# Status of Education in India
# National Report

Prepared by the

**National University of Educational Planning & Administration**
for the



Department of Higher Education
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Government of India
New Delhi, India

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ADIP | Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/ Fitting of Aids/Appliances |
| AICTE | All India Council for Technical Education |
| AIE | Alternative and Innovative Education |
| BRGF | Backward Regions Grants Fund |
| CABE | Central Advisory Board of Education |
| CBO | Community-based Organization |
| CBSE | Central Board of Secondary Education |
| CCPD | Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities |
| CSS | Centrally Sponsored Schemes |
| CWSN | Child With Special Needs |
| DPEP | District Primary Education Programme |
| EBB | Educationally Backward Blocks |
| ECCE | Early Childhood Care and Education |
| EDI | Education Development Index |
| EDUSAT | Education Satellite as launched by Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) |
| EGS | Education Guarantee Scheme |
| GER | Gross Enrolment Ratio |
| GOI | Government of India |
| GPI | Gender Parity Index |
| HRM | Human Resource Minister |
| ICDS | Integrated Child Development Scheme |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IEDC | Integrated Education for the Disabled Children |
| IEDSS | Inclusive Education for the Disabled at Secondary Stage |
| IIITM | Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management |
| IIM | Indian Institute of Management |
| IIS | Indian Institute of Science |
| IIT | Indian Institute of Technology |
| KGBV | Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya |
| KVS | Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangthan |
| M/HRD | Ministry of Human Resource Development |
| MDMS | Mid-Day Meal Scheme |
| MS | Mahila Samakhya |
| MSJE | Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment |
| MWCD | Ministry of Women and Child Development |
| NCERT | National Council of Educational Research and Training |
| NCF | National Curriculum Framework |
| NCMP | National Common Minimum Programme |
| NGO | Non- Government Organization |
| NIOS | National Institute of Open Schooling |
| NIT | National Institutes of Technology |
| NLM | National Literacy Mission |
| NMCME | National Monitoring Committee for Minorities Education |
| NPE | National Policy on Education |
| NPEGEL | National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level |
| NSSO | National Sample Survey Organization |
| NUEPA | National University of Educational Planning and Administration |
| NVS | Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti |
| OBC | Other Backward Classes |
| POA | Programme of Action |
| PSK | Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh (Elementary Education Fund) |
| PWD Act | Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 |
| SC | Scheduled Castes |
| SSA | Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan |
| ST | Scheduled Tribes |
| SUCCESS | Scheme for Universal Access and Quality at the Secondary Stage |
| UEE | Universalisation of Elementary Education |
| UGC | University Grants Commission |
| UNCRPD | United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities |

# Inclusive Education the Way of the Future

*".….Every society that values social justice and is anxious to improve the lot of the common man and cultivate all available talent must ensure progressive equality of opportunity to all sections of the population. This is the only guarantee for the building up of an egalitarian and human society in which the exploitation of the weak will be minimized".*

*(The Education Commission, GOI, 1966. 108)*

**Section 1**

# Vision of Inclusion

India, as one of the oldest civilizations of the world and with its rich cultural heritage, has traversed a long distance during the last sixtyone years of its independence. It accounts for 2.4 per cent of the world surface area and supports 16.7 per cent of the world population. India's 1.28 billion people live in 28 States and 7 Union Territories. The uniqueness of the Indian society is its 'Unity in Diversity', which is visible in its religions, languages and cultures. India is a multi-religious country with a population mix of Hindus 80.5 per cent, Muslims 13.43 per cent, Christians 2.3 per cent and 3.77 per cent others, constituting an important part of Indian diversity. Hindi, in the 'Devanagari' script, is the official language of the country; but both Hindi and English are collectively used by the Union Government for certain specified administrative purposes. Besides, the eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution recognizes as many as 22 scheduled languages. By some count, there are over 200 languages and almost 1,600 dialects that are spoken in the country (Prakash, Ved, 2008).

The Education system of a country does not function in isolation from the society of which it is a part. Hierarchies of castes, economic status, gender relations and cultural diversities as well as uneven economic development also deeply influence issues relating to access and equity in education. Though India was widely acclaimed as a land of knowledge and wisdom during ancient times yet access to education was limited to select strata of the society. The societal distribution of responsibility and accountability may have been justified in those days but in today's context deeply entrenched social inequalities between various social groups and castes, the centuries- old social prejudices and inequalities, based on caste at birth, continue to propose challenges for national development. Extending educational opportunities to the marginalized groups has

been considered an antidote to this longstanding discrimination by the framers of the Constitution. Several attempts have been made by social reformers and others to make education accessible to the marginal groups with varying degrees of success.

The concepts of social inclusion and exclusion are used in many debates around injustice and inequality. These concepts have found their way into mainstream discussions of education policy through the influence and experience of disabled people's movements and 'special needs schools' (id21 Insights, undated). India is also touched by these international instruments and is signatory to most of them. These developments necessitated that schools may be viewed as the facilitators for exercising the Right to Education for growing children and youth. This school reform approach favours the evolution from integrated education (where the child is adapted to fit the mainstream environment) to inclusive education (where environment is adapted according to the needs of the child). Inclusion is to be seen as part of the wider struggle to overcome exclusive discourse and practices, and against the ideology that each individual is completely separate and independent.

The biggest change in education in the last five years is the focus on "Learners" in a pro-active manner. This being so, learners are central to attempts to improve the quality of education. While this may appear obvious as logic, it needs to be consciously reflected in practice. Education, to be inclusive needs to be responsive to the diverse needs and circumstances of learners and to give appropriate weight to the abilities, skills and knowledge they bring to the teaching and learning process. The Dakar Framework (UNESCO, 2000) makes clear that an inclusive learning environment is an essential attribute of high-quality education. This is the spirit in which inclusive education has emerged in India.

One of the landmark developments since the last conference in 2004 has been the assurance given by the Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development (HRM) in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of the Parliament) in 2005 and now the launch of the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012): Inclusive Growth in June 2008.

The Statement by the HRM is very comprehensive and covers all the levels of education -from early years to adulthood and cuts across all the related ministries, departments and programmes. According to this Statement, "The Ministry of HRD will assume nodal responsibility to monitor, guide, facilitate and coordinate the new Action Plan. The Ministry will also be responsible for making an assessment of the additional funds required and for making the appropriate recommendations in this regard. A person/ persons with deep experience of inclusive education practices will be nominated to the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) and will, in addition, assist the MHRD and ensure proper implementation of the new action plan. The Ministry will also devise methods to make the implementation of the Action Plan transparent, measurable and accountable and will involve non-governmental experts in monitoring this area of work".

This Statement promised an action plan that has been developed in 2005 and Department of School Education and Literacy in the M/HRD is the nodal agency for monitoring implementation. *Though this statement is made for the children and youth with disabilities, the same developments are also true for children*

**Box 1: Statement by the HRM\***

Sir, as promised in this august house during the last session of the Parliament, my Ministry has formulated a comprehensive Action Plan for the Inclusive Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities. The need for inclusive education arises precisely because it is now well understood that most children with disabilities can, with motivation and effort on the part of teaching institutions, become an integral part of those institutions. The government is committed to providing education through mainstream schools for children with disabilities, in accordance with the provisions of the Persons With Disabilities Act, 1995. Non-specialist schools, whether at the elementary, secondary or higher levels can, with appropriate support within the education community adapt themselves to work with children with disabilities. Worldwide there is a conscious shift away from special schooling to mainstream schooling of education for children with disabilities. It should, and will be our objective to make mainstream education not just available but accessible, affordable and appropriate for students with disabilities. I also believe that if we make our schools accessible to children with disabilities, we will also be improving the quality of education for all children, a key objective of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

The main objectives of the Action Plan will be

(i) To ensure that no child is denied admission in mainstream education;

(ii) To ensure that every child would have the right to access an Aanganwadi and school and no child would be turned back on the ground of disability;

(iii) To ensure that mainstream and specialist training institutions serving persons with disabilities, in the government or in the non-government sector, facilitate the growth of a cadre of teachers trained to work within the principles of inclusion;

(iv) To facilitate access of girls with disabilities and disabled students from rural and remote areas to government hostels;

(v) To provide for home- based learning for persons with severe, multiple and intellectual disability;

(vi) To promote and distance education for those who require an individualised pace of learning;

(vii) To emphasize job-training and job-oriented vocational training; and

(viii) To promote an understanding of the paradigm shift from charity to development through a massive awareness, motivation and sensitization campaign.

*Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Arjun Singh Rajya Sabha*
*(Upper House of the Parliament) in 2005*

\* *Statement made in the Rajya Sabha on 21.3.2005 by the Minister for Human Resource Development on the subject of the Inclusive Education of Children with Disabilities ( Reference- Office Memorandum dated 22.3.2005 of Department of Secondary and Higher Education, M/HRD)*

*and youth of other marginalized groups that may be facing the danger of exclusion for the deep rooted historical reasons.* This now is substantiated by the components of the education plan as reflected in the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) of India.

It also needs to be noted that Indian Constitution provided safeguards for the marginalized and vulnerable groups as early as in 1950s and these are being continuously executed and monitored. However, inclusion of children and persons with disabilities is one of the priority areas as indicated by the HRM's statement and also reflected in policy and plan documents. This report on development of education in India gives information about education in general, about achievements and challenges for the identified groups for special focus like Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backwards Classes (OBCs), Minorities such as Muslims, with gender as the cross cutting concern. However, inclusion in education for children and youth with disabilities will also be commented separately though India recognizes that issues in education of the disabled also become more complex due to multiple disadvantages that these persons face and also disability like gender is a cross cutting concern.

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# Indian Education System[1]

There has not been any fundamental change over the past few years in the structure and organization of secondary and higher secondary education. The period since the nineties especially since last decade has witnessed growth in response to the demand generated by the expansion of elementary education. While state financing of secondary education continues to grow, participation of non-governmental organizations has also increased in the management of secondary schools with official recognition, and in many cases, with financial assistance. Vocationalization of secondary education provides for diversification of educational opportunities so as to enhance individual employability, reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of skilled manpower and a viable alternative for those not intending to pursue higher education. Currently a scheme for universalisation of secondary education is on the anvil under the current Eleventh Five Year Plan.

School education in India is organized in four stages, namely, primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary. While the minimum number of years required to complete general school education remains ten years throughout the country, the division of the ten-year general school education into primary, upper primary and secondary continues to be different in some of the states and union territories. Eighteen states and union territories have adopted the 5+3+2 pattern of general school education. In twelve other States and Union Territories, the pattern of general school education is 4+3+3 (i.e. four years of primary, three years of upper primary and three years of secondary school education). Three states and union territories follow a 5+2+3 pattern and one State follows a general school education system of 4+4+2. Educational structure of school education in India is depicted in Figure-1.

Literacy is the first rung of the educational ladder. Literacy has for long been considered a pre-requisite for development. It is a major determinant in achievement of our demographic goals, be they the reduction in infant mortality rates, maternal mortality rates or the fall in female fertility rates. The need for a literate population was recognized as a crucial input for nation building and the National Literacy Mission (NLM) was set up by the Late Prime Minister of India, Shri Rajiv Gandhi in 1988 to achieve this goal. The initial target before the National Literacy Mission was to make 80 million persons literate by 1995, was later enhanced to 100 million persons literate by 1997. The target for the Tenth Plan was to achieve a threshold level of 75% literacy by 2007 which now has been revised to achieving 80% literacy.

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[1]    Most of the information in this section is based on *Education in India,* prepared by National University of Educational Planning and Administration for the Department of Higher Education, Government of India, October 2007.

