to supplement the analysis based on the data collected from structured schedules.

Scrutiny and Verification of Data

2.8 The data collected through the various schedules were scrutinized first at Regional Evaluation Offices of PEO and then at PEO Headquarters. Proper codes were developed for both open ended and close ended questions and the coded information were fed to the computer and suitable computer programmes were developed for tabulation and analysis of data with the help of National Informatic Centre (NIC), Planning Commission.

CHAPTER 3

PLANNING, ADMINISTRATION AND MONITORING PROCESS

PLANNING

National Level

3.1.1 The Programme of Action for the implementation of the scheme on Non-Formal Education, as revised in 1992, mentioned that the essential characteristics of the scheme should be its organisational flexibility, relevance of curriculum, relating the diversified learning activities to the learners' needs and decentralisation of management by evolving various models depending upon the requirement of the target groups. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), in consultation with the national resource institutions like NCERT and NEIPA as well as institutions in the concerned State Governments, formulates the long term, medium term and annual NFE plans.

State Level

3.1.2 In the States, the responsibility for planning, monitoring, overseeing and evaluating the programmes lies with the Joint Director, NFE. In some cases, Director of Education/Director of Adult and Non Formal Education/Director, Mass Education/Director, Tribal and Social Welfare is responsible for planning and implementation of NFE Programme. For academic support, State level functionaries draw upon the resources of SCERTs/SIE/DSERT, NCERT in planning, designing training programmes, development of instructional materials, etc. The State level organisations are directly responsible for collection of data about centres, instructors/supervisors/project officers and identification of community needs and for monitoring the programme.

District Level

3.1.3 The District Education Officer is responsible for monitoring formal and non-formal education programmes. He/She is helped by

Assistant Director of NFE/Coordinator on matters of planning, guiding and monitoring of NFE programmes under different projects within a specific District. The DIET and the DRU are institutions, which are expected to provide technical and academic support. The DIET has direct responsibility for organising training of instructors and supervisors. The DRC assists in the collection of basic data on the status of NFE in the area of its operation. An important function of the DRU is the renewal and upgrading of curriculum and development of local specific teaching-learning materials.

Project Level

3.1.4 At the project level, a Project Officer is responsible for effective functioning of all NFE Centres. The number of centres under a Project Officer is generally 100. In tribal, hilly, desert and remote areas, a reduced number is allowed in the light of topographical and other conditions. The central guidelines for project development are at Annexure 3.1. The Project Officer is responsible for educating, orienting and organising training for instructors and supervisors on the concepts, operational strategies and approach for implementation of NFE programme. He is also responsible for pupil evaluation and for maintaining close liaison with DIET, DRU, District Education Officer, Assistant Directors of NFE/NFE Coordinators, Voluntary Agencies, TLC Agencies and various development and Social Welfare agencies.

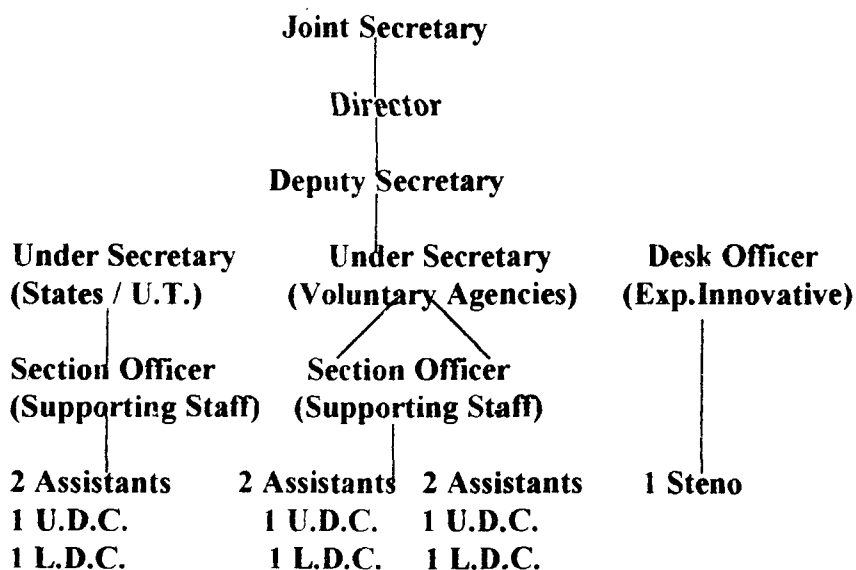
Village Level

3.1.5 The most important functionaries of NFE are instructors and supervisors. The instructor is responsible for day to day activities of the centre, identification of out of school and non-school going children through survey of households and selection of proper site/place for the centre in consultation with Village Education Committee. The supervisor is responsible for providing academic and technical support to the instructors, solving their administrative problems and coordinating the support of different agencies. The Village Education Committee (VEC), has to play a significant role for selection of suitable location for centres, identification of potential instructors, persuading parents to send their children to the centre, deciding upon timing of the centre, ensuring

effective functioning of the centre and maintaining liaison with other developmental agencies at the village level.

Organisational Set Up Central Level

3.2.1. Since the inception of the NFE Programme in 1978-79, the administrative set up at Centre is being strengthened to meet the growing needs of the scheme. At present it is being monitored, supervised and coordinated under the over all guidance of the Joint Secretary (Elementary Education), Ministry of Human Resource Development. He is assisted by a Director, two Under Secretaries (one for States/UTs and the second for Voluntary Agencies) and a Desk Officer for experimental and innovative programme. The Under Secretaries are supported by two Section Officers with 12 supporting staff. They plan, administer, overview and monitor the NFE scheme in the 21 States/UTs of India. The administrative set up is illustrated in the following chart.



3.2.2 The total effective strength of administrative machinery for the scheme at the Centre is 18 staff members at present. They have to control 2,41,399 centres under the States/UT Governments and 48,878 centres under 740 Voluntary Agencies (VAs). NFE scheme in 16 States is being looked after by two officers with 4 supporting staff, which comes to about 40,233 centres (403 projects) per staff member.

The workload of voluntary agencies' run NFE centres in 20 States/UTs is being administered by 3 officers and 8 supporting staff (4443 centres per staff member). **Considering the enormous work load of processing the project proposals, quarterly reports, administration, monitoring and evaluation, the coordination with NCERT, Grants-in Aid Committee and Pre-sanction Appraisal Committee for voluntary organisations, the organisational set up at Central level is very much under staffed.** In view of the resolve of the Government for decentralisation, NFE should need to be transferred to PRIs (Para 6.4.5).

State Level

3.2.3 Central guidelines make mandatory provisions for systematic organisational setup for efficient running of the NFE programme in the States. The broad central guidelines and the existing administrative mechanism at the State capitals, District Headquarters, Block, Project and Centre level are shown in Annexure 3.2. As per the provisions, the apex post of Director, who is the overall in-charge of Elementary Education (both formal and non-formal), is in operation in all the selected States. In the States of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa the nomenclature of this post is Commissioner. The post of Joint Director, who is exclusively administering the NFE programme, is present in the selected State but in Orissa State, where it is being looked after by the Deputy Director. Some States like, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh have also created additional post of Assistant Director for better administration. (See Annexure 3.3).

3.2.4 The academic support for NFE Scheme comes mainly from the SCERT, which prepares Teaching Learning Material (TLM), trains Instructors, Supervisors, Project Officers and District level Officers, besides monitoring the scheme. This institutional set-up is present in all the States, though the nomenclature for the posts vary in different States. At SCERT level, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa States have additional posts of Director for academic, training and monitoring work.

3.2.5 There is a Divisional break-up in the States of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa with the creation of 54 Educational Districts in the

former and 64 Educational Districts in the later for better coordination and supervision. There is a Joint Director and Coordinator at the Divisional level in Madhya Pradesh with requisite supporting staff for better coordination.

3.2.6 At the District, project, block levels, the administrative set up is almost similar in all the 6 selected States except that recently the posts of Supervisor have been done away with in the States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and senior Coordinator and Junior Coordinator posts are created at the district level in Orissa State. Supervisor's role has been assigned to the Village Education Committees (VEC) in these States.

Village Education Committee

3.2.7 The creation of Village Education Committee (VEC) is mandatory for every NFE Centre in all the States, and this has been reported to be in operation in almost all the centres with a few exceptions especially in urban centres of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. **The VECs are more active in the States of Uttar Pradesh and Orissa.** It was envisaged in the guidelines of MHRD that, VEC should include representatives from SCs/STs, teachers, Panchayat members and local leaders since VECs have to provide infrastructure for the provision of facilities to NFE centre/ Instructor, undertake supervision and monitoring besides motivating the parents to send their children to the centre. Though this composition is not strictly followed, VECs generally involve village Panchayat President and the local leaders. **VEC in Uttar Pradesh are entrusted with the task of disbursing the honorarium to the Instructor.** Block/Project level, District level and State level Committees with local leaders were also in operation in Bihar and Orissa States for monitoring and supervision.

Duties and role of Functionaries

Central level

3.3.1 NFE Department in MHRD in consultation with other divisions/departments and national resource institutions (like NCERT

and NIEPA) does the planning, liaison work, compilation, monitoring and evaluation with State Education Departments and Voluntary agencies. Project proposals' evaluation, administration and monitoring of VAs is exclusively being looked after by the Ministry officials. It sets up Central Core Group (CCG) and grants-in-aid Committee for State Govt. and voluntary agencies for NFE scheme and for coordinating Experimental/ Innovative projects in NFE. It prepares the long term, medium term and annual plans of action. However, it is observed that, most of the work pertains to VAs relating to sanctioning of projects and release of funds and the staff position for this is very much inadequate at the Central level.

State level

3.3.2.1 At the Secretariat level, Director, Joint Director and Deputy Director staff are involved in planning, administration, monitoring and coordination activities. In most of the States, Director/ Commissioner is the overall in-charge of NFE scheme. Secretariat staff are responsible for processing the reports from Projects and Districts, supply of Teaching Learning Material (TLM), training, arranging meetings/work-shops and appointments at the District level.

3.3.2.2 District level administration is looked after by District Education Officer assisted by Assistant Director, except in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. They are responsible for administration, monitoring, coordination, training and appointment of Project Officers, Supervisors and Instructors. In Madhya Pradesh and Orissa Assistant Directors and Jr. Coordinators, who are the in-charge of Educational Districts, coordinate and monitor the NFE programme under the supervision of Deputy Director and Deputy Inspector of Schools. Project Officers are entrusted with the task to coordinate, and supervise the activities of about 100 NFE centres. In the States of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, B.D.O. is the Drawing and Disbursing Officer. **The decentralisation of administrative and financial powers envisaged in the Central guidelines are yet to be translated into action in most of the States.**

3.3.2.3 Each supervisor is responsible for the supervision and monitoring of 10 to 15 NFE centres and is required to visit a centre

twice a month. Instructors, besides teaching and looking after the activities of NFE centre, are to survey the village, motivate children for admission and to coordinate with VEC, Community and Supervisors. **Our field report data indicates that, Village survey and visits by Supervisors are not being carried out properly and they are working fairly well only in Rajasthan and Orissa.**

Staff strength and pattern

3.3.3.1 As discussed earlier, all the States are following Central guidelines in general regarding the staffing pattern at the State Secretariat level. A joint Director is in-charge of NFE programme under the overall supervision of Director/ Commissioner of Elementary/ Basic Education. Many States like Anadhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have created additional posts of Deputy Director, Additional Director and Assistant Director at the Secretariat and Divisional level due to the expansion of the scheme over the years.

3.3.3.2 The academic and training support stemming from SCERT set-up is also well established in all the States as per the Central norms. The requisite number of Staff positions exists in the selected States except in Rajasthan where Adviser post is vacant. In Madhya Pradesh and Orissa States, SCERT has been strengthened by the creation of additional posts of Director of SCERT and SIE.

3.3.3.3 A detailed analysis of the staffing pattern and strength in the selected Districts/ Urban Centres of 6 States is shown in Annexure 3.3. **It is apparent that, staff position in the rural districts of the states of Bihar (Purbi Champaran), Madhya Pradesh(Sidhi), Orissa (Keonjhar) and Uttar Pradesh (Maharajganj) is dismal as many of the Instructors and Supervisors are not appointed and are not in position due to one or the other reason. Though District level staff position is satisfactory, Project Officers and their supporting staff are not appointed against their sanctioned posts in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.**

Voluntary Organisations:

3.3.4.1 As mentioned earlier, there are broad guidelines for engaging the Voluntary Agencies /Trusts/ Panchayat Raj Institutes in the NFE scheme. Assistance is provided on Project basis with guidelines for staff position as in the case of State Governments.

