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INDIA



Towards the Next Millennium

India - Status Report



Second **E9** Ministerial
Review Meeting, Islamabad

14 -16 September, 1997



The Symbol

This simple, evocative, easy to draw symbol, draws its inspiration from a number of similar forms which have a positive association with education... It can be variously interpreted as... a child reading a book... a bird in flight signifying the freedom of the mind that knowledge brings... the rising sun of hope for a brighter tomorrow... the wave carrying children to greater heights of achievement... the globe, signifying the world of knowledge... It will in fact mean different things to different people... and thus, we hope, be owned by them and become an intrinsic part of their lives.

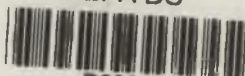
Towards the Next Millennium

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Ministry of Human Resource Development
Government of India
New Delhi, India

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Abbreviations and Glossary

7th Plan	Five year plan (1985-90)	M.Ed	Master of Education
8th Plan	Five year plan (1992-97)	MLL	Minimum Levels of Learning
9th Plan	Five year plan (1997-2002)	NCTE	National Council for Teacher Education
AE	Adult Education	NEEM	National Elementary Education Mission
Anganwadi	A village level centre under the Integrated Child Development Services	NFE	Non-Formal Education
APPEP	Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
BE	Budget Estimates	NLM	National Literacy Mission
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education	NPE	National Policy on Education
Bal Bhavan	Recreation centre for children	ODA (UK)	Overseas Development Agency
Bal Kendras	Learning resource centre for children	PLC	Post literacy Campaign
Balwadi	Early Childhood Care and Education Centre for children of 3-5 years of age, organised by voluntary agencies	Prehar Pathshalas	Schools of convenient timings
BEP	Bihar Education Project	Primary level	Classes I to V
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Scheme	POA	Programme of Action
CTE	College of Teacher Education	PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training	PROPEL	Promoting Primary and Elementary Education
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme	PS-QIP	Primary School Quality Improvement Programme
DRU	District Resource Unit	QLIP	Quality of Life Improvement Programme
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education	SC/ST	Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe
ECE	Early Childhood Education	SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
ECU	European Currency Unit	SDP	State Domestic Product
EFA	Education for All	Shiksha Karmi	Educational Worker
Elementary Education	Classes I to VIII	Shikshak Samakhya	Teacher's Empowerment
EPs	Equivalency Programmes	SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
FE	Formal Education	SKP	Shiksha Karmi Project
Five Year Plan	Five year socioeconomic development plan prepared by the National Planning Commission in consultation with central and provincial governments	SOPT	Spécial Orientation Programme for Primary Teachers
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	SSP	Sahaj Shiksha Programme
GNP	Gross National Product	STEI	Secondary Teachers' Education Institution
GOI	Government of India	SVP	Shramik Vidyapeeth
HRD	Human Resource Development	SWRC	Social Welfare Research Centre
IASE	Institute of Advanced Study in Education	TLC	Total Literacy Campaign
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services	UEE	Universalisation of Elementary Education
IDA	International Development Agency	UGC	University Grants Commission
IGPs	Income Generating Programmes	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IIPP	Individual's Interest Promotion Programmes	Upper primary level	Classes VI to VIII
IPER	Institute of Psychological and Educational Research	UPE	Universalisation of Primary Education
JNS	Jan Shikshan Nilayams	UT	Union Territory (administered directly by the central government)
L J	Lok Jumbish	Zilla Saksharata Samitis	District Literacy Societies
		Exchange Rate	US \$1 = Rs. 36.37 (as on 30th August, 1997)



Overview

Pioneering Radical Alternatives

Enrolment data and age-specific literacy rates have made it amply clear that much progress has been made in India in expanding access to education. In 1993-94, about 108 million children were enrolled in primary school, up from 100.9 million in 1990. This has further increased to 109.8 million in 1995-96.

The nation has set before itself the task of achieving full literacy by 2005 AD. This would mean enrolling and retaining all children within the age-group of 6-14 up to class VIII level either through the formal school system or the non-formal system with comparable standards. It

would also mean the acquisition of functional literacy by more than 100 million adults in the age group of 15-35.

A Constitution Amendment Bill has been introduced in the Indian Parliament to make elementary education a fundamental right demonstrating the political will and administrative resolve of the country to achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) and banish illiteracy.

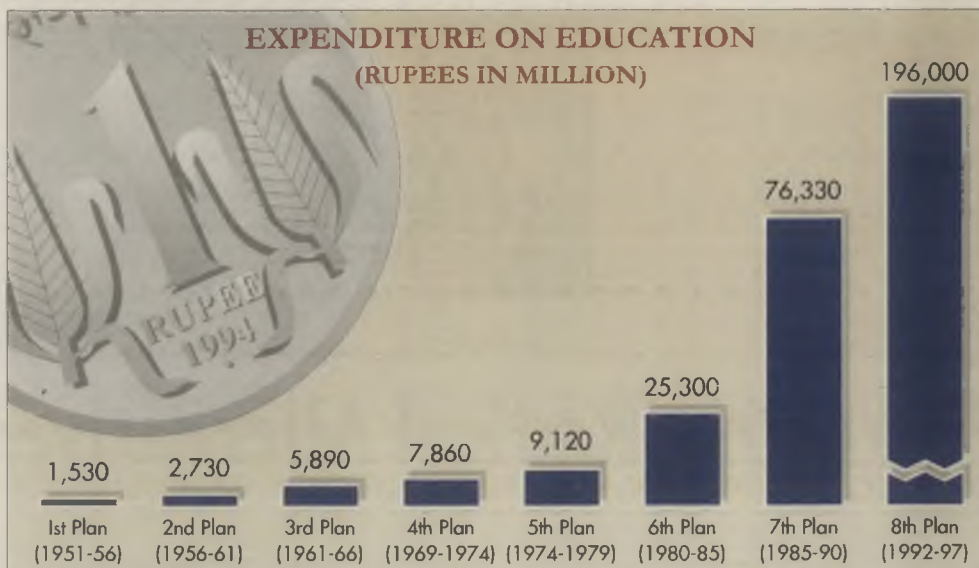
India is one of the few countries where during the stabilisation phase of structural adjustment, expenditure on education has been stepped up. The government is fully seized of the fact that nothing less than a wholehearted national effort both in the public and private sectors would be necessary if India is to emerge as a fully literate and economically vibrant nation in the 21st century.

The 8th Plan (1992-97) has been marked by a significant breakthrough in attitudes and perceptions in education. Radical alternatives have been pioneered by the government and NGOs for achieving the goals of UEE. The basic conceptual shift has been in decentralising planning and management, in social mobilisation of the teachers, community and voluntary agencies. Gender issues and problems of the vulnerable sections of society have come into sharp focus. Specific components for

- An estimated 95% of the rural population living in 826,000 habitations have a primary school within 1 km.
- 84% of the population have an upper primary school within 3 km.
- 150 million enrolments in the age group of 6-14 years covering about 91% of the children in this age group.



Source: Annual Report, 1996-97, MHRD, GOI



Source: Budgetary Resources for Education (1951-52 to 1993-94), Deptt. of Education, MHRD, GOI

mobilising women and ameliorating the conditions of the girl child have been built into internationally assisted projects.

Access to education has increased as an estimated 95% of the rural population living in 826,000 habitations have a primary school within a walking distance of 1 km and 84% of the rural population have an upper primary school within a walking distance of 3 kms.

The Indian elementary education system is today one of the largest systems in the world with 150 million enrolments in the age group of 6-14 years covering about 90% of the children of this age group. Gross enrolment ratio at the primary stage has increased from 100.1% in 1990 to 104.3 % in 1995-96 and at the upper primary stage (class VI-VIII) from 62.14% to 67.6%.

A major step to improve efficiency and effectiveness has been the collective exercise between the Government of India and the states to develop a time-bound action plan to reduce dropouts and remove systemic deficiencies in the implementation of educational schemes.

The expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP has

averaged nearly 4 per cent in the nineties. The total plan allocation has increased from Rs. 1,530 million in the 1st Plan to Rs. 196,000 million in the 8th Plan.

A major initiative to achieve UEE, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) has made much progress. It has emerged as one of the major vehicles for UEE as well as for international assistance for basic education.

A nationwide school meal programme has been launched recently, to provide nutritional support to primary education.

Great strides in adult literacy have been made through the Total Literacy Campaigns and the Post Literacy Campaigns.

Distance education is emerging as a major vehicle for improving teacher education and as an alternative mode of education. A significant development is the emergence of the National Open School as the hub of a network of state level open schools.

India is boldly venturing ahead with specific time bound targets, to make the right to free and compulsory education a fundamental right and to make the nation fully literate.



Fundamental Right to Education

Elementary Education: The Right of Every Child

In its endeavour to build a just and humane society, the Indian government has resolved to make the right to elementary education a fundamental right and to enforce it through suitable statutory measures.

The resolve is expected to help remove obstacles in achieving UEE. It has several positive aspects:

- The Constitutional enactment for the right to education would demonstrate the necessary political will and administrative resolve of the country to achieve UEE and eradication of illiteracy.
- The legislation would urge the governmental and non-governmental sectors to take necessary measures to provide universal access to elementary education and to ensure universal retention and achievement.
- The provision for making elementary education a fundamental right would create the required pressure on the central and state governments to focus on the special needs of the underserved and unserved population and region.

The government's commitment to provide 6% of GDP for education and to earmark 50% for primary education should provide the requisite financial backup and support to the constitutional enactment.

- Revitalisation of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), in the wake of the 73rd constitutional amendment,

provides an opportunity to bring about effective devolution and decentralisation of authority for planning and management of elementary education to give effect to the constitutional enactment.

- The proposal is expected to have a positive impact on eradication of child labour.
- The spread of elementary education would have a good impact on other social indicators like population growth, health and women's development, as well as enhancement of productivity of the economy and reduction in unemployment.

The extent to which the proposed right will bear fruit will depend on the ability of the state governments to finance education, and the resources raised through the Finance and Planning Commissions; the priority accorded to competing demands in the social sector; as well as expenditure of the household sector on education. On the other hand, it is realised that legislation in relation to compulsory education should ensure that penalties against parents ought only to serve as a deterrent and should be enforced as a last resort and that too in a compassionate and humane manner.

Free and Compulsory Education

State governments have abolished tuition fees in government schools till the upper primary level. Education in schools run by local bodies and private aided institutions

Constitutional Framework

Article 45 of the Constitution of India directs that the State shall endeavour to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years.

The government has now resolved to translate this directive into a fundamental right of every child between 6 to 14 years of age. This would give a further fillip to the nation's efforts to achieve UEE.

are also mostly free. However, unaided institutions of elementary education do charge tuition and other fees. Other costs of education such as textbooks, stationery, uniforms, school bags and transportation are generally met by parents. State governments provide text books and uniforms, as incentives for children from Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) and girls at the primary level.

The Compulsory Education legislation have been enacted in 14 states and 4 union territories. These have remained unenforced due to various socioeconomic and

cultural factors as well as administrative and financial constraints.

