

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

**Education For All in India with Focus on Elementary Education:
Current Status, Recent Initiatives and Future Prospects**

Arun C. Mehta



**National Institute of Educational
Planning and Administration**

17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg

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Education For All in India with Focus on Elementary Education: Current Status, Recent Initiatives and Future Prospects

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1. INTRODUCTION

Free and compulsory education to all children up to the age fourteen is the Constitutional commitment in India. At the time of adoption of the Constitution in 1950, the aim was to achieve the goal of *Universal Elementary Education* (UEE) within the next ten years i.e. by 1960. Keeping in view the educational facilities available in the country at that time, the goal was far too ambitious to achieve within a short span of ten years. Hence, the target date was shifted a number of times. Till 1960, all efforts were focused on provision of schooling facilities. It was only after the near realization of the goal of access that other components of UEE, such as universal enrolment and retention, started receiving attention of planners and policy makers. It is the *Quality of Education*, which is at present in the focus in all programmes relating to elementary education in general and primary education in particular.

Significant efforts have been made in the last fifty years to universalize elementary education. Since 1950, impressive progress is made in all spheres of elementary education. In 1950-51, there were about 210 thousand primary and 14 thousand upper primary schools. Their numbers are now increased to 642 thousand and 198 thousand respectively as in the year 1999-2000; thus showing an average annual growth of 2.32 and 5.56 per cent per annum. As many as 83 per cent of the total 1,061 thousand habitations have access to primary schooling facilities within 1 km and 76 per cent habitations to upper primary schooling facilities within a distance of 3 km. About 94 and 85 per cent of the total rural population is accessed to primary and upper primary schools/sections. The ratio of primary to upper primary schools over time has improved which is at present 3.2. More than 84 per cent of the total 570 thousand primary schools in 1993-94 had school buildings. The number of single-teacher primary schools has also considerably declined.

The number of teachers both at the primary and upper primary levels of education over time has increased many folds. From a low of 538 thousand in 1950-51, the number

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of primary school teachers in 1998-99 increased to 1,919 thousand (MHRD, 2001). Similarly, upper primary teachers during the same period increased from 86 thousand to 1,298 thousand. The pupil-teacher ratio is at present 43: 1 at the primary and 38:1 at the upper primary level of education. Despite the significant improvement in number of teachers, the percentage of female teachers is still low at 36 per cent both at the primary and upper primary level of education. However, the majority of teachers, both at the primary (87 per cent) and upper primary (88 per cent) levels, are trained.

Over a period of time, enrolment, both at the primary and upper levels of education, has increased significantly. From a low of 19 million in 1950-51, it has increased to about 114 million in 1998-99 at the primary and from 3 million to 42 million at the upper primary level. At present, the enrolment ratio (gross) is 95 and 59 per cent respectively at the primary and upper primary level of education. The percentage of girl's enrolment to the total enrolment at the primary and upper primary level of education in 1999-2000 was about 44 and 40 per cent. Despite improvement in retention rates, the drop out rate is still high at 40 and 55 per cent respectively at the primary and elementary level of education. The transition from primary to upper primary and upper primary to secondary level is as high as 94 and 83 per cent. However, the learner's achievement across the country remained unsatisfactory and far below than the expectations. The Government of India initiated a number of programmes and projects to attain the status of universal enrolment. Despite all these significant efforts, the goal of universal elementary education remains elusive and far a distant dream.

2. SCOPE

An attempt has been made in the present article to review the progress made with regard to different components of Education for All (EFA), such as, *Early Childhood Care and Education*, *Elementary Education* and *Adult Literacy and Continuing Education* programmes. However, the focus of the article is on elementary education. The *World Conference on EFA* was held recently in Senegal (April 2000) and the previous one at Jomtien in 1990. Therefore an attempt has also been made to review the progress made between 1990 & 2000. Within the elementary education, different components such as, universal enrolment, access, retention and quality of education have been critically analyzed.

By using the secondary data, a set of indicators is developed and analyzed. The analysis is confined to all-India level, however wherever necessary, state-specific situation is also analyzed. First the composition of school education across the states is presented. Some of the indicators that are developed and analyzed are literacy rates, habitations covered by schooling facilities, enrolment rates, attendance rates, transition rates, percentage of female teachers, average number of teachers in schools, trained teachers, facilities available in schools, pupil-teacher ratio, ratio of primary to upper primary schools and indicators of internal efficiency of education system. In addition, out-of-school children and additional enrolment that would be required to achieve the goal of universal enrolment is also worked-out. Further, the article also takes a view of

the recent enrolment projection exercises and attempts to redefine the concept of universal elementary education. The government has initiated a number of programmes under the *Centrally Sponsored Schemes* to achieve the goal of EFA in general and UEE in particular; all that are briefly discussed in the paper with regard to achievements made so far. A critical view is also presented on new initiatives, such as DPEP and SSA.

3. DATA SOURCES

The Indian education system is perhaps the largest system in the world catering the need of more than 190 million students of different socio-economic background in pre-primary to primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary to college and university level. Keeping in view the size of the system, it is bound to have certain limitations, which can be grouped under administrative and non-administrative problems. Data gaps, time-lag in data, inadequate, untrained and unqualified staff, lack of equipments and understanding of definitions and concepts of educational terms, poor dissemination, feedback and utilization of data, etc. are some of the major limitations in the existing information system. However, reliability of data remained the major cause of concern of the data users (Mehta, 1996). In the recent past efforts have been made to strengthen information system among which the development of computerized information system under the centrally sponsored *District Primary Education Programme* (DPEP) is the most prominent and sincere one.

In the present article, information generated by the government and semi-governmental agencies have been used to assess the status of *Universalisation of Elementary Education*. The *Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development* is the official agency that is responsible for collection and dissemination of educational data on annual basis. In addition, the *National Council of Educational Research and Training* (NCERT) and *National Sample Survey Organization* (NSSO) also occasionally collect information on educational variables through sample surveys. Generally, private unrecognized educational institutions that are large in number are not included in the official collection of statistics. In some locations, especially in urban areas, such institutions are large in number. A recent survey conducted in four districts of Haryana revealed that private unrecognized schools (primary) constitute about 31 per cent of the total enrolment in recognized institutions (Aggarwal, 2000).

4. EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (ECCE) PROGRAMMES

The National Policy on Education (1987 & 1992) recommended strengthening of ECCE programme as an essential component of human development and UEE. Only a limited statistics is available on ECCE related programmes and whatever is available from the official sources is total number of pre-primary (recognized) centers and their enrolment. In fact, a large number of unrecognized centers are also engaged in ECCE related activities. The *Integrated Child Development Service* (ICDS) is one of the major

programmes under ECCE. The scheme is funded by the Central Government and children below age '6' are its clientele. Since the health input at lower ages is more as compared to the educational input, the ICDS and the *Anganwadis/Balwadis* is considered more as welfare activity and is part of the activities performed by the *Welfare Department* and not under the *Department of Education* (Thakur & Mehta, 1999).

Since its inception, the ICDS has covered all the community development blocks (5,320) of the country. More than 11 million children of age group 3-6 years were enrolled in these centers most of which are from the disadvantage section of the society. A perusal of *Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)* during the period 1990 to 1998 reveals that the same has increased from 10 per cent in 1990 to about 17 per cent in 1998. But a few of the 32 States & UTs have GER even less than 10 per cent. However, it may be noted that ECCE programmes are not a pre-requisite condition for obtaining admission in Grade I. Further, it is noticed that the boys/girls differential in GER is almost negligible both at the state and all-India level. The constitutional amendment if passed by the Parliament will make the education of 3-5 years child a state duty.

5. ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

5.1 SCHOOL STRUCTURE

As mentioned above that free and compulsory education to all children up to the age fourteen is constitutional commitment. In 1993, the Supreme Court of India declared education up to fourteen years of age to be a fundamental right of children in India. The entire school education can be divided in to four parts, namely, primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. The National Policy of Education (1968 & 1986) and its revised formulation (1992) envisaged a uniform pattern of school education (10+2 pattern, 12 years of schooling) across the states. Since education is on the concurrent list, i.e. state subject; the States & UTs are free to evolve their own pattern of school education. Eight years of primary education is envisaged in two stages: a junior stage covering a period of five years and a senior stage covering a period of 3 years. It needs to be mentioned that 8 years of compulsory education was envisaged as one integrated unit, although there were two stages in the cycle. Hence elementary education became the compulsory component of education in India (Varghese and Mehta, 1999a). It is this compulsory stage that has been incorporated as a directive principle in the constitution in 1950. The official age (entry) to obtain admission in Grade I is 6 years but a few States & UTs have 5 years as entry-age. The Government has recently decided to re-introduce the Constitutional Amendment Bill, which will make elementary education a fundamental right. This will be implemented as a part of the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*. It may however be noted that about 10-12 states have already made elementary education compulsory. But the situation in most of these states is not different than other states with regards to enrolment and retention.

Table 1: Educational Pattern in States & UTs of India

State/UT	STAGE		
	Primary	Upper primary	Secondary
Andhra Pradesh	I-V	VI-VII	VIII-X
Assam	I-IV	V-VII	VIII-X
Gujarat	I-IV	V-VII	VIII-X
Goa	I-IV	VI-VII	VIII-X
Haryana	I-V	V-VII	VIII-X
Karnataka	I-IV	V-VII	VIII-X
Kerala	I-IV	V-VII	VIII-X
Maharashtra	I-IV	V-VII	VIII-X
Meghalaya	I-IV	V-VII	VIII-IX
Mizoram	I-IV	V-VII	VIII-X
Nagaland	I-IV	V-VIII	IX-XI
D & N Haveli	I-IV	V-VII	VIII-X
Lakshadweep	I-IV	V-VII	VIII-X

Note: Most of the other States & UTs followed Grades I-V and VI-VIII corresponding to Primary and Upper Primary levels of education.

Source: Selected information on School Education in India: 1995-96. MHRD, 1997, New Delhi.

The Table 1 shows that in eleven states primary education consists of Grades I to IV where as in rest of the states, it is Grades I to V. The National Policy advocates Grade I to V at the primary and VI to VIII at the upper primary level of education. The states that have adopted Grades I to IV as its composition of primary level generally have grades V to VII as part of the upper primary education. Like elementary education, the secondary level of education has also got divergent composition across the states. While in 19 States & UTs, secondary stage consists of Grades IX and X; it consists of Grades VIII, IX and X in thirteen States & UTs (*EFA the Year 2000 Assessment, Country Report: India*). However, it may be noted that within a state, a complete uniformity is in existence but the type of institutions that offer school education (management) vary across the states and even within its districts and blocks. Different type of institutions that are in existence are schools run by government management, schools under the local bodies and private managed schools. The private managed schools can further be divided into private aided and unaided schools. In addition, private unrecognized institutions spread over across the country both in rural and urban areas are also in existence in large number.

5.2 UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Availability of schooling facilities is measured by a set of indicators concerning to access. As per norms, a habitation is entitled to have a primary school, if it has a total population of 300 & more and has no school within a distance of one kilometre. For upper primary schools, the corresponding norm is total population of 500 & more and a distance of three kilometre. However, the norm is often relaxed in case of hilly and tribal dominated areas, difficult terrains and border districts. A distance of one and three kilometre is treated as the maximum walking distance to which a child is expected to

travel from his/her residence to school. The states have their own norms according to which they provide schooling facilities. Micro planning and school mapping plays an important role in making provision for schools and also deciding location where a school is to be opened. Efforts have been made in the recent past to conduct micro planning and school mapping exercises under the *DPEP and Lok Jumbish Project*. First let us have a look on growth in number of schools in India.

(a) Number of Schools

There has been substantial expansion of primary and upper primary schools in the country. Growth of upper primary schools is influenced by the expansion of primary education in India. The number of primary schools in India increased from 210 thousand in 1950-51 to 642 thousand in 1999-2000, thus showing an average annual growth of 2.32 per cent per annum. During the same period, upper primary schools increased from 14 thousand to 198 thousand, a growth of 5.56 per cent per annum. In other words, primary schools registered an increase of more than three-fold while upper primary schools increased by almost fifteen times during the period 1950-51 to 1999-2000. Although it may look very impressive when compared to primary schools, it needs to be noted that the base of upper primary education was too narrow in 1950-51 when compared to that at the primary level (Table 2). During 1990-99, about 80.8 thousand primary schools were opened against 46.5 thousand upper primary schools.

The trends in growth of primary schools further reveal that the rates of growth were higher during the initial decades following independence and they continuously declined thereafter. The average annual growth in number of primary schools at the all-India level has considerably declined from 3.5 per cent during the period from 1955-56 to 1960-61 to 1.4 per cent during the period from 1980-81 to 1995-96 and further to 1.3 per cent during the period from 1990-91 to 1995-96. The compound growth rates in number of upper primary schools reveal that in the initial period (1955-56 to 1960-61) the growth rate was as high as 18.0 per cent, which is also the highest throughout the period from 1955-56 to 1995-96. The growth rates showed a decline from the sixties reaching a figure of 2.5 per cent during the period from 1990-91 to 1995-96. Although the growth rates declined, these low growth rates of upper primary schools are still substantially higher than the corresponding growth rates in primary schools. An analysis of state-specific growth rates reveal that during the most recent period i.e. from 1990-91 to 1995-96, barring a few exceptions they were positives. The state like Bihar where both literacy rates and participation of children in education are low, the growth rate in the number

Table 2: Number of Schools, All India, 1950-51 to 1999-2000

Number of Schools			
Year	Primary	Upper Primary	Ratio of Primary to Upper Primary Schools
1950-51	209671	13596	15.4
1955-56	278135	21730	12.8
1960-61	330399	49663	6.7
1965-66	391064	75798	5.2
1970-71	408378	90621	4.5
1975-76	454270	106571	4.3
1980-81	494503	118555	4.2
1985-86	528872	134846	3.9
1990-91	560935	151456	3.7
1995-96	590421	171216	3.4
1998-99*	626737	190166	3.3
1999-2000	641695	198004	3.2
Rate of Growth (%) , 1990-2000	1.24	2.56	-

* Provisional thereafter.

Source: MHRD (2001). The author calculated growth rates and ratios.

of schools is also low both at the primary and upper primary levels. Uttar Pradesh experienced a negative growth rate in the number of upper primary schools. These low and negative growth rates in these two states is a matter of concern to universalize elementary education because these two are highly populous states and influence the all-India figures significantly. Kerala, one of the most educationally advanced states of the country, experienced a very low growth rate, throughout the period during 1980-81 to 1995-96. This is explicable because the state has almost achieved the goal of universal enrolment. In fact, due to declining child population many primary schools in Kerala are being closed down. A clearer picture about availability of school will emerge when ratio of primary to upper primary schools is analyzed, which is presented below. The ratio can be treated an indicator of access conditions or the spread of facilities for upper primary education.