3.3.4.2 A large number of Voluntary Organisations are facilitating in NFE scheme with dedication especially in Orissa (139) followed by Uttar Pradesh (93) and Andhra Pradesh (75). 27 VOs in Madhya Pradesh and 21 VOs in Rajasthan are also running the NFE Centres. The organisational set-up at Project, Supervisor and Instructor level is similar in all the VOs of the selected States. Project Officers have a supervisory role for about 100 NFE Centres with three supporting staff (Accountant, Clerk and Peon), with assistance from Supervisors (mostly working on part time basis for every 10-15 Centres who monitor the performance of Instructors (working on part time basis sometimes) manning the NFE Centres. The duties and responsibilities of these functionaries are similar as in State Government set-up. However, the qualifications and emoluments of the Instructors, Supervisors and Project Officers are generally higher in VOs as compared to State Government functionaries. This has been examined in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Central level

3.4.1 Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resources Development has laid down specific guidelines for Management Information System (MIS) at the State and Central level. The Ministry had also undertaken the periodic monitoring and Evaluation of the NFE scheme in the country by Social Science/ Educational/ Research Institutes, Committees and other external agencies and conducted several workshops/ seminars for streamlining and efficiency. About 7 major Evaluations were undertaken/ sponsored by the Ministry so far by the Operations Research group, Regional College of Education (NCERT), Orissa Youth Association Centre and others. The deliberations and reports resulted to some extent in scaling up the

programme in 1987 and its thorough revision in 1993. The monitoring of the programme is done on the basis of quarterly progress reports submitted by the implementing agencies. **Though filing of reports is a prerequisite for the release/grant of funds to State/VA but remedial action is not being initiated by the Ministry seriously.**

State level

3.4.2.1 Director/Commissioner School Education assisted by Joint Director NFE is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the scheme progress at the State level and coordinates with the Centre. Evaluation of NFE performance is done on macro - terms i.e. learners enrolled, their achievement, and about instructors, supervisors, administrative staff and extent of acceptance and usefulness to the community. District level monitoring and supervision is being done by District Education Officer/Asst. Director with the assistance of Project Officers, Supervisors and Instructors. VECs also is also supposed to play a major role in the supervision and monitoring at the specific Central level.

3.4.2.2 Instructors have to submit monthly progress reports to the Supervisors, who visit each Centre twice a month and submit progress reports to the Project Officer. These progress reports contain particulars of learner's strength, attendance, their performance in subjects, the problems of the centre and the superior's supervision details. Monthly and quarterly progress reports are compiled and processed at the District level by the District Officials who in turn send separate reports to the State Officials. In Andhra Pradesh, instructors have to conduct formative and summative evaluation of learners at the end of unit/ month and every 6 months respectively, submit the monthly reports of NFE Centre and attend cluster meetings arranged by the Supervisor/ Project Officer. **The involvement of VEC is nominal to negligible.** Recently monitoring, supervision has been revamped and systematised through structured formats. **Though supervision, visits to Centres and filing of reports by Supervisors, Project Officers and District Educational Officers**

and feed back exists, it is fraught with irregularities and lack of financial and transport facilities to the supervisory staff.

3.4.2.3 In Bihar, Instructors and NFE Centres are supervised by the VEC concerned, though it is not very effective. Supervisor post has been abolished and Project Officers have to directly coordinate and monitor the scheme, which is very weak. Block level and District level coordinating Committees have been formed, though they are dormant. District Mass Education Officer does the evaluation of scheme annually. There is wide variation in the monitoring and evaluation procedures from district to district. In Madhya Pradesh Evaluation at the district is being done by Chief Executive Officer in Bhopal district, whereas it is the responsibility of Assistant Director in Guna (with the help of Zilla Panchayat) and Sidhi districts. Besides Project Officer, Block Education Officer is involved in the monitoring of the scheme at the project/ Block level. There are no coordination Committees at the Block, District and State level. Monitoring is weak in the State due to lack of powers at the Project level and transport facilities to Project Officer and Assistant Director.

3.4.2.4 In Orissa State, Central guidelines are followed in the monitoring and evaluation procedure and the VECs are very active. Monthly review meetings upto district level and bimonthly meetings at Secretariat level are being held to monitor the scheme. Though Coordination Committees are formed at State, District and Project level for monitoring and supervision they are not effective in some districts. Common evaluation of the learners at class - III, class - IV and class-VII for all Centres has been introduced in Keonjhar district for uniformity of certification.

3.4.2.5 Monthly meetings are being conducted at District and Project level, where monitoring, performance and problems are discussed in Rajasthan. Monitoring reports are filed monthly by the Instructors, Supervisors and Project Officers to Assistant Director. Evaluation of learners from 3rd unit is good resulting in lateral entry of the pupil in Formal Schools in 6th class. There are no coordination Committees at the District level and lack of proper financial and

administrative powers to the Assistant Director and Project Officer, which is hampering monitoring and evaluation process. The role of VEC is nominal and it is reported to be negative in some Centres of the State. Village Education Committees are effective in Uttar Pradesh and they monitor and supervise the NFE Centers performance. Though monitoring system has been reported to be adequate, it is not very effective due to the non-formation of District level Committees and lack of financial and transport facilities to the Project Officer and supervising staff respectively. Monitoring reports filed by the staff are routine and quantitative in nature.

Voluntary Organisations

3.4.3.1 Voluntary Organisations have their own monitoring and evaluation process and they are filing half yearly reports to Central authorities as in State Governments' set-up. Instructors, supervisors and project officers regularly send progress reports to their organisations. **The State/District level authorities do not have any control over the functioning of the Voluntary Organisations and cannot monitor the performance of NGO run centres.**

CHAPTER 4

PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Since its inception in 1979-80, the NFE Scheme grew in its size and coverage over the years. Till 1996-97 the number of centres in the country have increased from 1.26 lakhs in 1986 to 2.41 lakhs (State Sector), against the overall target of 3.5 lakhs. The enrolment capacity also increased from 3.65 million to 6.3 million against the target of 7 million at the end of the Eighth Plan. However, the actual physical and financial performance at the levels of State, district and project differs a lot. An attempt is made to analyse the data collected from the selected States and districts for the period 1992-97 to assess the physical performance of the NFE scheme. The growth in the number of centres, their composition in terms of co-ed and girl centres, enrolment rates, successful completion and lateral entry to the formal schools have been used as indicators of physical performance of the scheme.

Number of Centres

4.1.1 Table 4.1 gives the number of NFE centres, their break-up in terms of State-run and NGO-run centres and the rate of growth of such centres during the period 1992-93 to 1996-97 in the selected States. **Except in Rajasthan, and to some extent in Orissa, there has not been much growth in the State-run NFE centres; in fact, Uttar Pradesh shows a decline. However, there has been a phenomenal growth of the NGO-run centres in all the States.** The combined effect of the differential growth rates of the two types of centres has been a positive overall growth in the total number of NFE centres in all the sample States, except Uttar Pradesh.

4.1.2 The question that assumes importance is: are the number of centres in different States adequate to meet the needs of the eligible out-of-school children? An attempt has been made in the study to arrive at an indirect estimate of the out-of-school children in the selected States and examine the question of adequacy of NFE centres, on the basis of the projected population in the age group 6-14 years and children enrolled in formal schools for the year 1995-96. Table 4.2 summarises the results.

Table 4.1**Number of NFE centres in the Selected States**

State	1992-93			1996-97		
	State run Centres	NGO run Centres	Total	State run Centres	NGO run Centres	Total
Andhra Pradesh	25400	3040	28440	25400 (0.0)	5845 (92.3)	31245 (9.9)
Bihar	35100	1805	36905	44800 (27.6)	3530 (95.6)	48330 (30.9)
Madhya Pradesh	34080	680	34760	34080 (0.0)	1880 (176.5)	35960 (3.5)
Orissa	13448	6085	19533	15448 (14.9)	9656 (58.7)	25104 (28.5)
Rajasthan	10400	1190	11590	17600 (69.2)	1646 (38.3)	19246 (66.1)
Uttar Pradesh	60320	2675	62995	58107 (-3.7)	5581 (108.6)	63688 (1.1)

Figures in parenthesis are growth rates between 1992-93 and 1996-97 as percentages.

Source - State Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

4.1.3 It is obvious that in spite of a steep growth in the number of NGO-run centres during the Eighth Plan, the existing NFE centres meet only a fraction of the need for such centres. In particular, the requirement of such centres in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh is enormous. It may however, be noted that the large gap in availability is primarily because of low enrolment in formal schools, which are not adequate to cater to the needs of people (Table 4.3). **The population-primary school ratio in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh is, however, very unfavorable as compared to other States.** This is an important observation and it needs to be examined if access to formal school can be improved through improvement in the supply of formal school infrastructure, modification in school timing etc. so as to reduce the demand on NFE centres.

Table 4.2
Demand - Supply Gaps in NFE centres

State	NFE centres required @ 20 children/ centre (in lakh)	Actually Existing (in lakh)	Gaps (col. 1 - col.2) (in lakh)
Andhra Pradesh	1.33	0.25	1.08
Bihar	3.68	0.38	3.30
Madhya Pradesh	0.72	0.34	0.38
Orissa	0.58	0.15	0.43
Rajasthan	0.64	0.18	0.46
Uttar Pradesh	3.32	0.58	2.74

Source: (i) State Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

(ii) Selected Educational Statistics, Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD), 1995-96

Table 4.3
Availability of Primary Schools and Enrolment Rates

State	Population (1991) primary School (1995-96) Ratio	Enrolment Rate for 6-14 years age group (1995-96)
Andhra Pradesh	1355	78.7
Bihar	1635	60.9
Madhya Pradesh	917	89.5
Orissa	872	81.5
Rajasthan	1319	86.4
Uttar Pradesh	1608	76.7

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD), 1997

4.1.4 The other relevant issue in this context relates to the spread of the centres vis-a-vis their need. In other words, it is of interest to know if the centres are being located in accordance with the need. The non-formal centres are required more in areas where the literacy rate and enrolment in formal schools are lower. Table 4.4 presents information on the number of

centres, population-centre ratio, literacy rates, and number of formal (primary) schools per 100,000 population in some selected districts.

Table 4.4

NFE Centres and District Profile

District	No. of Centres (1996-97)	Population (1991) to Centres ratio	Population to primary school ratio	Literacy Rates (%)
<u>Andhra Pradesh</u> Hyderabad	876	3591	7710	71.52
Medak	921	2464	1622	32.41
Vijaynagaram	1044	2021	993	34.19
<u>Bihar</u> Patna	393	9206	1971	56.33
Madhepura	850	1385	2009	27.72
<u>Madhya Pradesh</u> Bhopal	458	2950	1428	64.27
Guna	572	2290	833	34.58
Sidhi	596	2304	844	29.15
<u>Orissa</u> Bhubaneswar	190	2166	1475	63.28
Keonjhar	723	1849	847	44.73
Kalahandi	712	2247	1099	30.05
<u>Rajasthan</u> Jaipur	980	4818	2063	47.88
Banswara	580	1992	1242	26.00
Tonk	300	3250	1510	33.67
<u>Uttar Pradesh</u> Lucknow	493	5604	2359	57.49
Maharajganj	1160	1445	1378	28.90
Unnao	910	2418	2253	38.70

Source: (i) District Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

(ii) Selected Educational Statistics. Ministry of Human Resources Development (HRD), 1995-96.

4.1.5 It is observed that, in general, the spread of NFE centres is in accordance with the need. Thus, one finds greater concentration of NFE centres in districts where the literacy rate is low, as reflected in the population to centre ratio in Table 4.4 . It is also interesting to note that the concentration of formal primary school is high in the districts where the population -NFE centres is low. **It needs to be examined if more and more eligible children could be brought in the fold of formal schools through improvement in infrastructure and other modifications to suit the local needs. Such a step would reduce the demand on non-formal education system on the one hand and lead to better utilisation of the formal school infrastructure on the other.**

Girl Centres

4.2.1 It is well known that the share of girls among the out-of-school children is more than that of the boys. Low enrolment and literacy among girls is because of the fact that in the Indian socio-cultural milieu, girls are required to attend to household work and look after younger siblings. To attract the out-of-school girl children and spread literacy among them, special provision has been made for them in the non-formal education system. One of these is to give special financial incentives to States/NGOs so as to encourage them to open more girl centres. As indicated earlier (Chapter-1), the central grant is 60% for co-ed centres and 90% for girl centres. The share of girl centres in total NFE centres is found to be 50% or more for Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh only, while in other States it is very low (Table 4.5).

4.2.2 **There is, however, an inverse relationship between the percentage of girl centres and enrolment/ literacy rate among girls (females).** Thus, the share of girl centres is more in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh where enrolment of girls is low. However, Bihar is an exception as the share of girl centres is low in spite of low enrolment and literacy among girls (females).

Enrolment in NFE Centres

4.3.1 State-wise total enrolment, enrolment rate and average number of learners per centre are given in Table 4.6.

Table 4.5
Share of Girl Centres, Enrolment & Female Literacy

State	% of Girl Centres	Primary Enrolment Rate in Formal School (1996)	Female Literacy Rate (1991)
Andhra Pradesh	24.4	86.50	32.7
Bihar	29.9	53.2	22.9
Madhya Pradesh	49.3	86.5	28.9
Orissa	34.2	87.1	34.7
Rajasthan	57.7	58.5	20.4
Uttar Pradesh	49.6	59.5	25.3

Source: (i) State Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

(ii) Selected Educational Statistics, Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD), 1997.