The Government of India has not enacted any legislation in this regard so far, as it holds the opinion that the compulsion contemplated in Article 45 of the Constitution is on the state rather than on the parents and children. It has, therefore, been advocating a consensual approach to motivate parents and children. The key elements of this approach have been:

- Community involvement.
- Decentralisation of planning and management of school education to PRIs.
- Motivation of children to attend schools regularly.
- Improvement of infrastructure and facilities in schools.
- Development of locally relevant curricula.
- Improvement in quality of textbooks.
- Teacher training.
- Child centred learning.
- Adoption of minimum levels of learning.

The government would continue to strengthen the consensual approach and social mobilisation for UEE. The constitutional enactment is expected to provide further momentum to the nation's efforts to achieve UEE at a faster pace.



Status of Elementary Education

The Road Traversed

U E E has been accepted as a national goal since 1950. It implies universal access, retention and achievement of children in classes I to VI. Concretely this means:

Universal Access: Universal enrolment of all children, including disadvantaged children; provision of a primary school within 1 km. walking distance and facilities for non-formal education for school dropouts, working children and girls who cannot attend formal schools; and improvement in the ratio of upper primary schools to primary schools from the existing level of 1:4 to 1:2.

Universal Retention: Reduction of dropout rates in classes I-V and class VI-VIII from the current levels of 46 % and 60 % respectively to 20 % and 40 % respectively.

Universal Achievement: Achievement of MLLs by almost all children at the primary level and introduction of this concept at the upper primary stage.

Within these parameters, the government is making all out efforts to honour the declarations made for achieving the goal of EFA in the Jomtien Global Conference on Basic Education in 1990, and the resolutions adopted in the Conference of the nine most populous countries (EFA-9) in 1993 at New Delhi. The national commitment to provide 6 % of GDP for education and to earmark 50 % of budgetary allocations for primary education should provide the requisite fillip to India's efforts to achieve UEE.

The rejuvenation of local bodies in most parts of the country in the wake of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments as well as the infusion of a large number of women members and representatives of other disadvantaged sections into these bodies have provided a

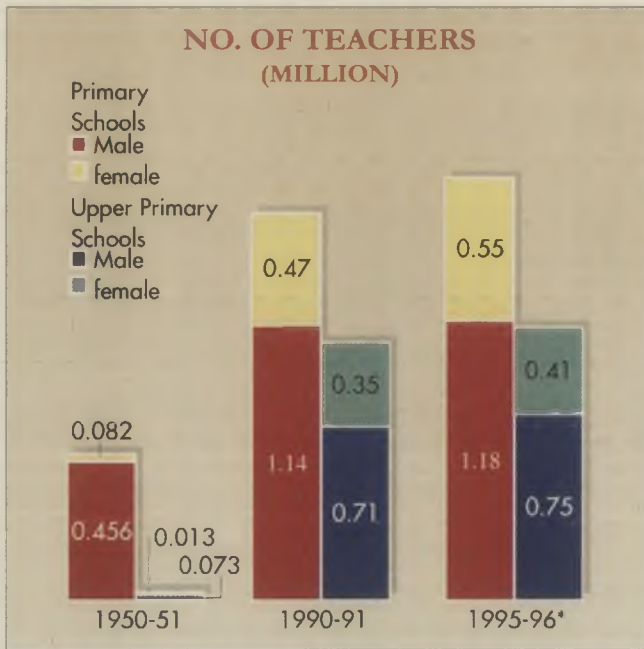
GROSS ENROLMENT

Primary (I-V)	1950-51	1990-91	1995-96*
Total enrolment (million)	19.2	97.4	109.8
Gross enrolment ratio - boys (%)	60.6	114.0	114.5
girls	24.8	85.5	93.3
overall	42.6	100.1	104.3
Upper Primary (VI-VIII)			
Total enrolment (million)	3.1	34.0	41.0
Gross enrolment ratio - boys (%)	20.6	76.6	79.5
girls	4.6	47.0	54.9
overall	12.7	62.1	67.6



Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1995-96, MHRD, GOI

* Provisional



Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1995-96, MHRD, GOI

* Provisional

great opportunity to bring about effective devolution of powers and decentralisation of authority for better planning and management of elementary education at the grassroots.

Achievements

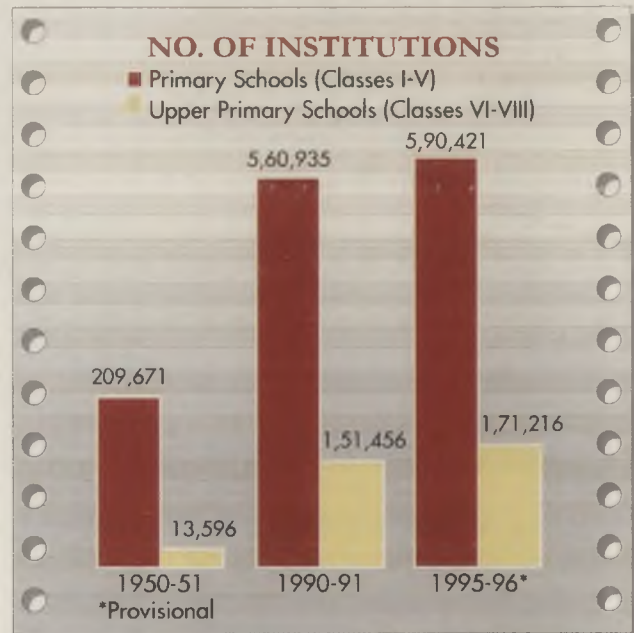
Expanding Access: Concerted efforts towards UEE have resulted in manifold increase in institutions, teachers and students. Between 1990-91 and 1995-96, the number of primary schools increased by 5 %. The number of upper primary schools increased by 13 %. Growth in enrolments have also been significant. It was 12 % in primary classes (I-V) and 20 % in upper primary classes (VI-VIII). Recent levels indicate that gender and sectional gaps in enrolments at the primary level are narrowing down, albeit gradually.

Retention: The dropout rates have shown a declining trend during the past four years, 1992-96. They declined from 42 % in 1991-92 to 34.5 % in 1995-96 in case of primary classes, showing an overall decrease of 7.5 %. In case of upper primary classes, the dropout rates declined by 7.1 % from 58.7 % in 1991-92 to 51.6 % in 1995-96.

Learner's Achievement: One of the thrust areas of UEE has been the effort to improve learning achievement of children both in primary and upper primary classes, mainly through the programme of Minimum Levels of Learning (MLLs). Several states have successfully used the idea of MLL to launch a number of activities including revision of text books, changes in curricula and teaching Methodologies, as well as the content of teacher training.

Despite significant achievements in UEE, there are severe gender, regional, sectional and caste disparities in UEE. A significant proportion of students dropout due to socioeconomic and cultural factors as also due to lack of adequate infrastructure, shortage of teachers and other reasons. A large proportion of children in the 6-14 age group are out of school.

Ensuring access to good quality learning environment for all children in the age group of 6-14 is still a daunting task. The nation has taken up this challenge. As India enters the next 5 years of planned development, straddling across to the next century midway, it stands committed to achieve UEE.



Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1995-96, MHRD, GOI



Elementary Education Initiatives

Harbingers of Change

Since independence, the central and state governments have been expanding the provision of primary formal and non-formal education to realise the goal of UEE. The challenge now is to sustain and deepen current reforms in education and encourage local planning and management of strategies for expanding and improving primary education.

With a view to cushioning the impact of rising costs of text books and exercise books, the government has exempted writing and printing paper supplied to all State Text Book Corporations from excise duty. It is expected that this would make school text books more affordable for students from weaker sections of society.

Removal of systemic deficiencies in the implementation of UEE and forging ahead necessitates the creation of informed public opinion and a facilitative environment akin to that of the Total Literacy Campaign. This has to be achieved through effective and sustained advocacy, massive community mobilisation and consciousness building. With this perspective, a national programme of media publicity and advocacy has been planned. The programme will target: i) teachers and all those involved in education of children; ii) students and parents of students, particularly non-literate parents; and iii) community opinion leaders.

The Kasturba Gandhi Shiksha Yojana, a programme to establish residential schools for girls in all the districts which have a particularly low female literacy rate has been announced. A sum of Rs. 2500 million has been provided in this year's budget. The central government has also decided to grant financial incentives and scholarships for the girl child born in families living below the poverty line.

Several central and state level initiatives have been in operation from the early 1980s. While the design of these projects vary substantially, all of them address the objectives and strategies of the National Policy on Education 1986. They pay special attention to increasing girls' enrolment, improving educational outcomes, strengthening community involvement, improving teaching and learning materials and providing in-service teacher training. The status of some of these initiatives are discussed below.

Operation Blackboard

This scheme launched in 1987, is aimed at improving the school environment and enhancing retention and learning achievement of children by providing minimum essential facilities in all primary schools. The scheme has brought about a remarkable quantitative and qualitative improvement in primary education. In all, 523,000 primary schools have been covered as originally envisaged. These schools have been provided with central assistance



Decentralisation

Decentralised planning and management of elementary education is a goal set by the National Policy on Education, 1986. The Policy visualises direct community involvement in the form of Village Education Committees (VECs) for management of elementary education. The POA, 1992, emphasised microplanning as a process of designing a family-wise and child-wise plan of action by which every child regularly attends school or NFE centre, continues his or her education at the place suitable to him/her and completes at least eight years of schooling or its equivalent at the NFE centre.

The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments provide for decentralisation of the activities and facilitate transfer of power and participation of the local self-government institutions or the Panchayati Raj Institutions. It has created a congenial ambience for the PRIs to play a more dynamic and proactive role. States are expected to evolve institutional arrangements both in rural and urban areas for undertaking these activities. These structures have been providing voice to women, Scheduled Castes and Tribes, minorities, parents and

educational functionaries. They have also been delegated with responsibilities with regard to location and relocation of existing primary and upper primary schools on the basis of microplanning and school mapping. In this regard, decentralisation of school management to grassroots level bodies is an important policy initiative.

During the 8th plan period several innovative efforts have been made under the ongoing projects to establish decentralisation. For instance, the District Primary Education Programme has shifted the planning mechanism from the state to the district level, and Lok Jumbish has gone one step further by assigning decision making processes to a block level committee. At the village level, a VEC has the main responsibility for community mobilisation, school mapping, microplanning, renovation and construction of school buildings and improvement of pedagogical curriculum. In fact, the VECs of Shiksha Karmi schools have been activated as a result of the Lok Jumbish programme.

States	No. of Districts		
	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Assam	4	5	-
Haryana	4	3	-
Karnataka	4	7	-
Kerala	3	3	-
Tamil Nadu	3	3	-
Maharashtra	5	4	-
Madhya Pradesh	19	15	-
Himachal Pradesh	-	4	-
Gujarat	-	3	-
Orissa	-	8	-
Andhra Pradesh	-	5	-
West Bengal	-	5	-
Uttar Pradesh	-	15	-
Bihar	-	-	27
Total	42	80	27

of Rs. 10,000 each for teaching learning equipment. Near about 147,000 single teacher schools have been upgraded to dual teacher schools. Construction of 174,000 classrooms has been undertaken with central assistance and contributions from the concerned states.

