DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Quest for Quality in Elementary Education

The Challenges and Way Forward

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Elementary Education in Himachal Pradesh: the Challenges and the Way Forward

1. **The Crisis:** The learning levels of children in government schools (both primary and upper primary) are very poor. While a large number of primary school students are not able to read and write properly, the students at elementary level have abysmally low understanding of mathematics, science, social sciences and languages. The elementary education in Himachal is in deep crisis and there is a need to take immediate remedial measures. The situation calls for putting in place immediate, short-term and long-term strategies so that the gains of Himachal in elementary education in last five decades which have resulted in universal access, universal retention, gender parity and high transition rate from primary to upper primary and higher classes are not lost. The conclusion that elementary education (and as a result higher education) in Himachal is in a state of emergency is not anecdotal, but based on several studies and reports. Consider these:

   1.1. **Scholarship Test:** In January 2013, The Department of Elementary Education conducted test to select students for scholarship under Medhavi Chatrvriti Yojna. The students currently studying in Class VI, who had been graded B and above in Class V appeared in this Test. In all 13777 students took the test. Results are shocking to say the least. Out of the 13777 students, only 231 (2%) got A Grade (80-100%) in Hindi and only 21 students got A Grade in English. While only 24 students got A Grade in Mathematics, the number was only 13 in EVS. What is more shocking is that a majority failed to get more than 34% marks in the test. The **failure rate (*and these are the brightest students in Class VI*)** is as follows: Hindi (boys: 60%, girls: 53%), English (boys: 92%, girls: 89%), Mathematics (boys: 92%, girls: 94%) and EVS (boys: 94, girls: 96%).

   These results reflect the learning levels of the best students in our government schools as these are not results of a random sample survey but the students who appeared in this test are those who got B and above grade in Class V in all the government schools of the state in the in terminal assessment under the system of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation

(CCE). Not only the results point towards the state of emergency in elementary education in the state but also raise doubts about the manner in which CCE is being implemented in the state. The State Abstract of the results is as under.

STATE Average Results							
Subject	**% marks**	**Grade**	**Boys**	**%**	**Girls**	**%**	**Total**
Hindi	**80-100**	**A**	78	**1**	153	**2**	231
	65-79	**B**	330	**6**	558	**7**	888
	50-64	**C**	661	**11**	1054	**14**	1715
	35-49	**D**	1301	**22**	1863	**24**	3164
	<34	**E**	3606	**60**	4173	**53**	7779
		Total	5976	**100**	7801	**100**	13777
Maths	**80-100**	**A**	16	**0**	8	**0**	24
	65-79	**B**	54	**1**	33	**0**	87
	50-64	**C**	98	**2**	86	**1**	184
	35-49	**D**	315	**5**	349	**4**	664
	<34	**E**	5493	**92**	7325	**94**	12818
		Total	5976	**100**	7801	**100**	13777
ENGLISH	**80-100**	**A**	11	**0**	10	**0**	21
	65-79	**B**	50	**1**	71	**1**	121
	50-64	**C**	107	**2**	208	**3**	315
	35-49	**D**	347	**6**	591	**8**	938
	<34	**E**	5461	**91**	6921	**89**	12382
		Total	5976	**100**	7801	**100**	13777
EVS	**80-100**	**A**	7	**0**	6	**0**	13
	65-79	**B**	10	**0**	28	**0**	38
	50-64	**C**	61	**1**	45	**1**	106
	35-49	**D**	265	**4**	255	**3**	520
	<34	**E**	5633	**94**	7467	**96**	13100
		Total	5976	**100**	7801	**100**	13777

1.2. **The PISA Shocker:** OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) conducts tests to assess the learning levels of students across

countries. The test is known as **PISA *(Programme for International Student Assessment)*.** Students from Himachal and Tamilnadu represented India in the latest PISA Test and the results came out in January 2012. These have come as a shocker. These results have put India at the 2nd from bottom position out of 73 countries that participated. PISA tests three subjects – Mathematics, Reading and Science – and India has ended either last or in the bottom three in all three subjects.[1]

- In *reading* of the 74 regions participating in PISA 2009 or 2009+ these two states beat out only Kyrgyzstan.
- In *mathematics* of the 74 regions participating the two states finished second and third to last, again beating only Kyrgyzstan.
- In *science* the results were even worse, Himachal Pradesh came in dead last, behind Kyrgyzstan, while Tamil Nadu inched ahead to finish 72nd of 74.

1.3. **The Monitoring Team of SSA went to Kullu and Spiti in November 2012 and conducted a test to check the learning levels of children in schools of Kullu and Spiti. The results are as under:**

%Age comparison of the correct responses of children in three grades in mathematics

Class	**Total Number of Students tested**	**Number and Percentage of Students who gave correct answer**				
		Question 1: Converting fraction into decimal	**Question 2:** Converting fraction into %age	**Question 3:** Converting decimal into fraction	**Question 4:** Operation on decimal/ addition/ subtraction	**Question 5:** Operation on decimal division
Class 5th	66	2 (3%)	14 (21%)	21 (32%)	6 (9%)	0 (0%)
Class 8th	95	5 (5%)	30 (32%)	28 (28%)	8 (8%)	4 (4%)
Class 9th	168	11 (7%)	26 (15%)	45 (27%)	29 (17%)	1(0%)

[1]The Times of India, January 15, 2012

%Age comparison of the correct responses of children in three grades in science

Class	Total Number of Students tested	Number and Percentage of Students who gave correct answer				
		Question 1: Related to Food	Question 2: Related to Agriculture	Question 3: Related to Habitation	Question 4: Related to Agriculture	Question 5: Related to energy
Class 5th	66	0(0%)	16(24%)	24(35%)	21(32%)	2(3%)
Class 8th	95	48(48%)	24(24%)	66(66%)	42(43%)	18(19%)
Class 9th	168	60(36%)	54(32%)	69(41%)	42(25%)	26(15%)

1.4. **ASER Reports:** Pratham, a Non-Government Organisation does annual survey on the state of elementary education in the country since 2003. The results are published as ASER (Annual Survey of Education Report) every year. The survey tests basic skills of reading and arithmetic among elementary school children. While analyzing and interpreting these results it must be kept in mind that these tests evaluate very basic skills and a good performance in ASER is not an indication of "good" but a poor showing in ASER definitely means that that "elementary education is in a mess". The Reading Test conducted in the Survey tests the ability of children to read **Letters** (set of commonly used letters of Hindi alphabet)**, Words** (common familiar words with two letters and one or two matras), **Level 1 Text** based on the learning level expected from a student of Standard I (set of four simple linked sentences which are familiar to students) and **Level 2 Text** based on the learning level expected from a student of Standard II(a short story of seven linked sentences. Sample Test is attached as **Annexure 3.** Those who can read letters are asked to read the words and those who read the words are asked to read the Level I test and if they can do it, these students are asked to read Level II text.

