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**INDIA**

**SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN**

# **Sixteenth Joint Review Mission**

18<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2012

**Aide Memoire**

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# Acronyms

<b>ALIMCO</b>	Artificial Limb Manufacturing Corporation of India
<b>AWP&amp;B</b>	Annual Work Plan and Budget
<b>ATR</b>	Action Taken Report
<b>BRC</b>	Block Resource Centre
<b>CAL</b>	Computer Aided Learning
<b>CCE</b>	Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation
<b>CTET</b>	Common Teacher Eligibility Test
<b>CTS</b>	Child Tracking Survey
<b>CRC</b>	Cluster Resource Centre
<b>CWSN</b>	Children with Special Needs
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>DIET</b>	District Institute of Education and Training
<b>DISE</b>	District Information System for Education
<b>DP</b>	Development Partner
<b>DoSEL</b>	Department of School Education & Literacy
<b>Ed.CIL</b>	Educational Consultants India Limited
<b>EGS</b>	Education Guarantee Scheme
<b>EMIS</b>	Educational Management and Information System
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EVS</b>	Environmental Science
<b>FM&amp;P</b>	Financial Management and Procurement
<b>GER</b>	Gross Enrolment Ratio
<b>GoI</b>	Government of India
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System
<b>GPS</b>	Global Positioning System
<b>IDA</b>	International Development Association
<b>IGNOU</b>	Indira Gandhi National Open University
<b>IPAI</b>	Institute of Public Auditors of India
<b>IRT</b>	Item Response Theory
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>JRM</b>	Joint Review Mission
<b>KGBV</b>	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
<b>LEP</b>	Learning Enhancement Programme
<b>MCS</b>	Model Cluster School
<b>MHRD</b>	Ministry of Human Resource Development
<b>MI</b>	Monitoring Institutions
<b>MS</b>	Mahila Samakhya
<b>NCERT</b>	National Council of Educational Research & Training
<b>NCF</b>	National Curriculum Framework
<b>NCFTE</b>	National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education
<b>NCTE</b>	National Council for Teacher Education
<b>NE</b>	North East
<b>NER</b>	Net Enrolment Ratio
<b>NGO</b>	Non- Governmental Organization
<b>NIAR</b>	National Institute of Administrative Research
<b>NIC</b>	National Informatics Centre
<b>NPE</b>	National Policy of Education
<b>NPEGEL</b>	National Program for Education of Girls' at Elementary Level
<b>NLAS</b>	National Learning Achievement Survey
<b>NUEPA</b>	National University of Educational Planning & Administration

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<b>OBC</b>	Other Backward Caste
<b>OOSC</b>	Out of School Children
<b>PAB</b>	Project Approval Board
<b>PMIS</b>	Project Management Information System
<b>PRI</b>	Panchayati Raj Institutions
<b>PTA</b>	Parent Teacher Association
<b>PTR</b>	Pupil Teacher Ratio
<b>QMT</b>	Quality Monitoring Tool
<b>RBC</b>	Residential Bridge Course
<b>RCI</b>	Rehabilitation Council of India
<b>REMS</b>	Research, Evaluation, Monitoring and Supervision
<b>RMSA</b>	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
<b>RMG</b>	Repair and Maintenance Grant
<b>RTE</b>	Right to Education
<b>SC</b>	Scheduled Caste
<b>SCERT</b>	State Council for Educational Research and Training
<b>SMC</b>	School Management Committee
<b>SES</b>	Selected Educational Statistics
<b>SFD</b>	Special Focus Districts
<b>SFG</b>	Special Focus Groups
<b>SIEMAT</b>	State Institute for Educational Management and Training
<b>SMC</b>	School Management Committee
<b>SPO</b>	State Project Office
<b>SSA</b>	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
<b>SSHE</b>	School Sanitation and Hygiene Education
<b>ST</b>	Scheduled Tribe
<b>TCF</b>	Technical Cooperation Fund
<b>TLE</b>	Teacher Learning Equipment
<b>TLM</b>	Teaching Learning Material
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>TSC</b>	Total Sanitation Campaign
<b>TSG</b>	Technical Support Group
<b>UAM</b>	Universal Active Mathematics
<b>UC</b>	Utilization Certificate
<b>UEE</b>	Universal Elementary Education
<b>UPS</b>	Upper Primary School
<b>UT</b>	Union Territory
<b>VEC</b>	Village Education Committee
<b>VER</b>	Village Education Register
<b>WSDP</b>	Whole School Development Plan

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INDIA  
SARVA SIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA)  
16th JOINT REVIEW MISSION  
(18 – 28 July, 2012)

Aide Memoire

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*Introduction*

1.1 *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) is a comprehensive and integrated flagship programme of the Government of India (GoI), implemented in partnership with state governments aimed at providing relevant and meaningful education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years age in the country in a mission mode. SSA aims to provide quality education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. The four SSA Goals are as follows:

- i. All children in school.
- ii. Bridging gender and social gaps.
- iii. All children retained in Elementary Education.
- iv. Education of satisfactory quality.

1.2 SSA is a national programme supported by domestic resources, supplemented partially by external funding from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Union (EU). As per the Agreements, the GoI and Development Partners (DP) carry out a Joint Review Mission (JRM) twice a year. The main objective of the JRM is to review progress in the implementation of the programme with respect to SSA's goals and to discuss follow-up actions in the light of the Terms of Reference (TOR) agreed upon for each JRM.

1.3 The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A has come into force with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. SSA has been designated as the vehicle to realize RTE provisions. Accordingly, SSA norms have been revised to harmonize with RTE provisions, and States have established their own RTE Rules. This review in way reflects the progress in policies, interventions and outcomes on the ground in this context.

1.4 This is the Sixteenth JRM of SSA and was held from 18<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2012. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Mission and details of the Mission composition are attached at Appendix 1. This is a desk based review, held in New Delhi, with extensive presentations made by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), SSA State Project Directors and Principal Secretaries, and national institutions such as the National Center for Education Research and Training (NCERT) and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

1.5 The Mission would like to put on record the deep appreciation for the support received from the Department of School Education and Literacy, MHRD, the Technical Support Group (TSG), the national institutions, and the teams from the participating States who made presentations, participated in discussions and provided detailed information to the Mission.

## Mission Objectives

1.6 The JRMs are conducted with an objective of reviewing the progress in the implementation of SSA (and RTE) with respect to SSA Goals, especially the interventions and its results in terms of agreed indicators, and to discuss follow-up action. The JRMs also review the actions taken upon the recommendations made by previous JRMs. The quantitative indicators that show the progress towards the SSA Goals are reported and summarized in the Results Framework (Appendix 3). This Mission assessed the implementation of SSA programme in the context of RTE provisions.

1.7 The Aide Memoire addresses the main topics of this review in six sections. In section I, an overview is provided. In section 2, progress in results and programmes related to Goal 1 and 3 (Access and Retention) are taken up. Section 3 reviews the progress in Goal 2 (Bridging gender and social gaps) and section 4 deliberates various activities related to Goal 4 (Quality). Section 5 reviews Programme Management and section 6, looks at aspects of Financial Management and Procurement.

## Overview

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Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) since its inception in 2001-02 has been the main vehicle for providing elementary education to all children in the 6-14 years age group. It has made considerable progress in universalization of elementary education (UEE). With the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 having come into effect from April 2010, it is now a fundamental right of all children to demand eight years of quality elementary education. Effective enforcement of this right requires that the vision, strategies and norms of the SSA is aligned with the mandate under the RTE and in this respect a revised framework for SSA has been prepared.

Enrolment has considerably increased under SSA, and is now focusing on the better targeting of uncovered and under-covered population. Isolated habitations, educationally backward blocks and districts are being given special attention. Greater flexibility of approaches and concerted efforts are needed to reach out to the 'Out of School Children' (OoSC) including drop-outs, children with special needs, urban deprived, street and working children. Bridging the social and gender gaps in enrolment with regard to SC, STs and minority girls should receive special attention and require contextually relevant interventions. Given the fact that MHRD and several States face serious limitations of funds in implementation of the RTE, which is also leading to staff shortages, innovative ways would have to be found to address resource constraints.

Despite improvements in access and retention, the outcomes for a majority of children continue to be an area of serious concern. The Approach Paper for the 12th Plan admits that nearly half the children in Grade 5 are unable to read a Grade 2 text. NAS (2012) results divulge that students from minority groups, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Categories scored significantly lower in achievement tests than students in the General category. Physically challenged children were also reported to perform substantially lower than the rest of the students in the three subjects (p.113). Concerted efforts are required to ensure that a minimum set of cognitive skills are acquired by all children during eight years of elementary education. There are other important aspects of children's development that need to be focused on by schools, and effectively measured. Unfortunately, till date this has not been achieved. Thus, quality issues and determinants thereof such as ensuring teacher availability, teacher competence and motivation, innovative pedagogy, and decentralised management that impact upon learning outcomes of the children must be addressed on a priority basis.

The issue of monitoring classroom learning is particularly important for children from disadvantaged groups. During recent years, there has been significant improvement in school enrolment of children from all sections of society, particularly from the weaker and disadvantaged sections, although wide gaps in terms of gender, caste, class, ethnicity, religion, region, etc. still persist. However, data on retention, drop-out rates and learning achievements indicates that meaningful school participation and learning of children, primarily from the weaker and disadvantaged sections, who were historically excluded from education, remains an issue of concern. Therefore, there is an urgent need to focus our attention on the classroom and identify

school-based practices and processes that act as barriers to equitable, meaningful school participation and learning of these children.

### *Accountability*

The emphasis in SSA should gradually shift from ensuring enrolment to equity, retention and learning outcomes. According to the NAS cycle 3, more than half of the students in class V could not answer the question, 'How much greater is 555 than 198'. According to PROBE 2, for which a survey was done in 2006/7, though school infrastructure has expanded rapidly in rural North India, about half of the time there is no teaching going on in primary schools. In the entire country nearly 62 per cent of children studying in Class 4 or 5 in a government school could not read a simple story. And more than 80 per cent could not write the answer to a simple question. As per PISA 2009+ results on the basis of testing 15 year-olds from Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, India has been ranked 73rd out of 74 countries.

Years of schooling and grades completed continue to remain an unreliable guide to what children learn and know. While such quantitative indicators are only one kind of measure, they point to serious shortfalls in the manner in which accountability in elementary school education system is established.

So far there has been less focus on accountability for assessing learning outcomes and children's performance. This needs to be corrected. Therefore, this Mission has focused on the issues of quality outcomes, failing which it will be difficult to wean students away from low quality private schools and tuitions.

During our discussions with the SSA State Project Directors (SPDs), two significant facts were brought to our notice. First, enrolment in government and aided schools is falling and this trend is likely to continue in the near future. This is primarily due to popularity of private unaided schools even in backward districts of poorer states. The PEO study of the Planning Commission (2010) also noted that though child population registered an increase, enrolments declined either due to shift to private schools, decline in overaged children enrolled in the schools or children dropping out due to lack of upper primary schools. Second, some SPDs mentioned that there are cases of under-utilisation of the existing infrastructure. Instances were given of newly constructed rooms that are lying vacant for want of students. While this may not be true of all States, we need to make a radical shift in our emphasis on improving quality of outcomes so that the trend of migration from government to unaided schools can be arrested.

In order to build accountability, there is a need to state what we mean by 'quality' and what we wish to identify as the desired outcomes from a public education system. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 suggests that quality education facilitates all round development of children. Schools must provide learning experiences and space for construction of their own knowledge and ideas. The areas traditionally labeled as co-curricular or non-scholastic such as Arts and Physical Education have been made core curricular areas. The NCF recommends 'holistic' learning instead of fragmenting learning as scholastic and non-scholastic or curricular and non-curricular. The manner in which children are engaged in learning and assessed at school also has a



bearing on the development of their character, personality and values. Therefore along with ensuring adequate educational infrastructure and qualified human resource, there is also a need to focus on educational outcomes and develop structures of accountability around these outcomes, but in ways which do not threaten or demoralize students in any way, only make the institutions more accountable for quality.

There is hence a need to look closely at this question of perspective of quality and relevant education and the manner of its public provisioning. Apart from strengthening of human capabilities and motivational factors in teaching and learning, it requires systemic innovations in this area, alongside affordability and access to better quality education for the poorest and the most marginalized groups.

In the spirit of CCE, which is meant to continuously monitor children's progress, learning outcomes need to be defined, measured, collected and understood at the school level. For instance, for a class III student, for language, the columns could indicate whether the child can recognise letters, words, or read sentences/paragraphs. This information needs to be collated, collected and shared at the State level and compared regularly with third party assessments to verify its accuracy. This way each teacher's performance can be assessed, communicated to her and the parents, and taken into account for her professional development and future career.

The contribution of BRCs and CRCs to improving learning outcomes seems rather weak. Planning Commission's evaluation of SSA (2010) had the following to say about them:

*'Institutional structures such as the Block resource center and cluster resource centres which have been created to provide academic guidance, conduct teacher training programmes and monitor the functioning of the schools are challenged by manpower shortage and poor communication linkages with schools. 77% of the BRCs and 45% of the CRCs in rural areas were located more than 3 km from the schools. In Assam<sup>1</sup>, each CRC has a catchment area of 44 schools and in urban slum areas in Uttar Pradesh each CRC caters to 48 schools. Only 10% of the schools had received academic guidance from CRCs located in the urban clusters.'*

MHRD too, in its 'Framework for Implementation' published in 2011, has expressed similar concerns about the weak quality of school supervision by BRCs and CRCs. We quote from the Framework:

*'7.8.1 During the last few decades school supervision has grievously suffered due to insufficiency of staff and administrative neglect. The effort made under SSA, through the establishment of BRCs and CRCs has improved matters marginally, but the overall situation has remained essentially unchanged. As a result, functioning of schools has deteriorated and quality of the teaching-learning process has shown no improvement. Improvement of quality of education is a pre-requisite of successful implementation of the RTE Act.'*

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<sup>1</sup> In Assam, the total number of BRCs is 145 and CRCs is 2473. The average number of schools covered by CRCs is between 19-20 schools– this includes aided school as well ( as on 31 march 2012).

*7.8.2 Periodic inspection / supervision of schools to observe infrastructure and facilities and the administrative aspects is critical. In addition, a proper system of academic and curricular support has to be developed to serve the purpose of continuing professional upgradation of teachers and to see the school syllabi and learning evaluation systems are operationalized as expected.'*

The Mission wholeheartedly supports MHRD's efforts to improve vertical accountability of the system through engagement of BRCs and CRCs in ensuring better quality of learning outcomes.

#### *Producing authentic and credible data*

There often appears to be wide divergence between the government data on outcomes and that emanating from donors or professional organisations. This results in dilution of accountability, which can never be institutionalised if the system gets away by denying the unsatisfactory state of teachers' output in government schools.

For instance, the Ed.CIL study concludes that 77.8% teachers in primary schools and 82.6% in upper primary schools were found present during school visits in UP, and some of the teachers who were found absent, could be on leave and others could be on duty elsewhere. However, according to a World Bank study (Public Participation, Teacher Accountability, and School Outcomes, November 2008) the average rate of teacher attendance was 65% in UP but the average rate of teacher activity (i.e., active engagement in teaching-related activities) was only 27% in UP. No more than a third of the teachers were actively teaching during survey visits. In terms of student learning: a) barely 12%-15% of sample students in MP and UP in class IV could read sentences and words, and an even lower 5%-7% could write sentences and words; b) in mathematics, only 12%-19% were able to do two-digit additions with and without carryover, 7%-11% could do subtraction and less, 4%-6% could do multiplication and less, and 4-5% were able to do division and less. Similar figures are given in the ASER data, which has never been discussed in the previous Mission reports, though quoted by the Planning Commission in its reviews<sup>2</sup>.

Similarly the MHRD data on OoSC is at variance with the NSSO 2007-08 data, according to which there are 24 million OoSC in the age group 6-14, comprising 14.6 mn children in the 6 to 10 age group and nearly 10 mn in the 11 to 13 age group. The proportions are 11.8 and 13.8 of the total number of children in the two age groups. Bihar, UP and Rajasthan account for 60% of all OoSC in the country. Almost a quarter of SC and Muslim children are not in schools. Admittedly this data is a bit dated, but surely the decline in the recent past has not been so steep as to make this data irrelevant. The MHRD figures for 2012 on OoSC that were given in the presentation made to us on the 18th July are just about 3 million, of which 1.8 million and 1.2 million are in the age group 6 to 10 and 11 to 14 respectively. The Ed.CIL/ IMRB data gives this number as 8.1 million.

It is noted that the MHRD has undertaken a large scale third party evaluation to assess teacher absenteeism and children enrolment in government. It may be suggested to include private schools

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<sup>2</sup> These studies are not necessarily comparable given different set of objectives, methodology and grades being assessed.

and their performance as well as out-of-school children by disaggregated groups such as SC, ST, Muslim as well as CWSN.

Mean Years of Schooling is another measure of school efficiency. In India, for those who are above 15 years of age, Dr Montek S Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, in his paper published in Economic & Political Weekly (May 21, 2011) has stated the figure has gone up from 4.20 in 2000 to only 5.12 years in 2010, suggesting significantly high drop-out rates.

As regards quality, the Mission would like to quote from his article:

*'The real problem is that improved access in terms of enrolment and even retention in school does not necessarily mean comparable access to education across income classes adjusted for quality. The quality of education in private schools is widely perceived to be higher than in government schools, and since children from lower income groups go predominantly to government schools which are free, opportunities may be less equal than they seem. The latest Annual Status of Education Report (2010) shows that 36% of the children in Class III-V in rural areas cannot read texts meant for Class I, and 41% cannot perform simple arithmetic exercises meant for Class I. What is particularly worrisome is that these surveys show only a small improvement between 2007 and 2010, too small to be of any comfort. Poor quality of education reflects well-known problems relating to the difficulty in recruiting qualified teachers and equally important, the difficulty in enforcing accountability among teachers once recruited.'*

There is a need for the government as well as policy makers at different levels to be responsive to and cognizant of the new researches, achievement surveys (such as the ones quoted by the Planning Commission) and feedback being provided on the quality of education and systemic functioning by independent nongovernmental agencies. It would be useful to recognize these studies, compare them against the government studies and databases and to try to analyse the reasons for the mismatch between the data. There is a need to move towards a more consultative mode, studying them and using them to an advantage. Monitoring of quality through well-structured systems and processes needs to be taken up immediately that not only provide quantitative data but also reflect process factors in education that critically impact the quality of outcomes.

