सत्यमेव जयते

Education for All

National Plan of Action, India

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Department of Elementary Education and Literacy
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Government of India
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Foreword

One could without any hesitation consider the 1990s as the most active period for the development of basic education in the country. The efforts in this regard were set in motion by the recommendations of the National Policy on Education – 1986. These got a fillip through the global declaration on basic education adopted in Jomtien in 1990. Significant strides were made both in the area of elementary education and literacy during this period. For instance during the decade, the number of lower primary schools increased by 14 per cent and upper primary schools by 36 per cent. Altogether, 24.3 million more children entered school, 130,000 new schools were opened and 530,000 additional teachers appointed in the period. The share of girls in the total enrolment went up from 41 per cent to 44 per cent in primary and from 38 per cent to 40 per cent in upper primary schools. During the same period, literacy rate improved by a substantial 13.1 per cent (from 52.2% in 1991 to 65.4%). For the first time during the fifty years since Independence, the absolute number of illiterates came down by 32 million. Expenditure on education in the government sector went up from 3.84 to 4.11 per cent of GDP during the 1990s. These efforts were accompanied by vigorous debates and discussion on the issue of right to education, culminating in the historic declaration of elementary education as a fundamental right through an amendment to the Indian Constitution. Making this right a reality through necessary legislative measures and field-based operations is the challenge before us in coming years.

The new millennium has brought in new perspectives at the national and international levels. The Framework of Action for EFA adopted by the Global Conference of 2000 in Dakar presents a renewed focus for action to provide education for all. Simultaneously, major initiatives for strengthening policies and programmes related to EFA have been afoot in the country. The *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), which is the flagship programme of the national government, promises to achieve the goal of EFA by 2010 (five years ahead of the international commitment made at Dakar). The revised framework of the National Literacy Mission promises to reach a literacy rate of 75 per cent by the year 2007. The task of planning to achieve these goals became more concrete with the formulation of the Tenth Five Year Plan beginning in 2002. The present document therefore is a plan of action that creates convergent perspectives on the EFA goals set out by the Dakar Framework of Action and the ongoing policies and programmes of India to reach the goals of universal elementary education, eradication of illiteracy and other related aspects, as enunciated by the National Policy on Education.

In a large federally administered democracy consisting of more than 30 constituent states and union territories, it is not easy to prepare a national plan of action for EFA, as different states are in different situations with respect to the goals of EFA. A genuine National Plan has to take into consideration these inter-state variations. The Plan also has to reflect the perspectives of the civil society organisations which are involved in educational activities on a large scale across the country. With this in view, a series of four regional consultation meetings were conducted to elicit the perspectives of the official leadership and NGOs in different states. A national consultation was held involving NGO representatives and professionals. An attempt has been made to integrate the inputs received through these consultation in setting national level perspectives with respect to the six Dakar goals of EFA.

The EFA Plan marks the beginning of a critical period of implementation, monitoring and review, a process, which would feed back into the planning effort, especially at the district level, where we now have District Elementary Education Plans for all the 600 districts in the country. This has to be a truly national effort of the central government, state governments, local bodies, village education committees/school management committees/PTAs/mothers' groups, universities, academics and civil society organisations. We look forward to receiving a constant feedback on the implementation of the Plan.

(S.C. TRIPATHI)

Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
AP	Andhra Pradesh
APPEP	Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Programme
AW	Anganwadi
AWC	Anganwadi Centres
AWTC	Anganwadi Training Centres
BEP	Bihar Education Project
BRCs	Block Resource Centres
CABE	Central Advisory Board of Education
CARE	Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere
CCE	Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation
CE	Continuing Education
CII	Confederation of Indian Industries
CLP	Child Labour Project
CLRC	Circle Resource Centres
CRCs	Cluster Resource Centres
CTEs	Colleges of Teacher Education
DEP	District Educational Planning
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
DWCD	Department of Women and Child Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
ETV	Educational Television
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GNP	Gross National Product
GOI	Government of India
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
HRD	Human Resource Development
IASEs	Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEDC	Integrated Education of the Disabled Children
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
IPTT-ITV	In-service Primary Teacher Training through Interactive Television

IT	Information Technology
ITU	International Telecommunications Unit
JSS	Jan Shikshan Sansthan
KGSV	Kasturba Gandhi Swatantra Vidyalaya
KSY	Kishori Shakti Yojana
KVS	Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan
LJP	Lok Jumbish Project
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MLL	Minimum Levels of Learning
MS	Mahila Samakhya
MSK	Mahila Shikshan Kendra
MT	Metric Ton
MTA	Mother Teacher Association
NCAER	National Council of Applied Economic Research
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCLP	National Child Labour Project
NCTE	National Council for Teacher Education
NDC	National Development Council
NE	North East
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NFE	Non Formal Education
NFHS	National Family and Health Survey
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NIEPA	National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
NIOS	National Institute of Open Learning
NLM	National Literacy Mission
NOS	National Open School
NPE	National Policy on Education
NSS	National Sample Survey
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organisation
NYK	Nehru Yuvak Kendra
NYKS	Nehru Yuvak Kendra Sangathan
OB	Operation Blackboard
OBE	Open Basic Education
OBEP	Open Basic Education Programme
OLS	Open Learning System
PA	Private Aided
PL	Post Literacy
PMIS	Project Management Information Systems
PRIs	Panchayati Raj Institutions (Local Government Bodies)
PROBE	Primary Report on Basic Education
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
PUA	Private Unaided
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RCH	Reproductive and Child Health
RSP	Resource Support Programme
SAC	Space Application Centre
SC	Schedule Caste
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SHGs	Self Help Groups

SIE	State Institute of Education
SIEMAT	State Institute of Educational Management and Training
SIG	Social Initiatives Group
SKP	Shiksha Karmi Project
SLM	Self Learning Material
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
ST	Scheduled Tribe
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TERG	Teacher Education Resource Group
TLCs	Total Literacy Campaigns
TLM	Teaching Learning Materials
UDC	Urban Deprived Children
UEE	Universalisation of Elementary Education
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UP	Uttar Pradesh
UPBEP	Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project
UPE	Universalisation of Primary Education
USNPSS	Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan
UTs	Union Territories
VECs	Village Education Committees
ZSS	Zilla Saksharta Samiti (District Literacy Society)

The Context

India is a vast country extending over an area of 3,287,263 sq. km. from the snow covered Himalayan heights to tropical rain forests of the south. According to Census of India 2001, India's population is 1,027,015,247 (531,277,078 males and 495,738,169 females). As the second most populous country, India is the home to 16 per cent of world's population.

For the purpose of governance, India is divided into 35 states and union territories (UTs). States and the Centre function under a federal relationship. The Centre governs certain subjects such as defence, railways and finance, while several other subjects are the responsibility of the states. There are other subjects on which both the states and the central government have concurrent powers. Education has been on the Concurrent List since 1976. Union territories are administered under the direct control of the Centre. The Constitution of India makes an elaborate distribution of governmental powers–legislative, administrative and financial– between the Union (Centre) and the states. Adequate mechanisms exist for sharing of resources and responsibilities between the Union and the states, for harmonious exercise of their powers in the larger national interest. A major challenge in national planning is to reconcile the planning priorities of states with the national plan frame. The National Development Council (NDC), with representation of chief ministers of all states, imparts a national character to the entire process of planning.

Expanding System of Education

During the post-Independence period, there has been considerable expansion in educational facilities and enrolment at the elementary stage, as revealed by successive surveys of educational facilities. Consequently, literacy rate has improved in every decade. Table 1.1 depicts the rise in literacy rates and the expanding system of primary education. Recent estimates indicate a significant rise in the literacy level. According to the National Sample Survey (NSS) estimates, the literacy rate has increased by about 13.17 percentage points in a period of ten years, from 52.21 in 1991 to 65.4 percent in 2001.

Organisation and Structure of School Education

There are broadly four stages of school education in India, namely, primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary. In pursuance of the National Policy on Education of 1968 and 1986, there have been attempts to evolve a uniform pattern of school education with 12 years of schooling, commonly known as 10 + 2 pattern. The 'plus two' stage refers to classes XI and XII, which constitute higher secondary stage in all 35 states/UTs. (In some states, higher secondary stage is part of collegiate education,

Table 1.1: Literacy Rate and Number of Primary Schools (1951-2001)

Year	Literacy Rate (%)			Number of Schools	
	Persons	Males	Females	Primary	Upper Primary
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	215,036	14,576
1961	28.31	40.40	15.34	351,530	55,915
1971	34.45	45.95	21.97	417,473	93,665
1981	43.56	56.37	29.75	503,763	122,377
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	566,744	155,926
2001	65.37	75.85	54.16	641,695	198,004

Note: Literacy rates of 1951, 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged five years and above. The rates for the years 1981, 1991 and 2001 relate to the population aged seven years and above.

known as junior colleges.) However, for the first ten years of schooling, the organisational patterns differ considerably among states/UTs. While in twenty-two states/UTs, secondary stage consists of classes IX and X, it consists of classes VIII, IX and X in thirteen states/UTs. The initial schooling stage up to class VII or VIII (as is the case in many states/UTs) is generally called 'elementary stage'.

Decisions regarding the organisation and structure of education are largely the concern of the states/UTs. Within the overall framework of the national policy on education, each state/UT has been independently determining the educational structure to be adopted. This is particularly true of the school stage. However, there is almost complete uniformity in the pattern of educational structure within a particular state or union territory. A broad consensus has also emerged for adoption by all states/UTs, as indicated in the following diagram.

Figure 1.1: Structure of Education in India

Source : Development of Education : 1986-1988, National Report of India . NIEPA ,1988

National Plan of Action : INDIA

The 10 + 2 + 3 pattern of education introduced in the country envisages a broad-based general education for all pupils during the first ten years of school education. The curriculum at this stage is, therefore, largely undifferentiated and little attempt is made to introduce diversified courses at this stage. The focus of the curriculum at the primary stage is on development of basic skills of literacy and numeracy, study of environment in terms of physical and social phenomena, participation in activities which would develop productive skills, creative expression and habits of healthy living. In the initial years, the content and methodology are directed to achievement of communication and computational skills with a view to developing the basic tools of learning.

Overview of Recent Developments in EFA

Both on the literacy and the primary education fronts, India has been implementing a number of specially designed programmes to move towards the goals of ensuring universal primary education and of eradicating adult illiteracy. However, as a follow-up of the Dakar Framework of Action for Education for All (EFA), an attempt has been made to link national goals and targets with the global targets of EFA.

Apart from the increase in literacy rates and schooling facilities, there has been development in the following areas also:

- A separate Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, headed by an independent Secretary, was created in November 1999 within the Ministry of Human Resource Development to specifically focus on EFA goals.
- A Constitutional Amendment Act has been passed by the Parliament to make elementary education a fundamental right.
  - A Central legislation to enforce this right, which is under preparation, will contain the following:
    - Delineation of responsibility of various State organs such as central government, state governments and local bodies.
    - Setting the parameters of acceptable quality of education.
    - Providing for remedial mechanism at various levels for redressal when this right is violated.
- Expenditure on education as percentage of GDP increased from 3.84 to 4.11 in the government sector.
- Gender Disparity
  - Increase in girls' enrolment by 23 per cent in primary and 40 per cent in upper primary between 1990 and 2000: much higher than the boys.
  - Share of girls in total enrolment has gone up from 41 per cent to 44 per cent in primary and from 38 per cent to 40 per cent in upper primary.
  - Proportion of female teachers increased from 29 per cent to 36 per cent.
- Early Childhood Care and Education
  - 90 per cent of 5,652 blocks to be covered under the scheme by 2002.
  - Number of beneficiaries increased from 22 m in 1995 to 30 m in 2000.

Current EFA Strategies

At the present juncture, based on EFA 2000 Assessment and other reviews, the strategy for achieving total literacy and universal elementary education focuses on several interrelated strategies.

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Box 1.1: Andhra Pradesh – Enduring Initiatives for Achieving EFA

MAABADI (Our School)

The MAABADI scheme was formulated in order to give access to all children in the age group of 6-11 years, even in small habitations with a population of 100-200. Government provides assistance to local communities to engage community instructors wherever there are at least ten learners. Assistance is also provided for training the community instructors. So far 1200 MAABADIs have been set up.

Akshara Sankranthi Programme

In Andhra Pradesh, the most significant change is the strengthening of the self- help group (SHG) movement, and common interest groups have been formed around a variety of activities, ranging from thrift to management of forest resources. Keeping in view these developments, it was decided to take up a programme of revitalizing Continuing Education Centres, focusing on SHGs.

A special drive was launched in July, under which SHGs that were interested in implementing this programme were identified, along with the illiterates within the groups, as also a volunteer to teach them. A programme of basic literacy was launched on 2 October 2000, initially with the objective of covering around 6 millions illiterates. The proposal was to cover the first primer before the Sankranthi festival in the middle of January under a programme called Akshara Sankranthi. The programme had been earlier in a pilot form in West Godavari district, where 60,000 women belonging to SHGs were covered. The programme was taken up in all the districts and around 2.9 millions learners had completed the project by the end of March 2001.

The programme has resulted in Andhra Pradesh recording a literacy rate of 61.11 per cent in 2001 as compared to 44.08 in 1991. This represents a 17 per cent increase over the figure recorded in the 1991 census and the highest decadal growth ever to be recorded in the state.

(a) Government of India and the state governments are actively engaged in preparing contextualised action plans which would be implemented through the programmes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and National Literacy Mission (NLM). The focus is on reaching the unreached through innovative and alternative modes of schooling. Decentralised district wise planning introduced in the 1990s is expected to address local needs and demands more effectively.

(b) The second strategy is to actively involve the people at the grassroots through democratic devolution of powers. Though there are variations across the states, there is a decisive move towards decentralisation of educational governance all over the country. In some states, this is done through by transferring powers to the Panchayati Raj institutions (local self-governing bodies), while in others it is done through the creation of empowered village education committees and school management bodies. Micro-planning and participatory school mapping exercises, as in Lok Jumbish, are other means of involving people in the local-level planning for EFA.

(c) While recognising that the problem is closely linked to poverty and deprivation, employment of children in work is viewed as a direct denial of their fundamental right to education. Though direct action from the State has been slow to come, it has become a major plank of action in several parts of the country due to the significant role played by the NGOs. But much greater support and cooperation from parents and employers is critical for achieving success in this area.

(d) Another policy level action with far-reaching impact is the effort to remove legal hurdles in accessing basic education as a fundamental right. Towards this, the Indian Constitution has been amended, making basic education a justiciable right in line with the international convention on child rights.

(e) Social mobilisation and eradication of adult illiteracy are attempted through mass literacy campaigns, largely as a national programme but planned and implemented at the district level. These are complemented by actions initiated by state governments such as the *Jan Sampark Abhiyan* (people's contact campaign) of Madhya Pradesh and by civil society organisations such as *Prajayatna* (people's effort) in Karnataka.

Recent years have seen much greater coverage of basic education in the media, particularly TV, thereby helping to articulate public perceptions and mobilising public pressure groups. This has been coupled with an important move in many states towards 'right to information', which has helped to place facts related to basic education in the public sphere. Many state governments are attempting to use ICT capabilities for this purpose. Emergence of grassroots level community action groups and their coalitions at the national and state levels to articulate the voice of the civil society in favour of EFA is also a significant development.

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Meeting Dakar Goals:
The Indian Perspective

Contextualising Dakar Goals

The Dakar Conference of the World Education Forum met in April 2000 to review the progress made to achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA). The Framework of Action adopted in Dakar identified the following six goals of EFA:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015, all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literary by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. Improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring excellence so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Recognising the importance of elementary education, the Government of India has been working with state governments for achieving the goals of universalisation of elementary education (UEE). In this context, the major initiative has been the launch of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the national programme to implement the fundamental right to free and compulsory education. Other initiatives include the District Primary Education Programme, Teacher Education Programme, activities under the National Literacy Mission and special programmes for promotion of early childhood care and education, inclusive education, etc. It is important to note that a major part of planned action in India takes place in individual states, which may not get fully represented in national plans and perspectives. It is within this framework that the following national goals, corresponding to the six Dakar goals, have been drawn.

◆ Integrated Child Development Services scheme being universalised–early childhood care and education an important component of the scheme (Dakar Goal 1)
◆ Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Movement for Education for All) launched with the aim of

providing eight years of quality education to all children in the age group 6-14 by 2010. (Goal 2 and 6)

♦ A comprehensive plan for adolescents, especially girls, in the Tenth Five Year Plan. (Goal 3)

♦ National Literacy Mission to provide functional literacy to all illiterate adults in the age group 15-35. (Goals 3 and 4)
  ■ Achieve sustainable threshold level of 75 per cent literacy by 2007.

♦ Special schemes targeted at girls, apart from focus on girls in general schemes. (Goal 5)
  ■ Removal of all disparities, including gender, in primary (class I-V) by 2007 and elementary (I-VIII) by 2010.

Setting Priorities in the Indian Context

The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) recognised that the World Declaration on EFA was, from the national point of view, a reaffirmation of the policy orientation given to elementary education in the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986. CABE endorsed the Declaration and called for further strengthening of the processes initiated through the NPE -1986. CABE highlighted the need for increased financial inputs to achieve the goals of EFA and formulated a broad operational framework for receiving financial assistance from international agencies for undertaking large scale projects to achieve the goals of EFA. Further, CABE emphasised that the additional resources generated through external assistance should be utilised for educational reconstruction, which should go beyond the conventional measures such as opening new schools, construction of school building and appointing teachers. The goals, targets and strategies enunciated in the National Policy on Education have been incorporated into successive Five Year Plan proposals.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

Early childhood education (ECE) is considered a significant input to compensate for early environmental deprivations at home, by providing a stimulating environment to the children. While on one hand, it is expected to provide the necessary maturational and experiential readiness to the child for meeting the demands of the primary curriculum; it also affects positively the enrolment and retention of girls in primary schools by providing substitute care facility for younger siblings. Envisaged as a holistic input, fostering health, psychological and nutritional development, the policy emphasised the significance of making it play-based while cautioning against the danger of reducing it to the teaching of three R's i.e., reading, writing and arithmetic. The holistic and integrated concept of ECCE clearly represents this spirit.

Though programmes of early childhood care have been under implementation on a large scale through the programme of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), efforts to integrate early childhood education into activities of these centres and to extend institutionalised educational facilities for children in the pre-school age group have begun only during recent years. Pre-school education in urban areas, which is fairly widespread, and is continuously expanding, is largely in the hands of the private sector without much supervision or support from the government. Considering the magnitude of resources needed to reach out to all children in this age group, the target set for the sector has been modest. It is envisaged that the network of early childhood education centres would expand to two million centres and cover about 70 per cent children in the pre-school age group by the year 2000.

Elementary Education

Universalisation of elementary education (UEE) has been accepted as a national goal since 1950. The Directive Principles of the Constitution of India envisage provision of free and compulsory elementary education to all children up to the age of 14 years. The Constitution was amended in December 2002 to include free and compulsory education for all children in the age group 6 –14 years as a fundamental right, while expanding the provision for children up to the age of six, to include early childhood care and education within the Directive Principles. The overall goal in this regard is to provide free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children. It is significant to note that the National Policy on Education defines universal elementary education in a broad framework, changing the emphasis from enrolment to participation, retention and achievement.

Universal Access

Though considerable progress has been made towards achieving the target of EFA as indicated by the overall figures, more rigorous and sustained efforts are required to universalise elementary education. A major bottleneck in this direction has been the persistence of regional and sectional disparities. The policy goal, therefore, has been to intensify the efforts to reach primary education to such deprived sections of population. Specifically, the goals of EFA with respect to universal access focus on:

- ◆ Universal enrolment of all children including girls, disabled children and children belonging to SC and ST in primary classes and provision of upper primary education for them.
- ◆ Provision of non-formal education (NFE) or alternative education for school dropouts, working children and girls who cannot attend formal schools.

Universal Retention

As mentioned earlier, the country has made significant progress in terms of provision of access to basic education. Recent surveys show that more than 95 per cent of the population has access to primary education within a distance of one km. Overall enrolment figures have also shown a massive increase. However, the number of children who participate in schooling regularly and complete the first cycle of education still needs to be improved substantially. For a number of reasons, many children initially enrolled in school do not complete their primary schooling. Here again, there are wide disparities among different states; for instance, while almost all children enrolled in the initial classes of primary school complete at least 4-5 years of schooling in the states of Kerala, Goa and Mizoram, the figures of school dropouts in certain other states continue to be very high. Thus, the policies have reiterated reduction in the number of dropouts as an important goal. The aim is now to achieve universal retention by 2010.

Improvement in Quality

The National Policy on Education - 1986 emphasises the importance of giving special attention to quality aspects of primary education for which several policy guidelines have been formulated.

Improved quality of school provision

With the expansion of the school system, a systematic exercise has been carried out to determine basic norms for provision, physical, human as well as academic, in each

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school. These norms act as the guiding principle for creating additional schooling facilities for primary education.

Focus on learning outcomes
Alongside provision of improved facilities in the school, policy makers have also focused their attention on the learning levels attained by children who attend schools. A National Committee of experts set up by the Government of India in early nineties evolved a framework of "minimum levels of learning" to be attained by every student undergoing primary education.

Teacher Capacity Building
The critical role of teachers in ensuring quality education has also come into sharper focus. As in case of infrastructure, massive expansion of the system has also influenced the quality of teachers and the support system available for guiding them in their work. One of the major policy interventions in the last decade has been to make institutional arrangements at district and sub-district levels for in-service training of primary teachers. The emphasis is on decentralising the training arrangement and providing guidance and support to teachers on a continuous basis.

Adult Education and Literacy Programmes
The goal of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) is to attain full literacy (i.e., a sustainable threshold level of 75 per cent by 2007). NLM envisages that focusing on imparting of functional literacy to non-literates in the age group 15-35 would help achieve this goal. NLM seeks to bring non-literates to a level of self-reliance in the three R's. It also provides them facilities for skill development to improve their economic status and well being. It enables them to imbibe values of national integration, conservation of the environment, women's equality and observance of small family norms. And finally, it facilitates their participation in the development process. Functional literacy, encompassing all of the above, is the overall goal of NLM. A special programme has been launched targeting low female literacy districts. It is also proposed to expand the coverage of Jan Shikshan Sansthans to provide for access to life skill programmes for neo-literates.

Setting Targets for EFA 2002-2015
The last decade has witnessed a number of new initiatives to improve the access and participation of children in elementary education, as well as to improve the quality of education in primary schools. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is being implemented by the Government of India in partnership with the state governments with a long-term perspective on cost sharing and through district-level decentralised management framework involving local bodies. It is envisaged that the campaign, to be launched in a mission mode, will move towards achieving the following four goals:
- Providing access to all children in the age group 6-14 years through formal primary schools or through other equivalent alternative delivery means by 2003.
- Completion of five years of primary education by all children by 2007.
- Completion of eight years of elementary education by all children by 2010.
- Provision of elementary education of satisfactory quality for all by 2010.

Box 2.1: Innovative Programmes in Different States

Several state governments have designed innovative programmes to improve the quality of education in schools.

HEAD START

The Rajiv Gandhi State Mission in Madhya Pradesh has introduced a project on a pilot basis for using computers to improve the quality of teaching in rural elementary schools through indigenous customized educational software. The idea is to integrate the use of computers with classroom activities to improve the child's comprehension of difficult parts of each subject as well as to instill computer literacy. A syllabus mapping the difficult areas of learning has been developed and educational software on this for all subjects is being prepared for use in the academic year 2002-03.

Started in November 2000, 648 Head Start centres were operationalised in middle schools that have a primary section and serve as Jan Shiksha Kendras or school cluster resource centres for primary schools in a radius of eight km. A total of 2,358 teachers have been given training in computer-enabled education.

GYANKALASH

The District Primary Education Programme in Himachal Pradesh, in collaboration with All India Radio, Shimla, has started a 15-minute bi-weekly programme called Gyankalash to provide academic support to primary teachers. The programme helps in improving the teachers' access to knowledge, especially those in remote areas, as it is impossible to reach them through conventional means.

In the first phase of Gyankalash, topics were identified and radio scripts developed in workshops organised for the purpose. Resource persons, teacher educators from state and district level, practicing teachers in secondary and primary schools participated in the workshops. In the next phase, teachers and students from government primary schools were involved in the production and broadcast of the spots. In order to motivate teachers, certificates were given to teachers on the successful completion of the training under different phases of Gyankalash.

NALI KALI

The Nali Kali programme in Karnataka was introduced in privately managed schools in 1999. Under the programme, learning takes place in an interactive situation in accordance with age-wise competency. Children are divided into groups and they master one level of competency, then move to another group to learn the next level of competency. Children learn at their own pace and the move from one level of competency to another is not dependent on the whole group's learning achievement. All teaching-learning processes involve songs, games, survey, story-telling and use of educational toys. This method effectively eliminates the formal system of roll calls, examinations, promotions, ranking – all these now deemed unhealthy – at least between the ages of 5 and 14.

The programme will be implemented in a manner that will provide adequate opportunities for NGOs and the private sector to contribute towards the achievement of these goals and lead towards a community-owned initiative for universalising elementary education. Keeping in view past experiences, efforts under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will be underscored by effective decentralisation, sustainable financing, cost-effective strategies for universalisation, interesting curriculum, community-owned planning and implementation, and focus on girls, marginalised caste groups and ethnic minorities.

The National Literacy Mission has fixed the following two goals for achievement of EFA targets:
- To achieve a sustainable threshold level of 75 per cent literacy by 2007 and to achieve a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015.
- To expand continuing education programmes to cover all districts by 2007.

Process of EFA Planning and Monitoring in India

In a vast and varied country like India, it is not easy to prepare a national plan of action for EFA, as different states are in different situations with respect to the goals of EFA. A genuine national plan will have to take into consideration these inter-state variations. Second, the plan will also have to reflect the perspectives of the civil society organisations which are involved in educational activities on a large scale across the country. Third, it should have a professional basis in setting the goals and designing strategies. With this in view, a series of four regional consultation meetings have been conducted to elicit the perspectives of official leadership and NGOs in different states. The states are in the process of preparing basic inputs for the EFA plan with concrete reference to the six Dakar EFA goals. A national consultation was also held, involving NGO representatives and professionals so that the national plan of action reflects the concerns and perspectives of all stakeholders. In addition, several workshops and meetings were held on planning and capacity building for SSA.

There is no doubt that preparing a credible national plan for India that takes into account the variety of situations across the country is a real intellectual challenge. However, an action plan prepared only at the behest of the international community could remain a mere statement of intention. Making the plan a credible one and translating it into reality hinges critically on two factors. First, the international commitments made by the country towards EFA goals have to genuinely converge with the national level proposals. This is important, as EFA or UEE is an ongoing effort of the national and state governments of the country. In particular, this gains importance in the context of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Real convergence has to be viewed not only in terms of statement of goals and targets but also in actual field level actions. Also, the institutional arrangements adopted for achieving the goals have to match the international commitments. The second important prerequisite that injects credibility to any plan of action is the political commitment of the national leadership, as well as the genuine support of the civil society for the goals agreed upon.

It does not require any debate to convince that India cannot go on with the micro-incremental approach in its efforts to reach basic education for all. The change has to be much more substantial and the progress has to be much faster if the socio-economic aspirations of the people, as well as the newly made commitment of pursuing quality basic education as a fundamental right of all citizens, have to be met. This demands a massive movement through political and social mobilisation that brings all sections of the society on a common platform and with the sole agenda of providing "Quality Education For All" as envisaged by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, as well as the Dakar EFA Declaration.

Early Childhood Care and Education

Backdrop

Provision of comprehensive health care and education to children in the early stages of development prior to entering primary school is given a special place in the national education policies and programmes. This received further impetus in recent years with a specific mention on the subject under the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution, which enjoins the state to endeavour towards providing universal access to such services throughout the country.

Until the Eighty-sixth Constitutional Amendment Act, 2001, was passed, Article 45 (Directive Principles of State Policy) of the Indian Constitution directed the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen. The earlier inclusion of 0-6 year-old children within this constitutional directive implied the intent to provide conditions for holistic child development with pre-school education as an important component.

The Eighty-sixth Constitutional Amendment Act, 2001, has split the age group 0-14 years into two clear categories to cover their interests under separate Articles in the Constitution. Article 21A has been introduced as a fundamental right after Article 21 to read "*The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.*" Articulating the intent to specifically cater to the needs of the 0-6-year-old children, the Eighty-sixth Constitutional Amendment Act has substituted Article 45 (Directive Principles of State Policy) to read "*The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.*"

At the time of Independence, the need for pre-school education was primarily fulfilled by voluntary organisations. It was in the 1970s that child welfare services were expanded to the health, education, nutrition and other sectors. The National Policy for Children was adopted in 1974 and the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme was launched as a sequel to it in 1975.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) adopted in 1986 views early childhood care and education (ECCE) as a crucial input in the strategy of human resource development, as a feeder and support programme for primary education and also as a support service for

working women. Some of the important policy directions in the NPE are as follows:

- *The National Policy on Children specially emphasises investment in the development of the young child, particularly from sections of the population in which first generation learners predominate.*
- *Recognising the holistic nature of child development, viz., nutrition, health and social, mental, physical, moral and emotional development, ECCE will receive high priority and be suitably integrated with the ICDS programme, wherever possible. Day-care centre will be provided as a support service for universalisation of primary education, to enable girls engaged in taking care of siblings to attend school and as a support service for working women belonging to poorer sections.*
- *Programmes of ECCE will be child-oriented, and focused around play and the individuality of the child. Formal methods and introduction of the 3 R's will be discouraged at this stage. The local community will be fully involved in these programmes.*
- *A full integration of childcare and pre-primary education will be brought about, both as a feeder and a strengthening factor for primary education and for human resource development in general. In continuation of this stage, the School Health Programme will be strengthened.*

The Tenth Five Year Plan document has reaffirmed the commitment to the young child. The approach outlined is:

- To reaffirm the commitment to the 'Development of Children' with a special focus on early childhood development, not only as the most desirable societal investment for the country's future, but as the right of every child to achieve his/her full development potential
- To adopt a rights-based approach to the development of children, as advocated by the draft National Policy and Charter for Children (2002).