Figure 1: Educational Structure in India
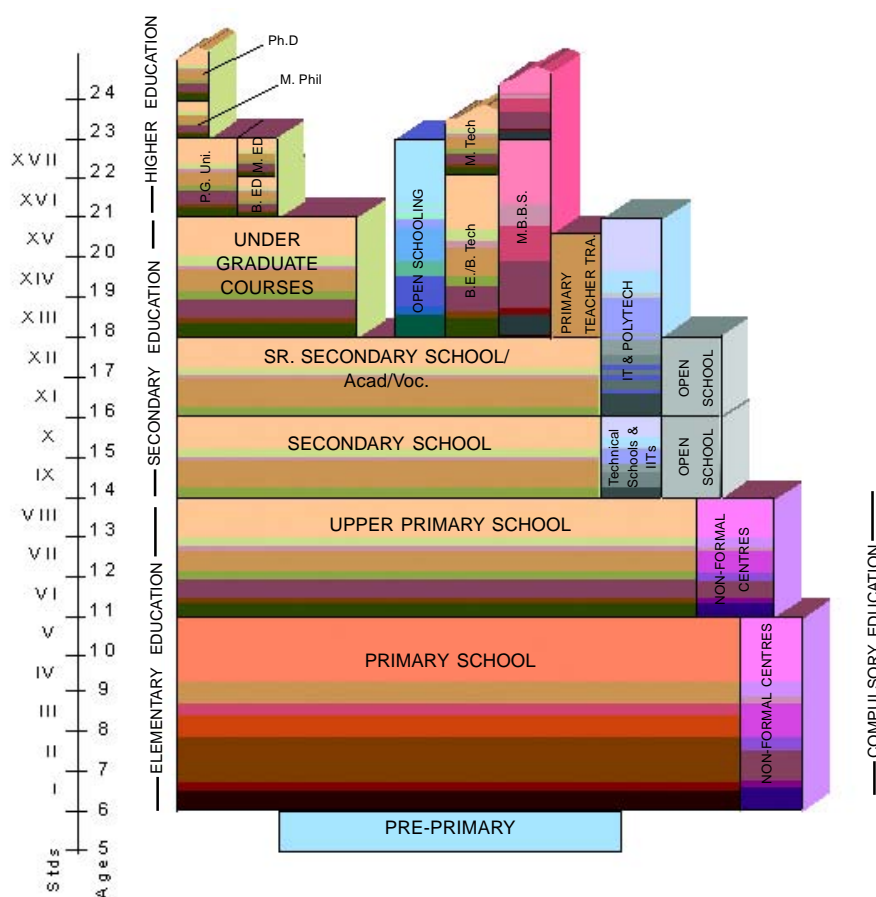


The pre-primary education as a part of the educational ladder is not compulsory. Governmental intervention in the pre-primary sector is through the Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) programme which includes universalising the programme of Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) to provide a functional *Anganwadi* in every settlement and ensure full coverage for all children. The private sector, mostly in urban areas, supplements the government efforts substantially in catering to the pre-primary educational needs of children. The National Common Minimum Programme (CMP) envisages a significant expansion of the

ICDS to cover all States and UTs in the country. As per the Census of India (2001), children in the age group of birth to 6 years number around 158 million which is approximately 15.2 per cent of the total population of the country. The ICDS offers a package of health, nutrition and preschool education services to children, from pre-natal stage to the age of six years and to pregnant and lactating mothers, following a life cycle approach. The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) introduced in 33 Blocks (Projects) has gradually expanded to 6277 Projects as on 14.12.06 under the scheme, and early childhood care and

education is being provided to about 54.34 million children (0-6 years) (GOI, MCWD, 2007).

The *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)* is the national programme launched in 2001 to achieve universal primary education by 2007 and universal elementary education by 2010. The focus of SSA is on decentralized planning process with an emphasis on participatory planning approach to ensure full participation of all children of the relevant age group through increasing access to education of equitable quality for all. SSA has brought primary education to the doorstep of millions of children and enrolled them, including first generation learners, through successive fast track initiatives in hitherto unserved and under-served habitations.

In view of the demands of rapidly changing technology and the growth of knowledge economy, a mere eight years of elementary education would be grossly inadequate for our young children to acquire necessary skills to compete in the job market. Therefore, a Mission for Secondary Education is essential to consolidate the gains of SSA and to move forward in establishing a knowledge society. The thrust of secondary education during the Tenth Plan period was on improving access and reducing disparities by emphasizing the Common School System in which it is mandatory for schools in a particular area to take students from low-income families in the neighbourhood. The Tenth Plan also focussed on revision of curricula with emphasis on vocationalization and employment-oriented courses, expansion and diversification of the open learning system, reorganization of teacher training and greater use of ICT.

The administrative arrangement at the Centre

underwent a change during the year 2000 and a separate Department of Elementary Education and Literacy in the Ministry of Human Resource Development was established keeping in view the thrust needed for the Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). Since 2006, secondary education has also been merged with the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy. At present, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has two departments, namely the Department of School Education and Literacy, and the Department of Higher Education.

The higher education system consists of Central Universities, State Universities, Deemed Universities, Institutions established under States legislations, Institutes of national importance established by Central legislation and Agriculture/Veterinary, Medical including Ayurveda and Open Universities established under State Legislature. The University Grants Commission is the apex body which looks after higher education system in the country.

The Technical Education System covers courses in engineering, technology, management, architecture, pharmacy, etc. and the Ministry of Human Resource Development caters to programmes at the undergraduate, postgraduate and research levels. The Technical Education System at the central level comprises, among others, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), which is the statutory body for the proper planning and coordinated development of the technical education system. There are at present seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs); six Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs); the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore; the Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management (IIITM), Gwalior; the Indian

Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Allahabad, and 18 National Institutes of Technology (NITs). By 2007 the Indian higher education system has grown to be the largest in the world with 378 universities, 8064 colleges, and faculty strength of 0.492 million and an estimated enrolment of 14 million students.

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# Major Reforms and Innovations for Inclusive Education

India has entered the Eleventh Plan period with an impressive economic growth. Tenth Plan period (2002–03 to 2006–07) recorded an average growth of 7.7%, the highest in any Plan period so far. Besides, there was acceleration even within the Tenth Plan period and the growth rate in the last four years of the Plan has averaged 8.7%, making India one of the fastest growing economies in the world. These developments suggest that the economy is now at a point when it can achieve sustained economic expansion that has the potential to bring significant improvement in the lives of our people. If this momentum can be accelerated in the years ahead, it will put India on the path to becoming one of the key players in the world economy over the next two decades. These positive factors notwithstanding, a major weakness in the economy is that the growth is not perceived as being sufficiently inclusive for many groups, especially Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Minorities. Gender inequality also remains a pervasive problem and some of the structural changes taking place have an adverse effect on women. The lack of inclusiveness is borne out by data on several dimensions of performance.

The central vision of the Eleventh Plan is to build on our strengths to trigger a development process which ensures broad-based improvement in the quality of life of the people, especially the poor, SCs/STs, other backward castes (OBCs), minorities and women. However, the target is not just faster growth but also inclusive growth, that is, a growth process which yields broad-based benefits and ensures equality of opportunity for all. This broad vision of the Eleventh Plan includes several inter-related components: rapid growth that reduces poverty and creates employment opportunities, access to essential services in health and education especially for the poor, equality of opportunity, empowerment through education and skill development, employment opportunities underpinned by the National Rural Employment Guarantee, environmental sustainability, recognition of women's agency and good governance.

The vision of inclusiveness must go beyond the traditional objective of poverty alleviation to encompass equality of opportunity, as well as economic and social mobility for all sections of society, with affirmative action for SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities and women. There must be equality of opportunity to all with freedom and dignity, and without social or political obstacles. This must be accompanied by an improvement in the opportunities for economic and social advancement. In particular, individuals belonging to disadvantaged groups should be provided special opportunities to develop their skills and participate in the growth process.

Education and skill development receive high priority in the Eleventh Five Year Plan of India, both to meet the needs of a growing economy and to promote social equality by empowering those currently excluded because of unequal access to education and skills to participate fully in the growth process. Public expenditure (Centre and States) on education is only around 3.6% of GDP. The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) had set a target of raising it to 6%. The Eleventh Plan places the highest priority on education as a central instrument for achieving rapid and inclusive growth. It presents a comprehensive strategy for strengthening the education sector covering all segments of the education pyramid (GOI, 2008).

The Tenth Plan laid emphasis on Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) guided by five parameters: (i) Universal Access, (ii) Universal Enrolment, (iii) Universal Retention, (iv) Universal Achievement, and (v) Equity. The major schemes of elementary education sector during the Tenth Plan included SSA, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, commonly known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), Teacher Education Scheme, and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBVS). The schemes of Lok Jumbish and Shiksha Karmi were completed but DPEP will extend up to November 2008. KGBV has now been subsumed within Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) the principal programme for UEE, culminating all previous endeavours and experiences in implementing various education programmes.

Major reforms and innovations for promoting inclusive education across all levels of education are briefly presented below broadly covering the developments since 2003, marking the onset of the Eleventh Five- year plan that has adopted the term "Inclusive Growth" as its focus. These are being reported keeping the concerns for the education of children and youth from disadvantaged groups including persons with disabilities and marginalized communities.

## Elementary Education

Free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen is a constitutional commitment in India (Box-2). In order to achieve UEE, the Government of India has initiated a number of programmes and projects.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2008

More emphasis is now being given to those sections of the community, which are most underprivileged and disadvantaged like girls, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, minorities, children and youth with disabilities. The schemes of National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) are specifically designed for this purpose. NPEGEL makes additional provisions for enhancing the education of underprivileged and disadvantaged girls at elementary level through intensive community mobilisation, the development of model schools in clusters, gender sensitization of teachers and development of gender sensitive learning material. Recently, all Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB) have been included under the NPEGEL. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) have been designed to encourage greater participation in education of girls belonging to SC, ST, OBC and minority communities in EBBs, having high gender gaps and low female literacy at the upper primary

> **Box 2: The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2008**
>
> The Constitutional (Eighty Six) Amendment Act, 2002, notified on 13th December 2002, inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution, which provides that ''*the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine'.* Section 1(2) of the Constitutional (Eighty Six) Amendment Act, 2002 provides that *'it shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette appoint'.*
>
> On 30.10.2008 the Union Cabinet accorded approval to 'The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2008' and its introduction in the Parliament in the current session. The Notification of the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002 would be issued in the official Gazette after 'The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2008' is enacted.

level. The Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative & Innovative Education (EGS & AIE) is a transitory facility till a primary school replaces it in two years.

## Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Scheme

In accordance with the National Common Minimum Programme of the Government, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme was revised in September 2004. This was initially launched as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in August 1995 to support universalization of primary education and to improve the nutritional status of children at primary stage. This programme ensures provision of cooked mid-day meal of minimum 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein to children studying at elementary level in government, local body and government-aided schools as also children studying in Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) Centres. Feedback on the programme points to its positive impact on enrolment and attendance of children. Social equity is fostered through sharing of meals by children. The nutritional support provided by the

programme to children is increasingly being acknowledged by States resulting in concerted efforts to improve the implementation of the programme. The programme has also provided excellent opportunities of employment to women belonging to disadvantaged sections, particularly SCs and STs who are being engaged as cooks and helpers. Women Self-Help Groups have also been productively engaged in implementing the programme.

## Mahila Samakhya (Programme for Women's Empowerment)

The Mahila Samakhya (MS) programme recognizes the centrality of education in empowering women to achieve equality. The programme started in 1989, seeks to bring about a change in women's perception about themselves and the perception of society with regard to women's traditional roles. The core activities of the MS programme centre around issues of health, education of women and girls, accessing public services, addressing issues of violence and social practices which

discriminate against women and girls, gaining entry into local governance and seeking sustainable livelihood.

## Secondary Education

Secondary Education is a crucial stage in the educational hierarchy as it prepares the young persons for higher education and also for the world of work. The Government of India's intervention in secondary education is at two levels: (i) Through apex national level bodies like National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangthan (KVS), and Central Tibetan School Administration (CTSA); and (ii) Through centrally sponsored schemes, such as (a) Scheme of Boarding and Hostel Facilities for Girl Students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools, (b) Integrated Education for Disabled Children, (c) Information and Communication Technology in Schools, and (d) Quality Improvement in Schools.

The *Scheme of Boarding and Hostel Facilities for Girl Students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools* provides for financial assistance to voluntary organizations for running hostels for girl students of Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. Preference is given to organizations having hostels in Educationally Backward Districts, particularly those which are predominantly inhabited by SCs and STs and educationally backward minorities.