It is important at this critical juncture to ensure that quality measures take the forefront of the discourse of elementary education in India. The MHRD needs to create a forum for consultation on quality issues at the national level that would help large-scale dissemination of quality initiatives as well as sharing of best practices between the states and from relevant international experiences. The Task Force on Quality (a sub-group of the National Advisory Council on RTE) recently created by MHRD may consider adding this to their ToRs. At the national level, MHRD should reactivate the National Resource Group comprising of experts, policymakers, nongovernmental representatives etc. to debate and discuss issues related to curriculum planning, pedagogy and evaluation methodologies. The state resource groups which have been created need to be made more effective and functional.

With the large-scale roll out of RTE, this Mission would like to focus particularly on the issue of accountability for ensuring that systemic functioning is robust, institutional structures are effective and responsive to constantly emerging needs, teachers are present in school and are accountable for the results of students, and schools are functioning optimally. This requires generation of data - both at micro and macro levels- which is authentic, transparent, and widely disseminated, establishing oversight mechanisms that review such information on outcomes periodically, and building a system of incentives and dis-incentives correlated with performance. There needs to be a shift from input-based approaches towards accountability for outcomes especially at the school level. Teachers' performance, assessment of school and institutional performance with incentivizing of good performers needs to be undertaken to bring about a healthy and constructive competition amongst teachers and schools to perform better and ensure improved student learning levels.

### *Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation*

The Model Rules under RTE spells out specific norms and guidelines for how schools ought to be structured and provisioned. Its requirements seem largely in the form of 'input norms' and some 'process norms'. While these may be enabling factors, these do not in any way ensure that educational goals, including basic learning outcomes in key scholastic areas, are indeed to be met. This applies equally to government schools and private schools. The Mission feels concerned that the RTE does not seem to explicitly hold the government schools accountable for non-compliance with even the 'input norms'.

There is a need to correct the perception that CCE attempts to do away with tests, and that children may move to higher grades without the appropriate learning levels being achieved. Promoting the child to the next grade by default every year may increase the learning and achievement gaps. Such a child may not be able to keep pace in the next class and tends to lose interest. In the absence of clearly laid down procedures and resources for remediation to bridge this gap, the child is likely to be mechanically promoted up to Class VIII and then may become a drop out. This is likely to happen in most government /municipal /rural schools where children are first generation school goers with parents being unable to support remediation.

While the spirit behind the no-detention policy can be appreciated, unless it is supported by adequate resources and training for remedial help especially in govt. and aided schools, this may be counter-productive. In the long run, in the absence of standards of teaching and appropriate modes of assessment at the national level, students are not measured on the same scale in a context-sensitive manner, eventually resulting in skewed examination results. Standards for teaching and learning need to be developed for elementary level. Assessment is viewed not only as a final product (summative), but also as a continual process (formative) that provides pupil performance data to teachers and students, regarding their progress towards achieving the standards. Teachers' competencies must also be assessed based on how much the class as a whole has progressed between two milestones such as academic years. The school assessment may be done on both academic as well as non-academic parameters as envisaged in the NCF which can be adapted as per local context. The concept of continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) has been a major guiding principle right from the time of the National Policy on Education (1986). However, there is

an absence of clarity around the concept of CCE. CCE does not mean not evaluating or not testing the child's learning. The system and the stake-holder needs to know about the learning levels of the children and their progress as it also reflects on systemic functioning, and is a measure of accountability to ensure that large funds allocated to the project show attributable and quantifiable results. The Mission is aware that CCE has been introduced in 23 states and suggests that NCERT may evaluate its implementation in an effort to bring it in line with the Source Books on Assessment.

### *Peoples' participation*

100 million of the 134 million primary school-going children in India attend a public school in a system that has struggled to strengthen teacher and school accountability and produce learning outcomes. The costs of a weak system have been low levels of learning for generations of students. So far the decentralized governance model to oversee school performance, with communities having oversight powers over schools and teachers through school committees, has not been effective in extracting accountability and making schools deliver acceptable learning outcomes<sup>3</sup>. According to a World Bank study (Does Information Improve School Accountability? Results of a Large Randomized Trial, Priyanka Pandey, Sangeeta Goyal and Venkatesh Sundararaman, December 2011) one of the key reasons contributing to ineffective functioning of school-based management committees has been lack of knowledge among communities—committee members themselves are unaware of how committees are formed, who the members are, and what controls they have over the school. PROBE 2 also found that these committees had not been effective in improving the levels of teaching activity. Once again, unequal power relations interfered with the presumed channels of accountability. Power in most committees rested with the president (generally the sarpanch) and the secretary (generally the head-teacher), who need to be held accountable in the first place. Teacher absenteeism and lack of accountability has to be addressed by not only by greater community involvement in management and ownership of schools but also through better oversight mechanisms and measurement of achievements of each student on the basis of which teacher's performance should be assessed, as already recommended in this note.

Planning Commission's evaluation of SSA (2010) had the following to say about the school committees:

*'Community ownership of schools which was envisaged to be the backbone for the successful implementation of the programme at the grassroots level has met with partial success as most village education committees took a ringside view of school activities. While VECs in Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh and Rajasthan reported that they were involved in monitoring of schools, infrastructure improvement and improving enrolment, meetings were held on quarterly basis. In Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu meetings were not conducted on a regular basis. None of the VECs were involved as much with appointing para teachers (except Andhra Pradesh) as*

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<sup>3</sup> The Mission notes that with the introduction of RTE, the former Village Education Committees of SSA have been recently replaced by School Management Committees (SMCs), the composition, role and responsibilities of which are carefully defined. The current status remains in flux as the Act is yet to be fully implemented, however, the efforts of MHRD in particular the 'Shiksha ka Haq' campaign indicates a strong initial effort in this regard.

*with infrastructure improvement (80%). More than half of the VECs were concerned about fund matters. Parents' role as primary stakeholders has been limited as only 50% of the parents in the rural and 45% in the urban schools were aware of the existence of PTA.*

The responsibility for effective implementation rests with the school headmasters as community mobilization/ownership has not gained ground and involvement of Panchayati Raj institutions in management of schools is prevalent only in a few states. The role of School Management Committees (SMCs)/Parents Teacher Associations (PTAs) are partial at best and there is a need for them to engage more substantively in the non-monetary school activities such as improving educational quality, monitoring teacher and student absenteeism. For this, they would require significant capacity-building.

In a field study (EPW, Apr 14, 2007) of UP, it was found that people in such committees rarely focused on the issue of children's learning. The most frequently raised issue and the issue around which there was the most animated discussion was scholarships. The second issue that attracted attention was the new government midday meal programme. Actual learning levels attracted the least attention, and the facilitators had a difficult time steering the conversation away from scholarships and school meals to the broader issue of learning.

Because of several practical constraints the task of ensuring teachers' attendance and quality cannot be left solely to the village level education committees. Such committees even where they are active are involved in construction works and physical infrastructure and leave the learning aspect to the teachers and head masters. Many members from disadvantaged and vulnerable sections are often under awe of the school authorities. Whereas contract teachers appointed by the panchayat are more responsive to people's needs, regular teachers do not consider themselves as accountable to the village. Therefore, whereas all-out efforts should be made (through untied direct grants to the school committee, organising more effective training programmes, grading<sup>4</sup> schools on the basis of parameters that are amenable to change through local initiative, etc.) to improve peoples' sense of ownership of the school, for several years to come one should not dilute vertical accountability, to be enforced by the government system through capturing authentic data and reviewing it with the teachers from time to time.

### *Low-fee-charging unaided Private Schools*

Entry of more and more private schools charging low fees into the educational landscape across the country has been a reality in recent years. Often students are enrolled in government schools, but are physically present in private schools. According to a study done by Ed.CIL (Study of Students' Attendance in Primary & Upper Primary Schools) the overall attendance rate of students at primary level is 68.5%. The states having less than 65% attendance rate are Bihar (42.2%), Rajasthan (62.7%) and Uttar Pradesh (57.4%). The Bihar, Haryana and Andhra Pradesh SPDs told the Mission that they attributed the decline in enrolment in government schools to the mushrooming growth of private schools. Such schools offering mainly scholastic education of variable quality are

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<sup>4</sup> According to the Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) Study, schools are graded in Andhra Pradesh as 'A' 'B' 'C' or 'D' based on their performance which improves teacher accountability.

mushrooming despite the availability of free-of-charge government schools. As our analysis elsewhere in this report shows, the decline in enrollment in government schools cannot all be attributed to the rise in private school enrollment because the former is larger than the latter. However, the rise of private enrollments is unambiguous.

A study needs to be done why these schools of poor infrastructure are being demanded by parents. Some of the factors could be: better teacher attendance, personal attention to each student and testing of their homework by the teachers, scholastic learning is faster, and greater emphasis on English. In each case, there are implications for SSA. For example, if it is true that personal attention is important to parents and to learning, is this being promoted through training programmes funded under SSA and if so are SSA-funded teachers being held accountable for their classroom practice? There are two broader implications for SSA. First, if parents' perceptions of private schools are incorrect, for example, with respect to opportunities for higher learning achievement or the importance of adequate infrastructure, then how can SSA promote better informed parental choice given the wealth of data gathered under the Programme and the role of village/community level institutions? Second, if the shift of enrollments is a signal that the quality of education in government schools is inadequate, then how can SSA resources be more effectively spent (especially since per pupil spending is increasing)?

Moreover, there is another potential challenge for SSA, as the various provisions of RTE come into effect. Of particular importance are specific norms and standards for school infrastructure<sup>5</sup> prescribed in the RTE Schedule. These norms are applicable to all schools and are undoubtedly desirable for creating a positive learning environment. Since the norms are being seen as prerequisite to obtaining 'recognition without which all such unrecognized' some schools – and perhaps many low-fee private schools – will cease to exist after a certain time period.

These provisions are intended to apply also to government schools, even though under the present system these schools do not require any formal recognition. Hence they could continue to exist without proper amenities, without any pressures to reform or change due to absence of any legal/pecuniary consequences for non-compliance. The accountability for this lack of compliance is unclear, given the joint Centre-State responsibility for programme implementation under SSA. If government schools are closed, this will exacerbate supply problems. If they are not, this lack of accountability and non-compliance of norms in government and aided schools will not bring improvements in the existing system, since this segment of schools remains the largest proportion of schools. Hence there is an urgent need to provide sufficient funds in the budget, and monitor it periodically, so that all government and aided schools are able to comply with these norms in a time bound manner.

Low fee-charging private schools are likely to be hit hard by the RTE norms and standards. These schools (on an average, charging monthly fee of Rs. 50-120 in rural areas and up to Rs. 250 in urban areas) will typically not be in a position to meet the infrastructure requirements specified in the

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<sup>5</sup> An all-weather building consisting of: At least one classroom for every teacher and an office-cum-store-cum-Head teacher's room; Barrier free access; Separate toilets for boys and girls; Safe and adequate water facility to all children; Kitchen where mid-day meal is cooked in the school; Playground.

Act. Many of the urban schools are located in slums inhabited by low income households, and do not even have the space to build the necessary infrastructure. Shutting down schools that do not meet the required norms and standards, will place an additional burden on SSA funds at a time when the overall demand for primary education is still greater than supply. If all low-fee-charging private schools were to shut down, the government schools would not be able to cope with the numbers as private schools cater to more than 30% of our children and a 50% closure rate will put 15% of our student population out of school. This is particularly so in urban areas that cater to migrants and in slum areas / new settlements etc. If there are not enough schools, this could also increase drop-out rates. At the very least, this suggests that States enable a gradual transition process to meeting the RTE norms, with continuous monitoring. If poor quality of outcomes in government schools is the main factor behind the popularity of private schools the answer lies in improving quality of outcomes and not in shutting down the private schools. In the long term a responsive public school education system is the best answer towards providing a quality and equitable education to all.

Some states like Andhra Pradesh informed the Mission that they have been able to close as many as 130 private schools that are not RTE compliant. The Mission emphasizes that quality standards need to be met both by private as well as government schools. It therefore does not seem a very good idea to penalize private schools by closing them, thereby denying access to education to the deprived sections in that area. This is also contrary to what is stated in the 12th Plan Approach Paper, 'In the Twelfth Plan, possibilities will have to be explored for involving private sector more meaningfully to achieve the objective of expansion and quality improvement.' The government should be open to competition from the private sector and endeavor to improve its own performance rather than close down private schools which often cater to the poor and not-so-rich sections of society.

These issues need to be deliberated in depth to find creative solutions to provide continued and better access to quality education for all sections of our society.



# Key Recommendations

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## *Access and Retention*

- *In the context of RTE, States should carry out fresh initiatives to identify the actual number of OOSC.*
- *NUEPA should finalize the definition / criteria for dropouts within the first week of September so that the new definition/ criteria could be used for collecting information within the first week of September for DISE 2012-13,.*
- *MHRD / EdCIL should analyze all independent sources of data on elementary enrolments in the country, especially the National Sample Survey data and triangulate the information emerging from various sources to understand the emerging trends in school participation and its underlying equity characteristics.*

## *Closing Gender and Social Gaps*

- *KGBV's mandate is to include the most disadvantaged girls. Therefore girls with disabilities need to be included and their needs catered to within KGBVs. A focused strategy needs to be developed for ensuring transition from primary to upper primary for SC, ST and Muslim children with specific attention to school factors, including classroom practice.*
- *Teachers need to be oriented to develop a positive attitude towards indigenous languages and cultures specifically in the context of tribal languages and cultures.*
- *The Taskforce on Curriculum and Pedagogy constituted by MHRD should examine the current practice and curriculum differentiation within States and develop a framework for adapting curriculum for CWSN with an emphasis on children with MR and MD.*
- *State evaluation of Inclusive Education programs at all levels (institutional and teacher performance as well as student performance) to be conducted to measure effectiveness of mainstreaming, home-based education and school-readiness programmes.*
- *ALIMCO must provide child-specific aids and equipment to CWSN. A guideline for assessment procedure and maintenance of aids and equipment provided must be developed.*

## *Education of Satisfactory Quality*

- *Early reading is a matter of serious concern. States are requested to take up Early Reading and Early Mathematics programs seriously and on priority. States should take advantage of innovative materials and approaches developed by NCERT and other academic institutions to enhance the learning of children in early grades.*
- *The training being imparted to STP teachers should be reviewed and strengthened. This should allow the articulation of long term strategies and a plurality of specific programme outlines,*

*all within a common understanding of the nature of teacher preparation and continued support.*

- *States should in a decentralized and flexible manner give priority to enriching teacher training/support programmes at the CRC / BRC level taking local needs into account.*
- *The National Resource Group may be revived and made more functional with adequate resource support.*
- *Before the 17<sup>th</sup> JRM is undertaken, the MHRD may organize a National Consultative Meet on implementation of RTE, inviting policy makers, NGOs, private school providers, SMC members and teachers to understand the concerns around RTE implementation and prepare a Plan of Action to remedy the genuine issues raised.*
- *The comparison of findings from national assessments such as NAS and ASER and smaller scale assessments and research studies to understand the similarities and differences in findings to identify common areas for improvement.*
- *There is a strong need for a fully resourced National Assessment and Evaluation Centre.*

### *Programme Management*

- *Mainstream institutions at the national, state and district levels need to be strengthened with additional funding and human resources. They should then be made responsible and accountability for results. Academic authorities at national and state-level as designated by the RtE have to be empowered so that parallel structures are eliminated from the system. These institutions should be mandated to undertake consultation with a wide range of stakeholders to draw upon the best in the country.*
- *Planning and appraisal processes especially at the state level needs to be provided a lot of emphasis and attention. An analysis of the expenditures against the budget provisions indicates that there is an immense need to develop the capacity in the states to better prioritize their activities with great care. Over budgeting and budgeting for non-critical areas needs to be avoided to ensure parsimony in expenditure. Capacity building in these areas for the state governments needs to be undertaken immediately.*
- *The concept of innovation under SSA needs to be evaluated very carefully. Independent evaluation needs to be undertaken to study whether funds being disbursed under innovation component actually have a component of innovation in them, or have they been disbursed for mainly mechanical norm based activities. Some of the best practices, especially in collaboration with the civil society such as through Mahila Samakhya on community mobilisation, should be widely disseminated.*
- *There is a need to ensure that there is continuity in decision-making systems at the state level. State Project Directors need to have a minimum term of three years. Just as there is a lock in system for funds being provided to the state implementation society, there should be mechanisms to ensure that the tenure of the SPDs is 3 years and this needs to be incentivised by providing greater weightage to states that have continuity of SPDs through larger fund allocation.*
- *MHRD may advise states to evolve integrated data capture formats for capturing data on related schemes (including those from private schools) and appropriately analyze them for informing policy and use. States should look at rationalizing required data in order to reduce the burden at the school level.*

- For the 17<sup>th</sup> Joint Review Mission, the Mission should engage with NCPCR and certain SCPCRs during state visits.
- The Development Partners should continue to be associated with the SSA programme.

### *Financial Management and Procurement*

- Inform the states, as they start their AWPB preparation process, the likely budget available from MHRD. This indicative amount should be based on available evidence from budget discussions, rather than the desirable amount based on State's needs.
- With increasing scale of the Program, MHRD may consider a Financial Management Improvement Plan specifically targeting the weaker states, which in case of SSA are also the large spending states.
- The expertise of the State Finance & Accounts Service officers could be most effectively utilised to man the Finance and Accounts wings for professional management.
- MHRD should follow up with States to ensure that all procurement plans are hosted on the respective websites by mid-August 2012. MHRD should brief the 17<sup>th</sup> JRM on the action taken on the recommendations and observations made in the IPAI reports. MHRD should follow up on these and take appropriate action.

The mission commends MHRD and the states on the progress that has been made with regards to the recommendations of the 15<sup>th</sup> SSA Joint Review Mission. Specific follow-up remarks by the Mission on the various "Actions Taken" are detailed in the Annexe.

