

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA
RAJYA SABHA

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

HUNDRED FIFTY - FIFTH REPORT

ON

**ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS CONTAINED IN
THE HUNDRED FORTY NINTH REPORT ON DEMANDS FOR GRANTS 2004-2005 (DEMAND NO. 57) OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION & LITERACY
(MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT)**

**(PRESENTED TO THE RAJYA SABHA ON 3RD MARCH, 2005)
(LAID ON THE TABLE OF LOK SABHA ON 2ND MARCH, 2005)**

**RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI
MARCH, 2005/ PHALGUNA, 1926 (SAKA)**

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**COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE
(2005)**

RAJYA SABHA

1. Shri Vayalar Ravi ¾ *Chairman*
2. Shri Eduardo Faleiro
3. Shri Dwijendra Nath Sharmah
4. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad

5. Shrimati Chandra Kala Pandey
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8. Shri M.P. Abdussamad Samadani
9. Prof. Ram Deo Bhandary
10. Shri Anil Dhirubhai Ambani

LOK SABHA

11. Shri Basudeb Barman
12. Shri Hari Sinh Chavda
13. Shri G.V. Harsha Kumar
14. Shri R. L. Jalappa
15. Shri Ramswarup Koli
16. Shri Manjunath Kunnur
17. Shri Y.G. Mahajan
18. Shri Manoj Kumar
19. Shri Babu Lal Marandi
20. Dr. Thokchom Meinya
21. Shri Krishna Murari Moghe
22. Mohd. Mukim
23. Shri Tukaram Ganpatrao Rengepatil
24. Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat
25. Shri M. Rajamohan Reddy
26. Shri Tufani Saroj
27. Smt. P. Satheedevi
28. Shri A.R. Shaheen
29. Smt. Jyotirmoyee Sikdar
30. Shri K. Virupaxappa
31. Shri Devendra Singh Yadav

SECRETARIAT

Shri N.C. Joshi, Additional Secretary
Smt. Vandana Garg, Joint Secretary
Shri N.K. Singh, Director
Shri J. Sundriyal, Under Secretary
Shri Swarabji B., Committee Officer
Smt. Meena Kandwal, Research Officer

PREFACE

1. I, the Chairman of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development, having been authorised by the Committee, do hereby present this Hundred –Fifty Fifth Report on Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations contained in the Hundred Forty Ninth Report on Demands for Grants (Demand No.57) of the Department of Elementary Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development for the year 2004-2005.

2. The Hundred Forty Ninth Report of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development was presented to Rajya Sabha and laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 20th August, 2004. Replies of the Government to the recommendations/observations contained in the Report, were considered by the Committee at its meeting

held on the 26th February 2005.

3. The Committee considered the Draft Report and adopted the same in its meeting held on 26th February 2005.

New Delhi;
February 26, 2005
Phalgun 7, 1926, (Saka)

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

REPORT

1. This Report of the Committee deals with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in Committee's One Hundred-forty ninth Report on Demands for Grants (Demand No.57) of the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy for the year 2004-2005.

2. Action Taken Notes have been received from the Government in respect of the recommendations contained in the Report. They have been categorized as follows: -

- (i) Recommendations/Observations have been accepted by the Government: 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.7, 3.10, 3.11, 4.3, 4.4, 5.6, 6.4, 6.6, 7.5, 10.7, 12.4 (Chapter I) Total- 14
- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee does not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies: 3.6, 5.7, 8.4, 10.8, 12.3 (Chapter II) Total- 5
- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee: 3.4, 3.5, 3.9, 3.12, 3.13, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.8, 5.9, 6.5, 6.7, 7.6, 9.6, 9.7, 11.7, 11.8 (Chapter-III) Total- 17
- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited: 12.1 (Chapter – IV) Total- 1

2.1 The final replies in respect of the recommendations/observations made in Chapter IV of the Report are still awaited from the Department. The Committee may be apprised of the same as and when action is taken.

CHAPTER-I

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS, WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

II BUDGETARY ALLOCATION

Recommendations/Observations

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 cess 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 Ministry of Finance at appropriate stage.**

Action Taken

2.2 & 2.3 Requirements for SSA and MDM for 2004-05 mentioned in para 2.2 was based on information furnished by the

Department to the Committee on 22.7.2004.

At that time, extension of MDM programme to Upper Primary stage was envisaged from this year itself. Subsequently, Government decided not to extend MDM programme to the Upper Primary stage for the present, resulting in reduction of requirement for this programme from Rs.4499 crore to Rs.3261 crore, and of total requirement for SSA and MDM from Rs.10,919 crore to Rs.9681 crore. As against this, additional provision of Rs.2000 crore and 1232 crore (total Rs.3232 crore) have been made for SSA and MDM schemes respectively in 1st Supplementary Budget for 2004-05. With this, total allocation for SSA and MDM has risen from Rs. 4732 crores to Rs. 7964 crores.