Some of the major strategies outlined in the Tenth Plan document include:

- Reaching every young child in the country to ensure their survival, protection and development, as prescribed in the two National Plans of Action (1992) – one for children and the other for the girl child
- To ensure development through effective implementation of policies and programmes in the areas of health, immunisation, nutrition and education through nationwide programmes such as Reproductive and Child Health (RCH), ICDS, SSA, and other related programmes.
- To continue ICDS as the mainstay for promoting the overall development of young children and mothers, especially that of the girl child all over the country.
- To recognise that while early childhood up to six years is critical for the development of children, the pre-natal to first three years is the most crucial and vulnerable period for laying the foundations for the achievement of full human development and cumulative life-long learning.

To reinforce the commitment of family-focused and community-based interventions, in addition to the institution-based interventions, which is critical for enhanced survival, growth and development of young children, adolescent girls and women across the life cycle.

ECE in the National Context

The ICDS programme of the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) is the largest early childhood education (ECE) programme in the country. ICDS was started in 1975 in 33 blocks as a programme for the holistic development of children under six years to break the vicious cycle of malnutrition, morbidity, reduced learning capacity and mortality. ICDS provides health, nutrition, ECE and convergence services.

ICDS also provides support to the national efforts for universalisation of primary education, through increased opportunities for promoting early development, associated with improved cognitive and social skills, enrolment and retention in the early primary stage. By releasing girls from the burden of sibling care, it also enables them to participate in primary education.

ICDS is now operating 5,725 projects in the country, with more than 620,000 operational *anganwadi* (childcare) centres. With this, the programme covers most of the country. The total coverage for children in the 3-6 age group under ICDS is 169,555,641. ICDS will continue to be the major programme in the Tenth Plan period for the provision of ECCE services.

For the Tenth Five-Year Plan period (2002-2007) the projected outlay for the ICDS programme is Rs. 121,468.1 million.

Early Childhood Education under DPEP

Apart from the ICDS programme of the DWCD, efforts have been made by the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy to impact the early childhood education scene through a variety of strategies under the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the Mahila Samakhya project.

DPEP is conceived as a holistic programme for ensuring universal primary education (UPE), emphasising therefore the centrality of pre-school education as the foundation for achieving UPE. Since the ICDS programme already has a large presence, and was to be universalised, DPEP works closely with the ICDS programme.

The DPEP programme adopts a multi-pronged strategy for ECE. This includes working with identified ICDS centres, and strengthening them through a basket of interventions, and also increasing timings to ensure that it coincides with the formal primary school, and thus seeking to impact on the nature of the ICDS programme at the field level. DPEP also attempts to directly provide pre-school education, though not on a large scale, through selected interventions and the opening of new centres in areas where ICDS is not in operation, as well as through the opening of pre-primary classes in formal primary schools, and offering school readiness packages.

Box 3.1: Major components of ICDS

Nutrition
  ◆ Supplementary feeding
  ◆ Growth monitoring and promotion
  ◆ Nutrition and health

Health
  ◆ Immunisation
  ◆ Health check-ups
  ◆ Referral services
  ◆ Treatment of minor illnesses

ECE and pre-school education
  ◆ Early care and stimulation for the 0-3 year-old child
  ◆ Early learning readiness programme for the 3-6 year-old child

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The DPEP guidelines state that

"DPEP would finance expansion of ECCE through establishment of ECCE centres in villages not eligible to be covered by ICDS. In states with limited experience of ECCE, new ECCE centres would be financed initially on a limited scale only, in one district, or in one block per district, where inter-district variations are substantial. This activity could be scaled up gradually over the project period. The DPEP would not finance nutrition.

In order to improve the quality of ECCE, DPEP would finance development of pre-school materials and training of functionaries in the ECCE centres set up under DPEP. It would also finance the training of ICDS anganwadi/ balwadi (play school) workers in forging linkages with schools."

DPEP followed a combination of different strategies for ECE. These are:

DPEP follows a combination of different strategies for ECE. These include coordination with ICDS for strengthening of the pre-school component and opening ECE centres in non- ICDS areas.

Since the ICDS programme, run by the DWCD, is the single largest provider of ECCE services in the country, the major strategy adopted by DPEP has been one of coordination with ICDS. The ICDS programme runs anganwadi centres (AWCs) in villages with a population above 1000 in selected blocks – with a relaxed norm of 700 for tribal areas. Now that the DWCD has extended the programme to cover all districts in the country, these centres will cover all DPEP districts.

The major areas of coordination involve:
- *Ensuring that school timings and AWC timings are coordinated to enable older girls who could not attend school due to sibling care burden to attend school*
- *Locating the school and AWC in close proximity to ensure better coordination between them*
- *Providing teaching-learning material (TLM) to strengthen the pre-school component*
- *Capacity building for ECE, mainly through training of anganwadi workers*
- *Academic support through the DPEP set-up*

Apart from these, DPEP has also set up new centres, modelled largely along the ICDS pattern. Some of the models set up under DPEP, however, have addressed specific issues of concern in the local context. The ECE centres-cum-alternative schools set up in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, for example, attempt to specifically address the question of sibling care. This has entailed site selection in villages with the need for ECE services and locating these close to the primary school, recruitment of ECE workers, as well as the development of curriculum, TLM and training modules.

These activities are carried out with the active support of resource groups that have been formed for ECE in many states. In many states an encouraging trend has been the involvement of the local community in the management of these centres, through mothers' groups and village education committees (VECs). Academic support for these centres is often provided through the structures set up under DPEP, namely, block resource centres and cluster resource centres. Another model that has been adopted has been to open pre-primary classes in the primary school. This has been taken up on scale in the state of Assam.

All states have, regardless of the approach adopted, taken up the issue of school readiness programmes for children entering primary school. This has usually been taken up towards the end of the pre-primary stage, either ICDS or DPEP model, and in some cases in the beginning of class I, in the primary school. The school readiness programmes also ensure that the curriculum and teaching in the ECE centres and primary schools is synchronised.

Although different models have been followed by the states, there are common issues that have dominated the overall strategy followed by them. The thrust areas for ECE under DPEP have been the following.

Building stronger linkages between the primary school and the AWC/ ECE centre:
This has included looking at issues like school readiness, transition monitoring from ECE to primary school, influencing curriculum to ensure a continuity, convergence for training of the ECE workers, augmenting infrastructure, impacting the sibling care problem for primary school-age group children, involving communities in the running or ECE centres, and convergence for monitoring

Impacting enrolment through relieving children from sibling care:
Social assessments and gender studies conducted highlighted that a major problem keeping children, especially girls out of school, has been the burden of looking after younger siblings. As a strategy to ensure that primary school-going age children are not prevented from attending school on this ground, an effort has been made to synchronise the timings of the AWC/ ECE centre and the primary school, and where possible, to locate them in the same premises or in close proximity. This enables children in formal primary schools to leave siblings in the ECE centre while they attend school and to thereby impact on the enrolment of children, especially the girl child.

Since a major objective of pre-school education is to familiarise children with the school atmosphere and to prepare them to join formal primary schools, many states have tried to bring the physical location of the two together, including where possible, the same campus.

All states have, regardless of the approach adopted, taken up the issue of school readiness programmes for children entering primary school. This has usually been taken up towards the end of the pre-primary stage, either ICDS or DPEP model, and in some cases in the beginning of class I, in the primary school.

Early Childhood Care and Education

Box 3.2: Balwadis: An Innovative Approach for ECCE and Community Empowerment in Uttaranchal

Supported by the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, the baiwadis of Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan, Almora aim at providing a quality ECCE programme to 3-6 years old children in remote, economically poor Himalayan villages in Uttaranchal.

Twenty-nine community based groups from 10 hill districts of Uttaranchal work with a common philosophy of education and development as they try to create and develop socially and ecologically sustainable rural communities through education. Starting with two villages in 1988, the programme has now not only expanded to 321 villages catering to about 7,000 children, majority of whom are girls, but also evolved from being just a learning orientation to children to a forum for child development and community education.

In Uttaranchal, the geographical conditions make it imperative to have a centre flexible both in terms of the curriculum and admission procedures. Girls start attending the centre as soon as they are three years old and are enrolled in primary schools after they attain the age of 5-6. Over the years, universal primary education of girls in all villages having a pre-primary centre has been achieved. Primary school teachers welcome children from the Balwadis as they are more confident and articulate. Most of the girls, working as teachers, are now intermediate/graduates and want to pursue further studies. An offshoot of this trend has been that girls are marrying late in villages. A network of 412 women's groups called *Uttarakhand Mahila parishad* involving 12,000 rural women has been created as a direct offshoot of the balwadi programme.

Environmental education, an important component of the balwadi curriculum, aims to foster children's awareness and knowledge about the local environment and helps develop skills to enable them to translate their knowledge into action. Children learn songs, stories, poems, games in the centre. They also plant their own flower and vegetable beds and take part in campaigns to clean the village paths and water sources.

The community owns each centre and this sense of ownership and commitment towards baiwadis is the driving force for education and sustainable development:

♦ Communities provide a room for the centre. Villagers have donated land and provided free labor to construct small buildings called *bal bhavans*

♦ Members of the women's group maintain the centre. They apply mud plaster on the walls and on the floor, help in digging the garbage pit, and installing a temporary sanitation facility near the centre. The land for these facilities is provided free by the community

♦ Each year, the local NGO, the community, and the centre organise a Bal Mela jointly. Children display what they have learnt.

The strong link of education to communities through balwadi centers helps provide a secure framework of learning to children as well as the village people. In each village, where a balwadi centre is functional, a women's group is formed. The programme is reviewed each month in village meetings organised by the women's group as well as by the local community based group. Regular meetings are held in USNPSS to review the programme and to initiate new activities.

In Uttar Pradesh, for example, the state government passed an order, saying that where available, primary schools would provide the space for AWCs in their campus.

Although there are problems in implementation, especially where the primary school is far from the habitation (making it difficult for pre-primary children to attend) the need was recognised. Where this has been achieved this is not only helping the smaller children to become familiar with schools, but also helping older children in taking care of siblings , so that they can attend school.

Transition to primary school

A different facet of this can be seen in states which are putting in place mechanisms for monitoring the transition from ECE centres to primary school. The very process of monitoring ensures that the linkage with the primary school, as well as the need for coordination, comes to the forefront. This linkage is crucial to ensure further linkages, in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and school readiness.

Involving communities in ECCE

Involving communities in ECCE has been another area where states have been working. In Bihar DPEP, for example, ECE centres are established by *Mata Samitis* (mothers' committees) who select the ECE workers, provide the space for the centres and purchase equipment/materials, etc., for the centre. They also organise *prabhat pheris* (torch rallies), *melas* (fairs) and meetings at the centres. Suitable training modules have been developed for ECE/AWC workers, ECE programme personnel, ICDS supervisors and Anganwadi Training Centre (AWTC) instructors.

ECE under Mahila Samakhya

Many Mahila Samakhya (MS) states took up ECE activities in villages where it emerged as a felt need among the women of the *sangha* (women's collectives). The process for setting up of these centres was different from those set up under other programmes, and was rooted in the MS process itself. The process followed by Mahila Samakhya in Gujarat is given below as an illustration.

It is during the analysis of women's and girls' problems in the sangha that the childcare needs of villages emerged. In the initial phase, an effort was made to evolve a model that suited the village conditions, with flexibility, both in form and organisation. A summary picture of each village was developed through simulated activities, where the participants shared their ideas about creating a model support system.

The highlights of childcare patterns evolved by MS in Gujarat included:
- Leadership and responsibility for childcare centres rest with the *sanghas*.
- Timings are fixed to suit the needs of the community.
- Programme was evolved with regard to the need for care/ education.

The various options that emerged were:
- Self-financed childcare centres, combining day-care and pre-school activities
- Linking day-care service to the existing anganwadi of ICDS
- Childcare centres only for a section of the population in the village (the poorest) where the demand is high
- Caring for children in more than one location

- Collective decisions about choice of place, time, caregivers, (who, how many and how) and payments.
- Finding a safe place that can accommodate the children, and is accessible to them, with some outdoor space for play .
- Promoting varied models and catering to a wide age group, including infants, pre-schoolers and if need be, older children
- The sanghas negotiate for resources at the local level, and with MS structures.
- Sangha members participate in the purchase of raw materials, maintenance of accounts and cooking of meals.
- Women brainstorm to explore alternative local resources from the community in the form of play material, fuel, water, floor spreads, *matkas* (pots), grains, etc. Community contributions (Rs. 5 to 10 per child) are collected towards the cost of the honorarium for the *balsakhi (child care-giver)*.

Training for childcare was originally carried out by some external resource persons. MS developed specific modules for each of the components with the support of a consultant from the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodara. The primary concern was to adapt training to the needs of childcare centres emerging in the villages; to problems emerging in the villages; and to problems encountered by women in their initiation and management. The format took the form of camps, cluster meetings, workshops, village sangha meetings, field visits and celebrations.

ECE under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Under the scheme of SSA, the major vehicle for the provision of ECE services is the ICDS programme. However, the SSA programme has a provision for taking up ECE projects on a small scale, under the "innovations" head. A fund of Rs. 5 million is available in each district, each year for such projects (each project not to exceed Rs. 1.5 million). This can be utilised either for setting up new centres in areas where there are no ICDS centres or for strengthening linkages with the ICDS programme.

Under the proposed scheme "education of girls at the elementary level", under the SSA framework, provision is being made for setting up of community-based childcare centres, in areas where such services are not provided under ICDS.

By the end of the Ninth Plan a total of 5,652 ICDS projects had already been sanctioned, comprising 4,533 rural blocks, 759 tribal blocks and 360 urban slums. The total number of rural and tribal blocks is now 5,488, leaving only 186 blocks uncovered. Of the projects sanctioned, 4,608 were operational by the end of the Ninth Plan. In the Tenth Plan it is envisaged that the remaining 1,044 projects will be operationalised. With this, almost the entire country will be covered under the ICDS programme.

Table 3.1: Coverage under various Early Childhood Care and Education Schemes 1996–97

Programmes	Centres Sanctioned	Centres Operational	Beneficiaries
ICDS projects sanctioned	5652	4608	3,15,00,000 (0-6 children) 60,00,000 (pregnant and lactating mothers)

(As per the 2001 Census. number of children in the 0-6 age group was 15.78.63,145. so approximately 20 per cent children in the 0-6 age group are covered under the ICDS programme.)

Universal Elementary Education

Overview of Progress towards Universal Elementary Education

Elementary education in India is defined as the education from class I to VIII, and roughly covers , children from the age of 6 to 14 years. Elementary education is further divided into two stages: primary and upper primary education. Primary education lasts up to class V and covers children in the 6 -11 age group. Upper primary covers Class VI to VIII, and includes children in the age group of 11-14 years. However, while this is the national picture, there are minor variations in some states. Some have primary schooling up to Class IV only, while a few have upper primary up to Class VII only.

Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has been a national goal since Independence. The recent amendment to the Constitution, which has made elementary education a fundamental right of every citizen, guides the formulation of policies and programmes in this area. Concerted efforts towards the goal of UEE during the last five decades have resulted in a manifold increase in the number of institutions, teachers and students. (Table 4.1) During the period 1950-51 to 2000-01, the number of primary schools increased by more than three times, while the number of upper primary schools increased by fifteen times. Special projects and programmes at the national level launched during the 1990s gave further fillip to the process. The average annual growth rates for primary and upper primary schools during the decade were 1.51 per cent and 3.02 per cent respectively.

Table 4.1: Progress in Education since 1950

Indicators	1950-51	2000-01
Primary schools	2,10,000	6,38,738
Upper primary schools	13,600	2,06,269
Teachers in primary schools	5,38,000	18,96,791
Teachers in upper primary schools	86,000	13,26,652
Enrolment in primary	19.2 million	113.83 million
Enrolment in upper primary schools	3 million	42.81 million

Total enrolment at primary stage increased from 97 million in 1990 to 114 million in 2000-01. At the upper primary level, the increase in enrolment during this period was from 34 million in 1991 to 43 million in 2001. During this period the growth rate of girls' enrolment at elementary level was much higher compared to that of the boys.

Table 4.2: Sex-wise Enrolment by Stages, 1990–91 to 2000–01

(in million)

Year	Primary (Grades I-V)			Middle/Upper Primary (Grades VI-VIII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1990-91	57.0	40.4	97.4	21.5	12.5	34.0
1993-94	55.1	41.9	97.0	20.6	13.5	34.1
1994-95	62.3	46.8	109.1	24.5	15.8	40.3
1995-96	62.4	47.4	109.8	25.0	16.0	41.0
1996-97	62.5	47.9	110.4	24.7	16.3	41.0
1997-98	61.2	47.5	108.7	23.7	15.8	39.5
1998-99	62.7	48.2	110.9	24.0	16.3	40.3
1999-2000*	64.1	49.5	113.6	25.1	17.0	42.1
2000-01*	64.0	49.8	113.8	25.3	17.5	42.8

Source: Estimated average growth rates annual from Selected Educational Statistics, 2000-01, M/HRD, GOI
* Provisional

Over the years, the participation of girls at all levels of school education has increased substantially. The relative share of girls' enrolment in total enrolment at primary level was only 28.1 per cent in 1950-51, which has increased to 43.7 per cent in 2000-01. Similarly, at the upper primary level, the relative share of girls' enrolment to total enrolment was as low as 16.1 per cent in 1950-51, which has gone up to 40.9 per cent in 1999-2000.

Gross Enrolment Ratio

The most important indicator pointing to the participation of children in schooling is the enrolment ratio. Table 4.3 presents the gross enrolment ratios (GER), which represent school enrolment as a ratio of the total population in the age group of 6-14 years.

Table 4.3: Gross Enrolment Ratio - National@

YEAR	I-V Primary (6-11 years)			VI-VIII Upper Primary (11-14 years)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1991	98.12	75.89	87.28	79.82	54.62	67.87
1992	95.0	73.46	84.6	72.5	48.94	67.5
1996	98.7	81.9	90.6	70.9	52.8	62.4
1997*	98.5	81.5	90.3	66.5	49.5	58.5
1999*	104.1	85.2	94.9	67.2	49.7	58.8
2001*	104.9	85.9	95.7	66.7	49.9	58.6

Source: Growth of School Enrolment 1950-1993 MHRD, Government of India
Selected Educational Statistics 1997-98 of MHRD, GOI.
@ These figures do not fully match with the figures provided during different years in the "Selected Educational Statistics" published by Government of India as the base population size used are different
* Provisional

Gross enrolment ratios have remained relatively static during the decade. This is particularly true of the figures for boys at the primary stage (6 -11 years). Corresponding figures for girls show an increase of about 6 percentage points. However, the figures indicate a decline with respect to enrolment at the upper primary stage. This is possibly due to several factors. One of these is the fact that children are not enrolled exactly at the official age specified by the state, which also varies from one state to another.

Out-of-school children

In the country, as a whole, approximately 35 million children (as on 30th September 2000) still need to be enrolled. Moreover, India being a large country, one sees a wide disparity in the educational status from one region to another. Thus, while there are some regions, which are close to achieving the goals of UEE, there are other regions which have still a long distance to go before they can achieve the same. This is clear from Table 4.4, which gives the number of out-of-school children as obtained from the educational statistics produced by Government of India every year.

Table 4.4: Child Population, Enrolment and Out-of-school Children in the States

(in million)

State		Primary			Upper Primary		
		Projected child population (6-11) as on 1st March 2000	Enrolment in year 2000	Out-of-school children	Projected child population (11-14) as on 1st March 2000	Enrolment	Out-of-school children
1	Andhra Pradesh	8.558	8.906	-	5.768	2.823	2.945
2	Arunachal Pradesh	0.139	0.163	-	0.076	0.053	0.023
3	Assam	3.481	4.041	-	2.091	1.505	0.586
4	Bihar	13.238	10.573	2.665	8.154	2.551	5.603
5	Goa	0.187	0.124	0.063	0.101	0.072	0.029
6	Gujarat	5.367	6.771	-	3.344	2.224	1.120
7	Haryana	2.558	2.018	0.540	1.480	0.935	0.545
8	Himachal Pradesh	0.784	0.695	0.089	0.428	0.413	0.015
9	Jammu & Kashmir	1.158	1.063	0.095	0.634	0.425	0.209
10	Karnataka	5.862	6.658	-	3.705	2.756	0.949
11	Kerala	2.977	2.594	0.383	1.838	1.789	0.049
12	Madhya Pradesh	9.974	11.113	-	5.925	3.483	2.442
13	Maharashtra	10.616	11.721	-	6.265	5.338	0.927
14	Manipur	0.294	0.286	0.008	0.160	0.121	0.039
15	Meghalaya	0.284	0.325	-	0.155	0.094	0.061
16	Mizoram	0.110	0.120	-	0.061	0.045	0.016
17	Nagaland	0.196	0.211	-	0.107	0.068	0.039
18	Orissa	4.183	4.710	-	2.637	1.465	1.172
19	Punjab	2.672	2.112	0.560	1.535	0.991	0.544
20	Rajasthan	7.074	7.922	-	4.233	3.278	0.955
21	Sikkim	0.066	0.090	-	0.037	0.027	0.010
22	Tamil Nadu	5.920	5.709	0.211	3.827	3.551	0.276
23	Tripura	0.441	0.471	-	0.241	0.155	0.086
24	Uttar Pradesh	21.557	14.160	7.397	13.284	4.970	8.314
25	West Bengal	9.348	10.016	-	5.849	3.053	2.796
26	Andaman & Nicobar	0.045	0.040	0.005	0.025	0.022	0.003
27	Chandigarh	0.102	0.067	0.035	0.057	0.040	0.017
28	Dadar & Nagar Haveli	0.023	0.028	-	0.012	0.009	0.003
29	Daman & Diu	0.016	0.016	-	0.009	0.007	0.002
30	Delhi	1.625	0.996	0.629	0.893	0.475	0.418
31	Lakshadweep	0.008	0.008	-	0.004	0.005	-
32	Pondicherry	0.128	0.103	0.025	0.071	0.064	0.007
	Total	**118.991**	**113.827**	**5.164**	**73.006**	**42.810**	**30.196**

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2000-01
Note: Figures for Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttaranchal included in unbifurcated states

The above is reinforced by other studies done on out-of-school children. Most recent surveys (NFHS-II-1999) indicate that nearly 79 per cent of the 6-14 age group are attending school. This means that out of the population of 192 million in the age group of 6-14 in 2000, the number of children attending is 152 million. Those outside the school system are mostly SC/ST girls, working children, children of poor families, disabled children and children in difficult circumstances.

Dropout Rates

The dropout rate in primary classes has been decreasing year after year from 64.9 per cent in 1960-61 to 40.7 per cent in 2000-01, as shown in Table 4.5. Similarly, for classes

Universal Elementary Education

I to VIII the dropout rate decreased from 78.3 per cent in 1960-61, to 53.7 per cent in 2000-01. Some studies have indicated the repetition of grades by large number of children as a serious problem.

Table 4.5: Dropout Rates at Primary and Upper Primary Levels, 1960–61 to 2000–01

	1960–61	1970–71	1980–81	1990–91	1998–99*	1999–2000*	2000–01*
Class I-V							
Boys	61.7	64.5	56.2	40.1	38.62	38.67	39.71
Girls	70.9	70.9	62.5	46.0	41.22	42.28	41.90
Total	64.9	67.0	58.7	42.6	39.74	40.25	40.67
Class I-VIII							
Boys	75.0	74.6	68.0	59.1	54.4	51.96	50.33
Girls	85.0	83.4	79.4	65.1	60.09	58.00	57.95
Total	78.3	77.9	72.7	60.9	56.82	54.53	53.67

Source : Ibid
* Provisional

While the dropout rates have fallen over the years, the disparity between the more developed states and still developing states is glaring. The dropout rate from class I to V ranges from (-) 9.34 in Chandigarh to 60.50 in Mizoram. Similarly, for class I to VIII, the dropout rate ranges from (-) 12.22 in Kerala to 77.35 in Meghalaya.

Requirement and Targets for Achieving the Elementary Education Goals of EFA

Although the task of achieving UEE is stupendous in a country as diverse and large as India, several positive signals and opportunities have emerged in recent years. Most important of these is the ever-increasing demand for education from parents and the community all over the country.

Further, recognising the importance of the primary education sector, the central government has been working with state governments on a principle of shared responsibility for achieving the goal of UEE. This becomes even more important in the context of the commitment to make the 'right to elementary education' a fundamental one. With the magnitude of the unfinished task, the Government of India will continue supporting the initiatives in primary education while promoting the capacities of the state governments to meet the challenges effectively.

With the country following a five-year planning process, the requirements for achieving the goals of UEE have been aligned to the planning process associated with the Tenth Five Year Plan, which is under implementation during the period 2002-07. The goals of the Tenth Plan have been formulated so as to ensure that the requirements of the Dakar goals are fulfilled in the plan period itself and the projections for the EFA plan made so as to coincide with the year 2007, the last year of the Tenth Plan.

Targets for the period till 2007
Broadly, the targets for the period till 2007 are as follows:

(i) Universal Access
   ■ All children (age groups 6-11 and 11-14) should have access to primary schools,

upper primary schools or their alternatives within the walking distance of one kilometre and three kilometres respectively;

- Universal access to ECCE centres for all children aged 3-6 years;
- Need-based expansion of upper primary education facilities, particularly for disadvantaged sections. There should be one upper primary school for every two primary schools;
- All schools should have buildings, toilets, drinking water, electrification, playground, blackboards and other basic facilities; and
- Provision of one classroom for every teacher at elementary stage.

(ii) Universal Enrolment
- Enrolment of all children in schools or other alternatives by 2003; and
- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.

(iii) Universal Retention
- Universal retention in primary cycle by 2007; and
- Dropout rate to be reduced to less than 10 per cent for grades VI-VIII by 2007.

(iv) Universal Achievement
- Improve all aspects of quality of education (content and process) to ensure reasonable learning outcomes at elementary level, especially in literacy, numeracy and in life skills.

(v) Equity
- Bridge all gender and social gaps in enrolment, retention and learning achievement in primary cycle by 2007. In upper primary it should be reduced to less than 5 per cent by 2007; and
- Special interventions and strategies to include girls, SC/ST children, working children, children with special needs, urban deprived children, children from minority groups, children below poverty line, migrating children and children in difficult-to-reach groups.

Expansion of Elementary Education till 2007

Before suggesting the broad strategies to be adopted to achieve UEE, it is necessary to estimate the backlog of non-enrolled children in the age group of 6 -11 and 11-14 at the primary and upper primary levels, respectively, at the beginning of the period and also the target child population during the period. This section deals with the target-setting exercise relating to the estimation of enrolment during the period. For the enrolment projection exercise, 1999-2000 has been taken as the base year. The relevant age-group population has been used after adjusting for over- and underage children in the target year.

For arriving at an estimate of the targeted population, use has been made of the enrolment data at the primary and upper primary levels for 1999-2000, as reported in the Selected Educational Statistics, 1999-2000, MHRD, as base year enrolment. To obtain the enrolment data in the target year (2006-07) in the relevant age group population (6 -11 and 11-14), adjustment has been made in the base year enrolment (1999-2000) by taking into consideration the difference in enrolment data as reported in Selected Educational Statistics, MHRD, 1993-94 and Sixth All India Educational Survey, 1993, NCERT. The enrolment figures reported by the MHRD have been deflated by 10 per cent at primary level and by 14 per cent at upper primary level. The target year child population in the relevant age group has been taken as the enrolment in the target year.

Consequently, the enrolment figures have been estimated on the basis of the share of the child population (6 -11 and 11-14 years) to total population in the target year (as estimated by the Expert Committee on Population Projections). The advantage here is that the population in the target year has been estimated on the basis of the average annual growth rate between the year 1991 and 2001, for which population figures are now available.

The projected population on the basis of average annual growth rate between 1991 and 2001 up to the target year, i.e. 2006-07, is given in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Projected Population from 2006 to 2010

Year	Male	Female	Total
1991 (Actual)	439,231,000	407,072,000	846,303,000
2001 (Actual)*	531,277,078	495,738,169	1,027,015,247
2006	584,298,977	547,070,028	1,131,369,005
2007	595,522,172	557,957,391	1,153,479,563
2008	606,960,942	569,061,426	1,176,022,368
2009	618,619,427	580,386,444	1,199,005,871
2010	630,501,848	591,936,845	1,222,438,693
Average annual growth rate (1991-00)	1.92	1.99	1.95

Provisional Population Results, Census of India, 2001, Registrar General and Census Commissioner, New Delhi, March 2001

Table 4.7: Projected 6-11 and 11-14 age group population in 2006 and 2010

(in million)

Year	Male	Female	Total
2006 (Total population)	584.3	547.1	1131.4
6-11 age-group population in 2006	56.71	53.88	110.59
11-14 age-group population in 2010	34.48	32.66	67.14

The share of child population (6 -11) to total population in 2006-07 was estimated to be 9.71 per cent for boys, 9.83 per cent for girls, and 9.77 per cent for total (Expert Group on Population Projections, Registrar General of India, 1996). Similarly the share of 11-14 age-group population was estimated to be 5.90 per cent for boys, 5.97 for girls, and 5.93 per cent for total (Expert Group on Population Projections, Registrar General of India, 1996). In this scenario, the 6 -11 and 11-14 age-group populations have been estimated by taking the same share as projected by the Expert Group on Population Projection to the total population (by taking 1991 Census data and 2001 Provisional Population Results of Registrar General of India, 2001) (see Table 4.7).