Since 1993-94, the scheme has been expanded to cover upper primary schools. More than 47,000 upper primary schools have been granted central assistance of Rs. 40,000 each for purchase of teaching-learning materials. Also, primary schools with enrolment exceeding 100 have been augmented with a third teacher. A Special Orientation Programme for Primary Teachers (SOPT) to facilitate optimum utilisation of materials supplied has also been launched to cover all primary school teachers in the country.



The total expenditure under the scheme from 1992-93 to 1995-96 has been Rs. 8,163 million. The outlay for 1996-97 is Rs. 2,910 million.

National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (School Meal Programme)

This scheme was launched on 15 August, 1995 to give a boost to UEE in terms of increasing enrolment, retention and attendance in primary classes by supplementing nutritional requirements of children attending primary schools. It is an ambitious scheme that has been operationalised throughout the country in a very short period. The programme envisages provision of nutritious and wholesome cooked meal of 100 gms of foodgrains per school day, free of cost, to all children in classes I-V by 1997-98.

During 1995-96, 378 districts, 225,000 schools and 33.5 million children have been covered with an expenditure of Rs. 4,412 million. In 1996-97, the scheme was extended to cover 55.4 million children with an expenditure of Rs. 8,110 million. The scheme has become fully operational in 1997-98 covering nearly 110 million children in primary classes. A positive impact on school enrolment and retention has been reported.

District Primary Education Programme

The DPEP launched in November, 1994 is conceived as a beachhead for overhauling the primary education system in India. The programme aims at operationalising the strategies for achieving UEE through district specific planning and disaggregated target setting. It draws upon the accumulated national experience of several state level initiatives that were started earlier. It moves away from the schematic piecemeal approach of the earlier programmes and takes a holistic view of primary education with emphasis on decentralised management, community mobilisation and district specific planning based on contextuality and research based inputs.

Objectives of DPEP

The basic objectives of DPEP are :

- To provide all children with access to primary education either in the formal system or through the non-formal education (NFE) programme.
- To reduce differences in enrolment, dropout rates and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than 5 %.
- To reduce overall primary dropout rates for all students to less than 10 %.
- To raise average achievement levels by at least 25 % over measured base line levels and ensuring achievements of basic literacy and numeracy competencies and a minimum of 40 % achievement levels in other competencies by all primary school children.

The Government of India finances 85 % of the project cost as a grant to the DPEP State Implementation Societies and the concerned state government provides the rest. The central government's share is resourced by external funding. As of now, IDA has approved credit amounting to \$260 million and \$425 million under Phase-I and Phase-II respectively. The European Union (EU) is providing a grant of 150 million ECU. The ODA (UK) is extending a grant of \$80.21 million. The grant from the Netherlands amounts to \$25.8 million.

The first phase of the programme was launched in 42 districts in the states of Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and Madhya Pradesh. In the second phase, the programme has been launched in 80 districts of Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat and in Phase I States.



During the last three years, DPEP has been able to set up project management structures at district, state and national levels, create the environment and capacity for microplanning, take up the challenge of pedagogical innovation, create a responsive institutional base which includes both government and non-government institutions, enhance community participation and strengthen the process of catering to special focus groups such as tribals, scheduled castes, women and other marginalised sections.

The first phase of the programme is under evaluation. The initial trends of impact studies are very positive. DPEP has made a decisive impact on increasing enrolment, reducing repetition rates and improving class room processes.

While the DPEP has been targeting backward districts with female literacy below the national average and where TLCs have stirred up a demand for elementary education, several state level initiatives have shown tremendous potential. These are directed at improving literacy levels in the five low literacy states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Bihar Education Project

Bihar Education Project (BEP) was launched in 1991 with the express purpose of bringing about quantitative and qualitative improvement in the elementary system in Bihar.

The project lays emphasis on the education of deprived sections of society, such as SCs, STs and women. Participatory planning and implementation are crucial ingredients of the project.

A midterm review highlighted certain major achievements such as: a) a strong Mahila Samakhya component; b) organisation of VECs and community involvement in programme implementation at grassroot level; and c) non-formal education through NGOs. The review

suggested:

- consolidation of the programme in the existing seven districts,
- establishing strong linkages between BEP and the education system in Bihar,
- giving greater focus to the primary stage of classes I-V,
- building better linkages with the activities in other states under DPEP and other programmes,
- providing more emphasis to MLLs and teacher training, and conducting periodic base line studies.

It has now been decided to extend the project to the second phase of two years duration. The total outlay for the second phase (1996-98) is estimated to be Rs. 613 million to be shared between UNICEF, Government of India and Government of Bihar as per the existing funding formula of 3:2:1. The total project outlay for BEP is Rs. 3600 million. It is proposed to merge the project with DPEP during the next five years.

Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Programme

A project "Education for All" prepared by the Government of Uttar Pradesh was approved by The World Bank in June, 1993. The project is currently in operation in 12 districts. It is planned to expand the coverage to 15 districts under DPEP-II. It has an outlay of Rs. 7,288 million spread over seven years. International Development Agency (IDA), the soft loan window of The World Bank, would provide a credit of US\$163.1 million and the state government's share would be approximately 13 per cent of the total project cost.

The progress of implementation of the project so far has been satisfactory. The construction work of schools and Block Resource Centres is being completed as per schedule. Training materials for teacher trainers on DIETs have been prepared. The first cycle of in-service teacher training was completed in October, 1995. About 40,000 teachers have been trained.

Community Mobilisation and Participation

Many educational innovations of recent years are based on the strong foundation of community support and participation. When progress is discussed and analysed at different levels within the project, "people's acceptance and participation" is used as an indicator.

Mobilising the village community to take responsibility to ensure quality education for every child, is the core strategy of both Lok Jumbish (LJ) and Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) in their efforts to universalise primary education and deliver quality education. It would not be far removed from truth if we say that community involvement has been the key factor for the success of the two projects.

LJ has had a positive effect on the empowerment of locally elected people, especially on female representatives at village level, who are often active members of the LJ core teams or women's groups. The Village Education Committees (VECs), carefully formed and trained through environmental building activities in

the LJ programme, are actively involved in school matters.

SKP has constituted VECs in 2000 villages to promote community involvement in primary education and encourage village level planning. The role of the VEC is to mobilise resources for maintenance, repair and construction of school infrastructure. The VEC also helps in determining the school calendar and school timings in consultation with the local community and Shiksha Karmis (educational workers).

The positive impact of the LJ and SKP, focusing on supporting the teachers and the students by involving the village community in taking responsibility for all educational activities of the village school, is serving as a demonstration of how deeply rooted problems of education in India can be addressed. Wide dissemination of these innovative approaches could inspire other educational programmes all over India and the world.

Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project

The Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP), practised in the south central state of Andhra Pradesh, with a female literacy of just 34 %, adopts a two-pronged strategy of improving classroom transaction by training teachers and giving a fillip to school construction activities. The project has trained an estimated 80, 000 teachers in 23 districts and more than 3,000 teaching centres have become operational. The project is assisted by the ODA with an estimated outlay of Rs. 1,000 million in the 8th Plan.

Shiksha Karmi Project

The Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) is being implemented since 1987, with assistance from the Swedish International

Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The project aims at universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in the remote and socioeconomically backward villages of Rajasthan, with primary focus on girls. Since teacher absenteeism has been found to be a major obstacle in achieving the objective of UEE, the project uses the novel approach of substituting teachers in dysfunctional schools with local youth known as Shiksha Karmis who are provided with rigorous training and supervisory support. An important feature of this innovative project is the mobilisation and participation of the community in improving the functioning of primary schools.

The project is being implemented as an externally aided scheme with reimbursement of 90 % in Phase I and 50 % in Phase II, from SIDA. The project, with an outlay of around Rs. 212 million in Phase I and Rs. 490 million in



Phase II, places strong emphasis on vigorous and continuous in-service training.

The SKP also runs non-formal classes called Prehar Pathshalas—schools of convenient timings. For girls' education, Angan Pathshalas are being run in three blocks. The programme at present covers over 150,000 students in 1,785 schools and 3,520 Prehar Pathshalas, involving over 4,271 Shiksha Karmis.

The project is known for its open participative style and continuous experimentation to achieve its objectives. The approach, strategies and achievements of the SKP have attracted national and international recognition. The project is slated for a major expansion with SIDA assistance in the 9th Plan. The total projections for the 9th Plan are estimated to be Rs. 4260 million.

Lok Jumbish Project

Barely five years old, Lok Jumbish (LJ) has made an indelible impression in the primary education landscape of Rajasthan. The coverage of the project has extended to 75 blocks, covering a population of approximately 12 million. Significantly, it has also achieved a major breakthrough in welding together government agencies, teachers, NGOs, elected representatives and the people into an interactive group effort to promote universalisation of primary education.



The seven guiding principles of Lok Jumbish are:

- a process rather than a product approach;
- partnerships;
- decentralised functioning;
- participatory learning;
- integration with the mainstream education system;
- flexibility of management; and
- creating multiple levels of leadership committed to quality and mission mode.

Special focus has been given to environment building in all training programmes under LJ. This helps in the development of an understanding about issues involved in people's mobilisation, use of different media forms and clarity about the messages to be given to the people.

The first phase of the project was for a period of two years from 1992-94, with the expenditure shared between SIDA, Government of India and Government of Rajasthan in the ratio 3:2:1. The second phase stretches up to 1998, with the sharing modality remaining the same. The allocation for LJP is Rs. 1100 million for Phases I and II and Rs. 4000 million for Phase III. A Norwegian grant of Rs. 200 million is also available.

Sahaj Shiksha Programme (SSP) was started in LJ (as NFE) in June 1993. A programme evaluation conducted after two years has observed that 96 % of the NFE centres were functioning efficiently, the level of motivation among instructors and learners was high, there was a high degree of community involvement in the programmes and that the level of achievement of the learners were comparable with the formal school system.

A significant area which reflects LJ's concern for gender equity is the content and process of education. Steps have been initiated to incorporate gender equity in curriculum and textbooks. The faculty of Lok Jumbish is working in close cooperation with Sandhan, an NGO, in this area.

The buildings development programme of LJ is beginning to have an impact on the Government of Rajasthan with respect to its school buildings programme. LJ designs have been accepted and widely disseminated.

LJ has some remarkable achievements to its credit. The style of partnership between LJ and NGOs has been emulated by other programmes and their stress on gender equity and women's development is a harbinger of similar efforts elsewhere. LJ's achievement in enhancing

enrolment and retention have been widely acclaimed, as also the impact on achievement levels.

Joyful Learning and Teaching

Shikshak Samakhya, or Teacher Empowerment Strategy, now being implemented in modified forms as Joyful Learning/Teaching in several Indian states as an in-service teacher training strategy for mobilising teachers on a mass scale, is an unprecedented story of success and innovation within the Indian subcontinent. This programme, underway in 11 states of India, has created a revolution in the nature of teacher training and has stressed on the importance of participatory approaches and mobilisation techniques in teacher training programmes.

