

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA
RAJYA SABHA

**DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

HUNDRED FORTY - NINTH REPORT

ON

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS 2004-2005 (DEMAND NO. 57) OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND
LITERACY

(MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT)

(PRESENTED TO THE RAJYA SABHA ON THE 20TH AUGUST, 2004)

(LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA ON THE 20TH AUGUST, 2004)

**RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

AUGUST, 2004/BHADRAPADA, 1926 (SAKA)

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE (2004)

1. Shri Vayalar Ravi ----- *Chairman*

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RAJYA SABHA

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3. Shri Dwijendra Nath Sharmah
4. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
5. Shrimati Chandra Kala Pandey
6. Shri S. Anbalagan
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8. Shrimati Vanga Geetha
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LOK SABHA

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28. Shri A.R. Shaheen
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30. Shri K. Virupaxappa
31. Shri Devendra Singh Yadav

SECRETARIAT

Shri N.C. Joshi, Additional Secretary
Shrimati Vandana Garg, Joint Secretary
Shri N.K. Singh, Joint Director
Shri J. Sundriyal, Under Secretary
Shri Vimal Kumar, Committee Officer
Shrimati Meena Kandwal, Research Officer

PREFACE

I, the Chairman of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development, having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on its behalf, do hereby present this Hundred Fourty-ninth Report of the Committee on the Demands for Grants (Demand No.57) of the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development for the year 2004-2005.

2. The Committee considered the various documents and relevant papers received from the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development and also heard the Secretary and other Officials of that Department on the said Demands for Grants in its meeting held on 12th August, 2004.

3. The Committee considered the Draft Report and adopted the same in its meeting held on the 17th August, 2004.

NEW DELHI;
August 17, 2004
Bhadrapada 27, 1926 (Saka)

VAYALAR RAVI
Chairman
Department-related Parliamentary, Standing Committee
on Human Resource Development.

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Elementary education is the bedrock of a strong society ready to take the challenges of building a modern nation. India, a nation in upswing, a giant in knowledge sector, therefore, needs to ensure that none of its children go without education. An investment in elementary education, in fact, is an investment made for future generations, which would

be fit enough to take up challenges before the nation in days to come. It was in this backdrop that the Parliament through 86th Constitution Amendment Act, 2002 made free and compulsory education as a fundamental right of every child of 6-14 years of age. It is a reflection of our strong commitment to the well being of our future generations.

1.2 Department of Elementary Education has been mandated to run programmes/schemes for providing care as well as quality education to every child of the country with special emphasis on girls and those coming from the poor families and backward areas. Department for this purpose is implementing the following schemes.

Elementary Education Bureau

(A) *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:*

- (i) Operation Blackboard
- (ii) Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education
- (iii) National Programme for Women's Education

(B) *Other Schemes*

- (i) Strengthening of Teachers Training Institutions
- (ii) National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NPNSPE)
- (iii) *Shiksha Karmi*
- (iv) *Lok Jumbish*
- (v) District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)
- (vi) *Mahila Samakhya*

(C) *Assistance to Central Institutions & Resource Organisations/Apex Bodies*

- (i) National Bal Bhavan
- (ii) National Council for Teacher Education

Adult Education Bureau

(A) *Creation of a Learning Society*

- (i) Literacy Campaigns & Operation Restoration
- (ii) Continuing Education
- (iii) Jan Shikshan Sansthan

(B) *Institutional Schemes*

- (i) National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA)
- (ii) Directorate of Adult Education (DAE)
- (iii) Population Education Project
- (iv) National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE)

(C) *Support to Non-Governmental Organisations*

II. BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS

2.1 The Committee notes that plan allocation of Rs. 4900.00 crores made in BE 2003-04 for the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy was increased to Rs. 5450.00 crores at the RE stage. It has been further enhanced to Rs. 6000.00 crores in BE 2004-05. When asked whether this amount would be sufficient for meeting its requirements, the Committee was informed that this allocation of Rs. 6000.00 crores for 2004-05 was not sufficient for even two main schemes of the Department, *viz.* Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) & National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-day Meal). Following are the figures and actual requirements in regard to the two Schemes for the year 2004-05.

(Rs. in crores)

Scheme	BE 2004-05	Actual requirement 2004-05	Difference
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1.	SSA	3057	6420	3363
2.	MDM	1675	4499	2824
	TOTAL :	4732	10919	6187

2.2 The Committee notes that increment in the allocations of the Department for the year 2004-05 is nominal with which Department would hardly be able to carry out two of its main schemes (SSA & MDM) let alone other schemes. These two schemes would require Rs. 10,919.00 crores for the year 2004-05, according to the Department. The Committee notes that the Government recognizing this need of the Department has provided for 2% education less from this year. Department should put forth this aspect before the Ministry of Finance at appropriate stage.

2.3 Even if the entire Rs. 5000.00 crores expected to be generated from Education Cess is fully utilized to meet the additional requirements, there will still be a shortfall of Rs. 187.00 crores. The Department should put forth this aspect before the minority of finance at appropriate stage.

2.3 The Committee also notes considerable gap between the demand projected by the Working Group Report of the Department before the Planning Commission both for the Elementary Education as well as Adult Education for the 10th Plan Period. It feels that primary education had suffered from deprivation and degradation mainly due to inadequate allocation of resources over several decades. The Committee is happy that the education of children has received some attention but is still not treated as priority area as far as resource allocation is concerned. Some very good schemes have been started with valuable components which need to be strengthened and expanded. The Committee, therefore, recommends that need for adequate funds for elementary education should be projected effectively by the Department before the Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission at the RE stage. At the same time, the Committee has a word of caution for the Department. Although allocation of Rs. 1951.25 crores for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 2003-04 was enhanced to Rs. 2732.32 crores at the RE stage, the Department could utilize only Rs. 2582.29 crores. In the event of their projected demand of Rs. 6420.00 crores being met, the Department will have to take effective steps for optimum and judicious utilisation of enhanced allocation.

III. SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

3.1 The main goals of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) are as follows :

- (i) All 6-14 years old age children in school/EGS center/bridge course by 2003,
- (ii) All 6-14 years old age children complete five year primary education by 2007,
- (iii) All 6- 14 years old age children complete eight years of schooling by 2010,
- (iv) Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life,
- (v) Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010, and
- (vi) Universal retention by 2010.

3.2 The programme covers the entire country and addresses the needs of 192 million children in 11 lakh habitations. 8.5 lakh existing primary and upper primary schools and 33 lakh existing teachers would be covered under the Programme. It also seeks to open new schools apart from strengthening existing school infrastructure by providing additional classrooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance grant etc. Provision for additional teachers, training the existing teachers, grant for developing teaching-learning material also is there. The SSA puts special focus on educational needs of girls, children of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other children in difficult circumstances.

3.3 The Committee was informed that a new programme called National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) had been approved as a part of the SSA for providing additional components for education of girls at elementary level will be implemented under the umbrella of SSA but with distinct identity. The NPEGEL has been formulated for education of under privileged/disadvantaged girls for class I to VIII.

3.4 The SSA is, in fact, the flagship Scheme of the Department to pursue elementary education in mission mode. The goals before it are laudable, yet highly ambitious ones. The Committee could see that the goal of having all the children aged 6-14 in schools, Education Guarantee Centres/bridge course by 2003 could not be achieved. As per information made available by the States, number of out-of school children was 2,30,34,518 as on 1.4.03 which stands reduced to

61,61,104 as on 31.12.03 (not including Goa, Sikkim, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.) The Committee is not inclined to believe these figures specially in respect of Bihar, UP & West Bengal as indicated below:

	1.4.2003	31.12.2003
Bihar	44,30,140	7,46,000
U.P.	43,00,00	2,10,000
West Bengal	39,50,239	4,39,602

3.5. The Committee finds it quite baffling that within a span of just nine months such a tremendous improvement had taken place. It appears to the Committee that these figures may not be real. When asked about the channel of information on the performance of this scheme, the Committee was informed that it is through official channel - from District level to State level and to the Centre. The Committee was given to understand that 42 national research and resource institutions with a proven track record have been involved with monitoring at different levels. Further independent evaluation is provided through monitoring by independent external audit organizations. The Committee would like to be apprised about the latest feedback provided by independent external audit organizations. These information are crucial because they indicate health of a particular scheme based on which effective remedies can be suggested.