(b) Ratio of Primary to Upper Primary Schools

The ratio of primary to upper primary schools during the period from 1950-51 to 1998-99 at the all-India level (Table 2) reveals that the ratio has considerably improved from 1:15.4 in 1950-51 to 1:6.7 in 1960-61. It showed a declining trend thereafter and it stabilized at around 1:3.2. The improvement in the ratios over a period of time indicates that the overall situation changed for the better. The *Programme of Action* (1992) also envisaged an upper primary school for every two primary schools. The trend shows that the expansion of primary education has exerted considerable pressure on upper primary education system to expand and the government has responded positively by providing larger number of schools and school places for children who are completing primary level

of education. In addition, there may be a few non-formal education centres and unrecognized schools; also that impart both primary as well as upper primary education. However, it would be better to analyse the ratio of primary to upper primary sections than number of schools but a long time-series is not available. However, the same is available from the all-India educational surveys. In 1986-87, the ratio was 3.36 that improved to 3.14 in 1993-94.

The state-specific ratios are presented in Table 5 that shows that states have divergent positions with regard to provision of upper primary schooling facilities. On the one hand states, such as, Chandigarh, Maharashtra, Kerala, Mizoram and Rajasthan, have almost provided an upper primary school for every two primary schools they have. On the other hand a few states, namely Goa, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal etc. have a high ratio, which means that they are yet to provide a large number of upper primary schools so that the ratio is improved to 1:2. Despite the impressive achievements there are still a few habitations that may not have access to primary and upper primary schooling facilities within the specified norms. An analysis of indicators of access will throw more light on access conditions, which is presented below.

(c) Habitations Accessed to Schooling Facilities

Despite the increase in number of habitations and population, both the percentage of habitations and rural population served by primary and upper primary schools/sections within a distance of 1 and 3 km. has increased significantly over a period of time from 1965 to 1993. Of the total 1,061 thousand rural habitations in the country, 528 thousand (about 50 per cent) had a primary school/section within the habitation itself in 1993-94 (NCERT, 1998). On the other hand, about 83.4 per cent habitations had a primary school/section within a distance of one kilometre, against which about 177 thousand habitations, though eligible did not have schooling facilities. The alternative and innovative education programme envisages opening alternative elementary centres in all these habitations. Many of the unserved habitations are not entitled to have a school/section because of the population norms. There were about 581 thousand habitations in 1993-94 that had a population of 300 & more of which more than 40 thousand habitations (7 per cent) did not have access to schooling facilities within a distance of 1 km. It may be noted that the number of unserved habitations in 1986-87 (population 300 & more) was 142 thousand (26.76 per cent).

On the other hand, as many as 808 thousand habitations (76.15 per cent) providing access to about 85 per cent population in 1993-94 had upper primary schooling facilities within a distance of three kilometre. However, when schooling facilities in terms of number of habitations having population of 500 & more is analyzed; one notices that only 474 thousand (71.60 per cent) habitations had facilities within a distance of three kilometre. This shows that about 65 thousand habitations did not have access to an upper primary school/section but were otherwise entitled to have the same as per the norms. The aggregate data further indicates that the number of habitations having access to upper primary schools/sections declines with the decline in population size of habitation, which is quite similar to the situation at the primary level. On the other hand, a good number of

habitations (474 thousand) who had population below 500 in 1993-94 had schooling facilities within a distance of three kilometre of which about 26 thousand had the facilities even within the habitation. But the percentage population to which they serve is only 5.40 per cent of the total population in that

Table 3: Indicators of Access, All India: 1965 to 1993

Particulars	2 nd Survey 1965	3 rd Survey 1973	4 th Survey 1978	5 th Survey 1986	6 th Survey 1993
% of habitations having primary schools/sections within 1 Km.	68.58	75.58	80.23	83.83	83.36
% of rural population served by primary schools/sections up to 1 Km.	86.33	90.34	92.82	94.45	93.76
% of habitations served by upper primary schools/sections within 3 Kms	55.50	56.85	69.97	74.00	76.15
% of rural population served by upper primary schools/sections within 3 Km	68.24	68.80	78.83	83.98	85.00

Source: National Council of Educational Research & Training (different survey reports), New Delhi.

slab. It may also be noted that educationally backward states still have a large number of unserved habitations. Except Sikkim, Tripura and Andaman & Nicobar Islands, all other States & UTs have more than 90 per cent habitations that are accessed to primary schools/sections within a distance of one kilometre. Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep are the only two UTs in the country that have provided a primary and upper primary school/section to all of its habitations within a distance of one and three kilometre (Table 4 & 5). Except Orissa, educationally backward states had a

Table 4: Rural Habitations Having Population of 300/500 & More and Served by Primary/Upper Primary Schools/Sections

States/UTs	PRIMARY				UPPER PRIMARY			
	Served within Habitation (%)		Served up to 1 km (%)		Served within Habitation (%)		Served up to 3 km (%)	
	1986-87	1993-94	1986-87	1993-94	1986-87	1993-94	1986-87	1993-94
Andhra Pradesh	92.74	91.86	97.70	97.51	26.60	29.09	75.97	74.45
Arunachal	80.31	83.03	87.80	90.69	38.01	48.09	56.46	73.22
Assam	78.38	65.80	92.71	89.02	23.01	23.31	84.65	88.00
Bihar	73.70	69.95	95.05	94.32	19.98	20.73	88.70	88.24
Goa	59.59	87.10	91.61	95.83	28.50	53.26	93.63	90.49
Gujarat	96.50	96.03	99.23	98.32	65.88	68.59	91.90	92.30
Haryana	94.02	91.04	98.81	97.17	40.98	44.43	89.36	89.17
Himachal Pradesh	64.12	62.35	89.41	87.68	34.17	34.02	90.19	92.41
J & K	83.90	84.97	94.06	93.75	40.36	39.35	92.38	90.76
Karnataka	92.89	92.08	97.36	97.15	49.12	54.54	87.65	89.11
Kerala	75.16	64.29	88.34	83.54	51.16	38.52	94.42	89.59
Madhya Pradesh	87.92	87.04	95.69	94.75	26.73	27.33	70.35	72.04
Maharashtra	93.12	91.47	98.37	96.22	50.98	54.10	85.22	84.25
Manipur	88.99	82.04	98.18	95.26	42.60	43.08	90.37	90.39
Meghalaya	89.34	83.39	95.79	94.01	41.12	42.52	78.85	81.46
Mizoram	97.79	93.92	98.28	95.27	89.64	86.09	92.43	89.47
Nagaland	98.59	88.79	99.58	93.36	39.03	43.24	64.56	70.13
Orissa	82.76	79.91	96.24	96.13	36.86	39.28	88.90	91.73
Punjab	96.26	89.90	99.58	99.17	33.20	31.50	90.87	86.71
Rajasthan	87.09	86.66	90.83	93.05	38.21	39.55	72.31	76.68
Sikkim	83.53	73.55	90.46	85.95	45.64	41.48	83.89	83.84
Tamil Nadu	80.15	70.53	95.44	99.43	25.55	25.79	82.26	85.55
Tripura	58.52	56.06	86.72	86.79	31.14	30.16	93.88	92.80
Uttar Pradesh	47.61	49.62	86.01	85.64	16.88	17.01	80.95	80.89
West Bengal	73.07	54.76	96.71	91.94	14.53	12.03	82.91	87.66
A & N Islands	72.51	70.53	88.30	81.16	50.48	51.85	82.86	82.96
Chandigarh	90.48	83.33	100.00	93.33	57.89	46.67	100.00	96.97
D & N Haveli	65.66	50.66	89.90	88.82	11.76	18.75	82.35	89.58
Daman & Diu	60.00	59.57	93.33	100.00	42.42	54.05	100.00	100.00
Delhi	95.48	67.72	100.00	88.19	43.81	41.67	97.42	98.75
Lakshadweep	100.00	76.92	100.00	100.00	100.00	69.23	100.00	100.00
Pondicherry	82.00	64.60	98.74	97.08	35.53	34.31	95.43	95.10
All India	77.03	73.24	93.72	93.03	29.78	30.33	82.94	87.91

Source: Same as Table 3.

Table 5: Rural Population Served by Schools/Sections, 1993-94

State & UT	Ratio of Primary to Upper Primary Schools	Primary Schools/ Sections			Upper Primary Schools/Sections		
		Within Habitation	Up to 1 km		Within Habitation	Up to 3 kms	
			1993-94	1986-87		1993-94	1986-87
Andhra Pradesh	5.95	92.45	97.30	97.62	42.99	79.18	79.43
Arunachal	3.92	70.12	73.35	77.87	33.13	42.20	54.39
Assam	3.69	66.27	93.57	88.61	22.40	83.29	87.16
Bihar	3.90	77.19	95.86	95.51	27.13	88.30	88.33
Goa	10.63	91.77	90.60	97.01	63.94	91.80	92.87
Gujarat	-	97.12	99.45	98.78	76.79	94.43	94.48
Haryana	5.74	94.47	99.37	98.47	64.70	93.12	93.26
Himachal	6.50	45.07	76.64	75.97	17.33	76.04	78.22
J & K	3.38	82.68	90.70	92.37	38.41	85.99	86.78
Karnataka	-	91.11	97.24	96.58	60.86	89.78	91.42
Kerala	2.28	76.67	94.39	89.68	50.54	96.22	91.84
M.P	4.11	84.67	92.92	93.55	31.36	69.58	72.60
Maharashtra	1.88	90.65	97.95	95.82	61.08	88.46	87.64
Manipur	4.08	82.26	97.39	94.12	37.25	80.19	82.24
Meghalaya	4.95	74.05	89.22	87.97	25.57	64.99	69.50
Mizoram	1.68	94.30	98.28	95.77	77.58	82.85	83.38
Nagaland	3.13	92.36	99.45	95.05	47.76	66.41	74.54
Orissa	3.49	76.10	92.83	93.74	34.21	83.35	87.88
Punjab	5.00	90.83	99.59	99.32	45.41	92.49	89.68
Rajasthan	2.37	85.39	92.90	92.55	46.96	77.00	79.00
Sikkim	3.82	65.59	83.11	83.44	26.38	76.20	79.01
Tamil Nadu	5.57	77.16	96.02	99.53	35.36	84.07	87.78
Tripura	4.99	55.43	84.12	85.00	24.92	86.31	85.89
Uttar Pradesh	4.57	60.50	88.07	88.60	21.69	81.88	82.09
West Bengal	18.2	61.22	97.38	93.07	14.16	82.79	87.51
A & N Islands	3.69	70.45	83.01	81.75	44.37	73.57	77.03
Chandigarh	1.41	89.86	99.67	96.07	47.15	100.0	99.30
D & N Haveli	2.67	40.05	85.19	86.83	10.07	65.33	76.05
Daman & Diu	2.41	72.25	94.78	99.22	63.67	99.44	100.00
Delhi	4.45	81.93	100.00	93.83	58.31	98.60	99.05
Lakshadweep	4.75	86.32	100.00	99.73	73.29	99.16	98.74
Pondicherry	3.33	74.75	99.02	97.68	43.73	96.48	95.76
All India	3.30	77.81	94.45	93.76	37.02	83.98	85.00

Source: Same as Table 3 and MHRD (2000a).

lower percentage of habitations having access to a upper primary school/section within a distance of three kilometre. In general, it has been observed that the states that had a lower percentage of habitations served by a primary school/section also had a lower percentage of upper primary schools/sections.

(d) Rural Population having Access to Educational Facilities

In 1986-87, more than 95 per cent rural population had a primary school/section within a distance of one kilometre compared to 94 per cent in 1993-94 (Table 5). The corresponding figures at the upper primary level were 84 and 85 per cent. Although the percentage during 1986-87 to 1993-94 remained almost stagnant but is termed spectacular because of the massive increase in total number of habitations during the same period. More than 65 thousand habitations were added during 1986 to 1993. The facilities distributed according to different population slabs reveal that both the percentages of habitations and rural population accessed to schools/sections decline with the decline in the population size. It is only in Daman & Diu that the entire rural population is accessed to an upper primary school/section within a distance of three kilometre. Among the major states, Andhra Pradesh (79.43 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (72.60 per cent), Rajasthan (79.00 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (82.09 per cent) had a lower percentage of population served by upper primary schooling facilities than at the all-India level (Mehta, 1999).

(e) Unserved Habitations and NFE Centres

The unserved habitations may have a non-formal education center or even unrecognized institutions. At the all-India level, only 6 per cent of the total unserved habitations (within one kilometre) with 9 per cent population had a non-formal education centre in 1993-94. Of the total 121 thousand primary and upper primary centres in 1993-94, 94.52 per cent were in rural areas and the remaining 5.48 per cent centres were in the urban areas. A good number of centres are being run by the Voluntary Agencies. The average size of a non-formal education (primary) centre in 1993-94 was about 27 learners. There were about 4,553 primary and 128 upper primary centres that respectively had an average enrolment of 26 and 36 learners but did not have an instructor. On the other hand, there were about 729 primary and 22 upper primary centres that had at least one instructor but did not have a learner. In addition, there were a few upper primary centres (18) that had more than two instructors but did not have a learner, thus indicating a lot of wastage and lack of seriousness in implementing the programme. The percentage of learners in the Government run centres (primary and upper primary) to total elementary enrolment (Grades I-VIII) in 1993-94 indicates that it was as small as 2.54 and 2.33 per cent respectively in case of girls and total enrolment. The coverage of unserved habitations and enrolment in NFE centres suggests that the objective of non-formal system has not been fully realized in providing alternative facilities to areas where out-of-school children concentrate and schooling facilities not available. It may be interesting to note that a little less than 50 per cent of the total villages in the country had both the unrecognized primary and upper primary schools.

The above analysis presents an overall picture of the access conditions, which is of limited use. Unless the same is analysed at the block level and unserved habitations

and villages are identified, the provisions made available under different schemes/programmes cannot be fully utilised.

5.3 FACILITIES IN SCHOOLS

Provision of schools does not guarantee availability of necessary facilities in schools, which is reflected in statistics presented in Table 6. Over a period of time, facilities in schools have improved significantly but still a large number of primary schools do not have adequate facilities that are required for smooth functioning of a school. Both the Central and State Governments had initiated a number of programmes to improve facilities, one such programme is the *Scheme of Operation Blackboard*.

Table 6: Facilities in Primary Schools: 1993-94

School Management	Schools having Permanent Buildings (%)	Average Number of Instructional Rooms	Percentage of Schools Having			
			Drinking Water	Urinal	Urinal for Girls	Lavatory
Government	56.31	1.64	34.64	13.19	4.97	6.02
Local Body	73.22	1.84	47.80	16.70	6.10	9.06
Private Aided	54.38	1.76	65.96	49.88	32.26	31.53
Private Unaided	75.85	1.84	87.15	78.48	56.53	64.95
All Schools	65.01	1.74	44.23	18.93	8.66	10.86

Source: Sixth All India Educational Survey: 1993-94, NCERT, 1998, New Delhi.

A perusal of Table 6 reveals that of the total 0.57 million primary schools in 1993-94, only 65.01 per cent had *pucca* (permanent) buildings. The rest of the schools had either partially permanent buildings or were functioning in open space or even in tents (4.20 percent, 24 thousand schools). Of the total building-less schools, government schools constitute more than 65 per cent, whereas schools managed by the private managements have only few such schools. On the other hand, only few upper primary schools in 1993-94 were functioning in open space/tents (2,966). Even if a school has building that need not guarantee that it has got adequate number of instructional rooms. Most of the primary schools on an average had 2 instructional rooms, which is less than the total number of grades/sections a school has got. But there are several schools, which had more than even 10 rooms. On the other hand on an average an upper primary school had four rooms. Further, it has been noticed that the majority of primary schools did not have ancillary facilities in 1993-94. The drinking water facility was available in only 44.23 per cent primary schools against which 18.93 per cent had urinal facility in school. Further, it is noticed that government run schools had poor facilities than in schools managed by the private managements. Even if the schools have necessary infrastructure that itself is not a guarantee that it has also got adequate number of teachers. Therefore the growth in number of teachers, pupil-teacher ratio and average number of teachers in a school is critically analyzed below.