Pivotal to the success of the teacher empowerment programme in India is its use of the participatory approach for training, design and implementation. It essentially draws on teacher resources from the district, block and cluster levels, aimed at empowering the teacher to make their own decisions. Teachers are involved in highly participatory sessions from the initial stages of

designing the content of the training package, to the actual training sessions delivered by core trainers selected mainly from the teachers themselves.

The most powerful aspect of joyful learning programmes are that they provide an extremely effective teacher mobilisation strategy which leads to highly motivated and transformed teachers in a very short time. Teachers take a pledge to change their role and to make the classroom a joyful and stimulating learning environment and to do so together with leaders from the community as well as educational functionaries. A further incentive for change has been the participation of teachers in making their own teaching aids, their involvement in the writing of handbooks and worksheets, their involvement in the organisation of the training programme in the various blocks and its extension to the cluster level training, and their active cooperation in using their own creative talents in the design of activities, songs, drama and dances to accompany the various MLL competencies.

The teacher empowerment programme represents a macro-approach towards mobilising teachers on a large scale and has expanded rapidly into new districts. Attempts are now directed towards analysing teacher competencies and training needs to arrive at a comprehensive, recurrent and sustainable in-service training programme.

One of the specific Joyful Learning initiative is the Guru Mitra, which was launched by the Government of Rajasthan in collaboration with UNICEF in 1994. By the beginning of 1997, 38 blocks in 10 districts have been covered under this initiative. Guru, the teacher is the pivot of this initiative. The project is a joint endeavour of teachers, parents, community, PRIs and administrators to strengthen UPE. Guru Mitra offers conditions for a teacher to learn from fellow teachers in MLL-based joyful learning during the foundation training course followed by monthly cluster level enrichment sessions.



National Elementary Education Mission

In view of the rapid expansion of the elementary education system and the emerging challenges, the government is contemplating several structural changes at national and state levels for achieving the goal of UEE. Within this background, the commitment made in the revised NPE, 1992, for launching a National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM) is being given final shape. A major task before such a Mission would be to evolve strategies for reaching the unreached and achieving the goals of UEE within a given time frame in a systematic, sustained and integrated manner by involving all segments of civil society in this national endeavour.

The objectives of the Mission will be :

- universal access and enrolment;
- universal retention of children up to 14 years of age; and
- a substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning.

The approach and strategy of the Mission would

incorporate the following tenets :

- genuine and effective involvement and participation of all people—political parties, mass organisations, trade unions, peasants, youth groups, women's collectives, NGOs, voluntary agencies, teachers, students, creative individuals, and social activists—so as to make UEE a mass movement;
- national arousal and social mobilisation through media—print, theatre, folk culture and kala jathas.
- a time bound and decentralised perspective with rigorous planning at district, block and cluster levels for achieving the goal of UEE;
- accountability and transparency at all levels of the elementary education system.

The political resolve to make the right to elementary education a fundamental right has cast a greater responsibility on the Government to achieve UEE. The National Elementary Education Mission is expected to play the role of an overarching body to meet this challenge.

Community Based Primary Education: Joint GOI-UN System Initiative

To provide programme support in a coordinated manner to the ongoing efforts of the Government of India (GOI) towards the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education, the Joint GOI-UN System for Support for Community Based Primary Education has been slated for a major takeoff. It is a collaborative effort of the GOI and five UN agencies namely, UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, UNESCO and UNFPA. The programme aims at enhancing the capacity for community participation in

effective school management, improving the performance of primary school teachers for the use of interactive, child-centred and gender-sensitive methods of teaching in multi-grade classrooms and addressing social factors which affect the attendance and performance of school-age children adversely.

The programme is likely to become operational in eight states, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh from the year 1998.



Early Childhood Care and Education

Well begun, Half done

While the process of human development is essentially cumulative in nature, the first six years of a child's life are the most critical for his/her development. Thus, investment in programmes for the youngest children in the range of 0-6 years becomes a major priority as the very foundation for basic education and lifelong learning and development.

The all important significance of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is compensation for early childhood deprivations at the home front by providing an appropriately stimulating environment to the children in the areas of health and education. Quality ECE (Early Childhood Education) programmes, a major component of ECCE, have demonstrated a positive impact on retention rates and achievement levels in primary grades.

While most of the coverage under ECCE in India is carried out through the ICDS scheme, other pre-primary and day-care centres are also involved.

Integrated Child Development Services

ICDS is the largest ECCE programme, at present, in the country. It is an inter-sectoral programme, which reaches out to children from vulnerable and remote areas.



The scheme's package of services includes:

- ◆ supplementary nutrition
- ◆ immunisation
- ◆ health checkups
- ◆ referral services
- ◆ non-formal preschool education
- ◆ nutrition and health education; for children below six years, and pregnant and nursing mothers.

The 8th Plan period saw the accelerated expansion of ICDS, with the total number of blocks under coverage being 3,072 in the first three years. The ICDS scheme was universalised in 1995-96, through the sanction of projects for all the 5,320 community development blocks and 310 major urban slums. This led to an increase in the total number of anganwadi centres to 0.4 million.

Presently, ICDS reaches 10.63 million children (in the age-group of 3-6) with its preschool facility. Although the scheme has now expanded and been made more accessible, it is felt that the preschool component needs further strengthening. Towards this end, a monitoring system has been devised to focus on this area; the training curriculum of the different levels of ICDS functionaries has been revised; and the process of the selection of core material for anganwadi centres and supervisory personnel is on, to further strengthen their capabilities. Instructions to the states have also been issued for teachers of primary schools to visit the anganwadi centres for better coordination. This would relieve the girl child from the burden of taking care of younger siblings.



Creches and Day Care Centres Scheme

Custodial in nature, the scheme provides day care services for children (below 5 years) of casual, migrant, agricultural, and construction labourers. 12,470 creches under the scheme cater to 300,000 children. In addition to this, under the National Creche Fund, 642 creches and 150 anganwadi-cum-creches, covering about 20,000 children have been set up.

Early Childhood Education Scheme

The scheme, introduced to reduce the dropout rate in primary schools, provides central assistance to voluntary organisations for running preschool centres. With the universalisation of ICDS, ECE and also Balwadi Nutrition Programme were expected to be phased out, by the end of the 8th Plan, with their centres being merged with ICDS.

Future Strategies

While the previous plan period witnessed a quantum leap in ECCE services, primarily through ICDS, the component of ECE has only received divided attention. However, the significance of ECCE for Universalisation of Education (UEE) makes it imperative for ECE to be regarded as the first indispensable step in the educational continuum.

Future efforts to achieve the same are underlined below:

- Priority to ECE in the education sector: This priority would be translated into action aimed at building resource capacity in ECE at all levels of the existing institutional structures in the education sector which can facilitate qualitative improvement of the ECE programmes at the field level.
- Provision of Basic Minimum Resources: Budgetary allocations for ECE programmes would be in

conformity with Minimum Specifications for Pre-schools produced by NCERT, which delineates the minimum resources required for a quality programme.

- Advocacy: To ensure developmentally appropriate play-based programmes in ECCE, for all children, an appropriate climate and a strong parent lobby would be developed.
- Regulation and Monitoring of Quality: The quality of working practices propagated by the private ECE centres would be regulated by legal and persuasive measures.
- Training: All levels of functionaries would be provided with resource capacity building for planning, implementation and monitoring the standard ECE curriculum.
- Strengthening of ECCE-Primary Linkage: In the context of ECCE's crucial significance for UEE, linkages between ECE and primary education initiated in the previous plan will be strengthened in both operational and programmatic terms.
- Micro and Need-Specific Planning: The ECE programme would ensure flexible response to local patterns of women's work, child-care needs and local culture-specific practices.
- Partnership with NGOs: The participation of NGOs provides resource support for qualitative strengthening of the programmes and would be encouraged for the further development of ECCE.
- Research: Action research in the area of ECCE would be promoted to assess the relative long-term impact of ECE on the subsequent development and achievements of children vis-a-vis the goals of UEE.



Educational Opportunities

En route to Equity

It is very imperative that education, if it is to fulfil its potential as a decisive intervention towards social equity, must move beyond the domain of literacy to create an environment where girls, women, working children, disabled persons and persons belonging to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minorities are enabled to come together to explore their situations, recognise and affirm their own strengths and capacities, and act to bring about change. Towards this end, all aspects of planning and implementation of educational programmes have been incorporated with a perspective that envisages enhanced participation of these groups.

Girls' and Women's Education

Women and young girls, all over the world, carry a historic burden of inequality which is visible in every aspect of their lives—in their share in the population, in the economy, in social and political life, in their access to health, information and all other aspects of development. Their educational status holds a mirror to the larger realities of their lives. There has been an increasing recognition of the fact that while UEE is the ultimate goal, no strategy can succeed without addressing its gender and class dimensions specifically.

States have exempted girls from payment of tuition fees up to graduate level. Other measures for promotion of girls' education include provision of scholarships, free text

books, uniforms, attendance incentives, separate girls' schools, construction of toilets for girls and increasing proportion of women teachers in primary schools.

Participation of girls in primary education has improved significantly. Girls enrolment ratio at the primary level has increased from 5.4 in 1950-51 to 47.4 in 1995-96.

Though girls' enrolment has been outpacing that of the boys, there still exists a big gap in gender achievements. The sixth All India Educational Survey supports the contention that girls, particularly in rural areas, are the single most important group requiring focused attention for achievement of UEE. Recognising this, most programmes have specific components for ameliorating the conditions of the girl children and women.

Some gender specific interventions are:

- Mahila Samakhya, one of the most successful efforts to link women's empowerment with education, has expanded its coverage to 35 districts.
- The TLC has been successful in raising the demand for education, especially among women. In most of the 417 districts, women make up over 60% of adults enrolled in the programme.
- Under the scheme of Operation Blackboard, of the 147,000 teachers appointed, 47% were women.



Mahila Samakhya Project

Mahila Samakhya (MS), which means women's equality through education, is a women's empowerment project which aims not only at service delivery but seeks to bring about a change in women's perception about themselves and that of society in regard to their 'traditional roles'. It endeavours to create an environment for women to seek knowledge and information in order to make informed choices and create circumstances in which they can learn at their own pace and rhythm. The centrality of education in the struggle to achieve equality is an important focus of Mahila Samakhya.

The process of mobilising and organising women is facilitated by a "sahayogini" (a cluster coordinator in 10 villages). She is a crucial link between the village sangha and the district implementation unit of the programme. The latter provides resource support and inputs to meet the needs of the women. The district units are supported by a state office. At the state level, an autonomous registered society, as an empowered body,

has been set up to oversee the programme. At the national level, the programme is coordinated by a Project Director. A National Resource Group—an advisory body of eminent women activists, academics, development workers and bureaucrats—supports the programme, providing it with new concepts, ideas and experiences.