The adjusted enrolment of 1999-2000 has been taken as the base enrolment. The target enrolment at primary level for 2006-07 has been estimated by taking the 6 -11 age-group population as calculated above and then inflating it by 10 per cent to account for under- and overage. The percentage of under- and over-age was around 24 per cent at primary level in 1993-94. The National Sample Survey (NSS) 52nd round also shows the extent of under- and over-age at primary level to be around 19 per cent in 1995-96, which shows that the percentage of under- and overage children in total enrolment is decreasing. Since the target is to achieve universal primary education by 2006-07, this assumption of 10 per cent under- and overage in the target year 2006-07 is quite reasonable.

For upper primary level also, the adjusted enrolment of 1999-2000 has been taken as the base enrolment. The target enrolment at upper primary level has been estimated by estimating the 11-14 age-group population in 2010 (as mentioned earlier) and then inflating it by 10 per cent to account for under- and over-age.

Accordingly, the enrolment at primary level needs to grow at the average annual growth rate of 1.12 per cent for boys and 4.16 per cent for girls (2.51 per cent overall), and at

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Table 4.8: Projected Enrolment at Primary and Upper Primary Levels, 2000–01 to 2006–07

(in million)

Year	Enrolment (Class I-V)			Enrolment (Class VI-VIII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1999-2000	57.69	44.56	102.25	22.57	15.29	37.86
2000-01	58.34	46.41	104.75	23.61	16.52	40.13
2001-02	58.99	48.34	107.33	24.71	17.84	42.55
2002-03	59.66	50.35	110.01	25.85	19.28	45.13
2003-04	60.33	52.45	112.78	27.04	20.82	47.86
2004-05	61.00	54.63	115.63	28.29	22.49	50.78
2005-06	61.69	56.9	118.59	29.6	24.3	53.9
2006-07	62.38	59.27	121.65	30.97	26.25	57.22
Required average annual growth rate (1999-2000 to 2006-07)	**1.12**	**4.16**	**2.51**	**4.62**	**8.03**	**6.08**

Note *: Provisional as reported in Selected Educational Statistics, 1998-99, MHRD, GOI

upper primary level, at 4.62 per cent for boys and 8.03 per cent for girls (6.08 per cent at upper primary level).

The year-wise estimated additional enrolments during the five-year period at primary and upper primary levels is given in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Year-wise Estimated Additional Enrolments at Primary and Upper Primary Levels

Year	Additional Enrolment					
	Primary (Class I-V)			Upper Primary (Class VI-VIII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2002-03	0.67	2.01	2.68	1.14	1.44	2.58
2003-04	0.67	2.10	2.77	1.19	1.54	2.73
2004-05	0.67	2.18	2.85	1.25	1.67	2.92
2005-06	0.69	2.27	2.96	1.31	1.81	3.12
2006-07	0.69	2.37	3.06	1.37	1.95	3.32
Total (2002-2007)	**3.39**	**10.93**	**14.32**	**6.26**	**8.41**	**14.67**

Programmes and schemes for achieving aims of UEE

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
The national programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), launched to achieve the objective of UEE by 2010, would be the main programme to achieve the goals of UEE. SSA aims at providing universal enrolment by the year 2003, five years of quality primary schooling by the year 2007 and eight years of quality elementary education by the year 2010. Its specific goals are:
- All children in school, Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) centre, alternate school, 'back-to-school' camp by 2003.
- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
- All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010.

Universal Elementary Education

- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
- Universal retention by 2010.

The scheme is an effort to universalise elementary education through community-ownership of the school system. The community is the key in the planning, implementation and monitoring of SSA. The programme calls for community ownership of school-based interventions through effective decentralisation. In this programme, habitation has been made the unit of planning and the habitation-level plans are prepared first, which are then combined together to form the District Elementary Education Plans.

Some of the strategies to be adopted in the scheme are:
- Institutional reforms: As part of the SSA, reforms are to be undertaken to improve efficiency of the delivery system. The states will have to make an objective assessment of their prevalent education system, including educational administration, and carry out changes to improve the delivery system for elementary education.
- Community ownership: The programme involves community ownership of school-based interventions through effective decentralisation. This is augmented by involvement of women's groups, VEC members and members of Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs).
- Institutional capacity building: SSA conceives a major capacity building role for national, state and district level institutions like NIEPA/NCERT/NCTE/ SCERT/ SIEMAT/DIET.
- Community-based monitoring with full transparency: The programme has a community-based monitoring system. The Educational Management Information System (EMIS) correlates school level-data with community-based information from micro-planning and surveys. Besides this, every school is encouraged to share all information with the community, including that about grants received.
- Habitation as a unit of planning: SSA works on a community-based approach to planning, with habitation as a unit of planning. Habitation plans are the basis for formulating district plans.
- Accountability to community: SSA envisages cooperation between teachers, parents and PRIs, as well as accountability and transparency to the community.
- Priority to education of girls and other disadvantaged groups: Education of girls is one of the principal concerns in SSA. Further, there is a focus on the inclusion and participation of children from SC/ST, minority groups, urban deprived children disadvantaged groups and children with special needs in the educational process.
- Pre-project phase: SSA involves a distinct and well-planned pre-project phase, which provides for a large number of interventions for capacity development to improve the delivery and monitoring system. These include provision for household surveys, community-based micro-planning and school mapping, training of community leaders, school-level activities, support for setting up information system, office equipment, diagnostic studies, etc.
- Thrust on quality: SSA lays a special thrust on making education at the elementary level useful and relevant for children by improving the curriculum, and through child-centred activities and effective teaching-learning strategies. It recognises the

critical and central role of teachers and advocates a focus on their development needs.

Externally Assisted Projects

The four existing externally assisted projects in elementary education – the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP), Lok Jumbish Project (LJP) and GOI-UN (Janshala) Programme – would continue as part of SSA framework till the completion of their project periods. As SSA supports most of the programme components, strategies and interventions of these four externally assisted programmes, a smooth transition to SSA would be ensured in the project districts after the project period. The capacities and technical support built by these programmes at personnel and institutional level would be made use of in SSA.

Strategies to be adopted under the above programmes

Considering that three-fourths of the out-of-school children in the country are girls, and a substantial percentage of them belong to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, the core strategy for achieving UEE will be the education of these children. It is felt that if the issues of UEE relating to girls and SC/ST children are addressed, all other issues will automatically get resolved. Simultaneously, there would be renewed efforts to address the educational needs of working children, children in minority groups, urban deprived children (UDC), children of migrant families, children of poor families, disabled children and children of hardest-to-reach groups. Most of the children in these categories are girls and SC/STs. Besides, there would be continued efforts to improve the quality of education and to ensure community participation in education. While strategies for girls and urban deprived children are dealt separately, strategies for some of the other sections are as follows:

Strategy to Improve Retention

Although dropout rate at elementary stage has declined from 78.3 per cent in 1960-61 to 54.5 per cent in 1999-2000, it is still very high. Most of the studies have pointed out economic reasons and also unattractive schools as reasons for children dropping out. Many children are not attending school because of poverty, high private cost of education, sibling care responsibility, household chores, work in the fields and factories, wage labour, work in family occupations, etc. A large number of children drop out of school because of school-related reasons like attitude of teachers, irrelevant curriculum, sub-standard teaching, teacher absenteeism, uninteresting teaching, corporal punishment, poor school infrastructure, inability to cope with the pace of learning, lack of parental support in the case of first generation learners, maladjustment in school, etc. Majority of the dropouts in all categories are girls.

As per the National Family Health Survey-II conducted in 1998-99, the main reasons for students dropping out after enrolling are lack of interest in studies, the private cost of education and the compulsions of work and poverty. These reasons account for almost 75 per cent of the dropout cases. The main reasons quoted by PROBE Report for children dropping out include high cost of schooling, children required for other works, children not interested in studies, poor teaching standards, etc. The stress would be on specific strategies for identifying dropout children and addressing their problems.
The economic reasons for low retention can be addressed by providing targeted

incentives. The SSA has taken a number of steps to reduce the private cost o education. It provides for free textbooks to girls and SC/ST students. Many of the states give free uniforms and other states would also be encouraged to adopt this. The Mid-day Meal Scheme is another programme aiming to increase attendance of students. The aim would be to ensure that all states give hot cooked meal, which would have direct impact on

Table 4.10: Reasons for Children not attending School (Percentage of children of 6-7 years who have dropped out-of-school)

Main reason for not currently attending school (dropped out-of-school)	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
School too far away	0.2	1.0	1.0	5.9	0.8	4.8
Transport not available	0.1	0.2	0.4	1.6	0.3	1.3
Further education not considered necessary	2.4	5.4	2.3	4.3	2.4	4.5
Required for household work	5.7	14.7	8.7	17.3	8.0	16.7
Required for work on farm/family business	4.7	1.6	9.2	2.9	8.0	2.6
Required for outside work for payment in cash or kind	11.3	3.0	9.9	3.7	10.3	3.5
Costs too much	15.2	17.0	13.3	11.4	13.8	12.6
No proper school facilities for girls	0.0	1.2	0.0	3.5	0.0	3.0
Required for care of siblings	0.2	1.5	0.6	2.3	0.5	2.2
Not interested in studies	42.5	30.2	40.0	24.8	40.6	26.0
Repeated failures	6.0	6.1	5.3	3.7	5.5	4.2
Got married	0.1	4.9	0.2	8.5	0.2	7.7
Other	5.8	8.2	5.3	6.2	5.5	6.6
Don't know	5.7	5.1	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.2
Total Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of children	1,852	1,747	5,475	6,121	7,327	7,868

Source: NFHS-2, India, 1998-99

Table 4.11: Why Children Drop Out

	Boys (%)	Girls (%)
a) Circumstances whereby children drop out		
Not allowed by school/ teachers to continue	5	2
Child did not wish to continue	35	16
Withdrawn by parents	47	66
Other circumstances	13	16
Total	100	100
b) Circumstances whereby parents withdraw *		
Child needed for other activities	50	68
Schooling is too expensive	54	29
School is too far	0	6
Poor teaching standards at school	8	18
Hostile school environment	4	6
Child fell ill	4	9
Child is not bright enough	0	6
Child is not interested in studying	8	6
Parents are not interested	8	27
Other reasons	8	22

Source: PROBE Survey
* Responses are not mutually exclusive

attendance as compared to giving of mere foodgrains. If children are dropping out because of economic reasons, emphasis would be on involving the community in motivating the parents to bring the children back to school. For those children who have already dropped out, suitable alternative education systems would be provided such as bridge courses, remedial courses, back-to-school camps, etc., so that they can be mainstreamed into the formal system.

Regarding the reasons for the students not being interested in studies, emphasis would be on improving the quality of education, the details of which are given in other sections. The focus would be on pedagogic improvement, making teaching-learning joyful, child-centred and activity-based. This would require further efforts on improving teacher training, development of local-specific teaching-learning material, interesting teaching methods, local contextual curricula and textbooks, instruction in mother tongue, flexible school timings, attractive classrooms, positive environment, good quality school infrastructure and facilities, more friendly evaluation techniques, etc.

Regarding the reasons for the students not being interested in studies, emphasis would be on improving the quality of education and the focus would be on pedagogic improvement, making teaching-learning joyful, child-centred and activity-based.

Other strategies and approaches would include:
- Monitoring attendance by the community and grassroot level structures like VEC, parent-teacher association (PTA), mother-teacher association (MTA), *Mahila Samooh* (women's group), youth clubs, etc.
- Regular micro-planning exercise to be undertaken by the states to identify the number as well as the reasons for dropping out. Community and grassroot level structures to be involved in the micro-planning exercise. This would help mobilise parents for regular attendance of their children.
- Follow-up and tracking of dropout children to bring them back to school either through camps or bridge courses.
- Organising retention drives to put pressure on parents and the school system to ensure retention of girls. These drives would not be a one-time exercise but would be organised at regular intervals to sustain pressure and take up corrective measures as may be necessary.
- In pockets identified for intensive activities, attendance of each child to be monitored to prevent dropouts.
- Improving access to ECCE and pre-schooling facilities--this would help in school readiness besides relieving older children, especially girls, from sibling care responsibility.
- Improving school infrastructure and facilities in terms of playground, play material, toilets, drinking water facilities, classrooms and school buildings.
- Conduct remedial classes to assist those children not performing well.

Incentive Schemes for Enhancing Participation of the Poor
Studies have shown that in addition to social disparity, there were also economic reasons which weighed against universal participation in schooling of a large number of children, particularly girls belonging to SCs/STs and other such groups. In order to attract such children to schools and also to convince their parents of the value of education, a number of incentive schemes were launched at different periods of time during the last few decades. Broadly, these incentives were in the form of provisioning of mid-day meals to children in schools, supply of free textbooks, free uniforms, scholarship/ stipend, etc.

Box 4.1: Mid-day Meal Scheme in Tamil Nadu

The Mid-day Meal Scheme in Tamil Nadu was started on a humble scale way back in 1925-26 by the Corporation of Madras to improve school attendance. Subsequently, philanthropists and voluntary organisations were urged to start free school lunch centres in villages and towns all over the state. In July 1956, the school lunch programme was launched as a 'people's movement' for organised charity as part of the school improvement efforts. Impressed by the public response, the Government of Tamil Nadu (erstwhile Madras) took up the school lunch programme in 1957 and issued detailed rules for running the programme, which have been revised several times since then. In 1961, the state started receiving CARE (Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere) food commodities for feeding 500,000 children through the school lunch programme. In 1978, 1.86 million children in 32,000 schools were covered, and this number increased to 2.03 million in 33,306 schools in 1980-81.

The state achieved another milestone in 1982 with the launch of the Nutritious Meal Programme for schoolchildren in classes I to X. This programme is being implemented through Nutritious Meal Centres located in schools, and all children who are willing to enrol are fed. During 2001-02, 5.80 million children were enrolled for the Mid-day Meal Scheme.

Mid-day Meal Scheme

◆ Keeping in view the beneficial impact already made by the programme in states like Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, and also in view of the comfortable position of foodstocks with the public sector agencies, the central government launched the scheme as centrally sponsored programme in August 1995 in a phased manner, expanding across the country in 1997-98.

◆ The objective of the programme is to give a boost to universal primary education by increasing enrolment, attendance and retention, and simultaneously impacting on the nutritional status of children studying in primary school in government, local and government-aided schools. Recently, the programme has been expanded to cover children studying in EGS and other alternative schooling centres opened in schoolless habitations.

◆ Under the scheme, the central government arranges for foodgrains (rice/ wheat or both) supplied through public sector agency, free of cost to the implementing agencies of the states/ UTs and also reimburses admissible transportation costs. The cost of conversion of foodgrain into a meal and other logistical support are required to be arranged by the implementing agencies. Recently, the central government has decided to construct kitchen sheds in schools under the rural development programme.

◆ Currently, 103 million primary school children studying in about 0.8 million schools are being targeted for coverage. The central government has allocated 3 million tonnes of foodgrains for this purpose. While more than one-third of the children are being served cooked meals, foodgrain at the rate of three kg per month for each child is distributed to others. The objective is to serve cooked meals to all children up to grade V.

◆ Evaluation of the programme has revealed that the scheme has attracted children of underprivileged sections to schools and has led to improvement in enrolment and attendance in many states.

◆ Various studies have shown positive impact of the programme on children not only in terms of attention in the classroom, regularity in attendance but also greater interest among parents to send their children to school and in participation in the programme itself, wherever cooked meals are served at the school site.

Free Textbooks to Girls and Children belonging to SC/ST Communities

i. Provision of reading materials for children of deprived sections is vital to educational process. Classrooms deprived of textbooks promote little in the way of reading, and students are obliged to adopt rote learning, recitation, and copying from blackboards.

Considering that under the prevailing socio-economic conditions, parents from deprived sections are unable to purchase textbooks, notebooks, etc., for their children, many states/ UTs have arrangement for supplying free textbooks since the 1960s for some specific groups.

ii. The central government has also made a provision for supply of free textbooks to girls, SC/STs in classes I-VIII who have not been covered by state schemes.

iii. Of about 158 million children currently enrolled in classes I-VIII, about 95 million are girls, and 32.27 million belong to SC/ST community. The central government has made provisions for spending Rs. 150/- per child per annum for supply of learning material for these children.

Education of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

Special attention to the educational needs of SCs and STs is a national commitment, pursued in all the Five Year Plans. In many states, the progress with respect to enrolment and participation of children belonging to these sections has been quite satisfactory. However, statistics reveal that the objectives of equity are still elusive in many parts of the country. Considering that the SC/ST population is not homogeneous in all respects, the endeavour would be to refine the identification of target groups even among the SC/STs and identify particular sub-groups which are seriously handicapped and require greater attention. This identification may be done through micro-planning activities.

During the past few years, tribal education has witnessed a rapid transformation, particularly in the area of access, pedagogic reform and community participation. Much emphasis has been given to the improvement of access in tribal areas through the schemes of non-formal education (NFE), alternative schools, community schools and Education Guarantee Scheme, both under DPEP and outside it. However, there are still habitations in the tribal-dominated districts which remain unserved by primary education facilities. There is a need to address this issue on a priority in tribal areas. Also, the following interventions will need to be made:

◆ All school-attending SC/ST children would be provided incentives in the form of free textbooks, uniform, stationery, scholarship, and transport allowance of up to Rs. 250 per child per year to defray the indirect as well as opportunity cost of education. SSA provides Rs. 150 per child for textbooks to SC/ST children. Already most of the state governments have schemes to provide free textbooks and uniform to girls and SC/ST children.

◆ Improving access by setting up appropriate schooling facilities in unserved habitations, especially for STs living in difficult terrain and forests.

◆ Apart from further improving access and addressing the "quantity" aspects, as done in the past, the emphasis would be on improving quality of education for SC/ST children and ensuring equity.

◆ Engagement of community organisers from SC/ST communities to work towards raising the level of awareness for education among the community.

◆ Ensuring ownership and management of schools by SC/ST communities by greater representation of SCs/STs in VECs/PTAs.

◆ Training programme for VECs/PTAs and other community-based organisations among SC/ST population.

◆ Using local teachers available in the community and upgrading their capacity.

Special attention to the educational needs of SCs and STs is a national commitment, pursued in all the Five Year Plans. In many states, the progress with respect to enrolment and participation of children belonging to these sections has been quite satisfactory.

- Monitoring attendance, retention and achievement of children from weaker sections regularly.
- Providing context-specific intervention in the form of hostels, incentives or a special facility, as may be required for SC/STs living in different contexts.
- Preparing the school schedule in tribal areas as per the local requirements.
- Suitably adapting the curriculum and providing locally relevant teaching-learning materials to tribal students. If need be, local language and dialects may be used for teaching, especially in lower class; successful micro-level models in this area would be upscaled.
- Environment building is of immense importance in the context of educational development among SCs and STs.
- Considering the geographical and communication problems in tribal areas, it is crucial to restructure and decentralise the monitoring system. VECs will have to be given training in academic supervision and monitoring.
- Convergence between the Tribal Welfare Department, tribal development authorities and education department has to be further strengthened.
- Ashram schools, or residential schools, would be set up if SC/ST habitations are small and scattered.

Working Children

Educating children who are compelled to join the workforce prematurely instead of attending primary schools is a major problem, which has defied effective solution for a long time. Enrolling such young children who are already in the labour market and ensuring that they complete primary schooling assumes even greater significance in the current economic scenario of a liberalised economy. India has the largest number of working children in the world. Estimates of working children in the country vary very widely. According to 1991 Census, there were 11.28 million child workers, of which 91 per cent were in rural areas. Out of the total, 9.08 million children were classified as main workers and 2.2 million as marginal workers. Besides, 7 million are involved in household work, 88 per cent of them being girls. Thus if a comprehensive definition of work is taken, the total incidence of child workers is quite substantial and merits serious attention. Even though the estimates vary, the magnitude of child workers is quite large.

The Ministry of Labour, which is the nodal ministry to formulate and implement schemes relating to eradication of child labour, has initiated the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) to impart education to working children. The Department of Elementary Education and Literacy would coordinate and cooperate with the Ministry of Labour by providing academic support in the form of designing appropriate curriculum; development of MLL-based teaching-learning material, training of instructors, imparting vocational skills, designing modes for learners evaluation, etc. Further efforts would also be made to encourage NGOs who have already established a foothold in the community to take up specific innovative programmes to promote education for working children. It would be necessary to make education of school-going children obligatory on the part of those who engage them for work.

The strategies for working children focus on the following:
- The first step for providing education to working children begins with elimination of child labour itself, wherever possible. This requires multi-pronged efforts with strong

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component of mobilisation of various stakeholders. The problem of working children and their education cannot be treated only as a responsibility of the Labour or Education Department. It is a multi-sectoral problem.

- ◆ Successful strategies and innovations tried out in the country would be upscaled, for example, the Back-to-school camp (UP), summer schools (AP), Shikshaghar (Firozabad), Back-to-school centre (Banaskantha), strategies for urban areas (Rajasthan), etc.
- ◆ Intermediary arrangement such as short-term camps, and bridge courses to prepare them for joining schools in the grade suitable for their age would be made. Camps would be seen as an occasion as well as process for transition for a child from a child labour to a student. This shift of position has to be carefully facilitated.
- ◆ All the stakeholders, i.e., parents, children, employees, PRIs, media, etc., need to be mobilised for the cause.
- ◆ Winning over children by making the camp/school atmosphere attractive and joyful.
- ◆ Continuous academic and emotional support after the children join school, through community teachers or orientation of primary school teachers inside the schools and through arrangement of coaching classes outside the school.
- ◆ Coordination and convergence of different departments/agencies working in the area of child labour, especially with the Department of Labour.
- ◆ Providing support to ongoing programmes like NCLP and others, after making assessment of the support they require. Teacher training and TLMs are two such areas where NCLP schools need to be supported.

The Area Intensive and Madrasa Modernisation Programme supports strengthening of infrastructural facilities in pockets of concentration of educationally backward minorities, as well as inputs to support additional teachers to teach science, mathematics and languages with necessary TLM.

Children from Minority Groups

Recent studies have shown that there has been inadequate participation of children of minority groups in elementary education. Hence, special attention would be given to these children. In the case of Muslims, the effort to promote education among girls and literacy among adult women would be of particular importance. The curriculum and other programmes of *madrasas* and *maktabs* (religious schools) and similar institutions, catering to educational needs of minorities would need modernisation with the introduction of the teaching of science and mathematics. Specific arrangements for orientation training of teachers in those institutions to transact mainstream curriculum would be required. These models have been successfully tried out in Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. The Area Intensive and Madrasa Modernisation Programme supports strengthening of infrastructural facilities in pockets of concentration of educationally backward minorities, as well as inputs to support additional teachers to teach science, mathematics and languages with necessary TLM.

Children below Poverty Line

There is a large number of children in India who are not attending school because of poverty. Although education is free, the private cost of education in terms of uniform, textbooks, stationery and transport is often beyond the means of poor parents. NFHS-II reveals that the cost of schooling is cited as the main reason for children never attending school or not currently attending school. This reason is mentioned in one-quarter of cases for both boys and girls. This reason is almost twice as likely to be mentioned for children never attending school as for children not currently attending school.

The average annual expenditure per girl in primary government schools in rural areas is Rs. 219 and in urban areas, Rs. 470 (NSSO 52nd Round, 1995-96). In upper primary it is

Table 4.12: Average Annual Household Expenditure per Student in Elementary Schools

	Primary			
	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Government	219	219	509	470
Local body	223	223	714	621
Private aided	693	529	1652	1525
Private unaided	902	925	1975	1866
Total	305	286	1197	1092
Upper Primary				
Government	548	555	923	864
Local body	533	553	1148	995
Private aided	893	868	1884	1734
Private unaided	1240	1267	2933	2908
Total	640	641	1590	1456

Source : NSS 52nd Round, July 1995- June 1996, Government of India, October, 1998.

Rs. 555 and Rs. 864 respectively. The per girl expenditure in private unaided school is Rs. 925 (primary) and Rs. 1267 (upper primary) in rural areas compared to Rs. 1866 (primary) and Rs. 2908 (upper primary) in urban areas. According to the PROBE Report (1999) the average cost of sending a child to school works out at Rs. 318/- per year. The cost of schooling will be still higher if opportunity cost and indirect costs are added up with the direct cost. The system of government incentives is supposed to help parents with the financial pressure of education. However, only a few children actually receive these incentives in terms of scholarship, free uniform, textbooks, mid-day meal, etc. The coverage of the incentives does not exceed 13-15 per cent of students in any state (Sixth Educational Survey, 1993). The coverage of incentives might have expanded since 1993.

Non-enrolment, non-achievement or dropping out are generally found among children from the low-income category. As the NCAER survey (1994) points out, , enrolment rates show a distinct relationship with household income. About 82 per cent of households in the country fall in the two lowest income categories of below Rs. 20,000, and Rs. 20,000 – Rs. 40,000, and approximately the same proportion of children come from these income classes. The report says that resource constraint is the most important reason for dropping out. As unequal distribution of education is both a source and consequence of poverty and social exclusion, incentive schemes for all children below the poverty line are recommended to meet the cost of education. The incentives would be in the form of free textbooks, uniform, stationery, scholarship, and transport allowance of up to Rs. 250 per child per year. There is also an urgent need to revamp the incentive delivery system so that the benefits reach the poor.

Other Hard-to-Reach Groups

Children who are designated as hard-to-reach are those who are likely to be left out despite all interventions. They are children living in very small and remote habitations where no form of schooling is available, children of migrant families, children engaged in household chores, children of sex workers, children in juvenile homes, children living in coastal areas and belonging to fishing communities, etc.

Landless labourers or families from agriculturally backward areas in India are forced to move out of their villages when no work is available. The families go looking for work as wage labour on brick kiln sites, sugarcane or cotton fields, salt farms, construction sites, road repair and other labour-intensive seasonal work. The migration is seasonal in nature, i.e., the families leave their village for a specified period and return once the work is over. When the families migrate, their children accompany them. The wages for the work are so low that the entire family has to work to support themselves and also save money for the lean period. Children from such families either do not enrol or drop out of schools. Successful models for education of migrant children like the vocational

course, farm school, Ashramshala and seasonal community hall (all in Gujarat) and sugar school, brick kiln school (Maharashtra) have to be upscaled.

A large number of children, especially girls, do not attend school because they have to attend chores like cooking, bringing water, collecting firewood, washing and cleaning, taking care of their younger siblings, grazing the cattle, and taking food for their parents to their work sites. Strategies designed to address this group of children includes alternative schooling centres (Tamil Nadu) Aamaar Kendra (Assam), Shikshaghar (Uttar Pradesh), alternative schools (Madhya Pradesh, Assam), Apana Vidyalaya (Bihar), NFE centres (Karnataka, Haryana), Prerna Centres (Maharashtra), Back-to-School Centre (Gujarat),) and Balshala (Uttar Pradesh). These approaches need to be further strengthened.

The Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education scheme would be given importance to address to the educational needs of the hard-to-reach children. The scheme has provision for diversified strategies and flexible financial parameters. A range of options, such as EGS, Back to School Camps, Balika Shivirs, etc., is available. Other strategies are:

* Evolving a mechanism to set up seasonal schools at the site of work of migrants, such as sugar schools, brick kiln schools, etc.
* Providing identity card to children of migrant families to facilitate their entry into schools at different work sites.
* Organising bridge courses, seasonal hostels and mobile schools based on local needs.
* Opening permanent community-based schools, residential camps and multi-grade centres for very small, unserved habitations.
* Mainstreaming of older children, especially adolescent girls, through bridge courses and transition classes of different durations.
* Intense community mobilisation to ensure community-based monitoring of all these interventions for quality and sustainability.

Education of children with special needs
It is estimated that there are about 6-10 million children with special needs in India in the 6-14 age group, out of the total child population of 200 million in 2001. Out of these, only about 1 million children with disabilities are attending school. The goal of UEE cannot be achieved unless and until all children with special needs are included in the formal or informal education system. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995 stipulates that free education would be provided to all disabled children up to the age of 18. All children with special needs would have access to schools, which would accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting their needs.

To achieve this objective, the following approaches and interventions are suggested:
* Every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, would be provided education in an appropriate environment. A zero rejection policy should be adopted so that no child is left out of the education system.
* A comprehensive component to provide education to children with special needs would be evolved and implemented, covering the provisions of the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act.

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- The strategy for including disabled children would be based on a wide range of options, including regular schools, special schools, open learning system, open schools, non-formal and alternative schools, home-based education, itinerant teacher model, remedial teaching, part-time classes and community rehabilitation.
- All disabled children would be identified through surveys and micro-planning and functional and formal assessment would be conducted.
- As far as possible, every child with special needs would be in regular school with the necessary support services.
- All children requiring assistive devices would be provided with aids and appliances, obtained as far as possible through convergence with the Ministry of Social Justce and Empowerment, state welfare departments, national institutions or NGOs.
- Support services like physical access, resource rooms at cluster level, special equipment, reading material, special educational techniques, remedial teaching curricular adaptation or adapted teaching strategies could be provided.
- Intensive teacher training would be undertaken to sensitise regular teachers on effective classroom management of children with special needs. This training would be recurrent at block/cluster levels. All training modules at SCERT, DIET and BRC level would include a suitable component on education of children with special needs.
- Wherever necessary, specially trained resource teachers would be appointed, particularly for teaching special skills to children with special needs. Whereve· this option is not feasible, long-term training of regular teachers would be undertaken.
- An IEP would be prepared by the teacher for every child with special needs in consultation with parents and experts, monitored from time to time. The programme would test the effectiveness of various strategies and models by measuring the learning achievement of children with special needs periodically, after developing indicators.
- Parents of children with disabilities would receive counselling and training on now to bring them up and teach them basic survival skills. Strong advocacy and awareness programmes would form part of the strategy to educate every child with special needs. A component on disability would be included in all the modules for parents, VECs and the community.
- Resource groups would be constituted at state and district levels to undertake effective planning and management of the programmes in collaboration with PRIs and NGOs. An apex level resource group at the national level to provide guidance, technical and academic support to children with special needs may be constituted.
- Wherever necessary, special schools may be strengthened to obtain their resource support, in convergence with departments and agencies working in that area.
- Architectural barriers in schools will be removed for easy access. Efforts will be taken to provide disabled-friendly facilities in school and educational institutions. Development of innovative designs for schools to provide an enabling environment for children with special needs would also be part of the programme.
- Research in all areas of education of children with special needs, including research for designing and developing new assistive devices, teaching aids, special teaching material and other items necessary to give a child with disability equal opportunities in education, would be undertaken.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation would be carried out to refine the programme from time to time. For this, appropriate monitoring mechanisms would be devised at every level and field tested at regular intervals.