5.4 GROWTH IN NUMBER OF TEACHERS

The growth in number of primary teachers during the period 1950-51 to 1998-99 shows (Table 7) that it has increased from a low 538 thousand in 1950-51 to 1,919 thousand in 1999-2000, thus showing an increase of more than 3.6 times. During the same period, upper primary teachers increased from 86 thousand to 1,298 thousand, which is fifteen times more than the total teachers in 1950-51. During 1990-99, primary and upper primary teachers increased respectively by 303 and 225 thousand. Despite the significant achievements still a large number of teachers' positions in a number of states are lying vacant. States, such as, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have appointed a large number of *para teachers* most of which are unqualified, untrained and low paid teachers. Once the para-teachers are appointed, they are imparted training duration of which vary from state to state. Once the para-teachers are appointed, they are imparted training duration of which vary from state to state. The qualification requirements to become a primary or upper primary school teacher is generally 10 years of general education followed by one or two years of pre-service training. However, a few states have recently increased qualification requirements for elementary school teachers but pre-service training is not a pre-condition.

Over time, the number of female teachers (Table 8) has also increased impressively but their share remained lower than their counterparts' male teachers. In terms of percentage, female teachers increased from 15.24 and 15.12 per cent in 1950-51 to 34.56 to 36.31 percent in 1998-99 respectively at the primary and upper primary level of education. The impressive improvement in number of teachers is also reflected in average number of teachers in a primary and upper primary school, which was about 3 and 7 in 1993-94. In addition, there may be a large number of single teacher primary schools but it is not reflected in the aggregate data presented above. The number of teachers in primary schools suggests that teachers are involved in multi-grade teaching but the same is not true in case of upper primary teachers. Further, it may also be noticed that barring northeastern states, most of the teachers both at the primary and upper primary levels of education are trained.

The state-specific pupil-teacher ratio, average number of teachers in a school and percentage of female teachers are presented in Table 8, which shows that states have divergent positions. However, it may be noted that Bihar, an educationally backward state has the highest pupil-teacher ratio both at the primary (63:1) and upper primary (49:1) level. The percentage of female teachers in

Table 7: Growth in Teachers, All India: 1950-51 to 1999-2000

(In '000)

Year	Primary Level		Upper Primary Level	
	Total	% Female Trs.	Total	% Female Trs.
1950-51	538	15.24	86	15.12
1960-61	742	17.12	345	24.06
1970-71	1060	21.23	638	27.43
1980-81	1363	25.09	851	29.73
1990-91	1616	29.27	1073	33.18
1998-99*	1904	34.56	1278	36.31
1999-2000	1919	35.59	1298	36.13
Growth Rate (%), 1990-98	1.93	4.16	1.96	3.10

* Provisional thereafter.

Source: MHRD (2001). The author computes growth rates.

the state is also dismally lowest at 19 (primary) and 23 (upper primary) per cent. More than 40 thousand positions of teachers in the state are lying vacant for last many years. The situation in other backward states (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal) is also not encouraging. In one of the educationally most advanced state, Kerala, the pupil-teacher ratio (primary) in 1998-99 was lowest (among major states) at 29:1; the percentage of female teachers at 70 (primary) and 66 (upper primary) and also it has got a very high average number of teachers, 8 (primary) and 18 (upper primary).

5.5 UNIVERSAL ENROLMENT

Since universal enrolment is the most important component of UEE, a detailed analysis of growth in enrolment is undertaken. In addition, out-of-school children and additional enrolment required to achieve the goal of universal enrolment, is also estimated.

(a) Growth in Enrolment

Considerable progress has been made so far as enrolment at primary and upper primary levels of education is concerned. Enrolment at the primary level was 19.16 million in 1950-51; which has now been increased to 113.6 million in 1999-2000 (Table 9). Compared to primary level, the growth in enrolment at the upper primary level is much impressive and substantial but is not adequate to attain the status of universal enrolment. From a low 3.12 million enrolment in the year 1950-51, enrolment at the upper primary level increased to 42.1 million in the year 1999-2000 accounting for fourteen fold increase as against six times at the primary level. The impressive growth is attributed to comparatively a low enrolment base in the initial year and consistent increase of girls' participation in upper primary education (Varghese & Mehta, 1999a). It

has also been noticed that during the last forty-five years, the highest rates of growth have taken place during the period 1960 to 1965. Another interesting feature of the trend in

Table 8: Indicators Concerning to Teachers, 1998-99

State & UT	Pupil-Teacher Ratio		% of Female Teachers		Average No. of Teachers, 1993-94	
	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary
Andhra	46	39	34.09	42.53	2.2	5.8
Arunachal Pradesh	38	28	25.74	26.22	2.2	6.7
Assam	35	22	27.88	16.79	2.4	6.5
Bihar	63	49	19.19	22.81	2.1	7.3
Goa	21	17	69.18	68.85	2.8	7.4
Gujarat	51	42	49.80	48.96	2.3	7.5
Haryana	46	24	50.13	34.04	3.3	8.6
Himachal Pradesh	30	19	39.93	23.47	3.0	5.7
J & K	30	22	37.20	37.77	1.9	7.2
Karnataka	32	49	43.62	46.17	2.0	5.6
Kerala	29	29	70.73	66.46	7.6	18.3
Madhya Pradesh	44	33	28.93	29.80	2.5	5.4
Maharashtra	36	39	50.26	40.00	3.3	8.1
Manipur	19	20	34.57	35.36	3.5	10.2
Meghalaya	39	17	46.98	39.58	2.1	4.8
Mizoram	24	11	48.73	25.52	3.9	6.5
Nagaland	20	18	40.81	41.20	4.9	10.6
Orissa	37	34	24.77	14.71	2.4	3.9
Punjab	42	17	62.59	51.30	3.5	5.9
Rajasthan	44	36	30.66	25.79	2.7	7.8
Sikkim	18	19	45.46	36.51	5.1	13.3
Tamil Nadu	39	40	41.45	48.25	3.8	11.1
Tripura	21	16	22.90	22.35	4.5	12.3
Uttar Pradesh	42	30	25.27	22.44	3.5	5.3
West Bengal	52	36	23.20	26.64	3.3	6.4
A & N Islands	20	21	47.27	53.29	4.0	16.4
Chandigarh	26	22	92.31	89.07	9.4	14.7
D & N Haveli	45	46	32.26	57.05	1.6	9.7
Daman & Diu	49	38	60.23	37.57	6.6	7.6
Delhi	38	29	63.59	65.15	11.2	15.0
Lakshadweep	25	21	41.72	50.00	13.6	44.0
Pondicherry	26	24	60.90	52.44	5.3	13.9
All India	42	37	34.55	36.28	2.9	6.9

Source: MHRD (2000a) and NCERT (1998).

growth of enrolment is the higher rates of growth of enrolment of girls at all periods of time that we have considered. Again, it has been noticed that after the period 1965 to 1970, the growth rates in all variables showed consistent decline. It has also been revealed that over a period of time, enrolment, teachers and institutions have increased but at different rates. During the previous decade (1990-99), number of primary schools, teachers and enrolment increased at an annual rate of 1.24, 1.93 and 1.45 per cent compared to 2.56, 1.96 and 1.90 per cent respectively at the upper primary level.

Table 9: Growth in School Enrolment: 1950-51 to 1999-2000

(In Million)

Year	Primary			Upper Primary		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1950-51	13.8	5.4	19.2	2.6	0.5	3.1
1960-61	23.6	11.4	35.0	5.1	1.6	6.7
1970-71	35.7	21.3	57.0	9.4	3.9	13.3
1980-81	45.3	28.5	73.8	13.9	6.8	20.7
1990-91	57.0	40.4	97.4	21.5	12.5	34.0
1998-99*	62.7	48.2	110.9	24.0	16.3	40.3
1999-2000	64.1	49.5	113.6	1.23	3.00	1.90
Growth Rate	1.1	1.98	1.45	25.08	16.98	42.07

* Provisional thereafter.

Source : MHRD (2001). The author computed growth rates.

(b) Share of Girls in Enrolment

The percentage share of girls to total enrolment both at primary and upper primary levels of education have increased considerably and consistently over a period of time from 1950-51 to 1999-2000 (Table 10). However, girls share to the total enrolment at the upper primary level (43.4 per cent) continues to be lower than their share at the primary level (43.6 per cent). In 1950-51, the share of girl's enrolment to total enrolment was 28.13 and 16.13 per cent respectively at the primary and upper primary levels of education (Table 10). In the next ten years, i.e. from 1950-51 to 1960-61, their share increased to 32.57 and 24.32 per cent respectively at the primary and upper primary levels, which has further been improved to 43.6 and 40.4 per cent in the year 1999-2000. This means that for every three boys there were at least two girls in the system. Both in case of SC and ST population, the corresponding percentages of girls enrolment are a bit lower than that the national average (Table 10). Further, the state-specific percentage of girl's enrolment at the upper primary level reveals that a few states had considerably a higher percentage than the all-India average. Kerala had almost equal participation of boys and girls in the upper primary education. However, the major cause of concern is the educationally backward states, which have a much lower percentage than the all-India average. The comparatively low participation of girls suggests that unless the primary system is improved to a significant effect, the goal of universal enrolment may not be

realized in the near future. The majority of out-of-school children also come from these states.

Table 10 : Share of Girls Enrolment at the Primary and Upper Primary Levels of Education, All India : 1950-51 to 1999-2000

Year	(In Percentage)	
	Primary	Upper Primary
1950-51	28.13	16.13
1960-61	32.57	24.32
1970-71	37.37	29.32
1980-81	38.62	32.85
1990-91	41.48	36.76
1998-99*	43.50	40.50
1999-2000	43.60	40.40

* Provisional thereafter. The corresponding percentages of SC and ST population in 1999-2000 were 42.21 and 38.40 per cent and 42.36 and 37.91 per cent respectively at the primary and upper primary level of education.

Source : MHRD (2001).

(c) Intake Rate

One of the important indicators that give information on coverage of child population (age-6) is the intake rate. Both the planners and policy makers are interested in this rate which is unless brought to hundred, the goal of universal primary enrolment cannot be achieved. The indicator considers enrolment in Grade I and population of age-6. The *Gross Intake Rate* considers total enrolment of Grade I irrespective of age whereas, enrolment in Grade I of age-6 is considered in *Net Intake Rate*. But in India, age-specific enrolment data is not available from the official sources. However, the same is available from the information system created under the DPEP. Based on this set of data, percentage of enrolment in Grade I of age-6 have been worked out. Since the data was available only for twelve states, average of these states was applied to remaining states to workout intake rates (Thakur & Mehta, 1999). The results suggest that the percentage of enrolment in Grade I of age-6 was highest in Tamil Nadu (76 per cent) and lowest in Gujarat (35 per cent). At the all-India level, the *Gross Intake Rate* in 1997-98 was 116 per cent compared to the Net Intake Rate of 68 per cent. This indicates that as many as 32 per cent of the total children aged-6 years were not enrolled. The boys/girls differential in gross and net intake rate was of the tune of 21 and 13 percentage points. Further, a few states have lower net intake rates than the all-India average. All this suggests that rigorous efforts are needed to bring all unenrolled children, especially girls under the umbrella of education system. This can only be achieved through involvement of community in the affairs of education at the grassroots level.

(d) Enrolment Ratio

A perusal of Table 11 reveals that *Gross Enrolment Ratio* between the period 1950-51 and 1998-99 improved significantly but the same is not adequate to attain the status of universal enrolment, if overage and underage children are taken out from enrolment. However, it may be noted that as we approach UPE, the percentage of overage and underage children, as well as the enrolment ratio (gross) will decline. As against the GER (*Total enrolment in Grades I-V as percentage to 6-11 population*) of 100.1 and 62.1 per cent in 1990, the corresponding ratio in 1999 was 94.90 and 58.79 per cent. The boys/girls differential in GER at the primary and upper primary level declined significantly from 28 and 30 percentage points in 1990-91 to 19 and 18 percentages points in 1999-2000. Both in case of primary and upper primary education, the GER in case of boys (except SC at primary level) is found higher for SC and ST population than the overall GER at the all-India level (Table 11) but the same is not true in case of boys/girls differential in GER. The erratic trend in GER is because of the projected population used in computing ratio. Otherwise, a consistent trend is noticed in absolute enrolment both at the primary and upper primary levels of education. The *Net Enrolment Ratio* is considered an ideal indicator but the same is not available from the official sources. However, recently as a part of EFA: The Year 2000 Assessment, NER at primary level was estimated by assuming that 1993-94 percentage of overage and underage children will remain constant in 1997-98.

Table 11: Gross Enrolment Ratio, All India Level: 1950-51 to 1999-2000

Year	Primary		Upper Primary	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1950-51	60.6	24.8	20.6	4.6
1960-61	82.6	41.4	33.2	11.3
1970-71	95.5	60.5	46.5	20.8
1980-81	95.8	64.1	54.3	28.6
1990-91	114.0	85.5	76.6	47.0
1998-99*	100.9	82.9	65.3	49.1
1999-2000	104.1	85.2	67.2	49.7
SC	103.6	80.5	73.6	50.3
ST	112.7	82.7	70.8	44.8

* Provisional thereafter
Source: MHRD (2001).

Table 12: State-specific Attendance Ratio: 1995-96

	RATIO, 1997-98		ATTENDANCE RATIO, 1995-96					
	PRIMARY		GROSS		NET		AGE-SPECIFIC	
STATE	GER	NER	P	UP	P	UP	6-10	11-13
Andhra Pradesh	90	69	86	56	69	41	75	60
Arunachal	97	69	90	65	69	29	65	82
Assam	109	98	91	73	98	43	73	80
Bihar	76	76	54	51	76	33	43	58
Goa	86	61	118	99	61	62	99	89
Gujarat	118	86	95	67	86	52	80	77
Haryana	84	73	106	86	73	52	83	87
Himachal	90	68	118	97	68	54	91	94
J & K	67	55	88	81	55	53	69	82
Karnataka	113	89	87	61	89	50	75	70
Kerala	90	72	109	97	72	76	97	97
Madhya	102	88	84	62	88	35	64	67
Maharashtra	113	84	106	80	84	55	88	85
Manipur	86	68	91	93	68	43	69	87
Meghalaya	93	50	111	86	50	25	69	94
Mizoram	114	73	102	108	73	39	71	88
Nagaland	94	59	105	107	59	40	71	85
Orissa	91	70	75	59	70	45	63	66
Punjab	82	71	100	86	71	59	85	86
Rajasthan	97	72	74	56	72	35	58	64
Sikkim	113	61	118	75	61	33	77	90
Tamil Nadu	109	85	98	80	85	61	91	74
Tripura	88	80	110	82	80	40	81	84
Uttar Pradesh	62	47	80	54	47	33	61	66
West Bengal	92	56	94	63	56	33	67	74
A & N Islands	87	64	108	116	64	73	94	94
Chandigarh	80	60	142	57	60	45	87	95
D & N Haveli	96	70	98	61	70	55	79	55
Daman & Diu	99	74	138	69	74	57	100	76
Delhi	89	68	107	93	68	70	84	95
Lakshadweep	105	73	138	96	73	69	97	98
Pondicherry	94	74	86	107	74	84	98	93
All India	90	71	85	65	71	43	69	72

P: Primary, UP: Upper Primary, GER: Gross Enrolment Ratio and NER: Net Enrolment Ratio
Source: Thakur and Mehta (1999) and NSSO (1998).