Table 4.6
Enrolment per centre

State	Total NFE Enrolment (1995-96)	Enrolment Rate (as % of out of School Children)	Average No. of learners/Centre (State Average)	Average No. of learners/ Centre (Sample Centres)
Andhra Pradesh	638000	23.9	25.1	31.6
Bihar	915426	12.4	24.1	24.5
Madhya Pradesh	759000	50.9	21.7	33.4
Orissa	386000	32.9	25.0	31.3
Rajasthan	461000	35.8	26.2	30.7
Uttar Pradesh	139500	21.0	24.0	26.8

Source: (i) State Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

(ii) Instructor Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

4.3.2 It may be noted that, except in Madhya Pradesh, the NFE system has not been able to attract the out-of-school children in any significant way. In Bihar, the enrolment is extremely low. Low enrolment can result either from constraints on supply side or from lack of demand for education. As per guidelines, an NFE centre should have a minimum of 20 learners and

it is observed that this criterion is met at the aggregate level. However, data collected by PEO from the selected centres show that the average number of learners is much more than the minimum level prescribed. While the discrepancy between the macro and micro level data needs to be examined, it is obvious that there is demand for NFE. Thus, the low enrolment rate in NFE system appears to be the result of the constraints on the supply side.

4.3.3 The NFE centres are required specifically to cater to the needs of the SC/ST population, as the literacy rates among them are much lower than those among others. All the State Governments could not supply the break-up of enrolment in terms of social groups. However, it is observed that in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh (for which data are available), the percentage of SC and ST students in NFE system exceed the percentage shares of SCs and STs in the total State population. This is generally observed at the district level, too. **Thus, the NFE system seems to be contributing to the objective of improving the enrolment and literacy rates among SC/ST population.**

4.3.4 **In spite of the financial incentives being given to the States and NGOs, the NFE system does not seem to be contributing to the reduction in gender disparity in education in any significant way.** The percentage of girls among the children enrolled in NFE system is 44.8 in Andhra Pradesh, 42.8 in Bihar, 45.0 in Madhya Pradesh, 57.7 in Rajasthan and 52.9 in Uttar Pradesh. **Thus, only in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh the proportion of girls is more than 50%.** The percentage of girl centres in these two States is also higher. It seems that availability of girl centres will increase the enrolment of girls. This issue will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Success Rate & Lateral Entry to Formal System

4.4.1 The performance of the NFE system could be judged on the basis of the proportion of enrolled students completing the NFE education and the percentage of NFE learners getting entry into the formal education system. The available secondary data at the State and District levels are not reliable. An attempt is made to present estimates of the success rate and rate of entry to the formal system on the basis of information collected by PEO field teams from the NFE centres at the village level (Table 4.7)

Table 4.7

Success Rate & Lateral Entry of NFE Learners

State	% of Students completing NFE education	% of Successful Students who were admitted to FE	
		Total	Girls
Andhra Pradesh	22.8	13.5	5.4
Madhya Pradesh	36.4	12.8	5.1
Orissa	21.1	89.3	41.1
Rajasthan	12.0	66.7	28.2
Uttar Pradesh	44.4	7.6	3.3

Source: Instructor Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

4.4.2 It is disheartening to note that only a small proportion of the enrolled students completed NFE of two years (except Uttar Pradesh). However, what is encouraging is that in Orissa and Rajasthan a significant proportion of successful NFE students seek admission in the formal system.

4.4.3 It is of interest to identify the factors that contribute to this success in Orissa and Rajasthan. In Orissa the government has taken initiative in facilitating the linkage between the FE and NFE. Among the steps taken by the government are: (i) reorganisation of districts to form educational districts for better monitoring and control over the functioning of both FE and NFE centres; (ii) encouraging the formal system teachers in guiding the NFE instructors and (iii) giving incentives to NFE instructors by promising them with the possibility of absorption in government service, after completing a certificate course in teaching, in due course. In Rajasthan too, the government has taken initiative in extending the NFE facilities to people, where the administration, training and monitoring system is better. However, the role of the Village Education Committee seems to be the single most important factor contributing to the success of NFE in Rajasthan.

Allocation of Central Funds for State run Centres

4.5.1 The allocation of central funds to a state in any given year depends on the number of centres and the composition of NFE centres in terms of co-ed and girl centres. According to the financing pattern adopted, the Central Government contributes 90% of the expenses of girl centres and 60% of the expenses of co-ed centres. In other words, an equal proportion of co-ed and girl centres would imply an allocation of 75% by the Centre. However, this percentage could vary slightly depending on the intra-year variation in the proportion of girl centres in the State. Table 4.8 gives the annual average total allocation for NFE, the share of girl centres and the share of the State Government in total allocation during the Eighth Plan.

Table 4.8

Allocation of Funds & States Share

State	No. Of Centres (000) in 1996-97	Average Annual allocation (Rs. Lakh) during 1992-97	Average allocation per centre (Rs.)	% of Girl centres	State Govt's Share (%)
Andhra Pradesh	25.4	1595	6280	24.4	33.2
Bihar	44.8	3244	7241	29.9	41.9
Madhya Pradesh	34.1	2703	7927	49.3	30.4
Orissa	15.4	663	4305	34.2	29.1
Rajasthan	17.6	1032	5864	57.7	17.2
Uttar Pradesh	58.1	3469	5971	49.6	15.6

Source : State Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

A few observations can be made on the pattern of allocation to NFE.

- (i) As per the revised norms a primary level NFE centre is entitled to an annual grant of Rs. 9925.00. However, actual allocation during the Eighth Plan varied between Rs 4305.00 in Orissa and Rs. 7927.00 in Madhya Pradesh. **Even the Central**

government is not contributing its full share as per norms. It has been observed that in 1995-96, the Centre released 81%, 70%, 79%, 48%, 66% and 56% of its share respectively to Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. During the same year, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh released 80%, 92%, 52%, 14% and 27% respectively of their own shares. Nothing could be said about Bihar as no information was made available to PEO.

It is obvious that flow of funds to NFE is erratic, and both the Central and State Governments are responsible for this. As a result, the NFE centres are not getting adequate financial resources to run the centres effectively. As will be noted later in Chapter V, this irregular flow of financial resources has resulted in non-availability of teaching learning material, non-payment to instructors leading to poor output of NFE centres.

- (ii) **It is important to note that the allocation pattern in all the States is not in accordance with the composition of the centres in terms of girls and co-ed centres.** This distortion has taken place because of the inability of both the Centre and States to release adequate financial resources for NFE. While the Centre was unable to provide the required funds fully, the inter-State variation in the release of Central funds have occurred because of the inability of some State Governments in fulfilling the conditions of receiving Central funds. In some cases the problem is entirely due to inadequate resources of the State governments. Thus, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have released much less than their share of funds, while Bihar and Madhya Pradesh released more than their due share during the period 1992-97. The release of funds by Andhra Pradesh and Orissa is however, in keeping with the composition of centres.

4.5.3 The erratic flow of funds to NFE could be assessed further by the rates of utilisation of Central and State resources (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9

Utilisation of Central and State Funds

State	Central Funds		State Funds	
	1993-94	1995-96	1993-94	1995-96
Andhra Pradesh	56	NA	100	26
Bihar	19	98	100	100
Madhya Pradesh	47	97	NA	NA
Orissa	66	50	100	101
Rajasthan	55	79	NA	589
Uttar Pradesh	67	87	100	100

Source: State Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

4.5.4 The State Governments are not utilizing even what is being allocated by the Centre. The utilisation rate of Central funds has improved over time. By 1995-96, except Orissa, all other States are utilizing the major part of the available Central funds. The State Governments have reported that they are using their share of allocated funds fully. However, during 1995-96, **the utilisation rate for Andhra Pradesh is extremely low and that of Rajasthan appears abnormally high. The flow of financial resources to NFE is thus erratic and inadequate.**

CHAPTER 5

FUNCTIONING OF NFE CENTRES

The success of NFE scheme revolves around the performance of individual NFE centres. The National Workshop on NFE (1995) and the Working Group Report for the Ninth Plan deliberated on issues relating to the functioning of NFE centres, and have recommended a number of steps that need to be taken for their efficient functioning and better performance. These steps relate to improvement in physical, financial and academic facilities and qualitative improvement at the levels of instructors and supervisors. However, these suggestions were based more on impressionistic studies and routine monitored information than on hard data. For the evaluation study, PEO has collected information on several aspects of functioning of 108 NFE centres spread over 18 districts in six states. The basic parameters on which the data were generated relate to: performance of the centres in terms of enrolment, drop-out, success rate and lateral entry to formal schools; availability and quality of facilities like teaching-learning material (TLM), methods of teaching and assessment etc. In addition to these, the PEO field survey was designed to generate information on the profiles of the instructors, supervisors and the villages in which the centres were located so that centre-specific information can be placed in appropriate context.

Enrolment, Drop-out and Success Rate

5.1.1 The performance of an NFE centre could be judged by analysing the pattern of enrolment, discontinuation and successful completion of the four semester -course of NFE. Table 5.1 presents the information collected from the sample centres on enrolment and drop-out for the period 1993-1996.

5.1.2 The selected NFE centres, on an average enrolled more than twenty children per centre. However, the centres in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh enrolled less number of children than in other states. **Many of the enrolled children do not complete their education in NFE. About one-fifth to one-third of the learners drop out before completing their two -year primary level course.**

Table 5.1

Enrolment and Drop-out pattern in the selected NFE centres.

State	Average No. of students enrolled per centre			Average No. of students Dropped-out per centre		
	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Andhra Pradesh	32.0	31.0	31.6	8.3	7.6	6.2
Bihar	NA	24.5	24.5	NA	4.0	4.5
Madhya Pradesh	30.8	33.6	33.4	13.0	12.8	10.6
Orissa	27.9	28.1	31.3	5.8	3.3	4.1
Rajasthan	30.9	31.0	30.7	9.0	5.5	3.1
Uttar Pradesh	24.4	26.5	26.8	NA	NA	7.3

NA = Figures not available

Source : Enrolment and drop-out figures are as per records available at the centres given by the instructors, PEO Survey, 1997.

However, as these drop-out rates are based on information relating to all types (primary and middle) of centres, they do not give a clear idea of how many of the enrolled children actually completed NFE education. To overcome this problem and to get a clear idea of the success rate in NFE, information on the actual number of learners of a particular batch, the number of successful candidates of the same batch and the number who took admissions to formal schools were collected. Table 5.2 gives the details with regard to the NFE learners who took admission in 1994 in the 108 selected NFE centres.

5.1.3 In the six sample states only 30.8% of the enrolled students completed the four-semester NFE course and only 28.7% of these successful candidates took admission in the formal school. There are, however, inter-state variations in both the success rate and the lateral entry to FE system. Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have reported relatively high rates of success, while in Rajasthan the success rate is the lowest. This performance of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, however, does compare favourably with the lateral entry rates to formal

schools. In Orissa and Rajasthan on the other hand, the lateral entry rates are higher.

Table 5.2
Success rates in the sample NFE Centres

States	Total enrolment (1994)	Enrolment of girls (1994)	% of Students who successfully completed the course in 1996	% of students who entered the formal education system after completion of NFE	
				Total	Girls
Andhra Pradesh	325	147	22.8	13.5	5.4
Bihar	250	100	NA	NA	NA
Madhya Pradesh	321	195	36.4	12.8	5.1
Orissa	265	146	21.1	89.3	41.1
Rajasthan	325	179	12.0	66.7	28.2
Uttar Pradesh	207	113	44.4	7.6	3.3
All States	1693	880	30.8	28.7	12.4

Source : Instructor Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

5.1.4 The results of Table 5.2 raise a few important issues with regard to the quality of education being imparted in NFE, methods of evaluation followed in the centres and the linkage between the formal and non-formal systems of education. To assess the quality of education being imparted by the NFE system in the six sample states, the background of the instructors, availability and adequacy of teaching-learning materials (TLM) and other relevant aspects of the functioning of NFE centres are reviewed.

Availability and Adequacy of Facilities

5.2.1 Table 5.3 clearly brings out the fact that even though some TLM are available in NFE centres, their supply is inadequate. However, their availability varies widely across States and across centres of the same state.