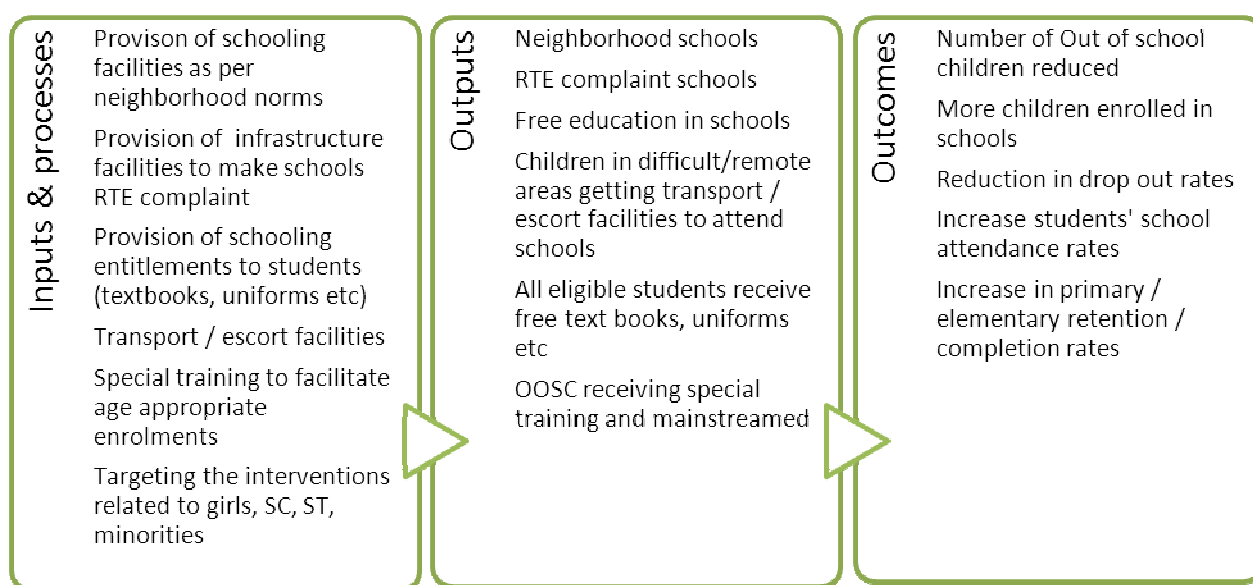
In addition to specific recommendations based on the findings of the 16<sup>th</sup> JRM, there are a few areas that the Mission feels require specific follow up or merit on-going attention from the Ministry from the 15<sup>th</sup> JRM. These include the following:

- (1) **There continues to be a critical need for consensus among States on the definition of 'dropout' in order to allow proper estimation of Out of School Children for reporting purposes.** The Mission was pleased to hear of the activities of States in trying to get a more accurate picture of out-of-school children, the work commissioned from NUEPA to develop a common definition of this category and the study commissioned by MHRD to update the 2009 study on out-of-school children. These activities offer an excellent opportunity to make some further progress in this area. In particular, the Mission recommends that the definition being developed by NUEPA and the one to be used in the study be the same, so that consistent over-time data can be gathered. In addition, the Mission recommends that any definition developed must be readily usable by States, including through their existing data collection system (such as the Child Tracking System being introduced in a number of states). Use of the Adhaar ID system is also recommended.
- (2) **The efforts of States to specify grade-wise milestones of children's learning should become benchmarks and points of reference for the implementation of CCE.** States have made considerable progress in this area, but their efforts should be supported further by NCERT as the Mission notes considerable confusion with the interpretation and implementation of CCE. Separately, the Mission requests a timetable from the NAC task force constituted to provide recommendations on the modifications required in syllabii for implementation of CCE.

- (3) **There is a need to understand more about how the NCTE norms and guidelines for training of untrained teachers are being understood and interpreted by States.** Though these guidelines make it mandatory for each State to take the approval of NCTE before starting any training program, it is unclear how these guidelines are being implemented, therefore the Mission requests a specific timetable be given for the completion of this work.
- (4) **The on-going activities of States around developing comprehensive and integrated plans for curricular reform should be situated within a comprehensive and integrated plan that ensures institutional strengthening, readiness and capacity at all levels of implementation.** The Mission suggests that MHRD guide the States to develop plans for curricular reform that include the strengthening and engagement from the block and cluster levels to the larger community.

## Goal 1 & 3: All Children in School & Attend school regularly till they complete primary / elementary school cycle

The Mission feels it is necessary to look at access and retention related indicators in the light of the outcomes envisaged with respect to these goals, the outputs to be created (as per the RTE/ SSA norms) to achieve these outcomes, and the activities/ processes involved in the creation of these outputs using the available inputs. In order to spell out the review in this Aide Memoire, the following logical framework is used for access, equity and retention related goals.



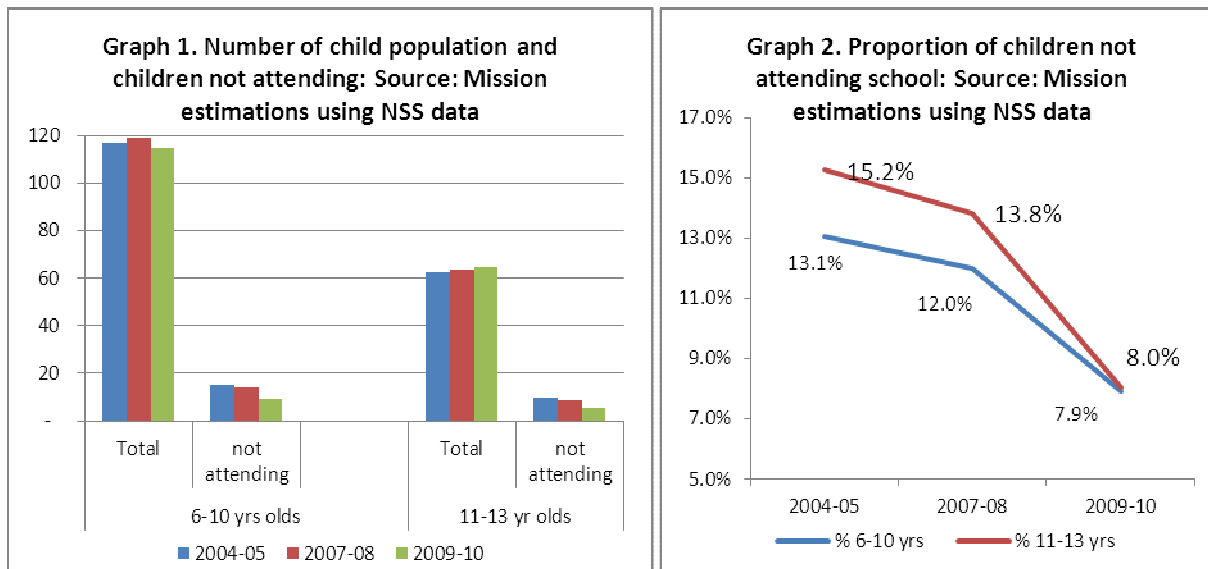
### Progress in Outcomes

**Out of School Children:** As per the data reported by the States during the AWP&B, the number of OOSC is only around 3 million (out of 201 million children in the age group of 6-14 years). This accounts for only 1.5% of total child population. There is no doubt that this is gross underestimation since the average annual dropout rate of 6.1% in 2010-11 to 2011-12 alone would mean 12 million children (out of 193 million enrolled in elementary grades in 2010-11 as per DISE statistics) dropping out in a year. This under-estimation of OOSC seems to be emerging from the States' mechanism of collecting data on OOSC using Village Education Registers and absence of regular updating of the same as well as the definitions used to consider a child as out of school or enrolled.

In order to get a better sense of the trends in population growth and participation in education, an analysis of NSS rounds in recent times (61<sup>st</sup> round in 2004-05, 64<sup>th</sup> round in 2007-08 and 66<sup>th</sup> round in 2009-10) are used here. The advantage of NSS data<sup>6</sup> is that the definitions are comparable

<sup>6</sup> NSS defines current attendance in the following manner: "It will be first ascertained if the person is currently attending any educational institutions (government or private) or not. Persons who are registered

across rounds (and hence for the years compared) for all States. The broad trends emerging during the last 6-7 years shows that child population in 6-10 years are declining while for 11-13 years age group it is still increasing; the number of those not attending is declining faster; still, on an average around 8% children in 6-13 years age group are not attending schools on a regular basis in 2009-10. See the graphs below.



For the purpose of better targeting and planning and to facilitate achieving the goals set by RTE, it is important that the number of OOSC should be estimated more accurately. The independent study to estimate OOSC to be commissioned by MHRD this year is expected to provide realistic estimates of the magnitude of the problem. However, the use of existing abundant information like NSS, should be promoted proactively.

**Enrolments:** The DISE data shows that there have been steady increases in the enrolments at upper primary level, while the enrolments at primary have been either stagnating or even declining in recent times (see graph below). There could be several reasons for decline in primary education enrolments, including: (a) decline in the child population to be enrolled (as evident from decline in projected child populations using Census 2001 data and also NSS data); and (b) reduction in the over-age and underage children attending primary schools (as more children enter schools at an appropriate age with few late entrants and even fewer repeaters). Another reason could be dropouts, though declining, are sizable enough to reflect in the declining enrolments at primary level.

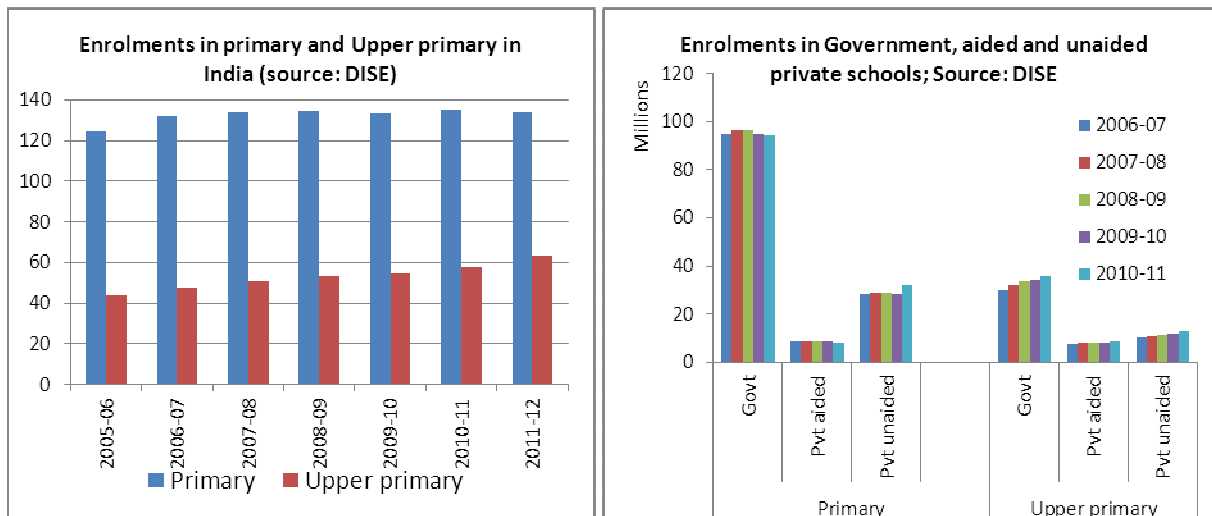
The decline in primary enrolments is more evident in government schools. This is highlighted by States and PAB review meetings (as evident from the PAB minutes; for example, PAB minutes of ANI, AP, Tamil Nadu etc). This is often juxtaposed against the increase in enrolments in private unaided schools. A lot of times, the conclusion drawn from such evidence is that children are

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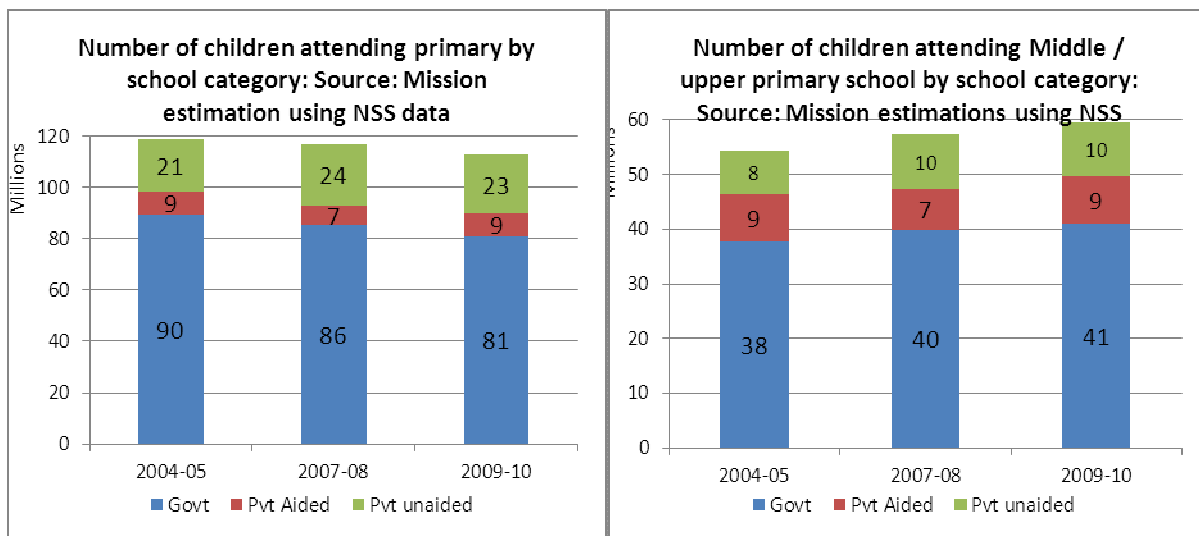
for any regular correspondence courses or distance education courses for a stipulated period at the end of which, are allowed to appear in the examination for the course, **will also be** considered as 'currently attending'. Persons who are awaiting results will be considered as 'currently attending'. However, it is to be noted that what is considered in NSS is the status of "current attendance" rather than "enrolments" and the response is entirely subjective to what the respondent perceive about the attendance of the child in question. However, due to its uniformity in data collection, we are using it here for broad trend analysis.

shifting out of government schools and are enrolling in private schools. However, this need not be entirely true. The analysis by Mission of various data sources show that the increase in private enrolments is not commensurate with the decline in government schools, highlighting that the decline in enrolments in government schools at primary level are not entirely due to children shifting to private schools, but rather due to the various factors mentioned above. In fact, the evidence from NSS 64<sup>th</sup> round data on education (2007-08) shows that around 92% of children remain in the same school and of the 8% who change schools, only 2% move from government to private schools, and 1.4% move from private to government schools and the rest, move within the same type of schools. The maximum change in schools happen when children move from last grade of the primary section to the first grade of the upper primary section.

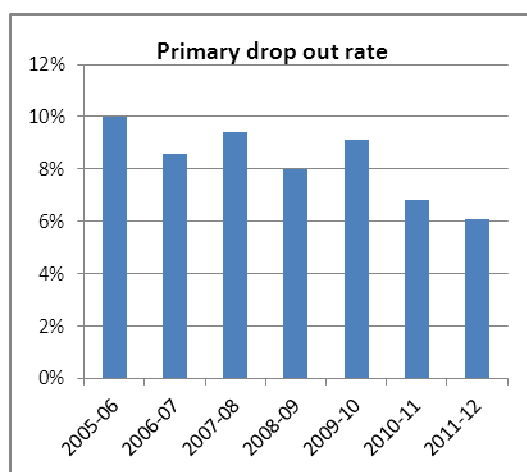
Moreover, the children from poor and vulnerable backgrounds largely attended government schools (for example, around 87-88% of the children in the lowest expenditure quintiles attend government schools. The share of those who attend government remained the same in spite of the increase in the number of attending schools. However, in the middle quintile, the attendance in government schools declined from 73% to 60% during the period (Mission’s analysis of NSS rounds)). While enrolments in government schools at primary sections are declining, enrolments at upper primary sections have been on the rise. See the graphs (using DISE data) below.



The above trends are corroborated by the NSS data as well. See the graphs using NSS data below.



**Schooling /Internal Efficiency Indicators (dropout, retention and completion rates):** The annual average dropout rate estimated using year to year dropout shows that as of now, around 6% children left primary grades in the year (see graph below). The grade to grade dropout rates are highest after grade V and then between grade 1 to grade 2. It is to be noted that in as many as 23 States /UTs, official age at entry is before 6 years, and in many States children who enter grade 1 before their eligible age repeat the grades or drop out. The cohort retention rate at primary level is only 73% (2010-11), which means that around 27% of those enrolled in grade 1 have either dropped out or repeating grades and have not reached grade V. Of the 73% who completed primary, only 85% enter upper primary grades.



One of the problems with the data collected at present by DISE is the lack of clarity and uniformity in defining what constitutes a dropped out child. The Ministry informed the Mission that NEUPA has been asked to develop uniform criteria to collect data on dropouts. The Mission would like to urge the NUEPA to develop a paper on the same by September 1<sup>st</sup> week so that the 2012-13 data collection (as on September 30, 2012) will be able to collect record data accordingly.

**Primary / Upper primary School completion:** Often, the lack of data and confusion about the definition / estimation procedures hamper looking at this important information. The Results Framework uses the definition of the number of students attending the last grade of a cycle divided by the number of children in the single age cohort that is supposed to complete that education cycle. According to the 201-11 DISE, the Gross Completion Rate (GCR) is 102%, which is an increase of 9 percentage point's increase from 93% in 2008-09. Using a different definition of the number of primary completers among 12-14 years age group (age specific primary completion rate), the primary completion rate is estimated using NSS data here. In 2009-10, primary completion rate is estimated to be 81%. Similarly, analyzing the upper primary completion rate among 15 -16 years old show that upper primary completion rate was 71%. The figures using the same definition was



65% for primary completion and 57.7% for upper primary in 2004-05 (NSS 61<sup>st</sup> round, Sankar, 2008).

**Student Attendance Rates:** The last nation-wide study carried out on this issue was in 2008, and a new nation-wide study is in progress. The last study showed that student attendance rate was only 68.5%. Many States have been reporting student attendance rates of more than 90% in their proposals (Annex II, Fact Sheets of PAB minutes documents). This random, unrealistic estimation are of no use for improving educational outcomes or for ensuring accountability. The States may benefit from using different sources of data available at their disposal and analyzing them. For example, the reports by Monitoring Institutions have been consistently reporting on the low student attendance rates, especially among children from disadvantaged groups. It is not enough to look at attendance rate as an average observation figure, but detailed analysis of the nature of absence needs to be analyzed. This is all the more important in the context of quality since children who are chronically absent would require a different set of teaching –learning mechanism than children who are absent only sporadically.

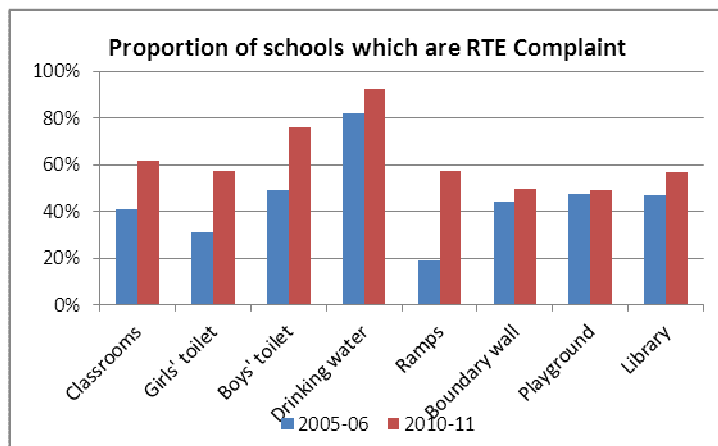
### **Progress in Outputs and Activities/ Initiatives:**

In terms of physical access to primary education, SSA has largely met the goals. At upper primary level, there seems to be some gaps, which needs to be re-assessed as per neighborhood norms. Since the beginning of SSA, 35608 primary and upper primary schools have been sanctioned (200,902 primary and 155,179 upper primary schools) till 2011-12, of which 96% of primary and 95% of upper primary has been made operational. Till 2011-12, around 131000 EGSs were upgraded to primary schools, with only 700 odd EGS remaining in Arunachal Pradesh. The States which are yet to operationalize sanctioned primary / upper primary schools are UP, Rajasthan, Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal.