The *Scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children* (IEDC) aims to integrate children and youth with moderate disabilities in the normal school system. The Scheme

> **Box 3: Enabling Activities of the Mahila Samakhya**
>
> - Formation of women's collectives (*Sanghas*) by women facilitators (*Sahayoginis*) for mobilizing women;
>
> - Dissemination of information, awareness building and facilitating collective action on core themes;
>
> - Development of supportive structures (such as *Mahila Shikshan Kendras*) for the education of older girls and young women who have never been enrolled or have dropped out of school; and
>
> - Setting up *Nari Adalats* for addressing issues of violence against women, etc.

*Source: Annual Report, 2006-07, MHRD, Government of India*

provides 100% financial assistance to State/UT governments and NGOs under various components for the education of children suffering from mild to moderate disabilities in normal schools. The components include allowances for books and stationery, uniform, transport, escort, readers for blind children, equipment etc, and salary of teachers recruited for teaching the disabled children.

The *Scheme of Information and Communication Technology* (ICT @ Schools) was launched by merging the erstwhile schemes of Educational Technology (ET) and Computer Literacy and Studies in Schools (CLASS) which works as a window of opportunity to the learners in the schools of India to bridge the digital divide.

*Quality Improvement in Schools* is a centrally sponsored scheme and is an amalgamation of the schemes of Improvement in Science

Education, Mathematics Olympiads, Environment Orientation, Promotion of Yoga and Population Education and has a new component of Educational Libraries. Under this scheme, State governments and registered societies are given grants for the specified activities under each of the erstwhile programme.

In order to provide for diversification of educational opportunities so as to enhance individual employability, reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of skilled manpower and provide an alternative for those pursuing higher education, the centrally sponsored scheme of Vocationlisation of Secondary Education was launched in 1988. It was revised in 1992-93 and now provides for financial assistance to the States to set up an administrative structure, conduct area-specific vocational surveys, prepare curricula, textbooks, workbooks, curriculum guides, training manuals, teachers training programmes, strengthening technical support systems for research and development, training and evaluation etc. It also provides financial assistance to NGOs and other voluntary organizations for implementation of specific innovative projects for conducting short-term courses.

## Higher Education

Higher education is of vital importance for the country, as it is a powerful tool to build knowledge- based society of the 21st Century. Improvement of access and quality, the adoption of state-specific strategies, enhancing the relevance of higher education through curriculum reform, vocationalisation, networking and information technology and distance education are the main policy initiatives of the higher education sector. The other important

policy initiatives in higher education are programmes for general development of universities and colleges; special grants for the construction of hostels for women; provision of Day-Care Centres in universities; promotion of socially relevant programmes; strengthening of international cooperation and educational exchange programmes; setting-up of Simple Sanskrit Speaking Centres in universities and colleges; establishment of Population Education Resource Centres in select universities, setting-up of Women Studies Centres and Cells; networking of universities and colleges; establishment of special cells for SC and STs in universities, and establishment of Advanced Centres and Institutes for Science Education and Research. Emphasis has been laid on expansion with quality, use of ICT and promotion of quality research.

The last fifteen years have seen a phenomenal increase in the number of institutions providing technical and management education in the country. A number of significant steps have been taken by the government during the last five years, especially for the growth of Technical Education in India (Box-4).

The new mode of delivery of education, namely the distance and virtual university mode, has broken down physical barriers and has the potential to provide the opportunity for higher education to persons located in any part of the country. This mode has immense capacity to enroll vast number of students. Distance education and open and flexible learning are well established and well positioned today to strategically meet the challenges outlined above and reform the educational organization and processes. About two million students studying through distance education constitute nearly

20% of the total enrolment in higher education in the country. A part of the requirement for expansion of higher education facilities could well be met by this mode of education.

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**Box 4: Technical and Management Education**

■ A National Programme of HRD in Information Technology (IT) to meet the emerging need for quality manpower in IT and related areas;

■ The Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP) launched with the assistance of the World Bank, aims at up-scaling and supporting of ongoing efforts of the Government of India in improving quality of technical education;

■ The National Programme for Technology Enhanced Learning aims at enhancing learning effectiveness through technology to supplement classroom teaching;

■ Massive expansion of Technical Education through increase in intake in technical institutions; and

■ Expedition of accreditation process of institutes by AICTE

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# Legal and Policy Framework for Inclusion[2]

The Indian Constitution as adopted in 1950 enshrines equality and social justice as the cardinal principles of the Indian democratic system. The unique feature of the Indian Constitution is that while it upholds the principle of equality before law, it provides for affirmative discriminatory actions to uplift the social, economic and educational well being of disadvantaged groups. *The Constitution recognizes the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and educationally Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Minorities and Women as disadvantaged groups.*

The ultimate objective of the Constitution Framers was to establish a casteless society within the framework of a welfare state by gradually eliminating caste hierarchy, caste distinction and caste stigma and thus to ensure dignity of the individual and equality of status among all citizens of India. The Preamble of the Constitution assures Justice, social, economic and political, as well as Equality of status and of opportunity with a view to promoting among all citizens Fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation. Article 14 of the Constitution of India guarantees equality before the law and the equal protection of law to all persons. Article 15(1) prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex. Article 16(1) guarantees equality of opportunity for all

citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

In order to make the Fundamental Rights meaningful to the socially disadvantaged people of this country, particularly those who had been subjugated to social injustice for centuries, the Constitution makers made several provisions to raise their level so that they may live with dignity and respect. Article 17 provides for abolition of untouchability, and the enforcement of any disability arising from it was made punishable as an offence according to law.

Article 15(4) was not there initially in the Constitution when it was adopted and was introduced as a first amendment to the Constitution. It enabled the government to make special provisions for the advancement of backward classes including the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). As per Article 16(4), the Government can make reservations in favour of any backward class of citizens.

Political representation was guaranteed for SCs and STs through the proportionate reservation of seats in all elected legislative bodies from Parliament to Village Councils. Not only that, the Government of India instituted a programme of 'Compensatory Discrimination', an Indian version of affirmative action, which provides for 15% reservation to SCs and 7.5% reservation

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[2]    Mainly based on Prakash, Ved, 2008 opcit

to STs in all public services as well as in admissions to all public universities and colleges. Article 46 of the Constitution clearly states that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the SCs and the STs, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. The 86th Amendment to the Constitution inserting Article 21 A, in 2002, making elementary education a fundamental right is going to make positive impact on the education of SCs, STs, OBCs and women.

Besides, the National Policy on Education (1968) calls for strenuous efforts to correct regional imbalances and inter-group disparities in education. Reinforcing the 1968 Resolution, the National Policy on Education and Programme of Action (1968/1992) emphasised on the removal of disparities and equalization of educational opportunities by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far. Both the Policies have dealt with the educational needs of the SCs, STs, Women and Minorities in great detail with a special concern for neglected groups like nomadic tribes and de-notified tribes. Based on the constitutional commitment and policy directives, planned efforts have been made since independence to promote educational development in equitable manner. Consequently, there has been considerable improvement in the educational status of the deprived groups.

The Government of India set up the Kaka Kelkar Commission in 1952 with a view to identifying the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and giving them similar benefits as it had extended to SCs and STs. The Commission submitted its report in 1955 but its recommendations were contested in the courts until the Supreme Court

of India ruled in 1963 that total reservation, inclusive of the quantum for SCs and STs could not exceed 50%. It was in 1978 that the Government of India decided to set up the Second Backward Classes Commission under the Chairmanship of Mr. B.P. Mandal. The Commission aimed at providing affirmative action policies for backward and disadvantaged castes in order to redress caste discrimination. The Commission used as many as 11 indicators to determine the backwardness. The Commission identified 3,743 castes and communities, constituting 52% of the total population, as OBCs. Driven by the 1963 Judgement of the Supreme Court, the Commission recommended 27% reservation to OBCs in all services and public sector undertakings under the Central Government. It also recommended 27% reservation to OBCs in admission to all public institutions of higher learning. In August 1990, The Government of India announced the implementation of the Commission's recommendation. The announcement met with tremendous resistance, and a writ petition was filed in the Supreme Court against the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. The Supreme Court, however, in its judgment (November 16, 1992) upheld 27% reservations in services for OBCs. Subsequently, the Central Government introduced the Bill. The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Bill No.76 of 2006 in the Parliament made 93rd Constitutional Amendment which provided for reservation in admission of students belonging to SCs, STs and OBCs to educational institutions established, maintained or aided by the Central Government, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The Bill was passed by both the Lower House and the Upper House of the Parliament on

December 14 and 18, 2006 respectively. No sooner did the Bill receive an assent of the President and became the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admissions) Act, 2007 than its Constitutional validity was challenged in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court in its judgment delivered on April 10, 2008 upheld the 93rd Amendment to the Constitution enabling the Government to reserve 27% per cent OBC quota in all centrally funded institutions of higher learning.

*The Muslim community* in India constitutes 13.43% of the total population; is considered as a minority community. Article 29 provides the minorities the right to conserve their language, script and culture. Article 30 gives the right to the minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. It has been expressed that amongst the minorities which have suffered educationally, the sense of inequity may be perpetual as a result of discrimination that the minority may face due to difference in 'identity'. the Government of India has initiated several measures to bring about qualitative improvement in the status of the Muslim community. The present government at the centre has created a new 'Ministry of Minority Affairs' which has been entrusted with the responsibility of overall policy, planning, coordination, evaluation and review of the regulatory and developmental programmes of the minority communities. The government through an Act of Parliament established the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions on 11th November, 2004 to advise the central or any state government on any question relating to education of minorities. It has to look into specific complaints regarding deprivation or violation of rights of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice and dispute relating affiliation to

a scheduled university and has to do other acts and things necessary, incidental or conducive to the attainment of all or any of the objects of the commission.

The Government also set up a 'National Monitoring Committee for Minorities Education (NMCME)' under the chairmanship of Union Minister for Human Resource Development (MHRD) in the year 2004. A Standing Committee of the NMCME has also been constituted to attend to the problems related to the education of minorities on an ongoing basis. Not only that the Government of India also constituted a high power Committee to understand social, economic and educational status of the muslim community in India under the Chairpersonship of Justice Rajindar Sachar in 2005. The report consolidates, collates and analyses information with regard to the states, the regions, the districts and blocks where muslims of India mostly live; geographical pattern of their economic activities; income levels; level of their socio-economic development; relative share in public and private sector employment; proportion of OBCs from the muslim community in the total OBC population. Information on these aspects has been indicated in the report of this committee to identify areas of interventions by the government to address relevant issues relating to the social, economic and educational status of the muslim community. Besides, the Prime Minister has also introduced a new 15 point programme, for the welfare of minorities, which relate to enhancing opportunities for their education, equitable share in economic activities and employment, improving the conditions of living of minorities and prevention and control of communal riots.

Article 350 (A) of the Constitution of India

advocates instruction in mother tongue at primary stage and Article 350 (B) provides for a special officer to safeguard the interests of linguistic minorities.

Further, the Constitution of India in its 'Union', 'State' and 'Concurrent Lists' defines the powers and functions of the Centre and the States. Under the Constitution originally adopted, education was primarily a State subject. Since this led to differential educational progress across the States, education was transferred to the Concurrent List through a Constitutional Amendment in 1976, which implied meaningful partnership between the Centre and the States. Though this shift did not change the role and responsibility of the States, it gave the Central Government a major role in strengthening the education system in the country. Since then, a large number of schemes and programmes in the form of affirmative policy interventions have been launched by the Central Government in collaboration with the State Governments to overcome the inadequacies hindering the educational progress. Consequently, the age-old discriminatory practices have nearly vanished. The educational status of marginal groups has greatly improved compared to the situation before country's independence.

Article 14 of the Constitution of India guarantees that no person will be denied equality before the law. The State is directed to provide relief and help to the disabled and the unemployable vide Entry 9 in List II of the Seventh Schedule. Article 41 states that the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provisions for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement. Additionally, there are four legislations specifically directed towards the protection, welfare, rehabilitation and development of people with disabilities—the Mental Health Act, 1987; Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995; the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act, 1999 and the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992. In addition to the legal framework, a comprehensive National Policy for Persons with Disabilities was announced in February 2006 (6.173 of Eleventh Plan, p130, Vol.1, 2008).