Table 5.3

Availability of Facilities and their adequacy in the selected NFE Centres

States	Books		Pencils		Slates		Black Board and Charts		Mats		Electri city	Petro max	Instru ctors Guide Book
	Availa bility	Adequ -ate	Availa bility	Adequ -ate	Availa bility	Adequ ate	Availa bility	Adequ -ate	Availa bility	Adeq u-ate	Availabi lity	Availa bility	Availab ility
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
A.P.	61.1	22.2	27.8	16.7	38.9	16.7	38.9	33.3	44.4	22.2	72.2	27.8	44.4
Bihar	100.0	38.9	44.4	27.8	11.1	16.7	44.4	44.4	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.9
M.P.	100.0	55.6	77.8	44.4	83.3	55.6	89.9	72.2	33.3	27.8	0.0	0.0	22.2
Orissa	94.4	11.1	94.4	38.9	38.9	33.3	100.0	94.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.9
Rajasthan	100.0	33.3	100.0	38.9	100.0	50.0	88.9	66.7	94.4	33.3	66.7	11.1	72.2
U.P.	100.0	44.4	100.0	66.7	100.0	55.6	100.0	100.0	44.4	27.8	0.0	0.0	22.2
All States	92.6	34.3	74.1	38.8	71.3	38.0	75.9	69.4	49.1	28.7	29.6	6.5	39.8

Source : Instructor's Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

5.2.2 Thus pencils and slates are not available in all the centres in states like Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. What is more disturbing is the fact that neither electricity nor petromax lights are available in the centres of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh, while the centres are required to be run as per convenience of the local population. **Even the basic things like instructors' guidebooks are not available in all the centres. Inadequacy in the supply of facilities could be an important factor contributing to high drop-outs and low success rates in NFE system.**

5.2.3 Non-availability and /or inadequacy of TLMS in the sample NFE centres is consistent with the findings (Chapter-4) that adequate financial allocation for NFE is not being made by both the Centre and state governments. **In fact, it was noted that in many states the centres are being run with less than 50% of the standard project management cost worked out by the government.** Financial stringency seems to have affected the functioning of NFE centres. **Even the meagre honoraria are not being paid regularly to the instructors of state-run NFE**

centres. Only in a few NGO-run centres (11.1%) were the instructors paid their salaries/ honoraria regularly. This obviously has a negative impact on the functioning of the centres as well as on enrolment, retention and success rates in NFE.

Profile of Instructors

5.3.1 Another aspect that is affecting the performance of the NFE system is the background of the instructors who play a crucial role in running the centres. Table 5.4 gives the profile of the instructors of the selected NFE centres in different States.

Table 5.4
Socio-economic Background of Instructors

(in percentage)

State	Age Distribution		Educational Qualification			Gender Breakup		Percentage of Girls centre
	Less than 30 years	Above 30 years	Below Matric	Secondary	Graduate & above	Male	Female	
Andhra Pradesh	44.4	55.6	50.0	33.3	16.7	50.0	50.0	77.8
Bihar	83.3	16.7	22.2	50.0	27.8	50.0	50.0	66.7
Madhya Pradesh	66.7	33.3	27.8	38.9	33.3	50.0	50.0	94.4
Orissa	77.8	22.2	83.3	16.7	0.0	55.6	44.4	66.7
Rajasthan	61.1	38.9	38.9	38.9	22.2	50.0	50.0	77.8
Uttar Pradesh	61.2	38.9	61.1	22.2	16.7	55.6	44.4	72.2

Source : Instructors Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

5.3.2 **Except in Andhra Pradesh, the majority of the instructors are in the younger age group, and a large proportion of them are not even matriculates.** The NFE system tries to cover the primary and middle level course in two and three years respectively. It is really surprising how non-matriculate (trained or untrained) instructors are expected to deliver this type of education. The quality of instructors is, however, linked, among other things, with low honoraria paid to them.

This aspect needs serious attention of the policy makers if NFE is expected to contribute significantly for realisation of the goal of universal elementary education for all the eligible children.

5.3.3 Another important observation that can be made from Table 5.4 is that **many girl centres are being run by male teachers**. Given the general weakness of the NFE infrastructure and the fact that a large proportion of the centres have instructors in the younger age groups and that some centres run in the evening hours, it is not certain if the enrolment and attendance of girls can be ensured in rural NFE centres. **In fact, in the sample girl centers the enrolment per centre was found to be very low.**

Timing of NFE Centres

5.4.1 The NFE centres are required to operate for two hours a day as per the convenience of the local population. However, as already noted, running the centres in the evening may not be possible for lack of lighting arrangements. **Many of the sample village are not electrified, nor were the centres provided with petromax for evening classes.** Most of the sample centres were found to run during day time (7 AM to 11 AM) and some during 6 PM to 8.30 PM. However, more of the NGO-run centres were maintaining flexible timings as per the requirements of local people. In Uttar Pradesh, all the centres were maintaining the same timing from 3 PM to 5 PM.

Experience and Training

5.5.1 The data from the selected instructors show that more than 2/3rd of them (upto 89% in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa) are having teaching experience of more than one year. However, the majority of them have indicated dissatisfaction with their jobs except in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, mainly due to the meagre honorarium and non-availability of TLM. Training of instructors is an essential element of the NFE scheme for an improved delivery mechanism. The data indicate that all the selected instructors, except 5% in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and 17% in Andhra Pradesh, have reported that they have undergone training. Most of the instructors are getting trained at the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), the venue of training being at

Government schools, teachers training collages or at project headquarters. The role of DIET in training the instructors seems to be significant in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar. However, **variations in training methods do not seem to have made any perceptible difference in the project outcome of NFE centres among the six sample states.**

Table 5.5

Instructor's Experience and Place of Training.

(In percentage)

States	Since how long working as Instructor		Place of Training					
	Upto 1 Year	Above 1 Year	In a Govt. School	Project headquarters	DIET	Teachers Training Institute	Other places	No training
Andhra Pradesh	27.8	72.2	22.2	16.7	33.3	5.6	5.6	16.7
Bihar	22.2	77.8	27.8	0	66.7	5.6	-	-
Madhya Pradesh	11.1	88.9	0	0	100.0	0	-	-
Orissa	11.1	88.9	5.6	5.6	55.6	16.7	16.7	-
Rajasthan	33.3	66.7	61.1	0	22.2	0	11.2	5.6
Uttar Pradesh	33.3	66.7	94.4	-	-	-	-	5.6
All States	23.1	76.9	35.2	3.7	35.2	4.6	5.6	4.6

Source : Instructor Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

Methods of Evaluation

5.6.1 Our data from selected instructors (Table 5.6) shows that only in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa instructors are following the guidelines of the instructors' manual to a certain extent. About 94% in Madhya Pradesh and 50% of instructors mostly belonging to NGO run centres in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have reported that, they are following innovative teaching methods, like the use of maps, charts, models, and conducting national festivals and sports.

5.6.2 Information on methods of evaluation indicate that in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan instructors are adopting written test (100%) as a major tool for evaluation. Besides this, Oral test (94% to 100%) is also found to be another common evaluation method in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh NFE centres. Certificates to the successful learners are being issued by instructors in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan along with authentication by District Education Officer/ Project Officers/ Supervisors. However, these data are at variance when compared with the data obtained from the parents of the students of NFE centre (Table 5.9).

Table 5.6

Methods of Evaluation in the Selected States.

(% instructors reporting)

State	Methods of Evaluation				Summative Evaluation
	Oral test	Written test	Question answer test	Assigning home work	
Andhra Pradesh	94.4	100.0	83.3	77.8	66.7
Bihar	94.4	83.3	66.7	50.0	55.6
Madhya Pradesh	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Orissa	94.4	94.4	33.3	33.3	0
Rajasthan	94.4	100.0	72.2	27.8	0
Uttar Pradesh	94.4	94.4	100.0	77.8	94.4
All States	95.4	95.4	76.9	61.1	52.8

Source: Instructor Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

Supervision & Monitoring

5.7.1 Instructors duties and functions are supervised by the supervisory staff like the Supervisors and the project officers. As per guidelines, a

supervisor for every 10 NFE centres and a project officer for every 100 centres need to be appointed for efficient running and monitoring of the scheme. Recently Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have abolished the supervisor's posts.

5.7.2 Table 5.7 shows that about 39% of the supervisors in Orissa, 50% in Rajasthan and 72% in Andhra Pradesh are looking after more than 10 NFE centres each thus exceeding the project norm. More than 50% of the supervisors have experience of 4 years and above, particularly in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Our data also indicate that all the supervisors in Orissa, about 94% in Andhra Pradesh and 83% of supervisors in Rajasthan have trained NFE personnel. All the supervisors, except three in Andhra Pradesh, have indicated satisfaction with the training they received. Most of the supervisors are receiving training either at the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) or at District Resource Unit (DRU). Supervisors are in turn expected to train the instructors in running the NFE centres. However, it is observed that none of the supervisors in Madhya Pradesh is imparting training to instructors and about 40% to 60% of supervisors are training 1 to 10 instructors each in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan.

Table 5.7

Supervisor's background, experience and training.

(In percentages)

State	No. of Supervisor	Experience				Training			No. of Centres allotted	
		Upto 1 Year	2-3 Years	4-6 Years	7 Years & above	Self Partici pation	Instructors trained during 1996		Upto 10	11 & above
							1 to 10	11 & above		
Andhra Pradesh	18	16.7	22.2	16.7	44.4	94.4	38.8	50.0	27.8	72.2
Madhya Pradesh	18	5.6	11.1	66.7	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	94.4	0.0
Orissa	18	16.7	33.3	33.3	16.7	100.0	61.1	38.8	61.1	38.9
Rajasthan	18	16.7	27.8	44.4	11.1	83.3	55.5	27.5	50.0	50.0

Source: Supervisor Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

5.7.3 As per guidelines, a supervisor is required to pay 2 visits per centre per month. However, our data show that **during 1996 the prescribed norm of visits was, to some extent, met only by the supervisors of Rajasthan (23 visits per centre)**. In the States of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh the number of visits was less than one during a full year, indicating the lack of proper supervisory mechanism (Table 5.8). However, in the case of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, the NFE being closely linked to the formal system, the visit of the supervisors may not be very important for better functioning of NFE centres.

5.7.4 There are broadly four types of duties for a supervisor, viz academic, administrative, supervisory and community mobilisation. Except in Rajasthan, the other States are concentrating mostly on the academic duties, like guiding instructors to conduct examinations, imparting training, helping the instructors to prepare question paper for examination and checking attendance.

Table 5.8

Supervisor visits, duties and responsibilities

State	No. of Supervisors	Frequency of visit per centre by supervisor during last one year
Andhra Pradesh	18	3.15
Madhya Pradesh	18	2.68
Orissa	18	10.38
Rajasthan	18	23.42
All States	72	10.23

Source : i) Supervisor Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

ii) Eligible Children Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

5.7.5 In Rajasthan, there is a multiplication of agencies carrying out the NFE work like Shiksha Karmi, Lok Jumbish, TLC etc., State and NGO run NFE centres, and there is a vast difference in their implementation and approach to financial and administrative procedures. Due to cultural and

social factors like segregation of girls and rigid caste system, some families hesitate in sending their children to a common centre where Boys or low caste children are enrolled. **Moreover for girl centres, there is shortage of female instructors. A good performance by NFE centre depends on the commitment of instructor who hardly is able to make both ends meet due to low honorarium paid to him.** Experienced instructors aspire to become regular teachers. Though the administrative department is the State Directorate of Adult Education, 80-90% primary education was governed by local self-government i.e. Panchayati Raj leading to excessive interference by the peoples' representatives i.e. village sarpanch. In Andhra Pradesh, it was opined that the existing system suffers due to various infirmities. **Primary Education in the State was neither compulsory nor was child labour banned.** Though Government of India has been releasing funds in time, the State Government was taking more time in releasing it to district/centres. **There is also a lack of sense of commitment among the NFE functionaries, particularly inertia has been observed at the district level. Lack of decision by the bureaucracy led to delay in supply of teaching learning material to the centres.**

5.7.6 In Orissa, the major problem was delay in payment of honorarium upto six-seven months to the instructors. Moreover, the remuneration itself was a deterrent to motivation for teaching. Furthermore, the infrastructure and administrative machinery was weak. Lack of accommodation for seating 25 to 30 children was another constraint in successful implementation of the programme. It was felt that accountability from an NFE functionary can be demanded if the honorarium is increased, say to at least Rs. 1000 for the instructor and Rs. 1500 for the supervisor. The State Government is rectifying some weaknesses in the programme by promising regularisation to the 2000 instructors currently working along with direct recruitees (i.e. a matriculate instructor with CT training and 3-years experience in the NFE can now become a regular teacher in a primary school).

Learners' Families and their views

5.8.1 The 1943 sample learners consist of 64% of NFE, 15% of FE, 3.5% of FE/NFE, 4% of drop-outs and the rest non-enrolled children. All

the 1943 respondent families across the six selected States were interviewed on a number of aspects relating to NFE centres, instructors, supervisors, their expectations and views on NFE scheme. Though a detailed analysis on many of these aspects will be attempted in the subsequent (chapter- 6), some of the important points relating to NFE centres are only dealt with here to cross -check the consistency of the information provided by the NFE functionaries.

5.8.2 Views of the NFE learners tend to suggest that **proper examination were not being conducted in all the centres** (Table 5.9). Only 57% of them in Bihar and 77% in Rajasthan expressed that examinations were conducted. Of the three types of tests- written, oral and both types, written tests were mostly used in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, whereas in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa both types are being conducted. Andhra Pradesh and Bihar do not fare well in this aspect. Only 65% to 80% NFE learners informed that, supervisors have visited their centres 1 to 6 times during the last one year as against the norm of 12 to 24 four visits per year to be paid by a Supervisor. Data, however, do not support their claim. **About 24% of learners' parents in Madhya Pradesh and 42% in the case of Andhra Pradesh reported dissatisfaction over the type of teaching and functioning of NFE Centres.**

Table 5.9

Assessment Pattern in NFE Centres

State	No. of NFE Respondents	Whether Examinations conducted (%)	No. of visits of supervisors as reported by NFE students	
			No. of respondents	1-6 visits(%)
Andhra Pradesh	199	62.8	199	65.3
Bihar	187	57.2	-	-
Madhya Pradesh	252	73.4	252	75.0
Orissa	188	58.5	188	69.7
Rajasthan	218	76.6	218	79.8
Uttar Pradesh	201	75.6	-	-
Total	1245	68.0	857	72.5

Source: Eligible children schedule, PFO Survey, 1997.