As suggested by the Committee, Department will continue to forcefully project its financial requirements before Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance at every opportunity.

Recommendations/Observations

2.4 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 has 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 utilization of enhanced allocation.

Action Taken

2.4 The issue of future requirements for the Department's programmes will be projected to the Planning Commission as part of its Mid-Term Appraisal exercise for the Tenth Five Year Plan.

BE for SSA in 2003-04 was Rs.1951.25 crore, which was raised to Rs.2732.32 crore at RE stage. As against this, total expenditure during 2003-04 was Rs.2710.64 crore (Rs.2582.29 crore under non-EAP and Rs.150 crore under EAP components) which works out to be 99.2% of RE. It appears that while quoting the expenditure figure of Rs.2582.29 crore in para 2.4, the Committee omitted to include the expenditure of Rs.150 crore shown under EAP.

However, Department has taken note of the Committee's concern regarding effective steps for optimum and judicious utilization of enhanced allocation, and will make all possible efforts in that behalf.

III SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

Recommendations/Observations

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.

Action Taken

3.7 The concern of the Committee is noted for guidance and compliance.

Recommendations/Observations

3.8 The Committee notes that assistance under the programme is on a 75:25 sharing arrangement between the Central Govt. and State Governments. 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 Governments 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.

Action Taken

3.8 A proposal for change in the sharing arrangement between the Centre and the States has been sent to the Planning Commission for consideration during their Mid-Term Appraisal exercise for the 10th Plan.

Recommendations/Observations

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 percent, 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.

Action Taken

3.10 As per latest available information, as against 5,35,203 posts of elementary teachers approved for Central assistance during 2001-04, 310506 (58%) posts have been filled. Of the three States mentioned in the Report Uttar Pradesh has since made considerable progress by filling up 74% of the sanctioned posts of elementary teachers. The matter is being pursued with Bihar and West Bengal.

Recommendations/Observation

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.

Action Taken

3.11 Para teachers are not necessarily under-qualified. On the contrary, data collected for 462 districts in 18 States for 2002-03 under District Information System for Education (DISE) has revealed that 97.6% have Secondary or higher qualification, and 88.4% have Higher Secondary or higher qualification.

Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan there is provision of 20 days' in-service training for all teachers annually, 60 days' refresher course for untrained teachers already employed as teachers, and 30 days orientation course for trained, new recruits.

States are making use of the above provision under SSA to upgrade professional competence of their teachers. Efforts are being made by States for training of un-trained in-service teachers through Distance Mode, with the help of IGNOU and recognition from NCTE. These include a six month training programme for primary teachers especially designed for North-Eastern States and Sikkim, and State specific elementary teacher training programmes for Orissa, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Gujarat. In addition to this, NCTE has also approved, in principle, a one year training programme in Distance mode for training of un-trained primary school teachers of Bihar.

IV KASTURBA GANDHI SWATANTRA VIDYALAYA (KGSV)

Recommendations/Observations

4.3 The Committee feels that KGSV is 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.

Action Taken

4.3 & 4.4 The detailed guidelines for the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme were disseminated to the 21 States eligible on 2nd August, 2004. The State Governments were requested to send in their detailed plans for opening of KGBV Schools by 30th September, 2004. The Hon'ble Human Resource Development Minister wrote to all the concerned Chief Ministers on seeking the State Governments fullest cooperation in planning and effectively implementing the scheme. There were positive responses received from the States concerned. A National Level Workshop was held on 2nd November, 2004 with the participant State Government representatives and experts with experience in running residential schools for girls, in order for the States to develop a better understanding of the scheme's implementation, learn from existing national experiences and also to build capacity of implementation staff. The necessity for local specific curriculum along with the elements of work experience has been emphasized at the Upper Primary level.

By 17th December 2004 approvals for 525 KGBV Schools had been accorded to 17 States.

V National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day Meal Scheme)

Recommendations/Observations

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.

Action Taken

5.6 As per NP-NSPE, 2004, Central Government has decided to provide assistance to States to meet cooking cost @ Re. 1 per child per school day w.e.f. 1.9.04. Ceiling for Transport Subsidy has also been enhanced, and assistance will be provided to meet expenses connected with Management, Monitoring & Evaluation also. In the First Supplementary Budget presented to Parliament on 13.12.2004, additional provision of Rs. 1232 Crore has been proposed for the Mid-Day Meal Scheme to meet above obligations.

VI STRENGTHENING OF TEACHERS TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Recommendations/Observations

6.4 The Committee is happy that the teachers' training had caught attention that 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 2003-04. The

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.