As per RTE's access provisions, around 303 residential facilities were made operational for sparsely populated school-less habitations and for children without adult protection in urban areas, and around 40000 children are using these facilities. As per the States reporting, around 1.85 million children were provided with special training in 2011-12 out of which around a million children were mainstreamed into age appropriate classes. Around 16 states have developed TLMs for age appropriate enrolment of out of school children through Special Training. While there are wide variations in the approaches to Special training across States, which could be argued to be suitable as context specific interventions, it is important that some evaluations of these training programs and its effectiveness in retaining children mainstreamed in the grades is worth as it is still early stage and there is definitely scope for improvement.

While the States /UTs are using different methods and strategies for identification of OOSC (for example, use of Child Tracking Systems by Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, MP and Rajasthan, use of Help Lines in urban areas in Chhattisgarh, AP, Maharashtra etc), especially those who are urban deprived, homeless and children at risk, there are large numbers of OOSC not counted and hence not reached out through any interventions. For the year 2012-13, the States together are targeting to reach out to 1.8 million children who is currently not in school in the age group of 6-10 years and 1.15 million children between the age group of 11-13 years through special training.

A large number of schools are yet to be fully RTE complaint (see graph below) and it seems unrealistic to assume that they will be able to do so by the end of the deadline of March 2013 as promulgated by the RTE Act. However, the States need to be encouraged to meet these goals in a



timely manner by exploring resources beyond what is available from SSA. In this regard, convergence with other departments that provide these services should be encouraged.

### Summary of Progress in Access and Retention goals

- ✓ The official SSA data (VER) and estimations using independent surveys like NSS shows that there is overall decline in out of school children, though the estimations

using VERs indicate the huge underestimations

- ✓ The overall decline in child populations and improvements in age appropriate enrolments resulting in decline in grossness in enrolments are leading to decline in overall enrolments at primary levels.
- ✓ Upper primary enrolments have been increasing over the years, indicating more children completing primary and joining the next level of education
- ✓ Enrolments in government schools at primary have been declining reflecting the general decline in primary enrolments. There have been increase in enrolments in private schools; however, the private sector increase is not in commensurate with decline in government school enrolments.
- ✓ Enrolments in upper primary in government and private schools have been increasing; however, the increase is much more assertive of the role of government sector.
- ✓ The analysis of student attendance issues show that with better analysis of existing data, a lot more information to inform the planning of retention strategies could be generated and used.
- ✓ Issues in dropout rate definition causes inaccurate and uninformed estimation of dropout rates and thus, the picture about out of school children.
- ✓ The access and equity goals remain unfinished agenda and needs more careful definitions, estimations and planning and implementation of interventions

### Recommendation

- *In the context of RTE, States should carry out fresh initiatives to identify the actual number of OOSC.*
- *The Mission urges NUEPA to finalize the definition / criteria for dropouts within the first week of September.*
- *The Mission recommends that MHRD / EdCil analyze all independent source of data on elementary enrolments in the country, especially the National Sample Survey data and triangulate the information emerging from various sources to understand the emerging trends in school participation and its underlying equity characteristics.*

## Goal 2: Bridging Gender and Social Gaps

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The Mission appreciates the efforts made towards identification and enrolment of children from marginalized social groups, minorities, and children with special needs (CWSN). The OOSC data (MHRD 2001-12) highlights that children from socially disadvantaged groups are likely to drop-out of schools at upper primary levels. For example, 15.6% of SC children, 12% of ST and, 10.8% of BC children are out of school in the age group 11-14. These children continue to be over represented amongst those who attend school irregularly and demonstrate lower learning levels as compared to other children. The Monitoring Institutes and National Achievement Survey, Class 5 (NCERT, 2012) have reported that SC and ST children continue to perform poorly in subjects such as language, mathematics and EVS. Children with physical challenges are also reported to perform poorly. Although the NAS found no significant difference in the average achievement of Class 5 girls, gender disparities continue to exist, particularly related to SC, ST, Muslim and CWSN girls. Bridging the social and gender gaps in enrolment and retention across the elementary years needs to receive special focused attention. Specific strategies need to be developed towards inclusion and retention of vulnerable children, particularly in the educationally backward blocks (EBB).

### *Bridging the gender gap*

The overall progress made under this goal has been significant, and are manifested in improved and consistent gender parity levels across the country and the results from the recent NAS find no significant difference in the learning achievements of boys and girls. All the states that the Mission interacted with, have reported positive trends across primary and upper primary levels. Gender concerns are also actively taken up through gender sensitization programmes. In West Bengal, this component is part of the teacher training module. The state of Uttar Pradesh report that fifty percent of recruitment was that of female. In Karnataka, 50% of posts are reserved for female candidates at the time of recruitment.

The gender gap at primary level has reduced to 3.18 percent in 2010-11, from 4.08 percent in 2003-04. In the case of upper primary, the reduction is considerable, from 8.8 percent in 2003-04 to 3.22 percent in 2010-11. The retention rate of girls at primary level is 74.00%. The transition rate of girls at upper primary level has improved considerably from 74.15% in 2003-04; to 85.48% in 2010-11. The number of out of school children has also reduced to 4.6% in 2009. There are however 36 districts with high gender gap. These districts are found in the states of Mizoram, Haryana, J&K, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Punjab.

### *Concerns*

Presently the understanding of gender is centred on issues of access and provisioning of facilities. It is important that decision makers at different levels are sensitized to understanding gender and other equity issues across the board. The whole range of stakeholders including teachers, head

teachers, cluster resource persons and block resource persons are coming into close contact with communities through school management committees, as more and more children from diverse backgrounds are entering the system.

### *Recommendations*

*The Mission recommends States further strengthen specific strategies towards gender mainstreaming within curriculum and teacher training with a focus on the most disadvantaged children entering the system. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV)*

The programme of KGBV has emerged as one of the key interventions for promoting the participation of girls particularly from marginalized communities. Today, 3501 KGBV's have been operationalised with a total enrolment of 3.42 lakh (31% SC girls, 25% ST girls, 29% OBC girls, 7% Muslim girls and 8% BPL. 2604 KGBV are implemented by SSA Society, 183 by Mahila Samakhya, 404 by other government agencies and 310 by NGO's. There are concerns however of low enrolment of Muslim girls in KGBV's. The states that report low enrolment of Muslim children include, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

As per the stipulations of the RTE Act, Andhra Pradesh is providing an opportunity to girls with special needs in twenty one districts. A total of 42 KGBV's are functional in these districts. The special provisions for children with special needs in inclusive KGBV's include reservation of twenty seats for the hearing and visually impaired. Two female special educators are also posted in each IKGBV to teach the children. With the increasing demand from parents of children with special needs, the state is planning to assign inclusive status to more KGBV's in remote areas in four to five districts.

### *Recommendation*

*KGBV's mandate is to include the most disadvantaged girls. Therefore girls with disabilities need to be included and their needs catered to within KGBVs. National Programme for Education of Girls in Elementary Education (NPEGEL)*

The scheme is targeted to educationally backward blocks where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average, as also in blocks that have at least 5% ST population and where the ST female literacy rate is below 10%. 637 blocks of 161 districts have been identified for NPEGEL Programme. 8473 clusters are being developed into model cluster schools under this programme. The total coverage of children under this programme 4.12 crore. 42,183 Model Cluster Schools are functional in 3297 educationally backward blocks.

### *Recommendation*

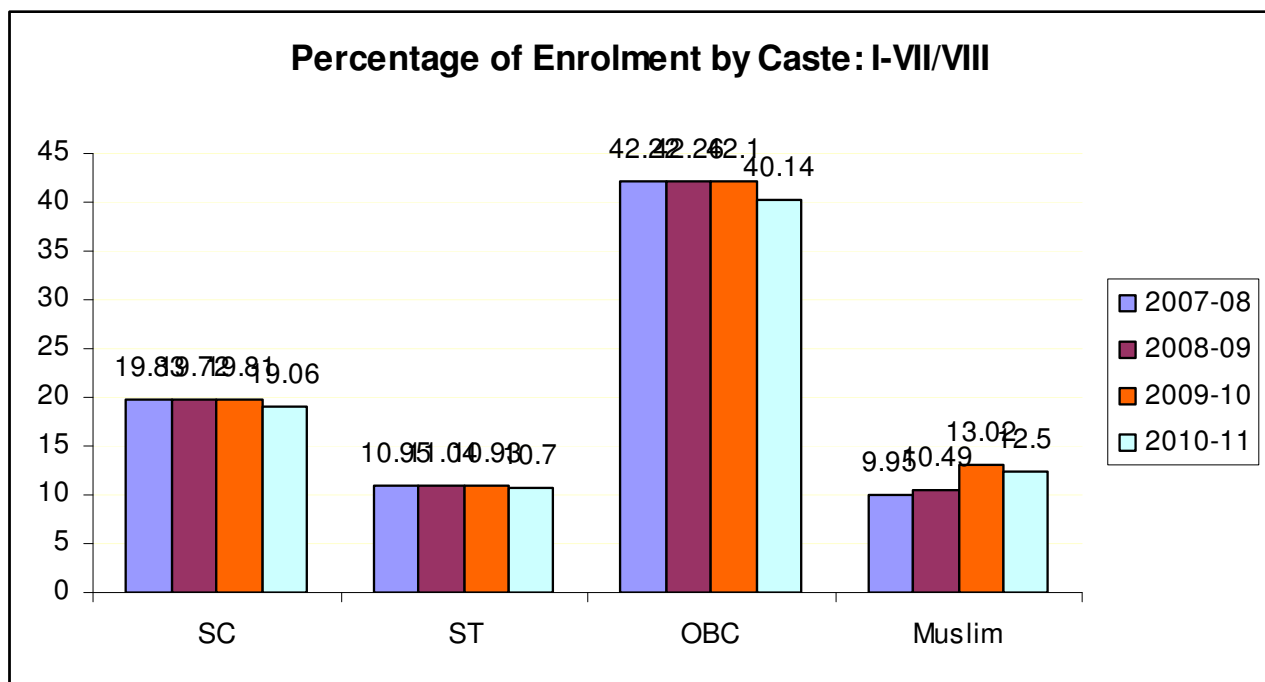
- *The Mission noted that NPEGEL has become a routinized scheme – there is an immediate need to make it more contextualized and relevant for empowering girls.*
- *MHRD may consider an impact evaluation to consider NPEGEL's impact on reducing gender gap and on the empowerment of girls.*

### *Trends in bridging gaps in enrolment, attendance, retention and learning achievements of SC, ST and Muslim children*

The Mission appreciates the efforts made towards identification and enrolment of children from marginalized social groups and religious communities. Across states several initiatives have been taken towards social integration of SC, ST and Muslim children in schools through orientation of teachers, translation and printing of textbooks in Urdu and different tribal languages, inclusive seating arrangements in classrooms, efforts at integration and linking the content of textbooks to the knowledge and experience of children from socially disadvantaged groups. In addition, special focus blocks and districts have been identified by MHRD and state governments for concentrated efforts towards inclusion of excluded social groups and religious minorities.

### *Concerns*

The Mission notes with some concern that enrolment for SC and ST and Muslim children in the 6-14 population has reduced. Among the social categories, the enrolment rate is lowest among the scheduled tribes. As per DISE data, the enrolment of SC children has reduced from 19.81% in 2009 to 19.06 in 2010-11. Similarly enrolment for ST children for the same period has reduced from 10.93% to 10.70%. Enrolment of Muslim children has also reduced from 13.02% in 2009-10, to 12.50 in 2010-11 as reported in DISE (see table below).



The Reports of Monitoring Institutes observe lower levels of attendance by SC, ST and Muslim children across most states. It has been reported that in Kolar and Chikkabura districts of

Karnataka, children belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes absent themselves relatively more in comparison to other children. In Kolkata district schools it was reported that SC, ST and Muslim children do not attend the class regularly in nine case (20%). The problem of low attendance was found to be more among Muslim students. In Uttar Pradesh it was reported that the variation in the pattern of attendance was quite high in respect of Muslim boys. Orissa has also reported irregular attendance of SC, ST and Muslim children as compared to other children in all three districts where schools were visited and surveyed.

Reports of Monitoring Institutes also observed that there were noticeable gaps in learning achievement levels of SC, ST and Muslim children in almost all the states. In Sambalpur district, Orissa it was reported that in 20% schools, there was a noticeable gap in the learning achievement level of SC and ST students. In Chikkabalapura and Gadag districts of Karnataka, gaps in the learning achievement were reported in 3% of the schools among SC, ST and Muslim children. Similarly, gaps were found in the learning achievement level of children of different social groups in three schools (6%) of North 24 Parganas, and in seven schools (16%) of Kolkata district. Several other studies carried out by the World Bank as well as The National Achievement Survey (NCERT, 2012) have reported similar findings.

In several of the schools, it was observed that students from backward classes and economically deprived sections do not feel very free to communicate with teachers.

Some of the Monitoring Institute Institutes have reported that in some instances in Rajasthan, teachers have discriminated among children in food and water related practices.

### *Out of School Children: need for disaggregation*

The disaggregated information for the out of school children along caste and religious categories is yet to be compiled for 2012-13. The Human Development Report (HDR) 2011 notes that across social groups, the incidence of out of school children was highest among the ST's. Among religious communities, the highest incidence of out of school children was that of Muslim children. Based on the calculations from NSS Database 64<sup>TH</sup> Round, the Report observed that the proportion of out of school children among Muslims was much higher than SC, ST and OBC children (2007-08). Bihar and Orissa have the highest incidence of Out of school children in the country (HDR 2011).

### *Recommendations*

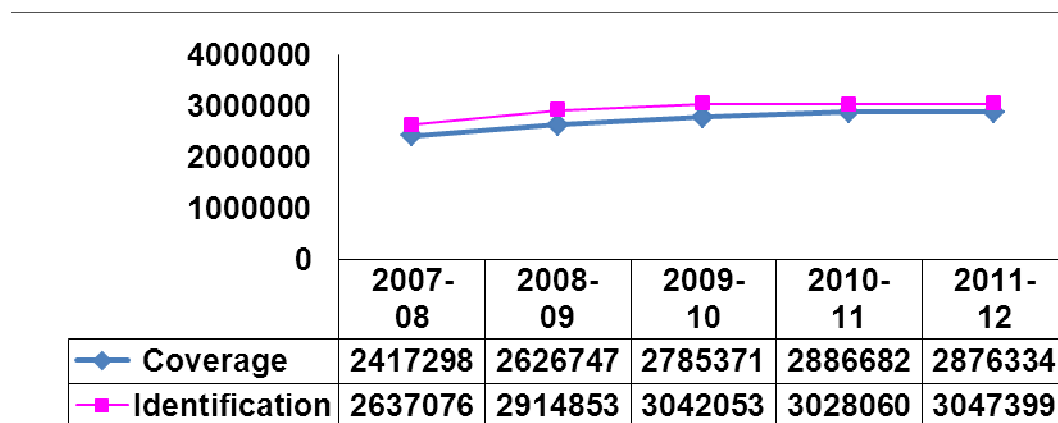
- *A focused strategy needs to be developed for ensuring transition from primary to upper primary for SC, ST and Muslim children with specific attention to school factors, including classroom practice.*
- *The ongoing study on disparities and exclusion needs to be expedited to meaningfully inform strategies to address discrimination and exclusion.*
- *Teachers need to be oriented to develop a positive attitude towards indigenous languages and cultures specifically in the context of tribal languages and cultures.*

## Children with Special Needs

India has made considerable progress in the last few years in enrolling a large number of children with disabilities into mainstream schools, with impetus provided by the 'zero rejection' policy adopted by SSA, ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and the Right to Education Act (2009).

The Mission appreciates the efforts made towards identification of children with disabilities which currently stands at 3,028,060. Out of this 2,646,011 children or 87% of identified children are reported to be enrolled in schools, 78,599 are covered through the School Readiness Program, and additional 162,072 through home-based education. However, the number of CWSN identified decreased from 3,042,053 (2009/10) to 3,028,060 (2010/11) corresponding to a diminution of 13,993 children and show an increase once again in 2011-12. Consequently, the percentage of coverage of these children has increased from 91.5% to 95%. This is a marked improvement over the All- India Survey of out-of-school children conducted by the MHRD in 2009 which revealed that 1.52% of the child population (6-13 years) were disabled i.e. 28.97 lakh children, and 34.12% children with disabilities remained out-of school (SRI-IMRB, 2010). Analysis by types of disability revealed that 58.57% children with multiple disabilities, 48.03% children with intellectual impairment and 36.96% of children with speech impairment remained out-of-school.

**Table ..... Identification and Enrolment of Children with Disabilities**



The Mission also appreciates the efforts taken to give special educators and resource teachers the same status as regular teachers. The efforts to set up Resource Centers in Districts according to the guidelines of RCI, have resulted in some of these being upgraded as training center-cum-study centers e.g. in Tamil Nadu. The training manuals developed by SSA-RTE covering various disabilities, is also a commendable step.

Based on the presentations made by states such as UP and AP during the 16<sup>th</sup> JRM, regarding their initiatives towards mainstreaming of CWSN in Special training camps and KGBV's – it is obvious that most states have been able to mainstream children with disabilities such as visual impairment and

hearing impairment but a large majority of those with multiple disabilities and intellectual impairment remain excluded from mainstream education.

The National Achievement Survey, Class V (NCERT, 2012) demonstrates that pupils classified as physically challenged performed significantly lower than rest of the students in Language, Mathematics as well as EVS.

### *Challenges*

-Statistics regarding children with disabilities remain problematic, since the last Census did not include children with autism, learning disabilities etc. Census 2011 results are awaited and with revisions in the Persons with Disability Act, 1995 being formulated. Census 2001, results also highlighted the higher prevalence of disability in rural areas as well as amongst SC's. Exclusion, poverty and disability are linked and the poorest children in disadvantageous locations are likely to be most marginalised, since special teachers are not going to be available.

- While a large number of CWSN are being enrolled, learning achievement levels of children with disabilities are not being addressed adequately as demonstrated by NAS, 2012. Children with disabilities require differentiated curriculum to suit their short and long term goals as stated in IEP's. This is not being done effectively and no changes are evident in classroom transactions, since regular teachers have not been trained to address individual learning needs.