In Arithmetic the students are asked to **recognize numbers** (randomly chosen numbers from 1 to 9 and 11 to 99), **subtraction** (two digit numerical problem with borrowing) and **division** (3 digit by 1 numerical problems). The results in both reading and arithmetic are very poor.

Reading Ability is Pathetic: Nearly 70% students studying in Standard III are unable to read the simple paragraph based on Standard I textbook and

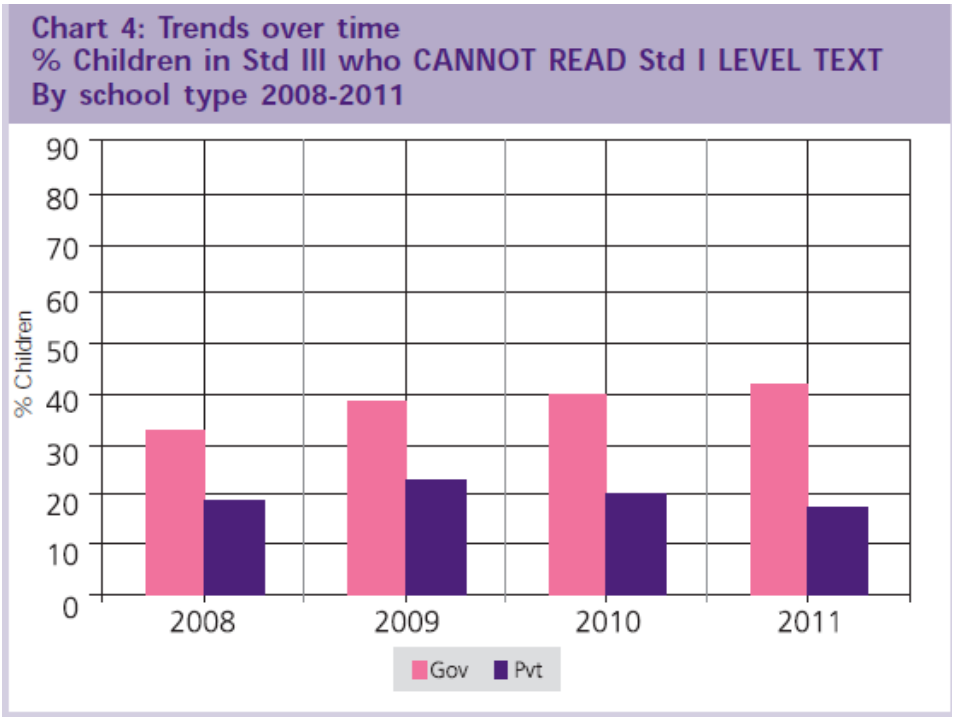
26% students in Standard V are unable to read the story based on Standard II textbook. The ASER 2011 gives the following results:

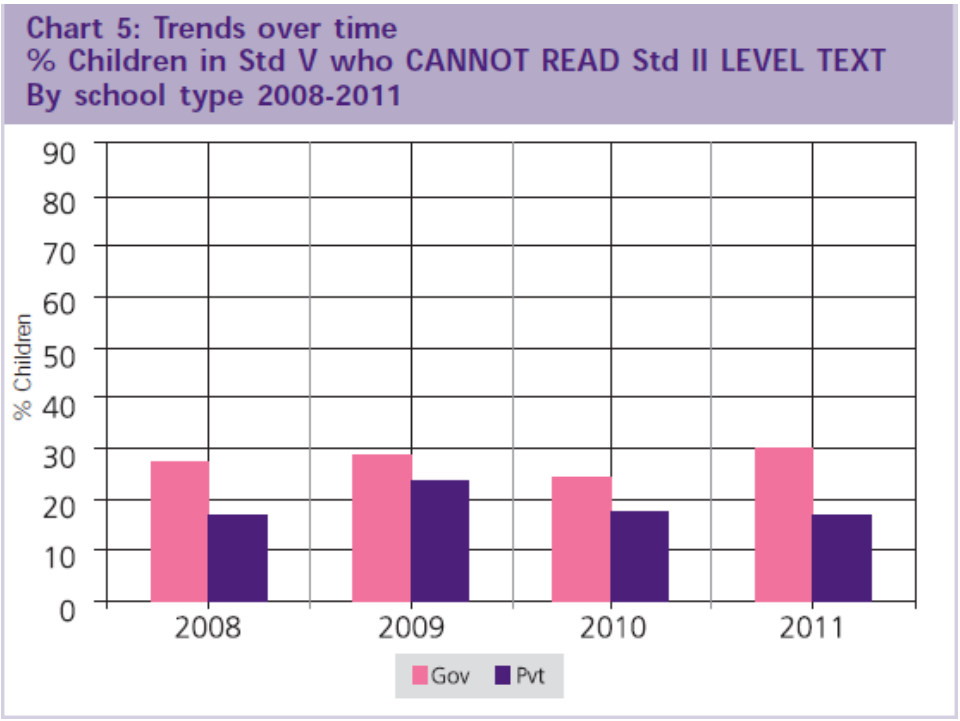
Table 4: % Children by class and READING level
All schools 2011

Std.	Nothing	Letter	Word	Level 1 (Std 1 Text)	Level 2 (Std 2 Text)	Total
I	12.1	51.0	27.1	5.6	4.2	100
II	3.6	19.4	43.5	20.4	13.2	100
III	2.1	8.5	22.6	35.5	31.3	100
IV	1.1	4.7	8.0	30.2	56.0	100
V	0.2	2.0	5.7	18.2	73.9	100
VI	0.0	1.4	1.5	10.8	86.3	100
VII	0.5	0.4	1.2	6.5	91.5	100
VIII	0.1	0.4	0.4	3.4	95.8	100
Total	2.4	10.5	13.6	16.5	57.0	100

How to read this table: Each cell shows the highest level of reading achieved by a child. For example, in Std III, 2.1% children cannot even read letters, 8.5% can read letters but not more, 22.6% can read words but not Std 1 text or higher, 35.5% can read Std 1 text but not Std 2 level text, and 31.3% can read Std 2 level text. In sum, for each class, the total of all these exclusive categories is 100%.