Closure of Centres and Learners' absenteeism

5.8.3 The number of days the centre remained closed and the number of days the learners were absent reveals (Table 5.10) clearly the glaring ground realities. **75% to 80% of the learners parents in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan have expressed that, the centre remained closed for more than 10 days during the thirty days preceding the date of the field visit of PEO officers.** At the aggregate level only 28% of the respondents reported that the centre functioned normally.

Table 5.10

Closure of Centres and learners absenteeism

State	No. of Respondents	No of days Centre Closed in a month (%)				Learners absenteeism (%)			
		Not Closed	1-5 days	6-10 days	10 days and above	Nil	1-5 days	6-10 days	10 days and above
Audhra Pradesh	199	34.2	0	0	65.8	51.8	40.2	6.5	1.5
Bihar	187	34.2	0	0	65.8	62.0	28.9	7.0	2.1
Madhya Pradesh	252	25.0	0	0	75.0	61.3	32.5	5.0	1.2
Orissa	188	33.0	0	0	67.0	44.7	22.4	17.0	5.9
Rajasthan	218	19.3	0.5	0	80.2	37.6	52.3	10.1	0.0
Uttar Pradesh	201	23.9	0	0	76.1	66.2	20.4	9.5	4.0
All States	1245	27.9	0.1	0	72.1	53.8	34.7	9.1	2.3

Source : Eligible Childrens Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

5.8.4 The information contained in the table also reveals that the constraint to access is more binding on the supply side (closure) than on the demand side (absenteeism by learners). This obviously calls for more effective supervision and control of the functioning of the NFE system.

CHAPTER 6

IMPACT OF NFE ON UNIVERSAL ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

In the preceding chapters we have discussed about the physical and financial performance, the functioning of NFE centres, the efficiency of the delivery system and other aspects concerning adequacy and quality of infrastructure of the NFE system. Though these analyses give a fair idea of the overall impact and performance of the NFE system, it must be recognized that the greater part of these analyses relied on the information collected from office records and /or functionaries of the NFE and, therefore, gave a partial picture of the performance of the system based on supply side information.

But, access to education is determined by the interaction of both supply and demand side factors. This Chapter is concerned with an assessment of impact of the NFE scheme with reference to its objectives and identification of these factors that have been influencing its outcome. The objective of the NFE scheme is to improve access to education for the out-of-school children through flexible convenient timings, place and pace in an informal atmosphere, and thereby move closer to the realization of the goal of universal elementary education. To what extent has the NFE system been successful in improving enrolment, retention and literacy among the eligible children who do not have access to the formal school system? Does it have the potential of being an effective instrument for improving access to education ? If it does, what steps are required to be taken to realize the potential ? These are important issues for the planners and policy makers. An attempt is made in this Chapter to throw light on these issues.

6.1.2 Apart from relying on the findings of the preceding Chapters, the analysis here will be based primarily on the survey information collected from the families of the NFE learners, village functionaries and knowledgeable people from the villages and urban area where the sample NFE centres are located.

Enrollment, Drop-out and Success Rate in NFE

6.2.1 The success of the NFE system is to be judged from rates of enrolment, successful completion of the NFE course and lateral entry to the formal system among the out-of-school children in the country consisting of

never enrolled children and school dropouts. In Chapter 4, these aspects have been dealt with in the context of assessment of physical performance of the NFE centres. At the State level, it was noted that the percentage of out-of-school children enrolled in NFE centres is very low in all the States. This observation was, however, made based on secondary data base and a rough estimate of the number of out-of-school children. The PEO survey was designed to generate all the necessary information to arrive at a more accurate number of the target group children (for NFE) at the village level. The information on the actual number of children in the age group of 6-14 years attending formal school has also been collected from the sample villages. Thus, the estimates of enrolment, drop-out and lateral entry derived from the survey information will present a more realistic picture of the impact of NFE. For some sample villages, however, the relevant information could not be obtained because of some errors of the interviewers. Table 6.1 presents the relevant information computed from only 81 of the 108 sample villages.

Table 6.1

Enrolment of FE & NFE Children in Selected Villages during 1996

State	No. of Villages	Child population age group of 6 to 14 years	% of children going to formal school	Estimated out of School children in age of 6 to 14 years	% of children admitted in NFE Centre
Andhra Pradesh	11	4676	38.5	2876	12.8
Bihar	18	8727	12.2	7661	16.2
Madhya Pradesh	11	1708	5.6	1613	22.1
Orissa	17	12552	22.1	9784	4.9
Rajasthan	15	12815	26.7	9387	9.5
Uttar Pradesh	9	2535	53.8	1170	19.9
All States	81	43013	24.5	32491	12.6

Source :Village Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

6.2.2 It is interesting to note that the proportion of the elementary school age children going to formal school is very low, except in sample villages of Uttar Pradesh. In Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, the enrolment in formal schools in the sample villages is abysmally low. These estimates of (formal

school) enrolment rate based on sample information are not representative of the enrolment at the State level and, therefore, inter-State comparison is not valid. However, for the purpose of deriving the estimates of out-of-school children in sample villages, the information on enrolment in formal school was required.

6.2.3 In the 81 sample villages, only 12.6 per cent of the out-of-school children have enrolled themselves in the NFE centres. The non-formal enrolment rate is the highest in Madhya Pradesh where enrolment in the formal system is the lowest. The formal and non-formal systems together enrolled around 34 per cent of the elementary school-age (6-14 years) children in the sample villages. The proportion of school going children (both formal and NFE) in sample villages is 64 per cent in Uttar Pradesh, 46.4 per cent in Andhra Pradesh, 33.7 per cent in Rajasthan and around 26 per cent in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The inter-State variation in this proportion is explained, to a large extent, by the general development indicators of the districts from which the villages were selected.

6.2.4 It is obvious that though the NFE system has contributed marginally towards addressing the problem of non-enrolment of elementary school-age children, however, the existing number of NFE centres are far less than required for bringing any perceptible improvement in the enrolment rate. On a rough estimate, in the sample villages alone, the number of NFE centres should be increased by 10 to 15 times if all the out-of-school children are to be covered under NFE. Since we have noted in Chapter 4 that both the Centre and State Governments are not able to meet the financial needs of the existing NFE centres, it is not advisable to increase the number of NFE centres without making adequate financial provisions, and unless there is a genuine demand for non-formal education. In view of the government's resolve to making the right to free and compulsory elementary education a Fundamental Right through a Constitutional enactment, it will have to find ways and means of making elementary education accessible to all children in the age group 6-14 years. However, before an expansion of the existing NFE infrastructure could be recommended one has to assess whether the existing NFE system is contributing towards removal of illiteracy and achievement of the UEE in the country.

6.2.5 In the preceding chapters, it has already been noted that the output of NFE measured in terms of "the rate of completion of the two-year NFE course" and "the rate at which successful NFE learners are getting into FE system for further study", is very poor. The factors affecting the output of the

NFE system relate to inadequacies in planning, implementation and delivery system. The general weakness of the programmes notwithstanding, some isolated cases of better run NFE centres have been found among the sample centres. It would be useful to derive lessons from the past success and failures for better designing of the programme in future. Another important aspect that needs to be examined is whether better alternative strategies exist to address the problem of illiteracy/ non-enrolment in the country than relying on NFE.

6.2.6 These issues can not be resolved only by examining the performance of alternative systems from the supply side. It is equally important to identify the factors that influence the demand for education. The PEO sample survey was designed to elicit the required information from the parents of school-age children. Specifically the parents of eligible children were asked about their preference for non formal vis-a-vis formal education, the reasons for not sending the children to school (formal or non-formal), their expectations from education of their children etc. The major findings from the survey are presented below.

Analysis of Household Level Information

6.3.1 The sample households consist of formal school learners, non-formal learners and eligible children either not going to any school or who discontinued studies. The survey information has been analysed to seek answers to questions relevant to each type of households. The following observations are relevant in the present context.

(A) Why do children drop out and/or do not enroll in schools (formal or non-formal)?

Parents of eligible children (not in schools) were asked about the reasons for not sending them to school. The findings are summarised in Table 6.2.

6.3.2 **The major constraints to access to school education as perceived by the parents are: household chores, lack of appreciation of value of education and high cost.** In some States, school timing and distance from schools are important factors. The primacy of household chores over school education should be interpreted to mean that for some parents education has an 'opportunity cost'. From the evidence thrown by studies (NCAER, 1994

and 1996)¹ this argument can be further sharpened to mean that, for poor parents whose children help them in household and other works, sending children to schools has an opportunity cost.

Table 6.2
Reasons for not sending Children to School

State	House-hold work	Education not useful	High cost	Timing not suitable	Distance too much
Andhra Pradesh	58.8	30.8	25.0	30.9	10.3
Bihar	79.2	19.5	26.4	27.8	4.2
Madhya Pradesh	68.6	77.2	34.3	20.0	25.7
Orissa	58.6	69.3	26.2	7.7	3.1
Rajasthan	68.1	66.0	19.1	21.3	19.1
Uttar Pradesh	24.6	85.3	18.0	NA	6.6
All States	59.2	54.6	24.4	18.1	9.8

Source: Eligible Children Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

6.3.3 An equally large proportion of the households has reported that school education is not useful to their children. It is possible that illiterate parents often fail to perceive the value of education, particularly because it does not bring any immediate tangible gain (Pal and Pant, 1995). About a quarter of the parents have identified 'high cost' as a constraint to access to school education when, in fact, primary education is supposed to be free so far as the direct private cost of education is concerned. It has been found in some studies that direct private cost of education comprising of expenses on fees, transport, uniform, books and stationeries, tuition etc. constitute a significant proportion of the income of the poor parents (NCAER, 1994).

6.3.4 All this tends to suggest that **'poverty' and 'illiteracy' of parents interact with each other to act as serious constraints to access to education.** Further discussion on this issue will be taken up later.

(B) Realising that the poor parents incur both direct and indirect cost of school education NFE was introduced to reduce the indirect cost by

(a) Non-enrolment, Drop-out and Private expenditure in Elementary Education NCAER, 1994.

(b) Human Development Profile for India-NCAER, 1996.

making school timing flexible and reducing direct cost by providing the necessary teaching-learning materials (TLM) to all the learners. It has been noted in the preceding chapters that some out-of-school children have indeed responded to the NFE system. It would be of interest to know about the socio-economic profile of learners' families.

6.3.5 About 81% of these families belong to SC, ST and OBC categories. 42.2% of them are cultivators (primarily small and marginal), 9.4% agricultural labourers, 15.5% non -agricultural labourers and the rest are artisans and petty traders. More than 60% of these families are having an annual income of less than Rs. 18,000/= at 1996-97 prices. Another 27.6% of the families have reported an annual income ranging between Rs. 18,001 to Rs. 30,000/=. About 80% of heads of families are either illiterate or having a literacy level below the primary stage. The average family size is a little over 4 members.

6.3.6 Thus, it is primarily the target group, which has responded to the NFE programme. In other words, the NFE scheme was conceived and designed to suit the needs of a large proportion of the out-of-school children.

(C) Are the parents of learners satisfied with the Non formal education ?

6.3.7 About 80% of the parents of learners have reported that they are satisfied, as their children are going to school and learning something. The reasons for satisfaction given by parents include: improvement in awareness, general knowledge, civic sense, aesthetic sense, sense of responsibility etc. of the learner. This expression of satisfaction of parents, however should not be taken to interpret that the performance of the NFE systems is good, as this does not necessarily imply that the children are getting quality education. Moreover, most of the parents themselves being illiterate are not in a position to assess the quality of education delivered through the NFE system. **The parents seem to be satisfied because they expect that education will enable their children to “observe and analyse life situation better”, “sharpen their vision”, “take decisions” and “live with self-respect”. To some parents NFE being the only system, which is accessible, they are happy with whatever, their children are learning. All this tends to imply that there is a demand for non-formal type of education among certain groups of households.**

6.3.8 It is, however, interesting to observe that a large proportion of the parents of NFE learners would like to send their children to formal schools, should the school timing of formal school become flexible to suit their convenience and the direct cost of education gets reduced. **More than 85 percent of the parents expressed their desire to send their children to formal schools, if these conditions are met. These parents value formal education more because they perceive that teachers in formal schools are better, trained, regular, their certificates are recognised and formal education also helps in getting employment.** This tends to suggest that if the functioning of the formal school system is made flexible to suit local needs, this mode of delivery of education will be preferred to NFE by the parents of learners. This is a significant observation in the context of devising an appropriate delivery mechanism to achieve the goal of UEE.

