

**NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF
STATE EDUCATION MINISTERS UNDER
THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE
MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
TO DEVELOP THE STRUCTURE AND OUTLINES OF
IMPLEMENTING UNIVERSAL ELEMENTARY
EDUCATION IN A MISSION MODE.**

**July, 1999
Government of India
Department of Education
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Shastri Bhavan,
New Delhi.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
<u>Chapter - I</u>	1-8
Introduction	
<u>Chapter - II</u>	9-34
Learning From Experiences	
<u>Chapter - III</u>	35-56
Broad Framework for Universalisation of Elementary Education	
<u>Chapter - IV</u>	57-66
Illustrative Organisational Structure for the Mission Mode	
<u>Chapter - V</u>	67-68
Concluding Remarks - Towards a Holistic And Convergent Approach	

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF
EDUCATION MINISTERS ON
UNIVERSALISING ELEMENTARY
EDUCATION IN THE MISSION MODE.**

**July, 1999
Government of India
Department of Education
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Shastri Bhavan,
New Delhi.**

INTRODUCTION

1.1 A National Committee of State Education Ministers under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Human Resource Development was set up in January, 1999 to develop the structure and outlines for implementing universal elementary education in a mission mode. The conference of State Education Ministers held on 22-23 October, 1998 had reached a consensus that universal elementary education be preceded by universal primary education. It was agreed that universal elementary education should be taken up in a mission mode with the focus on universal access, universal retention along with qualitative inputs and the implementation would be done with full collaboration between the Central and State Governments and with community involvement. The Conference had also emphasised the need to pursue a holistic and convergent approach towards UEE.

1.2 This Committee was set up on the recommendations of that Education Ministers' Conference with the following terms of reference :-

- i) to consider necessary measures for achievement of the goal of universalisation of elementary education in the shortest possible time in a mission mode with full***

collaboration between Central and State Governments, community involvement and decentralised strategies appropriate and relevant to the needs of our society.

- ii) To consider modalities in pursuing a holistic and convergent approach for achieving the goal of universalisation of elementary education on the lines suggested in the conference of the State Education Ministers on 23rd October, 1998.***

1.3 The constitution of the Committee was as follows :

- | | | |
|------|--|----------|
| i) | Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi
Union Minister of Human Resource Development | Chairman |
| ii) | Shri Thanesar Boro,
Minister of Secondary & Elementary Education
Govt. of Assam, | Member |
| iii) | Shri Ram Bilas Sharma,
Education Minister
Govt. of Haryana | Member |
| iv) | Shri Sudhir Joshi
Minister for School Education
Govt. of Maharashtra | Member |
| iv) | Shri Jayadev Jena
Minister for School & Mass Education
Govt. of Orissa | Member |
| vi) | Shri Tota Singh
Minister for School Education,
Govt. of Punjab | Member |
| vii) | Prof. K. Anbazhagan,
Minister for Education
Govt. of Tamil Nadu | Member |

- | | | |
|-------|--|------------------|
| viii) | Shri Baleshwar Tyagi
Minister of State for Basic Shiksha
Govt. of Uttar Pradesh | Member |
| ix) | Shri Kanti Biswas
Minister of Primary & Secondary Education,
Government of West Bengal | Member |
| x) | Shri M.C. Satyawadi,
Additional Secretary,
Department of Education,
Min. of HRD, New Delhi. | Member Secretary |

PERMANENT INVITEES

- i) Shri P.R. Dasgupta,
The then Education Secretary
Government of India
- ii) Shri Abhimanyu Singh
Joint Secretary (Elementary Education)
Deptt. of Education
Ministry of HRD, New Delhi.
- iii) Shri R.S. Pandey
Joint Secretary (DPEP)
Deptt. of Education
Ministry of HRD, New Delhi.
- iv) Shri M.K. Kaw
The then Principal Adviser (Education),
Planning Commission,
New Delhi.

Unfortunately, the Member Secretary, Shri M.C. Satyawadi, Additional Secretary, Department of Education, is no more with us. The members of the Committee record with appreciation, the contribution that Shri Satyawadi made to the deliberations of this Committee. The

first meeting of the Committee was held on 11 February, 1999 and the second meeting on 6 March, 1999.

UNANIMITY ABOUT APPROACH TO UEE

1.4 All the members were unanimous that universalisation of elementary education is one of the foremost tasks before us and there was a need to adopt a convergent and holistic approach. Implementation in the mission mode would signify the political will and unanimity of civil society for achieving UEE within a given time frame. The judgement in the Unni Krishnan case (1993) has declared Elementary Education to be a Fundamental Right and the 83rd Constitutional Amendment Bill has already been introduced in the Rajya Sabha for making Elementary Education a Fundamental Right. Even while there is a wider debate on the implications of this Bill, the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court has already made Elementary Education a Fundamental Right for all children in the 6-14 age group, irrespective of the economic capacity of the state. Elementary Education is already an entitlement of every child in India and can, therefore, no more be pursued as a mere incremental development goal. There is a sense of urgency in securing this entitlement for all. The members of the Committee were unanimous that securing the Fundamental Right to elementary education would require a significant community based thrust that allows convergence of efforts.

This would naturally call for modifications in the approach towards universalisation of elementary education, as at present there are a large number of compartmentalised State and Central Plan schemes for UEE. The Committee was unanimous in adopting an approach that allowed an identified geographical area to undertake context specific interventions in a holistic way.

1.5 The following documents were made available to the members of the Committee:-

- i) ***The report of the Working Group on elementary education, non formal education, early childhood education and teacher education in the 9th Five Year Plan, December, 1996.***
- ii) ***The report of the Expert Group on Financial Requirements for making elementary education a Fundamental Right (1999) popularly referred to as the Tapas Majumdar Committee Report and***
- iii) ***A Paper circulated by Shri M.K. Kaw, the then Principal Adviser (Planning Commission) and present Education Secretary entitled 'Towards a new strategy for UEE'.***

The following presentations were made before the Committee :

- i) the existing mission mode examples in the Department of Education, namely, the National Literacy Mission and the DPEP**
- ii) the proposed National Mission for UEE and**
- iii) the MP Education Guarantee Scheme.**

1.6 While working out its approach towards the issue of universalisation, the Committee was unanimous that mobilisation of the community should form the basis of any new strategy, as that alone could sustain the progress towards UEE. The Committee was also aware that being in the concurrent list, the initiatives in education have to be a collaborative effort between the local, State and the Central Governments. The initiatives have to be local and for this, there was general consensus that programmes should not be prescriptive but rather they should provide for meeting diversities across regions and States. The district was unanimously accepted as an appropriate unit for making contextual interventions because of the established presence of educational administrative structures and panchayati raj institutions at this level. There was general agreement that the panchayati raj institutions should play a very important role in the mission approach to UEE. For their effective participation, it was felt that provision of untied

funds to Village Education Committees would enhance their decision - making role.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

1.7 The report is divided into five Chapters. The second Chapter is on " Learning from experiences". The third Chapter presents a broad framework for Universalisation of elementary education. The fourth Chapter discusses an illustrative organisational structure. It is illustrative as the Committee was aware of the diversities in educational administration across states and it would be up to the states to adopt the most appropriate context specific strategy. The fifth Chapter gives the concluding remarks and argues for a holistic and convergent approach. It pleads for a national effort by mobilising the entire civil society through a National Programme for Universalisation of Elementary Education.

DIVERSITY OF APPROACHES

1.8 The National Committee was fully aware of the need for providing diversity of approaches in meeting the challenge of universalisation. Members were of the view that initiatives must be context specific and State Governments should have the leadership role in these matters. The Central Government's role is more in the form of supporting successful initiatives and of formulating a programme design that allows

for diversities. The Committee felt that meaningful partnerships could be forged between the Central and State governments in matters relating to holistic educational programmes and mobilisation of additional financial resources for UEE. It was generally felt that the Educational Development Index recently developed by the Planning Commission could be suitably improved and used for improving investments in elementary education.

1.9 The members of the Committee would like to thank the then Education Secretary, Shri P. R. Dasgupta, and all other functionaries of the Department of Education who extended support to the working of this Committee.

CHAPTER - II

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCES

2.1 India's quest for nation building began with the disadvantage of mass illiteracy on account of neglect of education during colonial times and also due to some social distortions. Independent India has seen a very significant expansion of the school system. Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has been accepted as a national goal in India since independence. The Founding Fathers of our Constitution recognised UEE as a crucial input for nation building. The Directive Principles of State Policy had envisaged that the State shall endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for children up to 14 years of age, within a period of 10 years. The National Commission on Education (the Kothari Commission 1964-66) had highlighted the need for increasing investment in education in order to meet the challenge of UEE. The National Policy on Education 1986, as revised in 1992, resolves to provide free, compulsory education and quality education to all children up to 14 years of age before the commencement of the 21st Century.

A BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

2.2 Historical records confirm a rich tradition of learning in the Bengal and Madras presidency areas in the pre-British times. Many of these traditional systems of learning were systematically destroyed during the colonial regime. The colonial education system, as epitomised in the minutes of Macaulay, was an effort to impose the so-called modern education at the cost of the traditional systems of learning. The investments in education during colonial times were largely community based and the Government merely provided a regulatory framework through the District Boards of Education and through the Education Acts that regulated both the setting-up of Schools and the curriculum in them. An effort was made during the colonial times to develop a regulatory framework that provided unlimited powers to School Inspectors and to the District Boards of Education. The salaries of teachers were extremely low during these times. Post colonial India has seen a remarkable improvement in the service conditions of teachers all over the country. Due to a process of take-over of financial responsibilities by state governments and local bodies, community initiatives in school education have become somewhat weak. We have reached a stage where Centre, State and Local Governments account for a very large percentage of the total expenditure on elementary education.