- Special emphasis must be given to education of girls with disabilities.
- All activities, interventions and approaches in the area of education for children with special needs will be implemented in convergence with existing schemes like Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/fitting of Aids/Appliances, and Integrated Education of the Disabled Children (IEDC) in coordination with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, state department of welfare, national institutions and NGOs.

Urban Initiatives in Elementary Education

The urban population in India has grown from 159 million in 1981 to an estimated 330 million at present, which represents about 30 per cent of the total national population. Increasing urbanisation has led to mounting pressure on civic infrastructure, particularly since investments in these facilities have not been commensurate with the growth of the population. In addition, low incomes coupled with the high cost of living in urban areas have meant more and more people living in difficult and vulnerable circumstances.

The Working Group Report for the Tenth Five Year Plan estimated that approximately 65 million of the urban population would be in the 6 -14 age group by 2001, of which almost 15 million would be from poor families. These deprived urban children would be in different categories, including children living in slums or unauthorised colonies, working children or children engaged in domestic labour, children from migratory families, street children, children of sex workers, orphans, etc. Clearly, it would be necessary to plan for each of these groups distinctly, and no single plan would be able to cover the needs of all the groups.

Unlike rural areas, where administrative arrangements and structures tend to be similar, urban agglomerations can be vastly dissimilar. Although elementary education is a subject allocated to urban local bodies under the 74th Amendment to the Constitution, there is little uniformity in the management of the subject between cities. While education may be looked after by the urban local body in one city, in another it may be the responsibility of the state's Education Department. Accordingly, it is not possible to define any one strategy that can meet all requirements.

The issue is further complicated by the complex inter-relationships between developmental, social and political structures in urban areas. It may be recalled that the nature of rural-urban migration is such that most poor urban people occupy public or government land on which little or no investment for the improvement of infrastructure is deemed necessary. In as much as these slum clusters are unauthorised, the local bodies are not able to officially consider investing in development, as this could be seen as legitimising the initial encroachments.

The problems of educating the deprived urban child are complex and varied. These include the cost of education, lack of schooling infrastructure, lack of specific incentives for such children, unsuitable location of schools, and so on. This is compounded by the fact that since each city presents a different set of circumstances, no unique solution can be found to address the needs of every city.

Box 4.2: PRATHAM: "Every child in school and learning well"

Pratham was first established in Mumbai in 1994 as a public charitable trust by the Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, UNICEF and several prominent citizens. Since then the Pratham initiative has spread to 26 cities and five rural districts in 9 states around the country. On a daily basis, Pratham programmes reach over 200,000 children. The Pratham concept is simple. The objective is to bring every child to school and help them to learn well. Pratham believes that its efforts must be replicable and the interventions must supplement existing government initiatives to universalise primary education. Based on an understanding of the local context, community- as well as school-based programmes run by young women from the local community work towards achieving these goals. The organisation is based on a triangular partnership: corporate sector and other funding sources, government and citizens. Corporate leaders and other funding sources take the lead in providing resources; the government responds by opening its schools, providing support and sharing its facilities; and community volunteers, mostly young enthusiastic women from the slums, implement the programmes.

Pratham has been serving underprivileged Indian children through five main programmes.

- **Pre-school children**: Such children are reached through community-based child-care centres, or *balwadis.*
- **Out-of-school children** (including those who have never been to school or dropped out): Bridge courses prepare children academically and socially to enter regular school. Those who cannot be mainstreamed are prepared to take the National Open School examinations for certification.
- **Working children**: Outreach programme targets working children and children in difficult circumstances.
- **In school children**: These receive learning support

and remedial education from a variety of communty- and school-based interventions. The *balsakhi,* or community volunteer, can be in a school or ir a community, conducting daily classes and/or runnng community-based libraries. The Remedial Educaton Programme provides support for the weaker municbal primary school children.

- **Computer Assisted Learning Programme**: It strives to familiarise municipal school children with computers.

Since the beginnings in 1994, Pratham has been able to mainstream over 30,000 children and bring them to school and help over half a million children to learn better. Sirce January 2003, close to 200,000 children have participaed in an accelerated learning programme for reading. Given the extensive network of Pratham in the slum areas, i is easy to layer other services (health, computer education) at a minimum additional cost.

UNICEF parented Pratham during the initial three yeers. In 1997, ICICI Bank, a private sector bank in Incia, assumed the parental role. Since then, the involvemant of corporate India has significantly increased. Today, he board of Pratham India Education Initiative consists of eminent leaders of the corporate world. The board oversees, supervises and guides the progress of he Pratham Movement and the board members, throigh their respective companies, have also committed financial, infrastructural and human resources support to Pratham.

Pratham strives to build a working relationship in he field of education between the people and the government. It seeks to make governance of educaton more effective through people's democratic participaton and aims at a private-public partnership to address issues related to education and arrive at solutions to be out into practice.

It is also important to realise that there are wide socio-economic disparities in urban areas. While basic services are available to the economically better off, large sections of urban society living in unauthorised colonies/slum clusters have no access to basic facilities, including education.

Government schools in urban areas coexist with privately provided facilities, and are often ill-equipped in terms of infrastructure and basic amenities. Differences also exist in

the curriculum transacted, particularly with reference to the study of English. Further, even though children may be formally enrolled in schools, a large number of them, particularly girls, remain out of school. This may be on account of social and/or economic reasons. In general, there is a lack of incentive for poor children in urban areas to attend school. In fact, there may even be a strong disincentive in terms of loss of earning, poor quality of teaching, lack of infrastructure, the location of the school, etc. At times, the issues may be even simpler, as for example, the difficulties faced by small children who need to cross a busy road to reach the local school.

The city's management structure is also relevant—this structure varies from state to state. While in some states the local body may be charged with the responsibility of education, in others it remains with the education department of the state government. A multiplicity of agencies, generally uncoordinated, has an impact on the quality of elementary education provided to the child.

Keeping in view the issues related to education of the urban deprived communities, the following interventions and strategies need to be adopted:

- Convergence between government departments of education, social welfare, health, police, railways, labour, urban development, and the municipal corporation, including rationalisation of management structures/agencies involved in the education of urban poor children.
- Formation of educational plans for all children of urban areas. Grassroot level and community-based organisations like Mahila Mandal, youth clubs, etc., to be involved in the plan formulation and implementation.
- Opening of new schools and EGS centres based on the need of the area in cities.
- Relocation of government and local body schools near colonies and settlements, rather than maintaining them in areas where government schools are not required.
- Improving quality and the infrastructure of government schools in urban areas.
- Strategies like bridge courses, transition classes, camp schools, etc., to be adopted for providing education to children living in difficult circumstances. These courses can be organised with the help of private sector educational institutions and NGOs working in the area.
- The formal school system to undergo a process of preparation to accept children who are first generation learners and, therefore, lack the parental support in academics. In certain cases, remedial classes will be required for such children.
- Greater involvement of the private sector in the education of the urban deprived. All support to be provided to initiatives by some of the private schools in big cities in this regard.
- Improvement in coverage by early childhood care and pre-schooling facilities, especially in slums, where both the parents generally work.

These strategies are reflected in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which recognises the need to plan for each group of deprived urban children separately and states, "…a diversity of approaches is required to tackle the educational problems in urban areas. On account of separate administrative arrangements of schools in the urban areas, there is a need to coordinate and converge interventions across departments and local bodies responsible for elementary education in urban areas. This calls for a provision of planning distinctively for

the urban areas, either as separate plans or as part of district plans in the case of smaller towns. In either case, this would require partnership with NGOs, municipal bodies, etc."

In accordance with this philosophy, the states have been advised to plan distinctly for the urban areas, either as part of the overall district plan, or as a separate plan altogether.

Increased Role of NGOs

The government would view NGOs, which represent the third sector (or the voluntary sector), as partners in the march towards achieving the goal of education for all. This comes out of the realisation that no single delivery system, be it in public or private, alone can achieve the goal of UEE without the participation of the voluntary sector. Also NGOs that offer alternative development models have established reputation in terms of accountability, quality of services, cost effectiveness, innovation, closeness to the grass-root and effective management style. NGOs have made significant contribution in education in developing new models of pedagogy, innovative curriculum, teaching, learning aids, new textbooks, teacher training, community empowerment, effective school management, building environment and institutional development. Government agencies have adapted or replicated many of these innovations.

As a broad policy, the Tenth Five Year Plan stresses on greater involvement of NGOs at all levels in the social sector for achieving participatory development and unburdening the administration unduly loaded with and inadequately equipped for implementation of development programmes. The approach followed will be to enhance the role of NGOs in education. At present, involvement of NGOs is generally limited to running NFE centres and literacy programmes and implementing small-scale innovative experiments in education. It is recognised that NGOs have tremendous creative potential to contribute in innovating and implementing education programmes. While continuing with existing programmes of NGO involvement, the voluntary sector would be assigned a larger role by functioning alongside the governmental sector in a significant manner.

Expanding Role of the Corporate Sector

The corporate sector has taken a lead in recent times in working with the central and state governments and NGOs to achieve the goal of basic education. For instance, one of India's largest financial institutions, ICICI, has set up a Social Initiatives Group (SIG) to focus on development-related initiatives. Pre primary and primary education are among the three areas on which the SIG is focusing its attention. The Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) has set up a Primary Education and Literacy Committee, through which it works with its affiliated units to build alliances to support EFA programmes. The Azim Premji Foundation set up by the Chairman of WIPRO – a leading IT company – is solely committed to the cause of elementary education and has been working with the governments of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. This expanding role of corporate citizens will provide an additional impetus to the EFA movement in the coming years.

Synergic partnership with the Private Sector

The task of providing basic education in a country as diverse as India is so stupendous that it is difficult to expect the governmental sector alone to meet the burgeoning needs of the society fully and effectively. Even though private initiative has always been a part

of the school education endeavour, it has neither been large nor of a sizeable magnitude in the efforts to universalise elementary education. The country has not been able to fully utilise the potential of the private sector. Without abdicating the responsibility of the governmental sector in providing basic education, a synergic public-private partnership would be evolved to achieve the objective of UEE.

The private sector can contribute not only in monetary and material terms but also in the form of expertise for quality improvement through effective management of the system and development of locally relevant teaching-learning materials. Some efforts in this direction have already been made by many states, including Karnataka, through its school adoption scheme. More collaborative efforts at institutional level, as well as programme implementation level, would be designed to expand the role of private initiative in elementary education. In case the private sector comes forward to improve the functioning of schools in the governmental sector, efforts to develop a partnership would be made within the broad parameters of the state policy. Depending on the state policy, DIETs and other government teacher training institutes could be used to provide resource support to private schools, provided additional costs are met by these schools.

Private fee-paying school system, a phenomenon till recently seen only in the urban areas, that too in the secondary education stage, is now gaining prominence in the elementary education sector even in rural areas. New private schools have contributed to raising parental awareness, even among poor and illiterate parents of how schools should function. Different surveys have given different estimates of the share of the private sector in the enrolment in elementary stage in India. As per the Sixth All India Educational Survey of NCERT (1993) based on school survey, the share of private unaided (PUA) in enrolment at elementary stage in rural India is 3.6 per cent while the household survey of NCAER (1994) puts it at 9.8 per cent and NSSO (1995-96) at 7.4 per cent. The urban bias in favour of private schooling is very much evident, and rural India still depends almost entirely on government schools. Only about 3 per cent and 6 per cent of the rural children go to unaided primary and upper primary schools, respectively, as against 26 per cent and 19 per cent in urban areas. The share of private sector must have certainly gone up in recent years. About 31 per cent of the total increase in enrolment (5.524 million) in India at elementary stage between 1986 and 1993 was accounted for by PUA schools. PUA schools accounted for more than 50.8 per cent of the increase in enrolment (3.813 million) in urban areas and 16.49 per cent in rural areas (1.711 million) during the period. The share of private schools would be still higher if the enrolment in private aided (PA) sector is also added up with PUA. Among states, PUA accounted for 111 per cent of the increased enrolment in primary in urban areas of Haryana during 1986-93, followed by Rajasthan 104 per cent, Uttar Pradesh 94 per cent and Andhra Pradesh 80 per cent. In upper primary level it was 106 per cent, 65 per cent, 15 per cent and 61 per cent, respectively, in these states. In some states the migration from government to private schools is fairly evident, since the enrolment in government schools is showing a decline.

Contrary to the general belief, there is not much gender difference in the choice of type of schools. On an average, out of 100 girls enrolled, 80.5 attend government schools, 11.5 PA and 8 PUA as against 81, 10 and 9, respectively, for boys. As the share of girls

in total enrolment is less, there would be more boys in PUA and PA schools as in government schools. However, some micro-studies show that private school enrolment is biased towards boys. Some of these private schools cater to low-income groups and disadvantaged children. However, the PROBE survey and also micro-level data of several studies show that private schools are biased towards more prosperous locations and privileged groups. The share of disadvantaged groups in private school enrolment is very low and the inroads made by the private sector are mostly among the "easy-to-reach groups." Therefore, the responsibility for providing education, especially to the poor and the disadvantaged, cannot be left to the private sector. At the same time, all support would be provided to the evening school system introduced by some of the best private schools in the country for deprived children. This model is now increasingly adopted by private schools to express the social commitment.

Certainly, the growth of private schools itself is a positive sign of the rising demand for education. Therefore, the roadblocks in opening new private schools would be removed but at the same time it would be regulated to ensure quality and minimum requirements. But if these schools are expanding rapidly because of the decline in government school quality and dysfunctional government schools or due to poor school infrastructure and management or on account of teacher negligence and absence, then these are areas of concern. It is the massive governmental school system on which the poor still rely for basic education, especially in rural areas. Therefore one of the thrust areas would be on improving the quality of government schools, teacher accountability and the infrastructure. The increasing share of the private sector in the additional enrolment has implications for projection of the requirements in terms of teachers, classrooms and other inputs to achieve UEE.

Open Learning System and ICT for Elementary Education
The open learning system (OLS) would form an important dimension of the efforts to reach school education to all. OLS at the school level would be strengthened for providing education from the elementary stage and above to meet the needs of those who are unable to seek education through full-time institutional system (especially girls, SC/STs and weaker sections), with assured equivalence to institutional learning in terms of certificates. The scope of the OLS channel would be expanded to bring more academic and vocational areas into its fold and cater to a larger student population from various segments of society, both in school and adult education sectors. Also, OLS would aim at ensuring optimum use of infrastructure and resources already available.

Recently, the open school system has been expanded through establishment of state Open Schools. Emphasis would be on networking and collaboration for use of distance education and information and communications technology (ICT) for basic education. At the national level, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) offers open basic education equivalent to grade VIII level through distance education mode. The target group belongs largely to disadvantaged and marginalised sections of society. It also caters to the education and vocational needs of adult literates through its Open Basic Education Programme (OBEP). Its major endeavour has been to extend partnership with over 150 leading NGOs for strengthening the programmes of basic education. These efforts would be further strengthened in the next five years.

Box 4.3: Shree Ramakrishna Ashram, Kalahandi, Orissa

Shree Ramakrishna Ashram is a non-political, non-profit making voluntary organisation engaged in the upliftment and welfare of the downtrodden, under the guidance of senior monks of the Shree Ramakrishna discipline. Significant activities of the organisation include:

♦ mobile and outdoor allopathic and homeopathic health services,

♦ a students' home for 50 students (SCs and STs) studying in nearby schools,

♦ drug awareness, counselling and assistance centre for the prevention of consumption of liquor,

♦ an old age home for 50 distressed persons (free boarding and lodging),

♦ research for the promotion of national integration, and

♦ a mini agriculture farm to train inmates and rural youth for development of agriculture/horticulture.

Shree Ramakrishna Ashram started its innovative education project in August 1999 with MHRD funding. The project operates in Kalahandi district of Orissa, which is both tribal and rural, and targets fifty dropouts in the age group of 6-14 years. These children, who reside at the project centre, are provided remedial teaching, uniforms, study material and food free of cost, while their parents are provided Rs. 100/- per month as a stipend for admitting their children into the project centre. Value-oriented education is provided while following the textbooks of formal schools (Board of Secondary Education, Orissa). The subjects taught include language (Oriya and English), arithmetic, social studies, science and drawing. The children also have access to library and free medical facilities. The community is mobilised through public meetings and audio-visual shows using resource personnel. Community participation, in turn, enhances the knowledge of children on various aspects. The educational programme lays special emphasis on agriculture with the intention of enabling the children to earn their livelihood.

Some of the recent initiatives for enrichment of basic education programmes through use of ICT and distance mode are: (i) development of education programmes having special focus on education of the disadvantaged such as minority groups, girls, women, street and working children, children and youth from tribal and socio-economically disadvantaged communities; (ii) adoption of ICT as a major plan of its strategy to reach the unreached; (iii) organisation of video conferencing and placing its study materials on its website; and (iv) extending the facilities of on-demand examination at elementary education level. Some of the popular distance education programmes for upgrading the skills of teachers are: (i) audio conferencing; and (ii) video conferencing. The tele-conferencing modality is being increasingly used in all alternative educational programmes – formal, non-formal, alternative and innovative education.

Computer Education

Computer education at elementary education level (particularly upper primary level) would be accorded priority in this period to make students familiar with computers. For this, three levels of computer education are envisaged. The first stage would be computer literacy or computer orientation to children and the second stage would be computer-aided learning, and the third stage would be computer-based learning. At present, a large number of elementary schools in the country are not electrified and there are no adequate infrastructure facilities to open computer learning centres in schools. To begin with, one or two schools in every cluster in the country, i.e., a total of about 60,000 clusters, would have facilities for computer-based learning that could be used by children in the adjoining schools. Networking of institutions in the form of school complexes would help in promoting the sharing of infrastructure and expertise.

A two-tier strategy for computer-based education is envisaged. The first tier is for training of teachers and necessary sensitisation of states and their statutory bodies. This could be the first step for implementation of computer-aided education and use of ICT. The second tier could include creation of infrastructure, development of e TLM and formulation of scheme for making available additional resources. Action on both the tiers will be initiated simultaneously. The training programme for teachers would include a component for familiarity with computers and their use and to encourage them to create educational material in digital form, using different media in the classroom. The immediate challenge of training of in service teachers in this field is proposed to be tackled by offering a compressed module. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), the apex body for teacher education, will ensure that all teacher training programmes leading to certificate, diploma or degrees in the country should essentially have a suitable module on computer-based education.

Media, Advocacy and Communication

Mobilising civil society to participate in the programmes of basic education is essential for achieving the goal of UEE. Communication and media strategy would be designed to sensitise, mobilise and motivate the stakeholders, community, opinion leaders and the public for achieving the goals of UEE. A multimedia campaign approach with strong media advocacy, employing a wide range of vehicles of communication, from folk and traditional media to electronic media, outdoor publicity and print media, would be adopted. At grassroot level, the emphasis would be on effective use of folk, traditional media and local art forms to spread the message of education. An environment of enthusiasm and commitment, as witnessed during the total literacy campaign in the nineties, would be created for providing education to all children. A social mobilisation campaign strategy, deftly combining the mass media with the traditional media and *Kala jatha* campaign, would be launched. Cultural performances combined with exhibitions, processions and inter-personnel communication have been found very effective in bringing about social change and awareness. Extensive use would be made of radio, which reaches the remotest corners of the country. The media and communication strategy would be designed to address the following objectives:

◆ Sharing and disseminating information about the programme on education for increasing public awareness.
◆ Using the media as a platform for advocacy and developing media packages in support of education.
◆ Encouraging and supporting effective participation of all in achieving the goal of UEE.
◆ Increasing the visibility of the programme in elementary education and highlighting the issues and challenges in the area.
◆ Mobilising opinion makers, legislators and policy makers.
◆ Motivating the community, NGOs, local bodies, implementing agencies and all stakeholders.
◆ Capacity building of the state and other decentralised levels in the effective use of media.

Education of Girls and Women's Empowerment

Perspectives and Framework for Girls' Education and Women's Empowerment

The persistent low educational participation of girls till recently had adversely impacted on women's empowerment in India. Such educational backwardness of a defined segment of population has not only denied them individual growth and development, it has slowed down the pace of national development and resulted in skewed attainment of development indicators.

This is despite early recognition of the value and need for female education. In fact, much before international commitment to girls' education was expressed as a follow-up to the EFA goals, the policy environment in India had recognised the criticality of educating girls if UEE were to be achieved. This was evident from the pro-girls/women constitutional stance that empowered the state to make special provisions for women and children notwithstanding the fundamental obligation of non-discrimination on the basis of sex. This provision has enabled the state to draw up special policies and programmes to benefit girls and women to overcome their backwardness and address gender differences.

The National Policy on Education (NPE–1986) articulated the intent to "lay special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far." (NPE 1986, p.7) It saw a turning point in Indian education as it brought the issue of women's' equality to centrestage in all discourses on education and development. *"Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the*

> **Box 5.1: On Girls' Education**
>
> It is impossible to achieve universal elementary education (UEE) unless concerted efforts are made to reach out to the girl child. Girls who cannot attend formal schools or have had to drop out will be provided educational opportunities through non-formal education (NFE). Efforts will be made to design special NFE programmes for out-of-school and adolescent girls in order to get them back into the formal stream or enable them to qualify for the technical or vocational stream.
>
> The rural girls are doubly disadvantaged by non-availability of educational facilities and by the work they have to do such as collecting fuel, fodder and water, sibling care and paid and unpaid work. Coordinated efforts, albeit with other departments/ministries, need to be made to provide the necessary support services to enhance their participation and performance. Provision of support services and childcare facilities should be seen as a necessary and integral adjunct of UEE.

status of women. In order to neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women.... This will be an act of faith and social engineering.... The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in elementary education will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services setting time targets and effective monitoring...."
(Chapter IV, page 6, paragraph 4.2 and 4.3; NPE-1986, Government of India)

It was acknowledged that achieving universal elementary education (UEE) would be impossible unless concerted efforts are made to reach out to the girl child. Since the mid-1980s all basic education programmes have been designed to incorporate these policy perspectives and recommendations.

The national commitment to girls' education gained momentum through several initiatives in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The first generation basic education programmes, such as APPEP, Lok Jumbish, Bihar Education Project and the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project, all emphasised the focus on girls' education. This intent was taken to scale through the District Primary Education Programme, which made female literacy rate a selection criterion for project districts and set goals of reducing gender disparities in enrolment, retention and learning. The clearly stated emphasis on girls' education has drawn the attention of planners, implementers and programme managers alike. Continuing in the same vein, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan reiterates the need to focus on girls' education to equalise educational opportunities and eliminate gender disparities.

Addressing the question of women's empowerment through education, the Mahila Samakhya programme was introduced in three states in 1989. From modest beginnings, the programme has spread to many more districts in the country and is poised for further upscaling during the Tenth Plan Period.

The thrust on female education received further fillip from the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, introduced in 2001, which emphasises equal access to women and girls, adoption of special measures to eliminate discrimination, to universalise elementary education, to eradicate illiteracy, to create a gender sensitve educational system, to increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and to improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning, as well as development of vocational/ technical skills. Reduction of gender gaps, achievement of sectoral time targets in existing policies and development of gender-sensitive curricula have also been stressed upon in the policy document.

Heightened interest and proactive measures have characterised national, as well as state level initiatives to achieve the goals of EFA with a special focus on school dropouts, working children, girls who cannot attend formal school and girl children of disadvantaged social groups. A sense of urgency was evident in governmental circles. Consequently, there have been significant gains, which were recorded at the Asia-Pacific Conference on EFA 2000 Assessment. Gains with a clear gender dimension are increase in primary school enrolment and expansion of early childhood care and education programmes (The Dakar Framework for Action for Education for All, adopted by the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000. p.57)

From Policy to Change

Forward looking policy statements need not necessarily mean actual change at the ground level. For change to be apparent, there has to be fuller utilisation of the policy statements in planning and implementation. In the case of India, the real challenge lay in translating the policy into action in order to impact on the overall status of girls' education. The sheer magnitude of the task of universalising basic education, in the Indian context, posed formidable challenges. The task assumed serious proportions in the case of girls as their participation rates were far lower than that of boys and required sensitive handling and greater efforts to lift them from their low levels of participation in the educational processes.

Table 5.1 : The Baselines for Female Education in 1950/1960

1950	Female literacy rate	8.86 %
	GER for girls (primary)	24.8 %
	GER for girls (upper primary)	4.6 %
1960-61	Dropout rates (primary)	70.9 %
	Dropout rates (upper primary)	85.0 %

The percentage share of girls in the total enrolment at the primary level has increased from 5.4 million (28.1 per cent) in 1950-51 to 49.8 million (43.7 per cent) in 2000-2001. In 1950-51, 0.5 million girls (comprising 16.1 per cent of the total enrolment) were enrolled at the upper primary level. This figure rose to 17.5 million girls (comprising 40.9 per cent of the total enrolment) in 2000-2001. The table below tries to bring out the decadal status of critical indicators for girls' education.

The present scenario pertaining to some of the basic indicators for girls' education is as given in the table 5.4.

Though major gains have been recorded in enrolment and retention of girls over the years, and gender gaps have narrowed considerably, they still persist. Similarly, although the share of girls' enrolment to total enrolment

Table 5.2 : Decadal Status of Girls' Education

Year	Enrolment (%)		Dropouts (%)		GER	
	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary
1950-51	28.1	16.1	N.A.	N.A.	24.8	4.6
1960-61	32.6	23.9	70.9	85.0	41.4	11.3
1970-71	37.4	29.3	70.9	83.4	60.5	20.8
1980-81	38.6	32.9	62.5	79.4	64.1	28.6
1990-91	41.5	36.7	46.0	65.1	85.5	47.0
1999-00	43.6	40.4	42.3	58.0	85.2	49.7
2000-2001	43.7	40.9	41.9	57.7	85.9	49.9

Source : Selected Educational Statistics 2000-2001
Despite the improvements recorded, gender gaps have persisted in total enrolment and GERs.

Table 5.3 : Gender Gaps in Elementary Education

Year	Percentage of Girls' Enrolment to Total Enrolment		Dropouts (%)				GER			
	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary		Upper Primary		Primary		Upper Primary	
			B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
1950-51	28.1	16.1	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	60.6	24.8	20.6	4.6
1960-61	32.6	23.9	61.7	70.9	75.0	85.0	82.6	41.4	33.2	11.3
1970-71	37.4	29.3	64.5	70.9	74.6	83.4	95.5	60.5	46.5	20.8
1980-81	38.6	32.9	56.2	62.5	68.0	79.4	95.8	64.1	54.3	28.6
1990-91	41.5	36.7	40.1	46.0	59.1	65.1	114.0	85.5	76.6	47.0
1999-00	43.6	40.4	38.7	42.3	52.0	58.0	104.1	85.2	67.2	49.7
2000-2001	43.7	40.9	39.7	41.9	50.3	57.7	104.9	85.9	66.7	49.9

Source : Selected Educational Statistics 2000-2001
B- Boys, G-Girls

Education of Girls and Women's Empowerment

Table 5.4 : Gender Differentials in the GER of SC and ST Children

Year	GER (%) Scheduled Castes				GER (%) Scheduled Tribes			
	Primary		Upper Primary		Primary		Upper Primary	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1986-87	103.8	64.8	52.7	26.6	111.0	68.0	45.6	21.9
1996-97	100.8	76.2	64.3	44.2	113.7	83.3	58.3	36.6
2000-2001	107.3	85.8	76.2	53.3	116.9	85.5	72.5	47.7

Source : Selected Educational Statistics 2000-2001

Table 5.5 : Basic Indicators related to Girls' Education, 2001

Indicators	Total	Male	Female
Population	1,027,015,247	531,277,078	495,738,169
Literates	566,714,995	339,969,048	226,745,947
Illiterates	296,208,952	106,654,066	189,554,886
Out-of-school children (6-14)	59,000,000	24,000,000	35,000,000
Enrolment (Primary)	113,600,000	64,000,000	49,800,000
Enrolment (Upper Primary)	42,060,000	25,300,000	17,500,000

Source : Selected Educational Statistics 2000-2001

at the primary and upper primary stages has risen sharply, and dropout rates have reduced, gender disparities still persist as can be seen from the tables above.

Challenges towards Educating Girls

Various factors have deterred the rate of growth in girls' participation in elementary education. With the passage of time and the mounting stress on girls' education, identification of the impediments became an imperative for contextual and responsive planning. Projects like DPEP systematically took up the task of identifying the major factors that hindered girls from participating in elementary education through specially commissioned research studies. All the factors thus identified were borne in mind in designing the various strategies and interventions for strengthening girls' education and women's empowerment. Some of the significant factors identified were socio-cultural and economic in nature as also rooted in the school environment itself. The specific factors highlighted by the research included the following.

Socio cultural factors

♦ Despite a growing demand for girls' education, the demand is not yet universal. Many communities still do not consider it appropriate to send girls to schools. Even when girls are sent to school, they are withdrawn by the time they attain puberty.

♦ Where the school is at a distance, concern for girls' safety often becomes a reason to keep them out of school.

♦ Early marriage remains one of the major reasons for girls dropping out of school.

♦ A large number of out-of-school girls belong to families of first generation earners. Parental indifference to education of girls and their own illiteracy also keep girls out of school.

Economic factors

These can largely be classified into the cost of educating girls and the opportunity cost of sending them to school.