3.6 The Department informed that for the year 2004-05, an amount of Rs. 6420.00 crores was asked for whereas it got only Rs. 3057.00 crores for SSA. Annual Plan of 575 districts was approved between May to July 2004 and Project Approval Board (PAB) was going to consider more plans thereafter. The Committee is aware that part of the gap in resources is going to be met by collection from the educational cess levied this year. But even this would not be adequate to fill the gap. The Committee, therefore, recommends that demands/needs of the Department for the SSA should be reconsidered and additional allocation provided at appropriate stage so that such an important scheme does not suffer and its goals were attained.

3.7 The Committee notes that there had been some underutilization of funds during the Ninth Plan. Underutilization, in Committee's view, is a cause for serious concern. It points out more towards the laxity on the part of the implementing authorities than anything else. Such a performance does not inspire confidence as to the success of this programme, hence it should be avoided at every cost.

3.8 The Committee notes that assistance under the programme is on a 75:25 sharing arrangement between the Central Govt. and State Govts. The Committee is not aware about the acceptance level of this distribution by the States already burdened by financial constraints. The Committee apprehends that proposed 50:50 sharing between Central and State Govts. after Tenth Plan may not find favour with majority of the States. The Department may need to have a re-assessment of this funding pattern by having a Mid-Term appraisal of Tenth Plan during the current year, 2004-05.

3.9 The Committee also observes that although an impressive number of additional classrooms and new school buildings were sanctioned by the PAB during the last two years, not much progress seems to have been made. Out of 79,766 additional class rooms sanctioned, construction of only 12,516 class rooms could be completed, as many as 62,275 class rooms remained under construction, and details about 5,375 sanctioned class rooms are not available. Similarly, out of 40,944 new school buildings sanctioned, only 3547 school buildings could be completed, 32093 school buildings were still under construction. Fate of 5504 new school buildings is not known. The Committee, therefore, emphasizes the need for taking all measures so that situation improves in non/under-performing States in SSA.

3.10 The Committee is dismayed to note that of the 4,06,148 teachers sanctioned to be appointed, only 1,38,090 (i.e. 33%) could be appointed during the last two years. Against the fixed target for recruitment of teachers, States like Bihar, U.P. and West Bengal could achieve zero per cent, 22 per cent and 21 per cent of the target respectively. These States constitute a large proportion of children between 6-14 years. Such a dismal performance in the bigger States does not augur well for the future of this programme.

3.11 The Committee is concerned over the quality of education imparted under the Abhiyan. The Committee is little apprehensive about the feasibility of appointing education volunteer/para teachers for imparting quality education to the children. The Committee strongly feels that a child needs to be tended under well-trained hands to initiate him into the art of learning. The Committee is aware of the fact that there was problem in getting regular teachers in remote and inaccessible habitations. It, however, emphasizes the importance of trained teachers for child education. The Committee

is happy to know that the Department had made a provision of pre-service induction/training as well as in service training of Education Volunteers even at block/cluster levels. But the Committee finds that due to shortage of teachers, not to speak of trained teachers/qualified resource persons at block and cluster levels, aims of the Programme are not being achieved.

3.12 The Committee also takes note of the evaluation study on Alternative Schooling (AS) conducted by the Central Institute of Education, Delhi University in the year 2002-2003, which broadly revealed that a majority of teachers in the Alternative Schools were first generation learners and the community was satisfied with their functioning. The Committee is of the view that the community in remote areas may not be capable for making a correct assessment of the functioning of AS teachers. But it is really encouraging that the communities were participating in the education of their children. The Committee also takes notice of the study which revealed that the AS learners performed better on tasks involving learning by doing. In view of the socio-economic context of the parent and the children themselves, the Committee recommends that learning by doing should be emphasized in the syllabi while taking due consideration of the child's psychology and his surroundings. The Committee feels that agencies involved in the framing of syllabi should ensure that at elementary level, to say the least, child's creativity should be promoted.

3.13 The Committee welcomes that the Government has approved a new programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL). The Committee desires that funds for the programme be released to all 2656 selected blocks as early as possible so that the gender differential in literacy rate in various States as well as at national level can be lessened to such an extent as to achieve the goal of gender equity under SSA.

1V. KASTURBA GANDHI SWATANTRA VIDYALAYA (KGSV)

4.1 Kasturba Gandhi Swatantra Vidyalaya (KGSV) is for opening of special schools for the girls belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes and Minorities, in low female literacy districts. The scheme is proposed to be implemented in 2198 educationally backward blocks of 261 districts having rural female literacy less than national average and where the gender gap is also above the national average. Besides, the districts/blocks having SC female literacy less than 20% and Tribal women literacy rate less than 10% are being considered for coverage.

4.2 When pointed out about the reduction of BE allocation for this scheme in 2003-04 from Rs. 8.50 crores to Rs. 1.00 crore at RE stage, the Department informed that this scheme was being restructured and its coverage, scope, interventions/ strategies, mode of implementation, etc. were being finalized in consultation with the concerned Ministries/Departments. Keeping in view the time taken for various mandatory approvals, the allocation last year had to be reduced. It has, however, been given Rs. 10.00 crores for 2004-05.

4.3 The Committee feels that KGSV is a laudable scheme but is concerned about the snail's pace at which it was being implemented. Changes and modifications from time to time, no doubt, were key to any Scheme being relevant, effective and meaningful, the inordinate delay caused in restructuring the scheme does not appear to be quite justified to the Committee. The Committee is happy to learn that this scheme since has been revised. It, therefore, expects that KGSV would be implemented with full steam and the Department would see that the allocation would not be reduced in the year 2004-05 as well. About 700 residential schools are to be opened during the 10th Plan Period, which would require considerable planning, determination as well as adequate resources in the year 2004-05. The Committee, therefore, recommends that adequate resources should be provided to spread this noble scheme for girls far and wide.

4.4 The Committee appreciates the idea of developing local specific curriculum suitable for girls from the SCs, STs, minorities and OBCs communities. The Committee desires to add that the curriculum should be such that it is not only contextual and interesting to them but also empowers them economically in order to sustain themselves in the society.

V. NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT TO PRIMARY EDUCATION (MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME)

5.1 The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) popularly known as the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme is another very important programme being implemented by the Department with a view to improving enrolment, attendance, retention and nutritional status of children studying in primary classes of Government, local body and Government aided schools. The programme has been extended to cover children in EGS centres also.

5.2 It is a centrally sponsored Scheme and being implemented across the country. It provides foodgrains free of cost through Food Corporation of India to Implementing - State Government/local bodies, cost of which is reimbursed at

BPL rate to FCI. The reimbursement of transportation cost on actual basis upto a maximum of Rs. 50 per quintal is made to District/State Implementing Agencies.

5.3 It has been informed that as on January 2004, fourteen States and seven Union Territories were providing cooked meal to all the primary school children, nine States were implementing it partially and remaining four States were distributing foodgrains. Hon'ble Supreme Court had directed States/UTs in 2001 to provide cooked meals to all children within a period of six months, instead of distributing foodgrains to children. Defaulting States have been requested to comply with the Supreme Court's order. Financial constraint has been cited as the main reason by these States for which they have been seeking additional financial assistance to meet conversion cost. The Committee was informed that even after several years of implementing the scheme, only in 54% of the blocks covering only 55% of the primary school children cooked meals were being served whereas in 44% of the blocks covering 44% of the primary school children, foodgrains were being provided.

5.4 The Committee however, observes that out of the seven States claimed to be implementing the Programme partially, five States i.e. Bihar, Punjab, West Bengal, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh are distributing foodgrains with percentage varying from 92 to 99 per cent. The Committee therefore, is of the view that in the major States, some of them educationally backward also, Mid-Day Meal Scheme still remains to be implemented in the true sense and as per the Supreme Court directive.

5.5 The Committee notes that against an allocation of 1,33,84,064 MTs of foodgrains during Ninth Plan only 79,54,426 MTs of foodgrains were lifted, which is approximately 60 per cent of the allocation. However, against a financial target of Rs. 6,50,177 lakhs fixed for the Scheme during Ninth Plan, a financial target of Rs. 6,49,980 lakhs has been achieved, which is 99.96 per cent. The Committee is at loss to understand that despite a 100 per cent utilization of fund there has not been a commensurate off take of foodgrains. The Committee is constrained to say that it is a result of a weak planning for the effective implementation of the Scheme. The chances of pilferage/financial mismanagement can also not be ruled out. The Committee, therefore, would like the Department to make the monitoring mechanism of this scheme more comprehensive and effective by holding District Collectors responsible for such lapses. It could also go in for an evaluation of the scheme with a view to tackling the problems faced in its implementation. The Committee feels that State Governments are needed to be sensitized.