- The 'Evaluation Report of the Impact on SSA-RTE intervention for CWSN in 12 States/UT' (Ed.CiL 2012) has stressed, "Relevant curricular adaptations, along with ability appropriate TLMs should be the mainstay of I.E.... It is time now to invest in the major exercise of curriculum adaptations. BRTs are trained for special schools and have no clue about inclusive schools. They do not even know the curriculum let alone how to adapt it." It is time now for IE to move beyond enrolment and retention into ensuring every child's diverse needs are met.

- The recruitment of special resource teachers is a huge challenge in many states particularly in the North East. At this point in time there are a total of 432 training Institutions which are recognised by Rehabilitation Council of India(RCI) and the total number of registered rehabilitation professionals in the country are approximately 72,487 (inclusive of rehabilitation professionals, multi-purpose workers and special educators). A study commissioned by RCI has highlighted that in 2007, the total number of special teachers requirement for all categories of children with disabilities stood at 1, 79,116 (IAMR, 2009)- a shortfall of approximately 1.4 lakh special teachers.

-Braille books were reported to be in shortage in several states.

- The Evaluation Report (Ed.CiL 2012) has highlighted that in some states, "ALIMCO products have known limitations; supplies are delivered very late, are substandard in quality and are not child-specific. but rather one size fits all"



## Recommendations

- *Robust questionnaires based on the International Classification of Functioning (ICF, 2001) must be utilised to identify CWSN across all states in the subsequent household surveys.*
- *The mission recommends a task force to address issues of curricular adoption and differentiation.*
- *It is critical to sensitize the peers and teachers in residential homes as well as schools and Special training camps to accept CWSN as 'children first'.*
- *State evaluation of Inclusive Education programs at all levels (institutional and teacher performance as well as student performance) should be conducted to measure effectiveness of mainstreaming, home-based education and school-readiness programmes.*
- *Better linkages and partnership with National Institutes (those for example, belonging to MSJE) and NGO's should be established so that cross disability expertise as well as capacity to print Braille books is developed within the respective states / regions.*
- *The Taskforce on Curriculum and Pedagogy constituted by MHRD should examine the current practice and curriculum differentiation within States and develop a framework for adapting curriculum for CWSN with an emphasis on children with MR and MD.*
- *In-Service training for BRTs and special teachers needs to focus on pedagogical transactions and curriculum content within inclusive classrooms.*
- *ALIMCO must provide child-specific aids and equipment to CWSN. A guideline for assessment procedure and maintenance of aids and equipment provided must be developed.*

## Goal 4: Education of Satisfactory Quality

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The revised SSA Framework suggests that quality will be improved through improvements in core components and enabling components. There is indication that considerable work has been initiated in these areas.

RTE is based on sound principles of the rights based approach for each child to access quality education. It is therefore the responsibility of the system to ensure that this is provided to each child. The 16<sup>th</sup> JRM therefore has looked at quality with accountability to include institutional accountability at different levels, school accountability, teacher performance and community engagement. Allocation of resources and its appropriate utilization for providing quality education deserves special attention as it informs the critical components that are critical determinants of quality. There needs emphasis on accountability in terms of outputs besides inputs and processes. Teachers' performance, assessment of school and institutional performance with incentivizing of good performers may be undertaken to bring about a healthy and constructive competition amongst teachers and schools to perform better and ensure improved student learning levels. The Gujarat *Gunotsav* exercise, the Rajasthan quality assurance program, the Orissa *Samiksha* initiative are some efforts that need to be consolidated and the results analyzed for implementation.

Accountability at the school level is based both on the availability of enabling conditions and the activation of a process that promotes the holistic development of the child. These include material resources, a qualified teacher, and a school climate supportive of the desired curricular process (as 'inputs') and a curricular orientation marked by flexible plans, implemented in child friendly manner utilizing materials (textbooks, supplementary materials), enriched by the application of CCE and guidance from resource personnel. The discussion under Goal 1 indicates that there are different types of classrooms for which the goals need to be differentiated. These are:

- (OoSC) freshly admitted, dropouts re-inducted into the system : many of these are in STPs for varying periods;
- Recently mainstreamed (post STP) and needing continued support; and
- Children with persistent low levels of learning moving to higher classes; and
- Children whose progress is at or above satisfactory levels.

Many of the children in the 'educationally vulnerable' categories above are likely to be served by teachers with less than adequate training and also be in multi-grade classrooms. The numbers of children from SC, ST, minority groups would also be high.

The Mission suggest that identifying these highly vulnerable categories as a priority target for pedagogy linked programmes and new initiatives would allow the formulation of specific, relevant and realistic/achievable at different levels of the system. Monitoring and thus accountability related to the quality of education can be made more focused and purposeful.

With this perspective, the discussion in this section draws special attention to the adaptation of general programmes/activities to make them more in tune with needs of STP and multi-grade classrooms in particular. This covers teacher preparation and support, instructional materials, classroom transaction, assessment. This proposal entails activity essentially at local levels. Learnings from these exercises can enrich the larger programme in a bottom-up process.

### *Curriculum Renewal*

Curriculum renewal and the development of textbooks in the light of NCF has been undertaken by seventeen states (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh) and currently an additional 7 states are in the process (West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Punjab). Four states (Arunachal Pradesh, Delhi, Goa and Jharkhand) and Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar, and Chandigarh have adopted NCERT textbooks. Kerala, Bihar, Chattisgarh and Orissa have also developed their own State Curriculum Frameworks.

The mission was impressed with the curriculum development process followed by the state of Tamil Nadu, which undertook a major initiative of empowering and enabling its academic institution, the SCERT to undertake quality initiatives with vigor and adequate resource support. After serious introspection, Tamil Nadu has undertaken a comparative analysis of NAS results; the studies conducted by Pratham (ASER); an independent NGO and the states' own assessments undertaken by the SCERT. The tests conducted by the state showed varied results and the state concluded that it was not performing as well as it was reported many studies- 11% of Class V children in the sample study showed have poor reading skills in Tamil and 32% of Class V children showed poor reading skills in English. Empowered with these tests, the state reviewed its activity based learning program to make it more child-friendly and relevant for the teacher, reducing ABL activity cards very substantially (in Tamil, there were reduced from 874 to 39 and in mathematics from 914 to 40).

- *The mission recommends that each state may undertake an exercise to analyze their NAS results and have them validated through other state-based tests and research by independent agencies to come to their own assessment of where they stand in order to take effective remedial measures based on the results. This may help states generate accountability at different levels.*

### *Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation*

Twenty-three States are in the process of developing their schemes of CCE. NCERT has developed the 'Source Books of Assessment' for classes 1 to 5 that provide one model of CCE. Both Kerala and Andhra Pradesh are using these source books. Uttar Pradesh has developed a handbook on CCE along the lines of the NCERT source books which is being tested in their schools. The state presented a good example of developing a workable framework for CCE, where the handbook was developed by teachers and emphasizes the assessment of learning progress on specific tasks. Assessment seemed to be integrated into the teaching learning process, which provides feedback

for improving teaching and learning. Karnataka has implemented the Nali-Kali program which focuses on activity based learning and continuous assessment is in-built in this approach. Tamil Nadu has implemented Activity Based Learning and continuous assessment is inbuilt in this as expounded in the NCERT Source Book. The Mission strongly feels that assessment needs to be linked to teaching and learning and continuous feedback needs to be used to improve teaching and learning to inform children and parents about the learning progress of the child and should be based on authentic assessment tasks. Moreover, it may be suggested that a study be conducted on the efforts made by states on implementing CCE to provide constructive feedback.

### *Learning Enhancement Programmes*

The Mission was unable to find evidence of any comprehensive interventions to address the development of early reading and mathematics abilities of children. For example, although funds have been provided to 34 states for Reading Improvement Programmes, the Mission noted that only Andhra Pradesh has set up a reading cell and developed reading material, while Gujarat has developed 19 early readers and 'Lekhan Sarjan' writing books. Similarly, Uttar Pradesh has initiated Early Reading Program in 2011-12 and developed materials, building on the curriculum, graded books, and teacher training manuals piloted by NCERT in Mathura.

NCERT has also developed Mathematics kits for classes I and II and teacher training materials for improving mathematics learning in early grades. Again, the Mission was not unable to report evidence of States implementing the work of the kit, nor are they developing their own intervention. Andhra Pradesh has reported use of Science and Maths kits at the upper primary stage, and Chandigarh reported release of funds for procuring Science and Maths kits.

### *Recommendation*

- *Early reading is a matter of serious concern (ASER reports that only 28% of Class 2 children can read simple words. At Class 3, 8.5% of children cannot even read letters). States are requested to take up Early Reading and Early Mathematics programs seriously and on priority. States should take advantage of innovative materials and approaches developed by NCERT and other academic institutions to enhance the learning of children in early grades.*

### *In-Service training of teachers*

All the states and UTs provided training to teachers except UT of Dadra & Nagar Haveli. The physical target achieved is 83 percent. It is encouraging that the states are aware of the limitations of the older schemes and are taking steps to develop revised programmes. The mission notes with appreciation the completion by the NCERT of the Impact of Teacher Training on Classroom Transaction Study focused on the 20-day programme. The report presents a set of 14 tools for assessing various aspects of the training package. These tools and the data obtained through them from the 15 states included in the sample. The findings and observations thereon provided in the report should be critically analysed and used by all the States as they revise their training programmes. The limitations of the classical cascade model based essentially on a fixed package that is vulnerable to 'transmission loss' needs to be addressed. States have developed a pool of key

resource persons and master trainers for providing training at block and cluster level. The States have developed materials for the training of Resource Persons and teachers.

This suggests action towards the recommendation of 12<sup>th</sup> JRM (5.31) that investments need to be made “to help existing teacher educators in recognized training institutions to ‘un-learn’ their own traditional attitudes and practices through an experiential process.” The reconsideration/review of training taken up in various states would benefit from the proposed ‘guide’ based on reviews of modules and course of universities and NGO’s known for their integral approach to quality and equity. [JRM12-.24]

A common strategy for revision is the introduction of new modules covering specific themes. While these are a step forward, the additive model (based on distinct modules) often does not yield the holistic new orientation called for in NCF, and elaborated in *The Reflective Teacher*, and in NCFTE(2009). Such transformation needs to be pursued. A move towards a more participatory mode of training has been made in some states, but efforts to weaken the long standing tradition of didactic transmission must continue. The consideration of teachers’ questions and self-articulated needs in framing the content of training is a welcome new step towards the new orientation. The possibilities for extended and more imaginative use of technology in the teacher training domain need to be explored.

### *Recommendation*

- *Each state should develop its own vision and policy for continuous professional development of teachers based on the needs of the teachers and state context. The state resource groups on ‘teacher education’ should be constituted and state specific plans should be developed.*

### *Teacher Selection:*

The institution of the mandatory TET and its implementation in states is a major step towards raising the quality of the new inductees into the teacher workforce. Several states report the successful conduct of the test. The mission hopes that problems that have arisen in certain states will be resolved. The major challenge in the sphere of teacher effectiveness lies both in the urgent need to ‘train’ (raise the professional competence, self-concept and foster a positive outlook) of large numbers of teachers recruited without the requisite qualifications, and to foster the continued growth of teachers through in-service programmes.

### *Recommendation*

*The mission noted with appreciation the introduction of TETs in several states. However, it would be useful to analyse the competencies and difficulty level of a sample of these tests to understand the low pass rate.*

### *Training of STP Teachers*

The category of teachers without qualifications includes a specific sub-group: those engaged to teach on the special training programmes (STP) provided to students who need bridge type instruction to make them ready for mainstreaming in their age appropriate grade. In the year

2011/12, for example, 1 million children were mainstreamed and therefore require continued support.

Three models of STP, from West Bengal, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh were presented. The nature of the training provided to these instructors is not clear. West Bengal has utilized Education Volunteers with experience in Bridge courses. Since the special training is located at the schools where the children have been formally admitted, there is scope for regular contact with regular teachers. Where the training is imparted at special sites/camps, as in Uttar Pradesh, the preparatory training of 15 days has to be comprehensive and intensive. The curriculum needs to be looked at, particularly in U.P where the mission felt the load was quite heavy. The conduct of assessments to determine whether a child is ready for mainstreaming is a specific point that needs to be covered. A compilation of Information about the modules, materials used in such special training from these two states and other states) could usefully be shared more widely – through TSG.

After children have been mainstreamed into the age appropriate class they will require continued support to help them keep pace with the class. This needs to be focused on in the induction training and annual inset training in those blocks where the number of children served through STPs is relatively high.

### *Recommendations*

*The Mission suggests that the training being imparted to STP teachers be reviewed and strengthened. This should allow the articulation of long term strategies and a plurality of specific programme outlines, all within a common understanding of the nature of teacher preparation and continued support.*

*The potential of information technology in its broad sense to support the revitalization of training at different levels should be explored particularly through participative and interactive mechanisms.*

*States should in a decentralized and flexible manner give priority to enriching teacher training/support programmes at the CRC / BRC level taking local needs into account.*

### *Use of Distance Education*

Use of distance education to train the large numbers of untrained teachers in the system should be expanded with more effective checks and balances for ensuring appropriate learner support system consisting of professional tutoring, counselling, assessing and credentialing with feedback loops built in at each level. Further, all ICT based teacher training interventions may have a strong baseline and inbuilt mechanisms for content monitoring and mid-term corrections, with impact results taken up. To enable this to be operationalized, SSA may engage with the Open and Distance Education universities and SCERTs to evolve mechanisms and processes to this effect and prepare guidelines to be shared with the states. Against the challenge of about a million teachers in the system having no pre-service education, the Mission was happy to note that some states like Bihar and UP had proactively undertaken intensive exercises to develop the DE curriculum that would define materials production, student support systems and monitoring and evaluation of such a massive pre-service training requirements. This may be taken up with more attention to the impact assessment that is well quantified and documented to appropriately inform interventions being taken up by states with similar challenges.

The mission had an occasion to interact with the *Distance Education Program* SSA and its Open Educational Resource *Wiki Portal* was shared. The mission felt that multi-media materials already existing with the DEP could be put to proper use and dissemination. DEP may be requested to produce materials in regional languages, as West Bengal requested for multi-media materials in Bengali. Training of SMDCs under SSA may also be taken in a more intensive manner by DEP.

### *Recommendation*

- *The Mission recommends that the DEP may start consolidating all existing multi-media materials and updating its digital library for dissemination and sharing with states*
- *Large scale training of SMCDs may be taken up through teleconferencing especially on RtE and its requirements*

### *Academic Support Systems*

Mainstream institutions and the national, state and district levels need to be strengthened with additional funding if required and better utilization of allocated resources for more accountability for results.

The SSA cell in NCERT may be further empowered with additional resources be able to work with consultants and management experts with varied experience of educational practice from different fields may be constituted under NCERT. This will bring in the much needed vigor and infusion of innovation through large stake-holder engagement especially in further improving the National Achievement Surveys that throw valuable light on children's learning and systemic functioning.

State level institutions designated as the academic authorities need to be identified and strengthened. The Mission feels that while the designated authority should be the nodal agency for curriculum reform and quality initiatives like materials production and teacher development, it is important to draw upon the strengths of cognate institutions located in the state. These institutions should be mandated to undertake consultation with a wide range of stakeholders to draw upon the best in the country.

Monitoring of quality through well structured systems and processes needs to be taken up immediately that not only provide quantitative data but also reflect process factors in education that critically impact the quality of outcomes.

The MHRD is requested to infuse the erstwhile *National Resource Group (NRG)* on quality with resource support and crisp terms of reference to generate large scale discourse and debate amongst stake holders twice a year. The NRG may have integral linkages to the State Resource Groups which should meet immediately before the NRG meetings and share their minutes with the NRG so that key issues and concerns along with important initiatives can then be picked up by the NRG for national sharing and dissemination.



## Recommendations

- *The National Resource Group may be revived and made more functional with adequate resource support.*
- *The Mission recommends that the Quality Monitoring Tools of NCERT may be re-assessed to make them more user-friendly and less bulky. The Mission recommends that this exercise be taken up immediately, with greater consultation with the states.*

## TC Fund

The Mission was pleased to note the developments under the Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) and recognises the critical role of research and evaluation to the process of improving the quality of education. The Mission also acknowledges that NCERT has made significant progress in strengthening capacities of RIEs and the SCERTs in some states with regards to conducting programme evaluations, including the process of 'learning by doing' and the development and conducting of workshops and modules related to aspects of programme evaluation and assessment.

As reported by NCERT, the States where programme evaluations were conducted have found value in both the process and outcomes of the study, and have made adjustments to their programme interventions based on the findings. For instance, though Activity based learning in Tamil Nadu and Multi Lingual Education in Odisha demonstrated an impact on student learning, the quality interventions of Aadhar in Himachal Pradesh and Children's Learning Acceleration Programme for Sustainability in Andhra Pradesh did not show a significant impact on student learning. Tamil Nadu informed the Mission that they had used the findings very constructively and enriched their Activity Based Learning (ABL) program.

The Mission was informed that the NCERT is conducting an evaluation of CCE. The mission suggests that this may be expedited urgently considering the lack of clarity about the concept and its strategy, especially indicators for the identification for assessment. The study may further be enhanced to widen the scope and the sample to cover larger states.

## Recommendations

- *The Mission recommends that the findings of the 4 completed evaluations and the 4 on-going evaluations be compiled, analysed and shared whereby their utility goes beyond the sample state(s).<sup>7</sup>*
- *The Mission recommends that NCERT may wish to undertake evaluation studies of quality initiatives in more states after a careful assessment of the states to be included.*

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<sup>7</sup> Completed studies include Activity Based Learning (Tamil Nadu), Multi Lingual Education (Odisha), Aadhar (Himachal Pradesh) and Children's Learning Acceleration Programme for Sustainability (Andhra Pradesh). On-going studies include CCE (Mizoram and Chhattisgarh), Mid Day Meal (Uttarkhand, West Bengal and Punjab), Professional Development of teachers (A&N Islands and Chhattisgarh), and Teacher training in English (Karnataka).