♦ Although elementary education is free in India, the cost of educating girls still comes up as a barrier. Additional expenses (other than school fees) include the cost of stationery, books, uniform, etc. Male priority in education also denies girls the opportunity to be in school.

♦ But more than these costs, it is the opportunity cost of sending them to school that is a major deterrent to girls' education. Girls are employed in a variety of work that is crucial to poor families, as it has a bearing on family livelihood. Within the family, the girl's responsibility of sibling care and household work makes her indispensable

while her mother goes for wage labour or other work contributing to the family income. Seasonal irregularity of girls at school is another phenomenon that is seen in India. There are times when work at home increases and she is expected to perform certain stereotyped roles and responsibilities, as during festivals, marriages and agricultural seasons. Long gaps in school attendance even leads to her leaving the school.

◆ Similarly, support to family occupation, especially at sowing or harvest time, often keeps girls away from school. In many areas, wage labour is also a significant factor that keeps girls out of school.

School environment
Within the school, the environment is sometimes not conducive to girls' learning.

◆ Inadequate school infrastructure in the form of toilets for girls and boundary walls have been identified as a significant factor in keeping girls away from school, especially at the upper primary level. Lack of boundary walls where the school is located in areas like the market place or remote isolated areas can also pose a barrier to girls' participation in school.

◆ Lack of female teachers and the consequent fear of girls' safety, is often a deterrent to girls' education.

◆ A lack of sensitivity on part of teachers to the issues that impinge on girls' education deprives them of a congenial learning environment. Often the problems that girls face, such as lack of time to study and low encouragement at home for studies, greater malnutrition, etc., also inhibit girls' participation in class.

◆ The overall classroom environment that reinforces gender stereotypes also places lower importance to the education and self-esteem of girls as compared to boys.

◆ Gender stereotyping gathers strength from a curriculum and textbooks that are not entirely free from gender bias.

Governmental Programmes
A number of national and state level initiatives directed at girls and women have been the hallmark of educational interventions for improving the educational status of girls and women. These were operationalised from time to time to address the impediments to universal elementary education among girls. Some of the significant ones that are currently under operation are briefly described below.

Non-formal Education
Under a centrally sponsored scheme, a programme of non-formal education had been running since 1979-80 till March 31, 2001, for out- of -school children in the 6-14 years age group. Recognising that large numbers of girls and working children have been left out of the ambit of education, the NFE scheme provided the flexibility, relevance of curriculum and diversity in learning activity to reach out through a decentralised management system.

The scheme was being implemented in 25 states/union territories. These included both educationally backward states as well as those having urban slums, and hilly, desert and tribal areas, with a particular emphasis on working children. Of the 241,000 NFE centres, 118,000 were exclusively for girls throughout the country.

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Based on the suggestions made by the Parliamentary Standing Committee, Planning Commission, and others, the scheme of NFE was revised as the Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education. The scheme provides for extending access to small and un-served habitations, flexible strategies for out-of- school children, bridge courses, back-to-school camps, and residential camps for out- of-school girls. A new feature is making community management of such centres mandatory.

Mahila Samakhya : Education for Women's Equality

To concretise the NPE policy objectives into an implementable strategy, the Mahila Samakhya programme was designed to mobilise and organise marginalised rural women for education by creating an environment for learning. The programme was launched in 1989 as a 100 per cent Dutch-assisted project and subsequently extended in some states with funding under the District Primary Education Programme. The programme is currently being implemented in over 9000 villages in ten states in the country.

The Mahila Samakhya programme starts from an acceptance that the fundamental issues that influence women's education–low status, survival tasks and poverty–are essentially outside the educational domain and yet education may be the critical factor that could help women break out of their predicament. The centrality of education in the struggle to achieve equality is an important focus of Mahila Samakhya.

The strategy acknowledges that the entire range of social, cultural and economic factors that have inhibited women's access to knowledge, information, education, mobility and justice cannot be tackled through piecemeal interventions. The complex interlinkages between the social and the personal, one reinforcing the other, cannot be tackled without the active participation of women in a self-driven and self-motivated strategy for a basic change in the mindsets of the individual and people in society. Movement from a passive state, where women accept their predicament and relate to the world around as recipients of welfare and charity to one where they become active agents in their own transformation is the essence of empowerment.

Education in Mahila Samakhya is understood as a continuous process of gaining the consciousness and ability to critically engage with one's environment and society and to acquire the knowledge from a position of strength. Women are enabled to question, analyse, learn new ways of thinking and doing, make informed choices and set their own agenda.

The *mahila sangha* or *mahila samooh*–the women's collective--that is established in each of the programme villages provides the space where women can meet, be together, and begin the process of reflecting, asking questions, speaking fearlessly, thinking, analysing and above all feeling confident to articulate their needs through this collective. Educational inputs in the form of adult education, non-formal education, vocational training, support services, Mahila Shikshana Kendras, and ECCE Centres are introduced in a phased manner, responding to the needs and priorities expressed by the women.

Whereas education for life skills underlies all activities in Mahila Samakhya and is largely communicated through non-verbal means and interactive behaviour, a large part of the education is the acquiring and effective application of information and knowledge. This

respect of education has been separated from literacy, because many Sangha women, while being illiterate or only marginally literate, assimilate vast quantities of information at workshops and meetings, which is regularly applied in everyday life – specifically in the areas of health, environment, law, government schemes and programmes. This not only enables women to take action themselves (e.g., with reference to traditional medicine, health practices) but also enables them to access the primary health centre, *anganwadi*, school, Block Development Office, bank, police station, courts, etc. Literacy is seen as essential to making things happen in all these arenas.

The spheres of sangha activity and action are ever expanding, ranging from accessing basic civic amenities; learning to deal with health issues; committing themselves to ensuring learning opportunities for their children, especially girls; doggedly trying to make themselves literate; breaking gender stereotypes in acquiring new skills like becoming mechanics; learning to manage credit, effectively participating in Panchayati Raj processes (local self-government); learning legal procedures and understanding how administrative and social structures work; gaining the strength to demand accountability and effective delivery of services; confidently addressing issues like violence against women, child marriage, etc.

The diverse impact of this learning process is discernible in all the Mahila Samakhya states. In all this, women are learning why problems exist, what are the obstacles—social and structural—that obstruct resolution of problems, where help can be sought from and, above all, the need for their own initiative to begin the process of setting things right. Starting from very small moves like applying for a ration card, or exercising the right of access to public space and mobility, sanghas are gradually moving from addressing livelihood issues to articulating their concerns on social practices, which subordinate women. In states like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, sanghas are playing a pivotal role in ensuring that young girls are not initiated into the *jogini/devdasi* system. Sanghas are also taking decisions against child marriage and ensuring that girls have access to education. In executing these actions, sanghas have demanded literacy for themselves and have directly addressed the issue of girls' education. Persuading parents to send their children to schools, monitoring teacher attendance are common activities of sanghas in many places.

An interesting outcome of organising women has been the emerging focus on girls and adolescent within the programme. In several states, forums of adolescent girls have emerged, where health, and legal education on issues relating to their lives are discussed. The Mahila Shikshana Kendra (MSK) is a unique learning opportunity for adolescent girls and young women. A residential programme varies in its focus and curriculum, as it is designed to meet specific local needs.

A host of other innovative, gender-sensitive educational interventions have emerged from this process. These include the Bal Mitra Kendra, designed for working 9+ girls in Andhra Pradesh; the Jagjagi Kendra in Bihar, NFE centres designed for adolescent girls; the Kishori Sanghas, etc. The programme has evolved educational institutions like the Balika/ Mahila Shikshan Kendras, the Jagjagis, Kishori Sanghas and the Bal Mitra Kendras, which address the educational needs of dropout girls, adolescent girls, working girls, etc. Through the Mahila Samakhya process, a gender-sensitive pedagogy and

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teaching-learning materials are being developed. The programme is now being expanded to cover educationally backward blocks in 240 districts across 17 states.

Operation Blackboard and Various EFA Projects
The scheme of Operation Blackboard (OB), started in 1987-88 to provide basic minmum facilities in elementary schools, has now been integrated into Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The programme sought to upgrade primary schools in low female literacy blocks by providing additional women teachers and teaching-learning equipment. The scheme had a special focus on the recruitment of women teachers and the revised scheme of 1993-94 made it mandatory that at least 50 per cent of the teachers be women.

State-specific holistic programmes for the universalisation of primary/ elementary education were introduced in some states, for example, the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Programme (APPEP), the Bihar Education Project (BEP), the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Programme (UPBEP) and Lok Jumbish in Rajasthan. As holistic programmes that were outcome oriented, all these programmes emphasised the goal of equity in education--between boys and girls. The effort to create a gender-sensitive environment emerged as a strong focus. The goals specifically included bridging the gender gap. The programmes also saw people's, especially women's mobilisation and the creation of mechanisms for effective involvement of women in school management.

As in all basic education programmes, the focus has been on recruitment of women teachers. Recognising that women teachers themselves face several problems both at the workplace and in the domestic sphere, Lok Jumbish has organised forums of women teachers called *Adhyapika Manch*. These forums serve the purpose of focusing attention on gender issues.

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)
The District Primary Education Programme has taken further the initiatives for girls education, initiated in the earlier Basic Education Projects in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. DPEP is a national initiative with a holistic approach to reduce gender and social disparities and to universalise access, retention and achievement. Initiated in November 1994 in 42 , DPEP now covers 271 districts in 18 states of the country.

Gender and equity concerns have informed all aspects of the programme design. The programme has been launched in low female literacy districts. Since DPEP attempts at a systemic change, an integrated approach to gender has been built into planning and management, pedagogical improvement, affirmative interventions for girls' education and strategies for community mobilisation and participation.

The entire process of project preparation, implementation and monitoring has integrated a gender perspective. Gender-related activities are clearly articulated in annual workplans. To concretise and sustain the gender focus within the programme, gender coordinators have been appointed at the state and district levels. At the village level, representation of women in the village education committees (VECs) has been made mandatory in most states. Gender sensitisation of all functionaries is a core and

continuing activity. Improvement in educational facilities like opening of new schools within reach of habitations, provision of drinking water and toilets has also had a tangible impact on girls' enrolment and retention.

Recognising that girls' education cannot be furthered without the active and willing participation and support of the community, DPEP has adopted a variety of strategies for awareness building and enabling active involvement and ownership of the programme by the community. Women have been mobilised, in some cases through convergence with programmes like Mahila Samakhya. Community participation has been institutionalised within the programme through VECs, MTAs, PTAs, mothers' associations and self-help groups, thereby ensuring a greater ownership of the educational process.

Women's participation in VECs and other activities of DPEP has been influential in focusing attention on the needs of girls. The active involvement of women has had an impact in various ways. They have been able to influence location of schools, as well as alternate schooling and ECCE centres, ensuring easy access. They have emerged as opinion makers at the community level to promote girls education. A significant outcome of women's mobilisation has been that they have focused community attention on issues like child marriage and other social practices that affect the girl child.

Several other supportive activities like ECCE have also been addressed, thereby freeing girls from the responsibility of sibling care, so that they are able to attend school. Appointment of women teachers has received priority. Converging with and strengthening the existing ICDS for pre-school education, and extending timings to synchronise with primary school timings are showing a positive impact.

To reach working girls, minorities and other marginalised groups, innovative alternative schooling has emerged as an effective intervention. In addition to providing facilities and creating a supportive environment, DPEP is consciously trying to develop a gender-sensitive pedagogy, sensitising teachers to the social complexities of gender and the ways in which this impacts the lives of girls, to enable them to confront and change their own biases and attitudes. Gender review of learning material, and the overhaul of most textbooks have been completed in all the states. An integrated approach to gender sensitisation, which synchronises textbook renewal and development of teacher/academic support training packages, has proved to be an effective strategy.

The programme strategy has had an overwhelming impact on girls' enrolment, especially SC/ST girls. The parent and community now recognise the need and are willing to send girls to school. With a conducive environment for girls' education created at the community level, girls' enrolment has shown a significant upward trend in DPEP districts as compared to non-DPEP districts.

Interventions such as these have certainly helped improve the situation and have brought us closer to the goal of universal education for girls. However, there are gaps yet to be met at the primary level and greater emphasis is required at the upper primary level.

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Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: Special Emphasis on Girls

The basic education programmes were succeeded by the national programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a nationwide programme for the universalisation of elementary education. It is expected that all children would complete five years of primary schooling, and gender gaps at the primary level would narrow by the year 2007. By 2010, it is aimed to have all children complete eight years of elementary education and bridge gender gaps at the upper primary level.

In blocks identified as educationally backward in terms of women's education (approximately 1/3 of the country), a special package has been designed to give a thrust to girls' education through intensified community mobilisation and local-specific interventions that focus on the school environment, support services like child-care centres, and special incentives in the form of the National Programme for the Education of Girls at the Elementary Level under SSA.

To give a greater focus to the hard-to-reach groups of girls, especially those residing in small, scattered habitations, which are distant from schools, the Kasturba Gandhi Swatantra Vidyalaya scheme for provision of residential schools in the identified backward blocks is being proposed, with a special focus on girls from marginalised communities.

Perspectives for the Future

Experience in the sector has shown that large omnibus UPE/ UEE programmes can significantly impact girls' education. The large reach of such programmes ensures that strategies can reach a larger group in short periods of time.

However, there is a need for greater emphasis on backward pockets. While issues like enrolment and retention have been addressed by states, those relating to pedagogy, building the self-esteem and confidence of girls and removing gender stereotyping have been only partially addressed. It has been seen that other issues can and do easily overtake gender issues, since gender remains only one of the concerns in the programme.

The experience of the Mahila Samakhya has shown that concerted attention on women's and girls' education requires a separate thrust. This ensures that gender concerns are built into every intervention and strategy and are not lost sight of in front of larger UEE targets. It has also enabled the building of capacities for girls' education, in terms of staff, in terms of institutions and teaching learning materials. Girls in the programme are more aware, self-confident and aware of gender issues, as these are thrust areas in the programme. These are reinforced through both the education process as well as the grass-root processes in the sanghas, which impact on the family and the community. The programme has also been able to focus on marginalised communities. These are the communities that are the hardest to reach and to bring into the educational stream, since they are inhibited by livelihood and socio-cultural issues and taboos. The effort needed to bring these girls in the system is greater than for other communities.

The country strategy has, therefore, been a two-pronged approach, including gender mainstreaming and introduction of specific schemes for promoting the education of girls

and women. The gender mainstreaming approach is targeted through the UEE programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and its components, the District Primary Education Programme, Lok Jumbish Programme, the teacher education programmes and the Mid-day Meal programme. The thrust areas for such programmes shall include:

- Community mobilisation to elicit support for girls' education, both in terms of enrolment of girls and their retention in elementary education, particularly in day-to-day monitoring of progress and performance and creating a supportive environment in the school and village;
- Gender sensitisation and training of planners, teachers and educational managers to ensure that girls' education remains an area of focus;
- To ensure girl-child friendly classrooms and textbooks and other teaching-learning materials;, and
- Provision of special incentives.

More focused and specific gender-based interventions shall be implemented through gender-based programmes, which focus exclusively on women and girls. This will ensure special attention and earmarking of funds for girls, especially those in educationally backward areas and more disadvantaged groups like the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Such programmes shall also provide support to UEE programmes for planning and implementation. During this plan, attention will also be focused on building of resources that will facilitate the training and implementation of such programmes. It is important to ensure that the experience of girls' education is reflected in the policy and strategy for larger programmes as well. Suitable convergence measures will be ensured to enable such influence. The thrust areas for these specific educational schemes will include:

- to focus on educationally backward areas in terms of girls education;
- to focus on disadvantaged sections of girls like those belonging to the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, minorities, etc.;
- to tackle gender-specific issues that prevent access of girls and women to education;
- to focus on the educational needs of adolescent girls, including special schools;
- to enhance the self-image and self-esteem of women and girls, reinforcing their need for participating in educational programmes;
- to provide women and adolescent girls with the necessary support structure, and formal and informal learning environment to create opportunities for education.
- to help girls to overcome socio-cultural and economic factors inhibiting their access to elementary education, including the provision of childcare services; and
- to set in motion circumstances for larger participation of women and girls in education programmes, and to create an environment in which education can serve the objectives of women's equality.

These objectives are proposed to be met through the three programmes for the education of women and girls that have been mentioned above, i.e., the Mahila Samakhya programme, the National Programme for the Education of Girls at the Elementary Level under SSA, and the scheme of Kasturba Gandhi Swatantra Vidyalaya.

The gender mainstreaming approach is targeted through the UEE programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and its components, the District Primary Education Programme, Lok Jumbish Programme, the teacher education programmes and the Mid-day Meal programme.

In addition to these three schemes, a new scheme for free education for girls at the secondary level has been proposed. Under this scheme, the following provisions are proposed :

- Construction of secondary and higher secondary schools in 500 identified educationally backward blocks @ Rs 100 million per school, with Rs 5000 million for the Tenth Five Year Plan period.
- Supply of free textbooks to girls from families below the poverty line in classes IX and X in educationally backward blocks at a cost of Rs 6577.76 million for the Tenth Five Year Plan period.

It is hoped that the combination of these two strategies would enable us to not only bridge gender gaps in enrolment, retention and achievement, but would also enable the creation of a gender-sensitive and equitable school environment.

Meeting Quality Concerns

The elementary school system in India has grown in size consistently, achieving an enrolment of nearly 150 million. This obviously poses a major challenge not only for efficient management but also for mobilising resources needed to maintain even a reasonable level of quality. It is recognised that quality improvement in education cannot be carried out on a turnkey basis in a pre-specified time-frame. Persisting with efforts to move ahead on all fronts is seen as the most important factor. Keeping this in view, a number of programmes and schemes have been initiated by the central, as well as state governments. Also, the quality improvement component has been given high priority in all the EFA projects such as DPEP and Lok Jumbish. It is also the main thrust of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Quality improvement is a complex question, unlike improvement in infrastructure, appointment of teachers or even of equipping schools with better academic facilities. Learning from past efforts, it is realised that there is no single-factor solution for the problem. With this in view, the government has pursued a five-fold strategy consisting of (a) improvement in provision of infrastructure and human resources for primary education; (b) provision of improved curriculum and teaching-learning material; (c) improving the quality of teaching-learning process through the introduction of child-centred pedagogy; (d) attention to teacher capacity building; and (e) increased focus on specification and measurement of learner achievement levels.

Improving Provision of Infrastructure and Human Resources

With the expansion of the school system, the state has been burdened with facilities that are vastly inadequate to meet the demands of the burgeoning numbers. In view of this, a systematic exercise was carried out to determine basic norms for provision--physical, human, as well as academic, in each school. As already pointed out, the goal of providing a school in every habitation having a reasonable population has been pursued in the country for several years. This has resulted in practically universalising primary schools in almost all the habitations of the country. However, field studies and periodic surveys have revealed that a large number of habitations are small, and therefore the primary schools in these habitations are relatively small in size. What type of infrastructure and human resources should these schools have has been a matter of extensive analysis. It is in this context that the Operation Blackboard Scheme, launched in the wake of the National Policy on Education (1986), specified basic norms for equipping a primary school. While recognising that physical infrastructure and academic

resources in a school would directly depend on the number of children enrolled, it was specified that every school should be provided with (a) two teachers; (b) two all-weather classrooms (30 sq.mt each) with covered veranda, 8-9 ft. in depth; (c) usable separate toilets for boys and girls; (d) teaching-learning materials of specified standards, supported by special orientation to teachers for using the material.

School Infrastructure

Considering that the country has more than half a million primary schools, it is difficult to get a clear picture of the status of provisions in all the schools. The Fifth and Sixth All India Educational Surveys, conducted by NCERT, showed that though there has been some improvement between 1986 and 1993, schools continued to suffer from deficiencies in infrastructure facilities. Most of the primary and upper primary schools being co-educational, the absence of separate urinals and lavatories for girls, particularly in upper primary schools, can be a major hurdle in the participation of girls.

The Sixth All-India Educational Survey has also provided data on deficiencies that have a direct bearing on teaching and learning. These include the following:

◆ 60 per cent of primary schools had no libraries;
◆ 35 per cent of primary sections and 17 per cent of upper primary sections had no blackboards;
◆ 35 per cent of primary sections and 33 per cent of upper primary sections had no mats/furniture for students, while 47 per cent of sections in primary and 29 per cent sections in upper primary had no furniture for teachers;
◆ About 985,000 additional classrooms are required in primary and 3,54,000 additional classrooms in upper primary.

During the 1990s, the attempt has been to ensure that expansion, as well as upgradation, of primary school network in different states conforms to the basic specifications made under Operation Blackboard. Under the scheme, the government of India has spent on an average about Rs. 400 million per year during the last ten years. More than 182,000 classrooms have been built and 149,000 additional teachers have been appointed. Besides, 42,000 posts of teachers have been sanctioned, in order to add a third teacher to schools with an enrolment of more than 100. A standard set of school equipment has also been supplied to all primary schools. In fact, these norms were further improved for expansion of schools under DPEP and other EFA projects initiated during the last decade.

Table 6.1: Infrastructure Facilities at Primary and Upper Primary Levels, All-India, 1993

(in percentage)

Particulars	Primary Schools		Upper Primary Schools	
	1986	1993	1986	1993
a. Buildings				
Open Space	7.5	3.8	2.1	1.8
Tents	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.1
Thatched huts	5.5	3.0		1.6
Kuchcha	13.9	9.1	18.4	7.2
Partly Pucca	16.3	18.7	18.4	20.8
Pucca	56.3	65.1	69.4	68.5
b. Classrooms.				
% of schools with adequate number of classrooms	18.7	37.6	20.7	35.2
c. Drinking Water/Toilets				
Drinking water	47.4	44.2	67,1	63.5
Urinals	15.5	18.9	41.5	48.4
Separate urinals for girls	5.2	8.7	21.7	31.5
Lavatories	6.3	10.9	21.7	29.9
Separate lavatories for girls	2.8	5.1	11.2	17.2

It is envisaged that this norm-based provision should help improve the quality of facilities in primary schools significantly. These norms will continue to act as the guiding principle for creating additional schooling facilities for primary education. Two significant actions need special mention in this regard. One, the all India survey of schools conducted by the NCERT in September 2002 would act as the baseline to design future actions for strengthening the quality of primary schools in terms of infrastructure and

Table 6.2: School-related Construction in DPEP States upto 2002

	Planned	Completed
New school buildings	5156	2709
Additional classrooms	6603	3680
Toilets	6716	5260
Drinking water	3493	1968

other provisions. Second, as a follow-up to the constitutional amendment making education a fundamental right, a new central legislation is being promulgated, which clearly delineates basic minimum provisions to be made available in every school. This should facilitate monitoring the quality of school provisions to a great extent. These will inform the establishment of new schools, as well as upgradation of existing facilities, under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, each of the 0.85 million elementary schools is receiving Rs.5000 maintenance grant and Rs.2000 school improvement grant on an annual basis. Further, all teachers in these schools are entitled to a grant of Rs.500 every year to develop TLM. The SSA also envisages a massive programme for construction of additional classrooms, new school buildings, toilets and drinking water facilities. About one million new additional classrooms are expected to be constructed by 2007.

Teachers

With the expansion of educational facilities over the years, the number of teachers has also increased. The government policy is to provide at least two teachers to every primary school initially, and ultimately, the endeavour is to provide one teacher for every class or section in primary schools. In the upper primary schools, the teachers are provided on the basis of subject teaching and teaching workload. Table 6.3 gives the growth in the number of teachers over the last few years in the primary and upper primary schools.

Table 6.3 Increase in Number of Teachers

Year	Number of Teachers in					
	Primary Schools			Upper Primary Schools		
	Total	% of Trained Teachers	% of Female Teachers	Total	% of Trained Teachers	% of Female Teachers
1990-91	1,616,020	85.25	29.24	1,072,911	88.02	33.24
1991-92	1,643,701	85.31	29.92	1,079,034	88.24	33.82
1992-93	1,651,416	83.54	31.14	1,085,301	87.32	34.63
1996-97*	1,789,733	88.00	32.68	1,195,845	88.00	35.77
1997-98*	1,871,542	87.00	34.34	1,211,803	88.00	36.08
1998-99*	1,904,000			1,278,000		
1999-00*	1,919,000			1,298,000		
2000-01*	1,896,000	86.00		1,326,000	89.00	

* Provisional

Table 6.4: Teacher-Pupil Ratio at Primary and Upper Primary Levels, 1950–51 to 1999–2000

Year	Primary	Upper Primary
1990-91	1:43	1:37
1995-96	1:47	1:38
1996-97	1:45	1:38
1997-98	1:42	1:37
1998-99*	1:42	1:37
1999-2000*	1.43	1.38
2000-01*	1:43	1:38

* Provisional

Table 6.5: Teacher Rationalisation and Recruitment between Primary and Upper Primary

(in '000)

	Primary	Upper Primary	Total
Total number of additional teachers required upto 2007	358	559	917

Teacher-Pupil Ratio

During 1990-91, the teacher-pupil ratio in primary schools was 1:43, and in middle schools it was 1:37, which remained constant in 2000-01. Over the years, teacher-pupil ratio has remained constant, with the increase in teacher recruitment not keeping pace with the increased enrolment.

Teacher Rationalisation and Recruitment

Based on the projections made of expected enrolment, the total number of additional teachers required up to 2007 is estimated to be 9,17,000, distributed between primary and upper primary as in Table 6.5.

Seeing the role of women teachers in increasing the enrolment and retention of girls, it has been stipulated that 50 per cent of the teachers being recruited henceforth would be women.

Prior to the process of recruitment, the states would be carrying out intensive rationalisation of the existing teachers. Because of lopsided development, it is seen that certain schools and areas, especially urban localities, have teachers much in excess than what they should have as per the 40:1 norm. In contrast, remote areas are often starved of teachers. To rectify this anomaly, the states would have to take up the exercise of rationalisation first before they embark on the recruitment process.

Since a large number of teachers are required in a short period, traditional methods of recruiting teachers would not be sufficient to meet the needs. Hence, alternative methods are being attempted to recruit teachers in various states. States where the requirements are comparatively less would continue to follow the traditional route of recruitment. However, other states are seeking to decentralise the teacher cadre, so that the teacher recruitment takes place at least at the district level, if not at the village or block level. Some states have made the local self-government bodies (Panchayats) responsible for managing the teacher cadre. Other states too, while retaining the teachers as government functionaries, have decentralised the management to the district or block level. This would not only facilitate easy recruitment but also enable better accountability and easy monitoring.

One problem being faced by many states is the non-availability of trained manpower slowing down the recruitment process. While efforts would continue to expand the capacity of pre-service training in partnership with the private sector, the states have been given the option to fill up the immediate needs through recruitment of community teachers. This would involve recruitment of academically qualified persons from the community by the village itself. These community teachers would be given compressed orientation training before they start teaching, which would be reinforced annually through a series of modules, with the aim of providing them the professional qualification after 3-5 years. The distance education mode would play an important role in this training. Some states, like Bihar, have already adopted this model and

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started the process of teacher recruitment. The training of teachers through the distance mode has also been successfully implemented in the North-East and is being expanded to other states.

Teacher Capacity Building

Improvement in the quality of teachers through effective programmes of teacher education is central to any quality improvement programme in basic education. It is with this in view that, as envisaged in the National Policy on Education (NPE), a national programme of restructuring teacher education in the country took shape in the 1990s. The programme got further reinforcement through actions initiated under different EFA programmes, including DPEP. These efforts are being continued with further strengthening on an all India basis for moving towards the goal of providing quality basic education for all.

Establishment of a three-tier mechanism in each district

Before 1987, the main source for academic support and training for teachers in elementary schools was the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) in each state. This was proving to be woefully inadequate to meet the capacity building needs in most of the states. The core strategy followed during the last ten years to improve this situation has been to decentralise the technical and academic support mechanism as envisaged in the National Policy on Education. The country has moved ahead considerably in this process of decentralisation of academic support Towards this end, a national programme was initiated to establish a District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) in each district exclusively to cater to the development needs of elementary education of the particular district, and to work out mechanisms for providing support to teachers at sub-district levels.

The establishment of a DIET in each district following the NPE-1986 was therefore a major step in taking the support system nearer to the field. During the last ten years more than 400 such district level institutions have been established. This process of decentralisation has been further extended under EFA projects through the establishment of block resource centres (BRCs) and cluster resource centres (CRCs). The main function of these sub-district level institutions is capacity building among teachers. Recent reviews of DPEP report the creation of 414 BRCs and CRCs across different states of the country. It is proposed under SSA that the decentralised system will be extended to cover all parts of the country.

Three key roles for the sub-district centres have emerged: teacher training, supportive visits to schools, and a monthly cluster

Table 6.6: Number of BRCs/CRCs under DPEP upto 31.3.2002

Sl.No.	State	Number of Block Resource Centres Functional	Number of Cluster Resource Centres Functional
1.	Andhra Pradesh*	990	5664
2.	Assam	56	1003
3.	Bihar	152	1894
4.	Gujarat	55	482
5.	Haryana	55	544
6.	Himachal Pradesh	33	230
7.	Karnataka	112	1206
8.	Kerala	55	627
9.	Madhya Pradesh	236	4325
10.	Maharashtra	73	189
11.	Orissa	170	885
12.	Tamil Nadu	106	1023
13.	Uttar Pradesh	645	6365
14.	West Bengal**	326	324
15.	Rajasthan	132	1041
16.	Chhattisgarh	134	1949
17.	Jharkhand	55	476
18.	Uttaranchal	38	280
	Total	**3423**	**28507**

* Andhra Pradesh has mandal resource centres and teacher centres in place of BRCs and CRCs.
**West Bengal has circle resource centres (CLRCs) in place of BRCs/CRCs.

meeting of teachers to discuss issues related to classroom transaction. These resource centres provide a modality for involving teachers in the process of quality improvement. Regular school visits by CRC coordinators have made a contribution to the functioning of schools and classroom transaction, and given teachers improved confidence that they are not isolated. There are many examples of BRCs and CRCs holding vibrant academic discussions in monthly meetings, documenting folklore for use in classrooms, establishing maths labs, developing libraries, etc. The sub-district resource centres also have tremendous impact on the nature of in-service training for teachers. Infrastructural residential facilities at the grassroots (block level) make it possible to have frequent training programmes on a wide range issues such as multi-grade, teaching, developing TLM, student evaluation, specific content areas, basic pedagogic issues (how children learn, approach to content-based teaching) and so on. The resource centres also provide a forum for the most gifted teachers to play a leading role.