(D) Has NFE system contributed to the growth of literacy among the disadvantaged groups ?

6.3.9 The NEF was designed specifically to promote enrolment and education among out-of-school children belonging to disadvantaged groups, like SCs, STs, OBCs and child workers. Table 6.3 gives the break-up of the NFE learners according to social groups. **The majority of the learners belong to the three identified disadvantaged groups in all the states except in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh where a sizeable proportion of learners belong to upper castes.**

6.3.10 The high rate of enrolment among OBCs in all states warrants further analysis of the background of the concerned families. Are the characteristics of these families the same as those observed among the NFE learners in general, or are these different ? The knowledge of such characteristics would be useful in developing a suitable strategy for improving access to education. **It is observed that about 85% of the heads of the families of OBC learners do not have even the primary level education, the principal occupation of about 73% of these families is either agriculture or wage employment, and nearly all of them have a household income of less than Rs. 6000/= per annum.** In other words, the basic socio-economic characteristics of these families are not very different from those of the NFE learners in general, perhaps, that this group is slightly better placed in terms of their social status and outlook.

Enrolment of Working Children

6.4.1 The reason why children have to work in India is that parents are unable to earn enough for the family. Hence children are sent to work instead of school. Since nearly 25% of learners' parents were agricultural and non agricultural labourers and were receiving very low minimum wages against the norm of Rs. 125/- per day (Renana Jhabvala, 1998). As mentioned earlier, majority of the families were having an annual income of Rs. 18000 with an average family size of 4. The enrolment and drop-out rates among child labourers in sample villages of the six states are given in Table 6.4.

Table 6.3

NFE Learners According To Social Groups

State	Social Groups %			
	SC	ST	OBC	Others
Andhra Pradesh	18.6	10.6	63.8	7.0
Bihar	49.7	NA	48.1	2.1
Madhya Pradesh	6.7	19.0	34.5	39.7
Orissa	12.8	39.9	32.4	14.9
Rajasthan	22.9	36.2	25.2	15.6
Uttar Pradesh	32.3	0.5	36.3	30.8
All States	23.0	18.0	39.6	19.4

Source: Eligible Children Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

6.4.2 In Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, about a third of the working children are enrolling themselves in NFE centres. However, in Orissa and Uttar Pradesh, NFE does not seem to have been successful in attracting the working children. In Orissa, a vary large proportion of them are from tribal families. Except in Andhra Pradesh and to some extent in Rajasthan, the drop-out rates among child labourers are quite high. Thus, the impact of NFE as measured by the enrolment and drop-out rates has been relatively significant in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. It may be mentioned that special efforts are being made by both the governments and NGOs in these two states to improve the enrolment and retention rates among child labourers. The NFE system is also relatively better run in these two states. It is pertinent to mention here that because

of lack of electricity and /or lighting arrangements. the timing of most of NFE centres is not in accordance with the convenience of the learners who need to attend to household chores or to work as child labourer. In Uttar Pradesh, for example, all NFE centres are running from 3 to 5 PM - a time slot which is not suitable to those children working as labourers. **However, since NFE system has been able to attract working children in a significant way in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, this pattern of education holds the potential of becoming an effective mode of delivery of education for such children. However, this is more so because of suitability of timing of such centres for these children than due to the quality of education delivered.**

Table 6.4

Enrolment & Drop-out Rates Among Working Children

State	Estimates of child labourers in sample villages	Enrolment Rate (%)	Drop-out Rate (%)
Andhra Pradesh	580	34.1	5.1
Bihar	461	13.7	36.5
Madhya Pradesh	52	30.8	31.3
Orissa	1953	8.1	37.5
Rajasthan	502	33.9	14.7
Uttar Pradesh	1061	8.4	18.0
All States	4609	15.1	22.5

Source: Village Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

(E) Does NFE programme have community support ?

6.4.3 The evaluation studies on NFE carried out prior to the Eighth Plan observed that community participation was a necessary precondition for the success of NFE, as the parents of the out-of-school children were required to be motivated to join NFE centres. One reason why NFE did not become popular was insufficient community participation in the programme. Accordingly, Village Education Committee (VEC) was made a necessary component of the NFE scheme. The VEC is expected to provide space and make other arrangements for running the centres, and participate in planning, implementing and monitoring the scheme. The

VECs are required to have members from disadvantaged groups. In 58 of 108 sample villages the VECs were actually in existence. The role of the VECs can be assessed from the following:

6.4.4 The participation of VECs in the NFE programme is passive and limited to few activities. The district authorities also reported that they did not get any feedback from these committees, which according to them, are ineffective and not interested in the programme. However, there is another side of the story. The methods of implementation of NFE is top-down through the district level Government officers Block level Project Officers and a chain of supervisors and instructors. The VECs do not have any direct role to play, nor are the instructors and supervisors accountable to VECs. Thus, **VECs have been given responsibilities without authority to control the functioning of the NFE centres.** Only in Uttar Pradesh, they were found to be effective primarily because honorarium is paid to the instructors through the VECs.

6.4.5 Since VEC's involvement has not proved to be effective, MHRD may consider entrusting the operations of NFE Centres to Panchayat Raj Institutions. Article 243 G of the constitution of India in Part IX of the constitution introduced by Seventy third amendment has also asked the State Governments to give the implementation of schemes including the scheme on primary education and literacy programmes to PRIs. Keeping in view the powers, authority and responsibilities of PRIs, they would be in better position to implement NFE scheme.

(F) **Factors contributing to Success/Failure**

6.4.6 The analysis of both secondary and primary data carried out in the preceding chapters and also in this chapter leads to the inescapable conclusion that the **NFE system has not contributed in any significant way to the realisation of the goal of universal elementary education in the country.** This, however, should not be taken to mean that NFE-type education does not have any potential. Indeed, some sections of the society have responded positively to various types of non-formal education. Many of the non-formal centres were found to have adequate number of learners. **But, the performance of these centres in terms of successful completion of the NFE courses and lateral entry to formal school has, in general, been poor.** Notwithstanding this, a few centres have performed relatively better in terms of the same performance indicators. To identify the factors that seem to have contributed to success/failure, an attempt is made to compare the characteristics of the best-performing

centres with those of the worst performing ones. The performance criteria adopted for classification of the NFE centres as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ are : (a) the rate of successful completion of non-formal education and (b) the rate of lateral entry to formal school.

Table 6.5
Activities of Village Education Committee

	Type of work done by VEC	% of NFE Centres
(i)	Overseeing the functioning of NFE	75.9
(ii)	Involved in selection of instructors	43.7
(iii)	Arrange accommodation for the Centre	37.5
(iv)	Motivated parents of potential NFE learners	56.2
(v)	Involved in monitoring the progress of learners	25.0
(vi)	Sign monthly bills, vouchers etc	31.2
(vii)	Checking Drop-outs	12.5

Source: Village Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

6.4.7 From the (PEO) sample Survey , three “good-running” and three “bad-running” centres have been chosen for detailed study. All the three, ‘good’ centres are from Orissa and the ‘bad’ centres are from Uttar Pradesh. Table 6.6 gives information on the performance indicators of the two types of centres.

Table 6.6
Performance Indicators of Good and Bad Centres

Sl. No.	Indicators	Good Centres	Bad Centres
1.	Enrolment per centre	21.0	26.6
2.	Percentage of villages having primary school within villages	33.3	100.00
3.	Percentage of learners completing NFE course	36.5	18.8
4	Percentage of successful learners admitted to Formal School System	100.0	0.0

Source : PEO Sample Survey, 1997

6.4.8 The factors affecting the outcome of NFE system can be divided into: (a) centre specific factors relating to the quality of infrastructure, including the quality of instructors; (b) community level information, particularly the existence /non-existence of related institutions and (c) household level characteristics of the learners.

Centre Specific factors

6.5.1 The single most important centre-specific factor that has contributed to the performance of a centre is the educational qualification of the instructor. In the successful centres 67% of the instructors are graduates and 33% higher secondary passed, while in the unsuccessful centres 100% instructors were found to have below-matric qualification. It may be mentioned that the NFE tries to cover the primary and middle level (upto Class VIII) course of the formal system respectively in two and three years only and that too within the two-hour school timing of NFE centres. The heterogeneity of age groups of NFE children poses yet another difficulty in the management of classes by a single instructor. **All this obviously warrants that the teachers of NFE system must be more competent than their counter parts in the formal system.** Given the fact that quality training is not imparted to the NFE teachers and that the supply of school facilities/ infrastructure is inadequate, an instructor with better formal educational qualifications is likely to be more effective in teaching NFE courses.

6.5.2 This observation has significant implication for the design and implementation of NFE scheme. It has been observed that more than half of the NFE teachers are not even matriculates and that they are paid only Rs. 200/= pm. **The findings of the study suggests that the NFE teachers should be better qualified, well trained and better paid than their counterparts in the formal set-up.**

6.5.3 Another centre-specific factor that has influenced the outcome is the school timing. Though most of the NFE centres are not provided with lighting arrangements(see chapter 5) and are running during the day-time, some have flexibility in timing while others do not. Thus, in Uttar Pradesh all the centres are running during 3 to 5 PM i.e. a rigid time schedule irrespective of the variations in local conditions and demand.

Community Level Factors & State Policies

6.6.1 It has been observed that only in 33% of the villages where successful NFE centres are located, access to a primary school (formal) within the village exists, while in the case of unsuccessful villages the access is cent per cent. This finding implies that the **NFE system works better in areas where the access to formal education system is inadequate**. A relatively large proportion of the parents of NFE learners of successful centres have mentioned “physical access” and “flexibility in timing” as the reasons for sending their children to NFE centres. The participation of the villagers in the management of the NFE centre is also better in such villages. **In the successful centres the villagers (VEC) have taken initiative to arrange for a place for running the NFE classes, furniture and in motivating parents of potential NFE learners.**

6.6.2 The most important factors influencing the performance of NFE centre is, however, the state level policies with regard to NFE. In Orissa the performance is better because the NFE and FE systems are linked formally. The State policy in Orissa has the following features:

- (i) **For better implementation and monitoring of education programmes the administrative districts have been reorganised. As a result, monitoring, evaluation and follow-up actions are found to be better in Orissa; the Junior Coordinators are provided with motorcycles for inspection of NFE projects and are accountable to the District Inspector of schools and coordinators at the circle level.**
- (ii) **The linkage between the formal and non-formal systems has been formalised in Orissa through common examinations at the 3rd and 7th standards, and through issue of common certification to learners of both types of education;**
- (iii) **The NFE instructors in Orissa have been promised of absorption as regular teachers in the formal schools. This had motivated the better qualified youths to join as NFE instructors. This has improved the delivery system of NFE in Orissa.**

Household Level Factors

6.7.i The household characteristics that seem to have contributed to better performance of NFE relate to occupation and income of the households of the NFE learners. More than 94 percent of the households of learners of successful NFE centres are cultivators and about 67 percent of them have an annual income of Rs. 18,000/= or more. In the case of unsuccessful centres, the corresponding proportions are 69.4 percent and 16.7 percent. In other words, the **small and marginal farmers who want their children to help them in household chores/cultivation have a demand for non-formal education. A large proportion of them have mentioned 'suitable timings' and easy physical access as major reasons for their preference for NFE.** The other household characteristics, which appear important in influencing the demand for NFE, is the household size. **The larger the family size, the greater is the success rate among NFE children.** The analysis of survey data indicates that in successful centres learners from families with more than 6 members constitute more than 75 percent as against 58 percent in the case of unsuccessful centres. This is so, perhaps due to relatively less demand on child's labour in large families.

Some Observations

6.8.1 The foregoing analysis reveals that **though the NFE centres have adequate enrolment as per records maintained by the centres, districts and states, the outcome of the NFE system as measured in terms of completion of NFE course and lateral entry to formal schools is extremely poor.** Limited success has however, been achieved in the case of Orissa, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh where the state governments have taken measures to closely monitor implementation of the scheme and to establish linkage with the formal education system. **Even under relatively favourable policy environment, the success of individual NFE centres depended mainly on factors relating to the quality of instructors, adequacy of TLM, flexibility of school timings and other local factors not always amenable to policy manipulations.** Even in a state like Orissa where the linkage of NFE and FE is systematized, the NFE system has not been successful in bringing the larger proportion of the out-of-school children under its cover (Chapter 4). All this raises doubts about the efficacy of NFE system as a major complementary system for delivery of elementary education in the country.