2.3 With the increasing role of Government in the management of schools, there was a perception that community initiatives had slowed down and the local community was not able to enforce accountability in the affairs of the schools. A diversity of experiments were carried out in various States by associating Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Village Education Committees (VECs), Parents Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Elected School Committees in the management of schools. These efforts truly reflect the diversity of this country and the kinds of interventions that were actually able to create community involvement.

THE DEVELOPMENTS AFTER 1986

2.4 The National Policy on Education, 1986 was followed by a significant effort to expand Centrally Sponsored Schemes in the elementary education sector. This has also been the phase when there has been a greater emphasis on spending at least 50% of the total expenditure on education in the elementary education sector. The ambitious scheme of Operation Blackboard for providing two teachers, two classrooms, and teaching learning equipment to all existing schools was one of the very significant national efforts in our quest for UEE. This has been followed by state specific basic education Projects in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, finally leading to the implementation of the context specific and local area planning based District Primary Education Programme in 149 districts. The thrust on

elementary education over the last 13 years reflects in the data released by NSS after the 52nd (1995-96) Round Survey. The 52nd NSS Survey places the age specific attendance ratio for 6 to 10 age children at 69% and for 11 to 13 age children at 72%. This is significantly higher than the figures reported at the time of 1991 General Census and the 42nd Round NSS Survey (1986 - 87). Other significant studies during this period have also brought out the drastic change that has taken place especially with regard to the percentage of never enrolled children in rural areas. Comparison of the NSS 42nd Round(1986-87) figures and the 1991 Census figures with subsequent surveys like the NSS 50th (1992-93), 52nd(1995-96), 53rd(1997-98) and other surveys like the National Family Health Survey (1992-93) and the NCAER Survey(1992-93) have all indicated the change with regard to school attendance. Even the recently published Report on Basic Education in India, 1999 brings out the significant success achieved in Himachal Pradesh. The report also highlights the state of elementary education in the educationally backward states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

2.5 The findings of the 53rd Round NSS with regard to literacy are quite significant. In 1997, India had achieved a literacy level of 62% in the 7+ plus age group and all States and Union Territories had reported male literacy level of more than 60%. The NSS figures confirm the impact that elementary education programmes and the total literacy

campaigns have had, in comparison to earlier phases. The decade of the 90s has been a very significant one in India's quest for universalising elementary education as it has shown that priority to basic education starts showing results over time. The improvement in the educational opportunities for girls and women has been specially significant during this period.

2.6 There have been a large number of State specific initiatives in the quest for UEE. There is need to look at the experiences of States in order to understand their performance.

PERFORMANCE OF STATES

2.7 Based on analysis of recent studies and findings, the following conclusion regarding performance of States could be arrived at :-

- a) Barely ten percent persons complete High School and the median number of schooling years is only 2.5. In Delhi, Manipur, Mizoram, Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the median number of years of schooling is more than five.
- b) School attendance in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Goa, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Punjab, Jammu region of J & K, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi is more than 80 percent. School attendance in Bihar, UP, MP, Orissa, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh is below 65 percent.
- c) There has been a significant decrease in the number of never enrolled children in 1992 – 93 compared to the NSS 42nd round assessments for 1986 – 87. In a majority of the states, the decline has been very sharp.

- d) The drop out levels in 1992 - 93 has also significantly reduced at primary stage compared to the figures for 1986 - 87. The reduction in Rajasthan, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat is quite significant, even though a lot needs to be done in these states. These high drop out rates are also on account of over reporting of enrolment figures.
- e) Even though the school system has considerably expanded, there are still nearly 1.80 lakh habitations that do not have a Primary school within one kilometre radius. For attaining the national norm of one Upper Primary School for every two Primary Schools, more than two lakh new Upper Primary Schools need to be established.
- f) Our elementary school system will have nearly 200 million children by the turn of the century. We have only 30 lakh teachers to take care of them. This means that to attain even a modest teacher pupil ratio of 1:40, more than twenty lakh teachers need to be recruited.
- g) In spite of the scheme of Operation Blackboard, there are a large number of schools with inadequate school infrastructure. The maintenance of schools is very poor and the number of classrooms is far from adequate.
- h) Learning is unsatisfactory and a lot of the teacher time is spent on non - teaching activities.
- i) There is a parental demand for education. Establishment of interesting schools with adequate school facilities will facilitate universalisation.
- j) Elementary education is not free, as there are large costs of schooling that households have to meet.
- k) Effective community action holds the key to school improvement as demonstrated in projects like the Lok

Jumbish, the Bihar Education Project and the work of the M. Venkatrangaiyah Foundation.

- l) Elementary education requires higher investments. For it to be effective, community action is the only answer.
- m) There is an improvement in the pace of adult literacy in the 1990s, as indicated by the 53 rd Round of the NSS household sample survey.

2.8 There are diversities in the educational scenario across regions and states. We have the case of Kerala where every child goes to school and completes Primary education. The states of Tamil Nadu, Mizoram and Himachal Pradesh are quickly getting 'Keralised' with nearly full enrolment and a limited drop out. States like Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka have also made use of their Panchayati Raj framework to push the case for elementary education for all. The educational attainments in the Hindi heartland of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajasthan continue to be unsatisfactory, in spite of some significant efforts. The case of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal also require attention as many children in these states do not complete five years of primary education. The tribal regions of the country and districts with high concentration of Scheduled Castes in the poorer states continue to have serious problems. The North - Eastern states have reported high rates of drop out though some pockets in Mizoram and Nagaland report better achievements. Nationally, the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal account for more than three fourths of the out of school children in India.

EDUCATION AND NATIONAL TRADITIONS

2.9 Before beginning to learn from the experiences in the context of differential achievements across the states, it is important to realise the role that education plays in human well being. No one expressed it better than the leader of the Russian revolution, Lenin, when he said, “ by listening to the songs that children sing, I can foretell the future of the nation”. Global histories are replete with destinies of individual nations being made by the educational and skill advancement of its people. The progress achieved by states like Japan and Germany, and in more recent times, the People’s Republic of China, has had its origin in a systematic attention to the educational advancement of its people. In India, the fight for freedom was accompanied by a very thought-provoking critique of Macaulay’s colonial framework of education. Gandhiji’s basic education philosophy, Dr. Zakir Hussain’s Naye Taleem, Sri Aurobindo’s experiments and the work of Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore, all pointed towards the limitations of the colonial framework. Unfortunately, many of these nationalistic trends did not get mainstreamed in the fifty years of free India. The colonial system destroyed our wonderful national traditions of education.

ROLE OF EDUCATION IN INDIA

2.10 Education in India has a very progressive societal impact as it questions the organisation of society on the basis of birth. The only way for a sweeper’s daughter to break the bondage of sweeping is by enrolling in a school. The colonial education system was never a mass education system, as its limited objective was to create some Indians in the likeness of Europeans, who could provide the basis for running the British empire by working in its offices at various levels. This narrow notion of

education as a means to a salaried government job continues to plague our educational advancement even today. We have failed in overhauling a system that could never develop respect for manual labour. In a country like India, development of skills and respect for physical work should be integral to the curriculum and our global opportunities lie in labour intensive workmanship. Our large numbers can translate into an opportunity only if our schools inculcate a spirit of inquiry and a will to work with hands. The most advanced technologies today would require workmen who can carry out tasks at a high level of standardisation. Every child in India, irrespective of his social background, needs to work with hands and learn by experimenting and interacting with nature. The principle of 'Samavaya' in the Gandhian basic education system addressed itself to this need for integrating mental and physical development. The traditional ' Gurukul' system also embodied the principles of learning by observation and learning by doing and the children were expected to learn much more from the ways in which the teacher conducted himself than from mere reading of texts. The Madras 'monitorial' system provided for across levels child to child learning and there was no fixed time of the year for enrolling. It allowed flexibility of learning needs.

COLONIAL LEGACY AND CHANGE

2.11 While planning for quality education for all, there is a need to learn from the experiences of the states over the last fifty years. Unfortunately, many new education projects are often prepared and implemented without a sense of history and without emphasis on 'structured learning' (analysis of past experiences). This often explains the non – sustainability of many new Projects and their inability to transform mainstream educational administration. The colonial framework of educational administration that was top down and regulation and control oriented

with little respect for teachers, has not been dismantled as yet in many parts of the country. The teacher unions have fought furious battles and the service condition of elementary education teachers today are far better than at the time of Independence. The process of state managed expansion of the school system has also led to the state ownership of hitherto private schools. These processes have had political and bureaucratic patronage and it is not unusual to find a few non-performing and illegitimate institutions being 'taken over' on an 'as is where is basis', with all its liabilities. All this has been done to achieve the noble goal and Constitutional directive of Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy to provide for free and compulsory education for all children below fourteen years, within ten years from the commencement of the Constitution. These developments have reduced community control over schools and led to a negative societal perception about teachers' commitment. Improving the image of teachers and bringing about greater accountability in the schooling system with community participation is one of the challenges of the quest of quality education for all today.

EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

2.12 While learning from states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Himachal Pradesh, we must keep in mind that their per capita expenditure on education is higher than the national average. Education is not cheap and it would require more resources, especially in a country like India where more than one third of the nation is not able to attain food security. The entitlements of households to food, clothing, health care, drinking water, natural resources, housing, do influence participation of children in schools. A large component of social sector investment in this country goes towards creating entitlements to food in order to support schooling and to meet nutritional deficiencies of under 6 children. The

People's Republic of China has achieved better educational indicators with only a 2.8 % GDP expenditure on education as it does not have to spend on food security and other basic entitlements from the education budget. With a few exceptions like Sri Lanka and Kerala in India, the regions with extreme poverty and deprivation are also the regions with poor participation in schools. This means that the issue of livelihood would have to be treated frontally if quality education for all has to be attained.

CONTEXT SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

2.13 The interventions have to be very context specific and no national uniform scheme can be a substitute for contextual planning in this regard. The costs of schooling have to be provided to those whose non-participation is on account of costs. This would naturally require stepping up of investments. The Centre-State resource sharing would have to be redefined in order to make financing of elementary education sustainable. Currently, 90% of the expenditure on education comes from States. The Central share also comes in the form of Non Plan Central assistance to States. In recent years, States have been reluctant to undertake recruitment of teachers even though Centre provides support during the Five Year Plan period. Under the present arrangement, after the end of the Five Year Plan period, all such expenditures are transferred to the Non Plan head of State Governments. In turn, the Finance Commission provides for increase in the Non Plan Central assistance. The States feel that the compensation from the Finance Commission is insufficient to meet the increased salary bills. Resolution of this issue is vital for a sustainable expansion of the schooling system and for increasing the absorptive capacity of states. Today, the situation is paradoxical - even though more investments are needed for elementary education, States are unwilling to recruit more teachers as they are

unable to meet the additional burden. Even though resources are provided in the Central Budget, the States find it very difficult to utilise them.

EDUCATION, WAGE RATES AND FOOD SECURITY

2.14 The question of food security can be seen both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. What Kerala did with a subsidised Public Distribution System, Tamil Nadu tried to do with the Chief Minister's Noon Meal Programme. Both states also realised the continuum of the 0 – 14 age group and a need to spend on the well being of children in the pre – school years. The functioning of ICDS as day care centres coterminous with school timings and special initiatives like the Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Programme concentrated on the 0 – 3 age group children. Such efforts reduced the younger sibling caring role for the girl child and improved the participation of girls in schools. By improving the nutritional status of children in the 0 – 6 age group, these states could reduce the debilitating impact of malnutrition. A child is an interplay of nature and nurture and any malnutrition in the 0- 3 age group is likely to reduce the cranial capacity and thereby retard mental growth. The moderate forms of malnutrition in more than seventy million children in the 0 – 6 age group in India is the most serious statistics that this country must attend to on a priority.

2.15 The experience of the states of Kerala and Himachal Pradesh also confirm that there are certain costs of schooling in spite of education being tuition free. Both the states are marked by high wage rates and this provides households with some disposable income to meet the costs of schooling. Recent surveys have indicated the willingness of poorest households to send their children to school only if they could meet all the costs of schooling. Child labour does not appear to be the only limiting

factor in non – participation. The educational indicators for the developed districts also show the linkages between high wage rates and participation in schools. States like Punjab and Haryana have demonstrated that gender discrimination in schooling comes down with economic advancement when families have more disposable income. The recently launched (1995) Nutritional Support Programme for Primary Education has also shown how, even mere distribution of food grains improves school enrolments and attendance. It only shows how integrally issues of livelihood are related to the quest for quality education for all.

ROLE OF PUBLIC POLICY

2.16 The argument above is not intended to prove any one to one relationship between poverty and illiteracy; far from it. Appropriate public policies do have a major bearing on participation in schools. The comparison of the state of Tamil Nadu with West Bengal is a good example of public policy determining progress in education. Though having similar population, almost an equal number of people below the poverty line and almost equivalent literacy percentage, West Bengal has lower attendance in schools as compared to Tamil Nadu at the primary stage. It is a tribute to the far - sighted public policies in Tamil Nadu that made the 0 – 14 age group a priority of state spending. The achievements in Tamil Nadu could have been even more significant if investment had also been made in appointing more teachers, improving classroom processes by better teacher training, and by providing more teaching learning materials to children. The incentives in Tamil Nadu call for a clear contextual focus so that the felt needs for improving school participation are attended to on a priority and academic achievements are further improved.

TEACHER SHORTAGES IN STATES

2.17 Lack of community control over teachers, teacher absenteeism and low teacher motivation is often cited as reasons for not recruiting new teachers but for only concentrating on reducing wastage and internal inefficiency of the education system. Even after making allowance for enrolment in private unaided and unregistered private schools, the teacher shortages are very significant. It is on this account that the recruitment of para teachers has to be considered a priority if all vacancies have to be filled up in the shortest time period. The issue of teacher/para teacher recruitment has to be addressed by all states as the long - term implications are for the states. The centre only provides fund support for teachers appointed under Operation Blackboard during the five year Plan period. Under the DPEP also, ultimately the states have to pick up the additional burden of teacher salaries. Measures such as greater teacher accountability, motivation, interaction with Community and rationalization of teacher postings are required to improve efficiency.

PARA TEACHERS

2.18 A large number of states have started experimenting with appointment of para teachers who are paid a lump sum amount, which is less than the pay scale of primary teachers. This has largely been resorted to for meeting the demand for teachers in a manner that the state can afford. Appointment of pay scale teachers to fill up all teacher vacancies as per Teacher - pupil norms would require resources that state governments are finding increasingly difficult to find. The economic argument for para - teachers is that provision of teachers as per

requirement is possible within the financial resources available with the states. The non - economic argument is that a locally selected youth, accountable to the local community, undertakes the duties of teaching children with much greater interest. The accountability framework is well - defined and by making the local authority as the appointing authority, the para teacher's performance assessment is the basis for his/her continuance. The quest for Universalisation of Elementary Education as a Fundamental Right signifies a certain sense of urgency in doing so. This urgency calls for appropriate modifications in National Policy in order to respond to local felt - needs. The recruitment of para teachers is a step in this direction.

2.19 The para teachers, in most states, are being appointed by the Zila Panchayats or School Committees. This has been done to avoid possibilities of litigation for pay scale at a future date. The appointment of para teachers on a lump sum emolument is sometimes agitated as an infringement of the principle of ' equal pay for equal work' and there are court matters in this regard in many states. Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh have managed to resolve the legal issues in appointment of Para Teachers. The other way out could be to engage para teachers only for teaching Classes I and II and to move the pay scale teachers to Class - III and above. This could be as per the preference of the state, keeping in view judicial pronouncements on the subject. Universalisation of elementary education requires an immediate filling up of vacant posts and for doing so, the para teacher route seems to be a real possibility. The selection must be community based and all efforts should be made to improve the teaching abilities of such para-teachers by effective teacher training modules and other distance learning packages. States may also make appropriate operational arrangements to ensure NCTE norms regarding minimum qualifications are adhered to before any para teachers are considered for regular pay scale appointments.

REACHING THE UNREACHED: ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING

2.20 There have been a large number of experiments in alternate schooling in this country. Some experiments have been in the form of a part time non-formal instruction with specially designed teaching-learning materials, whereas some others have been a substitute to the formal school. Education policy makers in this country have been aware about the shortcomings that alternate schooling may have. The common school system advocated by the Kothari Commission did not envisage any alternative models. It recognised the right of every child, living in a particular locality, to attend the same school. Dr. M.C. Chagla, Education Minister of India, had also cautioned against cheap alternatives in the name of fulfilling constitutional obligations.

2.21 Efforts at Non Formal Education date back to the pre New Education Policy phase. Eight states had been experimenting with it. The 1986 New Education Policy, in its quest to provide Education for All, recognised the need for NFE. It interpreted NFE as a form of alternate schooling for working children and children located in isolated, dispersed hamlets, where extension of formal schooling may be unsustainable. It recognised the fact that children would continue to work and some special arrangements need to be made for them. Besides having flexible timings, the NFE centres were expected to be located near the households of the learners and the Instructor was expected to be from the same neighbourhood. It was presumed that a local Instructor may be able to motivate these out of school children to come to the NFE Centre. By the use of specially developed pedagogy, it was expected that

the experiences of working children would be used to transact educational experience.

2.22 Besides large scale expansion of the NFE through governmental Projects, many Non-Governmental organisations were also provided grants to develop innovative non-formal projects. The whole programme was given a Project structure and each project was to have 100 centres. There were Primary and Upper Primary Centres. There was a supervisor for every ten centres and an Instructor from the local community at each centre. Specially developed teaching learning materials, lighting arrangements, blackboard, chalk, exercise books, pencils etc. were provided from project funds. The Instructors were initially paid Rupees two hundred per month. Provision for intensive training was also provided.

2.23 The evaluation reports prepared by research institutions in various states establish the near total failure of the NFE system, though some instances of NFE students mainstreaming into the governmental school have been reported. Lack of co-ordination between the formal school and the NFE system has been reported in many evaluation studies and this often posed serious problems in mainstreaming and certification. Comparable tests were not being held in most states. The supply of materials, the selection and training of Instructors, the role of supervisors, have all been pointed out as weak elements in the NFE approach. There is also some evidence of innovative teaching learning materials being developed. As a governmental alternative system, however, the NFE generally appears to have failed.