A perusal of Table 12 reveals a significant gap between GER and NER at the primary level. The NER (*Enrolment in Grades I-V of age 6-11 years as a percentage to 6-11 population*) in case of boys and girls in 1997-98 was as low as 78 and 64 per cent,

which suggests that boys/girls differential in NER to be of 14 percentage points. The overall NER at the primary level was 71 per cent, which suggests that at least 29 per cent children of age group 6-11 were out-of-school in 1997-98. The educationally backward states have lower NER than the all-India average of 71 per cent. An NER of 71 per cent does not guarantee that all these children attend school regularly. This can be known only if the average daily attendance is analyzed. From the regular sources, it is not possible to obtain idea about children attending schools. However, on household sample basis NSSO (52nd Round) recently collected data on school attendance. It may be noted that because of the difference in data collection methodology and years for which information is available, different data sets i.e. MHRD, NCERT and NSSO are not comparable. However, they give reasonably good indication regarding children attending school. School, habitation and households are the unit of data collection respectively in the MHRD, NCERT and NSSO set of data.

The Net Attendance Ratio (*Net AR = Percentage children of age 6-11 years attending Grades I-V & Gross AR = Percentage of children attending Grades I-V to total population of age-group 6-11 years*) in 1995-96 was 65 per cent against which the NER (primary, estimated) in 1997-98 was 71 per cent (Table 12). Similarly, as against 43 per cent attendance ratio among the children of age group 11-13 years, the corresponding GER was 58 per cent. The slight deviation between the two estimates suggests that less number of children attend schools than actually enrolled. The actual deviation may even be higher than the one presented above because of the fact that NSSO data on attendance includes all students irrespective of the management of school. This means that enrolment in private unrecognized institutions are also included in the attendance ratio but the same is not included in the official enrolment because unrecognized schools do not form part of the regular collection of statistics. Since then, attendance rates might have further been improved because of the *nutritious noon meal scheme*, which was initiated in 1995. The age-specific enrolment ratio suggests that it was 69 and 72 per cent respectively among the children of age groups 6-10 and 11-13 years. It means that about 31 and 28 per cent children of the age groups 6-10 and 11-13 years do not attend schools. It may however be noted that age specific enrolment ratio considers enrolment irrespective of grades which means that many of these children (age groups 6-10 and 11-13 years) may not necessarily be in the primary and/or upper primary grades.

The state-specific attendance ratio suggests that many states are in a position to attain the status of UPE but the same is not true in case of UEE. States such as, Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu had very high net attendance ratio at primary level in 1995-96 but the corresponding ratio at the upper primary level is found very low. Many children those who attend school at present may not retain and dropout from the system even before completion of an education cycle. This severely affects the internal efficiency of the education system. Therefore, indicators that give information regarding efficiency of the system are analyzed below.

(e) Universal Retention

The retention rates computed during the period 1964-65 to 1999-2000 (Table 13) reveals that both at the primary and elementary levels of education, it has improved

gradually. At present the retention rates at the primary and elementary levels are 60 and 46 per cent respectively. This otherwise suggests a dropout rate of 40 and 54 per cent respectively at the primary and upper primary level. Further, it has been noticed that throughout the period, the percentage of girls who remained in the system (up to Grade V) was lower than the overall retention at the all-India level. However, the difference between girls and boys in retention is less than the difference noticed between the two in enrolment. The boys/girls differential in retention rate in 1999-2000 continues to be more than 3 and 6 per cent respectively at the primary and elementary level of education. At the primary level, Bihar, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh etc. had dropout rate higher than 50 per cent whereas Goa, Kerala, Chandigarh, Delhi etc. had lower than 5 per cent dropout. At the elementary level, it was as high as 77 per cent in Bihar, 68 per cent in Orissa, 53 per cent in Uttar Pradesh and 74 per cent in West Bengal. The boys/girls differential in a few states is also significantly high.

Further, it may be noted that despite the policy of no detention up to the Grade V, a large number of children used to repeat a grade. However, boys/girls differential in repetition rate is almost negligible. The repetition rate in 1993-94 was 8, 6, 7, 6 and 6 per cent respectively in Grades I, II, III, IV and V (Table 14). This severely affects the internal efficiency of the education system and because of this, children take more years to become primary graduates than ideally required. The indicators of efficiency are calculated on the basis of assumptions that 1993-94 rates of repetition (Table 14) will remain constant throughout the evolution of cohort and no student will allow to repeat more than 3 times in a grade. After 3 repetitions, the child would either promote to next grade or will dropout from the system. The results reveal that boys take 7.2 years to become primary graduates against which girls are taking 8.0 years, thus showing a lot of inefficiency in the system. Needless to mention that ideal number of years a student should take to become a primary graduate is five years. The state-specific results also suggest that not a single state is exactly taking five years to produce a primary graduate (Table 15). In the states of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, it was as high as 15 and 14 years. Input/Output ratio calculated for measuring the efficiency of education system also supports this. The system at the all-India level is found to be efficient to the tune of only 67 per cent, thus indicating a lot of scope of improvement. The inefficiency in the system is due to two reasons, namely high incidence of dropout and repetition. The state-specific indicators of efficiency reveal that a few states have lower level of efficiency even lower than the all-India average. Particularly, the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal need immediate attention where the level of efficiency is very low and graduates are taking more years than ideally required. Even if students graduate primary level, there is no guarantee that they will transit to upper primary level. This can be known if transition from primary to upper primary level is analyzed which is presented below.

Table 13: Retention Rate at All India Level, 1964-65 to 1999-2000

(Percentage)

Year	Primary		Upper Primary	
	Total	Girls	Total	Girls
1964-65	37.10	32.00	--	--
1974-75	36.80	33.30	21.30	16.30
1984-85	50.38	47.54	35.65	29.60
1990-91	61.04	56.41	39.10	34.87
1998-99*	60.26	58.68	43.18	39.91
1999-2000	59.75	57.72	45.47	42.00

* Provisional thereafter. Ratio of Grade V/VIII in a year to enrolment in Grade I four/seven years back is termed retention

Source: Varghese and Mehta (1999a) and MHRD (2001).

Table 14: Repetition Rate (%) in Primary Grades, 1993-94

	GRADES				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Boys	7.6	5.5	7.3	5.8	5.9
Girls	7.9	5.8	7.3	5.8	5.9
Total	7.7	5.7	7.3	5.8	5.9

Source: Thakur and Mehta (1999).

(f) Transition Rates

The transition rate at the all-India level during the period 1970-71 to 1991-92 and state level for the year 1991-92 is calculated which is based upon the final set of the MHRD data produced in *Education in India*. In addition, the same for the year 1997-98 has also been calculated (without considering repeaters) on the basis of provisional information produced in *Selected Educational Statistics*. So far as the computation of transition rate is concerned, the procedure followed is that first the repeaters are taken out from enrolment in the first grade (V/VI) of upper primary cycle which is then divided by the terminal grade of previous cycle (IV/V), that is primary level. However, from the existing set of data, it is not possible to exactly know how many children successfully complete Grade IV/V and then take admission in Grade V/VI, the next year. In a few states, transition rates are more than hundred, which is by definition not possible unless a heavy in-migration has taken place.

Table 15: Rates of Efficiency: 1997-98

State & UT	Input/Output Ratio			Years Input per Graduate		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Andhra Pradesh	0.68	0.63	0.68	7.3	7.9	7.6
Arunachal Pradesh	0.61	0.60	0.61	8.2	8.4	8.3
Assam	0.87	0.61	0.75	5.8	8.2	6.7
Bihar	0.60	0.51	0.57	8.3	9.8	8.8
Goa	0.99	0.94	0.96	5.1	5.3	5.2
Gujarat	0.68	0.70	0.69	7.4	7.1	7.3
Haryana	0.84	0.80	0.82	6.0	6.3	6.1
Himachal Pradesh	0.73	0.90	0.81	6.8	5.6	6.2
J & Kashmir	0.82	0.78	0.80	6.1	6.4	6.2
Karnataka	0.72	0.66	0.69	6.9	7.6	7.2
Kerala	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.7	4.8	4.7
Madhya Pradesh	0.91	0.80	0.86	5.5	6.2	5.8
Maharashtra	0.85	0.82	0.83	5.9	6.1	6
Manipur	0.97	0.98	0.97	5.2	5.1	5.1
Meghalaya	0.56	0.51	0.54	8.9	9.8	9.3
Mizoram	0.79	0.81	0.80	6.2	6.4	6.3
Nagaland	0.59	0.58	0.59	8.4	8.6	8.5
Orissa	0.67	0.61	0.64	7.5	8.2	7.8
Punjab	0.93	0.89	0.91	5.4	5.6	5.5
Rajasthan	0.81	0.67	0.76	6.2	7.5	6.6
Sikkim	0.59	0.50	0.54	8.5	10	9.2
Tamil Nadu	0.81	0.82	0.81	6.2	6.1	6.2
Tripura	0.65	0.68	0.66	7.7	7.4	7.6
Uttar Pradesh	0.37	0.24	0.32	13.4	21.2	15.7
West Bengal	0.41	0.29	0.35	12.2	17.3	14.3
A & N Islands	0.98	0.91	0.94	5.1	5.5	5.3
Chandigarh	-	-	-	3.8	3.8	3.8
D & N Haveli	0.84	0.78	0.82	6	6.4	6.1
Daman & Diu	0.92	0.90	0.91	5.4	5.6	5.5
Delhi	-	-	-	4.5	3.8	4.1
Lakshadweep	0.82	0.92	0.87	6.1	5.4	5.8
Pondicherry	-	-	-	4.6	4.5	4.5
INDIA	0.70	0.63	0.67	7.2	8.0	7.5

Source: Thakur and Mehta (1999).

Table 16: Transition Rate (%), All India, 1970-71 to 1999-2000

Year	Transition Rate (Primary to Upper Primary Level)			
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys/Girls Differential
1970-71	86.80	74.08	82.56	12.72
1975-76	87.99	78.34	84.58	9.65
1980-81	92.11	81.77	88.35	10.34
1985-86	90.79	82.01	87.45	8.78
1990-91	95.20	93.22	94.42	1.98
1991-92	87.00	83.00	85.00	4.00
1997-98*	89.00	91.00	86.00	(2.00)
1998-99	95.59	90.33	93.37	5.26

* Provisional thereafter. While calculating transition rates, repeaters are taken out from enrolment except in years 1997-98 and 1998-99.

Source: Varghese and Mehta (1999a). For years 1991-92 & 1997-98 calculated by the author.

The transition rate at the All-India level reveals that over a period of time, it has improved to a significant effect. This is also reflected in boys/girls differential, which has considerably been declined during the same period (Table 16). The transition rate from primary to upper primary level, which was 82.56 per cent in 1970-71, improved to 84.58 per cent in 1975-76 and further to 94.42 per cent in the year 1990-91 (Table 16 & 17). However, during the following year, it declined to 85 per cent but improved to 93 per cent in 1998-99. For the first time, transition rate for girls was higher than boys by 2 percentage points in 1997-98 but again declined by more than 5 percentage points the following year. The results further reveal that more than 1.12 million children dropped out from the system in transition during 1998-99 and 1999-2000 of which girls constitute 61.25 per cent (0.69 million).

A perusal of state-specific rates reveals that transition from primary to upper primary level in 1991-92 (Table 17), irrespective of states was noticed higher than 74 per cent (except Sikkim and Dadra and Nagar Haveli). The educationally backward States had a mix of high and very high transition rates. The provisional rates for 1997-98 show that in case of two crucial states, namely Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, it has gone down considerably. In rest of the states, an increasing trend in transition rates is noticed both in case of boys and girls. Between upper primary grades, the transition rate is also found high in the four districts that were surveyed recently by Varghese and Mehta (2001). Kerala that had shown almost a consistent enrolment both in the ratio and absolute form for the last more than 25 years also had a very high transition rate for both boys and girls. The improving transition rates across the states indicate more demand for upper primary education in years that follow. However, still there are a few pockets, which have lower transition rate than at the state and national levels; this is more specific true in case of locations that have independent primary schools. Comparatively, transition in integrated schools (I-VIII) is high.

Table 17: State-specific Transition Rates (Grade IV/V to V/VI)

State & UT	1991-92			1997-98		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Andhra	85	79	82	95	93	89
Arunachal	76	73	75	85	83	91
Assam	102	87	96	88	88	92
Bihar	78	69	75	94	95	86
Goa	88	82	85	78	79	105
Gujarat	73	74	74	85	84	90
Haryana	78	68	74	72	77	109
Himachal	92	88	90	83	81	92
J&K	140	117	130	103	98	73
Karnataka	76	76	76	94	95	88
Kerala	96	96	96	96	95	102
M.P	81	64	75	91	91	99
Maharashtra	97	89	93	97	97	86
Manipur	89	86	88	76	78	104
Meghalaya	89	89	89	88	89	78
Mizoram	87	85	86	90	91	100
Nagaland	72	78	75	77	79	81
Orissa	83	87	84	96	96	100
Punjab	95	90	93	93	93	88
Rajasthan	98	86	95	97	96	92
Sikkim	56	56	56	84	84	103
Tamil Nadu	82	74	79	88	88	106
Tripura	78	73	76	73	75	73
Uttar Pradesh	91	74	85	92	92	67
West Bengal	102	116	109	67	77	46
A&N Islands	81	76	79	82	83	114
Chandigarh	124	121	122	112	110	84
D&N Haveli	57	64	59	85	77	102
Daman & Diu	75	78	76	90	95	107
Delhi	111	94	103	83	84	81
Lakshadweep	68	77	72	86	82	116
Pondicherry	102	99	101	95	95	87

Note: States having more than hundred percent transition are termed unreliable or there may be high in-migration in Grade VI from the neighboring states. Logically, enrolment in Grade VI cannot be more than the enrolment in Grade V in the previous year.

Source: Calculated by the author based on information given in MHRD publications.

(g) Out-Of-School Children

Out of School children and additional enrolment that would be required to achieve the goal of universal primary education by the year 2007 has been worked out. It may be noted that under the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, the goal of universal primary enrolment is to be achieved by the year 2007. First refined enrolment is obtained by taking out overage and underage children from enrolment in Grades I-V and VI-VIII in 1999-2000. The 1993-94 state-specific estimates of overage and underage children (Sixth Survey) are used for this purpose. The difference of age specific population and refined enrolment is termed as out-of-school children. While computing additional enrolment, first enrolment (Grades I-V) required within the age group (6-11 years) in 2007 is obtained by subtracting out-of-school children (in 1999) from the projected population (6-11 years) in 2007. The projected population is obtained by extrapolation, which is based on the estimates provided by the *Office of the Registrar General of India* between 2001 and 2011. The enrolment outside the age group (6-11 years) is obtained by applying the percentage of overage and underage children to the required enrolment within the age group (6-11 years). Required enrolment within and outside the age group is then added to obtain the net additional requirement of enrolment in 2007. This was repeated to upper primary level to obtain out-of-school children (11-14 years) and additional enrolment in Grades VI-VIII. At the all-India level, the estimates of overage and underage children used were 21.33, 21.82 and 21.54 per cent at the primary and 17.15, 17.49 and 17.28 per cent at the upper primary level respectively in case of boys, girls and total enrolment.