What is alarming is that over the years the learning levels of these children are declining. Chart 4 and **Chart 5** from ASER 2011 (See page 4) shows that in 2008 nearly 33% children in Class III (in the government schools of the state) could not read Level I text but this percentage has gone up to >40% in 2011. Similarly the number of children in Standard V who cannot read Level II text has gone up between 2008 to 2011:





Numerical Abilities are Worse: The Arithmetic tests conducted under ASER are enough to shame the department. 57% students from Standard III cannot do a simple 2 digit subtraction sum and 87% students failed to solve a 2 digit division sum. Table 6 (page 5) shows the arithmetic skills of students.

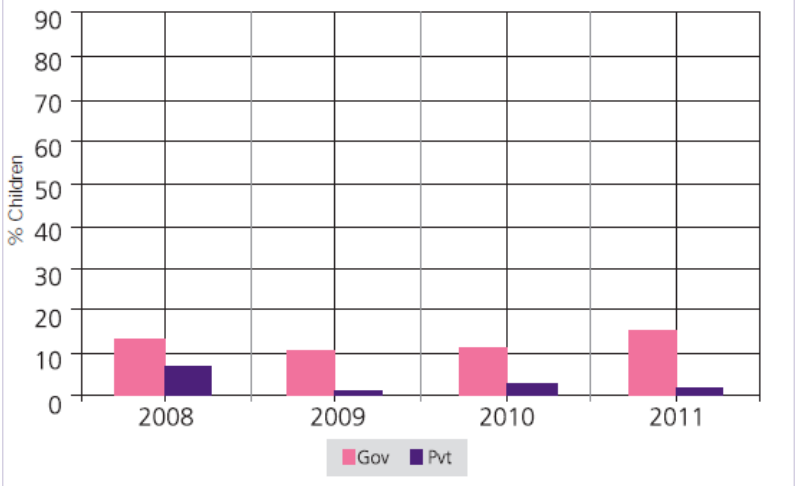
Table 6: % Children by class and ARITHMETIC level
All schools 2011

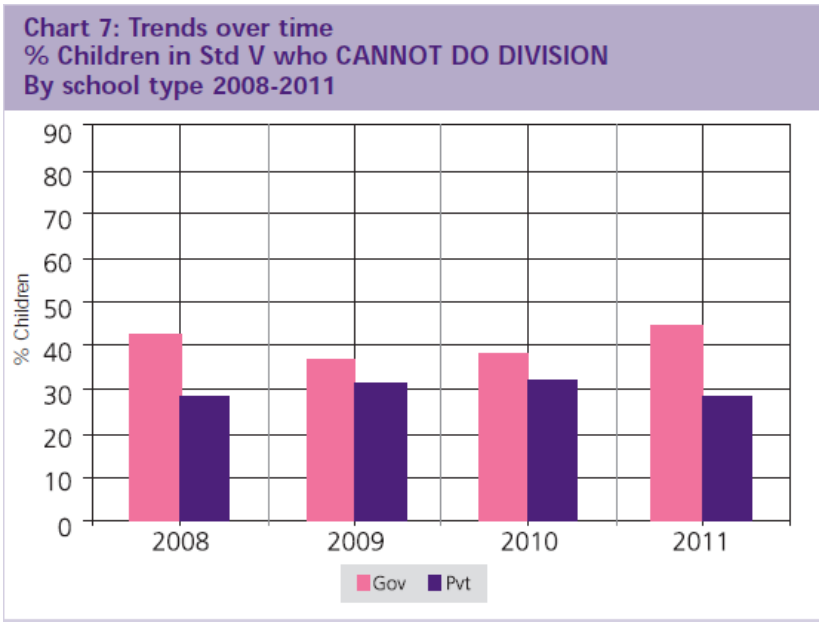
Std.	Nothing	Recognize Numbers		Subtract	Divide	Total
		1-9	11-99			
I	7.9	46.0	38.1	6.2	1.8	100
II	1.6	20.5	49.2	24.4	4.4	100
III	0.7	10.0	32.3	43.5	13.4	100
IV	0.6	5.2	14.4	44.0	35.8	100
V	0.3	2.0	9.5	28.4	59.8	100
VI	0.0	1.5	6.2	20.4	71.9	100
VII	0.4	0.3	7.0	13.9	78.4	100
VIII	0.5	0.4	3.3	15.7	80.1	100
Total	1.4	10.3	19.7	24.9	43.6	100

How to read this table: Each cell shows the highest level of arithmetic achieved by a child. For example, in Std III, 0.7% children cannot even recognize numbers 1-9, 10% children can recognize numbers up to 9 but not more, 32.3% can recognize numbers to 99 but cannot do subtraction, 43.5% can do subtraction but not division, and 13.4% can do division. In sum, for each class, the total of all these exclusive categories is 100%.

Again, just like reading skills the ability to solve simple arithmetic problems has declined between 2008 and 2011 as can be seen from Chart 6 and Chart 7. Though the private schools show some improvement in this period, yet we must bear in mind that ASER test is for very basic and the minimum levels of learning. The desired competencies are much higher.

Chart 6: Trends over time
% Children in Std III who CANNOT RECOGNISE NUMBERS upto 100. By school type 2008-2011





The fact that we fare better than many states in the country in ASER is no consolation. ASER results show us the mirror every year and emphasize that there is a need to put in place a comprehensive programme to improve the learning level of the children.

There is no doubt that Himachal has achieved commendable success in elementary education. The state has achieved universal access, enrollment and retention in Primary Level and the transition rate from Primary to Upper Primary is one of the highest in the country. There is no discrimination between boys and girls when it comes to schooling. The drop-out rate is negligible. Differently abled children have either been mainstreamed in the regular school or they are being catered to through Home Based Education. There are very few children who are out of school. For them too special courses (Non Residential Bridge Courses) are being run so that they also get education.

But the real challenge now is that of QUALITY. The children have come to the school but they are not learning. The reason is not far to seek: the teachers are not teaching, quality of classroom transaction has gone down, the accountability seems to have disappeared. The result is that even after spending 5 to 8 years in the schools children gain nothing. There is a state of

emergency and we must act now. Himachal must not squander the gains of decades in education. Amartya Sen, the noble laureate, rates India as one of the best states along with Kerala and Tamilnadu, in terms of human development and one of the reasons is success in elementary education. We have crossed the first hurdle and attained universal access, enrollment and retention but the poor and declining learning levels among students at elementary level demand urgent and comprehensive action.