### *Need for Realistic Planning*

Analysis of the state reports in terms of planning and provision for quality seems to suggest need for more attention to proper planning for quality as a continuum that informs all initiatives in an integrated fashion- especially the special training centers and their eventual integration into the mainstream systems. Fund utilization in Bihar in the most difficult districts suggests that quality initiative may be very deficient (Samastipur- 23.56%; Saran- 25%; Madhepura- 22.8%, while the expenditure at the State Level Office is 1064%). Jharkhand reports under-spending in all districts while in Uttar Pradesh, district wise expenditure is about 50-60% of total allocations. In Jharkhand, there are immense amounts of unutilized funds in TLE grant, research and evaluation, LEP, innovation etc. This will impact quality quite significantly. Even in UP, the TLE grant the expenditure was Rs.6.30 lacs against an allocation of Rs. 612.80 lacs, that on DRG and BRG was only 15%. There is an immediate need for states to realistically budget and plan their quality initiatives so that funds either do not go unutilized or the AWPB asks for funds that are *actually* needed and spent on activities planned. In West Bengal, the expenditure in 24 North Parganas, considered a difficult area is inadequate, with Academic Support through Block Resource Centre/ URC component spending only Rs 1025.17 out of the total of Rs 5345.01 lacs allotted. Expenditure on teacher training, academic support institutions at the cluster levels need to be improved so that the focus on quality especially in the lesser developed pockets of states are taken up on a priority basis and reasons for under spend on quality assessed.

### *Recommendations*

- *The MHRD needs to have the TSG in collaboration with management and planning experts from reputed Indian Institutes of Management and other national institutions to undertake afresh capacity building of planners at district and state levels to plan realistically with careful prioritization of activities and appropriate budgeting.*
- *The MHRD may have an assessment of the spend on quality in the lesser developed pockets of each state and present this to the 17<sup>th</sup> JRM.*

### *Community and Civil Society Partnerships*

As reported by the 15<sup>th</sup> JRM, it was noticed that most of the SMC trainings needed significant up-gradation with respect to their role in quality monitoring, teacher presence and children's learning levels. The 15<sup>th</sup> JRM to Rajasthan had noted that the SMCs had a great sense of anxiety which was shared by teachers and parents that CCE (which is seen as doing away with traditional tests and exams), coupled with policy of non –detention under RTE, will lead to children going through school without learning and facing difficulty in life when their competencies were suddenly tested through a formal system post school level education. The MHRD and the states are requested to address this issue effectively through providing appropriate checks and balances and accountability measures that the learning achievements of children under CCE are recorded as per identified indicators at different levels and results communicated in a consultative fashion to parents and SMCs. In fact it would be a very useful exercise to take a feedback from policy makers and SPDs of SSA about the reason for the discontent with RTE and assuage the doubts and suggest measures for mitigating problems of such nature in the system to stop the steady stream of migration of children from government to private schools.

## Recommendations

- *The Mission recommends that before the 17<sup>th</sup> JRM is undertaken, the MHRD may organize a National Consultative Meet on RTE, inviting policy makers, NGOs, private school providers, SMC members and teachers to understand the concerns around the implementation and prepare a Plan of Action to remedy the genuine issues raised.*

## Measurement of Learning Outcomes

There was a growing urgency noted among Mission members that education inputs should be linked to outcomes, with particular focus on children's learning outcomes. The measurement and analysis of learning outcomes should necessarily come from national assessments but should importantly be triangulated with independent sources, including but certainly not limited to the Annual Status of Education Report, or ASER as it is commonly known.

### **National Achievement Survey, Grade 5**

The findings of the Third Round of the National Achievement Survey (NAS) for Grade 5 were presented to the Mission. The Mission congratulates MHRD, NCERT and the States on the successful shift from Classical Test Theory (CTT) to Item Response Theory (IRT) which allows for comparability over time or across multiple tests. NAS, in its current avatar, can be a powerful tool to diagnose system performance and establish remedial action in teacher education, curriculum reform and assessment design. The Mission looks forward to the findings from the Grade 8 NAS, which is complete in 24 States (with 10 States to be completed in October 2012).

The results of NAS reaffirm the concerns that successive JRMs have had with regards to children's low levels of learning. Overall, NAS suggests that children's learning levels are far from equal across the country, with significant differences across states and within states. In reading comprehension, for example, at the lower end of the scale, approximately two-thirds of students were able to locate relevant information given in a table. However, only about one-third of students could read with understanding and infer things that weren't explicit in a given text. In math, just over three-quarters of students could add four-digit numbers together but only one-third could compute the difference between two decimal numbers. Nationally, there were no significant differences in the learning outcomes of boys and girls or between urban and rural students. However, NAS did find that children with special needs (CWSN) and students from minority groups, SC, ST and OBCs performed significantly lower than other students indicating a need for further analysis to understand these differences and to derive remedial action to address these differences.

## **Findings from Independent National, State and Sub-National Learning Assessments**

At a national level, the findings of NAS are corroborated by independent assessments of student learning. The latest ASER report<sup>8</sup> (2011) finds that reading levels have declined: Nationally, the proportion of Grade 5 children able to read a Grade 2 text has fallen from 54% in 2010 to 48% in 2011. They find a corresponding decline in basic arithmetic levels with a fall in the proportion of Grade 3 children able to solve a 2 digit subtract with borrowing from 36% to 30% over the same timeframe.

In PROBE Revisited<sup>9</sup>, a follow up to the PROBE Report of 1996, researchers visited randomly selected villages in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh. They find that despite sharp rises in enrolment between 1996 and 2006, classroom activity has not improved: to paraphrase, ‘enrolment does not mean attendance and attendance does not imply learning.’ They found that 80% of student in Grades 4 or 5 could do simple addition, but only 60% could do simple subtraction and barely half could do single-digit multiplication or a simple division by 5. Over 60% of children in Grade 4 or 5 could not read a simple story and over 80% could not write the answer to a simple question.

A recent study on learning outcomes<sup>10</sup> funded by Unesco and UNICEF in 5 States (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan) finds that while children are learning in the course of a school year, children’s learning is far behind what their textbooks expect. At each grade level, a child’s starting point is well below that of their textbooks. Across the board, they find that children whose home language is different from the medium of instruction learn less but that attendance in school matters. What helps to improve student learning? They find students asking questions, using local examples to explain lessons, small group work positively impact student learning. Teachers can spot mistakes made by children but have trouble explaining content in simple language – in this regard, qualifications, length of training, number of years of experience made little difference to children’s learning.

The Mission reiterates that the inclusion of these reports in the JRM is not indicative or exhaustive but a mere suggestion of the rich data that is available to be analysed by which remedial action to improve children’s learning outcomes can be undertaken.

### **The NAS Review and Strategic Planning Committee**

As per the recommendations made in the 14th JRM, an expert group was constituted to review the Grade 5 report before its publication and to provide recommendations more broadly on the development of a national assessment strategy, including a comprehensive communication strategy. The NAS Review and Strategic Planning Committee shared its final report with the Mission where it was suggested, among other things, that a National Assessment and Evaluation Centre be established at NCERT to give institutional capacity, human and financial, to the important task of measuring learning achievement, conducting programme and other evaluations and pursuing

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<sup>8</sup> ASER Centre. 2011. Annual Status of Education Report (Rural).

<sup>9</sup> De, A., Khera, R., Sampson, M., Shiva Kumar, A.K. 2011. PROBE Revisited: A Report on Elementary Education in India

<sup>10</sup> Bhattacharjya, S., Wadhwa, W. and Banerji, R. 2011. Inside Primary Schools: A Study of Teaching and Learning in Rural India

related research. It was also recommended that a National Achievement Survey become institutionalised as a regular and continuous 'health check' of the education system that extends beyond mere monitoring with greater emphasis on systems' diagnosis. The Mission reinforces the need for a fully resourced National Assessment and Evaluation Centre. The Mission extends its congratulations to the NAS Review and Strategic Planning Committee for its helpful recommendations, and suggests that NCERT engage a group of external experts to review the Grade 8 and 3 assessments, but perhaps at an earlier stage so feedback on design and analysis can be incorporated on a continual basis.

### *Recommendation*

- *The Mission recommends the comparison of findings from national assessments such as NAS and ASER and smaller scale assessments and research studies to understand the similarities and differences in findings to identify common areas for improvement.*
- *The Mission reinforces the need for a fully resourced National Assessment and Evaluation Centre.*
- *The Mission recommends that States develop their own 'rapid' assessments of learning, as evidenced by good practices in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. among others but also to build up capacities at state level institutions from SCERTs to DIETs to systematically analyse and use this rich, and growing, source of useful information on children's learning.*
- *The Mission suggests that NCERT engage a group of external experts to review the Grade 8 and 3 assessments, at formative stages, so feedback on design and the analysis plan that can be incorporated on a continual basis.*

# Programme Management

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## *Data collection systems*

1. Significant progress has been made in two important aspects of the data collection and monitoring system, the integration of DISE and SEMIS and the move towards an Adhaar-enabled child-wise data base. In due course, when these systems have bedded in, these developments will result in more timely and more comprehensive data.
2. DISE and Secondary Education MIS (SEMIS) integration: The Mission was informed that the committee charged with making recommendations about the integration of the DISE and SEMIS systems is about to complete its report to MHRD. It is expected that the consolidation will happen this coming data collection cycle, at least in some states. This is very encouraging to hear since this will significantly improve the quality of the data and JRM State Implementation Reports indicate that several states were already trying to move in this direction through establishing their own combined systems.
3. Child-wise data base: The Mission also heartily welcomes the progression made in establishing a child-wise data base, using the *Adhaar* numbers of children as an enhancement of the DISE. The Mission was told that from this coming data collection cycle, in September, the system will be rolled out in all schools in all states, following a successful pilot in 2 districts in each of 6 states. The Mission recognizes that this will significantly improve the quality and speed of data collection (though the first year's demands will be high because of the need to collect data for the first time), and it will enable a much larger and more sophisticated set of analyses (in addition to the standard reports the system generates).
4. The Mission encourages MHRD to recognize that the information collected is driven by the policy context and only data that will be used should be collected. Some states during the Mission commented that several data items do not need to be collected in government schools, and indeed trying to capture them may invoke political difficulties at the local level, for example, data on BPL status or ST/SC. However, this same data needs to be collected in private schools especially the elite schools, because of the 25 percent RTE provision. It is also the case, of course, that some policies vary across states. All this suggests the need for flexibility on what data is collected from different types of schools and in different states. This flexibility would need to be balanced by needs at the national level for certain data which is consistently collected across all schools in all states.
5. The Mission also is aware that States themselves are introducing additional data collection systems. For example, Child Tracking Systems and Village Education Registers are used to identify out-of-school children, School Development Plans require schools to collect data, Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation increases the records teachers keep on individual children, and so on. Each of these data collection systems may have validity in its own right, but the Mission recommends that States carry out a data audit which would: (a) identify the overlaps between data

collection systems, with the idea to reduce these through data sharing protocols and to cross-check data reliability; (b) look at data collection demands through the lens of the classroom teacher and the school, to assess whether the time burden is appropriate for the benefits accrued from the data collection; and (c) assess whether and how the data is actually being used for policy and programme design and implementation, so as to refine the data needs. This multiplicity of data collection also raises concerns about the security of the data, and states are urged to establish clear policies and guidelines for data capture, storage and use. Finally, the Mission reiterates a recommendation from the 14<sup>th</sup> JRM that the TSG and NUEPA takes the lead in building capacity in the use and analysis of these datasets as a critical need at the state, district, block and school levels.

*The Mission recommends that:*

- *MHRD may advise states to evolve integrated data capture formats for capturing data on related schemes (including those from private schools) and appropriately analyze them for informing policy and use.*
- *States (i) carry out an audit of their data collection systems; and (ii) establish clear policies for data use, security and storage; and*
- *TSG and NUEPA take the lead in capacity building on data analysis*

6. Including private schools in DISE: Several states commented during the Mission that there is a shift (of different magnitudes in different states) from government to private primary schools, though the States are initiating actions to address this shift. However, the significant and increasing presence of private schools emphasizes the need to include these schools on an urgent basis in DISE. The Mission recognizes that this is the policy of the Ministry. The Mission is also aware that this will require both actions from the government side – to approach the schools – but also from the schools themselves – to be willing to submit reliable data. The requirements of RTE give an opportunity to address this issue more systematically.

*The Mission recommends that NUEPA and MHRD identify those states which appear to have been more successful in including private school data, and share this good practice with other states. This needs to be done in time so that the States can address the issue effectively in the next data collection cycle in September.*

### *Research and Analysis*

7. The Mission notes with pleasure the progress made by NCERT, in part through the use of the Technical Cooperation Fund, in carrying out studies and producing reports on national assessments and programme evaluation. Earlier sections of this Report discuss national assessments. The Mission strongly believes in the importance of carrying out programme evaluation and is pleased that NCERT has published four studies and is in various stages of carrying out four more. The Mission encourages NCERT to continue and expand its cooperation with State agencies for carrying out this work. Enabling State agencies to carry out and to commission good quality evaluations will be a major contribution to the effectiveness of SSA programme implementation. It will also have valuable spill-over effects in helping States evaluate other sector programmes.

8. The Mission continues to be struck by the significant quantity of research being funded under SSA and carried out by States, using DIETs, SCERTs, schools, and independent agencies. The Mission heard of a high quality evaluation done by Tamil Nadu as it sought to identify changes needed to its ABL programme, and the way in which the evaluation results were used. Beyond this, however, the State Implementation Reports do not give any indication about the impact the research may have had. The Mission reiterates a previous recommendation that ‘universities, research institutions and researchers could be invited to conducted meta-analyses of these studies with a view to both consolidate the findings as well as analyse overall research methodology and analytical rigour’.

*The Mission recommends that NCERT expands its programme evaluation in more states and continues to use this as an opportunity to build capacity for this work in states. Engaging in partnerships with reputed institutions, think tanks and research organisations will allow it to extend the reach of these programmes.*

#### *Integration of SSA and State Department of Education Structures*

9. The Revised SSA Framework 2011 offers recommendations and guidance for the harmonization of SSA and other government structures in the education sector, as well as ways in which the actions of other government agencies are needed to ensure the RTE goals are met.

10. During the JRM, the States reported various ways in which the convergence of structures is taking place. For example, the UP report says the SSA has ‘been implemented through mainstream administrative structures’ and ‘Divisional, district and block level officers are the same [for SSA and mainstream activities]. No parallel administrative structure has been created in SSA.’ Andhra Pradesh reports that the District Education Officer is the District Project Officer. Other State reports tended to use more formulaic expressions such as the education administration being ‘involved’ or ‘coordinating with’ the SSA activities. While 21 States have constituted an SCPCR, there was a consensus that their capacity needs considerable development before they can take over their full responsibilities.

11. The Mission observed moreover that reports from States focused exclusively on the structural issues, rather than the programmatic ones. That is, the purpose of convergence is not simply to reduce duplication of administrative positions, which might be a welcome outcome, but more importantly to make the goals of RTE more likely to be achieved. Thus state government programmes outside of SSA also deal with the same schools, teachers and children that SSA activities do.

*The Mission recommends that MHRD works with States to understand how more effective programme planning and implementation can be promoted across all the States education programmes, and how the AWPB/PAB processes can contribute to this.*



*The Mission recommends that for the 17th Joint Review Mission, MHRD engage with NCPCR and certain SCPCRs to participate and present.*

12. In this context there is another concern of the Mission, and that is the short average tenure of SPDs. Several States during the JRM mentioned that delays had been experienced due to the change of SPD, who inevitably takes time to understand the scope and complexity of the SSA programme. This learning curve will become even more critical as the integration of SSA and State Departments become realized. The Mission urges MHRD to find some way, in dialogue with the States, of providing incentives to States to lengthen the tenure of SPDs.

### *Progress in School Infrastructure*

13. The analysis of the progress made in the provision of school buildings is as follows:

▪ Primary Schools :-

- 2, 00, 902 primary schools sanctioned up to 2011-12, of which 1,93,687 (96 percent) are operational. The states with significant schools sanctioned but not operational are Uttar Pradesh (2,311), Rajasthan (1,700), Bihar (1,483) and Odisha (502).

▪ Upper Primary Schools :-

- 1,55,179 upper primary schools sanctioned up to 2011-12, of which 1,46,551 (95 percent) are operational. The states with significant schools sanctioned but not operational are Odisha (2,035), Rajasthan (1,864), West Bengal (1,619) and Bihar (1,043)

14. In addition 1,041 primary schools and 1,613 upper primary schools were sanctioned in 2012-13. Clearly, ensuring that sanctioned schools are operational is essential to meeting the RTE goals. (The position with respect to specific elements of school infrastructure is discussed in the chapter in Access.)

### *Staffing vacancies*

15. A number of states reported progress in filling up vacancies, while at the same time additional posts have been sanctioned, especially at the block and cluster levels. The overall picture is presented below, for a selection of States (comparable information was not available to the Mission for all states). It can be seen that the picture varies considerably across states. However, the Mission found it hard to assess whether the situation is getting better or worse because information was not readily available across years; in addition, the significant expansion of the number of sanctioned posts (especially accountants at block level which were only sanctioned in 2011-12 for the first time) means that the overall vacancies may have increased even if a State has made considerable success in filling previously vacant posts. (The situation with respect to financial management staff is discussed in the Financial Management and Procurement chapter.)



### Percentage of vacancies in selected states (all posts)

	State	District	Cluster	Block	Overall
Bihar	44.7	42.9	0.0	15.9	14.5
Chandigarh	61.1				61.1
Chhattisgarh	56.8	41.2		76.0	70.8
Delhi	44.0				44.0
Jharkhand	56.6	20.0	38.4	38.0	38.5
Madhya Pradesh	37.7	33.9		23.9	27.2
Maharashtra	43.0	22.8		52.2	50.5
Odisha	9.7	3.2			3.9
Rajasthan					
Uttar Pradesh	32.1	31.2	0.0	29.9	16.5
West Bengal	0.0	17.9	93.6		61.1

Source: Selected State Programme Implementation Reports, 16<sup>th</sup> JRM

#### *Whole School Development Plan*

16. The 16<sup>th</sup> JRM Mission remains of the view expressed by the 15<sup>th</sup> JRM Mission that the Whole School Development Plan (WSDP) has good potential as an initiative to provide a comprehensive framework for using school infrastructure more holistically and integrating it with pedagogic reforms and strategies for tackling equity issues. This requires WSDP-based school visions. The evidence available to the 16<sup>th</sup> JRM however – through state presentations and implementation reports – is that this activity is still very marginal to the work of the vast majority of school plans. Almost all states report extensive use of the school planning process, and its importance as a tool for community mobilization. This is good news and to be commended and promoted. However, even for this ‘basic’ level of school planning, states reported varying degrees of success, especially in engaging the community in non-infrastructure related issues. This chimes with the observations during field visits during the 15<sup>th</sup> JRM, where the need for a major programme of capacity building of SMCs is needed (a call repeated in this Aide Memoire). Therefore this Mission concluded that the demands of WSDP are at present beyond the capacity of the vast majority of schools and likely to remain so for the medium term given the training needs for basic planning at the school level. Clearly, however, the WSDP is an important aspiration for the direction that school development planning should take, and schools and their communities should be encouraged to take this path as and when they are ready.