5.6 The Committee finds that the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, no doubt, was a noble scheme, which not only motivates the children to come to school and remain there but also takes care of the problem of malnutrition, particularly, in the rural areas. The Committee finds that the main problem is cooking and serving the food. It would require huge funds, should the Centre decide to support this as well. Given the ground realities and financial constraints of some States, covering all the children under this Scheme in near future appears to remain a distant dream. The Committee hopes that 15% of additional central assistance under PMGY earmarked for meeting the cooking cost under MDM and additional allocation that MDM was likely to get from the cess being collected from this year will alleviate resource constraints to a great extent in providing hot cooked meal to the children. The Committee recommends allocating funds to meet at least the gap between what is given and what is required.

5.7 The Committee though appreciates Government's move for mobilization of additional resources for this Scheme and extension of the scheme upto upper primary stage. The Committee, however, feels that it might put extra burden on already cash starved scheme. It can be taken up only after the coverage of MDM is 100 per cent at primary stage.

5.8 The Committee has been informed that teachers were being involved in cooking food in some States. It deplores this practice which affects studies in the school. The Committee feels that, at the most, teachers can do only quality checking. As an alternative, the Committee feels that involvement of NGOs as well as Self Help Groups in providing cooked meal to the children would facilitate this scheme in a big way. In places where Self Help Groups may not be available, the youth clubs and volunteers of Nehru Yuvak Kendras may also be involved for cooking and serving the meals to students. The Committee has been informed that the Department had issued guidelines in 2001 whereunder State Govts. may select NGOs for taking the responsibility of serving cooked meal to school children. States like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have actively involved well-established NGOs in this matter. The Committee feels that the Department should take the initiative in motivating the States lagging behind to follow the example of these southern states.

5.9 The Committee's attention has been drawn to media reports about children falling ill after taking cooked meal provided in schools. The Committee feels that these media reports about contaminated food being served under Mid-Day Meal Scheme in different States need to be taken seriously. The Department should make an effort as far as

possible to check with the concerned State authority about the veracity of such reports and if found true, implementing agencies should be taken to task. The Committee is of the view that that these reports should not be considered as stray incidents as they tend to adversely affect the minds of parents of school going children. The Committee, therefore, emphasizes the need for having strict quality control on food so as to avoid sub-standard and stale food being served to the children, which may result in health complications.

The Committee suggests that the Department should explore the possibility of supplying multi-vitamin tablets to the children as a part of MDM with a view to supplementing their nutritional requirements.

V1. STRENGTHENING OF TEACHERS TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

6.1 The need for orientation training and continuous upgradation of knowledge, competence and pedagogical skills of elementary school teachers can hardly be over-emphasized. This centrally sponsored Scheme envisages setting up of DIETs in each district to provide academic and resource support to elementary education teachers and non-formal and adult education instructors. It also envisages establishment of Colleges of Teacher Education /Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (CTEs/IASEs) to organize pre-service and in-service training for secondary teachers and provide extension and resource support services to secondary schools. IASEs are expected to conduct programmes for preparation of elementary teacher educators and Principals of secondary schools; engage in advanced level fundamental and applied research especially of inter-disciplinary nature, and provide academic guidance to DIETs and support services to CTEs.

6.2 The Committee has been informed that 498 DIETs, 86 CTEs and 38 IASEs have been sanctioned so far. Teachers are being imparted pre-service and in-service training in about 425 DIETs at present. During the year 2002-2003, 17 new DIETs, one CTE and one IASE have been sanctioned. For 2003-2004 the Department has expected to establish 20 new DIETs, 5 CTEs and 3 IASEs in various States.

6.3 With the twin objectives of consolidation of the existing facilities/assets for Teacher Education Center and setting up of new Teacher learning institutions in the uncovered districts in various States and UTs, the Revised & Restructured Scheme of Teacher Education is being continued under the Tenth Plan. The Cabinet Note for the Scheme has been finalized and Cabinet has approved the same. The focus during the 10th plan would be on making teacher education institutions functional, productive and improvement in quality of teacher education. The States and UTs will be encouraged to take initiative in implementing the scheme allowing flexibility but with increased accountability on their part.

6.4 The Committee is happy that the teachers' training had caught attention, which has been made as an integral component of SSA. The Committee emphasizes on the need for an effective teacher's training programme and is of the view that the Government still has a lot more to do in this regard. The Committee is concerned that against a target of establishing 20 new DIETs and upgradation of five institutions as CTEs/IASEs, only six DIETs could be sanctioned in 2003-2004. This situation becomes grim in face of the fact that a large number of trained instructors for elementary education were required for the successful accomplishment of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan apart from the requirements in regular schools.

6.5 The Committee further notes that against a target to set up 100 new DIETs, 125 CTEs and IASEs, only 39 DIETs, 9CTEs and 4 IASEs could be established during the Ninth Plan and actual expenditure against the total allocation of Rs. 976.53 crores have been to the tune of 763.06 crores, which is 78 per cent of the allocation. The Committee expresses dissatisfaction over the progress made in the physical achievements and also the underutilization of funds more so in face of the fact that there is a severe shortage of qualified teachers and this aspect is evident from NCTE's directive of raising the limit of DIETs intake to 200 seats to solve the problem of trained teachers.

6.6 The Committee appreciates the initiative taken by NCTE in encouraging State Governments in developing special training programmes in distance mode for the training of untrained in service teachers. During 2003-04, a large number of primary/upper primary teachers of Sikkim, Assam, Tripura have been covered under a six month programme developed by IGNOU. The Committee hopes that other north-eastern States, and States like Bihar, MP would also take benefit of this programme.

6.7 The Committee has learnt that to meet the requirement of additional elementary teachers due to implementation of SSA, NCTE has permitted increased in-take of DIETs to the extent of 200 seats and encourage recognized B.Ed. colleges to start elementary teacher training course, waiving the requirement of NOC from State Government. The Committee feels that it could be only a stop-gap arrangement in teacher's training programme. Moreover, abjuring the

requirement of NOC might result in the fall in standards of infrastructure and may also become the breeding ground of education mafias apart from producing sub-standard, elementary education teachers. The Committee strongly recommends that all out efforts be made to make all the sanctioned 498 DIETs, 86 CTEs, 38 IASEs functional as soon as possible. Moreover, the new scheme allowing flexibility but increased accountability of the states in making teacher education institutes functional, productive and qualitative appears to be good one. It, therefore, be implemented with all sincerity and responsibility.

VII. DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DPEP)

7.1 The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) is a centrally sponsored schemes for holistic development of primary education covering class I to V. The three major objectives of the DPEP are to (i) reduce dropout rate to less than 10%, (ii) reduce gender disparities in respect of enrolment, learning achievement etc. to less than 5% and (iii) to improve the level of learning achievement compared to the base-line surveys.

7.2 The programme includes construction of classrooms, new schools, opening of Alternative Schooling Centres, appointment of new teachers, setting up early childhood education centers, strengthening of State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) / District Institute of Educational Training (DIETs), setting up of Block Resource Centres / Cluster Resource Centres, teacher training, development of Teaching Learning Material, special interventions for education of girls, SC/ST, working children etc. Initiatives for providing integrated education to disabled children and distance education for teacher training have also been incorporated in the DPEP Scheme.

7.3 The Committee notes that DPEP is an externally aided project wherein 85% of the project cost is met by the Government of India and the remaining 15% is shared by the concerned State Government. The Government of India share is resourced through external assistance. At present external assistance of about Rs. 6938.00 crores, comprising Rs. 5137.00 crores as credit from IDA and Rs. 1801.00 crores as grant from EC/DFID/UNICEF/Netherland has been tied up for DPEP.

7.4 At the beginning of the year 2002-2003, the DPEP was running in 247 districts in 15 States. Due to closure of Phase I & II of the Programme during the year, it is now running only in 1.29 districts of 9 States namely: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Uttaranchal.

7.5 The Committee takes note that the reviews and various evaluation studies of (DPEP) programme pointed out that it had resulted in significant increase in enrolment, improvement in learning achievement, reduction in repetition rates/drop-outs with increased community involvement, improvement in classroom processes, etc. The Committee observes that the programme was now in its last leg after fulfilling its objective, by and large in the area of its operation. The Committee however observes that reduction in drop-out rates to less than 10 per cent, one of the three major objectives of the programme has not been achieved. In 20 districts of Bihar and 19 districts of Rajasthan, DPEP programme is being implemented at present. However, as per the figures made available to the Committee drop out rate continues to be as high as 61.64% in Bihar (2001-02), 60.43 in Rajasthan (2002-03).