2.24 The National Child Labour Project also concentrates on the creation of Special Schools with special timings. It accepts the need for children to continue to work and provides learning opportunities outside

the working schedule of children. It is much more a coping strategy rather than an abolition strategy. There is very little co-ordination between NCL Projects and education departments and this often hampers mainstreaming. Training of Instructors and development of teaching learning materials continue to be with institutions like SCERT/DIETs.

SHIKSHA KARMI IN RAJASTHAN

2.25 The Shiksha Karmi Scheme in Rajasthan is a very unique non-formal option as it is much more a substitute school. The timings are flexible but the hours of instruction are much longer and the quality of training very rigorous. The selection of Shiksha Karmi locations is on the basis of microplanning and school mapping and care is taken not to duplicate the efforts of a formal school. The remoteness criterion is given due weightage and all efforts at involving the community are made. The focus on the girl child is also clear. In many ways the Shiksha Karmi model is not an inferior model. It is much more a non-formalised school rather than an NFE Centre. A successful Shiksha Karmi location can be the starting point for the establishment of a school..

HIMACHAL MODEL

2.26 The Himachal Pradesh model is also a unique one. Instead of opening new NFE Centres, the State tried to reinforce the formal school system with the appointment of Volunteer Teachers in schools where the number of children had grown and the sanctioned teacher units was not able to meet teaching needs. The volunteer teachers are local youth and they receive a modest honorarium. The incentive of becoming a regular pay scale teacher on completion of ten years of teaching experience is also there.

M.V. FOUNDATION RANGAREDDY A.P.

2.27 MVF has been totally opposed to the NFE system as it perceives this as an inferior education for working and poor children. The bondage of child labour cannot be broken by an approach that tacitly recognises child labour. The MV Foundation believes in breaking the labouring cycle of children by putting them through a residential camp with innovative volunteer based pedagogy. The effort is at mainstreaming out-of-school children into the formal school after the camp provides them the competencies and the confidence to cope with the school.

EDUCATION GUARANTEE SCHEME IN MADHYA PRADESH

2.28 The recently launched Education Guarantee Scheme in Madhya Pradesh has received national and international acclaim. Nearly 20,000 new education centres have been established in hamlets which did not have a primary school within one kilometre. The EGS in Madhya Pradesh begins by the generation of community demand for a school. Wherever there is no school, it is the community through the Panchayat that places an application for the establishment of a school. After local inquiry and only if 25 children are available in such a centre in tribal areas and 40 in other areas, is an EGS centre approved.

2.29 The annual outlay for each EGS centre was earlier kept at Rs. 8500, within which Rs. 5000 was paid as honorarium to the local 'Guruji' who was selected by the local persons. The supervision of the EGS was left to the panchayats and some money was used for providing basic teaching learning materials to the children.

2.30 The EGS in Madhya Pradesh is really the nucleus of a new school where it is expected that investments will keep stepping up. Through rural development programmes, nearly 40% of the EGS centres have managed to get a room constructed and it is likely that these centres would be further upgraded with more investments coming in. In a manner, EGS provides the right to Education to the local community. Though the initial investment is low, the involvement of the community ensures that this translates into an effective school.

2.31 The Education Guarantee Scheme in Madhya Pradesh is a clear demonstration of the willingness of children in remote and tribal areas and their parents to promote education. The parental demand is high and the evidence from these centres indicate that lack of interest can no more be assigned as a reason for non-participation of tribal children. The selection of the teacher by the local community and the involvement of panchayati raj system in the supervision of EGS explains the reasons for its success.

LESSONS FROM VARIOUS ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING MODELS:

2.32 The Committee felt that given the dispersed habitation patterns, especially in tribal areas, some forms of Alternate Schooling framework would have to be developed as the viability and cost effectiveness of formal schools must always be kept in mind. There may be a need to meet the needs of 6-8 year old children through Alternate Schooling using a culturally contextual pedagogy and curriculum. Given the diversity of dialects in India, Alternative Schooling may be a forum to develop bridge materials that use standard script but use local dialects. The teacher volunteer from the same cultural context also influences the learning of children.

2.33 The Committee was of the view that alternative schools must not be an inferior level of education. They too must have a provision for a bare minimum infrastructure, best created with community support from governmental resources. These Alternative Schools must take into account factors like seasonality and timings but not to suit the work schedule of child labour. The bondage of child labour cannot be broken by alternate non-formal streams; it requires formal schooling.

2.34 The Alternative School must be able to stand on its own. The training of Volunteers must be intensive and periodic. The emoluments should also be sufficient to sustain a village youth, who devotes a whole working day to the school. The Shiksha Karmi model in Rajasthan has some strengths that must form the basis of the approach for improving social, cultural and gender access.

2.35 The Committee felt that the curriculum in the Alternative school must influence the formal school and efforts to "Non-formalise" the pedagogy of the formal school must also be made. The use of bridge dialects and words from the home environment must also be popularised in formal schools. The flexibility of school timings in formal schools and recognition of seasonal factors in the school calendar, must be given due regard. Rather than being an inferior education, alternate schools, wherever required, must become trend setters for such regions.

2.36 The formal school should continue to be our main focus. However, Alternative Schools are only suggested as a means of providing access in habitations where formal schools are not viable or for groups which need special intervention. The quality of Alternative Schools, however, must be absolutely outstanding and resource allocations must be sufficient to provide a friendly learning environment.

COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY OF SCHOOLS

2.37 There is a societal perception that most teachers are not doing as much as they should in Government and local body schools as there is no community accountability. The example of private aided institutions in Kerala and some other states is cited to show how school management committees improve accountability of teachers. Nationalisation of schools is often seen as a negation of community rights in the affairs of the school. In the absence of an expanding and efficient school inspection system, the teachers are left as their own masters. The proposal to set up Village Education Committees in our National Policy of Education was expected to meet this need for community involvement in the affairs of the school. Unfortunately, routine constitution of VECs in many States did not create vibrant and constructive VECs, as was intended. The teachers' unions took the presence of Village Education Committees as an interfering and threatening presence in the schools and the powers of VECs were redefined to accommodate interest groups.

2.38 In States like Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat where the Panchayati Raj system is strong at the district level, the village level Committees continue to be weak as decentralization of powers up to school level would redefine relationship within various levels of Panchayat Raj. In West Bengal, the Gram Panchayats are effective and have demonstrated their ability in implementing rural development programmes and in the literacy campaign. Efforts at sustained community mobilisation and involvement in the management of the school has been tried under the District Primary Education Programme.

Andhra Pradesh has recently amended its Primary Education Act to allow for elected School Committees comprising stake - holders. These Committees have extensive powers in matters of school management and it is expected that these would facilitate people's participation. The Andhra Pradesh model is a departure from the standard Panchayati Raj framework and has instead preferred a stake - holders' committee. The Committee felt that accountability to the local community must be followed in all educational initiatives. The modalities may vary from state to state.

DECENTRALISED MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION

2.39 The hastening of the processes of decentralization by 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments and by having special dispensation for tribal regions in erstwhile Agency areas, has the potential to translate into improved teacher accountability. The Committee felt that there is a need to make the school the epicentre of all village based social development interventions like ICDS, literacy campaigns, health care, disease control, sanitation campaigns etc. The school Head Master must become the Chief- co-ordinating functionary so that integration at the level of the village is complete. The Committee felt that a convergent and holistic approach must begin from the village upwards as top down strategies for convergence are never sustainable. The Committee felt that in order to improve the representativeness of Village Education Committees, efforts at identifying committee persons through activities, as has been attempted in Lok Jumbish Project in Rajasthan, is worth emulating. By constitution of Prerak Dals, Mahila Samoohs, Nirman Samitis and by involving the community in micro-planning, school mapping, building repair and construction and preparation of school-based information, an effort is made to identify genuinely interested individuals who can contribute towards a better management of schools. Such community-

based monitoring of school effectiveness will greatly contribute towards improved performance of teachers. The Committee was of the view that the sustainable way of improving education requires an effective, decentralised management system that is able to respond to societal needs. Accountability of public systems is best ensured by directly involving the users of the facility. The same holds true of the education sector. Ultimately, it is the parents of children who will need to be involved in school level decision making, in the best interests of children.

LARGE NUMBER OF PROGRAMMES FOR UEE

2.40 Presently, a very large number of initiatives are under the process of implementation in the elementary education sector. Some are initiatives from the State Plan like provision of free textbooks, scholarships, uniforms etc. Some others are in the Central / Centrally sponsored sector like -

- the scheme of Operation Blackboard for appointment of teachers, construction of school buildings, and provision of teaching learning equipment for Primary and Upper Primary schools;
- the National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education that provides cooked meals/ foodgrains to primary school children on the basis of school attendance;
- the programme of Non Formal Education in the governmental and the non-governmental sector to cover out of school children even in areas that have a formal school within one kilometre;
- the scheme of Teacher Education for the setting up of District Institutes of Education and Training and for organising teacher training programmes like the Special Orientation of Primary Teachers;
- the District Primary Education Programme in 149 districts that has contextuality and local area planning as its basis and that makes an

effort to achieve universalisation of Primary Education over a seven year period with an approximate investment in a district to the tune of Rupees forty crores. There is a ceiling of 24 % on civil works and 6 % on management structure under the programme;

- interventions for minorities;
- schemes of the Ministry of Empowerment and Social Justice for establishment of Ashram schools for tribals and Welfare Hostels for the Scheduled Castes;
- schemes for science teaching and for educational technology;
- construction of school buildings under the rural employment programmes;
- externally assisted projects like the Lok Jumbish Project in 75 Blocks of Rajasthan (now proposed for 13 districts of the state), PEEP Project in Bihar, Maharashtra and Delhi, and the Joint GOI - UN System Project in selected Blocks/ urban slum pockets of 8 states.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

2.41 The management of these programmes at the national level is done by two separate Bureaus, both under Joint Secretary level officers - the Elementary Education and the DPEP Bureau. At the state level, there are separate Project and mainstream educational administration set ups. In fact, in a majority of states, there are more than one Secretary in the Education Department, looking after specific sectors. In many states, the Project administration, especially under the externally assisted Projects, works independently from the mainstream and this often leads to a situation of dyarchy. Inappropriate funding of the mainstream educational administration and a liberal financial support for Projects often creates jealousies that are not in the best interests of Project implementation.