#### *Development Partners and SSA*

17. This JRM marks the end of the current period of support of the SSA Programme from the Development Partners. The World Bank has already completed disbursements of its credit and its

support formally closes in September. The UK's DFID expects to make its final disbursement this calendar year, with its support formally closing in March 2013. The European Union will continue its support for SSA. There are ongoing discussions regarding continuing financial support from the Development Partners for the SSA/RTE Programme.

*The Mission recommends that the Development Partners continue to be associated with the SSA programme.*

### *Innovations*

18. States continue to report a great diversity of activities under the Innovations component under SSA. However, the Mission is concerned about two aspects of this component. First, though perhaps valuable in themselves, these activities could not be considered new or innovative and could be readily funded by through SSA mainstream components. A second, and related point, is that there is no evidence that States are evaluating these innovative activities to see if they are having the expected impact and, if so, then using SSA funds to expand them to larger numbers of teachers, schools or districts. Therefore, in the Mission's view, the innovation activities are not serving as an opportunity to develop new and more effective strategies.

*The Mission recommends that MHRD revises the guidelines for the use of innovation funding, so as to promote genuinely new activities, which are evaluated for scaling up.*

# Financial Management

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## *Budget analysis*

The Mission was informed that budget allocations (and consequent) releases have been significantly below the total approvals for Central share funding made through the AWPB/PAB process. In the 2011-12 PAB Rs. 61,722 crore was approved and Rs. 42,519 crore was released by MHRD, against which the expenditure was Rs. 37,837 crore. It is expected that this situation is likely to continue for 2012-13 as several RTE deadlines near and possibly for a few more years given the somewhat constrained public finances. Discussion with States during the Mission indicated that States have adopted a variety of methods to respond to the lower GOI releases. First and foremost, State's own spending has risen – total spending for 2011-12 was in fact close to the original approvals, because of significantly higher than expected spending by States. A second approach was that, in the early part of the financial year, States used available SSA resources to carry out construction and purchase of materials, delaying spending on salaries in some states. Towards the end of the year, States then paid the salary backlog from their own resources, over and above their mandated share of SSA funds, and so did not rely on Central funds to meet these expenditures. A third approach was that some States' spending was lower than budgeted, because, for example, it was not possible to fill teacher positions from the start of the year, training sessions took time to organize and so all planned training could not be completed and, especially, construction activities were not completed within the year but with the expectation that additional budget would be available in the following year to complete the work and pay the contractors.

Given that budgets are likely to continue to be constrained; these coping strategies will become increasingly difficult and, in any case, such strategies do not promote effective strategic planning.

## *Recommendations*

MHRD may consider the way in which it makes approvals during the PAB process. The Mission suggests the following for MHRD's consideration:

Inform the states, as they start their AWPB preparation process, the likely budget available from MHRD. This indicative amount should be based on available evidence from budget discussions, rather than the desirable amount based on State's needs.

Give each State an indicative Central allocation, so that they can plan their AWPBs appropriately and such that the sum of these indicative State allocations adds up to the total

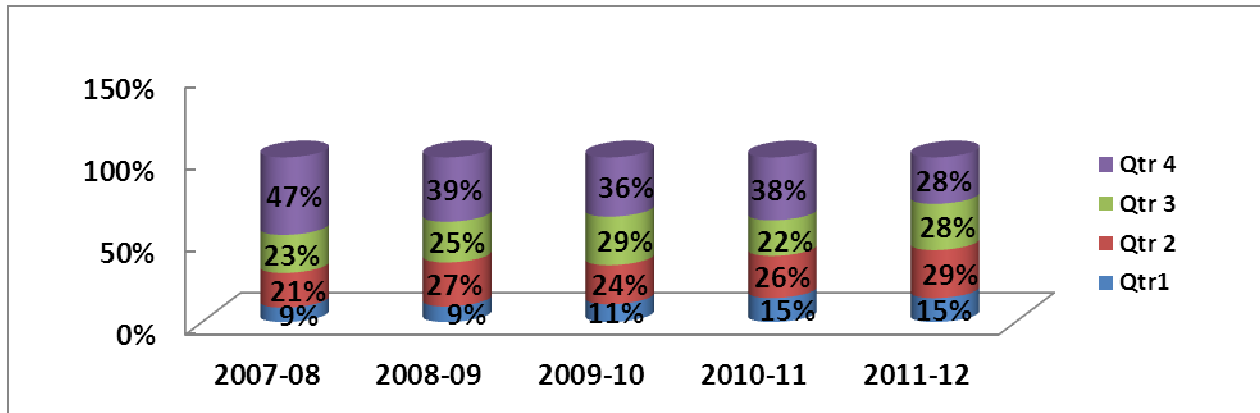
indicative Central share. These State allocations could be based on the *needs of different states, as measured for example by the Education Development Index*. In this way, *States' AWPBs would contain their priority items, the costs of which they can be reasonably sure of spending from the allocated SSA funds*. States would also be able to *prepare their own budgets accordingly*.

- *States could of course plan for more activities than can be financed from the indicative allocation, creating first order and second order priorities. Should additional Central funds become available, and States have fully funded their first order priorities, then these second order priorities could be considered. MHRD would need to decide whether at that point to hold a supplemental PAB, again allocating Central resources in line with objective needs of States.*

1. Timing of release of funds: Evidence from other sources indicates that there continue to be systematic delays in release of funds, especially those that are for schools. *PAISA: Planning, Allocations and Expenditures, Institutions* (Accountability Initiative, 2011). The report found considerable variability across states and districts as to the proportion of schools which received their grants before November 2011, i.e. before the year was half way through (the report tracked maintenance grants, teacher learning material grant and the development grant). As a consequence, more than 2/3 of schools spent money on whitewashing walls, rather than on activities with more direct impact on student learning. There are a number of reasons for these delays, at the Central, State and district levels.

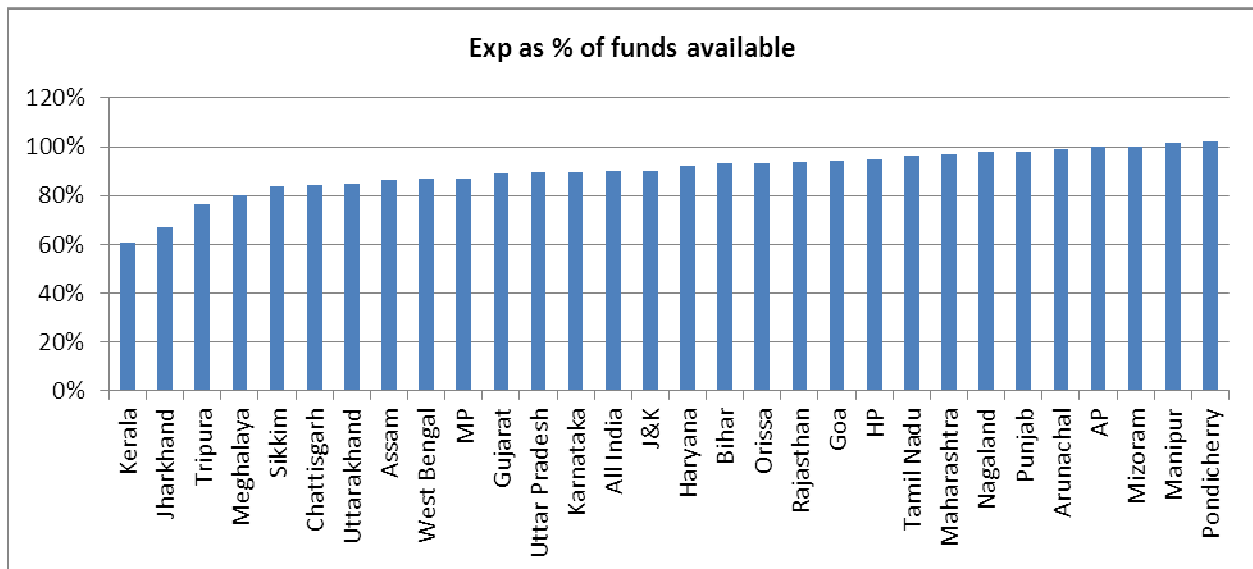
2. Spending during the financial year: There has been a continuation of the encouraging trend that more and more expenditure is being brought forward to the earlier part of the financial year. The chart below demonstrates that for 2011-12 expenditure in the final quarter fell to 28 percent (the first time it has fallen below 30 percent) and in the final two quarters expenditure fell below 60 percent for the first time. Feedback during the mission from both MHRD and the States indicates that an important reason for this better performance is the introduction of a monthly expenditure plan.

**Percentage expenditure spending by quarter**



Source: JRM/MHRD

3. Bringing forward this spending to early quarters has also resulted in another positive outcome: more and more states are also spending a higher proportion of the available funds. Thirty states are spending more than 80 percent of their resources, with only one state falling between 60 percent. Indeed, 17 states are now spending 90 percent or more. This is encouraging not only because it represents evidence of better financial planning, but it also bolsters the case that additional resources would be provided if they became available. (The chart below also indicates the importance of focusing on expenditure against available funds as the relevant indicator. Bihar was able to spend 93.1 percent of its available resources, but only 37 percent of outlays and 39.7 percent of approved AWPB budget.)



Source: JRM/MHRD

## Expenditure

As is expected from any programme dedicated to development of social infrastructure, SSA is capturing its progress through financial commitments. As against the reported expenditure for FY 2010-11 for Rs. 31,942.11 crore, FY 2011-12 reported expenditure (including national component) was Rs. Rs. 37,836.73 crore recording an increase of 18.5% over the previous year.

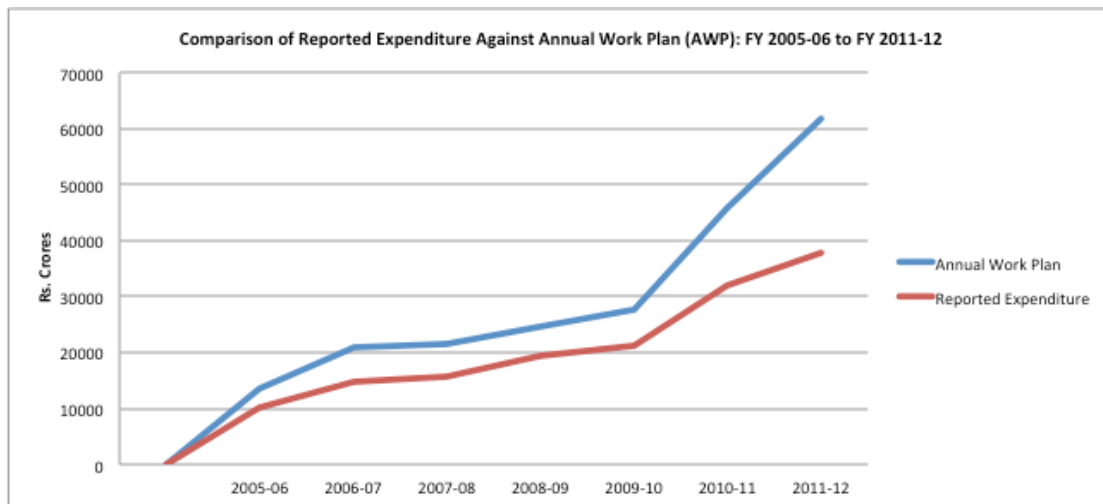
The state-wise FMR data (Unaudited) is presented below:

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Summary Budget Analysis (Entire Program)								
(2011-2012)								
(Rs. in lakhs)								
S. No.	Name of State	AWP&B (2011-2012)	Opening Balance	Releases by GOI	Releases by States	13th Finance Commission	Reported Expenditure	Estimated AWP&B for next Financial Year
1	A & N Island	2,431.48	348.95	907.36	562.80		1,606.37	2,928.20
2	Andhra Pradesh	4,37,640.92	5,879.27	1,83,551.72	1,12,996.38	34,900.00	3,37,247.68	4,74,585.63
3	Arunachal Pradesh	44,349.81	661.86	23,880.10	2,500.00		26,705.69	52,182.64
4	Assam	1,55,583.51	3,218.00	1,18,821.15	22,284.36		1,24,982.26	2,22,791.42
5	Bihar	11,12,343.66	1,57,771.37	1,85,108.94	29,201.38	69,900.00	4,11,523.49	
6	Chandigarh	4,801.17	1,729.95	1,611.77	943.64		3,298.65	
7	Chattisgarh	2,69,455.48	26,468.42	73,940.22	43,031.35	15,400.00	1,33,902.11	2,79,776.55
8	Dadar & Nagar Haveli	2,116.89	427.19	564.35	500.00		796.36	2,449.55
9	Daman & Diu	736.71	29.11	257.06	207.00		485.81	943.22
10	Delhi	20,601.67	3,290.41	3,783.28	1,365.35		8,008.74	20,617.63
11	Goa	2,859.20	278.01	1,079.16	500.00	200.00	1,934.35	3,531.72
12	Gujarat	1,86,373.98	7,644.76	88,027.79	55,034.94	8,500.00	1,41,781.06	
13	Haryana	1,19,767.40	15,941.39	40,461.41	23,000.00	4,300.00	77,193.80	
14	Himachal Pradesh	30,261.66	3,226.24	14,192.78	7,037.00	2,100.00	25,186.54	33,329.56
15	Jammu & Kashmir	1,45,130.84	37,918.96	30,070.51	39,600.00	8,500.00	1,04,733.46	1,80,006.71
16	Jharkhand	1,80,039.60	56,478.50	57,903.46	34,100.00	26,600.00	1,17,232.78	2,52,694.15
17	Karnataka	1,45,870.65	26,722.18	62,788.35	37,878.54	11,900.00	1,24,995.76	2,06,428.14
18	Kerala	47,636.49	11,698.00	17,021.85	11,476.40	2,700.00	26,046.45	
19	Lakshadweep	491.57	99.83	127.86	172.04	0.00	363.28	378.27
20	Madhya Pradesh	4,44,736.04	62,067.41	1,90,427.12	1,03,400.88	38,400.00	3,42,831.85	4,19,687.85
21	Maharashtra	2,87,057.89	5,820.34	1,17,962.57	63,516.92		1,81,066.45	2,62,622.75
22	Manipur	29,505.77	4,416.75	2,940.55	593.52	300.00	8,371.53	47,543.97
23	Meghalaya	45,795.44	6,515.29	14,410.60	1,830.24	1,900.00	19,782.13	46,277.08
24	Mizoram	20,003.42	2,232.53	10,814.05	1,000.00		14,084.56	22,296.11
25	Nagaland	25,031.12	218.04	9,798.33	533.15		10,315.05	
26	Orissa	2,20,016.83	9,059.02	92,719.98	54,002.27	18,700.00	1,62,570.06	2,77,272.42
27	Pondicherry	2,005.57	135.86	757.62	356.56		1,275.50	2,035.18
28	Punjab	1,05,195.58	4,131.02	48,112.44	11,469.73	2,232.00	64,703.06	
29	Rajasthan	3,67,546.46	20,314.36	1,48,580.86	1,33,966.00	32,000.00	3,13,068.00	3,99,907.77
30	Sikkim	7,068.08	983.00	4,022.84	300.00		4,453.04	6,140.98
31	Tamil Nadu	1,89,141.48	5,843.03	66,937.15	35,953.76	12,600.00	1,16,817.26	1,98,824.42
32	Tripura	22,479.75	5,391.61	17,493.76	1,588.74	400.00	19,068.88	24,124.42
33	Uttar Pradesh	9,40,804.73	89,164.92	2,63,682.61	1,35,567.70	87,100.00	5,15,804.16	
34	Uttarakhand	60,505.54	10,886.03	20,892.49	11,667.88	3,500.00	39,936.45	
35	West Bengal	4,98,056.63	27,114.29	1,77,652.74	97,510.94	41,600.00	2,98,627.20	73,11,931.88
	<b>Total</b>	<b>61,73,443.01</b>	<b>6,14,125.90</b>	<b>20,91,304.83</b>	<b>10,75,649.47</b>	<b>4,23,732.00</b>	<b>37,80,799.82</b>	
	<b>National Component</b>	<b>4,279.48</b>	<b>53.70</b>	<b>3,242.96</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,873.11</b>	
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>61,77,722.49</b>	<b>6,14,179.60</b>	<b>20,94,547.79</b>	<b>10,75,649.47</b>	<b>4,23,732.00</b>	<b>37,83,672.93</b>	

## Reported Expenditure and AWP&B

Comparison of expenditure reported as per FMR against Annual Work Plan for FY 2005-06 to FY 2010-11 shows that expenditure ranged between 70% to 79% of the AWP&B. However, in FY 2011-12, reported expenditure was only 61% of AWPB. Compared with reported expenditure for FY

2005 – 06 (Rs. 10,002 crore); expenditure has gone up by around 2.80 times in the last six years; reported expenditure for FY 2011 – 12 being Rs. 37,837 crore. This denotes an average growth of 26% in expenditure each year.



### Assurance of financial reporting system

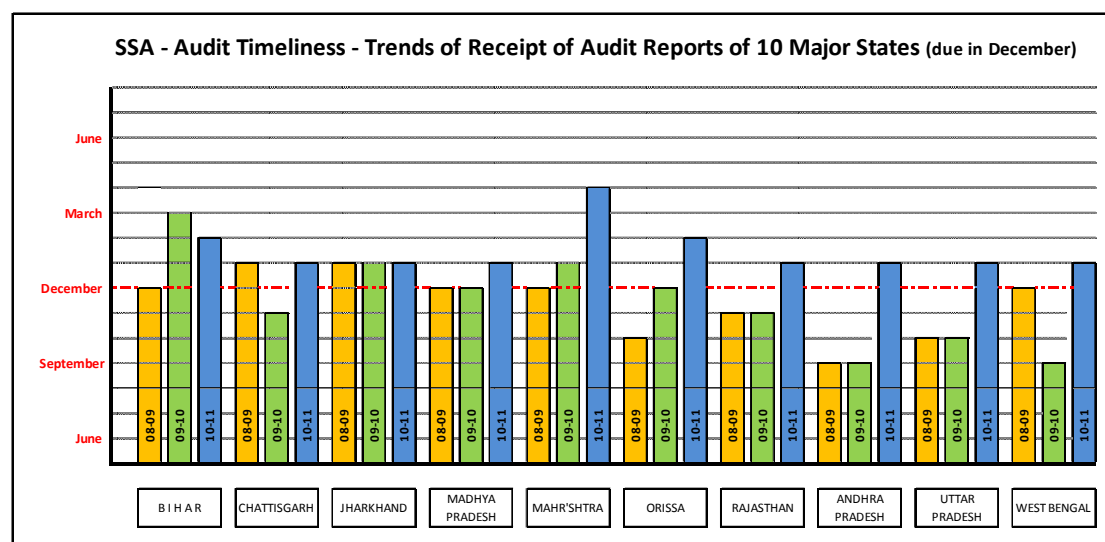
It is important to watch quality of the FMR data and variation when the same is audited. For the year 2010 – 11 a comparison was carried out between the expenditure as reported in the FMR and audited expenditure. The variation is quite significant in the following cases (between 23% and 65%) and needs to be looked into for the underlying systemic issues. Audit has led to a significant reduction in expenditure in the cases mentioned below.