Action Taken

6.4 During the first two years of the Xth Plan (2002-2003 and 2003-2004) Central assistance was released for recurring grants only viz. salaries and some programme funds. No major non-recurring grants for establishment of new institutions were sanctioned except for Mizoram and Nagaland, as the approval for the revised Scheme of Teacher Education was awaited. After approval of competent authority in Nov. 2003, guidelines for the Scheme for the X Plan period were issued on 12.1.2004. States' proposals are being considered and approved during 2004-05 under the revised scheme. Upto 15.12.2004, 44 new DIETs/DRCs & 13 CTEs/IASEs have been approved by the Teacher Education Approval Board set up under the revised scheme.

Recommendations/Observations

6.6 **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.**

Action Taken

6.6 NCTE has recognized a six month duration training programme in distance mode being conducted by IGNOU for the training of untrained in-service teachers at elementary level in North-Eastern States and Sikkim. The Council has also approved different elementary teacher training programmes in distance mode for the untrained elementary school teachers of Orissa, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Further, the Council has also approved in principle a one year duration training programme in distance mode for training of 44,000 un-trained primary school teachers in Bihar. Modalities of the same are being worked out by Govt. of Bihar in consultation with NCTE & IGNOU.

VII DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DPEP)

Recommendations/Observations

7.5 The Committee takes note that the reviews and various evaluation studies of (DPEP) programme pointed out that it had resulted insignificant 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 objective 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).

Action Taken

Strenuous efforts are being made to reduce drop-outs. The matter is being constantly pursued with States, which are ultimately responsible for Elementary Education and for implementation of all programmes connected therewith. Data for 2002-2003 has recently become available which shows that there has been decline of 4.1 percentage points in the Drop-out Rate for Primary stage in one year (viz. 34.9% as compared to 39% in 2001-2002). Comparative figures of Drop-out Rates for India and the five States mentioned in the Committee's Report are as follows: -

Serial No.	State	Drop-out Rate for Class I-V	
		2001-2002	2002-2003
1.	Bihar	61.6	62.3
2.	Meghalaya	56.96	56.5
3.	Mizoram	59.3	56.4
4.	Rajasthan	63.2	56.9

5.	Sikkim	61.76	52.1
All India		39.0	34.9

Thus, except in Bihar, Dropout rate has declined in varying degrees in the other four States mentioned in the Committee's Report. The Ministry is working closely with the Govt. of Bihar so as to make a dent in the problem there also.

X ADULT EDUCATION

Recommendations/Observations

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.

Action Taken

10.7 The observations of the Committee have been noted.

As regards under-utilization of funds, it may be stated that as against the total allocation of Rs.650.97 crores made for Adult Education during the Ninth Plan, an expenditure of Rs.521.20 crores (80%) could be incurred during this period. The funds earmarked under various schemes could not be fully utilized due to various reasons such as non-submission of audited accounts and utilization certificates of the earlier grants, non-receipt of viable proposals, etc. To ensure effective utilization of the grants, corrective actions, wherever required, have been taken. As a result of this, the position of utilization of funds has improved during the first two years of the Tenth Plan as indicated below: -

(Rs.in crores)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Allocation</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
2002-03	233.00	216.29 (92.84%)
2003-04	233.00	232.50 (99.78%)

XII PROBLEM OF DROPOUTS

Recommendations/Observations

12.4 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.

Action Taken

12.4 Work Education is one of the curricular areas at the elementary stage. States would be advised to arrange instruction in this curricular area more effectively, and in particular to make arrangements so that interested children can acquire a livelihood skill at the Upper Primary stage.

CHAPTER-II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS THAT THE COMMITTEE DOES NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF GOVERNMENT'S REPLY

III SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA)

Recommendations/Observations

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.

Action Taken

3.6 As already stated against para 2.2, for the year 2004-05, the Planning Commission has allocated an additional amount of Rs.2000 crores for SSA.

V National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day Meal Scheme)

Recommendations/Observation

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.

Action Taken

5.7 Government have decided to consider extension of the Scheme to Upper Primary stage, only after it is first consolidated at the Primary stage.

VIII LOK JUMBISH PROJECT

Recommendations/Observation

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.

Action Taken

8.4 The recommendations of the Committee have been forwarded to the various State Governments to give more emphasis on girl education under SSA, NPEGEL and to adopt strategies, which were successfully implemented in the Lok Jumbish Project of Rajasthan.

X ADULT EDUCATION

Recommendations/Observations

10.8 The Committee notes that in light of its recommendation 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.**

Action Taken

10.8 The Department had projected a requirement of Rs.276.51 crores for Adult Education for 2004-05. However, as against this, an amount of Rs.250 crore only has been allocated. As recommended by the Committee, the matter will be taken up with Ministry of Finance for stepping up this allocation.