7.6 The Committee is also surprised to notice that among the nine states where DPEP is still going on, Orissa, Jharkhand and Gujarat had comparatively less number of toilets constructed *vis-a-vis* the number of new schools and alternative schools established. The Committee would like the Department to look into the matter and improve the situation urgently under the SSA. The Committee feels that the infrastructure created during the operation of the programme was quite huge and hopes that it would bridge the resource crunch being felt in the successful implementation of various components of the SSA.

VIII. LOK JUMBISH PROJECT

8.1 An innovative project "Lok Jumbish" with assistance from Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) was launched in Rajasthan to achieve education for all through people's mobilization and their participation. Lok Jumbish Project has set up innovative management structures incorporating the principles of decentralization and delegation of authority as well as building partnership with local communities and the voluntary sectors, intensive community mobilization, and school mapping, processing as well as development of innovative design for community central school building programme.

8.2 The 1st phase of the project was implemented during June 1992 to June 1994 at a cost of Rs. 14.03 crores shared between SIDA, Government of India and Government of Rajasthan in the ratio 3:2: 1. The second phase of the project was implemented between 1st July 1994 to June 1998 and subsequently extended upto 31st December 1999. The

expenditure incurred during this phase was Rs. 96.92 crores. During the Phase III (1st July, 1999 to 30th June, 2004), the project is receiving assistance from Department for International Development (DFID), UK and the total project cost is Rs. 400 crores. The ratio of sharing expenditure between the three partners remains the same as during the first and second phase. As against the total DFID and Government of India liability of Rs. 333.35 crore, an amount of Rs. 256.10 crore has been released during the 3rd Phase, which includes Rs. 70.00 crore releases during the current year up to 15th December, 2003.

8.3 During 3rd Phase 439 Primary Schools, 221 Upper Primary Schools are being run. Among the targeted 2250 Shiksha Mitra Centres, 2122 have already been opened and against the targeted 7500 Sahaj Shiksha Centres 7659 are running. Moreover, the project has already achieved its targets with respect to the Balika Shikshan Shivirs, Mukangan and activities related to Environment building and formation and training of core teams. During 2003-2004, 1900 additional teachers in Primary Schools and Upper Primary Schools have been provided.

8.4 The Committee appreciates the work under the project and would like such model projects with strong girl components to be extended to other regions of the country, especially in the low female literacy States.

IX. SHIKSHA KARMI PROJECT

9.1 The Shiksha Karmi Project aims at universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote and socio-economically backward villages in Rajasthan with primary attention given to girls. The project identifies teacher absenteeism as a major obstacle in achieving the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE).

9.2 The project at present covers 3575 villages in 146 blocks in Rajasthan and provides primary education to 2.66 lakhs children in Day-Schools and Prehar Pathshalas (PPs) (schools of convenient timings). The experience of SKP demonstrates that the motivation of Shiksha Karmis working in difficult conditions can be sustained over a long period of time by recurrent and effective training; sensitive nurturing; community support; regular participatory review; and problem solving approach. The success of SKP has attracted national and international recognition.

9.3 Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) was being implemented with the assistance from Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA) since 1987. Phase-I of the project was upto 30.6.1994. SIDA and Government of Rajasthan (GOR) shared the project cost in the ratio of 90:10 respectively. Phase-II of the project was from 1.7.1994 to 30.6.1998. Cost sharing between GOR and SIDA was revised to 50:50 during phase-II of the SKP.

9.4 Phase-III of the SKP, which started from 1st July 1999 has concluded on 30th June, 2003. The financial assistance during the 3rd Phase was provided by DFID, UK and GOR on 50:50 basis. The Government of India has released an amount of Rs. 68.75 crores during the 3rd Phase against DFID share.

9.5 A proposal for extending Phase-III of SKP for a further period of 2 year i.e. 1.7.2003 to 30.6.2005 with an outlay of Rs. 96.35 crores to be contributed by DFID, UK and GOR on the revised funding norms of 75:25 respectively is under consideration of EFC approval. During the extended period, it has been proposed to open 500 Primary Schools and 50 Upper Primary Schools and enroll additional 22500 children in the State of Rajasthan.

9.6 The Committee notes that the Department acknowledges teacher absenteeism as a major obstacle in achieving the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) and is of the opinion that though the project has achieved reasonably good results, still the concept of Shiksha Karmis would not help the purpose in the long run. The Committee feels that the Government should have made more concerted efforts in this regard. It would have been better to take stringent measures to tackle the delinquent teachers than creating a cadre of semi-trained teachers. The Committee recommends that Government take sincere steps to ensure that only fully trained teachers were into teaching process to attain qualitative improvement in primary education.

9.7 The Committee observes that out of 3650 villages covered in Phase-III of the SKP, only 2154 Prahar Pathshalas (Schools of convenience) have been opened. The Committee feels that since the SKP aims at universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote and socio-economically backward villages in Rajasthan with primary attention towards girls, it is expedient to open Prahar Pathshalas to achieve its aims, more so, given the fact that girls need such Pathshalas more than the boys. The Committee also notes that female Shiksha Karmis (which is only 21.6%) are comparatively very less than the male Shiksha Karmis (which is 78.4%). The Committee is of the opinion that this imbalance be corrected and more females be inducted in the project as this will help more girls from backward villages to come out for education. Further, the Committee has noted that 100%-enrolled villages are only 2430, which was much less than 3650 villages covered under phase III. The Committee desires that all out efforts be made to make

all the villages 100% enrolled under the SKP.

X. ADULT EDUCATION

10.1 The Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) has been the principal strategy of National Literacy Mission for eradication of illiteracy. The TLC is area-specific, time-bound, participative, delivery through voluntarism, cost-effective and outcome oriented. The campaigns are implemented through Zilla Saksharata Samities (district level literacy committees) as independent and autonomous bodies, having due representation of all sections of society.

10.2 The Committee was informed that no targets are fixed from the top for this; targets emanate from the grass-root level on the basis of a survey, which also serve as a tool of planning, mobilization and environment building. Though the TLC is meant to impart functional literacy, it also disseminates a 'basket' of other socially relevant messages such as enrolment and retention of children in schools, immunization, propagation of small family norms, women's equality and empowerment, peace and communal harmony etc. On conclusion of TLC, Post Literacy Programme (PLP) is taken up specifically aiming at consolidation of literacy skills and integration of skill development programmes to enable the neo-literates to acquire skills for their economic self reliance. The normal time-span for TLC and PLP is 18 and 12 months respectively. The funding pattern is in the ratio of 2:1 and 4:1 between Centre and State Governments for normal and tribal districts respectively. The learning cost per head for TLC and PLP is Rs. 90-180 and Rs. 90-130 respectively.

10.3 It is noted that out of 600 districts in the country, 596 have since been covered under Adult Education Programmes - 167 under Total Literacy Campaigns, 191 under Post Literacy Programme and 238 under Continuing Education Programme. About 106.77 million persons have been made literate as on 31.3.2003. About 60% of the beneficiaries are women, while 22% and 12% belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively.

10.4 In case where for reasons beyond the control of the local ZSS, such as natural calamities, absence of political will, transfer of Collector, lack of grass root mobilization etc., TLC has stagnated; area-specific strategies are formulated for restoration of these campaigns.

10.5 Under the scheme of Continuing Education for neo-literates, the main thrust is given to setting up of Continuing Education Centres which function as a focal point for providing learning opportunities such as library, reading room, learning centres, sport centres, cultural centres and other individual interest promotion programme centres. Continuing Education Centres are set up to serve a population of 2000 to 2500 with a relaxation in the population criteria in sparsely populated areas. One Nodal Continuing Education Centre (NCEC) is set up for cluster of 8-10 Continuing Education Centres (CECs) to oversee and monitor the activities of CECs. The Scheme of Continuing Education also provides the opportunity to undertake other diverse activities such as equivalency programmes, quality of life improvement programmes, income generating programmes and individual interest promotion programmes involving alternatives and innovative approaches to cater to the need of the learners besides providing facilities for basic literacy for the dropouts as well as new entrants. The programme of Continuing Education is being implemented under the aegis of Zilla Saksharata Samiti (ZSS).

10.6 The Committee notes that Continuing Education of neo-literates is an important scheme under adult education which has shown a good performance. Department wanted more funds for increasing its coverage further. The Committee recommends that additional allocation be made for this programme so as to keep its pace.

10.7 The Committee would like to place on record its appreciation for the efforts made by the Department in accomplishment of adult education programmes, particularly, its continuing education component. However, it feels that literacy rate achieved i.e. 65.38% (as per census 2001) in comparison to the target fixed (i.e. 70%) by the end of Ninth Plan, should have been achieved. The Committee notes that only 77% of the allocation could be used. The Committee is dismayed at the underutilization of funds for different schemes of adult education. The Committee is concerned over the issue of underutilization of funds and feels that such a tendency need to be checked and problems identified to be removed at the earliest.