Variance between FMR and Audited Expenditure for 2010-11			
			Rs. Lakhs
State	FMR 2010-11	Audit 2010-11	Variance from FMR
Bihar	3,35,491	2,11,766	37%
Chhattisgarh	1,31,748	46,234	65%
Madhya Pradesh	3,00,010	2,18,180	27%
Manipur	10,021	6,614	34%
Meghalaya	20,050	15,595	22%
Nagaland	10,371	7,664	26%
Orissa	1,46,508	94,280	36%

Punjab	55,943	43,216	23%
Tripura	14,313	10,932	24%
Uttarakhand	37,030	28,152	24%
West Bengal	3,02,972	1,94,677	36%

### Audit timeliness

All SSA statutory audit report for FY 2010 – 11 have been received; a review of timeliness regarding the ten major spending states shows that seven out of the ten reports were received by the due date or within one month of the due date of December. Only three reports were delayed with the Maharashtra report coming on the month of April.



### Audit Observations

Review of audit reports for FY 2010-11 shows the same position of financial management in some of the large states. In high expenditure states, audit reports continue to report similar areas of concerns over the years. These include: weaknesses in accounting and maintenance of records; non-production of records; inadequate Internal controls for assets, advances, UCs, bank reconciliation and transfer of funds; internal audit not commensurate with size of operations and weak compliance system for internal and statutory audit; insufficient monitoring of funds spent at schools and sub-district level and deviations from procurement procedures.

### Audit Compliances

There is considerable improvement in the statutory audit compliance by most states. However, it is reported that statutory audit compliance is still outstanding from 8 states (Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland) for the year 2005-



06; 16 states for the year 2006-07 (Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu & Tripura); and 16 states (Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, Punjab, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh & Madhya Pradesh) for the year 2007-08.

### Difference of Expenditure in Audit Report as per UC and Financial Statements

Analysis of audit reports for FY 2010-11 showed difference in expenditure as per the utilization certificate (UC) and as per financial statements (FSs) for some states. Expenditure as per FSs was calculated by adding expenditure as per Income and Expenditure account and capital expenditure as per balance sheet. The variance needs to be reviewed and audit reports should report consistent figures of expenditure in future as per UC and FSs.

#### Audit Report 2010-11 : Difference between Expenditure as per UC and Financial Statements

Rs. Lakhs

State	Exp. As per UC	Exp. As per Financial Statements*	Variance
	a	b	c = a-b
<b>A. Exp. As per UC Less than Exp. As per Financial Statements</b>			
Chhattisgarh	46233.57	46648.16	-414.59
Meghalaya	15594.87	16387.71	-792.84
Tripura	10931.70	11155.41	-223.71
West Bengal	194677.42	202634.54	-7957.12
<b>B. Exp. As per UC More than Exp. As per Financial Statements</b>			
Assam	85385.67	85076.57	309.10
Madhya Pradesh	218179.78	150001.06	68178.72

\* Income and Expenditure Account and Capital Expenditure as per Balance Sheet

### Difference of Closing Balance of 2010-11 and Opening Balance for 2011-12:

The following table shows comparison of closing balance on March 31, 2011 as per audited Receipt and Payment account and Opening Balance on April 1, 2011 as per FMR. Normally these two reports should present exactly the same value of the 'balance' with the program state. However there are variation in several cases and as an illustration some of the larger variations are presented in the table below. These variations should be reconciled, reasons for variance need to be examined and reported to next JRM.

**Difference - Closing Balance as per 2010-11 Audit and Opening Balance as per 2011-12 FMR**

				Rs. Lakhs
State	Closing Balance on 31.3.11 as per Audit Report 2010-11	Opening Balance as per FMR for FY 2011-12 dated 29.6.12	Variance	
	a	b	c = a-b	
<b>A. Closing Balance as per Audit Report Less than Opening Balance as per FMR</b>				
Andaman & Nicobar	269.14	348.95	(79.81)	
Andhra Pradesh	879.28	5,879.27	(4,999.99)	
Bihar	156,490.37	157,771.37	(1,281.00)	
Chhattisgarh	24,509.75	26,468.42	(1,958.67)	
Haryana	10,559.91	15,941.39	(5,381.48)	
Kerala	8,693.96	11,698.00	(3,004.04)	
Rajasthan	12,933.76	20,314.36	(7,380.60)	
Tamil Nadu	2,337.38	5,843.03	(3,505.65)	
<b>B. Closing Balance as per Audit Report More than Opening Balance as per FMR</b>				
Jharkhand	72,592.56	56,478.50	16,114.06	
Manipur	5,647.05	4,416.75	1,230.30	
Nagaland	3,178.53	218.04	2,960.49	
Orissa	18,320.52	9,059.02	9,261.50	

**Accounting and disclosure issues**

SSA programme, running on a mission mode, has a separate set of accounting and auditing standards encapsulated in the Manual on Financial Management and Procurement (FM&P). Formats for statement of accounts prescribed in the Manual require disclosures to depict the true and fair state of affairs of the Society on the Balance Sheet date and also a true and fair view of the working of the Society during a financial year on the basis of mercantile system of accounting. It is observed that this prescription is either not being followed or partially followed in a number of states. It is observed that the three states (Sikkim, Manipur and Tripura) covered by IPAI in its latest reports have not adopted the accrual system of accounting and as a result the position of assets and liabilities is not being captured properly in the financial reporting system. Some accounting deficiencies noticed in the states are mentioned below.

In Sikkim outstanding liabilities for expenses amounting to Rs 15 lakh incurred by the SPO and the East District till 31.3.2011 were not provided for in accounts for the year 2010-11. Similarly, the Balance Sheet prepared by the SIS did not contain a Capital Account though required as per prescribed format (Annex XXI referred to in Para 108.1of FM&P) and also did not show the "Advances outstanding" at the State and district levels. Instead, a Fixed Assets Grant Account was created and "Excess of Expenditure over Income" was shown under the head "Unspent balance of grant" which was not prescribed in the format.

The Study Team noticed that a UC Register was not maintained at the district and sub-district levels. Many states while releasing funds for grants (other than those for Civil Works) to Blocks/SMCs/Schools booked the same as expenditure instead of advance. e.g., in Gujarat, Manipur, Sikkim (East District), Mizoram and West Bengal. Similarly, releases for Civil Work are treated as expenditure e.g., in Gujarat, Haryana, Manipur, Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh. Accounts being *on Cash Basis*, outstanding expenses relating to earlier year were booked in accounts as expenditure in the year of payment, though the FM&P provided that adjustment of advances were to be included in accounts in the year to which the grant related. Moreover, treating amount released as expenditure may result in lack of monitoring of end use of funds and higher reporting of expenditure compared to actual expenditure on such activities.

Bihar shows major deficiency in financial management at all levels. IPAI has reported delayed release of funds by the Government, SIS and the districts and substantial releases in last quarter of the year. Management of cash, accounts records and audit were deficient at the State level of SSA. Register of outstanding audit objections was not maintained. Misappropriation of funds took place in three districts viz. Araria, Aurangabad and East Champaran. Weak internal controls has led to large outstanding advances, non-maintenance of Fixed Asset Registers; non-verification of fixed assets; arrears in bank reconciliation statements etc. Expenditure statements were based on releases from district to fields and therefore were unreliable. Schools furnished UCs for grants to Block/District without any record of transactions in the cashbook. Headmasters did not receive training in accounts keeping. Third party evaluation of civil construction works was not done.

IPAI Reports on Financial Management & Procurement since January 2012 for the states/UTs of Sikkim, Meghalaya, Goa, Puducherry, Manipur, Lakshadweep, Chandigarh, Daman & Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Tripura, Nagaland, Andaman & Nicobar and Bihar are still pending for settlement. Effective settlement of the issues mentioned in the Reports from the macro perspective may result in course correction of many critical areas in financial management and MHRD may be able to put a robust system in place with an efficient internal control system across the whole country. MHRD has assured the mission that it is pursuing the matter actively with the states.

Another area of concern in accounting system relates to codification of account heads. FM&P provides for opening of account codes similar to the budget head and budget code. A sample chart has also been provided in the Manual. However, it has been observed that the states are yet to develop the system uniformly. This codification is an essential element in a sound accounting system, apart from acting as a tool for the management in studying the financial and physical progress of an activity and for inter-district and inter-state comparison.

### **Capacity Building of Finance & Accounts staff**

The Mission was informed that in 2011-12 capacity building for finance and accounts staff was not provided by 6 States of Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Delhi, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep and Nagaland. While adequate training was provided by other States, the training provided by 14 States of Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Manipur, Orissa, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal was found to be inadequate as they did not provide the full 5 days of training as stipulated in the FMP manual. With

a view to create Master Trainers at State and District level, MHRD had conducted 3 regional capacity building workshops on Financial Management and Procurement at Pune, Thrissur and Chandigarh during 2011-12. Another 4 such regional capacity building workshops are planned for the current financial year. This as well as the initiative taken by MHRD to request states to prepare a training calendar for the year is praiseworthy. Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Dadar & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal are yet to prepare their annual training plan.

### Recommendation

*With increasing scale of the Program, MHRD may consider a Financial Management Improvement Plan specifically targeting the weaker states, which in case of SSA are also the large spending states. MHRD should monitor the FM improvement plans for the large spending states on a regular basis and provide update on the status to JRM. States must continue to focus on quality of audit reports and have a time bound plan for compliance with audit observations of previous years.*

### Finance and Accounts Staffing

At district level, status of FM staffing is being regularly monitored by MHRD. However the status of vacancies for major states has been quiet high and has not shown an improvement over the past few years. Overall vacancy against norms has increased from 54% (January 2012 JRM) to 57% as on March 31, 2012. There is substantial increase in vacancy % against norms for some states: e.g., 30% increase in Chhattisgarh (50% to 80%) and 23% increase in Madhya Pradesh (57% to 80%). Among large states, reduction in vacancy % against norms is as follows: Karnataka (17%), West Bengal (7%), Uttar Pradesh (6%) and Rajasthan (4%). Overall, compared to the data presented in the July 2010 JRM (two years ago) staffing has gone down (from 502 to 467) in these states.

SSA JRM July 2012- Analysis of FM Staffing at District Level*								
State	FMPM Norms (district)	Sanctioned	Posted	Gap against Indicative Staffing	% Gap against Indicative Staffing	Vacancy Against Sanctioned	Vacancy % against Sanctioned	Posted (July 2010 - JRM)
	a	b	c	d=a-c	e=d/a	f=b-c	g=f/b	c
Bihar	148	152	71	77	52%	81	53%	67
Jharkhand	88	72	41	47	53%	31	43%	55
Karnataka	108	68	66	42	39%	2	3%	54
Madhya Pradesh	200	50	40	160	80%	10	20%	83
Rajasthan	132	66	50	82	62%	16	24%	44
Uttar Pradesh	280	178	123	157	56%	55	31%	114
West Bengal	76	81	63	13	17%	18	22%	64
Chhattisgarh	64	54	13	51	80%	41	76%	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>1096</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>502</b>

\* Status as on 31.3.12 as per information provided for July 2012 JRM/ Controller's minutes

It is obvious that the monitoring has not been effective, perhaps since no incentive or punitive action is linked to getting the staff to a reasonable level. This needs to be resolved somehow. It is heartening to note that states like Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat have taken pro-active measures to strengthen the staff position. While Gujarat has outsourced the accounting work to chartered accountants, Andhra Pradesh is effectively utilising the services of State Finance & Accounts Service officers. Only three states Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh UT and Sikkim have zero vacancies at all levels.

### Block Level:

Based on the initiative of MHRD states are now allowed to hire one block level accountant for every 50 schools. Over the past one/ two years this has resulted in establishing of this new set of accountants with the objective of strengthening block level accounting as well as for supervision/ support to VEC level account keeping. Among major states, FM staffing at block level against sanctioned posts is extremely deficient in Madhya Pradesh (89%) and Bihar (60%) and other states with over 25% gap include Jharkhand (30%) and Rajasthan (28%). No posts at block level were filled in Jammu & Kashmir and Orissa as on 31.3.12.

### SSA JRM July 2012- Analysis of FM Staffing at Block Level\*

State	Sanctioned	Posted	Vacancy Against Sanctioned	Vacancy % against Sanctioned 31.3.12
	a	b	c=a-b	d=c/a
Bihar	537	215	322	60%
Jharkhand	250	176	74	30%
Karnataka	1465	1124	341	23%
Madhya Pradesh	2208	240	1968	89%
Rajasthan	244	175	69	28%
Uttar Pradesh	880	744	136	15%
West Bengal	696	621	75	11%
Chhattisgarh	150	125	25	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6430</b>	<b>3420</b>	<b>3010</b>	<b>47%</b>

\* Status as on 31.3.12 as per information provided for July 2012 JRM

### Recommendation

Three main challenges for the program for FM staffing are: (a) urgent attention to maintain acceptable level of staffing in large states at district and sub-district level; and (b) time-bound plan to fill vacancies at sub-district level in all states, as weak financial management at sub-district level continues to be highlighted in audit and review missions; and (c) sanctioning posts as per norms at

*district level in all states. The expertise of the State Finance & Accounts Service officers could be most effectively utilised to man the Finance and Accounts wings for professional management.*

### **Accounting Software**

It is heartening to note that the financial accounting software has been installed and is working in most of the states upto the district level. As per Minutes of 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of Finance Controllers, as on 31 March 2012, manual accounting continues at district level in Jammu and Kashmir and in most of the districts of Madhya Pradesh. Manual accounting continues in Meghalaya. Other than these exceptions, software is reportedly running though manual records are also being maintained at the district levels. Currently, there is duplication of work.

### **Recommendation**

*States should have time bound target to discontinue manual records at state and district level and closely monitor implementation of computerized accounting.*

### **Internal Audit**

Internal audit is the most effective system for risk assessment in any large and varied organization. The 15<sup>th</sup> JRM had expressed concern regarding the absence of a proper an efficient and professional internal audit system in many of the states. It is reassuring to know that MHRD has taken up the issue with the states in tune with the recommendations of the 15<sup>th</sup> JRM and has requested the states to the priority operations, internal controls and risk management in high value expenditures and priority areas and conduct the internal audit on concurrent basis. MHRD mentioned that internal audit is being done in 10 States on concurrent basis, in 15 States the internal audit is in progress and in 10 States internal audit has not been carried out. The progress is being monitored in the Quarterly Review meetings of the State Financial Controllers. Andhra Pradesh shared its experience of concurrent internal audit with the Mission. The next JRM will watch the progress of internal audit in all the states with interest.

### **Central Plan Scheme Monitoring System (CPSMS)**

The Controller General of Accounts, Ministry of Finance is implementing Central Plan Scheme Monitoring System to track the funds availability with the SSA implementing agencies of the State. The Mission was happy to note that MHRD has organized 3 video conferences with the States/UTs in association with the experts from the office of the Controller General of Accounts with a view to explain the modalities of registration under CPSMS. Experts from the office of CGA with the same objective also participated in the Regional Training Workshops organized for finance and accounts staff at Pune (Maharashtra), Trichoor (Kerala) and Chandigarh (Haryana). Many of the States have already completed registration under CPSMS. The Mission was informed that more than 4 lakh registrations have been completed under SSA, this would cover VECs/ District Level/ State level entities. Reportedly SSA now accounts for the highest number of registrations in India under the CPSMS. This will strengthen funds management/ program implementation in the future.

## Procurement

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The Mission was informed that the online Procurement software to monitor procurements worth Rs10 lakh and more has been hosted on a dedicated website ([www.rte-ssaprocedurement.com](http://www.rte-ssaprocedurement.com)). The site is being maintained and hosted through an Internet Service Provider, KITINFINET. Login ids and passwords have been provided to States and Districts. The Operational manual for the software has been prepared and disseminated. This is an excellent achievement as the software will be very helpful for monitoring progress of high value procurement.

### *Recommendation*

*MHRD should monitor the website closely to ensure that States are uploading information on the database otherwise the purpose will be defeated. It is also suggested that the Operational Manual be uploaded on to the SSA website to provide easy access to States and Districts.*

PAB minutes for seventeen states for the Financial Year 2012-13 have been delayed. Procurement Plans which are another important monitoring tool have been uploaded on respective websites by only 5 States. MHRD has urged other States to upload their procurement plans at the earliest.

### *Recommendation*

*The Mission recommends that MHRD should follow up with States to ensure that all procurement plans are hosted on the respective websites by mid-August 2012. Though MHRD has been making all out efforts to ensure that PAB minutes are issued in a timely manner, there has been significant delay this year. Delay in issuing the PAB minutes impede procurement activities and program implementation. The Mission urges the MHRD to press further in order to ensure that PAB minutes are issued by 25<sup>th</sup> April in the following years, as mentioned in the Budget Calendar.*

IPAI's contract for the 4<sup>th</sup> Phase of review has been extended for 2012-14. Reports of the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of concurrent financial reviews by IPAI have been shared with States. The reports of this phase as well as the earlier phases have highlighted non adherence to the SSA FMP Manual and other gross irregularities in procurements conducted.

Mission noted that the concurrent monitoring of procurement function and providing on the spot remedies for mistakes and non-adherence to the agreed procedures as a significant area where MHRD and the states now need to consider institutionalising the efforts through the internal audit team or supervision teams. At present the oversight on procurement management is carried out within the approving authorities and hence the need for "separation of function" of oversight is not fully adhered to. With the mandatory use of FMP Manual and the introduction of an online Procurement MIS, SSA procurement management and monitoring model offers a "best fit" solution for fiduciary assurance in large centrally sponsored programs in the country. An effort to improve the oversight and concurrent monitoring by a team -independent of the procurement activity, but based within the system- would make the arrangements more robust.

## *Recommendation*

*The Mission recommends that MHRD should brief the next JRM on the action taken on the recommendations and observations made in the IPAI reports. MHRD should follow up on these and take appropriate action wherever non-compliance is noted. The Mission also reiterates the recommendation made in the 15<sup>th</sup> JRM whereby it was suggested that MHRD include specific checklists for review of procurement as part of the ToR for internal and external audit and that the Tor should prescribe a percentage of purchase related transactions that will need to be reviewed by the auditors.*