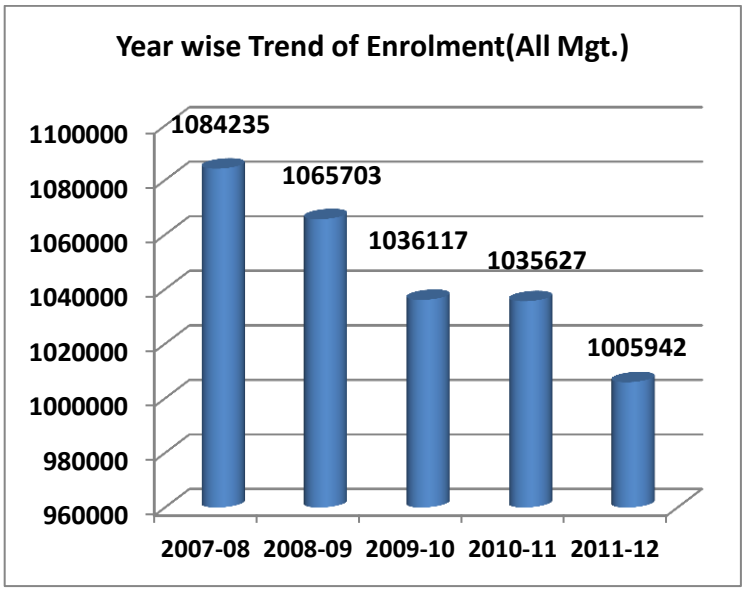
2. **Dimensions of the Crisis:** The learning levels of the children establish beyond doubt that the quality of classroom transaction is very poor. A sincere dialogue with the teachers throws up several reasons but nothing can justify poor performance in our schools. The teachers admit that at primary level the focus is no longer 3Rs and at elementary level the subject based teaching has taken back seat. Their reasons are: multi-grade situation (not having one teacher for each class), frequent transfers, non-rational deployment, load of non-teaching activities, paper work generated by SSA and RMSA, migration of students from better off sections of society to private schools, non-cooperative community. Each of the reasons listed has some merit to it and need not be ignored. However the outcome is clear: students are not leaning in schools as per the expectations. The key points are:

   2.1. *Teachers are not teaching.* Teacher has perhaps stopped owning the school where he/she is posted. The intrinsic motivators like success of students is the best reward for the teacher, seem to have lost their appeal. The teacher who used to take pride in his profession and called it the most noble of all is disappearing, even though the salary and perks of teachers today are the best.

   2.2. *There is decline in the enrollment in the government schools* and most of the private schools that are mushrooming in rural Himachal are not better than the government schools in terms of quality and training of teachers, infrastructure and on parameter of per child spending. Government school teachers do not educate their children in government schools.

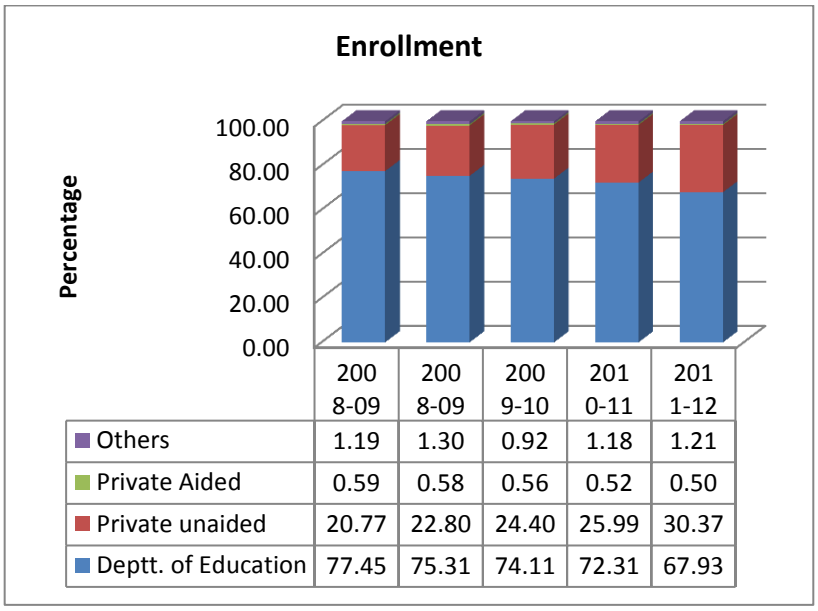
2.3. *There is no accountability*. The age old wisdom expressed by clichéd phrases such as *what gets measured gets done* and *we must keep the score* has been abandoned by the education department. The formal supervisory structure of Head Teacher, Centre Head Teacher, Headmaster/Principal and Deputy Director/Director is no longer going their duty as far as quality is concerned. There are no formal or informal inspections. The so called euphemistic supportive supervision has not taken root and there is near absent assessment and analysis of the learning levels of the children at supervisory levels. One reason is no one is asking questions, so no one feels obliged to answer.

2.4. ***Decline in Enrollment in Schools has some peculiar features*:** Though there is overall decline in school enrolment in the state due to overall decline in population, yet there is a clear trend to establish migration of students away from the government schools. Private schools are opening in rural areas and the parents perceive that these are better than government schools because they teach English, dress is smarter, there is one teacher to a class and the "teaching" is better. These reasons are not just anecdotal but are those that have come up as a result of several interactions with parents, teachers and field visits. It is worthwhile to look at the trends in enrollment.



One important factor is that while there are more boys are in private schools, the number of girls in the government schools is more. This indicates subtle

gender discrimination in the state. As the perceived quality of a private school is better compared to the government school and the fees and other costs are almost negligible in the government schools, the decision of parents to send the girl child to a so called "low quality" school and their son to a "preferred better school" speaks volumes about the socio-cultural norms.



	2008-09	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Others	1.19	1.30	0.92	1.18	1.21
Private Aided	0.59	0.58	0.56	0.52	0.50
Private unaided	20.77	22.80	24.40	25.99	30.37
Deptt. of Education	77.45	75.31	74.11	72.31	67.93

2.5. **Multi Grade Situation:** One reason for the low levels of quality is multi-grade situation in many of our schools. Though some schools will remain multi-grade for a long time to come, yet the state can definitely take steps to reduce single teacher schools. The concern of the teachers that mid-day meal, filling up of various forms and reports that are to be sent periodically, some non-important meetings puts lot of pressure on them is not without justification. The ASER data on multi grade situation in our schools shows that ground level multi-grade situation is quite alarming. This leads to difficulties in imparting quality content in the schools. Though the state has taken steps to tackle multi-grade situation in the schools through trainings and development of multi-grade teaching module, yet the situation needs to be tackled at several levels. On one hand there is a need to train teachers in a better way so that they can handle multi-grade situation in a better manner, on the other hand we need to take steps to reduce the number of single teacher schools.