The programme is operational in 5000 villages spread over 35 districts in seven states. The Mahila Samakhya was launched in March 1989 as a pilot project through Dutch assistance in 10 districts of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka. In 1992, the programme was extended to Andhra Pradesh. The Mahila Samakhya approach and strategy has been further extended through other basic education programmes in the country like the Bihar Education Project where it covers seven districts and the District Primary Education Programme in three districts each of Madhya Pradesh and Assam. The UP Basic Education Project is also assisting MS expansion in Uttar Pradesh.

- Non-formal Education centres run exclusively for girls get 90% assistance from the central government. The number of such centres has been increased from 25% to 40% during the 8th Plan.
- In Navodaya Vidyalayas—pace setting schools for talented rural children—at least one third of the students are girls.
- The DPEP has been targeting educationally backward districts which have a female literacy rate below the national average.
- Internationally assisted projects—SKP, LJP—have made gender issues a focus of their attention.

The programmes of elementary education though acknowledging girls as the single most important group requiring greater attention, have to be further strengthened to adequately address the many needs, risks and fears of girls and their families. The 9th Plan is expected to give

greater attention and direct more funds to meet the special needs of girls.

In addition to existing schemes, states will be encouraged to:

- promote formation of village level women's collectives and train local women activists to catalyse collective actions around educational issues;
- empower local bodies such as VECs, Mother-Teacher Associations and women's groups;
- build capacity of existing women's organisations/institutions in rural areas;
- encourage women representatives in PRIs to take up school mapping and microplanning activities; and
- mobilise informed and active women's participation to build and sustain an environment supportive of girls' education.

Gender Perspective in other Programmes

In line with the broad objectives of the NPE, 1986, the various educational schemes have specific gender components for the promotion of girls' and women's education.

Total Literacy Campaign(TLC)

TLC has been successful in raising the demand for education especially among women. In most of the 430 districts, women made up over 60% of adults enrolled in the programme. The classes have motivated women to fight for minimum wages and launch a crusade against prohibition. In campaign mode, the Programme actively seeks to attract women and girls to participate in the educational process. In 195 TLC districts, post literacy campaigns have begun and these address the needs of neo-literate learners. TLC is gradually being extended in the educationally backward states.

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)

One of the important components of DPEP is to enhance girls' access, enrolment and retention in the school system. Specific strategies have been designed in the Programme to enhance girls' participation in the school system. Educational incentives such as free textbooks, flexible school timings, gender sensitive curricula and textbooks, more female teachers, escort system, school health programmes, improved school buildings with provision of toilets for girls, ECCE centres close to primary schools and convergence with the ICDS to support girls' attendance in schools, are some of the significant features of the Programme.

Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP)

The project has a strong gender focus. More than 40% of the children enrolled are girls. Seven residential training centres for women have been set up in interior rural areas by NGOs for providing training to women

shiksha karmis. Forty Angan Pathshalas (courtyard classrooms) for education of girls in their neighbourhood have been set up. Mahila Sahayogis (women escorts) are engaged to accompany girls to schools in difficult terrain. Prahar Pathshalas (schools of convenient timings) have attracted girls in large numbers. They constitute two thirds of children enrolled in these schools.

Lok Jumbish (LJ)

LJ has sharpened its strategy to mobilise and involve the whole village in the process of primary education. From amongst the villagers, potential volunteers are identified who will work towards improving education and gradually assume the role of becoming the core team. Women are encouraged to join the core team. It is ensured that there are women field personnel in every cluster (collection of villages). The field centres at the cluster level play an important role in training women's groups and providing continuing education for girls who have completed class V and are unable to go to day schools. Financial assistance for girls from weaker sections, formation of an active group within VECs for promotion of girls' education, free distribution of books, organising Kishori Manch (adolescent girls' forum) for the adjustment and empowerment of adolescent girls, are important initiatives of this project.

Non-Formal Education Programme

The NFE programme caters to the special needs of working children, girls and children in far-flung schoolless habitations. Under the programme, states are being given 60% central assistance for coeducational centres and 90% for girls' centres. The programme, at present, covers around seven million children (majority of whom are girls) in 23 states/UTs in about 279,000 centres. About 118,000 centres run under the Programme are exclusively for girls.

Working Children

Child labour has been one of the major concerns in the socioeconomic development of India. According to the 1991 Census, there were 11.28 million child labourers in

the country. Promotion of education for working children as a special target group requires specific strategies and programmes.



Under the National Child Labour Projects, 1810 special schools are being run in 76 districts covering 104,000 children to impart education to children with a view to weaning them away from work. The Ministry of Labour proposes to expand this programme to cover about 2 million children by the year 2002. The Department of Education will coordinate and cooperate with the Ministry of Labour in this endeavour.

Educational Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

Scheduled Castes constitute 16.3% of the population and Scheduled Tribes, 8%. Overall, both the groups lag behind the general population in terms of enrolment, literacy and other indicators of progress. However, they are not homogeneous target groups. There are wide variations between SC and ST groups regionally.

The following special provisions for SCs and STs have been incorporated in existing schemes of the educational programmes:

- All state governments have abolished tuition fees in government and local body schools at least up to upper primary level.
- Most of the states provide assistance to students belonging to SC and ST communities for meeting other costs of education, such as textbooks, uniforms, stationery, school bags and transport.
- Secondary education is free for children belonging to SCs and STs in all states and Union Territories.
- Under the Scheme of National Scholarship at secondary stage for talented children from rural areas, 13,000 scholarships are provided to SC/ST students out of the total of 43,000 scholarships annually.
- The Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore, prepares textbooks, primers, grammars, dictionaries, bilingual textbooks, facilitating translation from regional languages into tribal languages.

Minorities and Educational Development

Both linguistic and religious minorities deserve special consideration in expansion and promotion of elementary education. An area intensive programme for educationally backward minorities was launched in 1993 with the objectives of providing basic infrastructure and facilities in areas of concentration of educationally backward minorities which do not have adequate provision for elementary and secondary education. Under the scheme, 100% financial assistance is provided to state governments and voluntary organisations (through state governments) for the following programmes:

- Establishment of new primary/upper primary schools and non-formal education centres where such need is felt and viability established on the basis of a school mapping exercise.
- Strengthening of educational infrastructure and physical facilities in the primary/upper primary schools.
- Opening of multi-stream residential higher secondary schools for girls where science, commerce, humanities and vocational courses are taught.

Towards Integration of the Disabled

According to POA, 1992 there are about 12.6 million differently abled children in the age group 5-18.



With an aim to place children with disabilities on par with other children, the government has chalked out a concrete programme. Under this initiative, to provide for the integrated education of the disabled children, it has been funding interventions for the integrated education of primary school children with mild to moderate disabilities.

Provision of in-service teacher training for the development of skills and competencies for early detection of disabilities, resource support for integrated education at block/district level with non-governmental agencies, educational aids and appliances to primary school children, innovative designs for primary schools are some of the activities undertaken under this programme.

The recently enacted Disabilities Act, 1995 provides for compulsory access to school to every disabled child.

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995

This Act which came into force on the 1st of January, 1996, ensures

- provision of free education to children with disabilities by appropriate governments and local authorities;
- implementation of schemes and programmes for non formal education;
- research activities for designing and developing new assistive devices, teaching aids, etc.;
- setting up of teachers' training institutions to develop trained manpower for schools for children with disabilities;
- preparation of comprehensive education scheme providing for transport facilities, supply of books, etc.;
- provision of amanuensis services to students with visual handicap by the educational institutions.



Teacher Education

Towards Quality and Innovation

Education is one of the most important building blocks for a nation, serving as an instrument of economic and social development. Within this context, the all important role of the teacher is well recognised, as imparter of knowledge and information to students who are the future citizens of tomorrow. In India, the role of the

teacher as not only an educator but also a guide, has been emphasised through the centuries. In the present context too, the role remains as critical as ever.

In India, teachers comprise the largest, most steadily growing profession. During 1990-95, the total strength of teachers at different levels of school education increased from 4 million to 4.4 million, an increase of 6.5%.

Teacher Education at a Glance

No. of teachers in formal schools, ECCE, NFE and FE centres	5 million
Teacher educators in academic, vocational and co-curricular areas	30,000
Teacher education institutions catering to all levels and areas of school education	2,000
Universities having Faculties of Education	150
DIETs focusing on in-service training of elementary teachers besides conducting pre-service training	433
No of STEIs upgraded into CTEs/ IASEs	110
No of SCERTs strengthened	19

One area that is considered as vital for the enhancement of the education system is teacher education. This field has been accorded special emphasis in the face of recent social, economic, political and technological advances, particularly the challenges posed by information and communication technologies, globalisation, growing rate of knowledge obsolescence and lack of social cohesion. The Government of India has upgraded educational infrastructure to prepare hundreds of thousands of teachers for their profession.

Teacher Education Scheme

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Restructuring and Reorganising of Teacher Education, consists of the following components:

1. Establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) to provide quality pre-service and in-service training to teachers and Adult Education / Non-formal Education instructors, thus providing academic and resource support to the elementary and



adult education systems and to engage in action research and innovation in these areas.

2. Upgradation of selected Secondary Teachers Education Institutions (STEIs) into Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs)/ Institutes of Advanced Study in Education (IASEs) to provide similar facilities to the secondary school education system. The IASEs are expected to take up the training of elementary teacher educators besides emphasising on research and innovations.
3. Strengthening of State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) by conferring an independent and autonomous status on them with the responsibility to supervise and guide the functioning of DIETs, District Resource Units (DRUs) and other teacher training institutions.
4. Strengthening of the Departments of Education in universities (through the UGC) so that they can provide academic support to the network of training institutes set up at various levels.
5. Special Orientation Programme for Primary Teachers (SOPT) was taken up in 1993-94, to provide orientation to primary teachers in the use of teaching learning material supplied under Operation Blackboard and to also train them in the Minimum Levels of Learning strategy with focus on teaching of language, mathematics and environmental studies.

Block and Cluster Resource Centres

Block Resource Centres (BRCs) are visualised to give an impetus to elementary education at the block level by providing opportunities and facilities for professional growth to elementary school teachers and heads, Adult Education (AE) and Non-Formal Education (NFE) functionaries. They will in fact be extensions of DIETs at the sub-district level and act as resource centres.

It is also proposed to set up Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) on a pilot basis for a cluster of primary schools in rural areas. They would provide a forum for professional development of teachers through peer group interaction

under the overall guidance of DIETs/BRCs. The objective is to enhance teacher competency through group discussions and interaction with resource persons on a regular basis.

Teacher Training through Distance Education

India has considerable experience and expertise in interactive distance education. This mode has been used to cover large numbers with improved quality of training. A significant innovation in distance education is the means to reaching teachers in remote areas through satellite transmission. This technology (interactive teleconferencing) has been successfully tried in the two states of Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh for 850 and 1,450 primary teachers respectively, for a one week in-service training course. A National Plan for Action providing in-service training to primary teachers through interactive distance education has also been developed.

National Council for Teacher Education

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was established by the GOI on August 17, 1995, as an apex organisation responsible for the regulatory as well as professional aspects of teacher education. The major functions of the council are: developing norms for various teacher education courses, recognition of teacher education institutions, laying guidelines with respect to the minimum qualifications for appointment of teachers, surveys and studies, research and innovations, and prevention of commercialisation of teacher education.