*Persons with Disabilities* are served by two Ministries – Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment and Ministry for Human Resource Development through special and inclusive programmes and schemes. The National Policy on Education (NPE) brought the fundamental issue of equality centre stage. Section 4.9 of the policy clearly focuses on the needs of the children with disabilities, "*The objective should be to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence.*" The following measures were suggested in this regard:

- Wherever it is feasible, the education of children with motor handicaps and other mild handicaps will be common with that of others;

- Adequate arrangements will be made for vocational training to the disabled;

- Teachers' training programmes will be reoriented, in particular for teachers of primary classes, to deal with the special difficulties of the handicapped children; and

■ Voluntary effort for education of the disabled will be encouraged in every possible manner.

The NPE was followed by the Plan of Action (1992) which suggested a pragmatic placement principle for children with special needs. It postulated that a child with disability who can be educated in a general school should be educated in a general school only and not in a special school. Even those children who are initially admitted to special schools for training in plus curriculum skills should be transferred to general schools once they acquire daily living skills, communication skills and basic academic competence.

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act 1995) defines disability as one or more of the following seven disabilities namely blindness, low vision, hearing impaired, locomotor impaired, mental retardation, leprosy cured and mental illness. According to the Act, to be considered disabled, a person must suffer from not less than 40 per cent of any disability, as certified by a medical authority. The medical model of disability clearly informs the act, with tight and selective definitions of disability and 40 per cent threshold, implying that key disabling conditions such as autism, learning disabilities etc are excluded. Chapter V (Section 26) of the said Act, which deals with education, mentions that the appropriate Governments and the local authorities shall:

■ Ensure that every child with a disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment till he attains the age of eighteen years; and

■ Endeavour to promote the integration of students with disabilities in the normal schools.

A reference has already been made to the Comprehensive National Action Plan for Inclusion in Education of the Children and Persons with Disabilities (MHRD, 2005) that flow from all these legal instruments. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE) is also developing a national policy on Disability. The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities issued by MSJE was adopted in 2006. It recognizes that disabled people are valuable human resources for the country. The policy focuses primarily on prevention of disability, early detection and appropriate interventions, physical and economic rehabilitation measures, inclusive education, employment in the public as well as private sector and self-employment, creation of a barrier-free environment and development of rehabilitation professionals. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was ratified by India in October 2007. It enjoins upon India to ensure that all the rights enshrined in the Constitution, the current legislations, as well as UNCRPD, are speedily and effectively operationalize.

All the departments and programmes are progressively striving for convergence and coordination to efficiently address the special needs of the marginalized groups by improving access, equity and quality. Vision and strategies of the Eleventh Plan captures all these developments across sectors especially education.

■■

# Responsiveness of the System: Actions, Achievements and Vision

*"India's commitment to planned economic development is a reflection of our society's determination to improve the economic conditions of our people and an affirmation of the role of the government in bringing about this outcome through a variety of social, economic and institutional means. The Eleventh Five Year Plan, which was approved by the National Development Council on 19 December, 2007 reaffirms this commitment. It provides a comprehensive strategy for inclusive development, building on the growing strength of the economy, while also addressing weaknesses that have surfaced. The transition to high growth is an impressive achievement, but we must not forget that growth is not the only measure of development. Our ultimate objective is to achieve broad based improvement in the living standards of all our people. Rapid growth is essential for this outcome because it provides the basis for expanding incomes and employment and also provides the resources needed to finance programmes for social uplift. However, it is not by itself sufficient. We also need to ensure that growth is widely spread so that its benefits, in terms of income and employment, are adequately shared by the poor and weaker sections of our society, especially the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and minorities. For this to happen, the growth must be inclusive in the broadest sense. It must occur not just in our major cities but also in our villages and small towns. It must be spread across all states and not just limited to some. It must generate sufficient volumes of high quality employment to provide the means for uplift of large numbers of our population from the low income low quality occupations in which too many of them have been traditionally locked."*

*(Excerpts from the Foreword by the Prime Minister to the Eleventh Five Year Plan, pp iii, GOI, 2008).*

India's commitment to inclusive approach in all its plans and strategies is evident from the above statement of the Prime Minister of India. This section captures the evolving responsiveness of the education system across all levels, with special reference to all the groups and categories of people identified through the constitutional provisions and education programmes for special focus.

## Literacy

Independent India began its educational journey with a serious handicap as only around 18 per cent adults possessed basic literacy skills. The situation has vastly changed as successive generations got the opportunity to pursue school education. Thus, examining literacy status across the country indirectly reflects on the

efficiency and effectiveness of the school system that has grown multi-fold during the last six decades.

In 1901, a little over 5% of Indian population was literate, which increased to around 16% in 1950, a mere increase of 11 percentage points in the literacy rate during the first half of the century. In the post-independence period, the decadal growth in literacy has shown a substantial progress. In 2001, almost two-thirds of India's population (65.38%), and around three-fourths of males (75.85%) and more than half of females (54.16%) were literate. Sustained increase in adult literacy depends very much on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of elementary schooling. While regional variations across the states and union territories are significant and important, the variation in the literacy rate across social groups and household types is also very high.

According to the 2001 Census, India has 16.2% and 8.2% of SC and ST population respectively. The greatest concentration of population of SCs is in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Punjab, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Orissa. Besides the northeastern states, STs are found in greater numbers in Orissa, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and Rajasthan. The composition of population is mildly changing in favour of SCs and STs. The proportion of SCs increased from 14.7 per cent in 1961 to 16.2 per cent in 2001. Similarly the proportion of STs also increased from 6.8 to 8.2 per cent between 1961 and 2001.

The literacy rate of population including those of marginal groups has improved a lot. For example, in case of SCs, the literacy rate increased from a little over 10 per cent in 1961

to 55 per cent in 2001. In case of STs, it increased from less than 9 per cent to 47 per cent during the same period. It may be noted that the educational status of ST households is relatively better in majority of the predominantly tribal northeastern states.

The process of collection of data on socio-economic and educational status of minority Muslim community commenced only from 2001 Census. According to the latest figures, Muslim literacy stands at 59.13 per cent. The literacy rate with respect to total population increased from 28.3 per cent to 65.4 per cent between 1961 and 2001.

The SC and ST populations are generally disadvantaged in most of the states in India. Analysis of Census 2001 and National Sample Survey data reveals that the seven states having around 65% of illiterates have high concentration of SCs and STs, and the illiteracy rates of agricultural and casual labour households are relatively very high. Besides, in most of the sates, where female illiteracy rate is high, the percentage share of females in total agricultural labourers is also high. However, there are a few states where high female illiteracy rate is accompanied by low share of female agricultural labourers, primarily because women are engaged in other household-based paid activities or other commercial activities, particularly in Rajasthan and northeastern states.

As per NSS, 55th round, the educational attainment and economic status of households are directly related to each other. Illiteracy rate is relatively high among members of households having low MPCE, both in rural and urban areas. Compared to urban areas the literacy rate increases at a relatively slower rate with

| Table 1: Percentage Population by Caste and Gender to Total Population and Literacy Rates | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Population | | | Literacy | | | |
| Year | % of SC | % of ST | % of Female | Total | SC | ST | Female |
| 1961 | 14.7 | 6.8 | 48.48 | 28.31 | 10.27 | 8.53 | 15.35 |
| 1971 | 14.6 | 6.9 | 48.18 | 34.45 | 14.67 | 11.30 | 21.97 |
| 1981 | 15.3 | 7.6 | 48.29 | 43.56 | 21.38 | 16.35 | 29.76 |
| 1991 | 16.4 | 8.0 | 48.10 | 52.11 | 37.41 | 29.60 | 39.29 |
| 2001 | 16.2 | 8.2 | 48.26 | 65.38 | 54.69 | 47.10 | 54.16 |

*Source: Census of India, Govt. of India, New Delhi*

increase in the MPCE of rural households. In fact, the illiteracy rate declines very sharply with the increase in the MPCE of the urban households (Govinda, 2007).

*Literacy for Persons with Disabilities is also now being reported.* Currently, it stands at 55.36 overall and 70.05 for males and 63.85 for females indicating much better rates than that of SC and ST communities, but still needing more support and inputs especially across different disability categories. Literacy levels of persons with disabilities in general point to the need for increased sensitivity and challenges ahead. Only 49.31% are literate, with males and urban people having the best advantages. Within the disabled people, however, Mental disability makes a case for serious multiple disadvantages. Highest percentage of illiterates among persons with disabilities is found among persons with mental retardation (87%).

The Planning Commission has laid down a target of 80% literacy rate to be achieved by the end of the XI Plan. The NLM programmes will be revamped in the Eleventh Plan. The targets and special focus areas are as given below in Table -2.

Goal 4 of EFA, as applicable to literacy, aims at achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults. The social mobilization generated by the literacy campaigns has had an impact on the other social sectors, most notably women's empowerment, health and environmental awareness. Democratic participation has been enriched by promoting articulation in society, especially of the disadvantaged and the underprivileged. The campaigns have served the cause of promoting equity, in redefining gender relations and in questioning caste-based social categorization (Govinda, 2007).

| Table 2: Eleventh Plan Targets and Special Focus Areas | |
|---|---|
| **Eleventh Plan Targets** | **Special Focus Areas** |
| Achieve 80% literacy rate | A special focus on SCs, STs, minorities, and rural women. |
| Reduce gender gap in literacy to 10% | Focus also on low literacy States, tribal areas, other disadvantaged groups and adolescents. |
| Reduce regional, social and gender disparities | |
| Extend coverage of NLM programmes to 35+ age group | |

*Source: GOI, 2008*

# Pre-School Education (PSE)

As per Census 2001, the country has approximately 60 million children in the age group of 3–6 years. The 86th amendment to the Constitution, making education for children in the 6–14 age groups a fundamental right, does not cover children less than six years of age. It is for this age group that early childhood care in the form of childcare programmes, crèche programmes, and pre-school interventions are critical. Current figures suggest that pre-school programme under Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and other private initiatives covers about 34 million children; approximately 26 million children are left out of pre-school activities. Thus, the gap between the number of preschool children and available preschool services is large. Moreover, there are disparities in provision of ECCE in rural and urban areas. As per findings of a study conducted by the National Institute of Urban Affairs though the share of urban population in the country is approximately 27.78% (expected to go up by 33%), corresponding provision of ECCE facilities in these areas is insufficient.

Urban slums are under-represented in ICDS (GOI, Vol. II, p 209, 2008).

The Pre-School Component (PSE) component of ICDS known as Anganwadi is very weak with high repetition and low learning levels. This in turn discourages many children from continuing their education. SSA will have a component of one year pre-primary, which can be universalized to cover 24 million children in a phased manner. This is critical for school readiness/entry with increased basic vocabulary and conceptual abilities that help school retention. Besides, it will free the girl child of sibling care. The existing coverage of pre-primary classes in schools is over 11 million. A large number of primary schools in States like UP and Rajasthan already have ECCE. Primary schools within the habitations are ideal for such ECCE. In other habitations, Anganwadis need to be supported.

This programme is quite critical for children from deprived communities. Though nutrition component for these communities is being taken care of but education component for school

readiness is not very strong. School readiness and early intervention is also very critical for children with disabilities. According to the NSSO Survey, 58th Round (2005), the proportion of disabled persons of age 5-18 years who attended the pre-school intervention programme is only about 13 per cent of the disabled persons. The proportion of population with disabilities accessing early childhood services in urban areas is 20 per cent, while rural areas are estimated only at 11 per cent.

> *"Sarva Shiksha Mission is the heart and soul of the education process in the country now. If we are able to implement this successfully, I am sure all of us can claim that we have done our duty to the country."*
>
> *Shri Arjun Singh,*
> *Union Human Resource Development Minister,*
> *Excerpt from the Address at a Conference of*
> *State Education Ministers,*
> *New Delhi October 28, 2004*

## Quality Elementary Education for All

India's commitment to Universal Elementary Education dates back to 1951. The Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution stipulated that the State would endeavour to provide free and compulsory education to all children upto the age of 14 years. This commitment was reinforced by the National Policy on Education, 1986. A very important step forward has been the 86th Constitution Amendment Act, passed in December 2002, making free and compulsory elementary education a Fundamental Right for all children in the age group of 6-14 years. Elementary education in India comprises classes I to VIII, and covers children of 6 to 14 years, the years covered by constitutional provisions. Elementary education is further divided into two stages, primary education up to class V (6-11 years age-group) and upper primary covering classes VI to VIII (11-14 years age-group).