A perusal of Table 18 reveals that as many as 30.58 million children of age-group 6-11 years were out-of-school in 1999 of which girls constitute 19.42 million (63.51 per cent), corresponding figures estimated by the World Bank (1997) was 28 million. It may however be noted that a few out-of-school children may already be either in the EGS/NFE centers or in unrecognized private schools data of which is not readily available. Otherwise, a correction factor should be applied to the estimated out-of-school children in the absence of which, the present estimates may be treated as slightly overestimated. The estimates further suggest that of the total 30.58 million out-of-school children, more than 19.06 million (62.34 per cent) come from the most educationally backward states of Bihar (2.86 Million), Madhya Pradesh (0.09 Million), Rajasthan (1.23 Million), Uttar Pradesh (11.13 Million) and West Bengal (3.75 Million, Table 19). The projected estimates of enrolment further suggest that 28.62 million children (including overage and underage) would be additionally required to enroll in 2007 to achieve UPE. The corresponding estimate for girls is 19.78 million, which is 69.11 per cent of the net additional enrolment required in 2007. Similarly, 37.75 million children of age-group 11-14 years are estimated to be out-of-school in 1999-2000 of which more than 54.91 per cent are the girls. The additional enrolment that would be required in 2010 to achieve UEE would be 22.84 million boys and 39.65 million girls. Altogether, about 67.33 million children of 6-14 years are found out-of-school in 1999-2000. An additional 62.44 million enrolment would be required to achieve UEE in 2010, which is 40 per cent more than the enrolment in 1999-2000. Many of these children may still be in primary classes

Table 18

Out-of-School children (1999-2000) and Additional Enrolment Required to Achieve UPE in 2007 and UPE in 2010

(Figures in Million)

Educational Level	Population		Enrolment in 1999-2000	% of Overage/Underage Children	Refined Enrolment	Out-of-School Children, 1999-2000	Additional Enrolment Required, 2006-07			
	1999-2000	2006-07					Within Age-group	Outside Age-group	Net additional Requirement	
Primary (Classes I-V)										
	Boys	61.59	57.75	64.10	21.33	50.43	11.16	7.32	1.56	8.88
	Girls	58.13	54.94	49.51	21.82	38.71	19.42	16.23	3.54	19.78
	Total	119.72	112.69	113.61	21.54	89.14	30.58	23.55	5.07	28.62
Upper Primary (Classes VI-VIII)										
			2009-10							
	Boys	37.35	32.69	25.08	17.15	20.78	16.57	11.91	2.04	13.95
	Girls	34.19	30.93	16.98	17.49	14.01	20.18	16.92	2.96	19.88
	Total	71.55	63.63	42.07	17.28	34.80	36.75	28.83	4.98	33.81
Elementary (Classes I-VIII)										
	Boys	98.94	90.44	89.18	-	71.21	27.73	19.23	3.60	22.84
	Girls	92.32	85.87	66.49	-	52.72	39.60	33.15	6.50	39.65
	Total	191.27	176.32	155.68	-	123.94	67.33	52.38	10.05	62.44

Source: Percentage of Overage/Underage children is calculated on the basis of Sixth All India Education Survey, NCERT, New Delhi. Projected population may change as the figures used are based up to 1991 Census. However, no significant variation is noticed between 2001 Actual and projected population. Hence, age-specific population may not significantly change even after 2001 Actual Census is considered in revised projections.

Table 19: Out-of-School Children: 1999-2000

(In thousand)

State	Primary Level. 6-11 Years			Upper Primary Level. 11-14 Years		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Andhra	850	990	1838	1811	1935	3744
Arunachal	7	15	22	18	17	36
Assam*	-211	83	-127	386	503	889
Bihar	381	2482	2863	2464	2862	5326
Goa	44	50	94	28	29	57
Gujarat	252	653	904	702	805	1508
Haryana	394	323	717	367	342	710
Himachal	110	154	264	71	90	161
J&K	133	271	405	82	166	248
Karnataka	359	495	855	794	899	1694
Kerala	488	483	971	155	184	339
M.P.*	-387	482	99	1359	1869	3222
Maharashtra	747	812	1560	1033	1269	2303
Manipur	29	44	73	24	30	54
Meghalaya	48	56	105	54	51	105
Mizoram	12	17	29	15	15	31
Nagaland	42	43	84	36	32	67
Orissa	55	634	690	542	788	1330
Punjab	445	353	798	365	315	680
Rajasthan	-75	1303	1226	352	1172	1527
Sikkim	8	8	16	13	12	25
Tamil Nadu	611	685	1296	225	280	505
Tripura*	-11	18	7	48	58	106
U.P	4636	6492	11129	3799	4533	8331
West Bengal	1763	1982	3745	1780	1941	3721
A&N Islands	9	7	16	6	4	10
Chandigarh	27	24	51	14	11	25
D&N Haveli	-1	2	1	3	4	7
Daman & Diu	1	2	3	2	2	4
Delhi	286	282	568	216	125	341
Lakshadweep	1	1	2	2	2	4
Pondicherry	18	24	42	7	10	18
All India	11157	19421	30576	16572	20184	36754

Note: * Either the enrolment data and projected population or estimates of coverage/underage children are not reliable.

Source: Computed by the author based on the information given in MHRD (2001) and NCERT (1998).

or may even be out-of-school. Without graduating primary level, these children cannot be enrolled in upper primary classes, for which efficiency of the primary education system needs to be improved. The additional enrolment calculated would help to estimate school places that would be required in 2007. This will also help in better implementation and effective monitoring of different incentive schemes. However, the aggregated estimates are of limited use. Unless the same is available at the habitation

level, the benefits of new programmes and schemes are not likely to reach them. For this purpose, household surveys should be conducted across the country. A few states have already attempted it and collected detailed information on out-of-school children (0-14 years) along with reasons of dropouts and never been enrolled. But the same is not properly analysed and utilized in estimating school places that would be required in years that follow and strategies to bring them under the umbrella of education is also not linked to the information collected.

(h) Quality Of Education

The last but the most important component of UEE is the *Quality of Education* that is measured in India in terms of learner's achievement. Even, the states that have almost attained universal access, enrolment and retention, the quality of education is very poor. It is only in the recent past (during 1990's) that quality of education has got attention of policy makers. It may be noted that India follows policy of no detention up to primary level. But in practice, divergent models are in existence across states. Generally, at the end of primary cycle, examinations are compulsory and promotion to next cycle is linked to children performance in this examination. But, examination results are not considered an indicator of quality of education. It is the learner's achievement based on MLL is considered an indicator of quality of education.

Box 1: Mid Term Assessment Survey

The study has shown that the average performance of students in Grade I in 25 districts in language and 24 districts in mathematics has crossed 60 per cent level. Except two districts in language and four in mathematics in the state of Madhya Pradesh, all other districts have crossed 50 per cent level of achievement in both the subjects in Grade I. While student performance in Grades III/IV has touched 60 per cent marks in some districts, in some others it has stood below 40 per cent mark. A comparison of 1994 BAS and 1997 MAS has shown positive trends in 28 out of 42 districts in language with 19 districts showing statistically significant improvement. In mathematics, 33 out of 42 districts have shown significant improvement. The hike in achievement in language and mathematics varies widely ranging from 1 per cent to 44 per cent for Grade I. Similar analysis of Grade III/IV students' achievement shows positive trends in 31 out of 42 districts in language with 27 showing significant improvement and in 29 out of 42 in mathematics with 23 showing significant improvement. The hike in achievement in these grades varies from 10-25 per cent. The goal of reducing the differences between gender groups to less than 5 per cent has been realized in almost all the districts across grades in both the subjects

MHRD: Annual Report, 1998-99. See also Ved Prakash etc.: NCERT, 1998.

It may however be noted that data on learner's achievement is not available on regular basis. The official agency (*Department of Education, MHRD*) does not collect data on this aspect except that it disseminate statistics on examination results at the secondary and plus-two levels. It is only in the recent past (1994) that achievement tests were conducted under the *District Primary Education Programme* through the *Baseline Assessment Surveys* (BAS). DPEP envisages improving learner's achievement by at least

25 percentage points over the project period ranging between 5-7 years. The non-DPEP states do not have this set of data. However, the NPE (1986) had given emphasis to learners' achievement and thereafter the Government of India specified the minimum levels of learning and initiated projects to improve the learner's achievement. Under the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, it is expected that districts will conduct *Baseline Assessment Surveys* to know status of student's achievement both at the primary and upper primary levels of education.

To monitor achievement levels, a *Mid Term Assessment Survey* (MAS) was conducted by the NCERT in 1997 in the same 42 districts spread over 7 states where the first *Baseline Assessment Survey* (1994) was conducted (NCERT, 1998). One of the major objectives of MAS was to measure average performance of students' achievement on the newly developed competency based achievement tests in language and mathematics at the end of Grade I and at the end of Grade III/IV of primary level. The Terminal Assessment Survey (TAS) was also conducted recently in 2001. The MAS results show improvement in average performance of students in language as well as mathematics over 1994 to 1997 but still the mean scores across the states is low and far below than the expectations (Box 1). But why the achievement levels are low is an important question, which needs to be answered. For this purpose, analysis of student's responses (answers) may be useful to improve upon the existing training curricula. The faculty of DIET should take the lead in this direction for which they should be oriented by the state level institutions, like SCERTs. The quality can be improved only if the teachings practices envisage are reflected in classroom transactions.

(i) Future Prospects and Redefining the Concept of UEE

The analysis presented above reveals that at all levels of school education, a significant progress in enrolment is made on all aspects of UEE but a large number of children still remain out-of-school. Do the quantitative expansion of educational facilities imply that target of universal enrolment will be achieved in the near future. The estimates of enrolments and attendance give reasonably sound reasons to believe that stipulated targets may not be achieved in the near future. Mehta (1995 & 1998) projected that India may attain the status of UPE in 2007. The goal is likely to be achieved by 2004-05 in case of boys and 2007-08 in case of girls. The projected enrolment further reveal that all boys of age group 11-14 years are likely to be enrolled by 2007-08 but universalisation of girls' education would continue to remain far out of the sight

It may however be noted that without attaining the status of universal primary enrolment, the goal of universal elementary education cannot be achieved. Primary enrolment is a function of 6-11 years population but the same is not true in case of upper primary enrolment. Upper primary enrolment is not a function of 11-14 year population but is a function of primary graduates. Only primary graduates can be enrolled in Grade VI. It may quite be possible that many children of age 11-14 years are out of the system or there may also be dropped out children or some of them may still be in primary classes. Therefore, upper primary education cannot be expanded in isolation of the primary level. An inefficient primary system, as it is today, would send fewer numbers of primary graduates to the upper primary level. Thus, availability of graduates' along with

transition from primary to upper primary level would decide the future expansion of upper primary level. The demand is more likely to be in the educationally disadvantage areas where primary education has not been fully expanded. Further expansion of primary education in these areas and high transition from primary to upper primary level will generate more intensive demand for upper primary education to expand. Further improvement in transition may result into rapid demand for upper primary education in year that follows. This can be expected in the DPEP districts.

As a part of EFA: The Year 2001 Assessment, a number of activities were recently initiated in India, the summary of the Case Studies conducted in India is Annexed.

6. LITERACY SCENARIO

A little less than 50 per cent of the total population in 1991 was illiterate but since then the country has made considerable progress both in terms of total (7+ population) and adult literacy (15+) rates. The literacy rate (7+ Population) increased from 52 per cent in 1991 to 65 per cent in 2001; thus showing an impressive increase of 13 percentage points in a period of ten years (Table 20). However, no significant improvement is noticed in male/female differential in literacy rate, which has declined from 25 to 22 percentage points during the same period. It may however be noted that during 1991 to 2001, the increase in female literacy (15 per cent) was higher than the increase in male literacy (11 per cent). The rural and urban distribution of literacy rates, as well as, adult literacy rate (15+ population) for 2001 is not yet available. However, The rural/urban differential in literacy rate during the period 1991 to 1998 shows a decline from 28 to 24 percentage points but the male/female differential in rural areas continues to be significantly high at 25 percentage points. Following the general pattern, the adult literacy rate (15+ population) also increased significantly from 49 per cent in 1991 to 57 per cent in 1998. However, male/female differential in literacy remained high at 27 percentage points.

Table 20: Literacy Rate (7+ Population): All India, 1991 and 1998

Year	Male	Female	Total
1991	64.13	39.29	52.21
2001	75.85	54.16	65.38

Source: Census of India 2001, Series -1, India, Provisional Population Totals, Papers-1 of 2001, Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, 2001.

The increase in literacy during 1991-2001 should be seen in relation to increase in primary enrolment during the same period. Mehta (2001) while assessing the contribution of primary education to total literates, assumed enrolment in Grade V as

literate. During 1991-2001, the country has produced more than 203 million literates, which is 74 per cent of the total Grade V enrolment during the same period. Total literacy campaigns may not have contributed significantly to the total literates produced but it has created positive environment for primary education to expand. This is largely because of the aggressive campaigns initiated by the National Literacy Mission during 1990's, which generated demand for the primary education.

7. THE RECENT INITIATIVES

Since independence, India has made considerably progress towards the goal of UEE. However, past trends do not indicate that the goal is right now in the sight. However, the trend can be reversed and goal may be achieved earlier than projected, if concerted efforts are made to bring all concerned under the umbrella of education. The Union Government initiated a number of projects and programmes under the *Centrally Sponsored Schemes* most of which were initiated after the *National Policy of Education* was evolved in 1986 and *World Conference on Education for All* held at Jomtien in 1990. Some of these schemes in terms of their objectives and major achievements are briefly discussed below.

(a) The Scheme of Operation Blackboard

The scheme of *Operation Blackboard (OB)* was launched in 1987 to improve facilities in schools by providing more teachers, rooms and teaching learning equipments. The OB Scheme seeks to bring both the quantitative and qualitative improvements in primary education. The scheme had three components, namely (i) an additional teacher to single teacher primary schools; (ii) providing at least two classrooms in each primary school; and (iii) providing teaching-learning equipment to all primary schools. It was proposed to cover all primary schools under the OB scheme that were in existence as on September 30, 1986. The scheme is implemented through the State Governments with 100 per cent assistance from the Central Government towards the salary of additional teachers and teaching learning equipments. Construction of school buildings is the responsibility of the State Governments but funds were arranged for this purpose from other Ministries like the Rural Development. However in the revised scheme, assistance is made available to State Governments on 75:25 share basis. For construction of school buildings, during the period 1987 to 2000, an amount of Rs. 2,617 crores was invested on OB scheme. About 185 thousand classrooms were constructed, 1.49 thousand teachers appointed and 523 thousand schools were provided teaching-learning equipments. During the eighth five year plan, the scheme was revised in 1993-94 and was extended to provide a third classroom and third teacher to primary schools where enrolment exceeds 100 students. During the Ninth Plan, more than 48 thousand primary schools were provided third teacher and about 90 thousand upper primary schools were provided teaching-learning material..