XII PROBLEM OF DROPOUTS

Recommendations/Observations

12.3 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.

Action Taken

12.3 The beneficiaries of Continuing Education Programme include neo-literates, school dropouts, pass-outs of primary school, pass-outs of non formal education and all other members of the community interested in availing opportunities for life-long learning. Skill development and income generating programme is one of the target specific programmes of the Continuing Education. Priority target group for this programme include every member of the community with specific focus on neo-literates and those who have had little or no formal education.

CHAPTER-III

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

III SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

Recommendations/Observations

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
UP	43,00,000	2,10,000
West Bengal	39,50,239	4,39,602

Action Taken

3.4 States were requested to cross check their figures. When information was last collected during September, 2004, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have reported enhanced figures of out of school children, viz.29.80 lakhs, 7.27 lakhs and 10 lakhs respectively.

Comments of the Committee

The Committee appreciates that the Department has got the figures cross-checked and has come out with the revised figures. However, this instance indicates an attempt in some States to portray unrealistic data. The Committee is, therefore, of the opinion that the Department should put in place its own mechanism to cross-check the data given by the States as also to oversee the progress being made under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Recommendations/Observations

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. This information is crucial because they indicate health of a particular scheme based on which effective remedies can be suggested.

Action Taken

3.5 The Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development has commissioned an independent survey for out of school children in the country, results from which are likely to become available in June, 2005.

A summary of quarterly reports received from independent monitoring institutions during 2003-04 is enclosed at **Annexure-A**

Comments of the Committee

3.5 The Committee after perusing the summary of quarterly reports received from independent monitoring institutions during 2003-2004, finds that the reports have basically confirmed the fears of the Committee. The Committee notes the contradictions in the reports of the progress made under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan after a comparison between the official monitoring channels and the independent external audit organizations. While the official version indicates a tremendous improvement under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the independent agencies point out that there is still a significant difficulty in mainstreaming of children belonging to minority communities, children living in urban slums, girls and children of SC/ST and other backward communities. Assessment of quality of teaching-learning process is a cause for special concern for the Committee. Lack of teachers, teacher absenteeism, teacher training, need for strengthening DIETS are some of the problem areas cited. The handicaps suffered by the EGS Centres, the unaccomplishment of a completely cooked mid day meal, poor progress of construction works which is further marked by use of low quality material, under-utilization of funds, lack of facilities are the factors that have adversely affected the imparting of quality education. Besides, delay in release of matching funds by the State Governments coupled with the delay in flow of funds from state to district level and below has also hindered the achievement of elementary education.

The Committee notes that the shortcomings/hindrances in elementary education as pointed out in quarterly reports of the independent agencies are not new ones. In fact, the Committee has time and again commented on all these aspects but unfortunately the Committee is constrained to observe that the Department is yet to initiate implementation of required corrective measures. The Committee would again caution the Department for such lacunae and recommend that concrete efforts be made to remove the bottlenecks in case the goals of universal elementary education are to be achieved in time. Time has come to really act on field in active co-ordination with the implementing agencies, lest the flagship SSA scheme would remain on paper only.

Recommendations/Observations

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 classrooms sanctioned, construction of only 12,516 classrooms could be completed, as many as 62,275 classrooms remained under construction, and details about **5,375 sanctioned classrooms 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.**

Action Taken

3.9 As in August 2004, completion rate of new School buildings has improved from 8.7% as reflected in Committee's Report to 12.5%, while another 36% are under construction. Progress is being regularly monitored and pursued with State Governments.

Comments of the Committee

3.9 The Committee is not impressed about the increase in the completion rate of new school buildings from 8.7 to 12.5 % as claimed by the Department. The Committee feels that this dismal rate of progress in the construction of school buildings amply indicates the low level of coordination between Central and State Government, and State Governments and implementing agencies. The Committee is surprised to note that no information on the status of additional classrooms to be constructed has been given by the Department. The Committee emphasizes that the Department take all necessary steps to expedite the construction so that the noble purpose envisaged in the SSA is not defeated.

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 the elementary level, to say the least, child's creativity should be promoted.

Action Taken

3.12 National Policy on Education, 1986 emphasizes the need for a child centred approach and activity-based process of learning, at the primary stage. In pursuance of this, States are adopting child centered activity-based pedagogy, in classroom transactions.

Comments of the Committee

3.12 The Committee is aware of the fact that the States are required to adopt child centered activity-based pedagogy in classroom transaction. The Department has not replied to the concerns of the Committee reflected in its recommendation. The Department should have supplied more information on this front. The Committee would like the Department to give a clear picture, state-wise, and would also like it to take-up the matter with those States who have not adopted activity-based pedagogy at elementary level.