Concerted efforts during the last five decades have resulted in manifold increase in the number of institutions, teachers and students' enrolment (Table-3). During 1990-91 to 2004-05, the number of primary schools increased from 0.56 million to 0.77 million. However, the annual

average growth rate of primary schools was 1.31% from 1990-91 to 2000-01 and it increased to 4.7% during 2000-01 to 2004-05. Similarly, the annual average growth rate of upper primary schools was 3.14 during 1990-91 to 2000-01 and it increased to 7.43% during 2000-01 to 2004-05. This increase in number of primary and upper primary schools may be attributed to the launching of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the country (Figure-2). Increase in the number of schools is also reflected in the ratio of primary to upper primary schools/sections which have shown consistent improvement during the same time period.

During 1990-91 through 2004-05, enrolment in the elementary education increased substantially, more with respect to the upper primary stage. However, the annual average growth rate of enrolment in primary classes was 1.22% during 1990-91 to 2000-01 which increased to 3.52% during 2000-01 to 2004-05. Similarly, the annual average growth rate of enrolment in upper primary classes was 1.86% during 1990-91 to 2000-01, which increased to 4.58% during 2000-01 to 2004-05. Both in primary and upper primary stages, proportionate increase in girls' enrolment was higher than in the case of boys both in primary

| Table 3: Progress in Elementary Education Since 2001 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicators** | **2000-01** | **2001-02** | **2002-03** | **2004-05** | **2005-06** |
| **No. of Elementary Schools** | 845007 | 883667 | 897109 | 1042251 | 1061061 |
| **No. of Teachers in Elementary Schools (in million)** | 3.22 | 3.39 | 3.49 | 3.75 | 3.85 |
| **Enrolment in Lower Primary Schools - Classes 1-5 (in millions)** | 113.83 | 113.90 | 122.4 | 130.8 | 132 |
| **Enrolment in Upper Primary Schools - Classes 5 - 8 (in millions)** | 42.81 | 44.80 | 46.9 | 51.2 | 52.2 |
| **Enrolment in Elementary School Stage - Classes 1-8 (in millions)** | 156.64 | 158.70 | 169.3 | 182.0 | 184.2 |
| **Average Pupil Teacher Ratio at Elementary Stage** | 41 | 39 | 38 | 42 | 41 |

*Sources: Selected Educational Statistics: 2003-04 and 2005-06, MHRD, GOI, New Delhi; and Education in India, MHRD, GOI.*

Figure 2: Growth of Primary and Upper Primary Schools
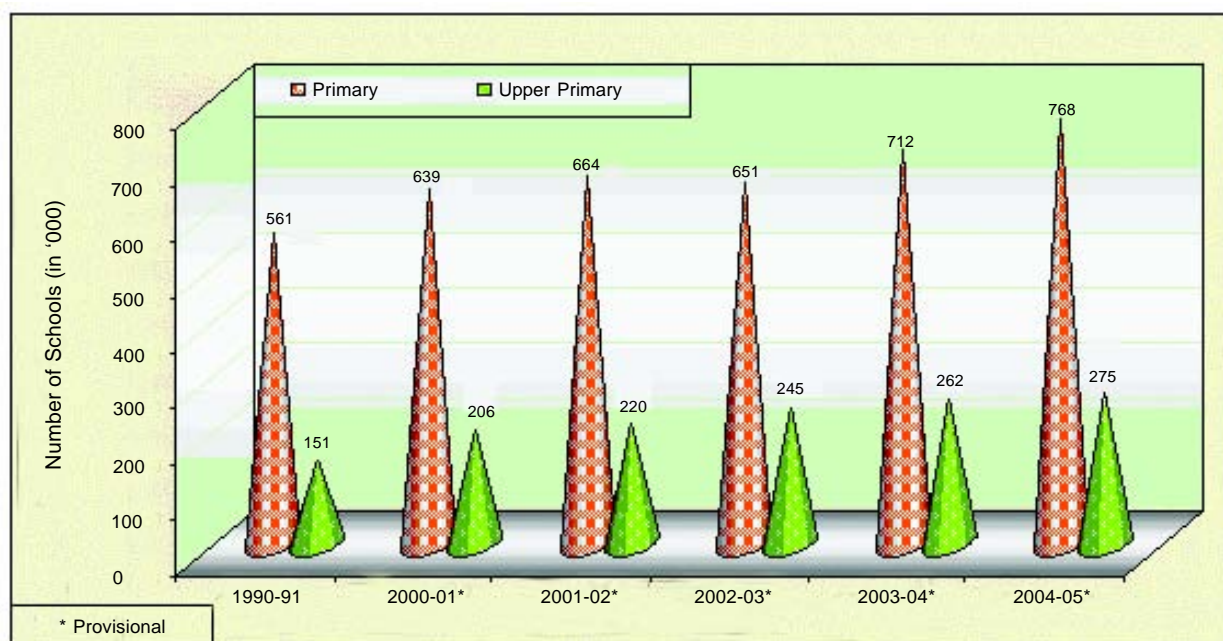


*Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi.*

and upper primary stages. In primary classes, whereas the annual average growth rate for boys was 1.45%, the same for girls was 3%. For upper primary, the annual average growth rate for boys was 2.03%, the same for girls was 4.35% (Figure-3).

### Girls' Enrolment

One of the very important attributes to achieve UEE is to ensure gender parity which is measured by girls' enrolment as a proportion of the total enrolment. The participation of girls at all levels of education has been increasing steadily through the years and has reached 44.50 percentage points at the upper primary and 46.70 percentage points at the primary level.

*Gender Parity Index (GPI)* measures progress towards gender equity in education. When the GPI shows a value equal to 1 at any level of education, it means that there is no gender disparity at that level and learning opportunities as available for girls are equal to those as available for boys. Figure-4 indicates gradual increase in Gender Parity Index in primary and upper primary stages of school education. It has improved from 0.75 in 1990-91 to 0.95 in 2004-2005 at primary stage, from 0.61 to 0.88 at upper primary, and from 0.71 to 0.93 at elementary stage during 1990-91 to 2004-05. It shows that gender disparity is higher at upper primary stage than at primary stage.

In the context of such observations, while the

Figure 3: Growth of Enrolment in Primary and
Upper Primary Schools
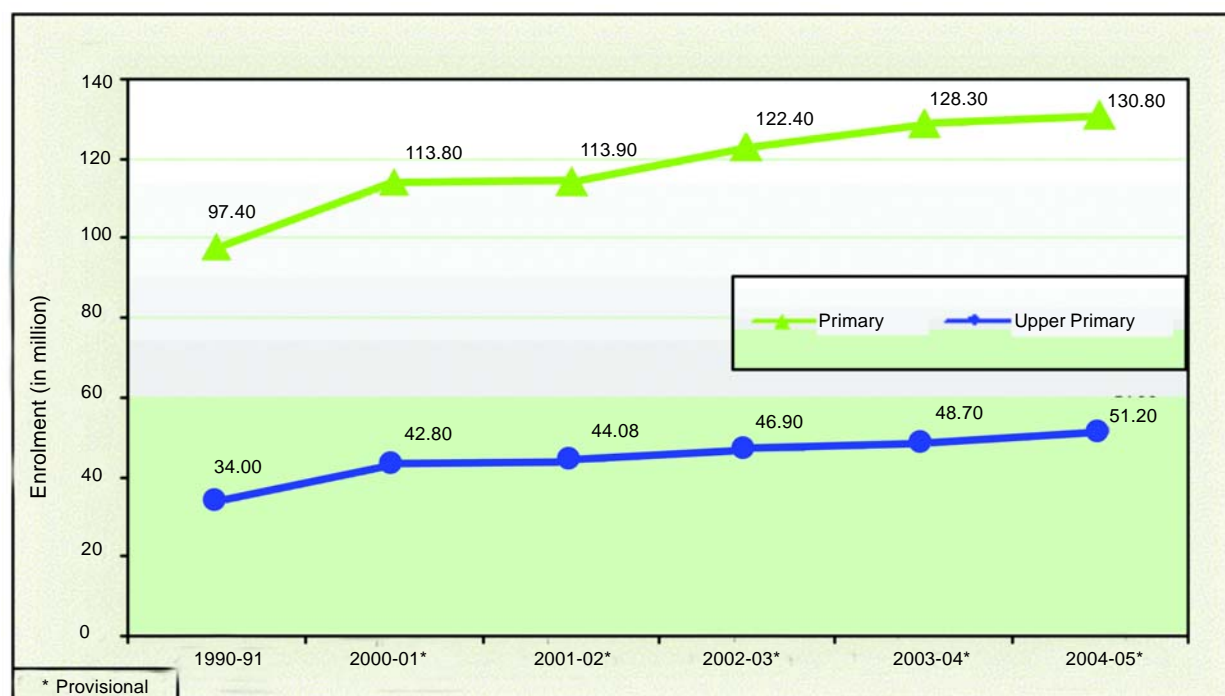


*Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi*

Figure 4: Gender Parity Indices (GPI) at Primary, Upper Primary and Elementary Levels



Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi

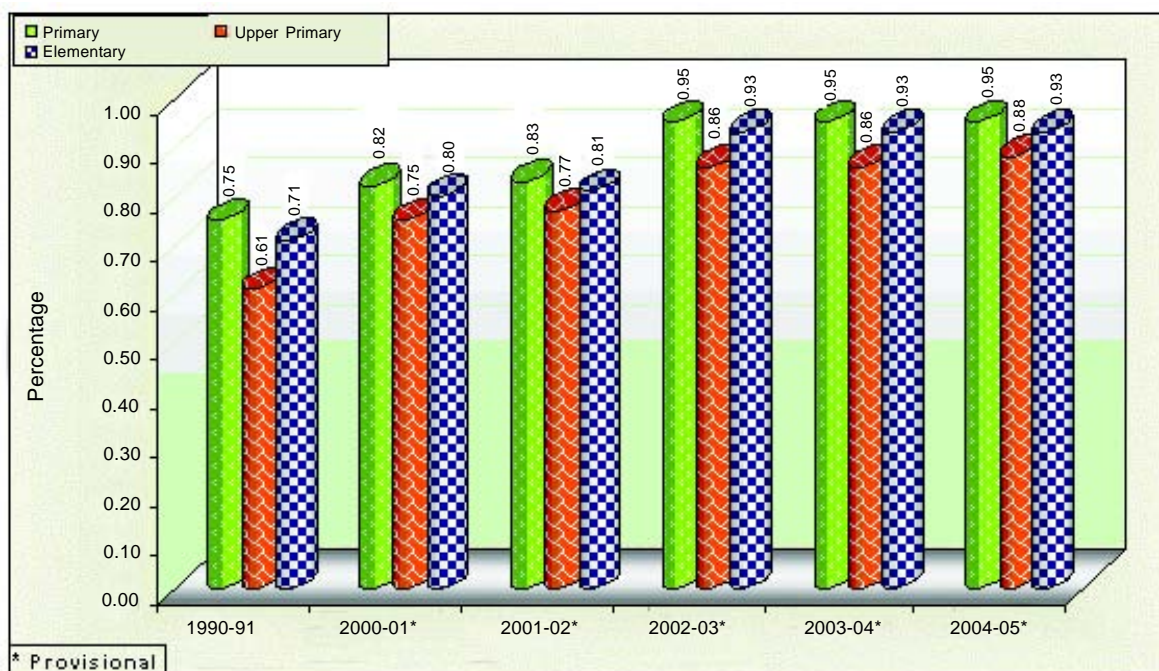flagship programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is envisaged to continue contributing significantly towards gender specific goals and targets, two special programmes with particular focus on social equity and locational disadvantage among girls have been operationalised, namely, the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya.

## National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)

NPEGEL is a focussed intervention financed by Government of India to reach basic education to the "Hardest to Reach" girls. Launched in July 2003, the programme provides for development of a "model school" in every cluster with more intense community mobilization and supervision of girls' enrolment in schools. Gender

sensitization of teachers, development of gender-sensitive learning materials, and provision of need-based incentives like escorts, stationery, workbooks and uniforms are some additional features of the programme. What distinguishes the NPEGEL schools from others is their holistic approach and intensive nature of inputs provided in all aspects of development of the girl child.