Despite all these significant achievements, all is not well in the schools. Large number of primary schools still have only one teacher and do not have adequate physical facilities and other teaching-learning material. In addition, a few schools do not have buildings and those who have, may not be in good condition and need repairs. The instructional rooms are also not adequate in a good number of primary schools. Even if the teaching-learning material is available that itself is not a guarantee that teachers are equipped to utilize these aids, which is noticed recently even in a state like Kerala also. The OB support is one time affair and the material provided under the scheme may not even traceable in a good number of schools. Even teachers in schools spread over four states that we visited recently were not aware of such equipments in schools. Teachers in other schools where the OB kits are available are of the view that they are inadequate.

It has also been noticed that teachers appointed under the OB scheme were not efficiently deployed. That is why we still have single-teacher schools. On the other hand, a few schools have got more than adequate number of teachers. This is more so true in case of schools located in the urban areas or in areas that located near to towns and cities. The OB scheme envisaged that one of the two teachers appointed under the scheme would preferably be a female teacher. No doubt, OB interventions have improved number of female teachers but in many locations their share is still poor. On an average there is one female teacher for every 2 & 3 male teachers respectively at the primary and upper primary level. The scheme was recently evaluated by the NIEPA.

(b) District Institutes of Education and Training

The scheme to strengthen teacher education by establishing quality training institutions, such as, the *District Institutes of Education and Training* (DIET) was initiated in 1987. The scheme proposed to create viable institutional, academic and technical resource base for orientations, training and continuous up-gradation of knowledge, competence and pedagogical skills of school teachers' in the country. The guidelines provided seven academic units with 22 faculty positions that cover different areas such as planning and management, education technology, material development etc. Since then 433 DIETs have been sanctioned of which 401 are functional. Below the district level, under DPEP, Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Circle Resource Centres (CRCs) have been established that ensure capacity building at the grassroots level. In non-DPEP districts, such institutions are not in existence. However, the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* envisages creating BRC and CRC in non-DPEP districts. The DIETs are now twelve years old but still many of them are not fully functional (see Box 2). The Ministry recently initiated a process through which it proposes to sign MoU with the States/UTs for the operationalization of the scheme. In the DPEP districts, a good amount of data is now available but hardly any DIET is using this set of information. Most of the DIETs do not function in the areas of planning and management and the faculty is neither actively involved in planning nor in implementation of the district plans. The prime activity of the DIETs is to impart training but in the DPEP districts even this responsibility is shared by the BRCs. The DIETs are involved in the training of the Master Resource Persons and concentrate only on training to primary school teachers. Hardly and DIET is imparting

training to upper primary teachers and to other functionaries working at the block level. Even the training calendar in most of the cases is provided by the state levels institutions, like the SCERT which leave a little scope for DIETs to develop need base training programmes.

(c) Alternative Education and innovative Programme

The *Non-Formal Education* (NFE) scheme was initiated in 1979 to cater learning needs of working children and children in difficult circumstances is one of the other important centrally sponsored schemes. The NFE programme is for the children of 6-14 age group who remain outside the formal system due to various reasons. Initially, the focus of the programme was on to Nine Educationally Backward states but at present it is in operation in 25 states. In 1999, there were 297 thousand NFE centers, which had a total enrolment of 7.42 million. The duration of NFE course is two years and a locally recruited and trained instructor is provided to impart education (equivalent to formal system) at a time and place most convenient to learners in smaller groups. A large number of voluntary agencies are also involved in NFE programme. An amount of Rs. 1,195 million to States & UTs and Rs. 400 million to voluntary agencies was released in 1998-99 for the implementation of the programme. The scheme is recently revised and named as *Scheme of Alternative and Innovative Education*. The scheme envisages that all habitations that do not have an elementary education centre within a radius of one kilometre will have one at the earliest. As a part of the scheme, school-mapping exercise will be conducted to identify school-less habitations, which will help to locate habitations where alternative centres are to be provided.

(d) Total Literacy Campaigns

The *Total Literacy Campaigns* mobilize communities and contributed to greater participation of children in schools. So far 450 districts have been covered under the TLC of which 250 campaigns have moved into post-literacy and 65 to continuing education stage. The campaigns cover an estimated 148 million persons. Of 94 million persons enrolled, so far 73 million persons have been completed level III. The uniqueness of the TLC lies in the fact that it is delivered through voluntarism. The programme is being implemented through the *Zilla (District) Saksharata Samities* created for the purpose. As mentioned, literacy rate has improved from 52 in 1991 to 65 percent in 2001 and TLCs have created positive environment for primary education to expand.

Box 2: DIETs: An Evaluation Study*

A recent evaluation study on functioning of DIETs by *Govinda and Sood* of NIEPA has come out with many revelations. The study found that different DIETs are at different state of development as some states have just begun and the others started very late. Since the inception of the scheme, a number of new districts have been created across the states and DIETs in these districts by and large have not been established. Most of the DIETs (83 per cent) have their own buildings but they are poorly maintained. In a few states, such as Delhi, Pondicherry and Meghalaya, hostel facilities are not available and as such 39 per cent of the DIETs do not have hostels. The study reveals that girls' hostels are not fully utilized. The states have divergent recruitment policy and 4 to 80 per cent of the positions across the states are vacant. In all the states, the study found shortage of the teaching positions.

With a few exceptions, ET equipments are not found in working condition. In a state like, Uttar Pradesh they are not at all in use. Most of the states have adopted DIET guidelines in total and as such there are no state-specific adaptations. In a large number of DIETs, units like Planning and Management, Curriculum and Material Development, Educational Technology etc. are found almost non-functional. The study found non-involvement of DIET faculty in development and implementation of plans. Even in DPEP districts, though willing, the faculty is not involved in managing and development of information systems. Libraries have been found to be totally neglected in most of the DIETs.

The study found lack of coordination in organizing in-service training programmes with the activities of BRCs and CRCs in many DPEP states. Most of the DIETs are implementing standard programmes of the states and hence a very little innovations are noticed. The DIETs focus its activities only on primary school teachers and orientation of other functionaries is sporadic. The study notices that in-service programmes are conducted without a long-term perspective.

The study by Govinda and Sood further found research and field experimentation the weakest component in DIETs. Research activities are not reported from the DIETs located in the North Eastern part of the country. This is because of the fact that in many states, sub-committees on studies and action research have not been constituted. Low motivation and lack of capacity and academic support are found to be the other major reasons. There are varying patterns so far as the management and coordination of the programme at the state level is concerned. SCERTs have emerged as the main coordinating agency in a number of states. However, poor support from the SCERT is reported in a few states. Under utilization of funds is also found to be a common feature in most of the DIETs.

*Summarized by the author based on the presentations made by Dr. R. Govinda and Dr. N. Sood at NIEPA, New Delhi on May 17, 2000.

(e) National Programme for Nutritional Support (Mid-day Meal)

The *National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education* (launched in 1995) provides foodgrains/cooked meals to children in primary classes. The programme assures 100 grams of grains per day for attending schools for at least 80 per cent of the total school days in a month. The programme had benefited more than 98 million children spread over 0.69 million schools. In the latest year, about 10.50 million children were covered under the scheme and allocated 2.48 million metric tones of grains (Annual Report: MHRD, 1999-2000). Along with teachers, local community is also given responsibility in the distribution of grains. In previous years, a significant gap has been noticed in quantity of foodgrains sanctioned (2.48 million metric tonnes) and actually lifted (1.06 million metric tonnes). A few states are not keen to implement the scheme because of the administrative problems or states like Punjab even do not need such type of programme. Punjab is the highest foodgrains producing state of the country. In difficult areas, the administrative cost is much higher than the actual cost of the foodgrains. The evaluation of the programme shows that on the one hand it has given boost to enrolment in a few states, on the other hand it has had a positive impact on attendance in other states. However, only 65 and 42 per cent children of age group 6-11 and 11-14 years were found attending primary and upper primary schools in 1995-96 (NSSO, 1998). Since then the same, due to mid-day meal intervention might have further improved.

(f) Innovative Projects and Programmes

I. District Primary Education Programme

The state specific basic education projects in Bihar (*Bihar Education Project*), Rajasthan (*Lok Jumbish & Shiksha Karmi*), Andhra Pradesh (*Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project*), Uttar Pradesh (*Uttar Pradesh Basic Shiksha Project*) and the *District Primary Education Programme* are of recent origin. Among these, the scope and coverage of DPEP is much more wider than the other programmes of similar nature. The programme that was first introduced in 1994 in 42 districts spread over seven states is now under implementation in about 248 districts (after bifurcation, 271) of fifteen (eighteen) states. The programme is structured in such a fashion so that it can provide additional inputs over and above the provisions made by the state governments for elementary education. Eighty five per cent of the project cost is shared by the Government of India and the rest 15 per cent by the concerned project states. The Government of India share is resourced by the external funding from IDA, European Community, Government of Netherlands, DFID (UK) and UNICEF.

Decentralized planning in a project mode, disaggregated target setting, community mobilization through *Village Education Committees*, participative planning process and autonomy to set targets, priorities and strategies are some of the salient features of DPEP (Box 3). For guidance and supervision, state-specific autonomous bodies (registered societies) are created at the state level and at the district level. District

Planning Teams were constituted. With the participation of the local community and others - both government and non-governmental agencies and individuals including the NGOs, district-specific plans were developed which are at different stages of implementation. The programme however confines only to primary level but the Government of India has decided to upgrade it to the upper primary level initially in 42 phase one districts. The programme in these districts will come to an end in March 2002.

Over the project period, more than 10,000 new formal schools are opened in the project districts and another 15,000 are in the pipeline. About 53,000 alternative schooling centres of different types have also been set-up and about 60,000 more are planned. About 16,500 new schools and 24,000 additional classrooms have been constructed under the DPEP and work on another 9,000 schools and 8,000 classrooms is in progress. In addition, drinking water and toilet facilities were also provided to schools and repairs of school buildings undertaken. Majority of teachers in the DPEP districts have received in-service training more than once. Teachers in a school are given Rs. 500/- per annum as teacher grant, which help them to develop local-specific teaching aids. All primary schools under the project have been granted Rs. 2,000/- per annum as school grant. More than 3 million community members have been trained and given responsibilities in the affairs of education at the grassroots level. A large number of *Cluster Resource Centres* and *Block Resource Centres* have been created where training to teachers is imparted. Teachers discuss problems and other topics of the common interest in the CRCs meetings.

Box 3: DPEP Objectives

The DPEP is a centrally sponsored scheme providing special thrust to achieve UEE. It takes a holistic view of primary education development and seeks to operationalised the strategy of UPE through district specific planning with emphasis on decentralized management, participatory processes, empowerment and capacity building at all levels. DPEP aims at providing access to primary education for all children, reducing primary dropout rate to less than 10 per cent, increasing learning achievement of primary school students by at least 25 per cent, and reducing the gap among gender and social groups to less than five per cent

MHRD: Annual Report, 1999-2000

A growth of 6.2 per cent per annum in primary enrolment has been noticed in 42 phase one (1995-98) districts with average GER at 99.7 per cent. In the phase two districts (1995-97) also, an increase of 2.55 per cent in enrolment has been noticed.

Reducing the gender gap, which is one of the important objectives of DPEP is closing rapidly. Index for social equity for Scheduled Caste children is more than 100 in all the phase one districts. Overall repetition rate has shown a decline in phase one district and come down to 5.2 per cent in 1997 from 7.5 per cent in 1995. The decline in dropout rates has been in the range of 4-20 per cent and most of the districts now have dropout rate in the range of 17-31 per cent. It may however be noted that utilization rate across districts remains very low. In a few project districts, enrolment in Grade I declined which is a major cause of concern. One of the possible explanations of this phenomenon is that children started diverting from government schools to unrecognized private schools. Or with the expansion of alternate schools, children of lower age group prefer alternate schools than the formal schools.

The significant achievements mentioned above are not reflected in the all-India averages because of the limited coverage of districts under the DPEP. One of the major limitations of the DPEP is the targets on GER (120 per cent) and Retention (90 per cent) which are almost same across the districts. The first phase districts got seven years while the phase two and three districts got only five years to implement the plan. In this process, districts which were in a position to achieve the goal earlier than seven years also got seven years project duration. A glance at a few of the plan documents reveal that districts have undertaken analysis of educational development and also attempted demographic and enrolment projections but the same in most of the cases need further refinement. In most of the DPEP districts, *Computerized Educational Management Information System* is now in existence but poor dissemination and low utilization of data have marred this significant achievement. Districts have also undertaken micro-planning exercises but the information generated is neither properly analysed nor is used in planning exercises. A huge amount of data is generated but only partially been utilized. Micro-planning was conducted as one time exercise and all the villages were not covered in the exercise. In a state like Tamil Nadu, school-specific completion (graduation) rate and achievement levels are now available but the functionaries at the grassroots level are not in a position to analyse correctly this set of data. Schools having low completion rates and achievement alongwith the reasons should be identified, to form school-specific interventions and strategies. The districts have not utilized school mapping in deciding the location of a new school. Rather, the capacity to conduct school mapping is not available both at the state and district level. Other significant limitation visible across the DPEP states is lack of coordination between the DPEP and the mainstreame Education Departments. There are many states even seven years after the programme, not too many can handle efficiently the task of planning and implementation.

The upper ceiling of the plan under DPEP was kept at Rs. 40 crore on irrespective of the size of the district. In view of this, districts proposed over ambitious proposals. They planned for Rs. 40 crore than for UPE. The utilization pattern suggests that most of the districts do not have the capacity to utilize the funds. Whatever they could utilize, a chunk of that was spent on civil activities. Activities relating to innovation, research, retention and quality improvement programmes are not picked-up as per the expectations. Teacher is one of the most important actors of the education system through whom all the interventions are expected to reflect in the classroom transactions: without which no

goal can be achieved. But a majority of states filled-up vacant positions by appointing *para teachers (low paid, unqualified and untrained local person)*. Despite all these limitations, a lot of progress is made across the districts and capacity of officials involved in the programme is also built-up at all levels. However, frequent transfers of DPEP officials at all levels across states have severely affected the implementation of the programme.

II. Lok Jumbish and Shiksha Karmi Projects

Apart from DPEP, *Lok Jumbish* (Peoples' Movement) and *Shiksha Karmi* Projects are the other two important programmes, which are, received attention at the international level. Both these projects are under implementation in Rajasthan since 1992, which is one of the most educationally backward states of India. Lok Jumbish and Shiksha Karmi are funded by SIDA. The main objective of LJP is to achieve EFA through people's mobilization and participation. Whereas, SKP focuses its attention on universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote, arid area and socio-economically backward villages with primary attention given to girls. The project identifies teacher absenteeism as a major obstacle in achieving the goal of UEE.

The LJ Parishad, an autonomous society, implements the LJP. Two phases of LJP during 1992 & 1994 and 1994 & 1998 are over and the third phase (1999-2004) with the assistance of *Department of International Development (UK)* is currently under implementation. For the first two phases, about Rs. 1,110 million were invested and for the third phase, an amount to the tune of Rs. 4,000 million is allocated. It has undertaken environment-building activities in the villages and has completed school mapping exercise in 8,921 villages. About 529 new schools were opened and another 268 upgraded. LJP has been able to set-up innovative management structures incorporating the principles of decentralization and delegation of authority as well as building partnership with local communities and the voluntary sector. It has also set-up block and cluster resource groups for providing academic supervision and regular training of primary school teachers.