Table 13: Multigrade classes 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2011								
% Schools with:	2007	2009	2010	2011	2007	2009	2010	2011
	Std I-IV/V				Std I-VII/VIII			
Std II children sitting with one or more other classes	60.8	57.4	58.7	50.7	80.0	54.6	58.1	74.5
Std IV children sitting with one or more other classes	54.6	53.7	54.0	44.8	61.5	40.0	49.2	65.2

If we look at the number of teachers and the schools in ASER 2011 we find that nearly 50% schools in the sample (sample 272 schools) were having one or two teachers.

Table 19: Schools by number of teachers 2010 and 2011

Number of teachers	2010		2011	
	No. of schools	% of schools	No. of schools	% of schools
1	37	16.7	45	18.7
2	80	36.0	98	40.7
3	39	17.6	46	19.1
4	24	10.8	20	8.3
5	17	7.7	18	7.5
6	11	5.0	5	2.1
>=7	14	6.3	9	3.7
TOTAL	222	100	241	100

In our schools the students are enrolled as per classes and the textbooks are also class-based but the teaching happens in multi-grade situations. This creates practical difficulties. As the government schools will not have one teacher to a class (which is also the case as per RTE Act, which talks about minimum two teachers in a Primary School) for a long time to come, the class and textbook as per the classes is a misnomer, instead the state should develop level-wise books and reading material. But even if we group students as per age groups, then also we need to have minimum three teachers in a Primary School, as three groups are needed in a primary school. Curriculum and books will also need revision accordingly.

Table 18: RTE norms: Pupil-teacher ratio 2010 and 2011

School enrollment	RTE Teacher Norms	2010	2011
		% Schools that do not meet PTR norms	
1-60	2	32.4	30.2
61-90	3	42.6	32.1
91-120	4	47.6	38.9
121-150	5	61.5	55.0
151-200	5 + HM	20.0	40.0
> 200	see note	57.1	100.0
TOTAL		39.4	34.7

Note : For schools with enrollment above 200 children the PTR shall not exceed 40 excluding the Head Teacher

ASER is based on Sample Survey. DISE, the annual database of the education department which captures information from each school gives the following figures for single teacher schools, and schools where PRT is high.

2.6. **Social elite, including government school teachers, has withdrawn their children from government schools:** Nearly all government school teachers send their own children to private schools. The other important persons in the village/school community (PRIs, businessmen, employees) have been shifting gradually to private schools. This has impacted the school system adversely. This trend has led to a crisis of confidence about the government schools. The fact (or the perception of it, as in most of the rural areas the government school is the only school) that the so called "social elite" has withdrawn from the government schooling system, has made teachers "lax" as the pressure of community has decreased.

3. **Present Focus of SSA is one of the main reasons for declining learning levels:** This may sound ironic but one main reason for declining learning levels among the children in government schools is the projects that were launched to improve the situation that is DPEP, SSA and RMSA. The national level focus of these projects (and rightly so) was to bring children to school as millions of Indian

children of school going age were out of schools, create infrastructure and to recruit teachers. Himachal had already done a lot in terms of access when the DPEP started. There were schools which were existing physically, there were teachers who were teaching and the out of school children were not many (though there were pockets where the children were not going to school). The PROBE (Public Report on Basic Education) had in 1995 called the elementary education situation in Himachal "a miracle" and had devoted a separate chapter (The Education Revolution in Himachal) on Himachal trying to understand the success. The researchers had found that the state had realized the dream of universal primary education (a dream that was so elusive for rest of the country at that time), schools in Himachal were functional, the teachers were motivated, the students were learning and parents (including those of SC/ST students) were highly motivated. The distinguishing factor of Himachal was that the success was result of state intervention through public sector investment in education and that the private schools were conspicuous by their absence. In 2006 when the PROBE team revisited their report after ten years all they had to say about Himachal was "Himachal is Different". Though the PROBE 2006 in its report PROBE Revisited had found that Himachal was a cut above the rest as it was in 1996, it had noticed that the country had made good progress on access indicators by opening more schools, recruiting more teachers and bringing out of school children to schools. This was commendable achievement of DPEP and SSA. But what proved to be "boon" for the country, created a "real problem" for Himachal. When the state was poised to put quality in focus after having attained near universal access and enrollment in primary education, instead of planning for and attaining the goal of quality education, we too (like rest of the country) started to focus on "not so important issues of infrastructure" like school rooms, toilets, water, boundary walls, electricity, out of school students (which was not a big number in the state). This was done at the cost of quality. The marginal became the main and everyone started to monitor inputs, forgetting the outcomes. For a state like Himachal it was disastrous to say the least. The decline in learning levels that we see today, in spite of such huge investment in

education sector is the result of wrong focus. What was right for other states was wrong for Himachal. There is a need to put quality where it belongs: right in the middle of it and to plan for it. We may be late but the state can still rise to the challenge and put a reversal plan in place.

4. **Way Forward: Quality is never an accident and the goal of quality cannot be realised through short cut methods. There is a need for a long term plan with clear measurable goals and timelines.** That is why the quality plan discussed below has following four distinct but deeply interconnected stages of a single vision: immediate measures, initiatives for the next two years, five year plan and a vision for the next twenty years.

   The first step is to start measuring and monitoring what is happening in our schools. However a word of caution is needed here, while we need to measure things to get them done the design of these systems should empower the teacher and should not be used as a tool to *punish* them for under achievement. If a child is not being taught or she is not learning as per expectations then the same teacher will have to take corrective measures. No one else can take her role. Thus our systems should monitor and measure only what is required to be monitored and measured and also be designed in such a way that the remedial action starts at the school level without time lag and the teacher owns the responsibility for doing so. The training programmes need to be aligned to the outcomes thrown up by the periodic assessment of the children under CCE. Other measures that are needed are: reward system for the schools, teachers, students, SMCs and other supervisory staff, training head teachers and principals to assume the role of leader of the institution and to ensure that libraries are used, supplementary reading material is available and used, there is activity based learning in the schools. For this following measures are proposed, categorized under IMMEDIATE (to be put in place in 2013-14), SHORT TERM (to be institutionalized in two years, by the close of FY 2014-15), MID TERM (five year perspective plan starting in FY 2013-14) and LONG TERM perspective (15 year Vision).