10.8 The Committee notes that in light of its recommendations in its 144th Report, the Department had allocated Rs.250 crore to Adult Education for the year 2004-05 in comparison to Rs.233 crore provided during 2003-04. The Committee feels that even this increase of mere 17 crore would not be adequate in the face of gigantic task that is before the Government.

XI. JAN SHIKSHAN SANSTHAN

11.1 The Scheme of Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) or Institute of People's Education (formerly known as Shramik Vidyapeeth) aims to provide polyvalent or multi-faceted adult education programme by improving the vocational skills and quality of life of its beneficiaries, which are mostly neo-literates, semi-literates and non-literates. It concentrates on the socio-economically backward and educationally disadvantaged groups of urban/rural population, such as neoliterates, semi-literates, SCs, STs, women and girls, slum dwellers, migrant workers, etc.

11.2 Till the end of Eighth Plan, the scheme was restricted to urban/semi-urban areas. With the emergence of missions of neo-literates due to the total literacy campaigns throughout the country and the transformation having taken place in the economic and social set up over the years, the role and scope of these institutes have widened manifold. During the 9th five-year plan the scheme has been strengthened with enhanced funding, widened scope and area of operation. In the changed scenario, the focus of JSS is now shifting from industrial workers in the urban areas to the numerous neo-literates and unskilled and unemployed youth both in urban and rural areas throughout the country. These Sansthans act as district level resource support agencies especially in regard to organization of vocational training and skill development programmes for the neo-literates and other target groups of the Continuing Education Scheme. At present, there are 122 Jan Shikshan Sansthans in the country. In brief, the main objectives of the scheme are:

- (i) To improve the occupational skills and technical knowledge of the neo-literates and other disadvantaged groups.
- (ii) To provide academic and technical resource support to Zilla Saksharata Samities in Literacy, Post Literacy and Continuing Education Programmes.
- (iii) To serve as nodal continuing education centers and to coordinate, supervise and monitor 10-15 continuing education centers/nodal centers.
- (iv) To undertake innovative programmes and to organize training and orientation courses for key resource persons and master trainers under the Scheme of Continuing Education.

11.3 The Committee has been informed that during 2002-2003, the JSSs offered around 225 different vocational training programmes from Candle and Agarbatti making, sewing and embroidery to computer courses. During the year 2002-2003, about 20,074 programmes were organized and 2,83,931 persons were benefited through vocational and other courses.

11.4 All the JSSs are encouraged to generate their resources through appropriate course fee for certain courses not strictly meant for non-literates, neo-literates and weaker sections. They can also mobilize resources through ZSS and other such agencies for conducting training programmes for resource persons and Preraks, etc. The JSSs are allowed to utilize the resources thus generated for expanding their programme activities.

11.5 At the end of Eighth Plan, 58 JSSs were functioning while during Ninth Plan, 50 additional JSSs were set up raising the number to 108. During 2002-2003, 14 additional JSSs were set up and during 2003-2004, it was proposed to add another 15 JSSs.

11.6 The JSSs are classified into three categories of A, B and C depending upon their location, performance and experience and their funding pattern is as follows:

(Rs. In lakhs)

Category	Recurring	Non-recurring
'A'	35	15
'B'	30	10
'C'	25	10

11.7 The Committee is of the view that the vocational courses carried out by the JSS should be increased in number and frequency. The committee finds that despite its mandate to concentrate on socio-economically and educationally backward groups of urban and rural population, including neo-literates as well as unemployed youth, (through its 126 Sansthans) the total number of persons benefited through the courses of JSS in the year 2002-03 was 2,85, 979 which is abysmally low, given the large number of people who are to be brought under the ambit of this programme. Further the

Committee is concerned over the underutilization of funds as only 81% of the total allocation could be utilized and it emphasizes that every step should be taken to curb such a recurring tendency.

11.8 The Committee has been informed that according to 2001 census, 45 districts in the country, majority of them concentrated in Bihar, Jharkhand, UP and Orissa have female literacy rate below 30 per cent. The Committee notes that 8 low female literacy districts in UP have been brought under an accelerated programme of female literacy which is being implemented through a network of about 100 NGOs. 24.79 lakh women are expected to be made literate under the programme. In Bihar, 15 low female literacy districts are being covered with the involvement of Panchayati Raj functionaries, women volunteers teachers and self help groups. 24.03 lakh non-literate women were identified, out of which 19.69 lakh have already been enrolled in the programmes. While appreciating the initiative taken by the Department, the Committee would like to point out that the Department should take all steps to ensure that only NGOs of proven track record are involved in this ambitious initiative.

XII. PROBLEM OF DROPOUTS

12.1 The Committee notes that various schemes are being run by the Department of Elementary Education & Literacy with the ultimate aim of achieving 100% enrollment so that no children in the country remained out of school. Not only that efforts are also being made to retain them as also to provide quality education to all the children between 6-14 by the 2007. The aims of innovative schemes under SSA can particularly be mentioned in this regard. The Committee is concerned that implementation of even these schemes does not inspire enough confidence. The problem of dropouts, it appears, has not been given due importance even under the SSA. The dropout rate, the Committee notes, has come down just by 3.5% during the last decade from 42.6% in 1991 to 39.1% in 2001. The Committee observes that drop-out rates in classes I-V for the year 2002-03 as per the provisional figures supplied by the Department are quite high in respect of some of the States as indicated below

Bihar	61.64
Meghalaya	56.96
Mizoram	59.31
Rajasthan	60.43
Sikkim	61.76

What is more disturbing is that except Rajasthan (2002-03), school data in respect of other States pertains to 2001-02. The reasons given for this dismal performance are - existence of teachers' vacancies, teachers' absenteeism (39%), particularly in rural areas inadequate involvement of community, difficulty in covering children from inaccessible areas. This gives a very grim view of the state of affairs which exposes all the claims made by the Department. If the dropout is taken as indicator, it appears that all the efforts and resources spent on achieving universalisation of elementary education had gone down the drains. It is a sad reflection on the performance of the Department as well. This points out towards an urgent need for having a serious look on the causes that are responsible for this. While doing so the states should also be consulted because education is the concurrent responsibility. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department should look into this and submit a note to the Committee within three months of presenting this Report.

12.2 The Committee is of the opinion that the children who have dropped out can be integrated with the Continuing Education Programmes of adult education so that they are able to undertake activities relating to income generation providing skills in area specific activities.

12.3 The Committee feels that a 'Learn & Earn' scheme could be an effective measure for retaining the students in the schools. It therefore, recommends that Government should consider the proposal of providing suitable vocational education to desirous children at the upper primary stage so that those who cannot for any reason pursue education beyond class 8, enter the world and earn their livelihood.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

II. BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS

The Committee notes that increment in the allocations of the Department for the year 2004-05 is nominal with

which Department would hardly be able to carry out two of its main schemes (SSA & MDM) let alone other schemes. These two schemes would require Rs. 10,919.00 crores for the year 2004-05, according to the Department. The Committee notes that the Government recognizing this need of the Department has provided for 2% education less from this year. Department should put forth this aspect before the Ministry of Finance at appropriate stage. (Para 2.2)

Even if the entire Rs. 5000.00 crores expected to be generated from Education Cess is fully utilized to meet the additional requirements, there will still be a shortfall of Rs. 187.00 crores. The Department should put forth this aspect before the minority of finance at appropriate stage.