The scheme is being implemented in educationally backward blocks (EBBs) where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average and the gender gap is above the national average; in blocks of districts which are not covered under EBBs but are having at least 5% SC/ST population and where SC/ST female literacy is below 10%; and also in select urban slums. Currently, more than 3000 educationally backward blocks are covered

under the Scheme spread over 25 States. Till 2006-07, under NPEGEL, around 29,532 Model schools have been developed, 73,788 teachers have received gender sensitization programmes, and skill building programmes have been provided to girls on diverse trades and life skill; 7713 additional classrooms constructed for being used as space for bridge courses, teacher training and skill building activities for girls; over 50,000 ECCE centres are being supported in non-ICDS areas to help free girls from sibling care responsibilities; further, free uniforms have been given as a direct educational incentive to about 20 million girls in EBB blocks. Data given in Table-4 indicates the massive nature of the inputs being provided under the scheme.

## Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

While the main goal of the NPEGEL is to get more girls into the fold of primary education, the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) launched in July 2004 focuses on providing education to the girls at upper primary level. With a view to consolidating the gains made in enrolling girls at the lower primary stage, the Scheme provides for residential facilities to girls at convenient locations for continuing their education beyond the lower primary stage. According to the Report of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2075 residential KGBV schools have been sanctioned in SC/ST and minority dominated areas. 428 KGBVs have been set up in Muslim dominated blocks and 441 in ST dominated blocks. Till December 2006, 1039 KGBV schools were opened benefiting 6400 children with 27% belonging to SCs, 30% to STs.

A recent evaluation of the scheme has revealed that the schools are well managed and functioning properly. It was also found that the students, parents and community members had positive opinion about the scheme. The teachers were also found committed. In some states the operation of the Scheme is further reinforced as Mahila Samakhya (MS) Societies are involved in its implementation. Encouraged by the positive observations from external

| Table 4: Progress made Under NPEGEL | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2004-05** | **2004-05** | **2005-06** | **2006-07** |
| **Block** | 2157 | 2157<br>3164 | 3122 |
| **Clusters** | 19575 | 19575<br>28917 | 38748 |
| **Fund Allocation (Rs. in millions)** | 6539.3 | 6539.3<br>6865.4 | 8133.6 |

*Source: Annual Report, MHRD, 2006-07*

evaluation of the Scheme, a massive expansion of the programme is being envisaged in the next five years under the Eleventh Five Year Plan (Annual Report MHRD, 2006-07).

## Declining Drop-out Rates

Reduction in dropout rates is another important indicator of quality of elementary education. The dropout rate has registered large decline since 1990s that can be attributed to the efforts made under District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), SSA and other programmes.

With respect to SC children, the dropout between classes I and V declined from 45.2% in 2000-01 to 33.8% in 2005-06. Similarly with respect to ST children, it declined from 52.3 %

to 39.8% during the same period. Between 2001-02 and 2005-06, i.e., within a span of five years, the dropout rate at primary level was brought down by more than 10 percentage points for both SC and ST children. The decline is very steep particularly from 2001 suggesting that the efforts made under SSA are making a dent. The proportion of children who dropout before reaching class VIII and X has also declined substantially.

The rural urban differences as well as situation with respect to certain religious minorities also merits attention. For instance, a survey of out-of-school children reported that the estimates of children out-of-school are highest among Muslims at 9.97%. The situation is even more

Figure 5: Dropout Rates at Primary and Elementary Levels
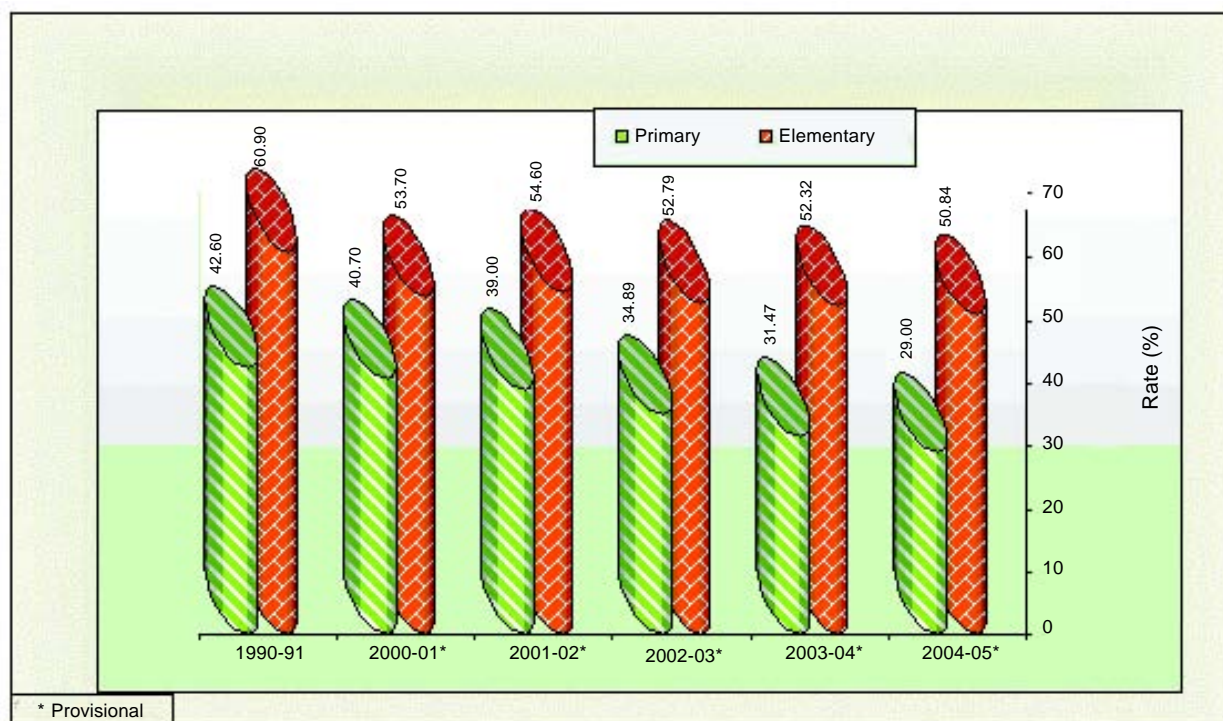


Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi.

| Table 5: Drop out Rates at Primary and Elementary Stages by Social Groups | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | Primary (I-V) | | | | | | Elementary (I-VIII) | | | | | |
| | Boys | | Girls | | Total | | Boys | | Girls | | Total | |
| | SC | ST | SC | ST | SC | ST | SC | ST | SC | ST | SC | ST |
| 2001-02 | 43.7 | 51 | 47.1 | 54.1 | 45.2 | 52.3 | 58.6 | 67.3 | 63.6 | 72.7 | 60.7 | 69.5 |
| 2002-03 | 41.1 | 50.8 | 41.9 | 52.1 | 41.5 | 51.4 | 58.2 | 66.9 | 62.2 | 71.2 | 59.9 | 68.7 |
| 2003-04 | 36.8 | 49.1 | 36.2 | 48.7 | 36.6 | 48.9 | 57.3 | 69 | 62.2 | 71.4 | 59.4 | 70.1 |

*Source: Selected Educational Statistics: 2003-04 MHRD, GOI, New Delhi, 2006. (Provisional)*

| Table 6: Out of School Children Aged 6-13 years: All India, 2006 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S.No. | Details | Out-of-School Children | | | Percentage Out-of-School children | | |
| | | Rural | Urban | Total | Rural | Urban | Total |
| 1. | All Children (6-13 years) | 11353597 | 2106137 | 13459734 | 7.80 | 4.34 | 6.94 |
| 2. | SC Children | 2706025 | 398841 | 3104866 | 8.55 | 6.25 | 8.17 |
| 3. | ST Children | 1585833 | 71145 | 1656978 | 10.11 | 4.21 | 9.54 |
| 4. | Muslim Children | 1567717 | 685535 | 2253252 | 12.03 | 7.17 | 9.97 |

*Source: SRI- IMRB Survey, 2006*

pronounced for Muslims in rural areas at 12.03% which is the highest among all social groups.

## Teachers

India supports a policy of one teacher per class at the primary level and a minimum of two teachers per primary school as expansion of access in remote and difficult areas also witness a number of small schools. Targeted teacher pupil ratio is 1:40. To staff this ever- expanding system with adequate number of qualified teacher is a humongous task to ensure equity and quality. Information on the size and human resources available in primary schools indicate that one-fourth of the total number of primary schools in the country are very small with only one teacher and/or one classroom and generally located in small habitations. It is in this context that *modifying traditional distance and population norms and opening schools in small habitations* has yielded positive results by bringing in more children to school.

In absolute terms, a substantial increase in the

number of teachers has been registered since 1990-91. The total number of teachers in primary schools increased from 1.62 million in 1990-91 to 1.9 million in 2001-02 and further to 2.2 million in 2004-2005. While the number of male teachers increased from 1.14 million in 1990-91 to 1.32 million in 2004-05, i.e., by 1.2 times, the number of female teachers increased from 0.5 million in 1990-91 to 0.8 million in 2004-2005, i.e., by about 1.8 times. In case of upper primary schools, the number of male teachers increased from 0.72 million in 1990-91 to 1 million in 2004-05, i.e., by 1.4 times, the number of female teachers increased from 0.4 million in 1990-91 to 0.6 million in 2004-2005, i.e., by about 1.7 times. It is worth mentioning that after 2000-01, more female teachers than male teachers are being appointed at elementary level (Figure-6).

DISE 2005-06 data also suggests that the number of teachers in place was 2.79 million in the primary stage and 1.5 million in the upper primary stage. The growth of teachers in place in the elementary sector, thereby, works out to 8.2% per year during 2003-04 through 2005-06. This increase is on account of the large number of teachers recruited under SSA in these years.

## Pupil-Teacher Ratio

At the time of independence, there was a paucity of educational institutions in the country. During the year 1990-91, the Pupil -Teacher Ratio (PTR) in primary schools was 1:43; and in upper primary schools, it was 1:37. In 2004-2005, this ratio increased to 1:46 in primary schools, but decreased to 1:35 in upper primary schools. Though the number of educational

Figure 6: Growth of Teachers at Primary and Upper Primary Levels
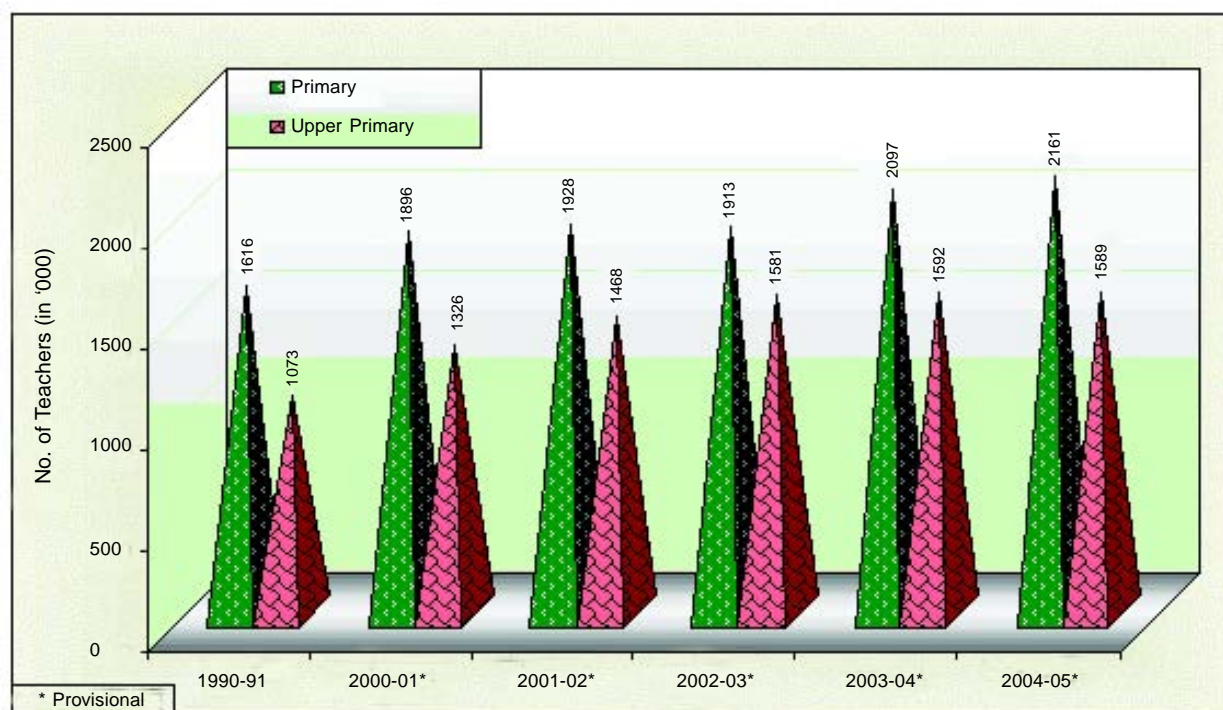


*Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi.*

institutions considerably increased during 1990s as also the number of teachers, the higher PTR indicates that the increase in enrolment at each level is comparatively more than the increase in the number of teachers. The increased enrolment at various levels also underscores the need for opening of a greater number of educational institutions as well as employing more teachers for improving the quality of education (Figure-7).