6.8.2 The analysis of the survey data and discussion with officers, knowledgeable persons and learners' parents tend to suggest that the design and implementation of the existing NFE scheme must undergo drastic changes, if it were to contribute to the realisation of the goal of UEE. The important modifications that are required are as follows:

- (i) The cost of running an NFE centre must be worked out realistically. **The NFE-type education can be delivered only by instructors who are qualified and trained. Their salaries should be commensurate with their responsibility, and regularity in payments to them must be ensured,** which no doubt would result in better performance.
- (ii) It has been observed that both the Central government and the States are not releasing even the grossly understated "standard cost" of running an NFE centre. **On an average, the centres get about half the money they are entitled to. Many of the centres do not get even this much in time, causing further delay in delivering the services.**
- (iii) **The NFE system must be linked to the FE system through common examination and certification,** as has been done in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. This will call for a review of the prescribed course materials for NFE.
- (iv) **The Village Education Committee must be made more effective in controlling the functioning of NFE centre.** Currently, the VECs have been given all kinds of responsibility without actually giving any authority to control the functioning of the centres. **In fact, the instructors and supervisors must be made accountable to the VECs.**
- (v) **Transparency in running the NFE centre is necessary** to eliminate leakages of what ever limited resources are available for NFE. For this, the centres should not run at the instructors' residence. **Instead, the VEC should be assigned the task of arranging a room preferably owned by the village community.**

6.8.3 Though, with these changes NFE can be made more effective, it must be mentioned that **NFE can not be thought of as a major instrument for achieving UEE. With improved delivery system, it can effectively cater to the needs of the working children and out-of-school children in tribal areas where hamlets are scattered and distance to formal schools is a binding constraint to access.** To address the broader issue of improving access to education to the large majority of the out-of-school children, it is necessary to understand what constraints access. In different studies, a large number of factors like distance to school, quality of school facilities, the proportion of female teachers, socio-economic and demographic characteristics of households have been identified as important determinants of access to primary education (Lockheed et al.1994)². In a study Pal and Pant (1995)³ categorized these factors into three groups, viz; (a) the supply side factors representing the quantity and quality of school infrastructure, (b) the supply side demand inducing factors (like female teachers, free books, mid -day meals) and (c) the poverty-illiteracy syndrome. Combining the various factors into appropriate indices and using the data of the Fifth All India Education Survey and NSSO, the study noted that these factors explained 82% of the inter-state variation in rural enrolment rate and 92% of that of urban enrolment rate. The single most important factor that constraints access to education is the interaction between poverty and illiteracy of parents of school-age children. The next in order of importance is the availability and quality of school infrastructure. The demand inducing factors also play a role at the margin in two important ways; (a) by reducing the direct/indirect private cost of education and (b) by removing some socio-cultural constraints.

6.8.4 **Thus, to improve access to education in any significant way, the poverty-illiteracy syndrome of a large section of the people is to be addressed in a big way through awareness generation programme among illiterate parents and by reducing the direct and indirect private cost of education.** The latter, in effect, implies provision for meeting the entire cost of education for children of poor

² Lockheed, M.E; Verspoor, A.M. and Associates (1991) Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries. Oxford University Press (For World Bank).

³ Ibid.

families. The improvement in the delivery system through supply of quality infrastructure would also contribute to improving access for some population groups. With these changes in the formal system, the enrolment and retention rates will improve considerably. In Chapter 4, it was noted that in rural areas of some States the proportion of school-going children is as low as 5 to 10 per cent of the elementary school-age children in villages.

6.8.5 The majority of the school-age children will have to be attracted to the formal system by removing the major constraints to access. The NFE system and its different variants could meet the needs of specific groups, if the design and implementation of these are improved and if these schemes are closely integrated with the formal system. **The study revealed that centres functioned better wherever school teachers/Headmasters took interest.**

6.8.6 Though in this study no attempt is made to compare the cost effectiveness of NFE vis-a-vis the formal system, it is likely that the unit delivery cost of "quality education" through NFE system will be higher than that in the formal system. **Thus, even on cost considerations NFE is unlikely to be viable as a major instrument for delivery of elementary education.**

6.8.7 **Moreover community at large felt that the NFE does not enjoy the same status as the formal school and if these are constantly deprived of quality infrastructure facilities, it may lead to further disparities between the so called elite and the disadvantaged groups of the society.**

6.8.8 The National Policy on Education-1986 envisaged a common educational structure under the National System of Education. The policy also highlighted universal access and enrolment; universal retention of children up to 14 years of age; and a substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning. **Under the NFE modern technological aids were to be used to improve the learning environment of NFE centres. The present study on the contrary presents a dismal picture as far as the availability of basic minimum teaching learning material is concerned.**

6.8.9 Although NFE is expected to provide quality education comparable with formal education to facilitate lateral entry in to formal schools, this is not being ensured by the implementing agencies at various levels.

CHAPTER 7

ROLE OF NGO'S IN NFE SCHEME

The Government of India has been encouraging many Non-Governmental Voluntary Organizations (NGOs) besides the State Governments in the implementation of the NFE scheme for the out-of-school children. Some of the NGOs are also being supported and encouraged to take up innovative and experimental education programmes under the NFE scheme. As dealt with in the previous chapters, NGOs are being selected on the basis of well laid out norms of their registration, commitment, experience, available infrastructure and resources. Central Government is providing 100% financial assistance on a project basis for both co-education and girl centres for the operation of NFE scheme. During the period 1992-97 NGO run NFE centres have increased from 23,099 to 38,900, which comprise about 14% of the existing NFE centres in the country. The number of NGOs operating the scheme through these centres have also grown from 363 to 590 during the Eighth Plan. This chapter will (i) examine the effectiveness of voluntary organizations in the implementation of NFE scheme; (ii) assess the performance of NGO run centres as compared to State run centres and (iii) identify the factors contributing to good/bad performance of the centres. However, NGOs dealing with experimental education have not been dealt here due to their limited role.

7.1.2. To meet the above objectives, a sample of 18 NFE centres being operated by 18 NGOs that were available in the selected districts and their associated functionaries (instructors, supervisors, head of NGO's, knowledgeable persons and learners' parents) were selected for the study. The same set of questionnaires canvassed to the sample units of State run centres were administered in the NGO run centres. The data base being similar for both types of centres, a comparative study of the functioning and performance of State-run and NGO run centre could be made.

Enrolment, Dropout Pattern and Success Rate

7.2.1 Table 7.1 gives the average enrolment and drop-out rates in the NGO-run centres and all centres together. There is no marked difference between the enrolment rate of the NGO and State-run centres. However, the drop-out rates in NGO centres are lower in most of the sample States. The performance of NGO-run centres is also better in terms of enrolment of girls, the rate of successful completion of NFE course and lateral entry into the formal school.

Table 7.1

Average enrolment and drop-out pattern during 1995-96

State	NGO Centres		All Centres	
	Average enrolment	Average drop-out	Average enrolment	Average drop-out
Andhra Pradesh	29.0	3.5	31.6	6.2
Bihar	25.5	4.0	24.5	4.5
Madhya Pradesh	27.5	2.0	33.4	10.6
Orissa	29.5	3.7	31.3	4.1
Rajasthan	29.0	-	30.7	3.1
Uttar Pradesh	30.5	-	26.8	7.3
All states	28.5	3.3	29.7	6.0

Source: Instructor's Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

7.2.2 Table 7.2 shows that the proportion of girls among NFE learners is substantially more than that of State-run centres. The rates of successful completion and lateral entry to formal system are also significantly higher for the NGO-run centres. But the above data are insufficient to conclusively say that more NGOs should be given assistance to take up NFE projects.

Table 7.2

Success & Lateral Entry Rates in Sample NFE Centres

Type of Centres	Enrolment during (1994)	Enrolment of girls (1994)	Students successfully completing the course in 1996	Students entering formal school after completing NFE
NGO Centres	148	97 (65.5)	71 (48.0)	28 (39.4)
All Centres	1693	880 (52.0)	521 (30.8)	150 (28.7)

(The figures in parenthesis indicate percentages)

Source: Instructor's Schedule. PEO Survey, 1997

Availability of facilities

7.3.1 To identify the factors contributing to the relatively better performance of NGO-run centres, supply of school facilities and their adequacy in all types of centres were examined. Table 7.3 gives the availability and adequacy of TLM for NGO-run centres and of all centres together.

7.3.2 **The NGO-run centres are better placed in terms of availability and adequacy of TLM though their non-availability and inadequacy seem to be a general problem in the entire NFE system.** This, however is expected, as it was noted in chapter 5 that funds released both by the Centre and States were inadequate and much less than the approved standard cost of running an NFE centre.

Socio-economic background of Instructors

7.4.1 One of the notable features of the NGO-run centres is that the proportion of female instructors is much larger than that in the State run Centres. It may be noted in Table 7.4 that while the proportion of girl centres is only 27.8% among the sample NGO centres, 61.1% of them are

female instructors. At the aggregate level on the other hand, about 76% of the NFE centres are girl centres, while the female instructors constitute 52% only. It is now widely accepted that the proportion of female teachers can have a decisive impact on enrolment and retention at the primary level particularly of girls. Using the data base of the Fifth All India Educational Survey, Pal and Pant (1995)¹ have shown that the co-relation co-efficient between the proportion of female teachers and primary enrolment rate is as high as + 0.82. Evidence of high degree of association of the proportion of female teachers with retention and success rates also exists (Lockheed et al 1992)². **Thus, the relatively better success and lateral entry rates of NGO-run centres could be explained to a large extent, due to the gender composition of NGO instructors.**

Table 7.3
Availability and Adequacy of facilities in NGO Centres.

Item	NGO Centres		All Centres	
	Available	Adequate	Available	Adequate
Books	94.4	33.3	92.6	34.3
Pencils	94.4	55.6	74.1	38.8
Slates	100.0	55.6	71.3	38.0
Black Board and Chalk	83.3	77.8	75.9	69.4
Charts	72.2	55.6	47.2	37.0
Games material	55.6	33.3	12.0	7.4
Mats	38.9	38.9	49.1	28.7
Lantern/Petromax	27.8	-	6.5	-
Instructors guide book	38.9	-	39.9	-
Electricity	38.9	-	29.6	-

Source: Instructor's Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

7.4.2 It may be seen from the table that NGOs were employing more female instructors, of comparatively younger age group as well as possessing better qualifications. Secondly, the NGOs were having their own resource centres for training their instructors where as State run centres were utilising mostly DIET's services.

Table 7.4

Instructors' particulars

Variable		NGOs	All Centres
Age	(a) less than 30 years	72.2	65.8
	(b) More than 30 years	27.8	34.2
Education	(a) Upto Matric	44.4	47.2
	(b) Higher Secondary and above	55.6	52.8
Gender	(a) Female	61.1	51.9
	(b) Male	38.9	48.1
Girl Centres		27.8	75.9
Experience	(a) 1 year	33.3	23.1
	(b) Above 1 year	66.7	76.9
Training	(a) DIET	22.2	46.3
	(b) Project Headquarters	16.7	3.7
	(c) Govt. School	5.6	35.2
	(d) Others places	44.4	10.2
	(e) Nil	11.1	4.6
Evaluation	(a) Oral test	94.4	95.4
	(b) Written Test	94.4	95.4
	(c) Home work	61.1	61.1
	(d) Question-Answer	72.2	76.9
	(e) Summative Evaluation	44.4	52.8

Source: Instructor's Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997.

Particulars of Supervisors

7.5.1 All but 3 NGOs at Patna and Kalahandi were having adequate staff strength for administration. Supervision and monitoring mechanism was

envisaged in a similar way for NGOs upto project officer as in State run centres. The table below gives particulars regarding supervisors in both NGOs run (12) and all centres (72).

Table 7.5

Supervisor's performances

Items	Percentage	All Centres
Number of Centres allotted		
(a) Upto 10	50.0	58.3
(b) 11 and above	50.0	41.7
Frequency of visit per month per centre	2.0	0.9
Training received	91.7	92.6
Instructors trained		
(a) 1-10	62.5	51.8
(b) 11 and above	37.5	48.2
Experience		
(a) Upto 1 year	33.3	13.9
(b) 2-3 years	39.4	23.6
(c) 4 years and above	27.3	62.5

Source : Supervisor Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

7.5.2. On an average 50% of the Supervisors are looking after more than 10 centres especially so in Rajasthan and Orissa, but still their frequency of visits per centre in a month is about 2 visits which is far better than their counterparts of all centres. **The other indicators like the training (self and to instructors) and experience are also comparatively better than State run centres' supervisors.**

Absentism and closure of centres

7.6.1 Information from learners parents regarding absentism and closure of centre during the month preceding the date of investigation and comparative data from State run centres are presented in Table 7.6. About 53% of learners are regularly attending the centre when ever the centre remained open. However, the problem lies more with the functioning of

the centre in both the types of centres as more than 78% of the learners of NGO run centres reported that the centre remained closed for more than 10 days in a month. **Irregularity of the functioning of centre is more serious in NGO run centres so remedial action and accountability of instructors has to be taken for centres' regular functioning.**

Table 7.6

Absentism and Irregularity in the functioning of NFE Centres

Variable	NGO Centre	State Centre
Number of Respondents	263	1245
Absentism in a month (%)		
(A) Nil	52.5	53.8
(B) 1-5 days	33.1	34.7
(C) 6 and above days	14.4	11.4
Centres remaining closed in a month (%)		
(A) Nil	21.7	27.9
(B) 10 days and above	78.3	72.1

Source : Eligible Children Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

Allocation of Funds

7.7.1 The NGOs run their NFE centres with inadequate resources. They have expressed dissatisfaction with regard to amount of Government assistance, volume of paper work to be done to get the Government grant, political interference, inadequacy of TLM as well as proper guidelines for running the NFE centres.