(Para 2.3)

The Committee also notes considerable gap between the demand projected by the Working Group Report of the Department before the Planning Commission both for the Elementary Education as well as Adult Education for the 10th Plan Period. It feels that primary education had suffered from deprivation and degradation mainly due to inadequate allocation of resources over several decades. The Committee is happy that the education of children has received some attention but is still not treated as priority area as far as resource allocation is concerned. Some very good schemes have been started with valuable components which need to be strengthened and expanded. The Committee, therefore, recommends that need for adequate funds for elementary education should be projected effectively by the Department before the Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission at the RE stage. At the same time, the Committee has a word of caution for the Department. Although allocation of Rs. 1951.25 crores for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 2003-04 was enhanced to Rs. 2732.32 crores at the RE stage, the Department could utilize only Rs. 2582.29 crores. In the event of their projected demand of Rs. 6420.00 crores being met, the Department will have to take effective steps for optimum and judicious utilisation of enhanced allocation. (Para 2.4)

III. SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

The SSA is, in fact, the flagship Scheme of the Department to pursue elementary education in mission mode. The goals before it are laudable, yet highly ambitious ones. The Committee could see that the goal of having all the children aged 6-14 in schools, Education Guarantee Centres/bridge course by 2003 could not be achieved. As per information made available by the States, number of out-of school children was 2,30,34,518 as on 1.4.03 which stands reduced to 61,61,104 as on 31.12.03 (not including Goa, Sikkim, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.) The Committee is not inclined to believe these figures specially in respect of Bihar, UP & West Bengal as indicated below :

	1.4.2003	31.12.2003
Bihar	44,30,140	7,46,000
U.P.	43,00,00	2,10,000
West Bengal	39,50,239	4,39,602

The Committee finds it quite baffling that within a span of just nine months such a tremendous improvement had taken place. It appears to the Committee that these figures may not be real. When asked about the channel of information on the performance of this scheme, the Committee was informed that it is through official channel - from District level to State level and to the Centre. The Committee was given to understand that 42 national research and resource institutions with a proven track record have been involved with monitoring at different levels. Further independent evaluation is provided through monitoring by independent external audit organizations. The Committee would like to be apprised about the latest feedback provided by independent external audit organizations. These information are crucial because they indicate health of a particular scheme based on which effective remedies can be suggested.

(Para 3.4 & 3.5)

The Department informed that for the year 2004-05, an amount of Rs. 6420.00 crores was asked for whereas it got only Rs. 3057.00 crores for SSA. Annual Plan of 575 districts was approved between May to July 2004 and Project Approval Board (PAB) was going to consider more plans thereafter. The Committee is aware that part of the gap in resources is going to be met by collection from the educational cess levied this year. But even this would not be adequate to fill the gap. The Committee, therefore, recommends that demands/needs of the Department for the SSA should be reconsidered and additional allocation provided at appropriate stage so that such an important scheme does not suffer and its goals were attained. (Para 3.6)

The Committee notes that there had been some underutilization of funds during the Ninth Plan. Underutilization,

in Committee's view, is a cause for serious concern. It points out more towards the laxity on the part of the implementing authorities than anything else. Such a performance does not inspire confidence as to the success of this programme, hence it should be avoided at every cost. (Para 3.7)

The Committee notes that assistance under the programme is on a 75:25 sharing arrangement between the Central Govt. and State Govts. The Committee is not aware about the acceptance level of this distribution by the States already burdened by financial constraints. The Committee apprehends that proposed 50:50 sharing between Central and State Govts. after Tenth Plan may not find favour with majority of the States. The Department may need to have a re-assessment of this funding pattern by having a Mid-Term appraisal of Tenth Plan during the current year, 2004-05. (Para 3.8)

The Committee also observes that although an impressive number of additional classrooms and new school buildings were sanctioned by the PAB during the last two years, not much progress seems to have been made. Out of 79,766 additional class rooms sanctioned, construction of only 12,516 class rooms could be completed, as many as 62,275 class rooms remained under construction, and details about 5,375 sanctioned class rooms are not available. Similarly, out of 40,944 new school buildings sanctioned, only 3547 school buildings could be completed, 32093 school buildings were still under construction. Fate of 5504 new school buildings is not known. The Committee, therefore, emphasizes the need for taking all measures so that situation improves in non/under-performing States in SSA. (Para 3.9)

The Committee is dismayed to note that of the 4,06,148 teachers sanctioned to be appointed, only 1,38,090 (i.e. 33%) could be appointed during the last two years. Against the fixed target for recruitment of teachers, States like Bihar, U.P. and West Bengal could achieve zero per cent, 22 per cent and 21 per cent of the target respectively. These States constitute a large proportion of children between 6-14 years. Such a dismal performance in the bigger States does not augur well for the future of this programme. (Para 3.10)

The Committee is concerned over the quality of education imparted under the Abhiyan. The Committee is little apprehensive about the feasibility of appointing education volunteer/para teachers for imparting quality education to the children. The Committee strongly feels that a child needs to be tended under well-trained hands to initiate him into the art of learning. The Committee is aware of the fact that there was problem in getting regular teachers in remote and inaccessible habitations. It, however, emphasizes the importance of trained teachers for child education. The Committee is happy to know that the Department had made a provision of pre-service induction/training as well as in service training of Education Volunteers even at Block/Cluster levels. But the Committee finds that due to shortage of teachers, not to speak of trained teachers/qualified resource persons at block and cluster levels, aims of the Programme are not being achieved. (Para 3.11)

The Committee also takes note of the evaluation study on Alternative Schooling (AS) conducted by the Central Institute of Education, Delhi University in the year 2002-2003, which broadly revealed that a majority of teachers in the Alternative Schools were first generation learners and the community was satisfied with their functioning. The Committee is of the view that the community in remote areas may not be capable for making a correct assessment of the functioning of AS teachers. But it is really encouraging that the communities were participating in the education of their children. The Committee also takes notice of the study which revealed that the AS learners performed better on tasks involving learning by doing. In view of the socio-economic context of the parent and the children themselves, the Committee recommends that learning by doing should be emphasized in the syllabi while taking due consideration of the child's psychology and his surroundings. The Committee feels that agencies involved in the framing of syllabi should ensure that at elementary level, to say the least, child's creativity should be promoted. (Para 3.12)

The Committee welcomes that the Government has approved a new programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL). The Committee desires that funds for the programme be released to all 2656 selected blocks as early as possible so that the gender differential in literacy rate in various States as well as at national level can be lessened to such an extent as to achieve the goal of gender equity under SSA. (Para 3.13)

IV. KASTURBA GANDHI SWATANTRA VIDYALAYA (KGSV)

The Committee feels that KGSV is a laudable scheme but is concerned about the snail's pace at which it was being implemented. Changes and modifications from time to time, no doubt, were key to any Scheme being relevant, effective and meaningful, the inordinate delay caused in restructuring the scheme does not appear to be quite justified to the

Committee. The Committee is happy to learn that this scheme since has been revised. It, therefore, expects that KGSV would be implemented with full steam and the Department would see that the allocation would not be reduced in the year 2004-05 as well. About 700 residential schools are to be opened during the 10th Plan Period, which would require considerable planning, determination as well as adequate resources in the year 2004-05. The Committee, therefore, recommends that adequate resources should be provided to spread this noble scheme for girls far and wide. (Para 4.3)

The Committee appreciates the idea of developing local specific curriculum suitable for girls from the SCs, STs, minorities and OBCs communities. The Committee desires to add that the curriculum should be such that it is not only contextual and interesting to them but also empowers them economically in order to sustain themselves in the society. (Para 4.4)

V. NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT TO PRIMARY EDUCATION (MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME)

The Committee however, observes that out of the seven States claimed to be implementing the Programme partially, five States i.e. Bihar, Punjab, West Bengal, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh are distributing foodgrains with percentage varying from 92 to 99 per cent. The Committee therefore, is of the view that in the major States, some of them educationally backward also, Mid-Day Meal Scheme still remains to be implemented in the true sense and as per the Supreme Court directive. (Para 5.4)

The Committee notes that against an allocation of 1,33,84,064 MTs of foodgrains during Ninth Plan only 79,54,426 MTs of foodgrains were lifted, which is approximately 60 per cent of the allocation. However, against a financial target of Rs. 6,50,177 lakhs fixed for the Scheme during Ninth Plan, a financial target of Rs. 6,49,980 lakhs has been achieved, which is 99.96 per cent. The Committee is at loss to understand that despite a 100 per cent utilization of fund there has not been a commensurate off take of foodgrains. The Committee is constrained to say that it is a result of a weak planning for the effective implementation of the Scheme. The chances of pilferage/financial mismanagement can also not be ruled out. The Committee, therefore, would like the Department to make the monitoring mechanism of this scheme more comprehensive and effective by holding District Collectors responsible for such lapses. It could also go in for an evaluation of the scheme with a view to tackling the problems faced in its implementation. The Committee feels that State Governments are needed to be sensitized. (Para 5.5)

The Committee finds that the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, no doubt, was a noble scheme, which not only motivates the children to come to school and remain there but also takes care of the problem of malnutrition, particularly, in the rural areas. The Committee finds that the main problem is cooking and serving the food. It would require huge funds, should the Centre decide to support this as well. Given the ground realities and financial constraints of some States, covering all the children under this Scheme in near future appears to remain a distant dream. The Committee hopes that 15% of additional central assistance under PMGY earmarked for meeting the cooking cost under MDM and additional allocation that MDM was likely to get from the cess being collected from this year, will alleviate resource constraints to a great extent in providing hot cooked meal to the children. The Committee recommends to allocate funds to meet at least the gap between what is given and what is required. (Para 5.6)