## Female Teachers

The number of female teachers per hundred male teachers increased from 41 to 64 in primary classes, and 50 to 60 in upper primary classes during 1990-91 to 2004-05 which shows that women participation in education programmes at all levels has increased many folds after independence (Figure -8).

## Improving Teacher Provision

Addressing Imbalances and Inequities in teacher provision is a critical issue that country is conscious of addressing. The situation with respect to demand for additional school places and the consequent need for additional physical infrastructure and teacher supply is not uniform across different states. Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have experienced declining trend in child population and this would cause decline in demand for school places and teachers at the lower primary stage; but even in these states, there will be a demand for school place and teachers in near future, particularly at the upper primary stage. On the other hand, some states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Orissa etc. would still require to employ teachers both at primary and upper primary stages. The need to

Figure 7: Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) at Primary and Upper Primary Schools
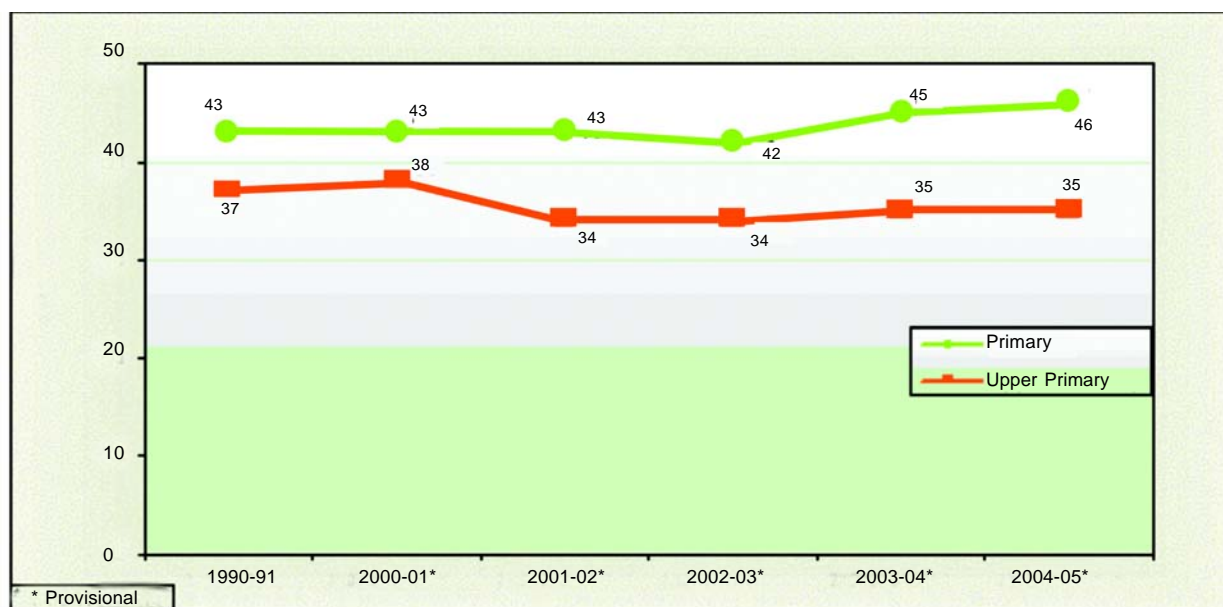


* Provisional

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi

provide qualified number of teachers to keep pace with the ongoing expansion of education sector remains a challenge.

## Learner Achievement and Equity

Improving the quality of education provided in the schools has been a goal pursued for the last 10-15 years. While there are areas of concern, a positive development has been the improvement achieved with respect to infrastructure. Student-classroom ratio (SCR) has improved from 48 in 2002-03 to 41 in 2005-06 at the primary level and from 36 to 33 at the upper primary level during the same years (DISE, NUEPA, New Delhi, 2007)

Recognizing that in the final analysis effective acquisition of basic learning competencies would determine the value of primary schooling. In this context, measurement of learning levels of school going children has come to occupy a place of central importance within and outside

the public education system. The wide variation among different states in this regard is clearly highlighted by the data collated from national survey conducted by NCERT in 2003-04. Clearly, the overall achievement levels are far from satisfactory. What is even more disturbing is that several states which have been doing well in enrolment and participation lag behind when it comes to quality of learning.

Considering that quality of learning also critically depends on what is transacted in the classroom as much as how it is done, there has been increased attention paid to the issue of developing relevant curriculum for school education. In this regard, the massive national level consultation carried out by NCERT towards preparation of the National Curriculum Framework, 2005, needs special mention. It is envisaged that the new National Curriculum Framework along with corresponding syllabi and textbooks would become the guiding documents

Figure 8: Number of Female Teachers per Hundred Male Teachers
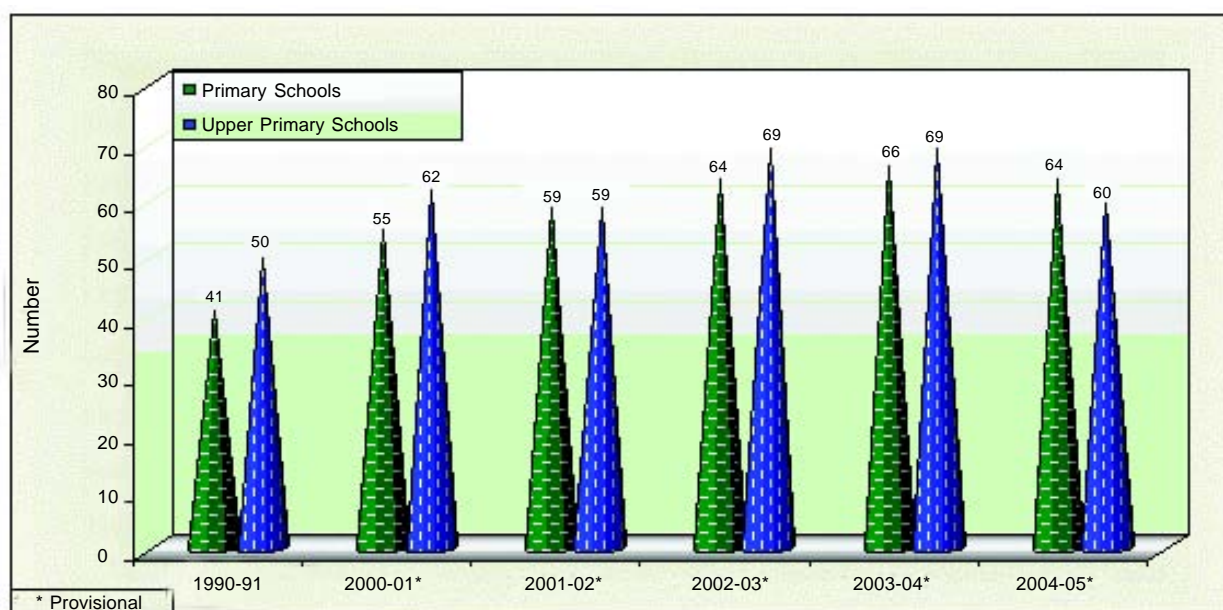


Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi

for State level organizations to work towards revising their curricula and syllabi (Govinda, 2007).

## Universalizing Secondary Education

The success of SSA in achieving large scale enrolment of children in regular and alternate schools has thrown open the challenge of expanding access to secondary education. Rapid changes in technology and the demand for skills also make it necessary that young people acquire more than eight years of elementary education to acquire the necessary skills to compete successfully in the labour market. Moreover, secondary education serves as a bridge between elementary and higher education. The stage is thus set for universalization of secondary education. The population of children in the age group (14–18

years) is estimated at 107 million in 2001, 119.7 million in 2006, and 121.1 million in 2011, whereas, the current enrolment in secondary and senior secondary education together is around 37 million only (2004–05).

The thrust of secondary education during the Tenth Plan period was on improving access and reducing disparities by emphasizing the Common School System in which it is mandatory for schools in a particular area to take students from low-income families in the neighbourhood. The Tenth Plan also focussed on revision of curricula with emphasis on vocationalization and employment-oriented courses, expansion and diversification of the open learning system, reorganization of teacher training and greater use of ICT. These objectives have been partly achieved.

During the period 1990-91 to 2004-05, the

Figure 9: Growth of Secondary/Sr. Secondary Schools
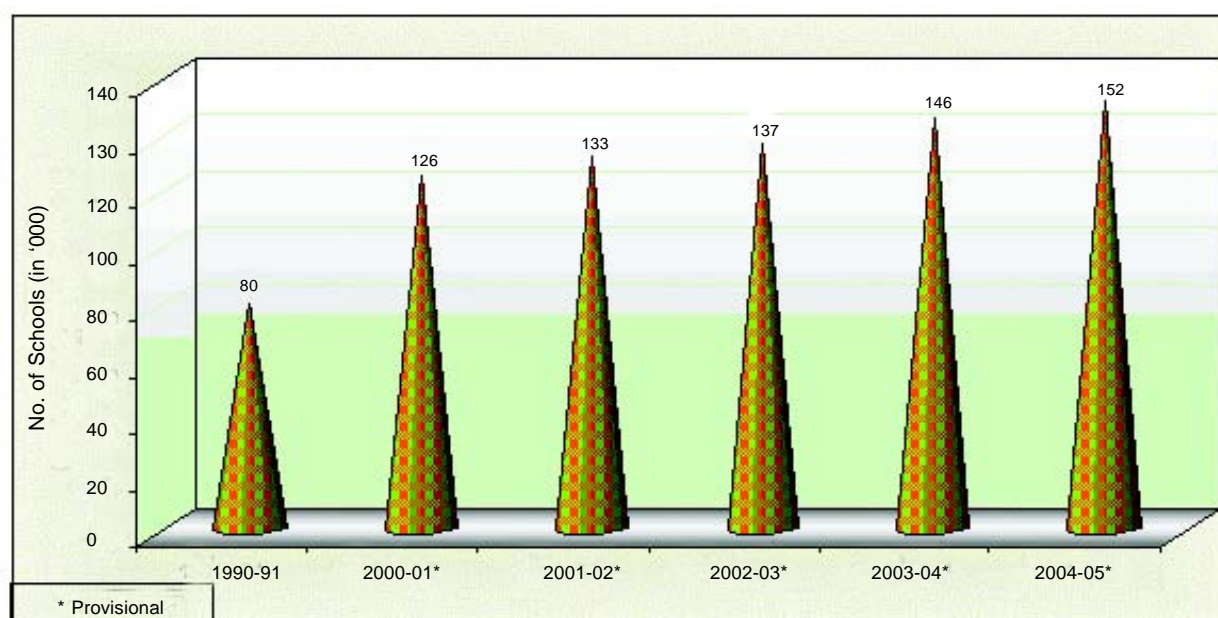


Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi.

number of secondary and senior secondary schools increased from 0.08 million to 0.15 million. The annual average growth rate of secondary and senior secondary schools was 4.7% during 1990-91 to 2000-01 which further marginally increased to 4.8% during 2000-01 to 2004-05. There are inter-State and intra-State variations in enrolment, dropouts, and access to secondary and higher secondary schools. At the national level, the average number of secondary/higher secondary schools per 1 lakh population is quite low. The national average number of secondary and higher secondary schools per 100 sq. km is only four; consequently, the GER in many States is lower than the national average of 39.91%.