7.7.2 Though the amount of assistance per centre is substantially more in the case of NGO-run centres than the State-run centres (Table 7.7), this amount is inadequate as it is inclusive of the combined administrative and supervision expenses of NGO run projects.

Table 7.7

Annual Allocation of Funds per Centre
(in rupees)

State	State-run centres	NGO-run centres
Andhra Pradesh	6280	9000
Bihar	7241	13000
Madhya Pradesh	7927	11000
Orissa	4305	9000
Rajasthan	5864	10000
Uttar Pradesh	5971	24000

Source : 1. State Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997
2. NGO Schedule, PEO Survey, 1997

7.7.3 What is of significance is the inter-state variations in the assistance per centre. Since the project cost are standardised, the only reason for variation seems to be the variation in the pattern of release of funds which depends on timely submission of utilization certificates. However information collected in the PEO survey is not adequate to explain this observed variation across the six states.

7.7.4 NGOs were asked to suggest measures for improving their performance in running the NFE centres. **Almost all of them opined that untimely release of funds is the most important issue that needs to be addressed first. A large proportion of them suggested for an increase in the honorarium of the instructors, improvement in the supply of TLM, supply of meals and uniforms for learners and issuance of certificates by the formal school system.**

Observations

7.8.1 The PEO study was designed to assess the functioning of NGO-run centres vis-a-vis the State-run centres. It has been found that the performance of the former in terms of success and lateral entry rates is better than those of the latter. However, this finding should not be taken to mean that the NFE scheme is better implemented by the NGOs. **Irregularity of functioning of Centre and absentism is more in NGO run Centres.** Several other aspects of the functioning of NGOs need to be assessed before this conclusion could be reached. **First, though the PEO study was not designed to assess the performance of the NGO run NFE centres in the course of the field survey our field team came across indirect evidence of prevalence of non-transparent practices in some of the NGOs.** Secondly, the selection of NGO-run centres by PEO can not be called unbiased, as the process was influenced by the NGOs running these centres.

7.8.2 The better performance observed in the sample centres could be due to the bias in selection. Thirdly, **the monitoring and supervision of NGO-run centres is carried out by NGOs themselves and is independent of the State's administrative machinery.**

* * * *

Annexure

Annexure : 2.1**Literacy rate in selected States/Districts for NFE study.**

State	District	Literacy rate as per 1991 census		
		Persons	Male	Female
I. Andhra Pradesh		44.09	55.13	32.72
	1. Hyderabad	71.52	78.9	63.56
	2. Medak	32.41	45.15	19.47
	3. Vizianagaram	34.19	45.93	22.47
II. Bihar		38.48	52.49	22.89
	4. Patna	56.33	69.07	41.35
	5. Madhepura	27.72	39.31	14.41
	6. Parbi Champaran	27.59	39.65	13.69
III. Madhya Pradesh		44.2	58.42	28.85
	7. Bhopal	64.27	73.14	54.17
	8. Sidhi	29.15	43.23	13.61
	9. Guna	34.58	48.86	17.99
IV. Orissa		49.09	63.09	34.68
	10. Bhubaneswar	63.28	75.74	50.38
	11. Keonjhar	44.73	59.04	30.01
	12. Kalahandi	30.05	45.54	14.56
V. Rajasthan		38.55	54.99	20.44
	13. Jaipur	47.88	64.83	28.69
	14. Banswara	26.00	38.16	13.42
	15. Tonk	33.67	50.64	15.24
VI. Uttar Pradesh		41.6	55.73	25.31
	16. Lucknow	57.49	66.51	46.88
	17. Unnao	38.7	51.63	23.62
	18. Maharajganj	28.90	45.67	10.28

Source : Census of India 1, 1992-Paper-2 Table-7, Page No. 228-325.

Annexure 3.1

Central Guidelines for the Project Development

For a well formulated NFE Project the following steps have been recommended by MHRD.

- (i) Identification of an area of operation for location of NFE centres, preferably localities with concentration of working children, tribal belts, hilly tracks, desert and urban slums.
- (ii) Household survey of the community which will include number of households, sex and age-group wise population (below 6 years, 6-11 years, 11-14 years, 15-35 years), socio- economic status of community, like education, occupation, caste/tribe, status of children of school going ages (enrolment in formal school children (never enrolled, dropped out) activity status of children i.e.engaged in domestic chores, assisting parents in economic activities, employed in shops/factories. School facilities, rate of drop out, presence of other projects etc.
- (iii) Mapping of the area which would include a rough map of the area with concentration of households, topographical conditions, approach roads, natural barriers like rivers, hills etc.
- (iv) Location of centre with special consideration to girls and younger children for establishing a centre near their homes and availability of rooms for holding classes.
- (v) Timings - The duration of the classes should be 2-3 hours per day which should be fixed in consultation with the community depending on the availability of children.
- (vi) Assessment of resources and requirements which would include building, furniture, teaching, recruitment, library holdings,

workshops, manpower (administrative, teaching, supervisory), financial resources.

- (vii) **Training of personnel** - For this the institutions and organisations where the training of functionaries would be held. The training should be related to the activities and material to be designed for children.
- (viii) **Teaching learning material** - For the use of learners, instructors and supervisors, this is an important element of planning for NFE which would include preparation and production of text books, supplementary readers, posters, or non-print form i.e. audio-video cassettes.
- (ix) **Performance evaluation** - This should aim at finding out to what extent the tasks set out, have been accomplished i.e. visualising while preparing the project, x number of children enabled to join the formal system.
- (x) **Pupil Evaluation** - In NFE the learners are expected to achieve minimum levels of learning. This can be obtained by a comparison of entry scores and scores obtained at the end of a semester which would indicate the extent of a learner's achievement. A variety of tools have to be developed like records of pupil achievement, observation notes, record of discussions, teacher / students' diaries, examination of note books etc. The evaluators like instructors, supervisors and project authorities need to be trained for taking these tasks.
- (xi) **Performance of Instructors and Supervisors** - The competency of these functionaries also needs to be evaluated in terms of how smoothly the centre is functioning, observation of class room instruction, out of the centre activities and student achievement which would determine the efficiency of the personnel.

Organisational Set up in Different States

Central	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Madhya Pradesh	Orissa	Rajasthan	Uttar Pradesh
Deputy Director EE	Commissioner	Director (Mass Education)	Commissioner	Commissioner / Secretary	Director EE	Director EE
Joint Director NFE	Joint Director FE	Deputy Director	Joint Director	Joint Director NFE	Joint Director FE	Additional Director
	Assistant Director	Assistant Director	Deputy Director		Deputy Director	Deputy Director
			Assistant Director			
			Additional Coordinator			
SCERT LEVEL						
Sr. Consultant	Professor		Director SCERT	Director	Deputy Director	Sr. Adviser
Consultant	Lecturers		Director SIE	Sr. Consultant	Consultant	Adviser
		Sr. Consultant	Consultant			
		Consultant				
DIVISIONAL LEVEL						
			Jt. Director			
			Coordinator			
DISTRICT LEVEL						
Assistant Director	Dt. Education Officer	Dt. Mass Education Officer	Deputy Director	Dist. Ins. Of School	Assistant Director	Dist. Education Officer
	Assistant Director	Assistant Director	Assistant Director	Sr. Coordinator Jr. Coordinator		
PROJECT LEVEL						
Project Officer	Project Officer	Project Officer	Project Officer	Project Officer	Project Officer	Project Officer
Supervisor	Supervisor		Supervisor	Supervisor	Supervisor	VEC
Instructor	Instructor	Instructor	Instructor	Instructor		

Annexure 3.3

Staff Position in the Districts

State	District	DEO/Assistant Director/District Insp. Schools		DEO Supporting Staff		Project Officer		Project Supp. Staff		Supervisor		Instructor		Grand Total	
		S	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S	P
Andhra Pradesh	1. Medak	1	1	4	4	10	10	30	30	78	76	944	921	1067	1042
	2. Hyderabad	1	1	3	3	9	6	29	27	-	-	91	91	43	38
	3. Vizayanagaram	1	1	3	3	11	11	23	23	80	77	1044	1028	1162	1143
Bihar	1. Patna	1	1	6	6	22	16	101	81	-	-	393	393	523	497
	2. Madhepura	1	1	3	2	13	7	47	34	-	-	850	850	914	894
	3. Purbi Champaran	1	1	3	3	21	8	63	38	-	-	704	704	792	754
Madhya Pradesh	1. Bhopal	1	1	3	3	1	1	3	3	10	10	228	228	246	246
	2. Guna	-	-	3	2	7	4	21	15	77	70	228	228	336	319
	3. Siddhi	-	-	3	2	6	6	18	5	64	64	754	618	845	695
Orissa	1. Bhubneshwar	1	1	-	-	2	1	4	4	19	19	190	190	216	215
	2. Keonjhar	1	1	2	2	8	8	14	14	72	67	765	715	862	807
	3. Kalahandi	2	2	1	1	7	7	14	14	66	66	712	712	802	802
Rajasthan	1. Banswara	1	1	3	3	1	1	3	3	58	58	580	580	646	646
	2. Jaipur	1	1	3	3	9	9	24	23	107	96	1130	1101	1274	1233
	3. Tonk	1	1	3	3	3	3	9	8	30	30	300	275	346	320
Uttar Pradesh	1. Maharajganj	-	-	3	1	12	10	36	15	48	8	1200	1160	1299	1194
	2. Unnao	-	-	4	4	10	10	30	23	-	-	1000	986	1044	1023
	3. Lucknow	-	-	4	4	5	5	15	14	25	16	500	493	549	532

S = Sanctioned
P = Present

PROJECT TEAM

I. PROJECT DIRECTOR

Smt. Usha Srivastava
Deputy Adviser

A. HEADQUARTERS

1. Dr. S.M. Sirajuddin Senior Research Officer
2. Smt. Roohi Siddiqui Research Officer
3. Shri Ram Singh Senior Research Officer
4. Shri D.V. Nayak Research Officer
5. Shri Ram Babu Research Officer
6. Shri Pyare Lal Eco. Inv. Gr. I
7. Shri Balwinder Pal Eco. Inv. Gr. I
8. Shri K.L. Kathuria Sr. Research Assistant
9. Shri Om Prakash Eco. Inv. Gr. II
10. Smt. Aruna Taneja Eco. Inv. Gr. II
11. Smt. Prem Lata Eco. Inv. Gr. II
12. Shri D.S. Sajwan Tabulation Clerk
13. Shri Bhuvan Chander Tabulation Clerk
14. Smt. Nalini Borker Tabulation Clerk
15. Shri Dinesh Kumar Computer
16. Shri K.P. Kalshyan Tabulation Clerk
17. Shri K.S. Meena Tabulation Clerk

II. Stenographic, Computer and Secretarial Assistance

1. Smt. Neera Kapoor Stenographer
2. Smt. Hemalata Narayanan Stenographer
3. Shri Uma Shankar Stenographer
4. Smt. Harinder K. Ahuja Stenographer
5. Smt. Indira Motwani Stenographer
6. Shri Kamal Prakash U.D.C.
7. Smt. Kanta Kalia U.D.C.
8. Shri L. Gangte L.D.C.

III. National Informatic Centre - Computer Programming

1. Shri M.K. Nanda Principal Systems Analyst
2. Shri C.R. Mitra Sr. Systems Analyst
3. Shri Mohd. Rais Programmer

FIELD TEAM

B. REOs/PEOs

REO, Hyderabad Andhra Pradesh Shri K. Prasada Rao Director	Shri B.C. Narasimhulu Smt. Juthika Bhattacharya, RO	Shri M.G. Narasimhulu, EI Gr. I Shri H.V. Shivappa, EI Gr. II Shri K.V. Suresh, EI Gr. II Shri G. Kullayappa Shri Raj Kumar, EI Gr. II Shri C. Venkaiah, E.I. Gr. II
REO, Lucknow (UP & Bihar) Shri V.L.V.S.S. Subba Rao Dy. Adviser Smt. Sangeeta Verma Dy. Adviser	Shri G.R. Khanna, RO Shri Kamla Pandey, PEO	Shri N.S. Rawat, EI Gr. II Shri Z.M. Ghufuran, EI Gr. II Shri V.B. Sharma, EI Gr. II Shri A.K. Singh., LDC Shri N. Singh Shri B.R. Gowali, EI Gr. I, Mumbai Km. Deepa N. Mothghare, EI Gr. I Mumbai
REO, Jaipur (M.P. & Rajasthan) Shri Om Prakash Dy. Adviser	Shri B.L. Sharma	Smt. S.K. Chaudhary, EI Gr. I Shri Virender Singh, EI Gr. I Shri S.K. Sutradhar, EI Gr. II Shri B. Singh Shri Amar Chand, EI Gr. II
REO, Calcutta (Orissa & W.B.) Shri R.C. Rey Director	Shri R.C. Dey, PEO, Bhubaneswar Shri S.K. Mondal, PEO Burdwan Shri J.T. Pratihar, RO, Calcutta	Shri D. Barla, EI Gr. I Smt. S. Bose, EI Gr. I Shri N.C. Samal, EI Gr. I