   4.1. **Immediate Measures (action points for 2013-14):**

4.1.1. Following is proposed to put quality at the centre stage.

- **January-March 2013: State Level Work:** Define Level Wise Competencies for Class I to Class VIII
- **April 2013: School Level Work: Start of the Academic Session:** Teachers do a baseline assessment of the students as per the pre-defined competencies. The base line results to be displayed in the school and shared with the SMC in April. CHTs to monitor the baseline. Parents to be explained the results of the baseline and each school to set the target for the year and break that into the achievable, quantifiable targets after 4, 8 and 12 months of teaching activities.
- **CCE:** Teachers to assess students by way of CCE on daily, weekly, monthly basis. They will have to undertake remedial teaching as per requirement. The state to simplify the assessment forms by February 2013 and share these with the schools before the start of the academic session 2013-14 in April 2013.
- **First Assessment:** This will be undertaken across state in July 2013 before the schools close for the monsoon break. Each and every child will be assessed based on the pre-defined level wise learning competencies. The results will be complied at CHT level and result sheet (school wise, class wise, student wise) will be given to the school teachers and the same will be shared with the SMC and parents before the school closes, homework for vacation to be assigned accordingly by the teachers. This result will tell the teacher how students have fared against the defined learning objectives and also how they have progressed since the start of the academic session compared to baseline assessment. The CHT/CRC, BPEO, BRC, DPO, Deputy Directors, SPO, Directors will be able to see the aggregated figures of the results. The weak clusters and schools will be identified and training needs will be assessed and the training of School Teachers will start in batches after that at state and district

level. At CHT level the results will be discussed and every month a capacity building session (day long) will be held to take stock of the situation and to plan corrective action for the month. CHT along with each teacher will draw a four month long action plan based on these results and put that plan in action. The assessment test will be under taken with the teachers but in order to spare the teachers the logistics, designing of question paper, evaluation work, this work will be undertaken by special teams constituted for the purpose which will have state coordinators, district coordinators, members of SRG, DRG, SCERT, DIET faculty, JBT students as members. Students from Bed colleges, degree colleges and other unemployed youth will be engaged by paying honorarium to administer the test and to evaluate, tabulate the results as per the requirement.

- **Second Assessment:** This will take place in the month of November/December and this will also be administered universally in the state. The results will be compared against the first assessment and these will also show the steps, if any, taken by the schools to address the issues thrown up after the first assessment.
- **Third Assessment:** This will be undertaken towards the end of the session, and will be more like a year-end exam. It will, like both the earlier assessments, assess both scholastic and non-scholastic aspects against the defined learning standards. This assessment will become the baseline for the next year except for the students enrolling in Class I. The students will carry their terminal assessment (and also earlier assessments) along with the transfer certificate in case they change the school.

  This system will do the enable the state to:

  - Define learning standards
  - Benchmark desired levels at the end of 4, 8 and 12 months.
  - Assess in an objective manner the progress of the children

- Track each child independently as well against the desired levels of learning.
- Track the performance of teachers individually and collectively (to be later linked to the ACR, transfer, reward systems).
- Grade teachers and schools (to be linked to reward system and with the School Grading System-explained below under the "The Quality Ladder")
- Plan trainings based on real time need assessment.
- Develop and institutionalize accountability mechanism.
- Involve community in schools' learning process.

4.1.2. Library Movement: The will launch massive movement to ensure that school libraries are used. Each school has library books, the problem is these are not used. Already the State Office SSA/RMSA has issued enabling instructions to make libraries vibrant. The SPO will come out with standards and benchmark of library use and then undertake an assessment to award **best libraries, best teachers (in terms of library books),** and **best schools** based on self disclosure and application based system that is the schools that consider that they are making good use of library will apply for the award. The Grants to the schools will be linked to the performance of school libraries (the complete scheme for making differential grants to the schools is detailed below).

4.1.3. Change of ACR Formats and **also the channel through which ACRs move:** There is need to measure what the teachers are supposed to do throughout the year. Present ACR forms are too general and most entries/items are vague. The ACR forms need to be aligned with the performance and also the channel of reporting and reviewing agencies need to be re-looked. Teachers working as part of SSA/RMSA mechanism do not have to route their ACRs through their immediate functional superiors, this leads to confusion in control and command. The State Office of SSA/RMSA will undertake the task of designing the ACR forms for the teachers at various levels according to their duties and

will focus on outcomes against the standards and benchmarks. This exercise is expected to be completed by October, 2013. Consultation with the Teachers' Unions and Associations and other stakeholders will be held. The Revised ACR formats and mechanism will be submitted to the Government through the Department of Higher Education and Elementary Education respectively. The aim is to introduce the new system from 2014-15.

4.1.4. **Selection and Transfer procedure for the BRC and Coordinators at State and District Level:** At present there are no guidelines/policy to select the BRCs/ Lecturers for DIETS/ SCERT/Coordinators for SSA/RMSA offices. The Hon'ble High Court has also opined that these coordinators should be changed only if they fail to meet the requirements and perform below the expectation compared to a notified and defined policy. However in the absence of a policy detailing the selection, tenure and transfer policy for these the practical situation is: once a BRC always a BRC irrespective of performance. It is proposed to make these positions: coordinators in office of SPO, Principal and lecturers in DIETs, SCERT and BRCs as selection posts and their selection, tenure and transfer conditions need to be defined. The old saying that **structure follows the strategy** is too correct to be ignored. The quality initiative under SSA and RMSA is to be spearheaded by these functionaries. If they are not right people entire effort may go waste. The experience so far shows that these places and positions have become parking places for the idle or for the incompetent in many cases. Some want to stay at the district headquarter or at the state headquarter, therefore they get themselves posted as coordinators. We need motivated, self driven, qualified, skilled and suitable individuals to man these positions. Through them we can make the change happen. And there are so many motivated and suitable individuals who can perform this work wonderfully well. Thus it is proposed that all these positions be made selection posts which are tenure based. The period of appointment will

depend upon performance and in no case an individual be retained in the same position for more than 5 years (initial tenure being two years extendable on year to year basis for a maximum of five years), so that more and more people get chance to learn and perform. There will be clear defined criteria of eligibility which will be designed in such a way that the available pool is sufficient to select the best. Unless we put this kind of system in place the quality initiative will not succeed. People who implement the strategy are as important as the strategy itself. Therefore it is proposed that by April, 2013 the State Project Office will finalise a draft proposal which will be placed before the EC and GC of SSA/RMSA and after approval the same will be put in place w.r.t. the coordinators. For SCERT, DIETs, SIEMAT a separate approval may be obtained from the Government and the selection process of the new Team may be completed by October 2013 so that the 2 and 5 year plan is put in place in proper manner. Annual appraisal of the coordinators will be carried out and their tenure will depend on the performance. Performance based appraisal will be the basis of extension of tenure at all levels. By April, 2013 the Appraisal Forms will be circulated to all so that the existing staff also knows the parameters against which they will be assessed.