During the brief period of its existence, the council has laid down norms and standards for pre-primary, elementary and secondary level teacher education institutions. Norms for B.Ed. through the distance education mode, and M.Ed. have also been prepared.

Minimum Levels of Learning

The National Policy on Education, 1986, brought to the forefront the need for focusing not only on quantitative aspects but also on quality in terms of achievement levels. Towards this end, a committee constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development specified the basic competencies to be achieved by all children at the primary stage in the form of Minimum Levels of Learning (MLLs) in selected subjects such as Language, Mathematics and Environmental Studies across the country. The effort of the programme is to make the curriculum and text books more comprehensive and relevant as well as to facilitate uniform, comparable levels of achievement among the states. The first phase of the programme was implemented through voluntary agencies, research institutions, SCERTs and DIETs. Currently, 12 states are implementing the programme through the institutional mechanism of around 200 DIETs and the programme is being up-scaled. MLL approach has so far been successfully introduced at the primary level.

The programme aims to lay down learning outcomes

expected from basic education at a realistic, relevant and functional level, prescribes the adoption of measures that would ensure that all children who complete a stage of schooling achieve these outcomes. The endeavour is to monitor learning achievement, to direct greater resources where levels of learning are lower, and to consciously accelerate the pace of development in the needy areas, thereby reducing disparities, equalising standards and determining inputs for quality improvement and enhanced efficiency of the system.

It is proposed that in future, efforts made so far will be consolidated and further support will be extended to various activities contributing to enhanced levels of learner achievement. Under this scheme, financial assistance is being provided to the state governments for a wide range of activities such as preparation of competency-based textbooks, training of teachers, preparation of teaching learning materials, orientation of education personnel and conducting benchmark surveys.

Future Strategies

- Expansion and consolidation of DIETs, CTEs, IASEs and SCERTs.
- Strengthening of the other teacher training institutes.
- Strengthening of NCTE.
- Partnership of national level institutes to achieve the desired objectives of improvement of content, processes and management of pre-service and in-service education programmes.
- Greater involvement of voluntary agencies, whose innovative and experimental programmes have borne laudable results.
- Networking of state institutions for improvement in teacher education.
- Use of distance education for in-service training.
- Streamlining of the project formulation and clearance machinery through the involvement of experts at the national level.
- Proper and timely utilisation of funds by the states with regard to DIETs and other institutions.
- Periodic research monitoring and evaluation of CSS of Restructuring and Reorganising of Teacher Education.
- Linking training with career advancement.





Non-Formal and Alternative Education

Reaching the Disadvantaged

Non-formal education is seen as a vital aspect of India's current strategy on education as it can reach out to working children, girls and those children who cannot attend full time schools due to several socioeconomic compulsions and cultural barriers.

In order to reach the large segment of marginalised children, the Government of India has been running a non-formal education scheme since 1979. Implemented through state governments and voluntary organisations, the NFE scheme draws on a high level of community participation and is characterised by flexibility, relevance and a decentralised administrative structure.

The main features of the scheme are:

- Short course with duration of about two years.
- Part-time instruction at a place and time convenient to learners in small groups.
- Flexibility in the mode of delivery.
- Special emphasis on girls' education.

The NFE scheme was conceived in 1979-80, scaled up in 1987 and revised in 1993 with emphasis on organisation, flexibility, relevance of curriculum, diversity in learning activity to suit the needs of the learners through decentralised management.

At present, NFE reaches out to nearly seven million

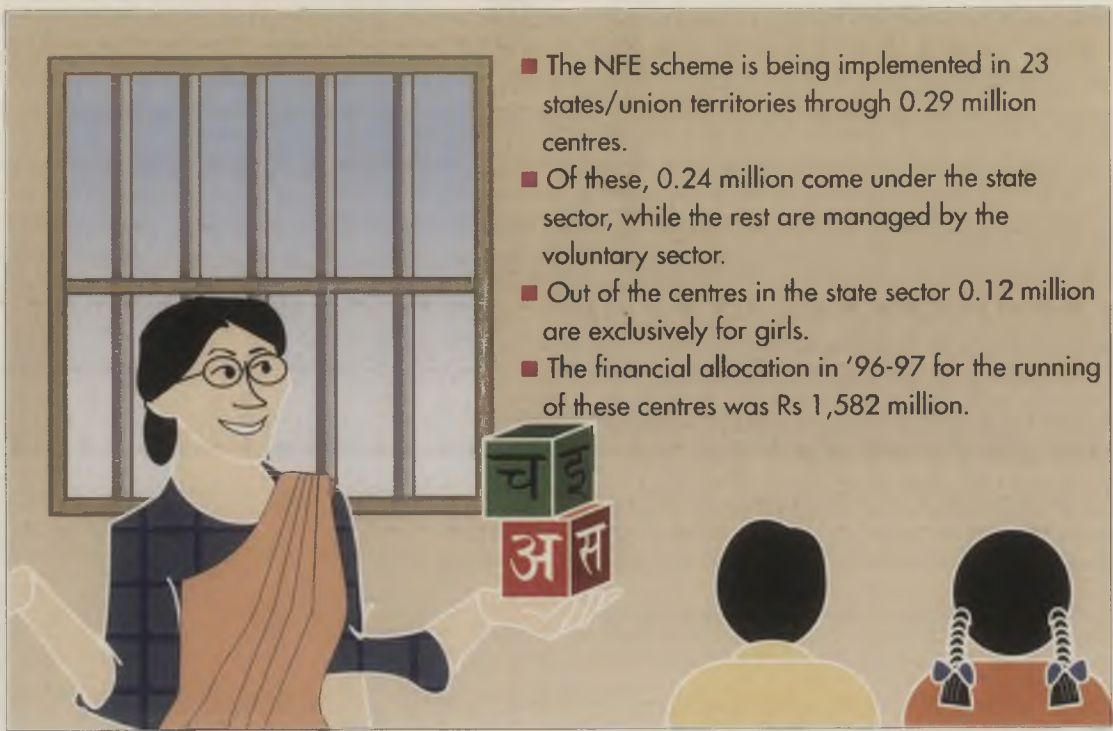
children (majority of whom are girls) in the age-group of 6-14, and has the potential of enrolling nearly half the number of children enrolled in the formal school system.

The NFE scheme is being implemented in 23 states/union territories through 0.29 million centres. Of these, nearly 0.24 million come under the state sector, while the rest are managed by the voluntary sector. Out of the centres under the state sector, 0.12 million are exclusively for girls, covering about 2.95 million beneficiaries. The financial allocation in 1996-97 for running these centres was a total of Rs. 1, 582 million.

Financial assistance being given to the NFE centres in the states and UTs by the Government of India is as follows: coeducational centres-60 %; exclusively girl centres-90 %; centres run by voluntary agencies-100 %.

An important achievement in the current financial year has been the increased participation of NGOs in the programme. At present, about 676 voluntary agencies are involved in running NFE centres in the country. Under Experimental and Innovative Programmes, new strategies on a pilot basis for microplanning, survey training, material development, education for the disabled and working children, running of NFE centres and health education programmes are being taken up. At present, 41 such projects are in operation. In addition, NGOs





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are running District Resource Units for providing resource support to the programme.

Gearing up for the Future

Gaining from the experience of running the NFE programme in the country over almost two decades, it is felt that some major strategies need to be adopted for its revitalisation and expansion in the future. Some of these are:

- The perception of NFE as inferior to the system of primary education to be redressed through stronger advocacy, better environment-building, investment, rigorous implementation and monitoring.
- Efforts to be made to establish academic equivalence between the products of formal primary schools and NFE centres. The unit cost of NFE should also be comparable with that of the formal system of schooling.
- Increased emphasis on ensuring mainstreaming of children who attend NFE centres.
- The programme should provide enough flexibility with regard to the duration, nature, content and

management of NFE while ensuring achievement of MLLs.

- The organisational structure of NFE at the national, state, district and project levels to be revamped to provide for greater professionalism and autonomy.
- Instructors, supervisors and other functionaries to be provided with adequate remuneration and opportunities for career advancement.
- While pre-induction training programme for NFE functionaries needs to be introduced, in-service training through DIETs needs to be strengthened.
- The possibility of providing relevant vocational inputs in NFE, particularly at upper primary levels, in collaboration with experienced NGOs, to be explored.
- An effective partnership needs to be forged with NGOs, Panchayati Raj Institutions and the local community for decentralised planning and management of NFE.
- NFE to be viewed as an instrument of women's equality and providing for the appointment of a larger number of women functionaries at all levels.



NGOs: Partners for Change

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have emerged as important players in the area of social development in the country in recent years. They are important stakeholders in social development programmes and their participation is crucial. They are also a repository of knowledge of grassroots realities because of their proximity to the people.

NGOs associated with the various educational projects such as DPEP, Shiksha Karmi Project and Lok Jumbish have been instrumental in mobilising community resources in terms of participation which contributed also directly towards the success of the various projects. Without this level of partnership with experienced and committed NGOs, the level of mobilisation would not have been what it is today.

NGOs have helped in :

- facilitating formation of the VECs;
- assisting in training and evaluation;
- assisting resource units in the modification of curriculum for local relevance;
- providing training in local communication skills to educators;

- review and participate in evaluation activities on a continuing basis.

The participation of NGOs together with community support has helped to improve the physical conditions, environment of primary schools as well as promotion of girls' education. Many NGOs also act as local resource base for the various projects currently being undertaken in the country today.

All said and done, it is felt that more effective involvement of the NGOs in primary education is needed. The NGO sector has tremendous potential to contribute in moving towards the goal of universal primary education. As of now, nearly 700 NGOs are actively engaged in rendering cooperation and resource support to various ongoing educational projects with assistance from the government. New initiatives need to be taken to harness the NGO sector more directly into the primary education development programmes even while continuing with the existing programmes of NGO involvement through the central scheme of Innovative and Experimental Programmes.

Other Non-formal and Alternative Initiatives

There are many other innovative and non-traditional approaches that are being tried out in India today to meet the diverse needs for educating children. These initiatives are the responses of the Central and state governments, educational institutions and voluntary organisations to varying expectations rooted in different region-specific traits.

Some of these are: PROPEL, M.V. Foundation, Digantar (Jaipur), SWRC (Tilonia), Rishi Valley Education Centre, IPER (Calcutta), Butterflies (New Delhi), Insan, Eklavya. (See "Treading the Uncharted", Country

Report on Innovative and Non-traditional Approaches in Education, Second Ministerial Meeting in Bali, September, 1995). A few more initiatives have been outlined below.

Bodh Shikshan Samiti: The Bodh Shikshan Samiti, based in Jaipur, represents an innovative approach to the education of non-school going children in slum areas. The agency manages 5 centres comprising 600 children and 25 teachers.

The centres function at different hours depending upon the convenience of the children and their families. There is no fixed curriculum and the children pursue learning at their own pace; the centre also provides for amicable interaction among the students. The association has also established centres for women.