Recommendations/Observations

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.

Action Taken

3.13 During 2004-05, an amount of Rs.113.68 crores has been released to the concerned State Societies for implementation of NPEGEL component of the SSA.

Comments of the Committee

3.13 The Committee notes that funds have been released to the concerned State societies of 2656 selected blocks for the new Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL). The Committee would, however emphasise that the monitoring of this programme at the ground level should also be initiated from the very beginning.

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

Recommendations/Observations

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.

Action Taken

5.3 & 5.4 As per latest available information, only five States, namely, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Goa and J & K are yet to take a decision regarding universalization of cooked Mid-Day Meal programme. Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its latest Order dated 19.11.04, has directed all States to universalize cooked meal programme latest by January, 2005.

Comments of the Committee

5.3 The Committee would like to know the reasons as to why five states are still not serving cooked meal under MDM Scheme. The Committee feels that the Department should seriously pursue with these states and find out ways and means to enable these states to switch over to the basic feature of Mid Day Meal Scheme.

Recommendations/Observations

5.5 The Committee notes that against an allocation of 1,33,84,064 MTs of foodgrains during Ninth Plan outlay 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 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.

Action Taken

5.5 Foodgrains under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme are allocated by the Ministry of HRD based on enrolment figures, while financial outlays depend on over-all availability of Plan funds, and are decided by Planning commission. Due to shortage of Plan allocation, at the end of the Ninth Plan, there were unsettled claims of about Rs. 435 Crore due to FCI,

which had to be carried over to the Tenth Plan.

Monitoring & Evaluation of the programme has been given due priority in the revised NP-NSPE guidelines for which have been sent to State Governments in December, 2004. Paras 3.5.2 - 3.5.4, 3.5.7 and 4.7 of the Guidelines address the concerns expressed in para 5.5 of the Committee's Report.

Comments of the Committee

5.5 The Committee finds it ludicrous that the Department has failed to ensure a matching financial grant against the utilization of allotted food grains. This imbalance has affected the lifting of the food grains, which ultimately must have had its negative impact on the successful running of the scheme. The Committee feels that the Department should persuade the Planning Commission to give sufficient funds so that the scheme does not suffer.

Recommendations/Observations

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 Yuva 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 Governments 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.**

Action Taken

5.8 Paras 3.5.4 & 4.2 of the Guidelines of NP-NSPE, 2004, meet the concerns expressed by the Committee.

Recommendations/Observations

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 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.

Action Taken

5.9 Wherever incidents of serving of contaminated mid-day meal come to notice, the matter is taken up with the State Government and necessary follow up action is taken.

Other concerns expressed in para 5.9 have been addressed in paras 4.1, 4.5 & 4.6 of the Guidelines of NP-NSPE, 2004.

Comments of the Committee

Guidelines referred to in replies to para nos 5.8 and 5.9 should have been appended to ATR as annexures for the ready reference by the Committee.

VI STRENGTHENING OF TEACHERS TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

6.5 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 express 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.

Action Taken

6.5 Observations of the Committee have been noted. Main reason for unsatisfactory progress during IX Plan was the poor response of many State Governments in terms of submission of proper proposals for new DIET/CTE/IASE projects, and claiming second installment of non-recurring assistance for already sanctioned projects.

Comments of the Committee

The Committee has been reiterating time and again that in cases where viable proposals were not forthcoming from the States etc as in the case of opening DIET/CTE/IASEs, the Department has to play a more pro-active role by finding out the reasons as well as facilitating the States and other agencies to come forward. Because the basic accountability for slow/non implementation of schemes lies with the Centre only.

Recommendations/Observations

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.**

Action Taken

6.7 Dispensing with the requirement of NOC for B.Ed courses by NCTE has been done with a view to meet additional requirement of trained teachers at elementary level, in the context of SSA. NOC is one of the requirements / inputs for considering application of an institution seeking grant of recognition of NCTE for conducting a teacher training programme. However, various other aspects are also taken into consideration by the Regional Committees of the NCTE before granting recognition to an institution viz availability of adequate financial resources, adequate infrastructural facilities, qualified staff etc.

The issue of operationalisation of sanctioned DIETs is being pursued with States/UTs. This issue was also taken-up with them on 28th & 29th Sept., 2004 in the Educations Secretaries Review Meeting held at Delhi, under the Chairpersonship of Sect. (EE&L).

Comments of the Committee

In the case of operationalisation of DIETS by the States/UTs also, the Committee, wants to reiterate its view of the need for the Department playing a positive and proactive role in persuading the States and facilitating them in expanding the framing network for the teachers as soon as possible.