In order to make the resource support mechanism for teacher more effective and based on need assessment studies, the following thrust areas in teacher education have been identified for the next five years:

♦ Development and strengthening of teacher education institutes: This includes an enabling policy environment, assessing institutions in terms of their functioning, capacity building and encouragement of institutional initiative.
♦ Training of teachers, pre-service as well as in-service: First, the training of para teachers, especially if untrained, is to be given emphasis. Secondly, pre-service and in-service training need to be upgraded qualitatively. Formalisation of in-service training in terms of accreditation, etc., needs to be considered to ensure quality.
♦ Professional development of practitioners, i.e. teacher educators, managers and others: This was identified as a major emerging need for improving the school system as a whole.

The major strategies to bring about vibrancy in teacher education are as follows:

♦ Central funding will be based on state plans, to encourage context-relevant strategies. Diversity will be supported. While preparing its plans, each state will be expected to review in detail the status of teacher education in the state through consultations and studies, and formulate appropriate strategies to improve it. The state perspective plan will be expected to identify clearly major gap areas, as well as strategies and activities that appear to have a good potential for upgrading teacher education
♦ States will be encouraged to innovate in the structure of teacher education insitutes. The funding pattern has been kept highly flexible.
♦ A Teacher Education Resource Group (TERG) of outstanding professionals in teacher education will provide support to the states. The TERG is envisaged as a modality of promoting interaction among professionals, as well as disseminating knowledge of new ideas. It is hoped that the best teacher educators of the country will get involved in supporting grassroots institutions.
♦ A Resource Support Programme (RSP) that is dynamic, responsive to emerging needs and builds on existing strengths of various institutions needs to be put in motion to upgrade the quality of teacher education in the country. The RSP will provide a framework to support the development of specialised professionals such as curriculum developers, evaluators, and educational management experts, experts in the teaching of mathematics, science and other disciplines. It would be a critcal

aspect of the education of teacher educators. It will also be instrumental in developing the knowledge and material base in these areas.

◆ SCERTs will be strengthened further so that they can provide leadership. Computer education cells will be set up in SCERT.

◆ All teacher education institutes will be linked by computer networks.

Distance education for teacher capacity building
It has been realised that even with the establishment of an extensive institutional network, continuous upgradation of knowledge and skills cannot be done effectively in view of the perpetually expanding system of schools and teachers. With this in view, a major move was made in the 1990s to use modern technology and distance education mechanisms to reach out to schoolteachers on a continuous basis. Two programmes in this regard need to be mentioned. One is the expanding programme of reaching out to teachers and teacher educators through satellite-based teleconferencing network. The second is the fairly large-sized Distance Education Project within the framework of the DPEP. Both the programmes are operated in a collaborative fashion involving various organisations such as IGNOU, NCERT, Space Application Centre (SAC) and several other national and state-level organisations. In fact, one can see that distance education is gradually emerging as an effective means of providing academic and technical support to schoolteachers on a continuous basis.

Curriculum Renewal and Development of Learning Material
Considering that curriculum and textbooks play a very significant role in quality improvement efforts, special steps are being taken to revise the curriculum for all stages of schooling and to bring out improved versions of textbooks. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education-2000 emphasises development of independent and rational thinking, ability to construct knowledge and solve problems among learners. However, curriculum prescription and textbook preparation for schools is a decentralised phenomenon and essentially a subject handled by state governments. Only a broad national level curriculum is suggested. State-level authorities decide on the specific curricular inputs and teaching-learning material to be followed in all the state-supported schools.

Textbook Preparation
The last ten years have witnessed a variety of activities in the area of curriculum and TLM preparation in all the states. These efforts will be strengthened and continued in the coming years. The purpose of the exercise has been mainly to make the material more relevant, interesting and child-friendly. The specification of minimum levels of learning (MLL) in the early 1990s at the national level also prompted the states to take up the task of curriculum and textbook revision. A series of activities in all the states with EFA projects, as well as others, was set in motion.

Three factors have characterised the process of material development. First, a participatory approach has been the high point of the textbook development process, involving teachers, field personnel and experts from SCERTs. Secondly, people involved in textbook development have been periodically exposed to 'good practices' of other states and also NGOs. Thirdly, in most states, field trials of textbooks and other material have been undertaken to identify gaps that could be corrected before large-scale introduction took place.

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As a result of the above processes, the new textbooks for primary school grades are significantly different from the old ones. The language used is much simpler and familiar to the child. The books now offer space to build in the local context for classroom transaction. Attention is also paid to illustrations and font size in an effort to make them more child-friendly. Some states have embarked on preparing integrated textbooks, e.g., using the same lesson to transact language skills, as well as environmental science skills, especially for the first two classes. Teachers' guidebooks have also been developed to facilitate classroom transactions.

Availability of Textbooks

Improving the availability of textbooks is another important area to be strengthened. Over the years, state governments have launched a number of schemes to ensure free textbook provision for marginalised children. This was further reinforced under the District Primary Education Programme. These efforts for provision of academic inputs in terms of textbooks and TLM will be institutionalised as a frontal mainstream initiative under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. All SC/ST children and girl students at the elementary level, in the whole country, would be provided free textbooks.

Strengthening TLM Preparation and Use

The two-fold strategy of curriculum renewal and textbook revision will continue in the years to come as a regular feature. It is, however, realised that the effectiveness of transaction will depend on use of a variety of teaching-learning material in the classrooms. It is with this in view that under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, special emphasis is laid on preparation and use of instructional material by classroom teachers. Towards this end, a TLM of Rs.500/- will be given to each teacher every year, which would allow teachers to make and use different kinds of materials as per need. The purpose of the scheme is to help the teachers prepare low-cost TLM for activity-based transaction of the curriculum in different subject areas. Experience gained in this regard from the earlier efforts under DPEP will be used in streamlining the scheme.

A second strategy would be to simultaneously encourage states to develop school libraries to augment the academic resource base for teachers, as well students. The experiment of providing mobile book vans tried in several states will also be expanded.

Resource Material for Teachers

Self-Instructional packages are being developed to provide in-service training to primary school teachers in order to promote awareness about MLL, comprehensive and continuous evaluation (CCE), developing school readiness in children, school climate, education of special groups, education of girls, value education and multigrade teaching. Apart from this, the contents would also include subject upgradation in areas of languages, mathematics, environmental studies, art education, health and physical education and work experience. The print material is being supplemented by ETV package, consisting of video programmes and user's guide for the effective use of ETV programmes in the transaction of print material. The training package has been adopted and adapted by the states/UTs in their regional languages.

Multimedia Support

Expansion and diversification of education programmes through open and distance learning and use of multimedia has come to occupy a significant place in basic education, particularly for supporting teacher development. This will be further strengthened in the next five years on the following lines:

- The distance education mode is effectively used for in-service education and training of teachers. The technology options available for use in distance education mode are print material (self-instruction), and video programmes (broadcast and non-broadcast), teleconferencing, audio graphic, computer, etc. These options are used in various combinations, keeping in view the target group, the nature of training inputs, etc.
- One-way video and two-way audio teleconferencing is being used to provide short-term training to primary and secondary school teachers since January 1996, when the first teleconferencing programme was conducted to train primary school teachers of Karnataka. Since then many teleconferencing programmes have been organised by agencies such as DEP-DPEP and state department of education of Gujarat and Karnataka by addressing the training needs of teachers and other personnel. This process will be further enhanced in size and coverage.
- Radio and television have been extensively used for the professional growth of teachers by NCERT and IGNOU. An experiment on audio teleconferencing for primary teachers of Indore district through All India Radio was conducted by NCERT in 1999. The identified themes were translated in three phases (i) problem phase, (ii) discussion by other teachers and (iii) discussion by experts. Experience from this pilot experiment will be utilised to expand the programme further.
- Gyan Darshan (educational TV) channel is being used for telecasting video programmes for the benefit of teachers, as well as children. Efforts will be made at the national level to constantly develop and telecast programmes addressing the needs of the teachers for their professional growth.
- Multimedia learning packages have also been developed by NCERT, SCERTs and SIEs for use by trainers in training teachers. Different states under DPEP have developed training packages consisting of print and audio-visual inputs for distribution to the training centres.
- A project sponsored by the Government of India, UNESCO and International Telecommunication Unit (ITU), entitled In-service Primary Teacher Training through Interactive Television (IPTT-ITV), is being implemented on a pilot basis in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. It proposes to use two-way video interactive teleconferencing for the continuous in-service training of primary teachers and teacher educators working in DIETs.
- In order to clear the backlog of untrained teachers and underqualified teachers, IGNOU has introduced a two-year distance education B.Ed programme for in-service teachers. It is also offering a certificate in primary education specially designed for the teachers of Sikkim and other north-eastern hilly states of India, where there is a large number of untrained schoolteachers.

Continuing the Programme of Pedagogic Reform

In the final analysis, quality of education depends on the nature of the teaching-learning process. In fact, studies have also brought out that non-attendance of children in schooling and subsequent dropping out from school for many of them is determined by

the nature of the teaching-learning process. It is in this context that a number of acivities to improve the quality of classroom interactions and making them child-centred ard joyful have been initiated during the last several years. These initiatives would be further reinforced.

The main thrust of action is to help teachers make the classroom processes more contextualized to the local conditions characterising the school and the communit/. It is recognised that many schools have to continue working under minimal infrastructire and learner support material for the time being. In spite of additional teachers beirg appointed in many project schools, the majority of schools in the country—arounc 80 to 85 percent—involve multi-grade teaching. This, perhaps, is inevitable with more scnools in smaller habitations being opened. Adapting to such conditions and making the teaching-learning process still effective is a big challenge faced by a primary schocl teacher. This has been the main focus of all EFA initiatives in the country. An effecive arrangement will be arrived at for dissemination of experiences from across state boundaries and their meaningful adaptation in larger areas as an essential feature of the efforts for pedagogic renewal process under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Through the pedagogic reform processes initiated under DPEP, a very close linkag? has been established between textbook preparation and teacher training. Taking this irto account, the strategy has been that states, to begin with, concentrate on effecting changes in the classroom transaction through intensive training programmes and eventuall> move to bring about changes in materials and textbooks through participation of teachen. It is expected that such an approach will provide space for innovations in the training programmes also. Several states are already in the midst of trying out new approaches. For example, Bihar has decided to undertake cluster-wise training. This means tha the trainers would interact with all teachers from one cluster before moving to the ne:t cluster. At the end of each cluster training programme, the cluster coordinator for he CRC is selected. Like this, many new ideas are being implemented in other states For example, Karnataka has brought out a series of educational films to support the teicher training efforts. The films cover areas ranging from the hindrances to primary schcoling, including social issues, to specific areas such as the teaching of language. The filrs are regularly used at the block level training programmes for generating discussions.

Kerala conducted a 16-day children's summer camp, called Kinginikkoottam, in vhich more than 5,00,000 children, in 3,500 schools spread over six districts, participated. The camp is a carefully designed effort to regain the joy of learning through meaningful and enjoyable experiences for children, in a totally informal and relaxed manner. Aboit 28,000 teachers and thousands of parents took part in Kinginikkoottam. Issues related to specific areas in pedagogy and classroom practices such as student evaluation and multi-grade teaching were also tackled.

Increased Focus on Learner Achievement
The 1990s witnessed a high level of importance and attention given to the assessnent of learner achievement. The first prompting for this came from the special emphasis jiven to learner achievement in the NPE. However, the main thrust for activity in this rgard came from the specification of minimum levels of learning at the national level though an expert body set up by the Government of India. Following this, most of the stae

governments with the help of NCERT and SCERTs not only revised their curriculum and textbooks but also initiated programmes for measuring learner achievement on a regular basis. The Government of India supported 16 large-scale projects to study and streamline this process and work out the processes needed for achieving competencies by all children.

A second set of efforts in this direction emerged with the launching of EFA projects which carried out baseline studies to assess the achievement of learners in various classes of the primary school. Some of the projects have even set targets for raising the learner achievement levels in a phased manner. For instance, DPEP has set the target of raising achievement levels by 25 per cent during the project period. Towards monitoring the programmes to raise the achievement levels, periodic surveys have been carried out both in DPEP and Lok Jumbish. Have these efforts helped to increase the levels of learner achievement? It is difficult to respond categorically to this. First of all, no all India survey has been conducted to determine the current levels of achievement. Further, since the programme content, as well as context of schooling, is quite different in each state, it will be difficult to generalise on the progress made in this regard. Finally, though the initial results show positive change in the learning levels of children in different project schools, both under Lok Jumbish and DPEP, one cannot expect any dramatic upswing in the learner performance. Performance of learners does not depend only on inputs provided in the school. They are also influenced by many other socio-economic contextual factors which do not fall within the purview of education development projects. Also, it may be counter-productive to start anchoring all quality improvement efforts only to improvement in performance of learners in achievement test in selected subject areas. They have to be coupled with focus on other areas of learner growth and development, which are not necessarily performance-based and measurable outcomes.

Learner achievement levels will be monitored by conducting nationwide periodic achievement surveys in all states at different stages of elementary education. The baseline achievement surveys at the end of class V and class VII/VIII are in the final stages of analysis.

Arrangements for Monitoring Learner Achievement Levels

Learner achievement levels will be monitored by conducting nationwide periodic achievement surveys in all states at different stages of elementary education. The baseline achievement surveys at the end of class V and class VII/VIII are in the final stages of analysis. The results will be available by mid-2003. Tests for another survey at the end of classes VII/VIII have been finalised and these are being administered in 2003. In view of the significance of the primary stage, a baseline survey at the end of class III has also been proposed for the years 2002-2004. It is envisaged that these three surveys will provide us the base for assessing the enhancement in achievement levels as a consequence of various inputs provide under SSA.

Further, mid-term assessment surveys will be undertaken again after a gap of about three years to initiate mid-term corrections, if required, in the implementation of SSA. These national studies will also be supplemented with state-specific monitoring processes, which are needed to understand the dynamics of teaching-learning contexts.

Finally, a nationwide terminal survey will be conducted around 2010 to gauge the extent the goals of universalisation of quality education at elementary stage have been achieved. All these surveys will be comprehensive studies of the impact of school environment, home environment and personal characteristics of studies and teachers on the teaching-learning process. For actual monitoring and follow-up actions, NCERT will be involving

SCERT/SIE of different states and will provide al technical guidance. It is expected that a monitoring culture will be built to sustain the efforts on a regular basis in all the states.

Acting at the School Level: School Improvement Programmes

The experience of implementing EFA projects during the last ten years has made it clear that along with the macro-level initiatives described above, micro-level activities looking at schools as institutions and dealing with school-specific problems are necessary. With this in view, several states have undertaken school-based quality improvement programmes, in which quality related activities are undertaken on the basis of school needs. This has been supported intensively from the central level. Strengthening these efforts will be one of the major strategies for quality improvement under SSA.

Box 6.1: Shiksha Mitra Yojana: Calling Women Teachers

In order to meet the increasing demand for primary school teachers, especially female teachers, the Government of Uttar Pradesh has started the *Shiksha Mitra Yojana*, whereby local persons are recruited as teachers for primary schools by the village education committees. These teachers are called *Shiksha Mitras*. There is 50 per cent reservation for women in the scheme. A total of 18,147 posts of *Shiksha Mitras* have been appointed by the VECs of the Gram Panchayats and another 35,000 are currently under recruitment.

Documentation and Dissemination

A great deal of the impetus in pedagogical improvement came from studies that were concerned not with academic questions but with regard to strategies followed in various states. Notably, studies were conducted to characterise the pedagogic practices and processes of student evaluation adopted in schools. These studies provided improved understanding and direction for future interventions. Dissemination of this knowledge and discussion was also stimulated through a journal for teachers.

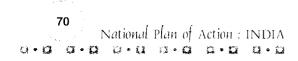### Collaboration with NGOs, Universities and Resource Institutions

EFA projects during the 1990s accessed tremendous resource support from many sources, and collaborated with a wide range of institutions and resource persons. This was done by including resource persons from NGOs and universities in state resource groups, through consultative workshops, and engagement of resource persons in specific activities such as textbook development, teacher training and research. The national level coordination played a key role in fostering this collaboration. This enriched quality improvement effort as a whole and the process of pedagogical renewal, in particular, significantly.

Encouraging Innovations

It has been the policy of the government to encourage innovations in education with a view to learning from the experience of such innovations and mainstreaming the successors. Under the SSA, each of the 600 districts will be able to access up to Rs.5 million every year to carry out innovations in the field of early childhood care (ECC), education for girls and SC/ST children, and computer education. The districts are expected to associate resource institutions, university departments and DIETs and NGOs in this process. Moreover, under the scheme of Innovative Education, the central government will continue to support NGOs and other groups working in the field of elementary education, both on issues related to targeting the more difficult groups of out-of-school children, as well as on improving the quality of learning.

Box 6.2: School-based Quality Improvement Programmes

It has been found that a majority of primary school children do not acquire the basic language and maths skills even by the end of grade V. In the absence of these basic competencies, children find it difficult to engage with the course content of higher grades. The examination system fails to capture this fact as it tests only for memorization and recall, while learning deficits go on accumulating. A host of interrelated factors are responsible for this non-learning–some rooted in classroom practices, but many stemming from systemic inadequacies. Besides, it is also evident from various field reports and studies in DPEP states that macro inputs (in the form of text book renewal, mass teacher training, provision of TLM grant and setting up of block and cluster resource centres), while impacting the system substantially, are not sufficient to change the culture and pedagogy in the classrooms. They need to be supplemented with contextualized, school-based inputs.

Some school-based experiments
The answer to the quality issue seems to lie in working directly with schools. This idea was concretized in the form of small pilot projects in district Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh; district Chamba, Himachal Pradesh; and district S.24 Parganas, West Bengal, which were initiated during 1999-2001. In these projects, work was taken up with a small number of schools for one academic year. Many school-based and systemic issues which act as obstacles to children's retention and achievement came to light, such as high PTRs, multigrade situation, poor physical conditions, excess of non-teaching tasks, high absenteeism, delays in material supply, ad hocism in school functioning, lack of academic support, mid-session teacher transfers, etc. The exact conditions varied from school to school, but it was clear that no single solution could work; each school had to be dealt with individually.

A more comprehensive school-based quality improvement programme was initiated in Andhra Pradesh, as the Learning Guarantee Programme. The process began in a small number of schools in 2001-02, and expanded to 83 schools in two mandals of Rangareddy and Nalgonda districts in 2002-03. In the first phase, it was clear that a majority of the schools were struggling with the same basic functional problems as the ones mentioned above. In the second phase, an attempt was made to design an input framework that addressed the needs of individual teachers and schools. Support was provided in a time-bound manner from state and district to streamline the functioning of individual schools. Teachers also assessed the learning levels of each child in language and maths. A six-week remedial programme was conducted for children of classes III-V to address their basic reading, writing and number skills of class I & II level.

At the end of the course, children across the schools showed remarkable improvement in the above abilities, and became better equipped to handle their grade level texts. Besides, a new classroom culture, a new teacher-child relationship, and also a new 'teacher' began to emerge. The same government school teachers who were earlier indifferent and disinterested in their work, now energetically facilitated children's learning, and the schools which were dreary, unattractive places began to buzz with excitement. A clear indicator of this was that children's attendance and punctuality levels went up significantly. Moreover, learning was no longer restricted to just a few; teachers were able to engage almost every child in class. Children produced a lot of work, which clearly displayed their improved reading, writing and drawing abilities. Teachers too began to independently design varied learning activities. The classrooms became challenging and attractive for both children and teachers. The level of discourse itself changed among the teachers. They now had personal stakes in improving their schools, and more specifically, the learning achievement of each child.

The next step in the programme, subsequent to the remedial, is of linking children back to their regular grade level course. Some bridging would be required to enable children of classes IV and V to go to their grade level texts after the remedial (covering grade I & II competencies). This programme envisages that while on the one hand the learning deficits of children of classes III, IV & V are being addressed through remedial and bridging measures, fresh class plans are to be introduced in classes I & II simultaneously, so that new entrants to school learn in a proper way right from the beginning. By the third year the regular plans would be functional in all five classes, and there would be no more need for remedial and bridging.
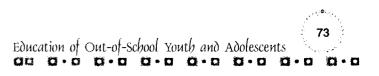
Education of Out-of-School Youth and Adolescents

Adolescents, or persons aged 10 to 19 years, are imbibed with a sense of idealism, justice and truth. With positive stimulation and a congenial environment, they rise to the occasion, fought for justice and devote their energies to constructive activities. Adolescent are powerhouses of the energy that could be channelised for social development and nation-building. However, a section of the adolescent population, because of one reason or the other (which may be economic, social or psychological), gets distracted from the normal path, and needs special attention. A majority of the adolescents from this section leave the regular education stream and join the group of out-of school youths.

As per projections of the Planning Commission's Technical Group on Population Projections, adolescents constitute 22.8 per cent of the population of the country, which means approximately 230 million persons in India belong to this group. Out of this, the male adolescents constitute 12 per cent and females, 11 per cent.

Adolescents have very special and distinct needs. The most important issues pertaining to adolescents include health, nutrition, education (both formal and non-formal), vocation, recreation and sports, child labour, children in difficult situations, alcohol and drug abuse. All adolescents need to be made aware of issues like safe motherhood, reproductive health rights, sexuality and sexual responsibility, age of marriage and first pregnancy, family size, health care, hygiene, immunisation, HIV/AIDS prevention, importance of education (particularly of girls), drug and alcohol abuse. They should also have some legal literacy and be made aware of vocational opportunities and career planning.

On the front of education of adolescents, poor attendance in schools and higher dropout rates are causes of concern. The situation is more discouraging in rural areas, where only 49.6 per cent of the boys and 30.6 per cent of the girls in the age group of 15-19 years were found to continue their education beyond class VIII, as compared to 67.4 per cent for boys and 63.8 per cent for girls of the same age group in urban areas. Both adolescent boys and girls, especially those out of school, have little opportunity to grow into self-confident, aware and healthy persons. The formal system has very little to offer to the dropouts and out-of-school adolescents.

The encouraging news is that the gender gap of literacy percentage was reduced to less than 10 per cent in 1991, as compared to more than 20 per cent in year 1981 because of certain initiatives of the government.

Policies and Programmes for Adolescents

The issues related to adolescents as described above fall under the purview of different ministries of the Government of India, including the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Departments of Elementary Education and Literacy, Secondary and Higher Education and Women and Child Development) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Ministry of Youth and Sports is the designated nodal ministry for the development of adolescents.

There are several policy documents addressing the needs of adolescents. The draft National Youth Policy 2001 provides a comprehensive overview of youth issues and concerns. It views youth as a vital resource to be nurtured for the development of the country and advocates "working with youth and not merely for youth", thus underlining the importance of youth participation in all programmes. The policy highlights several areas of concern for adolescents and youth in the country and emphasises an inter-sectoral approach, stressing on empowerment and gender equity. It gives a special focus to the educational needs of adolescents, including non formal education. The Draft Youth Policy makes a distinction between the age of adolescence (13 –19) and the age of attainment of maturity (20 –30 years), marking a shift towards distinguishing between these different phases. By marking the age of adolescence, the policy facilitates efforts to focus on adolescents in government programmes.

The National Policy on Education, 1986, as modified in 1992, in emphasising universalisation of primary education and eradication of illiteracy, especially for the 15 – 35 age group, covers youth and adolescents. The policy also refers to meeting the non formal education vocational skill requirements of youth. The section entitled "Women's Equality" has special reference to the education programmes for adolescents. The National Population Policy 2000 has recognised the earlier invisibility of adolescents and views them as a section of population which needs special attention. Thus, the policy includes them as the subject of one of the twelve strategic themes. There is a special mention about developing a health package for adolescents and enforcing the legal age of marriage. The National Policy for Empowerment of Women 2001 recognises the girl child as a separate category and within this category, adolescent girls. The policy covers their nutrition, education, holistic approach to health, violence and sexual abuse against them, and the rights of the girl child.

While the above policies and the several programmes and schemes across ministries covered adolescents, there was no comprehensively policy exclusively addressing the needs of adolescents, especially those who were out of school. Recognising this need, the Planning Commission constituted a Working Group to look into all aspects of the issues related to adolescents, analyse them and submit the recommendations for consideration and implementation during the Tenth Plan period (year 2002-2007). The Working Group has emphasised that adolescence is a special period for learning. It has suggested that government programmes may learn from many groups across the country designing 'relevant' curricula, both for school and out-of-school adolescents, within an

empowering perspective and equitable context of education for all. Education for out-of-school adolescents must be linked with enhancing their self-esteem, survival and employment, better health and sexuality, awareness about their rights-social and political– and with mobilisation for community issues. For girls, the challenge is to design an interesting and meaningful learning programme that can compensate for the early years of social and educational neglect and also provide motivation to continue with enhanced zeal and confidence.

On the basis of the recommendations of the Working Group constituted by the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports is developing a new programme to address the educational needs of adolescents with due emphasis on girls. Under this programme, financial and technical support would be provided to autonomous bodies of the central, as well as state governments, local government bodies (Panchayati Raj institutions) and NGOs for creation of an environment wherein the special needs of adolescents are recognised, and they are provided with friendly services. This would include sensitisation of parents, teachers, government functionaries, law enforcement agencies, media, youth and adolescents through sustained awareness and advocacy campaigns, towards the needs and problems of adolescents; capacity building of NGOs and government functionaries dealing with adolescents; and development of sound database on adolescents and encouragement of research on the issues relating to adolescents in difficult circumstances.

The cooperation and involvement of various agencies is being sought to fulfil the objectives envisaged in the scheme under reference for the benefit of adolescents. The objective awareness generation about the special needs of adolescents would be fulfilled through thematic competitions, exhibitions, fairs, recreational events, and developing and distributing infotainment material (print, audio as well as video).

The parents, teachers, community leadership, government functionaries, health workers and law enforcement agencies would be sensitised by advocacy campaigns using print, as well as electronic media, involving them in debates and other activities with the participation of adolescents.

The scheme is also for capacity building, along with sensitisation of other stakeholders like teachers, health workers, government functionaries and law enforcement agencies by conducting workshops, seminars, short duration in-service training programmes, as also offering full-fledged diploma level courses. Outreach programmes, like holding seminars/workshops could combine both career guidance and psychological counselling and could be organised in cooperation and consultation with educational institutions for adolescents in classes IX to XII.

Life skills, as defined by the World Health Organisation, are the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with demand and changes of every day life. Life skills may be broadly classified as thinking skills, social skills and negotiating skills. Adolescents would be offered educational programmes by NGOs and government bodies like Nehru Yuva Kendra, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti on life skills to empower them with the ability to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life effectively and to enhance their productivity,

On the basis of the recommendations of the Working Group constituted by the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports is developing a new programme to address the educational needs of adolescents with due emphasis on girls.

efficacy, self-esteem, self-confidence and interpersonal relations. The module of life skll education would be based on the ones developed by some NGOs and KVS with the support of UNFPA and UN Interagency Working Group on Population.

The provision for psychological counselling and career guidance of adolescents by providing appropriate information in a non-judgmental way has been made to address their various concerns, including health, familial, financial, psychological, social, and emotional problems. This would help the youth in making realistic choices, preventing them from disruptive deviations and overcoming stresses and strains of everyday life. These career guidance centres for both school-going and out-of-school adolescents would be set up in universities and educational institutions having psychological and counselling departments. There is also a proposal for setting up of telephone helplines in cities and small towns.

The Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) is an autonomous organisation of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, with offices in 500 districts of the country. It has become one of the largest grassroots organisations in the world, catering to the needs of more than eight million non-student rural youth enrolled through 189,000 village-based youth clubs. These clubs work in the areas of education and training, awareness generation, skill development and self-employment, entrepreneurial development, thrit and cooperation, besides development of the body through sports and adventure, and mind through sustained exposure to new ideas and development strategies. For implementation of the programmes, every district NYK has a network of trained cadre of district youth coordinators, national service volunteers and youth leaders. The strength of NYKS is its vast network of youth clubs at the grassroots level.

The NYKS is plans to cover all districts of the country during the Tenth/Eleventh Five Year Plan for effective mobilisation of rural youth. NYKS is expected to organise one youth club/*mahila mandal* in each village having a population of 300 or above, so tha the goal of covering nearly 600,000 villages in the country is achieved during the next fifteen years.

It is also planned that at least one youth development centre would be set up in each of the 5000 blocks of the country during the next fifteen years and 1000 such centres would be upgraded to serve as real centres of information to the rural youth by providing then with internet connectivity.

Open Learning
The Ministry of Human Resource Development had established an autonomous institution, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in 1989 (then known as National Open School) primarily to take care of the educational needs of those who had to discontinue their formal school education because of one or the other.

NIOS has an average annual enrolment of 250,000 students with total enrolment of 750,000 students, who receive support and education in 1700 centres located throughout the country and abroad (Nepal, Middle-East and Canada). Out-of-school adolescents and dropouts are encouraged to enrol and continue their education through a new facility, which allows the students to choose the subjects of their interest, offer a

flexible examination system and allows transfer of credits from other boards. Under this system, a candidate may opt for examination at a time of his/her convenience and in as many courses/papers in which he/she feels comfortable.