However, it may be noted that the LJP has covered only 75 blocks, which is just one quarter of the total blocks in Rajasthan. The management cost of LJP is high compared to other programmes of similar nature. It is also not known whether the success it has achieved, will it be able to replicate elsewhere in Rajasthan and outside Rajasthan. The school mapping exercises, which are conducted in LJP, though termed school mapping but in fact, is a micro planning exercise. The disappointing aspect is closing down of LJP in about 10 blocks and another 9 may also meet the same fate. This is because of the DPEP, which is presently under implementation in 9 districts of Rajasthan. The *Government of Rajasthan* has decided to close down LJP in blocks, which falls under the DPEP districts. In 13 districts where the LJP is currently under implementation, development of District Elementary Education Plans will be taken up under the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)*. The Department of Elementary Education will implement SSA in these districts and coordination with the LJP at the grassroots level

will be challenging one. The state is yet to decide about the activities that it intends to take up under the SSA and LJP, as the goal of both the programmes is same but both have got separate project funds.

III. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

The Government of India recently launched an ambitious programme called *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: An Initiative for Universal Elementary Education*. The programme is planned to initiate in low female literacy districts spread over fifteen states to achieve the goal of UEE. It envisages that all the districts of the country will be covered under the programme before the end of the Ninth Plan i.e. March 2002. Unlike the *District Primary Education Programme*, the SSA envisages to develop district-specific elementary education plans within the framework of decentralized management of education with a focus on *Panchayati Raj Institutions*. In DPEP, the focus was on the primary level only. In these districts, it was the first attempt to develop the educational plans with the involvement of the local people in a participatory planning mode. District planning teams in many districts have been formed and training in planning methodology is imparted. A series of programmes were recently conducted by NIEPA, New Delhi and NSDART, Mussoorie in which members of the district planning teams and states representatives were trained.

The priority of SSA according to its framework is the low female literacy districts and districts that do not have experience of programmes like DPEP. But in reality, in case of many districts, this was violated. The 17 districts of Uttar Pradesh has got very rich experience (seven years) of the UP Basic Education Project but all of them were not only covered under the SSA but were also approved in the first lot. Many of these districts did not undertake the diagnostic exercise properly, existing information was not adequately utilized and there were a number of other methodological limitations. However, the Government ignored many of these issues and had taken a liberal view in sanctioning district plans despite numerous limitations pointed out by the members of the appraisal teams for unknown reasons. A number of other states, like Meghalaya, Punjab etc. included more districts than the originally planned.

SSA envisages a few pre-project activities. Filling-up of the existing positions of teachers, strengthening of DIETs and other state level institutions etc. are the few activities that were to be initiated at the state level. By and large not much attention is paid on these activities by the States, plans of which were approved recently. Constitution of the district planning teams, conducting baseline studies, household surveys, micro panning, strengthening of the existing MIS, undertaking diagnostic studies etc. are some of the district-specific pre-project activities that are envisaged to provide input to the district plans.

To initiate the pre-project activities, a ceiling of Rs. 5 million (upper ceiling) per district was proposed but in reality the districts were sanctioned much lower amount than the upper ceiling. Of the total 593 districts, DPEP and LJP are currently under implementation in about 285 districts. The remaining 308 districts will be covered under the SSA of which 270 districts spread over 28 States & UTs have submitted the pre-project activity proposals and amount is released to the State level registered societies. The total amount sanctioned and released is to the tune of Rs. 925 million. About 38 districts spread over Chhatisgarh, Goa, Rajasthan, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagra Haveli and Delhi are yet to submit pre-project activity proposals. In addition, an amount of Rs.55.2 million is also released to the DPEP Phase-1 districts spread over 8 states for pre-project activities with the emphasis on upper primary level of education.

The amount sanctioned for pre-project activities varies between Rs. 0.60 million in Harda (Madhya Pradesh) to 2.93 million in the Kamrup (Assam) district. It has been observed that most of the pre-project activities have not been taken-up in the districts, plans of which were submitted recently to the Government of India. It may however be noted that the money for the pre-project activities were released on the basis of the proposals submitted by the district planning teams. In few cases, the money sanctioned was not released to the districts in time and many of the districts did not get the full released amount. On the other hand, in Uttar Pradesh, an amount of Rs. 5 lakh each to the 17 (UPBEP) districts was released (by the Government of India) to upgrade the equipments even though the district teams didn't include it in their proposals.

One of the important pre-project activities is the constitution of the District Planning teams but in many districts the same was formed much later. In many districts they are yet to be constituted/activated. For these districts, pre-project activity plans were developed at the State level, which was against the basic spirits of the SSA. That is why in many districts, members of the planning teams found unaware of the

pre-project activities that were to be undertaken. Conducting research studies like, Social Assessment and Baseline Assessment Studies is another important pre-project activity. But barring Uttar Pradesh & Tamil Nadu, most of the other states didn't conduct research studies. Uttar Pradesh too could conduct SASs in five out of the seventeen districts even though money was provided to all the 17 districts. The BASs in most of the other states have not at all been conducted. Conducting BAS in SSA districts in the DPEP states may not be a problem but the non-DPEP states do not have experience to conduct such studies. State level institutions, like SCERT in these states should have taken initiatives in this direction for which they need support of the national level institutions, like NCERT. States like Nagaland approached the national level institutions in this regard but couldn't receive necessary support. Even the DPEP states are yet to evolve methodology for the upper primary level to conduct the BAS. However, Tamil Nadu has conducted BAS in case of the upper primary level also.

The SSA, which is a holistic programme, envisages involving community in a big way. The community ownership is central to the SSA programme (Box 4). However, it is not clear how SSA will actually become a movement and will be different than other programmes of the similar nature implemented in the past. All the existing centrally sponsored schemes have come under one umbrella programme i.e. SSA. This is expected to smoothen the flow of funds from the Central Government to the State level registered societies created for the implementation of the programme. Avoiding delay in the release of money from the state government to district was one of the many reasons because of which the SSA was initiated. But as it seems that this objective is forfeited in almost all the states where money was released to undertake the pre-project activities. In case of a few states, initially funds were released to the State Governments, as these states were yet to create registered societies. In most of the other states money was either not released to the districts in time or it was partially released. In a few states, money from the DPEP funds was released to the non-DPEP districts to initiate pre-project activities.

Most of the DPEP states, barring a few have decided to utilize the existing registered societies for the SSA also. However, a few others those who have created separate bodies for SSA, lack of coordination is quite visible. Karnataka and Assam are the two such states. In Assam, money was released to the DPEP in September 2000 (Rs. 7.4 million) to initiate pre-project activities in four districts but the same couldn't be transferred to the SSA districts. The state has since registered a separate society for the SSA. In case of the remaining 10 districts, an amount of Rs. 22.11 million was released to the State Government in August 2001 even though the State has got the registered body for the SSA. This money too was not released to the districts till September 2001. Needless to mention that the State decided to develop and submit district plans to the Government of India by November 30, 2001. Was there any magic through which this could be achieved in such a short period? The money to districts was yet to be released and the districts were to initiate the pre-project activities. Without compromising the quality, this was an impossible task to complete in two months especially when the district planning teams were yet to be activated. But the state did this magic and prepared all the plans in two months. But the interesting point is that the plans in Assam were prepared by the State Core Team and not by the district planning teams. In Himachal Pradesh also, the money was released to the State Government but the same even after 7 months couldn't be transferred to the DPEP society that is also the society for the SSA. In anticipation, the DPEP from its own funds released an amount of Rs. 50,000/- to each of the SSA districts to initiate the household survey. The State decided to complete the household survey and develop the district plans in less than two months. Needless to mention that the district planning teams at that time were not even aware of the pre-project activities that were to be initiated, money for which was released by the Government of India. In one of the newly created states, namely Uttaranchal except the household survey, as it seems that other pre-project activities were not undertaken and the State Government has yet to release the money to the DPEP society for carrying out SSA activities. In case of Tamil Nadu, money was released to the state government in two installments to carry over pre-project activities in 22 districts. The money was partially released to the State Government and also to the DPEP. The state government has yet to release the amount to the DPEP. The state is in the peculiar situation where it has decided to implement the SSA through the Directorate of Elementary Education but as of now it has not registered separate society for the SSA in the absence of which it withdraw money from the DPEP on time to time basis. Whatever the amount that was released for pre-project activities, the state could spend only one sixth of the total amount (Rs. 3.18 crore) and the rest of the money is lying unutilized with the DPEP and the State Government. Tamil Nadu has developed highly centralized system and the districts are given only a meager amount of the total released. Though the money was released partially in case of the 17 districts of Uttar Pradesh and a lot of pre-project activities not initiated/completed, the state ensured complete

coordination between different agencies involved in promotion of the elementary education that is mainly because of its state's leadership, which lack elsewhere. On the other hand in case of Meghalaya, money to undertake pre-project activities was released but the districts didn't undertake any of the approved activities. Even at the time of appraisal, the household survey was still going on halfway. It may also be noted that most of the districts covered under the SSA across the country have not estimated the funds over time they received and utilized under different *Centrally Sponsored Schemes* or how much are they spending on elementary education even though plans of all the districts that were submitted are approved and money released. In case of Assam, the State Mission Director informed the SSA board that the state has not released the money to the districts and as such no pre-project activity has been under taken in the state, even though all the plans were sanctioned. However, household survey was conducted in Haryana but only 40 per cent of the total blocks were covered in the survey.

The targets under the SSA is that all children will bring back to school by 2003 and complete five years of schooling by 2007 and eight years by 2010. Accordingly, all children of age '6' year will be enrolled by 2002-03 and retain till 2007 to achieve UPE. All the districts of the country will be covered under the SSA before the end of the Ninth Plan i.e. March 2002. This may not be an easy task to achieve in such a short period. Even, the *Dakar Framework for Action* to which India is a signatory envisages achieving the goal of UPE by the year 2015. It is also quite possible that a few states and districts may achieve the UPE earlier than 2007 and a few others may not achieve, even after 2007. Therefore, the national targets should be treated indicative in the nature and the districts and blocks within a district should adopt their own targets, which should be based upon the present status of the educational development in a district/block. If necessary, separate targets for boys, girls, and SC & ST population should also be fixed. However, most of the plans that were appraised recently blindly adopted the national targets without going into the details whether they will be able to achieve it in a short period of 7 to 10 years. A few districts, those who have adopted district-specific targets didn't follow scientific methods to fix the targets. Whatever the targets they have adopted are entirely based upon their perception and present educational status in the district, demographic and enrolment projection techniques are not considered in fixing the targets. Those who attempted projection techniques also need further refinements. In most of the cases, block-specific targets are not set so as the separate targets for the focus/target groups. In almost all the states, first year's annual plans have been prepared without even preparing the perspective plans. These states are now advised to prepare perspective plans; this is just up side down. In case of Haryana, the appraisal team was sent to appraise the perspective plan of eight years duration. The state initially didn't plan for the current year. It was only after the appraisal, the annual plans for the last two months of the current financial year was prepared and money sanctioned. In Punjab, the members of the appraisal team helped the State Government to develop the State Component plan that was out of the preview of the appraisal team. Across districts, not much attention is paid to upper primary level of education. Neither the districts have separate targets for upper primary level nor the annual targets are fixed even though detailed first years work plan is developed. By and large districts have not considered the existing transition from primary to upper primary level and graduation rates that will decide the expansion of the upper primary education. Despite all these limitations, district plans of all the states were approved and money sanctioned.

Box 4: Strategy Frame for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

The SSA a people's movement for EFA will provide useful and relevant elementary education of satisfactory quality for all by 2010 bridging all social and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community in the affairs of school. To achieve UPE, in a holistic and convergent approach, the following key strategies have been worked out:

- I. Emphasis to be laid on retention and achievement rather than on mere enrolment;
- II. Adopt incremental approach for creating school facilities. Education Guarantee Centres in unserved habitations and 'back to school camps' for out of school;
- III. Focus to be shifted from educationally backward states to educationally backward districts;
- IV. Adoption of disaggregated approach with focus on preparation of district specific and population plans;
- V. Universal access to schooling facilities particularly to girls, disaggregated groups and out of school children;
- VI. Make education relevant by curricular reforms to promote life skills;
- VII. Improvement in school effectiveness, teacher competency, training and motivation;
- VIII. Decentralization of planning and management through *Panchayati Raj Institutions/Village Education Committees* and stress on participative processes; and
- IX. Convergence of different schemes of elementary education and related services such as early childhood care and education, school health and nutrition programmes etc.

Source: MHRD: Annual Report (2000b &c).

SSA envisages habitation as a unit of the planning. However, the document is not clear how this would be achieved? Do we have education offices at the habitation level? Or will it be achieved through the convergence? Do we have the other governmental offices at the habitation level? are some of the important questions, which needs to be addressed. Therefore, the proposal look ambitious and challenging one especially keeping in view that a large number of persons will be required to involve in this task. Of the total 1,061 thousand habitations in the country, 581 thousand had population 300 & more and were eligible for the schooling facilities in 1993. An average of 4-5 persons per habitation would need at least 2-3 million people to be trained and involved in this task. If not available, there will no alternative but to involve teachers too in this activity. Do we have effective infrastructure to build-up capacity of the grassroots people? Can DIETs handle this mammoth task? Certainly we are not ready to take up this challenging task at this stage, which is more specifically true in the light of the quality of training facilities that are available at the lower levels. The states that have initiated household surveys, mainly utilized teachers in conducting the survey and involvement of the community were only marginal. However, information generated through HH-survey is not properly and adequately utilized in most of the district plans. To begin with, it would be better to develop district-specific plans with block as the basic unit of planning. Habitation plans may be possible in the districts, which have already initiated a variety of innovative projects. For example because of the Janshala Programme, many districts of Andhra Pradesh have habitation-specific information, effective community mobilization and elected school committees. In many of these districts, habitation and mandal-specific information on out-of-school & drop out children, facilitates in schools and additional requirements etc. is readily available but because of the limited funds the same couldn't be provided to all the habitations; thus forfeiting the basic objective of developing the habitation-specific plans. In Tamil Nadu, household survey and other studies such as, Cohort, Infrastructure and BAS have been conducted in all the 29 SSA districts but utilizing this set of rich information in improving the functioning of schools and learners achievement is challenging one. DPEP is said to be successful in achieving significant increase in both the enrolment and retention and also in creating effective information system, management structures and training centres both at the block and cluster levels. Can't we adopt this model in the SSA? That is what exactly has been tried in the SSA but inputs from other programmes has made it too heavy and over ambitious. It seems that there are too many eggs in the basket.

States have different arrangements to look after upper primary education. They have District Elementary/Education Officer to look after Grades I-VIII. But across states, high and higher secondary schools also have upper primary sections. In most of such states, upper primary sections in the high and higher secondary schools is being looked after by a separate DEO (Secondary)/CEO. In most of the states (like Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu etc.), it has been noticed that DEOs (Secondary) were not at all involved in the SSA (pre-project) activities. This is quite visible both at the state as well as at the district and other lower levels. Without their active involvement and cooperation, a number of activities even cannot be initiated.