The Committee though appreciates Government's move for mobilization of additional resources for this Scheme and extension of the scheme upto upper primary stage. The Committee, however, feels that it might put extra burden on already cash starved scheme. It can be taken up only after the coverage of MDM is 100 per cent at primary stage. (Para 5.7)

The Committee has been informed that teachers were being involved in cooking food in some States. It deplors this practice which affects studies in the school. The Committee feels that, at the most, teachers can do only quality checking. As an alternative, the Committee feels that involvement of NGOs as well as Self Help Groups in providing cooked meal to the children would facilitate this scheme in a big way. In places where Self Help Groups may not be available, the youth clubs and volunteers of Nehru Yuvak Kendras may also be involved for cooking and serving the meals to students. The Committee has been informed that the Department had issued guidelines in 2001 whereunder State Govts. may select NGOs for taking the responsibility of serving cooked meal to school children. States like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have actively involved well-established NGOs in this matter. The Committee feels that the Department should take the initiative in motivating the States lagging behind to follow the example of these southern states. (Para 5.8)

The Committee's attention has been drawn to media reports about children falling ill after taking cooked meal

provided in schools. The Committee feels that these media reports about contaminated food being served under Mid-Day Meal Scheme in different States need to be taken seriously. The Department should make an effort as far as possible to check with the concerned State authority about the veracity of such reports and if found true, implementing agencies should be taken to task. The Committee is of the view that that these reports should not be considered as stray incidents as they tend to adversely affect the minds of parents of school going children. The Committee, therefore, emphasizes the need for having strict quality control on food so as to avoid sub-standard and stale food being served to the children, which may result in health complications.

The Committee suggests that the Department should explore the possibility of supplying multi-vitamin tablets to the children as a part of MDM with a view to supplementing their nutritional requirements. (Para 5.9)

VI. STRENGTHENING OF TEACHERS TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

The Committee is happy that the teachers' training had caught attention which has been made as an integral component of SSA. The Committee emphasizes on the need for an effective teacher's training programme and is of the view that the Government still has a lot more to do in this regard. The Committee is concerned that against a target of establishing 20 new DIETs and upgradation of five institutions as CTEs/IASEs, only six DIETs could be sanctioned in 2003-2004. This situation becomes grim in face of the fact that a large number of trained instructors for elementary education were required for the successful accomplishment of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan apart from the requirements in regular schools. (Para 6.4)

The Committee further notes that against a target to set up 100 new DIETs, 125 CTEs and IASEs, only 39 DIETs, 9 CTEs and 4 IASEs could be established during the Ninth Plan and actual expenditure against the total allocation of Rs. 976.53 crores have been to the tune of 763.06 crores, which is 78 per cent of the allocation. The Committee expresses dissatisfaction over the progress made in the physical achievements and also the underutilization of funds more so in face of the fact that there is a severe shortage of qualified teachers and this aspect is evident from NCTE's directive of raising the limit of DIETs intake to 200 seats to solve the problem of trained teachers. (Para 6.5)

The Committee appreciates the initiative taken by NCTE in encouraging State Govts. in developing special training programmes in distance mode for the training of untrained in service teachers. During 2003-04, a large number of primary/upper primary teachers of Sikkim, Assam, Tripura have been covered under a six month programme developed by IGNOU. The Committee hopes that other north-eastern States, and States like Bihar, MP would also take benefit of this programme. (Para 6.6)

The Committee has learnt that to meet the requirement of additional elementary teachers due to implementation of SSA, NCTE has permitted increased in-take of DIETs to the extent of 200 seats and encourage recognized B.Ed colleges to start elementary teacher training course, waiving the requirement of NOC from State Government. The Committee feels that it could be only a stop-gap arrangement in teacher's training programme. Moreover, abjuring the requirement of NOC might result in the fall in standards of infrastructure and may also become the breeding ground of education mafias apart from producing sub-standard, elementary education teachers. The Committee strongly recommends that all out efforts be made to make all the sanctioned 498 DIETs, 86 CTEs, 38 IASEs functional as soon as possible. Moreover, the new scheme allowing flexibility but increased accountability of the states in making teacher education institutes functional, productive and qualitative appears to be good one. It, therefore, be implemented with all sincerity and responsibility. (Para 6.7)

VII. DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DPEP)

The Committee takes note that the reviews and various evaluation studies of (DPEP) programme pointed out that it had resulted in significant increase in enrolment, improvement in learning achievement, reduction in repetition rates/drop-outs with increased community involvement, improvement in classroom processes, etc. The Committee observes that the programme was now in its last leg after fulfilling its objective, by and large in the area of its operation. The Committee however observes that reduction in drop-out rates to less than 10 per cent, one of the three major objectives of the programme has not been achieved. In 20 districts of Bihar and 19 districts of Rajasthan, DPEP programme is being implemented at present. However, as per the figures made available to the Committee drop out rate continues to be as high as 61.64% in Bihar (2001-02), 60.43 in Rajasthan (2002-03). (Para 7.5)

The Committee is also surprised to notice that among the nine states where DPEP is still going on, Orissa, Jharkhand and Gujarat had comparatively less number of toilets constructed *vis-a-vis* the number of new schools and

alternative schools established. The Committee would like the Department to look into the matter and improve the situation urgently under the SSA. The Committee feels that the infrastructure created during the operation of the programme was quite huge and hopes that it would bridge the resource crunch being felt in the successful implementation of various components of the SSA. (Para 7.6)

VIII. LOK JUMBISH PROJECT

The Committee appreciates the work under the project and would like such model projects with strong girl components to be extended to other regions of the country, especially in the low female literacy States.(Para 8.4)

IX. SHIKSHA KARMi PROJECT

The Committee notes that the Department acknowledges teacher absenteeism as a major obstacle in achieving the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) and is of the opinion that though the project has achieved reasonably good results, still the concept of Shiksha Karmis would not help the purpose in the long run. The Committee feels that the Government should have made more concerted efforts in this regard. It would have been better to take stringent measures to tackle the delinquent teachers than creating a cadre of semi-trained teachers. The Committee recommends that Government take sincere steps to ensure that only fully trained teachers were into teaching process to attain qualitative improvement in primary education. (Para 9.6)

The Committee observes that out of 3650 villages covered in Phase-III of the SKP, only 2154 Prahar Pathshalas (Schools of convenience) have been opened. The Committee feels that since the SKP aims at universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote and socio-economically backward villages in Rajasthan with primary attention towards girls, it is expedient to open Prahar Pathshalas to achieve its aims, more so, given the fact that girls need such Pathshalas more than the boys. The Committee also notes that female Shiksha Karmis (which is only 21.6%) are comparatively very less than the male Shiksha Karmis (which is 78.4%). The Committee is of the opinion that this imbalance be corrected and more females be inducted in the project as this will help more girls from backward villages to come out for education. Further, the Committee has noted that 100% enrolled villages are only 2430 which was much less than 3650 villages covered under phase III. The Committee desires that all out efforts be made to make all the villages 100% enrolled under the SKP. (Para 9.7)

X. ADULT EDUCATION

The Committee would like to place on record its appreciation for the efforts made by the Department in accomplishment of adult education programmes, particularly, its continuing education component. However, it feels that literacy rate achieved i.e. 65.38% (as per census 2001) in comparison to the target fixed (i.e. 70%) by the end of Ninth Plan, should have been achieved. The Committee notes that only 77% of the allocation could be used. The Committee is dismayed at the underutilization of funds for different schemes of adult education. The Committee is concerned over the issue of underutilization of funds and feels that such a tendency need to be checked and problems identified to be removed at the earliest. (Para 10.7)

The Committee notes that in light of its recommendations in its 144th Report, the Department had allocated Rs.250 crore to Adult Education for the year 2004-05 in comparison to Rs.233 crore provided during 2003-04. The Committee feels that even this increase of mere 17 crore would not be adequate in the face of gigantic task that is before the Government. (Para 10.8)

XI. JAN SHIKSHAN SANSTHAN

The Committee is of the view that the vocational courses carried out by the JSS should be increased in number and frequency. The committee finds that despite its mandate to concentrate on socio-economically and educationally backward groups of urban and rural population, including neo-literates as well as unemployed youth, (through its 126 Sansthans) the total number of persons benefited through the courses of JSS in the year 2002-03 was 2,85, 979 which is abysmally low, given the large number of people who are to be brought under the ambit of this programme. Further the Committee is concerned over the underutilization of funds as only 81% of the total allocation could be utilized and it emphasizes that every step should be taken to curb such a recurring tendency. (Para 11.7)