VII DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DPEP)

Recommendations/Observations

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-à-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.

Action Taken

7.6 There is a ceiling of 33% on civil works. States prioritise building schools, additional classrooms and increase coverage under toilets and drinking water through convergence with other schemes.

Comments of the Committee

7.6 The Committee finds it astonishing that basic amenities do not get any priority in the programme. In fact, no provision for the basic amenities actually reflects no concern for the students as well as teachers. It is also inhuman. The Committee strongly feels that provision of basic amenities such as toilets and drinking water do not get equal priority alongwith school buildings and additional classrooms. The Committee understands that the schemes for providing drinking water and toilet facilities in schools are also being administered by the Ministry of Rural Development. There might be other Departments both at Central and State level, which may be directly or indirectly involved in provision of basic facilities at schools. The Committee would appreciate if a joint-mechanism involving various sanctioning/implementing authorities is evolved to have better results.

IX SHIKSHA KARMI PROJECT

Recommendations/Observations

9.6 The Committee notes that the Department acknowledges teacher absenteeism as a major obstacle in achieving the goal of Universalization 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.**

Action Taken

9.6 The Committee's observations have been conveyed to Govt. of Rajasthan for further necessary action during the remaining period of the project, which is upto June 2005.

Recommendations/Observations

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 216%) are comparatively very less than the male Siksha 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.

Action Taken

As above.

Comments of the Committee

9.6 & 9.7 The Committee disapproves such a cryptic reply by the Department. The Committee feels that the Department's reply should have been updated with the response of the State Government. The Committee hopes that the Department would actively pursue with the State Government and furnish the actions taken by the State Government in this regard.

XI JAN SHIKSHAN SANSTHAN**Recommendations/Observations**

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.**

Action Taken

11.7 Over the years, the number of JSS has increased from 58 at the end of 8th Plan to 140 at the end of March 2004. The JSSs cover neo-literates, illiterates, SC/STs and other backward sections of the society under their programmes and there are no fixed quantitative targets, which are to be covered by the JSSs. However, the following figures show that the number of learners have increased over the years:-

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of learners</u>
1999-2000	1,20,739
2000-2001	1,81,756
2001-2002	2,59,928
2002-2003	2,85,979
2003-2004	3,16,653

As regards under-utilization of funds, it may be stated that as against the total allocation of Rs.67.00 crore made during the Ninth Plan, an expenditure of Rs.54.26 crore (81%) could be incurred. However, the position of utilization of grants has improved in the first two years of the Tenth Plan as indicated below: -

(Rs. In crores)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Allocation</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
2002-03	25.00	23.32 (93.28%)
2003-04	25.00	25.86 (103.44%)

Comments of the Committee

11.7 The Committee appreciates the improvement made in the utilization of funds during the first two years of the Tenth Plan. The Committee feels that though there are no fixed quantitative targets to be achieved, yet, the quantum of beneficiaries should have been more than what it is today. It hopes that the Department would take necessary measures to cover more people within the ambit of Jan Shikshan Sansthan.

XI JAN SHIKSHAN SANSTHAN

Recommendations/Observations

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.**

Action Taken

11.8 To ensure that only NGOs with proven track record are given grants under the Scheme of Support to NGOs in the field of Adult Education, the following points are checked and ensured:-

1. The NGOs are registered voluntary societies/public trusts/non-profit making companies in existence at least for three years.
2. Have a proper constitution and Memorandum of Articles of Association.
3. Have a properly constituted Managing/ Governing Body with its powers and duties clearly defined in its constitution.
4. They do not discriminate against any person or group of persons on the basis of sex, religion, caste or creed.
5. Be secular and democratic in character and should do nothing which may incite communal disharmony.
6. Should not directly function for the furtherance of/with interest of any political party.

At the time of receipt of proposals of the NGOs, all the above points are looked into through pre-appraisal done by State Government/State Resource Centres. As an additional precaution, a report from CAPART is also taken in respect of the NGO. The projects of NGOs, in whose case pre-appraisal reports and report from CAPART are positive, are placed before Grants-in-Aid Committee duly constituted under the provisions of the Scheme.

Comments of the Committee

11.8 The Committee finds the reply of the Department too routine & technical. It also knows these stipulations/procedure in selecting the NGOs but the question is then why so many cases of defaulting NGOs are being reported every year. It only shows that present procedure is not fool proof and needs to be revisited with a view to making it more transparent and effective.