NEED FOR TOTAL FOCUS ON ONE DISTRICT

2.42 The Committee was of the view that the pursuit of a holistic and convergent approach requires a total focus on a district as a unit of implementation where all existing programmes of elementary education must form part of an over all District Education Plan for UEE. This is required for promoting context-specific interventions and for addressing regional diversities. Convergence is required even in the management structures as any Project has to be fully accountable to the mainstream. The Committee felt that all existing programmes must form a part of the District Plans that should be formulated on the basis of Village Plans. These Plans need to be placed before the state government for approval. The Committee felt that the Central and State governments should formulate broad intervention norms that allow for flexibility of approach and state level authority should be in a position to approve these holistic Plans that are based on an appreciation of the local context. While advocating convergence of personnel, the Committee felt that the exercise should begin from the Central government level by merging the Bureaus of Elementary Education and DPEP. State governments in turn, need to work out suitable administrative arrangements in order to ensure that the Project interventions are in accordance with the priorities of the educational administration so that the Project mode and the mainstream are fully supplementing and complementing each others' efforts. The Committee felt that this was necessary for sustainable adoption of positive Project interventions by the mainstream.

BROAD FRAMEWORK FOR UNIVERSALISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN THE MISSION MODE

3.1 The previous Chapter tried to analyse the experiences over the last five decades. In this Chapter, an effort will be made to develop a broad framework for Universalisation of Elementary Education. The framework is being kept broad as the Committee is fully aware of the diversities across regions and states. This Committee is opposed to prescriptive solutions of educational problems and therefore, the broad framework has to be contextualised to the need of the state. Broadly the following areas of action emerge on the basis of the previous Chapter's analysis -

I. Political Will

There should be a statement of political will at the highest level that UEE is a national programme with the topmost priority.

3.2 The first and foremost element in the new strategy would be the expression of political will at the highest level of Government that UEE would be one of the topmost priorities of the Government and all necessary steps to achieve it within the shortest possible time-frame will be taken. The scheme would be placed at par with the Family Welfare Programme, as a national policy.

3.3 This will could be expressed by the enunciation of a policy statement by the Prime Minister in Parliament and adoption of the same by a Resolution. A special session of the NDC could then be

convened to discuss the various aspects of this National Programme, so that the various parameters of the strategy, the funding, the schematic pattern, the respective roles of central and state governments, the time-frame etc. could be worked out in close consultation with the States.

II. Constitutional and legal issues

The Bill for amendment of the Constitution in order to make elementary education a fundamental right be got passed in Parliament's next session.

3.4 There is a Directive Principle of State Policy in the Constitution of India about the desirability of the State providing free and compulsory education to children up to the age of 14 years. For some years, it has been advocated that this should be converted into a fundamental right. In fact, there is a judgement of the Supreme Court in Unnikrishnan's case suggesting that elementary education is a fundamental right. A bill to amend the Constitution has been introduced. An argument has been advanced that with the decision of the Apex Court, there is no ambiguity in the legal position and Constitutional amendment is unnecessary.

3.5 This view seems to have been expressed in order to block the legislative change. The unstated fear is that people could rush to the courts and government would be forced to open schools all over the place, irrespective of the local needs and the overall availability of funds.

3.6 There is a fallacy in this viewpoint. Even with Unnikrishnan's judgement, nobody is rushing to the courts in large numbers. Secondly, if it is clearly the country's law, why not formalize the situation by an amendment of the Constitution? This would serve as an expression of political will.

III. Central law

A Central law, declaring elementary education to be free and compulsory throughout India, should be got passed by Parliament.

3.7 Some States have passed legislation declaring that primary education shall be free and compulsory in their States. It is nobody's case that UEE should be brought about by compulsion or that learning in a school should not be joyful. Such legislation expresses the firm commitment of the people's representatives and even if it is invoked in rare cases, the law serves a beneficial social purpose.

3.8 Education is a concurrent subject. Such a law can now also be passed by Parliament, as a central piece of legislation, so as to be applicable throughout India on a uniform basis. This appears to be a more desirable course of action and would signify urgency in the quest for UEE.

IV. Resolving Centre State fiscal responsibilities and sharing systems so that the states feel confident in appointing more teachers as per needs -

3.9 The slowing down of the pace of appointment of Teachers in recent years is not in the interest of universalisation of elementary

education. All efforts to resolve the issue of support for teachers' salaries in consultation with the Finance Commission, should be attempted. The Committee is of the view that financial resources for UEE would have to be provided by mutual consultation. There was general unanimity that the states and the Central government should equally share the additional resource requirements for UEE.

V. Strategy

The new strategy should be to have a single, national programme of UEE, encompassing all the components of existing schemes which should be merged in it. It should cover the entire country and be holistic in its approach, while the micro-planning could vary from district to district.

3.10 There is at present a number of schemes like Operation Blackboard, Teachers' Education, Lok Jumbish, Mahila Samakhya, Shiksha Karmi, District Primary Education Programme, Non-Formal Education, etc.

3.11 The new strategy would combine all these disparate schemes into a single National Programme for Universalisation of Elementary Education.

3.12 It would have different components as under :

- (i) additional elementary schools
- (ii) additional staff
- (iii) buildings and classrooms
- (iv) teacher training

- (v) teaching learning materials
- (vi) curriculum development

3.13 The National Programme for Universalisation of Elementary Education would cover all the districts of the country, right from its inception. However, it will distinguish among different categories of districts, blocks or villages on the basis of their educational attainment. In particular, there will have to be special emphasis on the eight educationally backward States of J&K, UP, MP, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, which have unfortunately lagged far behind the other States.

3.14 Efforts should be made to make the state governments take the lead and for doing this there should be a mission approach at the state level. The initiative must remain with the states and they must own new initiatives. Mobilisation of resources and institutionalisation of arrangements for community participation will be priority areas for attention at the state level. The leadership in programme implementation will be that of the state government and it would be for them to design and approve context-specific interventions. All fund flows would also be routed through the state governments, through registered state societies. These societies in turn, would make available resources to District Project Societies.

3.15 The Committee was of the view that there may be diversity in state level and district level agencies and these would be respected under the National Programme of UEE. The nomenclature may vary state to state but there would be commonality of functions and levels. There shall be a District Elementary Education Plan (DEEP) for each district. This Plan will state the present status of

educational attainment, the gaps at different levels required to achieve UEE and annual targets (Physical and financial) till the date of achieving UEE. The conditions among different districts vary widely and, therefore, the strategy and the components selected for each district would be different.

3.16 The DEEP will be holistic in every way. It shall take into account the present infrastructure available in the district for early childhood care and education (ECCE), lower and upper primary classes, etc. both in the public and private sectors. It will forge a strategy, both for formal and non-formal education, as the final aim of both is the same. They will be supplementary to each other. The open school, distance education and education technology would also be part of the overall plan.

3.17 DEEP will plan for recruitment and training of teachers. For this purpose, the manner in which the District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs), the block and cluster resource centres have to be developed would also be spelt out. The chart below is an illustrative example of functions at various levels.

3.18 DEEP will look at the various sources of funding for construction of school buildings and classrooms. There would be an emphasis on mustering of local resources, both by individuals and the community. Existing buildings could also be used, by taking them on lease or by running a double shift with another institution. Funds available in the district under rural employment programmes, MP Local Area Development Scheme, flood and drought relief works, discretionary grants by Ministers, Panchayat funds etc. would be harnessed for this national task. The Committee was of the view that the Government of India should issue a clear directive that at least 25% of the funds under rural employment programmes would have to be spent on the creation of educational infrastructure.

VI. Stepping up community action at the School level so that spending translates into investment in elementary education..

3.19 Efforts should be made for genuine context specific planning and community based implementation of Village Education Plans. Decisions regarding all school investments should be decentralised down to the Village Education Committee. The Committee was of the view that the community must have a greater say in the affairs of the school.

VII. Finance

There should be a substantial increase in both public and private investment in education, so that the public investment goes up to

3.20 A critical element in the strategy relates to availability of finance. Several Committees have gone into this aspect and come up with varying estimates of how much money is required in order to achieve UEE. When such estimates are compared with what is currently available, there is a feeling of despair that the objective of UEE cannot be achieved in a time-frame that is acceptable.