NIOS took initiative by launching the Open Basic Education (OBE) programme with the objective of providing basic education to the neoliterate, as well as out-of-school adolescents, among others. The education at OBE stage is free. This programme is being launched with the help of more than 150 NGOs, who implement this programme through NFE centres. NIOS has also laid special emphasis to the special educational needs of physically and mentally challenged persons, including adolescents, and established a cell to implement and monitor the initiatives taken in this regard.

NIOS, in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Union Ministry of Labour, has undertaken the Child Labour Project (CLP). Under this project, NIOS is developing relevant and need-based curriculum, self- learning material (SLM), audio-visual instructional materials, transactional strategies and evaluation processes to cater to the specific learning needs of children (9-14 years) receiving education under the National Child Labour Rehabilitation courses. About sixty vocational education courses for out-of-school children in the major areas of agriculture, business and commerce, engineering and technology, paramedical and health, applied sciences and social services sector are being offered, mainly through the open schooling system. Taking advantage of modern technologies and with the objective of addressing the need of vocational education in rural areas, NIOS has initiated the programme of rural community workshops to provide need-based infrastructure for rural vocational education/training-cum-service centres.

Education of Adolescent Girls
The Department of Elementary Education and Literacy has focused on the specific needs of girl adolescents and took care of this section of adolescents through the Mahila Samakhya programme. Mahila Shikshan Kendras (centres for girls' education) are in operation in six states, namely, Karnataka, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Assam, under Mahila Samakhya, which has the objective of ensuring equal access to educational facilities for adolescent girls and young women. Adolescent girls, who have dropped out from the formal education system are provided educational opportunities through NFE centres. The programme has gained considerable popularity in the last few years, as it has responded well to the growing demand among adolescent girls for completion of formal education, as well as acquisition of leadership and vocational skills. Under the programme, *kishori/cheli sanghas* (adolescent girl groups) have been set up, which provide life skills education to out-of-school girls. *Kishori melas* (fairs for adolescent girls) are organised under Mahila Samakhya with the aim of creating opportunities for education and self-development of adolescent girls. An expansion of Mahila Samakhya to 240 districts is planned, as outlined above.

Lok Jumbish, a programme jointly launched by the Government of India and Government of Rajasthan in 1992, has been organising residential camps of about six months' duration for adolescent girls since 1995. The participants of such camps are provided with primary education. They are also taught various empowerment activities. Lok Jumbish also started short-duration camps for boys and girls in upper primary classes

NIOS took initiative by launching the Open Basic Education programme with the objective of providing basic education to the neoliterate, as well as out-of-school adolescents, among others. The education at OBE stage is free.

to introduce the students to reproductive health and other issues relevant to adolescents. It has also launched a non-formal education programme.

Activities under the Department of Women and Child Development

The Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) also supports policies and interventions for adolescent girls. It is recognised that the adolescent girl child still continues to experience discrimination throughout her life, and unfortunately, the existing socio-cultural practices also make it difficult for her to overcome the handicaps posed by her unequal status. Taking note of this situation, the Tenth Plan reaffirms the life-cycle approach for the adolescent girl child. During this period, efforts will be concentrated to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violation of the rights of the adolescent girl child by undertaking strong legal measures, including punitive ones. These include strict enforcement of relevant legislations along with eradication of harmful practices such as female foeticide/ infanticide, child marriage, child abuse, child labour and child prostitution.

The Department's main programme is the ongoing scheme of Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY), launched in 1991 92. The programme aims at the empowerment and self-development of adolescent girls in preparation for their future productive and reproductive roles as confident individuals, not only in family-building but also in nation-building. The KSY, now in operation in 2000 ICDS blocks of the country, will be expanded further to another 2500 blocks. Moreover, to the present package of health education and nutrition awareness, it is proposed to add counselling facilities, besides strengthening the component of vocational training and development of entrepreneurial skills.

A long-term developmental measure launched during the Ninth Plan in the name of Balika Samriddhi Yojana will be expanded widely during the Tenth Plan to extend incentives not only to the girl child but also to the mother of the girl child, so that she is assured of state support for the future of the girl child. Similar initiatives, which have already proved to be successful in some of the states, will be replicated in other parts of the country.

Activities of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment deals with the social issues related to adolescents and also support the education of adolescent girls from socially backward section of society such as schedule castes (SCs) and schedule tribes (STs) through a scheme for providing scholarship and hostel facilities.

The Ministry is implementing the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000 through a programme for juvenile justice to cater for the care, protection, development and rehabilitation of both neglected and delinquent adolescents. The aim of the programme is to enhance the quality of institutional care to the affected adolescents and to develop and support a system for separate handling of non-delinquent and delinquent children at various stages of their apprehension, processing and rehabilitation. The Ministry has adopted the approach of processing the case of those juveniles through the formal system of police, courts and correctional institutions, which could not be handled by the informal social control mechanisms within the family or

Box 7.1: Doosra Dashak

'Doosra Dashak' means the second decade. This programme is about education and development of persons in 11-20 age group, mainly adolescents, and to make it a lever for social and economic development.

Rationale: Adolescents comprise about 23 percent of India's population. They go through physical and psychological changes, which seriously impact their lives. There is a feeling of alienation among them and they have a tendency for drug and alcohol addiction. Persons in this age group also have boundless energy and are imbued with idealism. If they are provided relevant education and skills they can become a source of social change and economic advancement. The Dakar Framework of Action for Education for All recognises the importance of this age group and calls for organisation of need-based equitable learning opportunities for them.

Objectives: With reference to persons of 11-20 age group, the objectives of this project are as follows:
* To meet their basic learning needs;
* To equip them for adolescence and family life through improvement in their understanding of health/RH related issues;
* To create an awareness about the underlying causes of socio-economic and gender inequality;
* To enhance vocational and life skills;
* To harness their energies for nation-building; and

* To employ science and technology for improving lives.

Strategies: The main strategies and activities are:
* community mobilisation;
* organisation of good quality residential camps for education, integrated with health, life skills, value inculcation, etc.;
* building up a new leadership of youth so that they may take back to their peers and the larger community what they learnt in residential camps;
* promotion of forums of adolescents and youth, inter alia, to create a gender-sensitive socio-cultural environment; and
* advocacy and dissemination.

The programme was started in June 2001 and is being implemented in two blocks of Rajasthan. Funds for this project are provided by Tata Education Trust, UNESCO, UNFPA and UNIFEM.

Outcomes: The main outcomes so far are: (a) social mobilisation in 80 villages; (b) provision of residential training to 700 adolescents; (c) formation of youth/adolescent forums in 42 villages where village development projects have been taken up; (d) relief to persons affected by famine in both the blocks; and (e) large-scale acceptance of the programme by government and NGOs.

community. The Ministry utilises the services of voluntary welfare agencies to the maximum at various stages of referral, treatment and rehabilitation of juveniles, especially with regard to non-delinquents.

The training and orientation programme for NGO personnel and the government officers deployed in institutions established for children under the Juvenile Justice Act are being conducted. There is a provision for incentive to those who have successfully undergone the training.

The children being processed under the Juvenile Justice Act who excel in academics or in extra-curricular activities are encouraged by scholarships.

Activities of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare supports initiatives to address HIV/AIDs education in schools; broadcasts radio and TV programmes to target adolescents; and

implements Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Programme providing maternal care, including safe motherhood, nutrition facilities and prevention of unwanted pregnancies, etc. The Ministry has joined hands with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in running drug de-addiction centres and supporting NGOs in the same cause.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is engaged in taking care of health- related needs of adolescents. It realises that AIDS is a major problem among the youth and nearly 50 per cent of the new HIV infections are occurring in young people between 15 and 24 years of age. The fundamental risk for young people is their ignorance about issues of sexuality, HIV/AIDS/STIs and the dangers of unprotected sex. With regard to this, the Ministry has gone for early intervention, targeting adolescents, with information on HIV/AIDS/STIs, as well as skills to improve their self-confidence.

Literacy and Life Skills Programme for Adults

Presaging EFA: NLM Role in Tackling Adult Illiteracy

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched in pursuance of the National policy on Education (NPE), 1986, and its Programme of Action, for eradication of adult illiteracy. By the time the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) at Jomtien in 1990 began to survey the literacy efforts, India had already embarked on a programme of eradication of illiteracy in a mission mode. A mass campaign approach emerged as the main strategy to tackle the problem of adult illiteracy. By the time the "Year 2000 Assessment of Education for All" was undertaken, NLM had traversed a long distance, covering most parts of India by the Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) while also fine tuning the strategies for linking literacy with skill upgradation, quality of life improvement, etc., under the post-literacy and continuing education programmes. These were the very concerns that the successive EFA meets voiced. Simultaneously, NLM also began to address specific issues like community involvement and NGO partnership. Thus, by virtue of constantly benchmarking its strategies in relation to the EFA concerns, NLM was able to keep the target fulfilment far ahead of the dates set by the Dakar Framework for Action.

Coverage

Starting with the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) in Ernakulam in 1990, NLM has covered 587 out of the 600 districts in the country under literacy programmes. By March 2003, 190 districts were in the TLC stage. One hundred and ninety-six were under the post-literacy phase, while 201 had moved to the continuing education (CE) stage. Through its mass campaign approach, NLM has reached out to more than 150 million non-literates and made 98 million people literate. More than 60 per cent of them are women. The socially disadvantaged scheduled castes (SC) and scheduled tribes (ST) together account for 36 per cent.

Current Status of Literacy: National Scene

The above data indicates that the increase in population of the age group 7 years and over has been 26-27 per cent during each decade. Increase in literates was by about 52 per cent during 1981-91 and by

Table 8.1: Growth of literacy in India during 1981–2001: Age group 7 years and above

(in million)

	1981*	1991**	2001
Population	541.4	688.1	867
Literates	235.9	359.3	567
Illiterates	305.5	328.8	300
Percentage of literacy	43.5	52.2	65.4

Source: Census of India Reports
*Excludes Assam, where 1981 census was not held
**Excludes Jammu and Kashmir, where 1991 census was not held

about 59 per cent during 1991-2001. Absolute number of illiterates increased during 1981-91 but substantially declined during 1991-2001. In terms of percentage of literacy, the increase during 1981-91 was by 8.7 percentage points, while the increase during 1991-2001 was by 13.2 percentage points. This analysis indicates that the progress of literacy during 1991-2001 has been much higher as compared to the progress made during the earlier decade. This progress is attributed to better educational efforts during the decade 1991-2001 as compared to the earlier decade. For the first time, educational efforts seem to have overtaken growth in population and the absolute number of illiterates has started declining rather than increasing.

In the five decades after Independence, the increase in literacy rate during the last decade has been the highest, i.e., from 52.2 to 65.38 per cent, which is an increase of 13.2 percentage points. For the first time, the country witnessed a faster growth in female literacy, i.e., 14.87 per cent (from 39 to 54 per cent,) than that of males, which increased by only 11.72 per cent, (from 64 to 75 per cent.) This also reveals the bridging of the gender gap in literacy, which was 25 per cent in 1991 and got reduced to 20 per cent in 2001. There is also, for the first time, a converging trend in the rural-urban literacy gap. Between 1991 and 2001 rural literacy rates increased by 14.52 per cent while urban literacy rates increased only by 6.98 per cent, thereby reducing the urban-rural gap from 28.39 per cent in 1991 to 20.85 per cent in 2001. Similarly, for the first time, there was a decline in the absolute number of non-literates, from 328 million in 1991 to 296 million in 2001.

Literacy: The Regional Dimension

Going beyond national aggregates, there is considerable variation in the literacy scene among the states. Nine out of the 35 states and union territories (UTs) have come under **the high literacy rate** category, ranging between 81 and 90 per cent. There are 13 states which come under the **above national average** of 65.4 per cent. The remaining 13 states and UTs are still **below the national average**—the state with the lowest literacy rate (47.53 per cent) being Bihar.

Box 8.1: Himachal Pradesh: The Continuing Success Story

Himachal Pradesh had been showing significant progress in literacy rates over time--from 21.26 per cent in 1961 to 77 per cent in 1997. In terms of rural literacy rates, its progress has been remarkable. Himachal ranked second among 16 major states, as far back as 1981 and has retained its ranking. This is all the more impressive as Himachal has several factors that make educational progress difficult. In the same fortitude the literacy rate according to the 2001 census was 77.13 per cent, which is far higher than the national average of 65.38 per cent. The state has surged forward to take third position among major states in the country.

Even within this disaggregated data, and particularly among the below-average states, there are many which recorded impressive gains in literacy in the last decade. In these states, adult literacy and primary education programmes were effectively implemented. Rajasthan, for example, recorded the highest increase, viz., 22.75 per cent (and 20.44 per cent in female literacy). There are also states like Chhattisgarh, where the increase in female literacy has been the highest in India viz. 24.88 per cent, taking its female literacy from 27.52 per cent in 1991 to 52.40 per cent in 2001. Madhya Pradesh is another state which recorded a similar growth in female literacy, i.e. 20.93 per cent.

Residual Illiteracy

Impressive as the gains are, the problem of illiteracy

is far from over. There are at least seven major states with more than 15 million illiterates each, accounting for 64.81 per cent of India's illiterates. Only four of them viz., Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan account for 42.84 per cent of India's illiterates. Besides these, there are also at least four other states with an illiterate population ranging from 10 to 14 million each. The gender gap in literacy is still considerable, at 21.70 per cent. Similarly, there is also a considerable leeway to be made to bridge the rural-urban divide in literacy, the difference being more than 20 per cent. The most acute problem, however, remains the rural female literacy, at 46.58 per cent, as compared to the national average of 54.03. The literacy position among the SCs and STs is also far below the national average–literacy among SCs is 53 per cent, and among STs, 49 per cent, as per the NSS (1999-2000) assessment.

Table 8.2: Growth of literacy in India: 2003 to 2015 (age group 7 years and above)—A Projection

(in million)

	2003	2015
Population	900	1075
Literates	612	892
Illiterates	288	183
Percentage of literacy	68	83

During the last decade, literacy rate increased by about 1.3 percentage points per year. Taking into account this trend and slight decline in population in the age group 7-14, the literacy rate is expected to go up by at least 2.6 percentage points during the two years from 2001 to 2003. It has therefore been assumed to be 68 per cent for the year 2003. The number of literates and illiterates has been calculated on the basis of population projections for 2003. The increase in the number of literates is about 4 per cent per annum, while the number of illiterates reflects a declining trend.

Population projections[1] for India and states up to the year 2016 were worked out by a technical group constituted by the Planning Commission. The population data arrived at in the projections made by the group has been used with minor adjustments on the basis of the 2001 Census results. During the last decade the increase in the number of literates was at an average rate of 20 million per year. The projected figure of the number of literates for the year 2015, viz., 892, takes into account an average annual growth of around 23 million literates per year. It is based on an intake of about[2] 17 million per year in class IV retainable literacy level of the primary school system in the country and an average of 5 to 6 million persons made literate through the adult literacy programme. On the basis of these projections, the literacy rate for the age group 7 and above for the year 2015 works out to 83 per cent and the number of illiterates works out to 183 million.[3]

The Dakar Framework for Action

EFA Focus Areas in Adult Literacy
The Dakar Framework for Action, especially in respect of adult literacy, is:
◆ Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
◇ Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Achieving the Dakar Goal of Fifty Percent Improvement by 2015
For purposes of measuring adult literacy, UNESCO considers the population in the age group 15 and over. Growth of adult literacy in India during the last decades has been as Table 8.3.

Literacy and Life Skills Programme for Adults

Table 8.3 Growth of Adult Literacy in India

(in million)

Census Year	Adult Population	No. of Adult Literates	No. of Illiterates	Adult Literacy Rate (%)
1971	317.82	108.31	209.51	34.08
1981	401.85	164.03	237.82	40.82
1991	526.20	255.42	270.78	48.54
1998-99*				58.46

*NFHS-2 - Based on sample study

Table 8.4: Extrapolation Figures of Adult Literacy

(in million)

Census Year	Adult Population	No. of Adult Literates	No. of Illiterates	Adult Literacy Rate (%)
2001	675	412	263	61
2003	710	452	258	64
2015	900	720	180	80

According to UNESCO estimates, the adult literacy rate for India in 2000 was 57.2 per cent as indicated in the Monitoring Report 2002.[4] However, the National Family Health Survey (NFHS, 1998-99, estimated the adult literacy rate to be 58.5 per cent for the population 15 years and above. Projection of this trend indicates that the adult literacy rate in India should have been 60 per cent in the year 2000. On the basis of the trend indicated by the results of the NFHS and 2001 census, it is estimated that the literacy rate of the adult population for 2001 was 61 per cent. (age-wise literacy rates from 2001 census are still awaited).[5]

Extrapolation of this trend indicates the situation likely to emerge in the year 2015 as Table 8.4:

Population projections are based on the projections made by the Registrar General of India (Technical Group [3] on Population Projections) with minor adjustment based on the 2001 census results.

The adult literacy rate increased by 6 percentage points during 1971-81. It increased by 8 percentage points in the next decade, viz., 1981-91. The estimated increase during 1991-2001 on the basis of NFHS survey results was about 12 percentage points. It has been observed that the number of adult literates, which increased by an average rate of about 5.6 million per year during 1971-81, increased by an average of 9 million during 1981-91. As a result of greater efforts during 1991-2001, the average annual increase during this period was about 16 million. This trend is likely to go up further during the 21st century. It has been estimated that the present (2003) literacy rate of 64 per cent will improve to around 80 per cent by the year 2015. The accelerated growth of literacy in the younger age group of 6 to 14 will move to the age group of 15 and over by the year 2015. The declining growth rate of population in the age group 6 to 14 at present will impact on the age group of 15-25 by that time. Thus, India can be placed in the category of countries which are likely to reach adult literacy rates of 70-90 percent in the year 2015.

For the year 2000, as shown above, the adult literacy rate in India was about 60 per cent. To achieve the Dakar goal of halving the illiteracy rate by 2015, India needs to reduce illiteracy rate by 20 per cent. As indicated by the above projections, India is likely to reach this goal by 2015 in terms of halving the illiteracy percentage from 40 per cent in 2000 to 20 per cent by 2015.

In terms of absolute number of illiterates also, there is likely to be a substantial decline, from about 263 million illiterates in the year 2001 to 150 million in the year 2015.[6]

Box 8.2: Employment-linked Vocational Training Programmes for Neoliterates–Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Coimbatore

Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Coimbatore, conducts a number of need-based and employment-oriented vocational courses for illiterates, neoliterates, physically challenged, slum dwellers and unemployed youth. The courses include two-wheeler and four- wheeler maintenance and repair, motor winding, electrician, tool and die making, lathe operator, machine operator-cum-moulder, plumbing and sanitary work, web-page designing, computer applications, beauty culture, refrigeration and air conditioning, maternity and child health, nursing assistant, laboratory technician, cutting and tailoring, embroidery and dress designing, metal embossing, etc. The courses are identified and developed in consultation with local industry, district employment exchange, hospitals, automobiles service stations, prospective employers and experts in different fields.

Coimbatore district has a large number of textile mills–large, medium and small. The adjoining Salem and Erode districts are also industrially developed. By linking the vocational training programmes to the needs of local industry and service sector, the JSS Coimbatore, has established effective employment linkages for the neoliterate trainees.

From 1997-98 to 2001-02, Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Coimbatore, trained 8,457 persons in various skills, and all of them are recorded to be either wage employed or self-employed.

NLM Thrust Areas

In 1999, before the "Year 2000 Assessment of Education For All", and as part of the on-going realignment of approach to the literacy movement, NLM began paying special attention to some of the aspects that later came to be highlighted in the Dakar Framework for Action.

- Achievement of 75 per cent literacy level by 2007.
- A multi-pronged strategy in order to address the regional, social and gender disparities in literacy.
- Refocusing the literacy, post-literacy and CE programmes to increase and strengthen women's participation, so as to bridge the gender gap in literacy.
- Encouraging PL and CE districts to pay special attention to mobilisation and organisation of women into neoliterate and self-help groups (SHGs).
- The priority areas for the Tenth Five Year Plan were set up, which included special attention to socially disadvantaged groups like SCs/STs and women.
- Regional disparities, and especially low literacy states, were identified for special attention. Forty-five districts with female literacy rates below 30 per cent have been targeted for a multi-pronged strategy to improve the female literacy rates.
- An integrated approach to make the basic literacy, post-literacy and continuing education phases into a learning continuum.
- District Literacy Society (*Zilla Sakshartha Samiti*), the autonomous body which implements and oversees the literacy, post-literacy and continuing education programmes, would have freedom now to use grassroots participatory networks like youth clubs, *mahila mandals*, voluntary agencies and local self-government bodies like Panchayats, cooperatives, etc., as partners in CE implementation.

- Conscious of the need for administration-civil society partnership, ZSS are now empowered to co-opt NGOs in the implementation of CE programme, including devolving funds to run CE centres in the areas where the NGOs are active.
- Increase in the number of Jan Sikshan Sansthan (JSS), earlier known as Shramik Vidyapeeths, to 122. Provide non-formal vocational training to neoliterates.
- Extension of activities of JSSs which are performing well to neighbouring districts.
- In view of social and gender disparities in literacy, NLM lays special stress with the ZSS to specifically highlight the strategies to take up literacy and skill upgradation programmes for the socially disadvantaged like the SC/STs and women in particular. Conscious of the social disabilities and acute economic problems, separate centres for SCs in their own colonies are encouraged. It is also stressed that the content of the CE programme in such areas could address issues affecting their health, quality of life and skill improvement.
- In the case of scheduled tribes, given their poverty, exploitation, ill health and their scattered habitation pattern, NLM provides a special relaxation in the matter of funds allocation. This is done so as to pay special attention to the needs of the tribals, especially the females, so that it addresses regional, social and gender inequities in literacy simultaneously.

Strategies for Bridging Gender Disparity in Literacy: States and NLM
Education in India, including adult literacy and CE is a concurrent subject, and both the central and state governments are equally responsible for its development. NLM defines the broad policy contours and provides the major share of funds. But the state governments also have a commitment to EFA, and pursue the NLM objectives, according to their own resources.

On the basis of the results of Census 2001, districts where female literacy is less than 30 per cent have been identified. Forty-five such districts have already been taken up for the literacy special drive.

Some states that have these low female literacy districts have started working out a multi-pronged strategy to improve their female literacy.

Different states are following different strategies and methods to tackle the gender disparities in literacy. Andhra Pradesh is using a mixture of two approaches. The state uses SHGs as the nucleus to eradicate residual illiteracy, especially among women, and as a bridge to their increased participation in the continuing education programme. Second, a new approach of a combined literacy, post-literacy and CE programme, organised in the CE centre with suitable capacity building of preraks (motivators) and a well articulated community ownership strategy.

Rajasthan is developing a strategy of involving the Panchayats to spearhead the drive to eradicate female illiteracy in low female literacy districts.

Madhya Pradesh also has a special state-supported programme for female literacy, called the 'Mahila Padhna Badhna Andolan'.

Box 8.3: The Sari Weavers of Kaithun: A ZSS Jan Shikshan Sansthan Success Story in Literacy

Kaithun is one of the sectors in Ladpura block in Kota district of Rajasthan. Famous for the finely crafted *Kota Doria* saris, it was one of the most difficult areas for literacy workers to work in. The literacy rates were dismal, and the poverty immense. Every household is engaged in sari weaving. A child here may not be able to read but can easily recognise a design.

Initially, the women were very reluctant to give up their valuable weaving time to attend literacy classes because time lost meant wages lost. But concerted efforts of the Zilla Saksharta Samiti (ZSS) functionaries and volunteers made a huge impact. Literacy was followed by the formation of self-help groups. A comparative look at the census literacy figures for the years 1991 and 2001 for Kaithun city sector speak for themselves:

Year	Total	Male	Female
1991	40.55	55.63	24.03
2001	81.25	89.59	77.61

The Zilla Saksharta Samiti and the Jana Shikshan Sansthan, Kota, contributed not just towards making these women literate but also ensuring that their economic interests were protected.

Another strategy that is emerging distinctly in respect of gender disparities is the formation and use of women's SHGs as literacy centres. These are emerging as effective vehicles for women's mobilisation, empowerment and improvement in the PL and CE stages. There is an increasing trend of using these groups as basic units of eradication of residual illiteracy among women, using the literates among them as the volunteers and the ZSS providing the training, teaching-learning material and supervision of teaching-learning progress.

The Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh strategies are centred around SHGs and active community participation in monetary terms as well.

In Uttar Pradesh, eight low female literacy districts have been brought under an accelerated programme of basic female literacy, which is being implemented through a network of about 100 NGOs. Approximately 2.4 million women are expected to be made literate within a period of about six months.

A programme on similar lines is being considered for implementation in Orissa in seven districts, where female literacy is below 30 per cent, and two other adjoining districts.

A different model has been adopted in Bihar to cover the 15 low female literacy districts with involvement of Panchayati Raj functionaries, women volunteer teachers and women's SHGs. Approximately 3 million non-literate women are expected to be covered within a period of 6-12 months.

Similar interventions are planned in the remaining low female literacy districts in other states.

Continuing Education

The objectives of the literacy movement as NLM evolved over the years are broadly two-fold. One, imparting functional literacy in the initial TLC phase, its consolidation and upgradation to a self-reliant level in the post-literacy phase, and self-directed learning and its application through continuing education, towards a learning society. The second objective relates to improvement not only through the ability to apply literacy skills, but also through the upgradation of life and occupational skills.

Given the short duration, the initial literacy (TLC) phase addresses mainly the literacy objective, and the improvement-oriented concerns take centrestage during post-literacy and CE stages.

The adult literacy movement initiated by NLM aims at imparting functional literacy to all non-literate adults in the 15-35 age group. But more than 60 per cent of the learners have been women at the basic literacy TLC, PL as well as CE stages. Conscious of this reality, strategies of social mobilisation at the TLC stage and life-skills oriented programmes at PL and CE stages have been dovetailed to address women's needs.

The mainstream CE activities include setting up CE centres to function not only as libraries or reading rooms but as focal points for diverse continuing education programmes, training, information, discussion, development, culture, sports, recreation and other individual interest promotion. Besides these regular functions, the CE schemes also take up certain target-specific programmes like equivalency, quality of life improvement, income generation, individual interest promotion, depending upon local conditions, needs and resources.

In some states, there is a trend towards increasing role of the community not only in the management of activities at the CE centre, but with regard to the range of CE programmes itself. In order to develop a sense of community ownership towards the CE programme, a system of neoliterate societies, based on membership, linked to a nominal fee, has been introduced in some states. Besides this, a system of corpus fund collection is also taken up, so that beyond the state-funded duration of five years, the community can take over and run the programme. Started in Andhra Pradesh, this practice can become a model for other states as well.

As more and more districts in the country complete the total literacy and post- literacy phases, they would graduate to the CE stage. The NLM expects to cover all districts under CE by the end of the Tenth Plan period, i.e. 2007, bringing the entire country under CE by that time.

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Financing the Programmes of Education for All

Investment in EFA since 1990

The statement made in the National Policy on Education, 1986 and 1992, that from the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-1997) onwards the outlay on education would uniformly exceed 6 per cent of the national income is yet to materialise. At present (2000-01), 4.1 per cent of the GNP is being invested in education. The share of elementary education in GNP in India has been relatively low, even though this has also increased by three times, from 0.48 per cent to about 1.7 per cent, during the last five decades. The expenditure by education departments as a percentage of GNP at current prices has increased from 0.68 per cent in 1951-52 to 4.1 per cent in 2000-01.

The central expenditure on education has increased substantially over the last ten years. The central plan expenditure increased from Rs. 30,360 million in the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) to Rs. 74,430 million in the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97). The government's commitment to raise the expenditure on education to six percent of GDP, as against the level of 3.9, by the end of the Ninth Plan, has not yet been achieved.

Fifty per cent of the enhanced allocation is expected to be spent on primary education. This increasing financial participation of the central government through central and centrally sponsored schemes for promotion of primary education is in keeping with the spirit of partnership between the central and state governments. Table 9.1 gives information about

Table 9.1: Percentage of Expenditure on Primary and Elementary Education

Years	Current Public Expenditure as %age of Total Current Public Expenditure on Education		Current Public Expenditure as %age of GNP	
	Primary (Class I-V)	Elementary (Class I-VIII)	Primary (Class I-V)	Elementary (Class I-VIII)
1990	34.30	46.30	1.25	1.69
1991	34.22	46.30	1.18	1.60
1992	33.69	45.20	1.14	1.53
1993	34.20	46.20	1.02	1.38
1994	34.05	46.40	1.00	1.36
1995	35.30	48.50	1.05	1.44
1996	36.50	50.10	1.05	1.44
1997	37.10	49.08	1.08	1.85
1998	-	49.60	-	
1999	-	49.03	-	
2000	-	45.54	-	

Source: Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure, MHRD

elementary education and its funding as a percentage of current public expenditure on education.

In the 1990s, there has been a marked increase in the proportion of central plan allocations made in the five-year plans for elementary education to the total outlay for education. The proportion in the Seventh Five Year Plan, which ended in 1990, was 38 per cent while in the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97), the proportion for elementary education was raised to 49 per cent.

One of the most significant factors related to change in the pattern of expenditure on education in recent years is the gradual increase in the proportion of funds spent on elementary education in comparison to secondary and higher education sectors. The last three five-year plans have witnessed a significant shift in the expenditure of the Department of Education in the central government towards primary and adult education and away from tertiary education. This highlights the proactive role that the central government is playing towards achieving the goal of EFA.

Until recently, primary education in India was almost free from large-scale external funding. The 1990s witnessed introduction of several externally funded primary education projects, in particular the District Primary Education Programme. However, external funding of elementary education is less than 5 per cent of the total expenditure by the Centre and the states on this sector. Mobilising of community resources for primary education on a larger scale has also received considerable attention during this period, especially for improving physical infrastructure of schools.