SSA proposes to provide funds for the renewal of school equipments, which is otherwise not covered in any other programme. In addition, a variety of incentive schemes have also been proposed. During the recent past, a number of primary schools are opened under the *Education Guarantee Scheme* (EGS). Under the EGS, the government is bound to provide a primary school within a period of 90 days. *Para Teachers* are appointed in EGS schools that are recommended by the community. The SAS proposes to upgrade 15 per cent of the EGS schools and alternative schooling centres. It also proposes to make available funds for maintenance and repair of the school buildings. Further, the SSA provides for an over a 6 per cent ceiling on the management and 33 per cent on the civil works cost. Unlike the DPEP, SSA will have no upper ceiling of the plan and money will be released on the year-to-year basis. However, the plan would be of ten years duration. In one of the states, namely, Uttar Pradesh, an amount of Rs. 5,000/- crore over a period of ten years was proposed for 17 of its districts. Similarly, Andhra Pradesh proposed a sum of more than Rs. 1,300/- crore for its four districts. In a recently held meeting of the SSA executive board, an amount ranging between Rs. 73.1 and Rs. 144.5 million were released to two districts each of the Andhra Pradesh (East & West Godavari districts) and Uttar Pradesh (Allah bad & Lucknow districts) to carry out first years activities (remaining seven months of the current year). Influential persons represent all these districts in the parliament. Subsequently, district plans of all other states were also approved and money sanctioned and released to undertake the activities during the last few months of the current financial year. All the states whosoever submitted the plans have got the approval. It is only states like Delhi, Manipur, Chhatisgarh, Jammu & Kashmir etc. and a few UTs that their plans are not approved

simply because they are yet to submit the plans to the Government of India. The DPEP experience suggests that there is no shortage of the funds but it is the utilization of the available funds, which is crucial. Most of the districts failed to fully utilize the funds provided under the DPEP. This would now be a challenge to the SSA district teams to utilize the money. In case if they fail to utilize the funds in the current year, which is most likely, the unutilized money will be utilized in the initial few months of the next financial year by that time the next year plans would also get approval. Ad-hoc approach, which as it seems institutionalized in the SSA, will kill the programme prematurely. If such practices continue, the fate of SSA will be similar to the other programmes/projects/schemes implemented in the past and it would have to merge in some other programme in 2010.

Finally, a few words about the appraisal process under the SSA. It seems that the existing arrangements are perfectly ad-hoc in the nature. It may be noted that only Uttar Pradesh has submitted plans for all of its 17 SSA districts. In case of other states, plans were submitted, appraised and approved in the installments. Representatives of the national institutions like, NCERT and NIEPA, State representatives, officials of the TSG (Ed. CIL) etc. have been the members of the appraisal teams. The appraisal manual has not yet been developed in the absence of which, the members of the appraisal teams appraised plans according to their own experience and understanding. Strengthening the briefing session at the national level will be useful specific to the new members of the appraisal team. The SSA framework suggests a few state representatives (experts) in the appraisal teams but in Uttar Pradesh, officials those who were involved in the planning and management of the programme (those involved in developing plans) were also made members of the mission. This has adversely affected the outcome of the appraisal. In other states where the state experts were the members of the appraisal teams, their participation was limited to the extent of accompanying the team members during the field trips to the districts only. They could contribute a little to the overall outcome of the mission activities. They were neither present in the initial briefing session nor in the final wrap-up at Delhi. Uttar Pradesh was repeated in case of other states also. In case of one district of Sikkim, the appraisal team consisted of only one person having specialized in the area of the civil works who also looked after other components such as planning, intervention strategies, costing etc. In case of 7 districts of Uttaranchal, 49 members of the district planning teams were trained in the planning methodology at the NSDART, Mussoorie. One of the key resource persons those who imparted training was made the member of the appraisal mission. In case of Tamil Nadu, Mizoram, and Orissa and in a number of other states, the SSA board meetings were fixed well in the advance even before the report of the appraisal mission was made available. This shows eagerness of the Government to approve the plans. This has sent wrong signal to the state concerned that the plans will be approved whatever may be the recommendations of the appraisal team. The other interesting feature of the appraisal is that in case of a number of states, there was no wrap-up session at the national level and the reports of the appraisal team were directly put up in the board meeting for the approval. In case of Meghalaya, members of appraisal team were not even briefed at the state level and were directly sent to the field trips. However, there was a wrap-up session at the state level, which was also attended by the MHRD representative. It was perhaps the first time in Gujarat and Meghalaya that a GOI nominee was presented at the state level in the final wrap-up. The MHRD representatives responsible for a state are always keen that the plans are approved by the board whatever may be the limitations and suggestions of the appraisal team. As it seems now that initially the appraisal was a bit serious exercise but it has fast lost its tempo towards approaching the year-end.

The other noticeable feature of the appraisal is the number of members that vary from one member in Sikkim to about ten members in Uttar Pradesh. As it looks that the number of members in a mission has no concern with the number of districts (in a state) appraised and also with the components of the plan. To appraise 17 plans of Uttar Pradesh, a strong team of ten members was constituted but a team of only seven members appraised 22 district plans of Tamil Nadu. In case of Uttaranchal, the team consisted of only three members. Like the number of appraisal members, the duration of the mission also vary from state to state and in many places the duration was too short and it was not linked to the number of district plans. In a few cases, leadership of the appraisal team too created problems. The approach followed in this regard need refinements. Without fault, NCERT and NIEPA were asked to nominate the faculty members and also to lead the mission. But in case of Jharkhand and Gujarat, no one represented the NIEPA in the appraisal team. It is the prerogative of the members of the team to identify the team convener and it should have been left to the members of the team. Even to support the programme at the national level, proposed Operational Support Group has also not yet been established. In the absence of which, appraisal activities are being supported by the TSG on an ad-hoc basis. To improve the district

plans, the appraisal teams gave a number of suggestions but in most of the cases they were ignored and plans were approved. In a number of states, states were not given the adequate time to incorporate the suggestions of the appraisal teams and revision of the district plans become only a formality.

The hope is not lost. We can expect improvements in the year that follows.

8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the analysis presented above on different components of EFA one noticed that the country progressed tremendously but still it has certain areas of concern, which are primarily responsible for the unfulfillment of the goals of universal literacy and enrolment. The system has certain strengths and weaknesses also.

Across the country, educational facilities are now available to a large segment of population and areas but compared to primary, upper primary facilities are not yet available to all the areas and population. The innovative and alternative education programme will further improve access to primary education. Over a period of time, ratio of primary to upper primary schools improved significantly but the same is not as envisaged in the policy directives. The ratio is further likely to improve in view of a large number of new upper primary schools proposed in SSA districts. The country also failed to adequately create, utilize and make available alternative facilities in all unserved habitations and areas where out-of-school children concentrate. The priorities of primary and upper primary levels are however different. Primary level need more schools where as the priority at the upper primary level is to strengthen the existing schools.

A few schools still do not have school buildings and other teaching-learning facilities. The number of teachers and pupil-teacher ratio over time improved significantly but still there are schools that do not have adequate number of teachers and instructional rooms. Average number of teachers and instructional rooms is higher in upper primary schools than in primary schools. The number of female teachers over time improved significantly but still their number is less than their male counterparts. Upper primary teachers face difficulty in teaching science and mathematics, for that matter, recruitment and deployment policy needs to be re-looked into. Except the northeastern part of the country, majority of primary school teachers are trained but the same is not true in case of the upper primary teachers. The responsibility of training is entrusted to *District Institutes of Education & Training*. But majority of the DIETs are not fully equipped to handle this mammoth task. DIETs do not concentrate on training of upper primary teachers. Below the district level, *Block Resource Centre*, *Cluster Resource Centre* and *Village Education Committees* have been formed in the DPEP districts but such bodies (except VECs) are not yet envisaged in non-DPEP districts. VECs are yet to be fully entrusted powers and responsibilities envisaged in the *Panchayati Raj Institution Bill*. VECs for upper primary education are yet to be activated. Under SSA much is expected from the community in the affairs of schools. It was proposed to create *State Institute of Educational Management and Training* (SIEMT) in DPEP states but barring Uttar Pradesh, elsewhere they are yet to be created/activated.

The enrolment at the primary and upper primary levels of education over time improved significantly but still more girls are out-of-school than their boys counterpart.

The enrolment ratio at the upper primary level is much lower than at the primary level. The primary education system as it is today, is highly inefficient one. The efficiency of primary education system has direct implications on upper primary system to expand. Unlike primary enrolment, which is a function of 6-11 years population, upper primary enrolment is strictly a function of primary graduates. Therefore, unless the goal of UPE is achieved, the dream of UEE is also not likely to be realized. However, the transition for primary to upper primary level across the country is reasonably high but attendance rates and achievements levels at primary level are low.

A large number of children continue to dropout from the system before completion of an education cycle, which severely affects the efficiency of the education system. However, dropout rate between upper primary grades is not very high. Children are taking more years to become primary graduates than ideally required. The unfinished task in terms of out-of-school children is challenging one. Rigorous efforts are needed to bring and retain all of them under the umbrella of education system. Decentralised planning and block as a unit of planning will help to identify disadvantage groups and areas. This has been experimented in DPEP and is now expanded to non-DPEP i.e. SSA districts. The community, in this direction, can play a vital role in bringing and retaining unenrolled children to schools. Micro planning exercises and development of habitation-specific plans may be useful. This has been experimented in DPEP districts but need significant improvement, this can further be strengthened under SSA. Utilization of data collected through household survey will be challenging one. It should be linked to EMIS, which will help to monitor elementary education programmes. The EMIS, especially in non-DPEP districts need strengthening. Local people and functionaries are made involved in DPEP in developing district plans that have brought sea change in quality of plans but effective implementation is still a major concern. The *Government of India* recently initiated a new programme called *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: An Initiative for Universal Elementary Education*. Before the end of the Ninth Plan, all the districts of the country are expected to cover under this programme. The districts will develop habitation-specific plans by involving local community in a big way within the broad parameters of decentralization. There is ample scope in SSA to improve upon the existing situation provided that the provisions made are optimally utilised.

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EFA THE YEAR 2000 ASSESSMENT

The *World Conference on Education for All – The Year 2000 Assessment* was held recently (April 2000) at Dakar, Senegal. A lot of activities were initiated in this regard in India. The country report was based upon a set of three core documents, namely (i) EFA 18-core indicators; (ii) The state of the art review on learning achievements; and (iii) The state of the art review on learning conditions. In addition, twenty-three studies covering different aspects of EFA were also initiated. This exercise has generated enormous amount of information about India in its efforts towards achieving the goal of EFA during the previous decade. In this section, a gist of findings of these studies is briefly presented.

EFA Year 2000 Assessment: Studies Conducted in India

- The study on *decentralization of education* (by Vinod Raina) concludes that there is little doubt that during the past decade, a noticeable desire to decentralize primary education has been evident in the country. However, the limited attempts to involve communities have not really translated in diminishing the role of the state in controlling and regulating education.
- The study on *participatory micro planning for universal primary education* (by Abhimanyu Singh) observes that during the previous decade a new hierarchy of micro planning has evolved. Further, the study on role and contribution of NGOs to basic education (by Disha Nawani) concludes that NGOs' existed in India for over a long period and has contributed immensely towards its various developmental programmes. However, the study notices tremendous diversity among the NGOs.
- Over time, the concept of continuing education has undergone several evolutionary changes and reincarnations. The study on *changing concepts and shifting goals* (by C. J. Daswani) advocates that for a post literacy programme to succeed, it is necessary to ensure that the non-literate is equipped with stable literacy skills before the basic literacy programme is terminated. A. Mathew in his study on *Indian engagement with adult education and literacy* also mentions that the methodology adopted for implementation of the mass literacy campaigns during 1990s' had brought in a breath of fresh air.

- The study on *early childhood care and education* (by Venita Kaul) concludes that there has been a quantum leap in services and programmes related to ECCE during the last decade. The private sector is making rapid expansion in this area but hardly there is any system of regulation. The study emphasizes the need to strengthen the linkages of ECCE programmes with primary education so that it caters to overall development of the child and not be limited to the academic learning aspect.
- The study on *role of private schools in basic education* (by Anuradha De, Manabi Majumadar, Meera Samson and Claire Noronha) observes that private schools have been expanding rapidly in recent years. It cautions that increasing privatization will only increase the already strong gender bias in schooling. The number of private institutions is expected to increase, if government system is allowed to deteriorate further.
- The study on *out-of-school children* (by Sharada Jain) presents various estimates of out-of-school children of age group 6-14 years that ranges between 63 to 75 million. The children engaged in full-time work as child labourers is estimated to be 60 million.
- Though significant progress has been made in the provision of education for all girls, the task is not yet complete (by Usha Nayar). Provision of post primary education to girls in rural areas, continued thrust on gender sensitive and gender inclusive curriculum etc. are the major issues that are yet to be tackled with regards to education of girls.
- The study on *status of elementary teachers* (by A. S. Seetharamu) mentions that teachers are rarely aware of the values of their work with the overall goals and values of EFA. EFA is not integral to their thinking process. It further mentions that for similar levels of qualifications, certification and performance teachers are paid different salaries. Another study on *primary teacher training in the EFA decade* (by C. Seshadri) observes that primary teacher education has made remarkable progress in terms of increase in enrolments, variety of training and support institutions. The creation of National Council of Teacher Education has, by and large, succeeded in creating a conducive climate for the pursuit of quality in primary teacher education.

- The study on *education of children with special needs* (by Sudesh Mukhopadhyay and M. N. G. Mani) observes that the last decade of the century recognized that children with disabilities and special education needs to constitute a significant group in the monitoring of EFA targets. However, there are still serious challenges, which would require increased effort and decisions for ensuring expansion of educational facilities in different parts of the country.
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- The study on *education among tribals* (by K. Sujatha) concludes that during the past few years, tribal education has witnessed a rapid transformation particularly in the arena of Access, pedagogic reform and community participation. However, the study cautions that improvement of educational scenario in tribal areas should not be left out as an intermediate strategy rather efforts should be undertaken to make it sustainable.
- The study on *financing of elementary education in India* (by J. B. G. Tilak) reveals that government expenditure on elementary education as proportion of national income declined from 1.6 per cent in 1990-91 to 1.4 per cent in 1996-97. It cautions that unless sufficient resources are devoted to elementary education, the goal might remain unaccomplished. The additional requirements of Rs. 137,000 crores in next ten years for universalisation according to study is neither unachievable nor un-affordable. The study suggests that a strong political commitment to finance liberally the education sector from domestic resources seems to be the only alternative.
- The study on *texts in context* (by Anita Rampal) concludes that there have been some major developments in the last decade, though much still remains to be done. There has been a perceptible shift from a monolithic mechanism of curriculum design, through an apex-centralized body, to many more agencies involved in the exercise.
- The study on *role of media in EFA* (by Avik Ghosh) observes that considerable investments are made in using communication technologies in education and the coverage of basic education in the media is more than it was 10-15 years ago. The access to information resource centres online, downloading information etc. are a reality to only a few teachers and students in the privileged private schools which should be extended to more teachers and students through a well planned public investment programme in basic education.

Summarized by the author based on different EFA Year 2000 Assessment Studies conducted in India, MHRD & NIEPA, 2000(d).