3.21 There is a need to moderate the estimates which have been arrived at by the experts, in the following manner:

- (i) The estimates are based on very perfect teacher-pupil ratios which do not obtain anywhere in practice. We should, at the initial stage, moderate such assumptions. Perfection cannot be aimed at from day one.
- (ii) There are remote, backward, tribal, inaccessible areas where fully trained local teachers are not available. Several States have already tried different models of low-cost educators, who are more like unemployed youth and are used, in the interim period, as second or third teachers in primary schools. If a certain proportion of teachers are assumed from this category, the costs would also come down considerably.
- (iii) Similarly in the construction of buildings, the use of low-cost local construction technologies can bring down the costs. In some areas, buildings can also become available free of cost or on nominal rent.
- (iv) Currently, the expenditure on the single scheme of Nutritional Support to Elementary Education is estimated at Rs.3000 crores per year, although the

Plan budget of the MHRD only provides for Rs.1092 crores for 1998-99 and Rs. 1031 crores for 1999-2000.

- (v) There is no justification for a universal application of the scheme. It is true that it draws children to school, improves retention rate and reduces wastage. It also gives a nutritional cover for young children attending schools many of whom are poor and cannot afford two square meals. But there can be selective coverage of the scheme for disadvantaged sections of society like SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities and the handicapped and to people below the poverty line in the case of non-disadvantaged sections. This restriction alone would drastically curtail the requirement of funds for the scheme.
- (vi) These estimates do not take into account the achievements of the private sector in education. This is a burgeoning area. The absence of reliable data should not deter us from making some credible assumptions about the likely contribution of the private sector.

3.22 Even with the use of these methodologies, the total requirement of funds would still be considerable. It is, therefore necessary to increase the allocation of public funds for education, in the following manner:

3.23 Public spending on education should be raised from 3.8% to 6% by the year 2007, while public and private spending combined could be raised to 10% by the same date.

- (a) The Centre's share of total spending on elementary education is about 10% of the total. If it is assumed that total spending on education would reach 6% of GDP by 2007 AD, and spending on elementary education will be 60% of the total, with the Centre contributing 10% of what is spent on elementary education, it should not be difficult to compute what the level of Central allocations for elementary education should be. The Centre and States should equally share the responsibility for additional resources for UEE.
- (b) As far as the States are concerned, these present a varied picture. An in depth analysis of their investment pattern divergent patterns. formulae are being st

- (i) **Total expenditure on education as percentage of State Domestic Product** : Those States which have a percentage of less than 6%, should reach 6%. Those which have a percentage between 6 and 10% may maintain that level.
- (ii) **Per capita expenditure on education**: States which spend less than Rs.500 per head on education should try to reach a level of Rs.500. Those spending between Rs.500 and Rs.1000 may try to reach Rs.1000. Those spending more than Rs.1000 may stay at that level.
- (iii) **Percentage of Plan expenditure on education to total Plan expenditure**: States spending less than 10% of their Plan on education should try

to reach 15%. States spending between 10% and 20% should try to reach 20%. States spending more than 20% may stay at that level.

- (iv) **Percentage of revenue expenditure on elementary education to total revenue expenditure on education**: States spending less than 60% should try to reach a level of 60%. Those spending more than 60% may stay at that level.

3.24 As the States are contributing 90% to the total expenditure on elementary education, the basic increase in both non-plan and plan spending on this sector will have to come from them. The 11th Finance Commission could earmark funds for upgradation of educational administration and thereby improve the situation as far as classroom accommodation, toilets and drinking water in schools are concerned.

- (c) There should a massive attempt to facilitate the entry of private sector in elementary education. This should be done by:
- enunciating a clearcut national policy on facilitatiion of private sector initiatives in the field of education.
 - Removing all the road-blocks to the opening of educational institutions and facilitating the same by allotment of land, supply of water and electricity etc.
 - Delicensing the opening of elementary schools and creating a competitive environment, so that the public can choose between different schools.

- Restricting the grant of Government scholarships to people below the poverty line and permitting this even in private schools.
- Issuing "free education" slips to children belonging to disadvantaged groups like SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, disabled, below poverty line, etc. and letting private schools compete for their patronage.

VIII. Implementation Machinery

There should be a unified control and command over UEE right from national level to district level. Within the framework of Panchayati Raj as recommended by the CAFE Committee on Decentralised Management of Education, efforts should be made to establish State level registered societies that could receive money for universalisation of elementary education.

3.25 At the national level, we have separate people and bureaus dealing with Elementary Education, DPEP and NFE. These should be merged into a single Bureau under a single officer, so that there is no multiplicity of policy-making authorities in the field of Elementary Education.

3.26 At the State level, there should be a Director of Elementary Education, if there is none at present. He should look after both the stages of elementary education.

3.27 At the district level, depending on the Panchayati Raj framework adopted by the state, the effort should be to promote decentralised decision making. The specific administrative arrangements for doing this should be left to the states. The nomenclature may vary from state to state but functionally this body should draw on the strengths of PRIs and NGOs..

IX. Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions

We should strengthen the trend towards transfer of elementary educational institutions to the control of PRIs. The district elementary education plan should be derived from the village plans drawn up jointly by the VECs, PTAs and teachers.

3.28 Under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, elementary education has to be transferred to PRIs. This transfer has not yet taken place in most States, due to the following reasons:

- i) Both the elected representatives of the people to the Parliament and State Legislatures as well as the bureaucrats are sometimes opposed to the idea of power getting transferred to the PRIs.
- ii) Some State Govts. have not given PRIs financial and administrative powers of any substantial kind.
- iii) Teachers are reluctant to go over to the control of the village Sarpanchas, as it erodes their authority and makes them answerable to the people for punctuality and performance.

3.29 Recent trends indicate that some states have started realising the potential power of the PRIs, not as competitive power centres, but as bulwarks of the power centre of the State level politicians. If this trend gets strengthened, it may be possible to see, if not the transfer of elementary education to PRIs, at least some modicum of control of the PRIs over the school teachers. This trend needs to be nurtured, in order to bring about decentralised planning and management of elementary education.

3.30 At the village level, the Panchayats have been asked to create village Education Committees. The ideal long-term scenario is a village education plan, drawn up jointly by the VEC, the PTA and the Education Department. The district education plan should then be a document derived from a summation of the village education plans.

X. ISSUES RELATING TO TEACHERS

3.31 The various experiments in elementary education have demonstrated the criticality of the teacher to the success of UEE. We have, therefore, to lay very strong emphasis on the quality of the teacher. The first stage is the selection of the teacher. It must be ensured that there is proper advertisement of a vacancy and the selection should be purely on the basis of merit by a board of experts. As many State Govts. select candidates for training institutions, the weeding out has to start at that stage itself. Minimum percentage of marks could be prescribed for admission.

3.32 There has to be a nationally accepted definition of the phrase 'elementary school teacher'. The training institutions should then churn out such teachers, who should be selected for manning the elementary schools. The present practice of reserving posts in upper primary schools for Trained graduate Teachers would have to be given up.

3.33 After the induction training, there should be a periodic schedule of refresher training, so as to constantly update the knowledge and pedagogic skills of teachers.

3.34 The NCTE should refuse to give accreditation to such training institutes as do not fulfil the minimum criteria laid down under the rules. This has to be especially ensured with reference to private training institutions.

3.35 The NCERT, SCERT, DIETS, Block and cluster Resource Centres should be seamlessly bound to one another as part of an integral system, with interdependence and mutual support being the watchwords.

XI. USE OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Foreign funding should be accepted on our terms, without allowing it to distort national objectives or creating dyarchy within the domestic system.

3.36 At present, there is some assistance from bilateral and multilateral agencies for DPEP, the Lok Jumbish Project and other projects like Shiksha Karmi, Mahila Samakhya. Compared to the vast sums that are domestically spent on elementary education, what trickles in from multilateral/bilateral assistance is just 4% of the total. 96% of our UEE programme is domestically funded.

3.37 It has been found, however, that the induction of international assistance sometimes results in several problems in implementation:

- a) As there is some flexibility in the operation of the foreign assisted programmes, these are more popular.

- b) Many retired people find themselves berths as consultants and constitute a vested interest. Some of them are highly paid and become an island of high wages.
- c) The foreign funding agencies insist that the projects assisted by them should be operated by separate agencies headed by separate co-ordinators at central and State level, and this creates a dyarchy right in the middle of the elementary education programme of this country.
- d) Many of the patterns of remuneration or assistance are higher than the comparable indigenous patterns, thus resulting in distortions and heart-burning.
- e) Access to various perquisites like staff cars, office equipment, computers, foreign tours, stay in five star hotels etc. is often limited to individuals working in foreign -funded projects. Such a situation may create bad blood among colleagues.
- f) At the district level, education department officials are just sidelined in discussions, while the collectors and officials of the foreign-funded programmes take an active role.
- g) Sometimes, the foreign agencies try to play the Central and State Governments against each other. Direct negotiations are sometimes conducted by foreign funding agencies with state govts.

3.38 International assistance for UEE would have to take into account the following :-

- external assistance should be within the parameters of our strategy for UEE.

- the foreign donor agencies may to assess the new strategy for UEE
- No consultants should be imposed.

XII. Other Policy issues

3.39 There are certain other policy issues, which also need to be addressed simultaneously. Some of these are as under :

- a) there should be a policy decision both at Central and State level that all educational institutions will be managed by the Department of Education, and other Departments like those of Women and Child Development or Social Justice and Empowerment would be allowed to provide subsidiary support in the shape of hostels, scholarships and incentives. This is essential in order to retain the professionalism in teaching institutions and provide for a unified policy structure for educational planning and management.
- b) There should be considerable emphasis on recruitment of women teachers. At least 75% of the newly recruited teachers should be women. This will raise the percentage of women teachers nationwide to 50% in a very short time-frame. Such a gender parity is important if girl students have to be encouraged to attend schools.
- c) Teaching learning materials should be revised in each SCERT and DIET. Already considerable work in this area has been done by voluntary agencies. What is required is a mechanism for large scale production of teaching learning material at low cost, preferably out of local material, and dissemination/distribution of the same on a wide scale. This

material should be in the local language and be directly related to the life experience of the students.