Requirement of funds for EFA

India has consciously decided to align the planning process of EFA with the planning process of the country, which is reflected in the five-year plans. The Tenth Five Year Plan started in 2002 and would remain in operation till 2007. While formulating the goals of the Tenth Five Year Plan, it has been attempted that requirements of the EFA goals set in Dakar are fulfilled in the Plan period itself. Accordingly, the fund requirement for EFA has been projected till 2007 only. The fund requirement has been calculated sector-wise, and has then been aggregated to arrive at the total requirement of funds for EFA. The sectors covered are:

♦ Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
♦ Elementary Education
♦ Mid-day Meal in Schools
♦ Education of Girls and Women's empowerment
♦ Teacher Education
♦ Education of Out-of-school Youth and Adolescents
♦ Adult Education Programmes

As it is apparent, the above sectors target all the six EFA goals. Therefore, it would be imperative to provide the requisite funds if the Dakar goals are to be achieved.

Fund requirement for ECCE

The funds for early childhood care and education are available under a number of programmes for UEE. For example, SSA provides Rs 1.5 million per district per year for

innovative interventions under ECCE. Similar components are available under other programmes like DPEP, Lok Jumbish and Mahila Samakhya. However, these programmes reflect only a small component of the entire interventions towards ECCE and funds for these have already been provided for under the respective programmes.

The main intervention towards ECCE is through the ICDS programme, which is being universalised under the Tenth Plan. The total allocation in the Tenth Plan for this programme is Rs 122,470 million.

Table 9.2: Funds Required for ECCE

(Rs. `0,000,000)

Sl. No.	Scheme Component	Outlay
1.	Integrated Child Development Services	10392
2.	World bank Assisted ICDS projects	1293
3.	Training of ICDS functionaries	462
4.	Balika Samridhi Yojana	100
		12247

Fund Requirement for Elementary Education

The programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, as explained in Chapter IV, is the primary vehicle for achieving the Dakar goals relating to elementary education. The programme supports a number of initiatives, details of which are given in Table 9.3.

Based on the projections given above, the total requirement for UEE comes to Rs 980,000 million over a ten-year period till 2010. Of this, the requirement of funds projected for the period till 2007, the target date for universalisation of primary education, is Rs 522,800 million, to be shared between the center and the states. To ensure the sustainability of this funding, the sharing pattern between the Centre and states has been modified for SSA.

The traditional pattern of funding of schemes sponsored by the central government has been to provide resources up to the end of the Five Year Plan period, in which the programme is being implemented. When the Plan period comes to a close, the liabilities on all recurring expenditure are transferred to the state government concerned, which is then expected to provide resources for continued implementation. Such an arrangement has not always been conducive to long-term planning and execution of the EFA programme. For instance, states have been reluctant to appoint teachers on a large scale in view of the fact that they would have to meet the entire expenses of the salaries after a few years.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan breaks away from this established mould by creating a long-term financial partnership between the central and state governments. The sharing pattern between the central and state governments, which was on a 85:15 basis in the Ninth Five Year Plan, would be on a 75:25 basis during the Tenth Plan and on 50:50 basis thereafter. This arrangement ensures long- term sustainable financing, and would allow greater flexibility to states. They will, for example, are enabled to fill in teacher vacancies as per requirement with the assurance that funding, on a reducing basis, will continue to be available from the central government. SSA is perhaps the first programme, which writes in such multi-plan funding support to the states, underscoring the importance of the EFA agenda.

The second and equally significant change is in the method of fund flows. SSA funds will be transferred directly to state implementation societies, which in turn are expected to transfer funds, along with the state share, to bank accounts maintained by village education committees (VECs), school management committees (SMCs), etc. These will

The main intervention towards ECCE is through the ICDS programme, which is being universalised under the Tenth Plan. The total allocation in the Tenth Plan for this programme is Rs 122,470 million.

Sl. No.	Item	Norms	Total Numbers Estimated
1.	Setting up of new schools	◆ Primary school if there is no school within 1 km and ◆ upper primary school to maintain a ratio of 1:2 between upper primary and primary	Number included in the classroom requirement given below
2.	Sanction of teachers	◆ To maintain ratio of 1 teacher for 40 children, ◆ At least two teachers for primary ◆ At least one teacher per class for upper primary	1.15 million teachers
3.	Additional classrooms	◆ A room for every teacher in primary and upper primary ◆ A room for headmaster in upper primary.	1.135 million classrooms (including new school buildings)
4.	Free textbooks	◆ To girls and SC/ST children, if the states have not been providing it.	100 million children
5.	Maintenance and repair grant	Rs 5000/- per school per year.	800,000 schools
6.	Teaching-learning material	@ Rs 10000/- for primary and Rs 50000/- for upper primary	180,000 primary and 85,000 upper primary schools
7.	School grant and teacher grant annually.	@ Rs 2000/- per school and Rs 500/- per teacher	800,000 schools and 4.2 million teachers
8.	Teacher training,	20 days for in-service, 60 days for untrained teachers and 30 days for new teachers	4.2 million teachers
9.	Setting up of SIEMAT	One time grant of Rs 30 million	One per state where SIEMAT does not exist
10.	Provision for disabled children	@ Rs 1200/- per child	8 million children
11.	Setting up of block and cluster resource centers	For every cluster consisting of 10-15 schools and for every block	3000 BRCs and 30000 CRCs
12.	Innovative activity	@ Rs 5 million per district per year.	600 districts
13.	Training of community leaders	2 days training for 8 persons per VEC	6.4 million persons
14.	Research, evaluation and monitoring grant	@ Rs 1500/- per school	800,000 schools
15.	Management cost	Up to 6% of the cost	
16.	Opening of EGS centres	In unserved habitations	180,000

be responsible for expenditure on school construction and maintenance, school and teacher grants, and emoluments paid to alternative schooling teachers (and in some cases to regular school teachers). Such decentralised structures would lead to greater accountability and social auditing.

In addition to SSA, a number of other programmes, viz. DPEP, Lok Jumbish Project (LJP), Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) and Janshala would also be contributing towards UEE. These programmes have a slightly different financial sharing arrangement between the Centre and the states. While DPEP's sharing is in the ratio of 85:15 between Centre and states,

Janshala is 100 per cent centrally funded. Under LJP the Centre funds five-sixth of the costs with the states, while under SKP the sharing pattern is fifty-fifty. Based on this pattern, the total central share comes to Rs 397597.5 million out of the total Tenth Plan requirement of Rs 522,800 million, with the state share being Rs 125202.5 million, as indicated in Table 9.4. Of this total Centre's share, the Planning Commission has provided Rs 212,710 million for the Tenth Plan period. Additional resources would be required to bridge this gap and for this, negotiations are going on with external funding agencies and the Planning Commission for an additional allocation to bridge the gap. (Table 9.5)

Fund Requirement for Mid-day Meal in Schools

The Government of India had launched the Mid-day Meal Scheme in all primary schools in the nineties. Earlier it was restricted to formal schools only, and the supply in most states was in the form of raw foodgrains to be taken home by children. However, the emphasis in the Tenth Plan period is to ensure that cooked food is given to all children instead of mere foodgrains and to extend this scheme to the non-formal system also. The total requirement of funds is as follows:

Table 9.4: Requirement of Funds for Elementary Education at the Centre and State level till 2007

(Rs. `0,000,000)

Programme	Total Outlay	Sharing Pattern	Centre Share	State Share
SSA	46,133.00	75:25	34599.75	11,533.25
DPEP	5,647.00	85:15	4,800.00	847.00
LJP	300.00	5:1	250.00	50.00
SKP	180.00	50:50	90.00	90.00
GOI-Janshala	20.00	100% Central	20.00	0.00
	52,280.00		39,759.75	12,520.25

Table 9.5: External funding during Tenth Plan Period

(Rs. `0,000,000)

Sl. No.	Programme	Allocation during Tenth Plan	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
1.	DPEP	4000.00	858.29	1199.35	1287.00
2.	Shiksha Karmi	47.00	24.46	10.00	15.02
3.	Lok Jumbish	137.00	56.10	50.00	60.00
4.	GOI-UN (Janshala)	20.00	0.00	10.00	13.50
5.	Mahila Samakhya	100.00	8.74	7.75	9.00
6.	SSA	600.00			27.00
	Total	4904.00	947.59	1277.10	1411.52

Annual requirement (200 days) of grains for 11 crore children	2.2 million MT
Cost of foodgrains @ Rs 5500 per MT	Rs 12100 million
Transportation charges @ Rs 500/- per MT	Rs 1100 million
Conversion cost @ Rs 1 per child per day (borne by states)	Rs 22000 million

Total cost till 2007

Centre	Rs 66000 million
States	Rs 110000 million
Total	**Rs 176000 million**

Thus, Rs 176,000 million would be required towards the mid-day meal programme as part of the incentive scheme for primary education.

Fund requirement for Girls' Education and Women's Empowerment

The total fund requirement for the three major programmes of girls' education in the Tenth Plan is Rs 41,080 million, as given in Table 9.6.

Table 9.6: Requirement of Funds for Girls' Education and Women's Empowerment

(Rs `0,000,000)

Scheme	Centre	State	Total
Free Education for girls	1125	375	1500
Mahila Samakhya	250	0	250
KGSV	1200	0	1200
Secondary Education	1158	0	1158
Total	**3733**	**375**	**4108**

Fund Requirement for Teacher Education

Apart from the investment on the quality aspect to be made under SSA, the country would be launching another programme on teacher education. Realising the importance of the programme in ensuring quality, it is felt necessary there should not be any shortage of funds due to sates not being able to meet their contribution in any sharing pattern. So it has been decided that this programme would be 100 per cent centrally sponsored. This would supplement SSA and help it to address the quality-related issues.

The total amount allocated for the teacher education programme is Rs. 9500 million over the Tenth Plan period. Funding under this scheme will take place in two ways. First of all, funds will be allocated on the basis of state perspective plans on teacher education. This will cover funding of DIETs, CTEs, IASEs and SCERTs. Secondly, some funds will be allocated centrally for education of teacher educators and for innovations in teacher education. This will include promotion of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) under the Resource Support Programme. Universities and other resource institutions would be expected to apply to the department for these funds. National level funds will also be used for supervision and resource support of state activities. Funds have been earmarked for each state on the basis of number of students. Depending on its expenditure, a state would be able to access upto 50 per cent more than the amount indicated, if funds are available. Ceilings have been kept for various activities but a state will be able to choose its own priorities.

Education of Out-of-School Youth and Adolescents

The Working Group on adolescents, constituted by the Planning Commission for the Tenth Five Year Plan, recommended the allocation of Rs. 1120 million for the nodal ministry, i.e., the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for the Tenth Plan period to carry out welfare activities for adolescents. Out of this sum, Rs. 1000 million have been earmarked for integrated projects covering a population of around one million adolescents over a period of five years. A provision of Rs. 80 million is recommended for conducting camps for adolescents. Rs. 20 million each has been recommended for administration and research. In addition, UNFPA has committed Rs. 125 million for the scheme. Other ministries such as the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Labour, Health, Department of Rural Development will continue to support programmes targeting adolescents out of their own funds.

In addition to this budgetary allocation, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports would consider tapping other resources like Indian and external funding agencies, local bodies like Panchayati Raj institutions, municipal corporations, individuals and corporate donors, as suggested by the Working Group. The allocations for various schemes

Table 9.7: Allocation for Teacher Education

(Rs. `0,000,000)

1.	Total allocation for Tenth Plan	950.00
2.	Allocation for national level activities	47.5 (5%)
3.	Allocation for NE states	95 (10%)
4.	Amount to be allocated for other states and UTs	807.50

Table 9.8: Allocation for National Level Activities

(Rs. `00,000)

1.	Appraisal and supervision of state activities	
	a) State plan appraisal	48.00
	b) Supervision of states through TERG	122.50
	c) Mid-term reviews, researches and strengthening of ministry	100.00
	d) Support to NCTE for salaries.	50.00
2.	Coordination by NCTE of ICT in computer education	500.00
3.	Resource support programme	3836.50
4.	Management of resource support programme	93.00
		4750.00

of the Ministry of Human Resource Development targeting the education of out-of-school youth and adolescents for the Tenth Plan and Annual Plan 2002-2003 are given in Table 9.9.

In addition, the Ministry is also running adult education programmes, and the Mahila Samakhya programme, which specifically target youth and adolescents. Since the funds for these have already been provided under the respective programmes, they are not being reflected under this head.

The Ministry of Social Justice has also allocated Rs 1000 million for interventions related to adolescence.

Thus, the total fund requirement for out-of-school youth and adolescent is Rs 17,520 million as indicated in Table 9.10.

Fund Requirement for Adult Education Programmes

As per Census 2001, there are about 296 million illiterate persons in the country at present. While these are the primary target group for NLM, the scheme of continuing education targets the whole population of neoliterate and other sections of the society.

Table 9.9: Tenth Five Year Plan Allocations for Education of Out-of-school Youth and Adolescents

(Rs. `0,000,000)

Name of Scheme	10th Plan Period
Vocationalisation of secondary education-	
Centre sector	350.00
State sector	650.00
Community polytechnic	475.00
National Open School (NOS)	65.00
Total	**1540.00**

Table 9.10: Fund Requirement for Education of Out-of-school Youth and Adolescents

(Rs `0,000,000)

Ministry	Centre	State	Total
Youth Affairs	112	-	112
HRD	890	650	1540
Social Justice	100	-	100
Total	**1102**	**650**	**1752**

Table 9.11: Fund Requirement for Adult Education

(Rs `0,000,000)

Scheme	Category	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	Total
Literacy campaigns and Operation Restoration	Central	130	130	110	60	34	464
Continuing education for neo-literates	CSS	670	918	1166	1240	1256	5250
Jan Shikshan Sansthans	Central	40	45	50	55	60	250
Cultural exchange programme	Central	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5
National Literacy Mission authority	Central	3	3	3	3	3	15
Directorate of Adult Education	Central	26	28	30	32	34	150
Population Education in Adult Education	CSS	3	4	4	4	5	20
National Institute of Adult Education	Central	3	3	4	4	5	20
Support to NGOs	Central	30	32	34	36	38	170
Total		**905**	**1,163**	**1,401**	**1,434**	**1435**	**6,340**

The target in the Tenth Plan is to make approximately 100 million persons literate and ensure that about 100 million neoliterates do not relapse to illiteracy. Based on this, the total projections for the Tenth Plan come to Rs 63,400 million. The detailed scheme-wise break-up is given in Table 9.11.

Total Fund Requirement

Thus, the total fund requirement for implementing the National Plan of Action for EFA is Rs 952,770 million as indicated in Table 9.12.

Table 9.12: Total Funds Required for EFA

(Rs `0,000,000)

Sl. No.	Sector	Centre	State	Total
1.	ECCE	12247	0	12247
2.	Elementary education	39760	12520	52280
3.	Mid-day meal	6600	11000	17600
4.	Girls' education	3733	375	4108
5.	Teacher education	950	0	950
6.	Youth and adolescent	1102	650	1752
7.	Adult education	6340	0	6340
	Total	**70732**	**24545**	**95277**

Organisational Arrangements for Planning and Monitoring Programmes
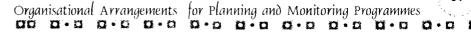
Towards EFA Goals

EFA occupies the topmost priority in the national planning process. To ensure that this priority is translated into action in day-to-day activities, it has been ensured that the organisational set-up and the monitoring structure draw their authority from the highest political levels in the country. While the Prime Minister heads the National Mission for EFA, the monitoring of the progress made under the Plan is being done at the highest level. The importance being attached to the Plan can be gauged from the fact that in the Tenth Plan, of the 11 monitorable targets fixed for the Plan period, three relate to EFA. These are:

◆ All children in school by 2003; all children to complete five years of schooling by 2007.
◆ Reduction in gender gap in literacy by at least 50 per cent by 2007.
◆ Increase in literacy rates to 75 per cent within the Plan period.

The EFA Plan would be implemented through the institutions already established for implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. These institutions would be suitably modified to include elements not included under SSA at present.

Management Structure at the National Level

In order to facilitate convergence, there would be a National Mission having representation from all stakeholders of the programme. This would be the existing National Mission of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, with certain additional stakeholders included to take care of the greater canvas of the EFA plan. The General Council will be headed by the Prime Minister, with the Human Resource Development Minister as the Vice-Chairman. The Chairman of the Executive Committee will be the Minister for Human Resource Development. The Secretary, Department of Elementary Education and Literacy will be the Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Committee. The Joint Secretary (Elementary Education) will also be the Director General of the National Mission of Sarva Shiksha Mission. He/she shall be the Member Secretary of the General Council and the Executive Committee. While the individual elements of the EFA plan would be implemented by the respective line departments already working in the area, the National Mission would play a coordinating and monitoring role. This would also be the highest decision making body as far as the EFA plan is concerned.

State Mission Authority

The State Mission Authority of SSA would be suitably expanded to make them the Mission Authority of EFA. The General Council would be headed by the Chief Minister, and the Executive Committee by the Chief Secretary/ Development Commissioner/ Education Secretary. Involvement of NGOs, social activists, university teachers, teacher union representatives, Panchayati Raj representatives, and women's groups would be ensured so as to give full transparency to the activities of the Mission.

The implementation team under EFA will work within a framework of decentralised management of education with full accountability to the community. The Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) and school level committees will be involved in programme implementation, along with the mainstream structures.

Decentralised Planning and Management

The management structure at all levels will be accountable to the state-specific arrangements for decentralised management of education. The National Policy on Education 1986 had proposed decentralisation as a fundamental requirement for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of educational planning and management and for creating a meaningful framework for accountability. Several state governments have already initiated the process of decentralising the management of primary education. New legislation has been adopted to provide for the changed framework to operate effectively. Some states have also gone for much closer collaboration and involvement of the community in decentralising the system of educational management. The country will continue to work towards the goal of decentralisation by initiating processes of community involvement and gradually shifting the locus for decision making from state to district level and downwards through Panchayati Raj bodies.

This shift in planning and management strategy will also require a large effort to train and continually give support to educational bodies constituted under the urban local governments and PRIs. There is an urgent need to reorient the outlook and role perception of government functionaries. Efforts will be made to reorient the programmes of various resource institutions at national and state levels to meet these requirements. Towards this end, the local-level institutions in education and allied sectors will be strengthened adequately. Besides, it is envisaged that distance education mechanisms, suitably strengthened and reoriented, will play a significant role in the task of building capacities among personnel working at local levels.

District as the Unit of Planning

Traditionally, planning for development of education has been done at the state government level. The National Literacy Mission changed this trend and adopted district level campaign mode. All assessment for action was done from the district. Following this, planning for primary education, particularly under the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), has been firmly anchored at the district level. Keeping the advantages, the country proposes to adopt an integrated approach for planning at the district level for development of education. This approach, it is envisaged, will help identify districts needing more attention and varied types of inputs, thereby tackling the question of equity in an appropriate manner. Movement towards planning at block, cluster and village levels in partnership with NGOs will be encouraged and supported.

While the district will be the basic unit for educational planning, actual plans will be designed with habitations, villages and specific groups and their needs, as the primary focus. The district plan will evolve from the programmes that take into consideration the needs and educational situation of communities at the grassroots level. As has been indicated earlier, action to promote enrolment, retention and achievement of children must be area-based and community-specific so that problems faced at those levels are effectively addressed on the basis of empirically identified needs.

Community Ownership

Community ownership and creating community demand for education would be encouraged to ensure universal elementary education. Increased involvement of the community in education will also improve the quality of education. Higher the demand for education, higher will be the quality. The following steps would be encouraged:

◆ Community participation in promoting enrolment, retention and other aspects of education would be further encouraged. PRIs and grassroots-level structures like VECs, PTAs, MTAs, etc. would become vehicles for community mobilisation.

Box 10.1: People's Education Reports: An Act for Creating Public Accountability for Quality

Jan Shiksha Adhiniyam, or People's Education Act 2002 of Madhya Pradesh is shaped by the vision of education as a collaborative process of the teachers, learners and the local community and the role of the government as facilitating this process towards the twin goals of equity and quality. The Act recognises the right of every child to basic education and seeks to remove impediments to access and participation in schools both by improving delivery as well as by creating social pressure. Parental responsibility for compulsory education up to age 14 is enforceable by *Gram Sabha*. Strengthening decentralisation, the Act lays down clearly the roles and the responsibilities of key agencies: parents, teachers, local bodies and government. A crucial role is assigned to the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to be set up for each school.

The Act aims at fostering processes that helps the school to emerge as a strong unit accountable to the local community of parents. To make planning responsible to the local educational needs, a *jan shiksha yojna* or People's Education Plan emanating from the PTA level is envisaged. A People's Education Report (PER) is envisaged as reporting on a set of indicators that are critical inputs, processes and outcomes, specially learning outcomes school wise, that the teacher puts together and then presents for wide discussion in the collective forum of the PTA, every quarter from where it then goes up to the District and State Government, and annually to the legislative assembly, constituency-wise. Some of the critical parameters in terms of inputs are access, teacher provisioning, qualification, training status, availability of textbooks and other academic infrastructure, and in terms of outcomes are indicators with special emphasis on equity. The aim is to make the public education system accountable to the civil society by inducing transparency and political ownership for what happens in the school and what it delivers and thereby compelling reform. These reports are expected to feed back into the *jan shiksha yojnas* for incremental improvement; thereby creating an organic relationship between planning and evaluation, placing their outcomes in public space for reinforcing people's right and the state's responsibility for better quality education.

- A community-based monitoring system would be evolved with full transparency.
- Community mobilisation through intensive micro-planning and school mapping would be made mandatory.
- Implementation of goals and strategies would be participatory.

Convergence in Management and Delivery of Programmes

With the expansion of the education system in the country, the administrative machinery has also expanded tremendously at all levels. Often, separate administrative structures are found to have a common goal and even common set of activities, for instance in primary education, non-formal education, and adult education. The trend of creating parallel administrative machinery has led to an over-expanded bureaucratic machinery and problems of overlap, where efforts towards coordination are often counterproductive. It is against this backdrop that the goal of integrated planning and convergence in delivery of services would be pursued in three main directions:

- Creation of parallel structures for implementation of different development programmes will be avoided.
- Effort will be made to re-examine the norms and patterns of operation specified under different schemes and projects to ensure greater convergence.
- State governments would be encouraged with adequate support from the Centre to reorganise education management structures so as to achieve greater coordination in planning, and effective convergence in implementation of education development programmes.

While convergence with the education sector is important, there is need for convergence among the education and other departments, particularly those which aim at providing services for improving the quality of life: housing, nutrition, family welfare, poverty alleviation, creation of opportunities for remunerative work, upgradation of returns from existing occupation, diversification of communities' occupational structures, etc. It needs to be required that all these have impact on education, particularly in creating capacity, and willingness for availing the already available educational opportunities and for creating demand for education of children.

Monitoring and supervision

Monitoring is envisaged as a three-tiered activity: monitoring at the local community level, at the state level and the national level. The community, through its representative institutions like village education committees (VECs), has been entrused with the responsibility of ensuring that schools are functioning effectively. Most of the qualitative impressions on school functioning can be effectively monitored only at local level and are difficult to capture either at the state level or the national level. For monitoring the qualitative aspect from the national level, reliance would be placed more on assessing the effectiveness of community-based monitoring at the local level and ensuring that this system is functioning properly. In addition, monitoring at the state and national levels would focus more on the quantitative aspect of both the status of project implementation and the progress made towards the achievement of EFA goals.

The community monitoring system would be operationalised by providing for a greater role for local self-government bodies (Panchayats) in the district, block, village and urban

Box 10.2: National Commission for Children

The government has decided to constitute a National Commission for Children, which would be a statutory body set up under an Act of Parliament to give further protection to children and act as an independent ombudsman for them. The Commission would have certain judicial powers and would guide policy on child-related matters, and take effective steps for review and better implementation of laws and programmes meant to ensure the survival, development and protection of children.

Structure of the Commission

- The proposed Commission will have a chairperson and six other members, a member secretary and other supporting staff.
- The chairperson will be either a sitting or former judge of the Supreme Court or a person of eminence who has done outstanding work in this area.
- The six members would be experts in the field of child health, education, child-care and development, juvenile justice, children with disabilities, elimination of child labour, child psychology or sociology.
- The officers and the staff of the Commission will be provided by the central government.

Functions, Powers and Budget

The proposed Commission will have the following functions:

(a) investigate and examine matters relating to the safeguards provided for children under the existing laws;

(b) present to the central government, annually and at other intervals, reports upon the working of such safeguards;

(c) undertake research and periodical review of policies, programmes and other activities in respect of children and make recommendation for their best implementation;

(d) fund litigation in public interest, involving issues affecting children;

(e) inspect or cause to be inspected any juvenile custodial home, or any other place of residence or institution meant for children, under the control of the central government or any state government or any authority, including any institution run by a social organisation, where children are detained or lodged for the purpose of treatment, reformation or protection and take up with these authorities for remedial action, if found necessary;

(f) inquire into complaints and take *suo moto* notice of matters relating to deprivation of child rights, non-implementation of laws providing for protection and development of children and non-compliance of policy decisions, guidelines or instructions aimed at mitigating hardships to and ensuring welfare of children and provide relief to such children or take up the issues arising out of such matters with appropriate authorities; and

(g) any other matter incidental to the above functions.

areas. The *gram sabhas,* i.e., the general body of villagers, would also be motivated towards taking an active part in the EFA processes. It is envisaged that the local level EFA plan be placed before these bodies at the beginning of every year and the progress made against the plan be evaluated at the end of the year. To facilitate such an evaluation, the chief executive of the local body would have to prepare a report annually on the progress made. This would not only ensure local accountability of the field functionaries, but also enable corrective measures at the local level.

To provide a reliable database for the monitoring process, two kinds of information systems have been developed. One is the Educational Management Information System (EMIS), under which school-level data is collected every year with September 30th as the record date. These would enable measuring of a number of indicators like enrolment, gross enrolment ratio, net enrolment ratio, retention rate, dropout rate, completion rate, repetition rate, transition rate, etc. The second information system being developed is the Project Management Information Systems (PMIS), in which the emphasis would be on

recording the progress made, both in physical and financial terms, towards the implementation of the perspective plans and annual plans.

The country is also conducting the Seventh All India Educational Survey, which would involve detailed collection of educational data from all habitations of the country. This would provide a baseline for the EFA process.

While continuous monitoring would be an ongoing process, this would be supplemented through sending of two supervision missions every year to the states. The supervision missions would have representatives of the Government of India and funding agency (if any). The supervision missions would be expected to visit individual states and look first hand at the implementation of the programme through visits to select districts of the state. The approach would be a holistic one, with emphasis on assessing both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of programme implementation. The missions are expected also to flag the areas of concern, both in programme implementation and also in the general educational scenario in the state. These areas of concern would be also one of the foci of monitoring till these are assessed to be suitably rectified by a future supervision mission.

As it is seen, the task of monitoring and supervision is a mammoth one, requiring considerable effort on a continuous basis. Instead of carrying out this centrally, and having a large establishment for this purpose, professional institutions would be involved in this task. These institutions would be allocated individual states, with which they will develop long-term partnerships. They would not only carry out the task of supervision and monitoring but also act as partners of the states in the implementation of the programme. Accordingly, a list of institutions would be identified for individual states for carrying out this task. While arriving at a pool of institutions, central universities, ICSSR, institutions, university departments of education and other professional institutions having expertise in this areas would be relied on. The emphasis would be on the institution having a competent and committed set of personnel, oriented towards carrying out similar work in the social sector. Generally, each state would have one institution attached to it, except the larger states, which would have two or three institutions attached.

The selected institution(s) would be expected to get reports on the implementation of the approved plan every quarter and send a consolidated report to the central/ state government. They would also be expected to get reports on progress made in achievement of some key outcome indicators like enrolment, out-of-school children, access to remote and unreached habitations, etc., every quarter and send a consolidated report to the central/ state government. They would also make quarterly visits to select districts and make an assessment of the ground reality. And at the end of the year, they would have to calculate the specified monitoring indicators such as GER, NER, out-of-school children, dropout rate, completion rate, transition rate, repetition rate, etc.

The institutions would be expected to launch two supervision missions per year in the months of September-October and April-May. Apart from these activities, the institutions would also be expected to carry out/coordinate research studies pertaining to the areas of concern in the states. These studies would be expected to find the reasons for some of

the problems encountered in the field and suggest solutions to tackle the same. They may also be in the nature of evaluation or impact studies to assess the effectiveness of any specific intervention. At the national level the coordination of the institutions would be done by the national institutions like NIEPA and NCERT.

In addition to the use of institutions for intensive supervision and monitoring, the country would be further using the services of independent auditors for concurrent auditing and financial monitoring. This would be in addition to the requirements of statutory audit.

The Real Challenge is not of Numbers

The new millennium begins with new expectations. The revised framework of the National Literacy Mission proposes to reach a literacy rate of 75 per cent by the year 2007. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which is the flagship programme of the national government, expects to achieve the goal of EFA by 2010 (five years ahead of the international commitment made at Dakar). This would mean that all children (in all states) would complete at least five years of schooling (or its equivalent through non-formal means) by the year 2005; all of them would transit to upper primary schools and complete at least another three years of schooling by 2010.

There is no doubt that the SSA targets are ambitious, surpassing the international expectations articulated in the Dakar Summit, which sets the target of 2015 for achieving the goal of EFA. While one can debate on the relevance of setting such ambitious targets, ignoring the practicability of mobilising necessary physical, financial and human resources, an important point needs to be borne in mind. For the poor and the marginalised, basic education continues to be the only hope and means of redemption. But across socio-economic considerations, a deep sense of desperation is setting in the minds of the people with respect to the capability of the state to meet their educational needs. An urgent requirement is to dispel this sense of despair and re-establish public faith in the state-sponsored delivery mechanisms, be it primary schools or adult literacy programmes. This can be done only through actual demonstration of effectively functioning institutions that produce desired results and meet the aspirations of the society. It is this resolve and determination of all those concerned with EFA in the country to persist with accelerated efforts that holds the key for achieving the goal of Education for All.