4.1.5. **Performance Based Financing of Schools:** At present all the schools get same amount of grant, this will be changed from 2013-14 and the schools will be released grant on the basis of performance which will, in turn, will be based on objective criteria. A separate proposal will be part of the Annual Plan for the year 2013-14 in this regard.

4.1.6. Supplementary Material for the students of **Class VI to Class VIII and also for Class IX and Class X:** One immediate need is to print and circulate a **Glossary of Important Terms, Definitions and Formulae** with explanatory notes for students of Class VI to Class VIII and also Class IX and X. The students who study Science and Mathematics in Hindi Medium find it very difficult to relate to English terms in higher

classes. While the overall, comprehensive textbook renewal will take care of the problem in a holistic manner (part of the short term plan), there is an immediate need to get this booklet printed and given to each student so that this confusion is avoided. Most students lose interest in Science and Mathematics or leave Science just because they cannot relate to the same concept in a different language in higher classes and usually the teachers do not have enough time to make them understand.

4.1.7. While we mostly focus on students when we talk about the outcomes and learning levels, there is a need to focus on teachers. An engaged, motivated and skilled teacher can only improve the skills of students. The assumption that if someone is a teacher he/she is capable of teaching and making students learn is wrong. The traditional approach of finding hard spots of students and training teachers to address these "hard spots" is not correct. First we must know (in an objective manner) the skill set of teachers and then understand "their problems" and "their needs" individually and collectively, then and only then we can expect teachers to engage with the students. Here both problems and needs are important while the teacher may need training in physics or a topic in physics textbook he/she may have certain administrative issues that are "real" problems e.g. non availability of lab equipment, non availability of space, non-cooperative attitude of head teacher, electricity, general atmosphere of school etc. which need to be addressed first.

Another important aspect is to give teachers a platform to excel, to exhibit their skill, to share their innovative methods, their outcome with others. This is very important. For example on general observation is that school libraries are not functional. One reason is that teachers (or the teacher in charge of library) don't read books themselves. A teacher who loves books will always make the students learn. So firstly there is a need to select right teachers to manage the library, and second to have some mandatory activities that make it possible for teachers to use the library. Following measures will be taken to engage teachers: **Seminars** (both at

state and district level), **Discussions** (again at different levels), **Science Fairs** and **Language Fairs**, **Quizzes, Competitions** for teachers. The papers presented by teachers in Seminars and deliberations of discussion can be later published by the SSA/RMSA. The teachers need to be made part of the **Quality Initiative,** as a participant and learner in order to make them realize their potential. Teachers must shed their pessimism and the approach to treat them just as passive receivers in a lecture based training system must be done away with. There are so many bright teachers who have done, and are doing very good work, in their respective schools, which need to be taken note of, shared and scaled up if it deserves to be showcased as an initiative worth replicating. Small pilots will be started and then scaled up. Teachers will be made part of the solution and will be made to lead the change. Teachers Associations will also be involved and they are sure to be part of this quality initiative. The aim is to have a vibrant, engaged and motivated teaching community that organizes seminars, discussion forum and brings out publications, periodicals. Scientific and research papers will be published periodically that will motivate teachers. Exposure visits of teachers will be planned as part of this initiative.

4.1.8. Training: Training is important component of SSA/RMSA but the experience so far (we have been training every teacher for a fixed number of days every year- first it was twenty days a year and then ten days a year) shows that the results are not encouraging. Following major problems have been noticed: *cascade model leads to dilution of content*; *the trainings lack innovative and activity based sessions-most of the sessions (more at the lower level that is district and sub-district level)are lecture based which fail to enthuse the teachers; there seems to be a gap between what teachers need and what we provide- in the sense the training need assessment is not poor; the monitoring of training outcomes and the follow up is weak.* Another important feedback is that though the teachers get motivated after training they get demoralized when they go back to the school as either their colleagues

do not support them or the head teacher is not motivated enough. As a result they find it difficult to implement what they have learnt. Solution to this is twofold: One, we need to start a **School Leadership and Change Initiative** where Head Teachers are brought on board as change managers and leaders and two we need to **train the school not the teachers**, this essentially means planning the training in such a manner that the entire school is trained as a TEAM, while it is impossible to train all the teachers and other staff of the school at the same place on same dates without closing down the school, the trainings will be designed in such a manner that (a) there is as little time gap between training of in-charge, staff and other members of the school as possible and (b) the training will not be a one-time event but it will be a process that includes follow up and refresher rounds.

The State plans to introduce paradigm shift in training by introducing the following initiatives:

- **MoUs with specialized agencies:** There are several Government, Non-Government, Voluntary (both international and national) organizations that specialize in trainings and some of them impart very good training in Science, Mathematics and Language. Some of these are already working with SSA/RMSA in Himachal Pradesh such as Learning Links Foundation, Save the Children, Pratham, Room to Read. The experience with them shows that there is a need to engage more with them and also with more organizations as the capacity of each of these organizations is not such that they can work throughout the state. State plans to sign MoUs with more of these agencies which will not just be for imparting trainings but for hand holding and long term outcome based association. It is felt that this step will give a boost to quality intervention in the state. These organizations will be asked to adopt some schools and then show outcome based results.

- **Use of ICT:** Due to large number of teachers to be trained, the cascade model is adopted. But the content loss is huge. The state will make use of ICT to overcome this problem.
- **School Leadership Trainings:** The experience of SSA/RMSA shows that the Principal/Head Master/Head Teacher is very important and there is need to train the head teachers so that they lead the change in their schools. A pilot project has been launched in Sirmour district which will be scaled up with improvements/modifications.
- **Focus on Specialized Trainings:** Mathematics, Science and Language (English and Hindi) will be taken up in a focused manner. The teachers will be trained to develop lesson plans and then transact these in the classroom. Results will be monitored and improvements will be made as an ongoing process.

4.1.9. **Making DIETS and SCERT functional:** The DIETS are not delivering as expected. Their mandate is to curriculum development, material development, in-service and pre-service training planning and also to function as resource center. No doubt that some of the staff members in DIET are working as coordinator under SSA but the others have no work. These coordinators have to be engaged more fruitfully and they have to be made part of overall quality initiative. After SSA, there is no budget allocation for DIETs and GoI does not give budget to strengthen DIETs but the SSA/RMSA can seek budgetary support for the district level resource groups. In addition the state government should provide more budgetary support to DIETs. The SCERT should also be made functional in the real sense. A separate working group may be constituted under the Secretary Education to make these functional.