- d) The experimentation with different models of elementary education should continue. There should be no attempt to impose a straitjacket over the entire country. However, there is need to learn from the experience of the models that have been experimented with so far and to evolve a broadly uniform framework, within which local variations and experiments could be permitted. Some things would work in particular regions and areas, and these should be localised. Other ideas would be of more universal application and could be made more widely applicable. There would have to be constant attempt at a dynamic interaction between different experiments, in order to arrive at a synthesis and a consensus, while permitting a lot of innovation and improvisation through local talent and initiative.
- e) Achievement of UEE would require the adoption of a flexible personnel policy, especially for building capacities in Teacher Training institutions. The effort should be to select the best by open advertisement if required so that the excellence of these institutions is ensured in order to make a dent in quality related initiatives.

XIII. Promoting education for life rather than merely for learning-

The Committee was of the view that the content of education should be suitably amended in order to make it more relevant to real life situations rather than be an isolated quest for literacy and numeracy. A curricular framework that promotes respect for work education and integrates value education in all academic and co curricular areas , would facilitate the pursuit of UEE.

XIV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The National Programme of UEE could be closely monitored at all levels and there would also be in built arrangements for community based monitoring -

3.40 Apart from the internal mechanisms, there could also be a constant and concurrent evaluation by independent research institutions, each of them taking up a state or two for study at a time. The results of evaluation should be openly debated and then internalised through constant reforms and fresh initiatives. While designing a monitoring system, efforts should be made to improve the quality of data gathering by incorporating the principle of triangulation that provides for confirming a finding by a multiplicity of sources. The Village panchayat, the School Committee, the Mahila Mandals, NGOs, social activists, can all form part of a large constituency of evaluators and data gatherers. This would improve the quality of MIS. Since the allocation of resources to States/ districts/ Blocks/ Village would ultimately depend on the nature and intensity of educational deprivation, it is important to develop a monitoring mechanism that allows for an effective and timely feed - back. The monitoring system could also serve to identify better performing regions and incentives for them could also be developed on the basis of a reliable MIS.

COMMUNITY BASED MONITORING

3.41 Community based monitoring would require much greater level of decentralisation and creation of a constituency of evaluators, who are internal to the system but external to the activity. An Aanganwadi Sevika commenting on the teachers' regularity and punctuality, a literacy volunteer following up on school enrolments. a teacher reporting on

community support, children monitoring the presence of teachers and other pupils, are some examples of a transparent and open system of monitoring. The Village Education Committee will have to emerge as a vibrant social institution that is able to make meaningful decisions and which has an effective presence in the management of the school. All this would require the VEC to emerge as a planning and implementation body rather than a purely advisory body that makes resolutions. The management of school improvement interventions would have to be assigned fully to the VEC. The Committee felt that it is the VEC which must determine the contextually relevant interventions on the basis of a micro plan for every child. Scholarships, books, stationery, food, uniforms, etc., must all be provided on the basis of the contextual plan evolved by participatory planning.

3.42 The use of attractive activities makes the community monitoring less threatening to the teachers. There is a need to improve teacher accountability without adversely affecting teacher motivation. The challenge of community monitoring is to build pressure on schools without making it threatening and without the teacher seeing the community as an adversary. The use of games and other activities in schools are ways of building accountability without making it threatening. The frequent visit by parents to school is by itself a very effective monitoring tool.

3.43 The Village Education Committee is an institutional arrangement for involving the local people. The school as a social institution requires the co-operation of all segments of society, especially those from unprivileged social groups. A community function in a school premises brings parents to the school and this by itself is a very effective monitoring tool. The school teacher has a special role in making the VEC a functional one. In fact, a good teacher always realises the worth of

carrying the community along. Visits by parents help in improving the teacher-parent interaction. This provides a basis for social partnerships necessary for the school to emerge as an effective school. The process of creating social partnerships is going to be a difficult one as many of the social contradictions would keep showing up. The challenge of community based monitoring is to be able to carry all segments of civil society together in the quest of effective schools.

OUTLINE OF THE NEW FRAMEWORK

3.44 The Committee was of the view that the framework has to be flexible in order to accommodate the state specific requirements and structures. The end objective is common and this would certainly help in creating the mission mode. The achievement of UEE would vary from state to state and district to district. It was generally agreed that our efforts at Universalising Primary Education may be achieved by 2006 and of UEE (up to Class - VIII) by 2010, though different states would adopt different time frame, within this outer limit.

3.45 The new programme framework would base itself on decentralised management and for making it effective, due care would be taken to promote release of untied funds to Village Education Committees. The participation of the community in managing school facilities would be integral to the whole new approach. Just as the Central government would indicate resource availability to states, the states in turn would allocate resources to districts on some objective criteria that focuses on the needs of that particular district. The planning process in the districts would be within this over all indications of resource availability. This would make the planning exercise more realistic. The district in turn, would communicate to the Blocks/Villages the likely resource availability, keeping in mind the specific requirements of specific villages.

The Village Education Committee would have to formulate its priorities within this over all framework. The prioritisation has to be local and all efforts at promoting availability of untied funds at all levels would be encouraged.

3.46 As regards school facilities, the Committee was unanimous that community alone is capable of maintaining school infrastructure and therefore all efforts for civil construction must be done by the community. The willingness of the community to contribute towards the infrastructure, as is done in the Lok Jumbish Project, would be a necessary pre - condition for undertaking improvement of school facilities. Efforts should also be made to make full use of funds under rural employment programmes for improving school facilities. The conjunctive use of resources under rural employment programmes to provide room for EGS centres in Madhya Pradesh, is a very good example of how resources from outside the Department of Education can be mobilised for improving school facilities.

3.47 While encouraging provision of Block grants to states/ districts/ villages, a flexible cost norm that allows for local innovation would be developed in consultation between Central and State governments. These cost norms would always keep in mind the community participation that could provide additional resources for undertaking specific activities. Self - Help Groups of women that have come up in many parts of the country, would be encouraged to associate with the management of the affairs of the School.

CHAPTER IV

ILLUSTRATIVE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR THE MISSION MODE

4.1 The framework for Universalisation of Elementary Education has been outlined in the previous Chapter. In order to operationalise the broad framework, there is a need to develop an appropriate organisational structure that addresses the issue of speed in programme implementation. The mission mode is also a statement of political will.

4.2 The Committee is fully aware of the diversity of organisational structures prevalent across states. That is why it chose to present an 'illustrative' organisational structure. It will be up to the states to decide on their organisational set up for achieving UEE in the mission mode. The state level set up must, however, be able to meet the requirements of the mission mode, both in imparting a sense of urgency and in speeding up a holistic and convergent programme implementation for achieving UEE.

4.3 Broadly, there are five levels in the organisational structure. They are -

I - SCHOOL - VILLAGE LEVEL
II - BLOCK - PANCHAYAT SAMITI LEVEL
III - DISTRICT - ZILA PARISHAD LEVEL
IV - STATE LEVEL
V - NATIONAL LEVEL

4.4 In order to arrive at a functional organisational structure that addresses the issue of convergence and holistic programme implementation, the Committee decided to approach the issue from the School - Village level upwards. The Committee was unanimous in looking at organisational structure from the local to the national so that contextuality could actually become a serious concern.

I - SCHOOL - VILLAGE LEVEL

The Committee was unanimous that there must be community involvement in the affairs of the school if the objective of UEE has to be achieved within the shortest time period. The Committee was aware of the diversity of systems for institutionalising community support. Some of the common Village - School level arrangements for community involvement are --

I - VILLAGE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
II - STANDING COMMITTEE OF GRAM PANCHAYAT (ESPECIALLY IN STATES WHERE ONE VILLAGE CONSTITUTES A GRAM PANCHAYAT.
III - SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, ESPECIALLY IN PRIVATE AIDED INSTITUTIONS
IV - PARENTS' TEACHER ASSOCIATION
V - MOTHER TEACHER ASSOCIATION
VI - VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ENCOMPASSING ALL DEVELOPMENT FUNCTIONS AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL (AS IN NAGALAND)
VII - ELECTED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (AS IN ANDHRA PRADESH)
VIII - GRAM SABHA AS DECISION MAKING BODY

The Committee was unanimous that states should continue with their respective arrangements as long as the objective of community involvement was fulfilled.

COMMUNITY MONITORING - SCHOOL - COMMUNITY MONITORING

There was general agreement that the community - school level must take decisions regarding the following -

I - PREPARING UEE PLAN
II- IMPLEMENTING UEE PLAN
III - PROJECTING TEACHER REQUIRMENT
IV - PROJECTING REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHING LEARNING MATERIALS
V - PROJECTING REQUIREMENTS FOR INCENTIVES
VI - ORGANISING SCHOOL BASED ACTIVITIES
VII - CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES
VIII - PROJECTING DEMAND FOR NEW SCHOOL / EGS
IX - ASSESSING TEACHER PERFORMANCE
X- MONITORING ATTENDANCE OF TEACHERS/ PUPILS

The Committee recommends to all states to make suitable changes in their institutional arrangements for community participation so that the above mentioned decisions can be taken at the village - school level. The Committee also suggests, depending on the local context, that

representatives of stake - holders (parents of children who are actually enrolled in the school) must be ensured. Similarly, due attention must be given to women, SCs, STs, in these village level institutions, depending on the context. In order to promote total convergence and a holistic approach, the Committee was of the view that at the village level, the same people's committee should also look after programmes of adult literacy and continuing education, preventive health care, pre school learning in ICDS centres, and programmes of sanitation.