CHAPTER-IV

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

XII PROBLEM OF DROPOUTS

Recommendations/Observations

12.1 The Committee notes that various schemes are being run by the Department of Elementary Education and 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 State is 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.**

Action Taken

12.1 Strenuous efforts are being made to reduce drop-outs. The matter is being constantly pursued with States, which are ultimately responsible for Elementary Education and for implementation of all programmes connected therewith. Data for 2002-03 has recently become available (copy at **Annexure - C**) which shows that there has been a decline of 4.1 percentage points in the Drop-out Rate for Primary stage in one year (viz. 34.9% as compared to 39% in 2001-02). Comparative figures of Drop-out Rates for India and the five States mentioned in the Committee's Report are as follows:-

S.No.	State	Drop-out Rate for Class I-V	
		2001-02	2002-03
1	Bihar	61.6	62.3
2	Meghalaya	56.96	56.5
3	Mizoram	59.3	56.4
4	Rajasthan	63.2	56.9
5	Sikkim	61.76	52.1
All India		39.0	34.9

Thus, except in Bihar, Drop-out rate has declined in varying degrees in the other four States mentioned in the Committee's Report. The Ministry is working closely with the Govt. of Bihar so as to make a dent in the problem there also.

The matter of systematic and rapid reduction in Drop-out Rates is being discussed with State Governments.

A more detailed note regarding Drop-out Rates will be submitted separately.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

III SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

Comments of the Committee

The Committee appreciates that the Department has got the figures cross-checked and has come out with the revised

figures. However, this instance indicates an attempt in some States to portray unrealistic data. The Committee is, therefore, of the opinion that the Department should put in place its own mechanism to cross-check the data given by the States as also to oversee the progress being made under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. (Para 3.4)

Comments of the Committee

The Committee after perusing the summary of quarterly reports received from independent monitoring institutions during 2003-2004, finds that the reports have basically confirmed the fears of the Committee. The Committee notes the contradictions in the reports of the progress made under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan after a comparison between the official monitoring channels and the independent external audit organizations. While the official version indicates a tremendous improvement under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the independent agencies point out that there is still a significant difficulty in mainstreaming of children belonging to minority communities, children living in urban slums, girls and children of SC/ST and other backward communities. Assessment of quality of teaching-learning process is a cause for special concern for the Committee. Lack of teachers, teacher absenteeism, teacher training, need for strengthening DIETS are some of the problem areas cited. The handicaps suffered by the EGS Centres, the unaccomplishment of a completely cooked mid day meal, poor progress of construction works which is further marked by use of low quality material, under-utilization of funds, lack of facilities are the factors that have adversely affected the imparting of quality education. Besides, delay in release of matching funds by the State Governments coupled with the delay in flow of funds from state to district level and below has also hindered the achievement of elementary education.

The Committee notes that the shortcomings/hindrances in elementary education as pointed out in quarterly reports of the independent agencies are not new ones. In fact, the Committee has time and again commented on all these aspects but unfortunately the Committee is constrained to observe that the Department is yet to initiate implementation of required corrective measures. The Committee would again caution the Department for such lacunae and recommend that concrete efforts be made to remove the bottlenecks in case the goals of universal elementary education are to be achieved in time. Time has come to really act on field in active co-ordination with the implementing agencies, lest the flagship SSA scheme would remain on paper only. (Para 3.5)

Comments of the Committee

The Committee is not impressed about the increase in the completion rate of new school buildings from 8.7 to 12.5 % as claimed by the Department. The Committee feels that this dismal rate of progress in the construction of school buildings amply indicates the low level of coordination between Central and State Government, and State Governments and implementing agencies. The Committee is surprised to note that no information on the status of additional classrooms to be constructed has been given by the Department. The Committee emphasizes that the Department take all necessary steps to expedite the construction so that the noble purpose envisaged in the SSA is not defeated. (Para 3.9)

Comments of the Committee

The Committee is aware of the fact that the States are required to adopt child centered activity-based pedagogy in classroom transaction. The concerns of the Committee reflected in its recommendation have not been replied to by the Department. The Department should have supplied more information on this front. The Committee would like the Department to give a clear picture, state-wise, and would also like it to take-up the matter with those States who have not

adopted activity-based pedagogy at elementary level. (Para 3.12)

Comments of the Committee

The Committee notes that funds have been released to the concerned State societies of 2656 selected blocks for the new Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL). The Committee would, however emphasise that the monitoring of this programme at the ground level should also be initiated from the very beginning. (Para 3.13)

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

Comments of the Committee

The Committee would like to know the reasons as to why five states are still not serving cooked meal under MDM Scheme. The Committee feels that the Department should seriously pursue with these states and find out ways and means to enable these states to switch over to the basic feature of Mid Day Meal Scheme. (Para 5. 3)