The Committee has been informed that according to 2001 census, 45 districts in the country, majority of them concentrated in Bihar, Jharkhand, UP and Orissa have female literacy rate below 30 per cent. The Committee notes that 8 low female literacy districts in UP have been brought under an accelerated programme of female literacy which is being implemented through a network of about 100 NGOs. 24.79 lakh women are expected to be made literate under the programme. In Bihar, 15 low female literacy districts are being covered with the involvement of Panchayati Raj functionaries, women volunteers teachers and self help groups. 24.03 lakh non-literate women were identified, out of which 19.69 lakh have already been enrolled in the programmes. While appreciating the initiative taken by the

Department, the Committee would like to point out that the Department should take all steps to ensure that only NGOs of proven track record are involved in this ambitious initiative. (Para 11.8)

XII. PROBLEM OF DROPOUTS

12.1 The Committee notes that various schemes are being run by the Department of Elementary Education & Literacy with the ultimate aim of achieving 100% enrollment so that no children in the country remained out of school. Not only that efforts are also being made to retain them as also to provide quality education to all the children between 6-14 by the 2007. The aims of innovative schemes under SSA can particularly be mentioned in this regard. The Committee is concerned that implementation of even these schemes does not inspire enough confidence. The problem of dropouts, it appears, has not been given due importance even under the SSA. The dropout rate, the Committee notes, has come down just by 3.5% during the last decade from 42.6% in 1991 to 39.1% in 2001. The Committee observes that drop-out rates in classes I-V for the year 2002-03 as per the provisional figures supplied by the Department are quite high in respect of some of the States as indicated below ----

Bihar	61.64
Meghalaya	56.96
Mizoram	59.31
Rajasthan	60.43
Sikkim	61.76

What is more disturbing is that except Rajasthan (2002-03), school data in respect of other States pertains to 2001-02. The reasons given for this dismal performance are - existence of teachers' vacancies, teachers' absenteeism (39%), particularly in rural areas inadequate involvement of community, difficulty in covering children from inaccessible areas. This gives a very grim view of the state of affairs which exposes all the claims made by the Department. If the dropout is taken as indicator, it appears that all the efforts and resources spent on achieving universalisation of elementary education had gone down the drains. It is a sad reflection on the performance of the Department as well. This points out towards an urgent need for having a serious look on the causes that are responsible for this. While doing so the states should also be consulted because education is the concurrent responsibility. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department should look into this and submit a note to the Committee within three months of presenting this Report. (Para 12.1)

The Committee is of the opinion that the children who have dropped out can be integrated with the Continuing Education Programmes of adult education so that they are able to undertake activities relating to income generation providing skills in area specific activities. (Para 12.2)

The Committee feels that a 'Learn & Earn' scheme could be an effective measure for retaining the students in the schools. It therefore, recommends that Government should consider the proposal of providing suitable vocational education to desirous children at the upper primary stage so that those who cannot for any reason pursue education beyond class 8, enter the world and earn their livelihood. (Para 12.3)

MINUTES III THIRD MEETING

The Committee met at 2.30 P.M. on Thursday, the 12th August, 2004 in Committee Room 'A' Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

MEMBERS PRESENT

1. Shri Vayalar Ravi ----- *Chairman*

RAJYA SABHA

2. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
3. Shrimati Chandra Kala Pandey
4. Shri Uday Pratap Singh

5. Shrimati Vanga Geetha
6. Prof. Ram Deo Bhandary

LOK SABHA

7. Shri Basudeb Barman
8. Shri Hari Sinh Chavda
9. Shri R. L. Jalappa
10. Shri Y.G. Mahajan
11. Shri Manoj Kumar
12. Dr. Thokchom Meinya
13. Mohd. Mukim
14. Shri Tukaram R. Patil
15. Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat
16. Shri Devendra Singh Yadav

SECRETARIAT

Shrimati Vandana Garg, Joint Secretary
Shri N.K. Singh, Joint Director
Shri J. Sundriyal, Under Secretary
Shri Vimal Kumar, Committee Officer
Shrimati Meena Kandwal, Research Officer

WITNESSES

(I) Ministry of Human Resource Development Representatives of the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy

1. Mrs. Kumud Bansal, Secretary,
2. Shri K.M. Acharya, Joint Secretary (EE-I)
3. Ms. Vrinda Sarup, Joint Secretary (EE-II)
4. Shri Jagan Mathews, Joint Secretary (Adult Education)
5. Shri C. Balakrishnan, Joint Secretary ((Planning)
6. Shri V.K. Pipersenia, Joint Secretary & Financial Adviser
7. Prof. H.P. Dixit, Director (NCERT)
8. Shri Shardindu, Chairperson (NCTE)
9. Prof. P.K. Joshi, Director (NIEPA)
10. Ms. Ira Joshi, Director (E.E)
11. Shri Amit Kaushik, Director
12. Shri P.K. Mohanty, DBA
13. Shri Suresh Kumar, Director
14. Shri Satish Loomba, Director
15. Mrs. Prana Gulati, Deputy Secretary
16. Shri P. Sudhir Kumar, Chief Controller of Accounts

(II) Representatives of the Department of Secondary and Higher Education

1. Shri B. S. Baswan, Secretary
2. Shri S. Banerjee, Additional Secretary
3. Shri S.P. Gaur, Joint Secretary (Commissioner KVS)
4. Shri C. Balakrishnan, Joint Secretary
5. Shri Ravi Mathur, Joint Secretary
6. Shri Sunil Kumar, Joint Secretary
7. Shri V.K. Pipersenia, Joint Secretary & FA
8. Smt. Bela Banerjee, Joint Secretary
9. Shri Sudhir Kumar, Chief Controller of Accounts
10. Prof. Arun Nigavekar, Chairman, UGC
11. Prof. H.P. Dikshit, Director, NCERT

12. Shri P.K. Joshi, Director, NIEPA
13. Shri O.N. Singh, Commissioner, NVS
14. Dr. Ashok Ganguly, Chairman, CBSE
15. Prof. R. Natrajan, Chairman, AICCTE

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the Secretary and other representatives of the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy and asked the Secretary to make brief presentation on Demands for Grants (2004-2005) of the Department. The Secretary made a presentation on the activities and achievements of the Department and briefly explained the budgetary allocation on different heads as also the functioning of the Department. The Members then sought clarifications, which the Secretary and the officials of the Department replied.

The witness then withdrew.

3. The Committee, thereafter, adjourned at 4.30 P.M. and reassembled at 4.45 P.M. to hear the Secretary, Department of Secondary and Higher Education.

4. The Chairman welcomed the Secretary and other officials of the Department of Secondary and Higher Education. The Secretary made a presentation on the activities and achievements of the Department and briefly explained the budgetary allocation under different heads as also the functioning of the Department. The Members then sought clarifications.

4A. A verbatim record of the proceedings was kept.

5. The Committee then adjourned at 7.30 P.M. to meet again at 3.30 P.M. on Tuesday, the 17th August 2004.

IV FOURTH MEETING

The Committee met at 3.30 P.M. on Tuesday, the 17th August, 2004 in Room No. '63', First Floor, Parliament House, New Delhi.

MEMBERS PRESENT

1. Shri Vayalar Ravi ----- *Chairman*

RAJYA SABHA

2. Shri Dwijendra Nath Sharmah
3. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
4. Shrimati Chandra Kala Pandey
5. Shri S. Anbalagan
6. Shri Uday Patap Singh
7. Shrimati Vanga Geetha

LOK SABHA

8. Shri Hari Sinh Chavda
9. Shri Ramswarup Koli
10. Shri Manjunath Kunnur
11. Dr. Thokchom Meinya
12. Shri Krishna Murari Moghe
13. Mohd. Mukim
14. Shri M. Rajamohan Reddy
15. Smt. P. Satheedevi
16. Shri A.R. Shaheen
17. Shri K. Virupakshappa

SECRETARIAT

Shrimati Vandana Garg, Joint Secretary
Shri N.K. Singh, Joint Director
Shri J. Sundriyal, Under Secretary

Shri Vimal Kumar, Committee Officer
Shrimati Meena Kandwal, Research Officer

2. The Committee took up for consideration the 149th and 150th Draft Reports on the Demands for Grants (2004-2005) of (i) Department of Elementary Education and Literacy and (ii) Department of Secondary and Higher Education respectively. Both the reports were adopted with some minor modifications.
 3. The Committee, then, decided that the 151st Draft Report on the Demands for Grants (2004-2005) pertaining to Department of Women and Child Development would be taken up for consideration and adoption the next day.
 4. The Committee, then, adjourned at 6.30 P.M. to meet again at 3.30 P.M. on 18th August 2004.
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