II - BLOCK - PANCHAYAT SAMITI LEVEL

Almost all states have a unit of educational administration at the Block level. In most cases, this level is chaired by the elected Panchayat Samiti President and the Block Development Officer is the Member Secretary. There is also the Block Education Officer or the School Inspector who is posted at this level. In the DPEP states, we now have the Block Resource Centres with buildings of their own at the Block level and with a BRC Coordinator and an Assistant Coordinator working in these Centres. The Office of the BEO is the record keeping Office and in many states the entire service records of teachers are maintained at this level. There are some states like Kerala where the Service books of Primary School teachers are maintained at the level of the Upper Primary School..

The Lok Jumbish Project in Rajasthan adopted the Block as the unit of educational planning and implementation and a team of 5 personnel has been established at this level. Under the DPEP, the additional personnel are provided at the District level. The Block is definitely a critical level as far as the management of elementary education is concerned and there is enough evidence to suggest that this level must be strengthened.

Normally, the Block Shiksha Samiti (or any other name by which it is referred to in any state), should be the decision making level for the following activities -

I - APPROVING VILLAGE EDUCATION PLANS
II - PROCESSING TEACHER REQUIREMENTS
III - PROCESSING TEACHING LEARNING MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS
IV - INQUIRING INTO COMPLAINTS AGAINST TEACHERS
V - SUGGEST RATIONALISATION OF TEACHER UNITS
VI - FOCUS ON EDUCATIONALLY BACKWARD VILLAGES
VII - MONITORING PERFORMANCE OF GIRLS / SCs/ STs

In order to carry out these functions, the Committee felt that by adopting the system of Block Resource Centres nationally, it would be possible to locate a team of Project implementors at the Block level. Participation of teacher unions, voluntary agencies, other departments at the Block Shiksha Samiti would help in improving the functioning of this level. The Committee was unanimous that there was a need to strengthen this level in the organisational structure, even for ensuring better cadre management of teachers and their service records.

There was general consensus in the Committee that the Block Shiksha Samiti must also be responsible for the ICDS and the adult literacy and continuing education programmes as they have an important role to play in creating a learning society.

DISTRICT SHIKSHA SAMITI

4.5 The district level is by far the most important level in the implementation of programmes for the universalisation of elementary education. The experiences of the total literacy campaigns with the Zila Saksharta Samiti comprising government and the non government representatives under the Chairmanship of the Collector, have by and large been positive. Similarly , the experience of the DPEP District Project societies has also been generally positive. There is a need to systematically involve the Panchayati Raj representatives at the district level in this exercise.

4.6 In order to undertake universalisation of elementary education in the mission mode, the district would have to emerge as the principal decision making level in programme implementation. The district level unit must have the autonomy regarding the following decisions -

I - PROVIDING TEACHERS AS PER REQUIREMENTS
II - PROVIDING TEACHING LEARNING MATERIALS
III - SANCTIONING VILLAGE EDUCATION PLAN AS PER NORMS
IV - PROVIDING SCHOOLS AS PER DEMAND AND AS PER NORMS
V - TRANSFER OF TEACHERS
VI - IMPLEMENT RATIONALISATION OF TEACHER UNITS
VII - PREPARING DISTRICT PLANS
VIII - FOCUS ON EDUCATIONALLY BACKWARD BLOCKS
IX - PROCUREMENT MATTERS

X- MONITORING PERFORMANCE OF GIRLS/ SCs/STs

4.7 At the district level, efforts should be made to promote decentralised decision making within the Panchayati Raj framework. The nomenclature may vary from state to state but functionally this body should draw on the strengths of PRIs and NGOs. In states where the Panchayati Raj institutions have become strong, the District level structure for the management of elementary education could be a part of the Zila Parishad set up, as is the case even with DRDAs in such states.

4.8 In order to carry out the above functions, the district level unit needs to be fully strengthened. Efforts should be made to involve Non governmental organisations, College teachers, teacher unions, women's groups, retired teachers, retired servicemen, etc., depending on the context of the district. The Committee was unanimous that the elementary school teacher cadre must be district specific and all matters relating to their service and benefits, should not go beyond the district level. A small core team of professionals, who may be drawn from outside the education department also, on a selection basis, could be an effective group at the district level to take on the tasks for universalisation of elementary education.

STATE MISSION AUTHORITY

4.9 Being a concurrent subject where the states spend more than 90 percent, the states have a major role to play in universalising elementary education at the state level. In order to impart a sense of urgency to achieving UEE in the mission mode, there would be a need to establish a State Mission Authority for UEE. The General Council could be headed by the Chief Minister and the Executive Committee by the Chief

Secretary/ Development Commissioner/ Education Secretary. Representation of Finance and Planning Departments on the General Council and the Executive Committee would facilitate decision making. Involvement of NGOs, social activists, university teachers, teacher union representatives, Panchayati raj representatives, and women's groups would help in ensuring full transparency to the activities of the Mission.

4.10 In order to achieve the objective of UEE, the State Mission Authority for UEE would be required to perform the following decision making roles -

I - SUGGESTING NORMS FOR OPENING ALTERNATE SCHOOLS/ SCHOOLS
II - APPROVING DISTRICT PLANS
III - EVALUATING PERFORMANCE OF DISTRICTS
IV - MONITORING PERFORMANCE OF EDUCATIONALLY BACKWARD DISTRICTS
V - ENSURING FUND FLOWS
VI - MOBILISING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The State Mission Authority for UEE would have to be established and nurtured in order that the above mentioned decisions could be effectively taken and finalised. The Committee was unanimous that this body must be the final authority in matters of UEE at the state level and the decisions taken by it should be like any final decision of government.

NATIONAL MISSION AUTHORITY

4.11 Being in the concurrent list, the Central government is equally responsible for the educational advancement of states and all efforts to work in full collaboration with the states should be made. In order to signify the national will, the General Council of the National Mission Authority for UEE should be presided over by the Prime Minister. The Human Resource Development Minister should be the Vice President of the General Council. The Human Resource Development Minister, should be the Chairman of the Executive Committee. The Education Secretary, Government of India would be the Vice Chairman. Involvement of Members of Parliament, representatives of Non Governmental Organisations, women's groups, social activists, trade union representatives, teachers and teacher unions, would all facilitate the achievement of complete mobilisation of civil society. The presence of the Finance Ministry and Planning Commission representatives would facilitate decision making with regard to provision of resources. Decisions taken in the General Council under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister would be binding on all Departments and there would not be any review of these decisions, especially with regard to allocation of resources to states for programme implementation.

4.12 The National Mission Authority would not create new posts. The existing personnel working in the Elementary Education and DPEP Bureaus would be part of the National Mission Authority and serve as its Secretariat. The National Mission Authority should be able to take the following decisions –

I - BUILDING ADVOCACY FOR UEE
II - MONITORING PERFORMANCE OF EDUCATIONALLY BACKWARD STATES/DISTRICTS
III - MOBILISING FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR UEE
IV - DEVELOPING ILLUSTRATIVE COST NORMS
V - DECIDING POLICY MATTERS
VI - ENSURING FUND FLOWS
VII - SHARING SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES IN UEE

CHAPTER - V

CONCLUDING REMARKS - TOWARDS A HOLISTIC AND CONVERGENT APPROACH

5.1 The preceding chapters have clearly brought out the thinking of the members of the Committee with regard to a holistic and convergent approach for UEE. The Committee felt that there was a need to highlight the political will for UEE and to streamline administrative structures that could facilitate decentralised decision making and programme implementation. In order that the mobilisation of the community be a complete one, it was important to associate non-governmental functionaries in this quest at all levels.

5.2 The committee felt that by making elementary education a fundamental right through a constitutional amendment, it would be possible to express the commitment of civil society towards the goal of UEE. The Committee favoured a Central Act as that would held in developing a clear national perspective on this issue.

5.3 As regards the programmes for Universalisation of Elementary Education, the Committee was convinced that prescriptive national programmes cannot be an answer to diverse local contexts. There was a need to allow for diversity by developing flexible cost norms and by providing for local area planning. It was felt that local area planning is difficult with a large number of independent schemes for UEE. The Committee therefore chose to bring all existing programmes for UEE under one national programme for UEE with a clear district focus.

5.4 While highlighting the need for district based interventions, the Committee was fully aware of the role of State Governments in ensuring efficient and timely programme implementation. It was felt that by mobilising additional resources and by following a positive personal policy for UEE, it would be possible to give it the required thrust.

5.5 The Committee fully endorsed the need for partnerships between the Central and the State Governments specially in areas of policy, decisions, programme components and additional financial resource mobilisation. There was general consensus that the Central and the State governments should equally share the additional resource requirements for UEE. Rather than waiting for full mobilisation of financial resources before starting new schools/alternate schools, the Committee felt that an approach involving appointment of para teachers should be adopted. Investments could be stepped up over time. This will be a departure from the norm set at the time of the launch of Operation Blackboard where State governments were directed to open new primary schools only after provision of two rooms, two teachers, and teaching learning materials had been made.

5.6 The Committee desired quick action towards launching of the mission approach for UEE.