The lessons learnt through the experience of running the centres are vital for the future functioning of the Samiti. Some facts that have come to light are:

- Before the implementation of any plan of action, an

extensive contact with each segment of the community is essential. An identification of what the community needs and its potentialities is important.

- Involvement of the parents is a strong factor for the motivation of the child towards learning.
- Alongwith the professional competence of the teachers, their degree of motivation and commitment is also essential for the success of the programme.
- There is a need to understand the nature of opposition from vested interests and fight it.

One major aspect that the innovative approach of the Bodh Shikshan Samiti needs to integrate in itself is the facilitation of the children's entry, at various points, into the formal education system. The need is to generate flexibility and competence in the formal system to meet the educational needs of communities with differing capacities and socioeconomic situations.

National Bal Bhavan: The enhancement of creativity among children from the weaker sections through activities of their choice, in a free and congenial environment, was the basis on which the Bal Bhavan Society (now the National Bal Bhavan) was formed in 1956. An autonomous body funded by the Department of Education, the

activities of the National Bal Bhavan include: creative arts, performing arts, environment, astronomy, photography, integrated physical and science-related activities, in a joyful manner. The role of the Bal Bhavan movement as an out of school support programme to the educational curriculum has been particularly recognised in the area of curriculum-based joyful activity.

The National Bal Bhavan has a membership of over 100,000. In addition to that, 52 Bal Bhavan centres in Delhi, 67 in the states and UTs, and 2 Jawahar Bal Bhavans in Srinagar and Mandi have been established for those children who cannot afford to participate in the activities of the national headquarter. These centres are provided general guidance, training facilities and transfer of information by the National Bal Bhavan.

The National Bal Bhavan has spent Rs.590,000, for the benefit of 312,000 children during the last five years (1992-97).

The focus areas for the future are: strengthening the National Bal Bhavan; strengthening the State Bal Bhavans and Jawahar Bal Bhavans; and opening new State Bal Bhavans.



Adult Education

People on the Move

If the goal of total literacy in India has slipped out of the realm of the impossible and entered the realm of the achievable, a large part of the credit accrues to the Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs). The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was set up in 1988 with the goal of making 80 million people, in the age group 15-35, literate by 1995. The Total Literacy Campaigns have been the dominant strategy for achieving this goal.

The Mission has now been given a more ambitious goal of covering 100 million non literates by the year 1999.

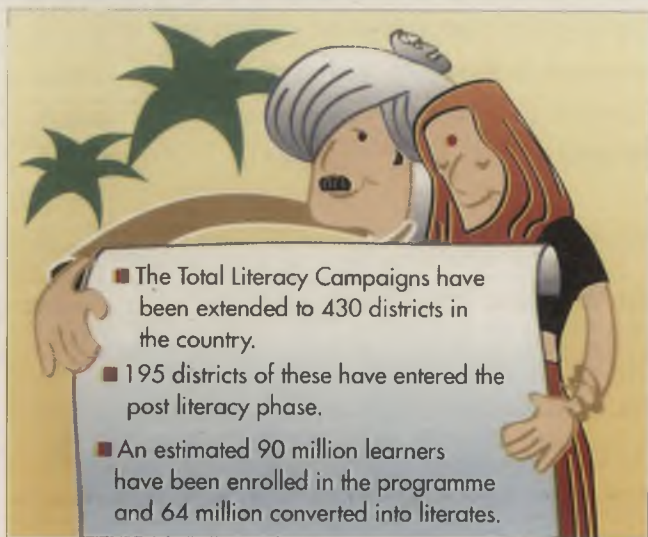
Children in the age group 9-14 are also included under this scheme where there are no NFE Centres. So far, the TLCs have been extended to 430 districts in the country of

which 195 have entered the post literacy phase in 22 states and 4 UTs. An estimated 90 million learners have been enrolled in the programme and 64 million have been made literate.

This trailblazing experiment in literacy has aroused wide interest amongst the international community and has become the role model for many Asian and south Asian countries. At the national level, the current thrust is to consolidate the gains of literacy and to concentrate efforts in the four major states in the Hindi heartland where the bulk of the illiterate population resides.

The literacy campaigns are area-specific, time-bound, delivered through voluntarism, cost-effective and outcome-oriented, and are implemented by Zilla Saksharata Samitis (District Literacy Societies) usually headed by District Collectors who are the chief executives of their districts.

The campaigns are initiated with appropriate environment-building activity coupled with a door-to-door literacy survey during which potential learners and volunteers are identified. Suitable primers are developed and primer-specific training is provided to the required personnel. The environment-building activity as well as monitoring and internal evaluation are continued through the teaching/learning activity which accounts for a total of 200 hours



Shramik Vidyapeeths

Shramik Vidyapeeths (SVPs) play a vital role in providing non formal adult and continuing education to the urban community. 53 Shramik Vidyapeeths have been set up by 1995-96 and are likely to be expanded in the future.

The basic idea behind the multidimensional or polyvalent approach to the education of the urban working community in this programme, is to meet the various interrelated needs of target groups with specifically tailored programmes. The aim is to provide knowledge and impart skills simultaneously and in an integrated manner.

The prime concern of the Shramik Vidyapeeth is to improve the socioeconomic status of the poorest of the

poor beneficiaries by providing income generation skills. The programmes have been widely recognised as a potent means for promoting continuing education and developing the attitude for lifelong learning.

During 1995-96, the SVPs conducted 10,119 programmes and benefited 376,802 persons. The participation of women in programmes has been as high as 63.21% of total participants. Nearly 88% of the participants were in the age group of 15-35. 84% belonged to the income group with an income of less than Rs. 155 per month.

spread over a period of six months. An external evaluation is made at the conclusion of the teaching.

After completion of the TLC, Post Literacy Campaigns (PLCs) are launched to mop up the leftover illiterates to consolidate the gains of literacy acquired during TLC, and to enable the neo-literates to develop abilities for self-learning.

Implementation of TLCs in various parts of the country has evoked an enthusiastic response from the weaker sections of the society, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Experience has also shown that more than 60% of the learners attending classes are women.

The Indian experience highlights the fact that literacy campaigns tend to evoke a positive attitude towards primary education and generate a demand from the beneficiaries for basic education for their children. In addition, this attitudinal change also enhances the participation and retention of children in schools.

Continuing Education for Neo-literates

The National Literacy Mission (NLM), besides emphasising

other aspects of the programme, lays special emphasis on post literacy and continuing education for neo-literates so that they can be prevented from relapsing into illiteracy. Keeping this in view, the Scheme of Post Literacy and Continuing Education was launched in March 1988 to institutionalise this concept through establishment of 'Jan Shikshan Nilayams' (JSNs) all over the country in a phased manner. The basic objective of the scheme is to provide opportunities of continuing education to neo-literates to facilitate retention of their literacy skills, enable the learners to continue their learning beyond elementary literacy and to create a scope for application of their learning skills for improvement of their living conditions. Currently 195 post-literacy programmes are in progress in the country.

Continuing education is also an indispensable aspect of the strategy of human resource development and of the goal of creation of a learning society. The Scheme of Continuing Education for Neo-literates aims to provide an institutionalised mechanism of continuing education through Continuing Education Centres (CECs) to enable the neo-literates to retain, improve and apply their basic knowledge and skills for satisfaction of their needs and to

facilitate continued learning through a self directed process for improvement of the quality of their lives. Under the Scheme the main thrust is given to setting up of CECs to serve as Library, Reading Room, Learning Centre, Training Centre, Information Centre, Charcha Mandal, Developmental Centre, Cultural Centre, Sports Centre and other individual interest promotion programmes centre. CECs are set up in a cluster of 8 to 10 with one of them being designated as the nodal CEC. Ideally, there is one CEC for one village to serve a population of 1500 to 2000 which includes 500 neo-literates or other targeted beneficiaries like the dropouts of primary School.

In terms of content, continuing education has been

classified broadly into four categories:

- Equivalency Programmes (EPs) : designed as alternative education programmes equivalent to existing formal general or vocational education.
- Income Generating Programmes (IGPS) : help participants acquire or upgrade vocational skills enabling them to take up income generating activities.
- Quality of Life Improvement Programmes (QLIP) : these aim to equip the learners and the community with that essential knowledge, attitude, value and skills both as individuals and members of the community.
- Individual's Interest Promotion Programmes (IIPP) : these provide opportunity for individuals to participate in and learn about their own chosen social, cultural, spiritual, health, physical and artistic interests.





Educational Finance

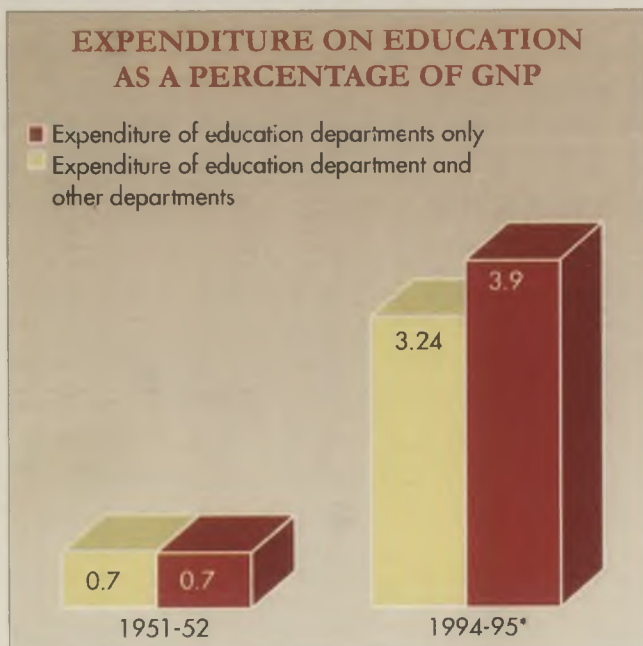
Investing in the future

India's education system is gearing itself to meet the needs of a liberalised and fast growing economy by rapidly expanding and improving coverage, quality and efficiency, particularly in elementary education. An important factor that is getting increased attention is the availability and optimal use of financial resources.

Although the central government's contribution to education is small relative to that of states, that contribution has become increasingly strategic, shifting

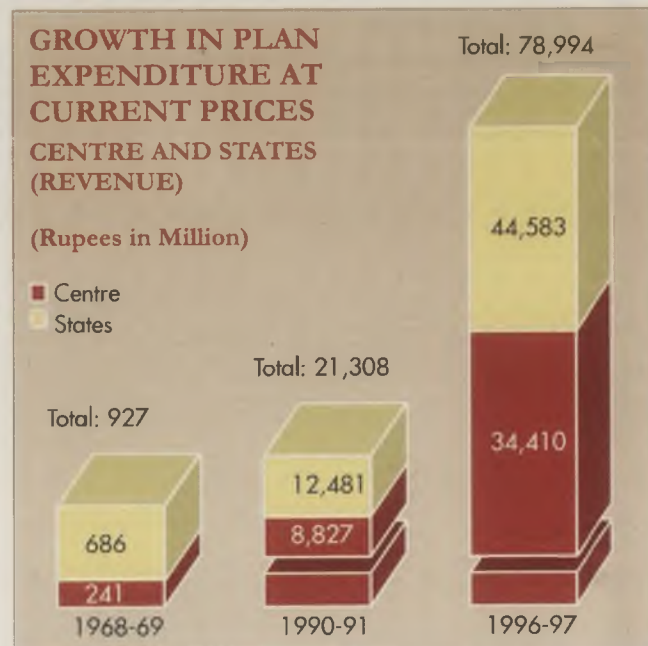
towards plan expenditure. The central government has expanded its role in plan financing for elementary education relative to the states. The share has increased from 23.1% in the 7th Plan to a projected 31.3% in the 8th Plan.