Comments of the Committee

The Committee finds it ludicrous that the Department has failed to ensure a matching financial grant against the utilization of allotted food grains. This imbalance has affected the lifting of the food grains, which ultimately must have had its negative impact on the successful running of the scheme. The Committee feels that the Department should persuade the Planning Commission to give sufficient funds so that the scheme does not suffer. (Para 5. 5)

Comments of the Committee

Guidelines referred to in replies to para nos 5.8 and 5.9 should have been appended to ATR as annexures for the ready reference by the Committee. (Para 5. 9)

VI STRENGTHENING OF TEACHERS TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Comments of the Committee

The Committee has been reiterating time and again that in cases where viable proposals were not forthcoming from the States' etc as in the case of opening DIET/CTE/IASEs, Department has to play a more pro-active role by finding out the reasons as well as facilitating the States and other agencies to come forward. Because the basic accountability for slow/non implementation of schemes lies with the Centre only. (Para 6. 5)

Comments of the Committee

In the case of operationalisation of DIETS by the States/UTs also, the Committee, wants to reiterate its view of the need for the Department playing a positively proactive role in persuading the States and facilitating them in expanding the framing network for the teachers as soon as possible. (Para 6. 7)

VII District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)

Comments of the Committee

The Committee finds it astonishing that basic amenities do not get any priority in the programme. In fact, no provision for the basic amenities actually reflects no concern for the students as well as teachers. It is also inhuman. The

Committee strongly feels that provision of basic amenities such as toilets and drinking water do get equal priority alongwith school buildings and additional classrooms. The Committee understands that the schemes for providing drinking water and toilet facilities in schools are also being administered by the Ministry of Rural Development. There might be other Departments both at Central and State level, which may be directly or indirectly involved in provision of basic facilities at schools. The Committee would appreciate if a joint-mechanism involving various sanctioning/implementing authorities is evolved to have better results. (Para 7.7)

IX SHIKSHA KARMI PROJECT

Comments of the Committee

The Committee disapproves such a cryptic reply by the Department. The Committee feels that the Department's reply should have been updated with the response of the State Government. The Committee hopes that the Department would actively pursue with the State Government and furnish the actions taken by the State Government in this regard. (Para 9.6 & 9.7)

XI JAN SHIKSHAN SANSTHAN

Comments of the Committee

The Committee appreciates the improvement made in the utilization of funds during the first two years of the Tenth Plan. The Committee feels that though there are no fixed quantitative targets to be achieved, yet, the quantum of beneficiaries should have been more than what it is today. It hopes that the Department would take necessary measures to cover more people within the ambit of Jan Shikshan Sansthan. (Para 11.7)

Comments of the Committee

The Committee finds the reply of the Department too routine & technical. It also knows these stipulations/procedure in selecting the NGOs but the question is then why so many cases of defaulting NGOs are being reported every year. It only shows that present procedure is not full proof and needs to be revisited with a view to making it more transparent and effective. (Para 11.8)

MINUTES XVIII EIGHTEENTH MEETING

The Committee on Human Resource Development met at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, the 26th February 2005, in Committee Room 'A' Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

MEMBERS PRESENT

RAJYA SABHA

1. Shri Vayalar Ravi ¾ *Chairman*
2. Shrimati Chandra Kala Pandey
3. Shri Uday Pratap Singh
4. Prof. Ram Deo Bhandary

LOK SABHA

5. Shri Basudeb Barman
6. Shri Hari Sinh Chavda
7. Shri Manjunath Kunnur
8. Shri Y.G. Mahajan
9. Shri Krishna Murari Moghe
10. Dr. Thokchom Meinya
11. Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat
12. Shri M. Rajamohan Reddy
13. Shri Tufani Saroj
14. Smt. P. Satheedevi
15. Shri A.R. Shaheen
16. Smt. Jyotirmoyee Sikdar

SECRETARIAT

Smt Vandana Garg, Joint Secretary
Shri N.K. Singh, Director
Shri J. Sundriyal, Under Secretary
Shri Swarabji B., Committee Officer
Smt. Meena Kandwal, Research Officer

2. The Committee took up for consideration the 154th draft Report on 'Functioning of Navodaya Vidyalayas' and adopted the same after certain modifications. The Committee also considered and adopted the 155th and 156th Action taken Reports on the recommendation/observation contained in 149th and 151st reports on Demands for Grants (2004-2005) in respect of the Department of Elementary and Literacy and Department of Women and Child Development respectively.
3. The Committee decided that the Reports may be presented to the Rajya Sabha and laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, the 2nd March 2005. The Committee authorized the Chairman, and in his absence, Smt. Chandra Kala Pandey to present the Reports in the Rajya Sabha and Smt. P. Satheedevi and in her absence Shri Manjunath Kunnur to lay the Reports in the Lok Sabha.
4. The Committee, then, adjourned at 4.30 p.m.