4.2. **Short Term Plan (2013-2015):** The State Project Office will hold consultations with stakeholder and organize Workshops to give shape to a Quality Plan that will detail policies, programmes and actions for the following time horizons: Short Term (two years), Mid Term (5 years) and Long Term (15 years) as its components. This will take more than a year to complete, but it

will be rolled out at the start of the academic session of the year 2014. However the following will be part of this plan:

4.2.1. **Quality initiative** will be the major focus of SSA/RMSA in coming years with following components:

- Comprehensive Textbook Renewal (Pre School to Class I to Class X): this will be done to align the child preparedness programme (in convergence with ICDS) with Class I abilities on one hand and the textbooks from Class I to X will be re-done so that abrupt jumps in learning curve are eliminated on the other hand. Textbook load will be reduced and these will be made more child friendly.
- Launch of Excellence Programme for Schools: After the results of the quality improvement programme (undertaken in 2013-14) are analysed the excellence programme will be launched for schools with the specific objective of enhancing the learning abilities.
- Benchmarking and Training Programme
- Publication of children magazine, education journal and other supplementary reading material will be made a regular practice.
- Library Movement: A child learns more if she gets to read quality books in addition to her text books. Age specific reading material, books have been made available to the schools which will be made use of. The schools will be asked to put in place systems to see that the books are used.
- Functional Laboratories: It is important that labs remain functional in the schools. While Science Labs will be made functional Language Labs will also be set up at DIETs and in selected schools so that the deficiency in learning of language is taken care of.

4.2.2. One major initiative to promote healthy competition among schools will be **grading of schools.** Schools will be **graded** on the basis of performance and will be rewarded. The schools, teachers and students will be rewarded annually.

4.2.3. The initiatives to take care of Special Children and Focus groups (minorities, girls and other special groups) that are currently being implemented under SSA/RMSA will be made more focused and outcome based. Initiatives under inclusive education, learning enhancement programme will be made more result and outcome based. It goes to the credit of the state that every child is either in school or is being imparted home based education. This success will be further strengthened by focusing on learning levels of the children with special needs.

4.3. Mid Term (5 year) and Long Term Perspective (20 year) Plan will be finalized by the end of 2013-2014 with quantifiable and measurable targets after holding discussions with stakeholders and after evaluating the success of the initiatives taken in 2013-14 and on the basis of the results and outcomes of the work done in two years from 2013 to 2015.

5. Suggested Administrative Measures to be Undertaken by the Department of Higher and Elementary Education to improve Quality:

5.1. **Rational Deployment:** Though there is some shortage of teachers in the state, yet it is possible to take care of the problem of single teacher schools by rational deployment of teachers. Due to mismatch between the requirement at the school level and staff strength, quality of reading and writing suffers.

5.2. **Transfer Policy:** The State Government has already constituted a committee to formulate a transfer policy and the Hon'ble High Court has also issued certain directions in this regard. Once this policy is in place the problem of gaps in teacher deployment will be addressed.

5.3. **Rationalization of Schools:** The cohort of students who come to schools is declining as the overall population in Himachal is showing a declining trend. Besides the State has noticed growth of private schools in last decade. While this trend is a welcome trend (and the state need to take note of this too under SSA/RMSA- the point is discussed below), yet there is a need for the education department in the state to introspect the reasons and to take corrective measures. Though the average PTR (Pupil Teacher Ratio) in the

state is very good: for Primary and for Upper Primary level, yet there is variation from district to district and within district also. In Spiti there are schools with more teachers and less students, whereas in some parts of the state there are schools with very high enrollment but less number of teachers. The dimension of the problem can be seen from the following:

Class I to V enrollments in Spiti Valley (data as on September 2012):

Sr No	School	Enrollment			Number of Teachers
		Boys	Girls	Total	
1.	**GPS Hurling**	1	1	2	2
2.	**GPS Nadang**	2	1	3	1
3.	**GPS Pomrang**	6	0	6	3
4.	**GPS Poh**	5	3	8	2
5.	**GPS Tabo**	9	4	13	4
6.	**GPS Lari**	7	8	15	3
7.	**GPS Gue**	5	6	11	3
8.	**GPS Tabo Gompa**	12	7	19	3
		47	**30**	**77**	**21**

Enrollment in Middle Schools in Spiti (data as on September 2012):

Sr No	School	Enrollment			Number of Teachers
		Boys	Girls	Total	
1.	**GMS Gue**	1	1	2	5
2.	**GMS Hurling**	1	0	1	3
3.	**GMS Poh**	3	0	3	5
4.	**GMS Tabo**	4	7	11	7
		9	**8**	**17**	**20**

Schools are needed in Spiti and given the population density of 2 per square kilometers and decline is growth of population there will be fewer enrollments in the schools. Yet there is a need to look at the present approach to educating children in Spiti. May be a residential, state of the art, boarding

school with full facilities (the most modern school) at one location in Spiti, where all expenses are paid by the state will be a better option than a school for each habitation. There are private schools in the Valley with high enrollment and these are residential schools.

As per DISE data (as on 30.9.2011), there are 877 single teacher primary schools (out of total 10573 Primary Schools, 8.2%) in the state. In addition there are 6405 schools with only two teachers.

At upper primary level also there are 50 schools out of 4372 middle schools that are single teacher schools and in 173 middle schools there are only two teachers. At Upper Primary Level, we have GSSS Bajaura with 356 students and only 4 teachers, GMS Manpur Deora (Paonta Sahib) with 268 students and 3 teachers, GSSS Thatibir (Kullu) with 175 students and 2 teachers, GSSS Baryogi (Seraj I) with 85 students and single teacher, GHS Bathar (Kullu) with 235 students and 3 teachers.

There are Primary Schools with SINGLE TEACHER with high enrolment like: GPS Kuraina (Chamba) with 87 students, GPS Bara Kamba (Nichar) with 79 students, GPS Baghi (Kotkhai) with 77 students, GPS Dhundanwari II (Dodra Kwar) with 75 students.

5.4. **Involvement of Private Schools:** The Right to Education Act mandates that the state engages more with the private schools as the concept of neighbourhood school and 25% enrollment for weaker sections is to be implemented. In addition, the private schools (especially those located in the rural areas) may be asked (optional offer, on payment basis- which may be nominal in case of rural schools) to train their teachers through the training programmes of SSA/RMSA.

5.5. **The Role of HP State Education Board also needs to be re-assessed.** Now that CCE is being implemented and Board Exams of Class VIII and Class XI are not being held and exams of Class X and XII may also get phased out, the role of the Board needs to be re-looked. The Board can take up the role of academic support group.