The central government's plan outlay on education has nearly quadrupled between 1990-91 and 1996-97. Primary and adult education have a proportionately higher share of the increase in these allocations; 50% of the centre's plan



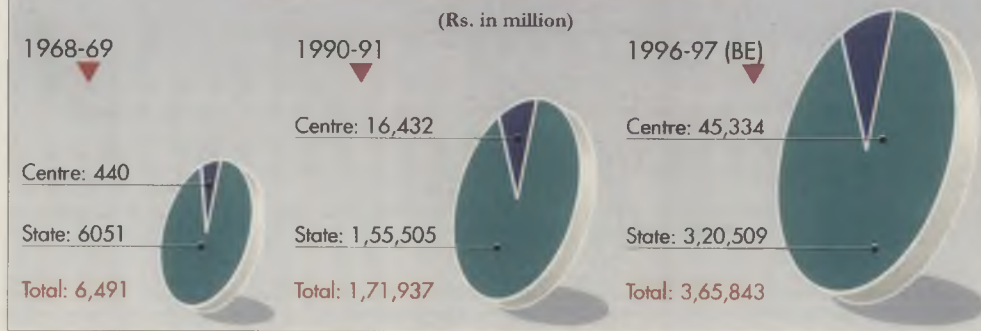
Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1995-96, MHRD, GOI

* Budgeted Estimate



Source: Spreading the Light of Education, MHRD, GOI

SHARE OF CENTRE AND STATE IN EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION



Source: Spreading the Light of Education, MHRD, GOI
Budgetary Resources for Education 1951-52 to 1993-94, MHRD, GOI

outlay devolves on the states for implementation of key Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as Operation Blackboard and Teacher Education.

The government has been enhancing the plan outlays even as fiscal correctives have been set in motion. Plan expenditure is increasingly gaining importance in elementary education. The share of Plan expenditure in total expenditure of centre and state has increased from about 10.1% in 1990-91 to 21% in 1996-97. To a certain extent, this has reversed the trend of an increasing proportion of expenditure on elementary education being spent on teachers' salaries.

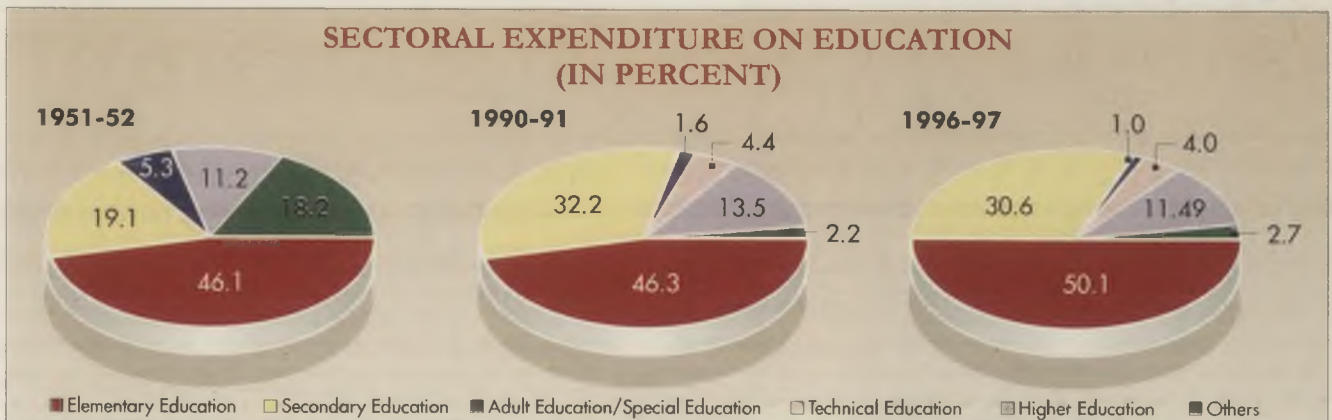
In spite of financial constraints, total expenditure by states

has also increased from Rs. 170,440 million in 1991-92 to Rs. 320,509 million in 1996-97. Even in real terms the per capita expenditure in many states has increased.

Expenditure by all central and state departments of education in 1995-96 was equal to 3.14% of GNP. When expenditures across departments other than education are also included, the share was 3.74%.

The central expenditure on education has increased substantially over the last ten years. The central plan expenditure was Rs. 30,360 million in the 7th Five Year Plan. The outlay increased to Rs. 74,430 million during the 8th Five Year Plan. For 1997-98, a plan allocation of Rs. 40,450 million has been made. This increasing financial

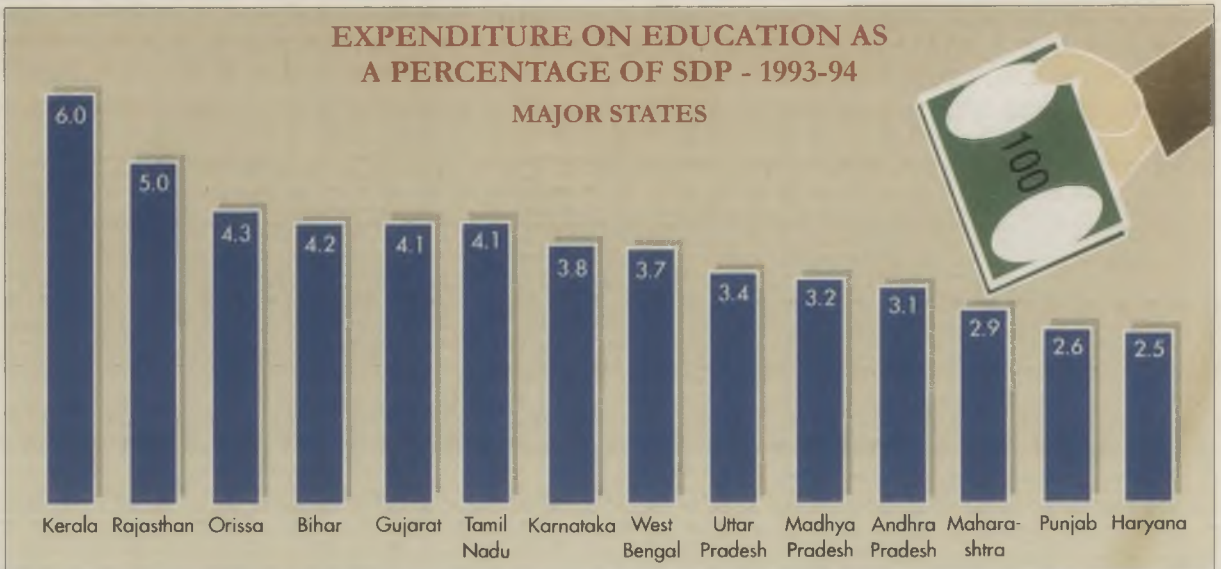
SECTORAL EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION (IN PERCENT)



Source: Spreading the Light of Education, MHRD, GOI
Budgetary Resources for Education 1951-52 to 1993-94, MHRD, GOI

EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF SDP - 1993-94

MAJOR STATES



Source: Annual Report 1996-97, MHRD, GOI

* 1994-95 ** 1992-93

participation of the central government through Centrally Sponsored Schemes in the process of educational development is in keeping with the spirit of cooperative federalism characterised by ongoing consensual processes and understanding between the central and state governments.

One area that is still of concern is the wide variation across states in terms of coverage and quality, reflecting differences in both past and current resources and in the priority given to the sector. The public expenditure on education varies from 2.5% of SDP (Haryana) to 6% of SDP (Kerala).

There are also substantial variations between states in

terms of per capita expenditure on education. Per capita expenditure varies between Rs. 176 in Bihar and Rs. 423 in Kerala. Per capita expenditure is closely related to the poverty level of the states. Poor states spend less per capita on education although they relatively make greater effort. For instance, the state of Bihar spends a higher share of its income, about 4.5%, on education but has a low per capita expenditure of Rs. 176 while Haryana, which spends only 2.5% of SDP on education, has a per capita expenditure of Rs. 270.

The government is committed to raise the expenditure on education to 6% of GDP as against the present level of 3.7%. Fifty per cent of the enhanced allocation is proposed to be spent on primary education.





Conclusion

Towards Fulfilling a Commitment

India has scaled a good part of the peak of primary education. Yet, the remaining climb is the most difficult and arduous. Though primary enrolment rates have steadily increased over the past 5 decades, there is also a big backlog of out-of-school children in the age group of 6-14.

Admittedly, if India is to reach the critical threshold of education where high economic growth rates and social development are to be sustained, efforts to ensure EFA have to be continued on a war footing.

Efforts so far have fallen short of the targets of EFA. However, given the thrust to increase enrolment and retention of children in schools through measures such as school mapping, microplanning, community mobilisation and programmes such as school meal programme, DPEP and a host of others, it is expected that shortfalls will decline and targets will be achieved at a faster rate.

Measures to improve learning achievement of all children at the primary level would need to be pursued with renewed vigour through teacher training and motivation.

Special concerns in the achievement of UEE include girls, children belonging to SCs and STs, working children, disabled children, children belonging to religious and linguistic minorities, urban poor and above all educationally

backward areas. These concerns would need focused attention, well thought out strategies and renewed commitment for their redressal.

India's goal of UEE revolves around three main challenges: expanding access, raising learning achievement and reducing disparities in education outcomes across states and among groups.

The Indian government is geared to meet these challenges through multi-pronged strategies which include:

- making elementary education a fundamental right
- consolidating the quantitative expansion achieved
- provision of adequate finances for promotion of basic education
- promoting alternative modes of delivery within an integrated perspective
- improved infrastructure for primary schools
- improving the content and process of primary schooling
- quality improvement in primary education
- sharpening the focus on the girl child
- priority attention to SCs and STs
- promotion of education for working children
- extension of efficient delivery of incentives
- meeting nutritional and health needs of children
- social mobilisation and decentralised management for elementary education



- improving monitoring/evaluation system
- exploiting the potential among NGOs
- partnership of public and private sector.

India faces these challenges with many assets. It has an expanded primary education system that has put the school within reach of most children. Its educational system is endowed with a strong policy framework with

significant political commitment from the central and state governments. Its educational programmes are innovative, fairly well financed with a strong focus on quality with equity. Above all, it has an educational and development community increasingly contributing to the solution of problems of primary education. These assets should take India to its destination.

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