Nearly 60% of secondary schools are with private management both aided and unaided,

almost in equal proportions. The share of government and local body schools and private aided schools shows a declining trend with private unaided schools showing an increase from 15% in 1993–94 to 24% in 2001–02 and further to 30% in 2004–05.

The doubling of the share of private unaided schools indicates that parents are willing to pay for education that is perceived to be of good quality. The factors underlying this perception include better English teaching, better monitoring and supervision of students' performance, better attention, attendance and accountability of teachers. There is, however, no evidence to show that the enrolments in these schools are additional. Only those who can afford to pay apparently opt for these schools and their average enrolment is much

Figure 10: Percentage of Secondary/Sr Secondary Schools under Different Managements



Private Un-aided 29.60%

Government 33.12%

Private aided 29.35%

Local Body 7.93%

* Provisional
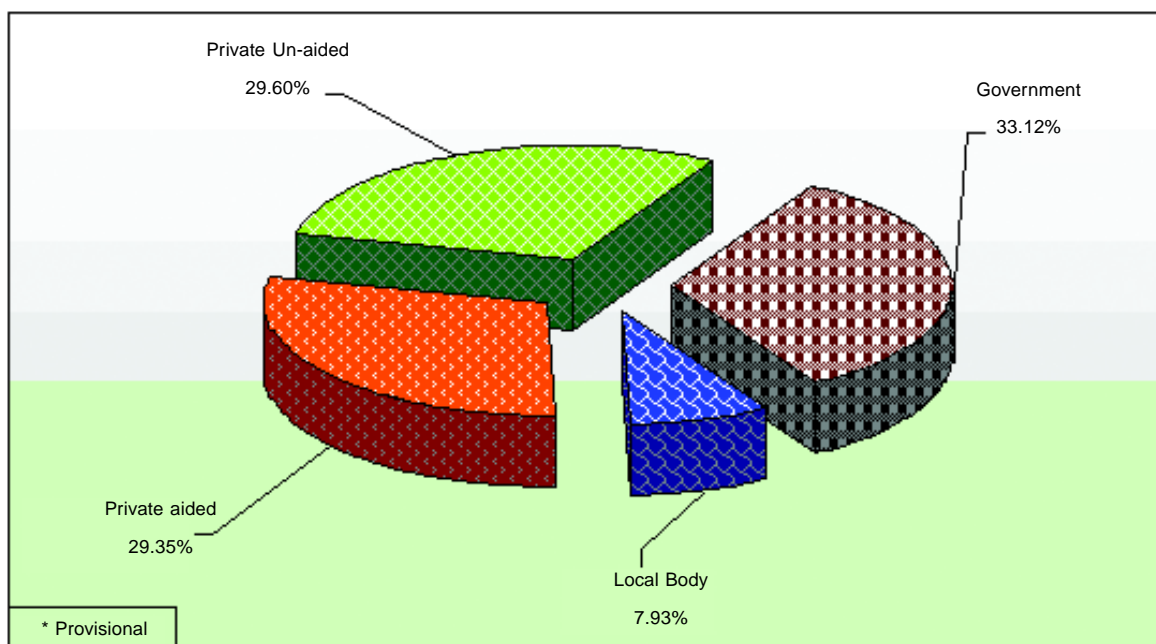
Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi.

lower than that in the aided and government schools. Public sector investment in secondary schools has, therefore, to be increased even for incentivizing Pulic-Private Partnership (PPP).

The enrolment in 1.02 lakh secondary and 0.50 lakh higher secondary schools is 24.3 million and 12.7 million respectively (2004–05). The GER for secondary education (IX and X) is 51.65% and that for higher secondary 27.82%. The combined GER both for the secondary and higher secondary schools is only 39.91%. The dropout rate at secondary level is as high as 62% (Table-7).

During the decade ending 2004–05, enrolment at the secondary and higher secondary levels increased at an average annual rate of 5.32%. During the three years of the Tenth Plan up to 2004–05, it increased at a faster rate of 6.75% per annum and an additional 7.5 million children were enrolled. There will be further acceleration in secondary enrolments during the Eleventh Plan period as the dropout rates at the primary level are declining and the transition rate from primary to upper primary level is getting closer to 90%.

## Share of Girls and SC & ST Students

The participation of girls at secondary level of education has been increasing steadily through the years. In 1990-91, 32.9% of the students enrolled in secondary and senior secondary schools were girls. Their percentage increased to 38.6% in 2000-01 and further to 41.5% in 2004-05 (Figure-12).

The secondary education GERs for SCs and STs are 45.4% and 37.2% respectively, as compared to the overall GER of 51.6% indicating a substantial social gap in enrolments for these groups. The GER for girls belonging to SCs and STs is 37.6% and 30.5% respectively, indicating a substantial gender gap in enrolment for these groups. Information on these lines needs to be generated now for the children and youth with disabilities.

| Table 7: Secondary Education - Enrolment (in crores) and Dropout, 2004-05 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicators** | **Boys** | | **Girls** | | **Total** | |
| | **Enrolment** | **GER** | **Enrolment** | **GER** | **Enrolment** | **GER** |
| **Secondary (IX–X)** | 1.42 | 57.39 | 1.01 | 45.28 | 2.43 | 51.65 |
| **Hr. Secondary (XI–XII)** | 0.74 | 30.80 | 0.53 | 24.46 | 1.27 | 27.82 |
| **Secondary & Hr. Sec.(IX–XII)** | 2.16 | 44.26 | 1.54 | 35.05 | 3.70 | 39.91 |
| **Dropout (%) Rates (I-X)** | 60.41 | | 63.88 | | 61.92 | |

*Source: Selected Educational Statistics (2004–05), MHRD and as reported in the Eleventh Five Year Plan Vol. II, 2008.*

Figure 11: Growth of Enrolment in Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools
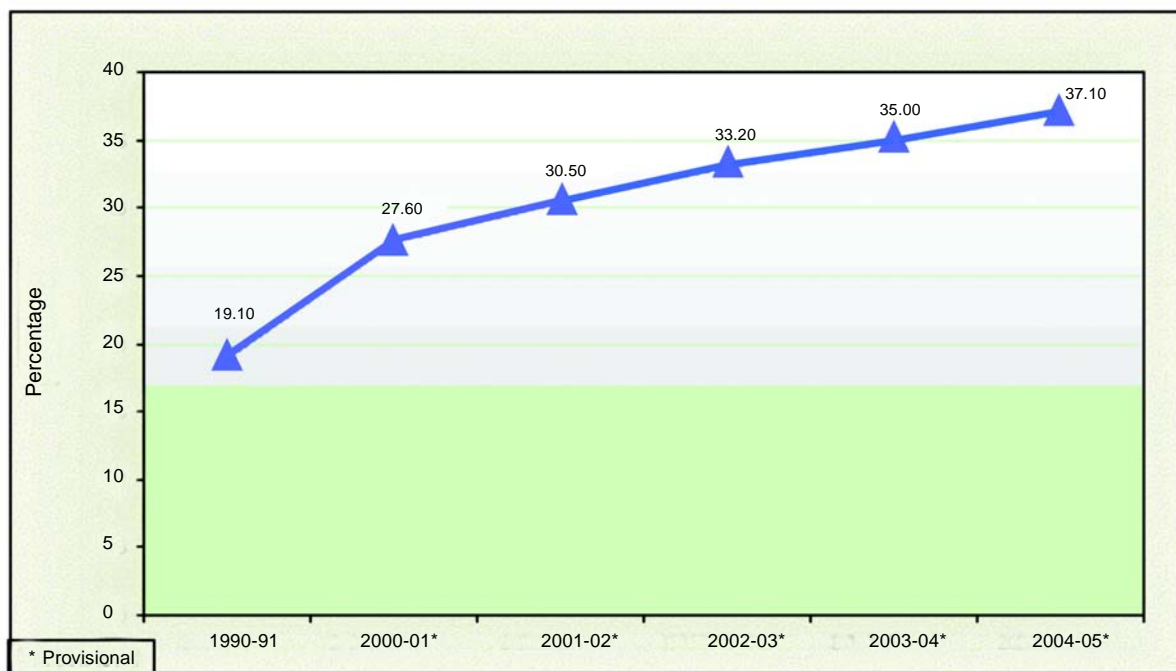


*Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi.*

Figure 12: Growth of Girls Enrolment in Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools
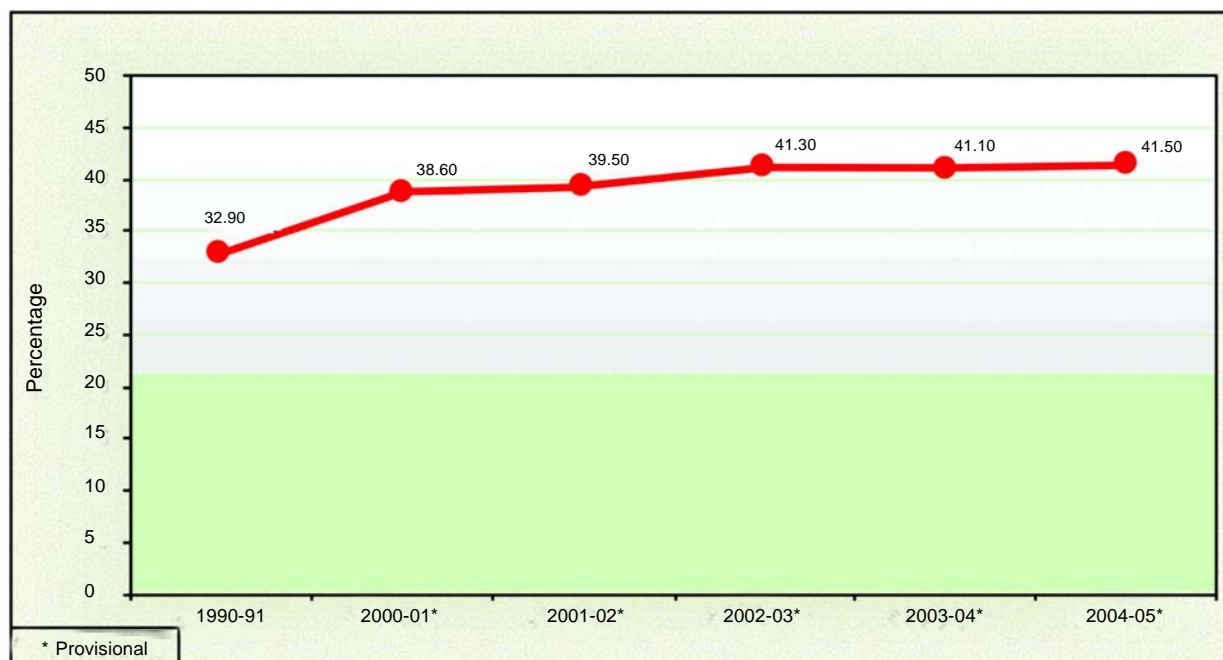


*Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi.*

The Union Government is implementing the scheme 'Strengthening of Boarding and Hostel Facilities for Girl Students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools (Access & Equity)'. Under the scheme, financial assistance is given to societies and NGOs to provide boarding and hostel facilities to girls, predominantly belonging to the rural, desert, hilly areas, and particularly for those belonging to SCs, STs, and educationally backward minorities. The performance of the scheme is not up to the mark. The scheme will be restructured and merged with the new umbrella scheme of 'Universalization of Access and Improvement of Quality of Secondary Education'.

### Teachers

In absolute terms, a substantial increase in the number of teachers has been registered since 1990-91. The total number of teachers in secondary and senior secondary schools increased from 1.3 million in 1990-91 to 1.76 million in 2001-02 and to 2.08 million in 2004-2005(Figure-13).

### Number of Female Teachers per Hundred Male Teachers

The number of female teachers per hundred male teachers increased from 46 in 1990-91 to 49 in 2000-01 and further to 63 in 2004-05 with recruitment of more female teachers in secondary and senior secondary schools after 2000-01 (Figure-15).

## Expanding Higher Education

India presently has 425 universities, comprising 216 State universities, 20 Central universities, 101 Deemed universities, 5 institutions established under States legislations, 13

Figure 13: Growth of Teachers in Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools
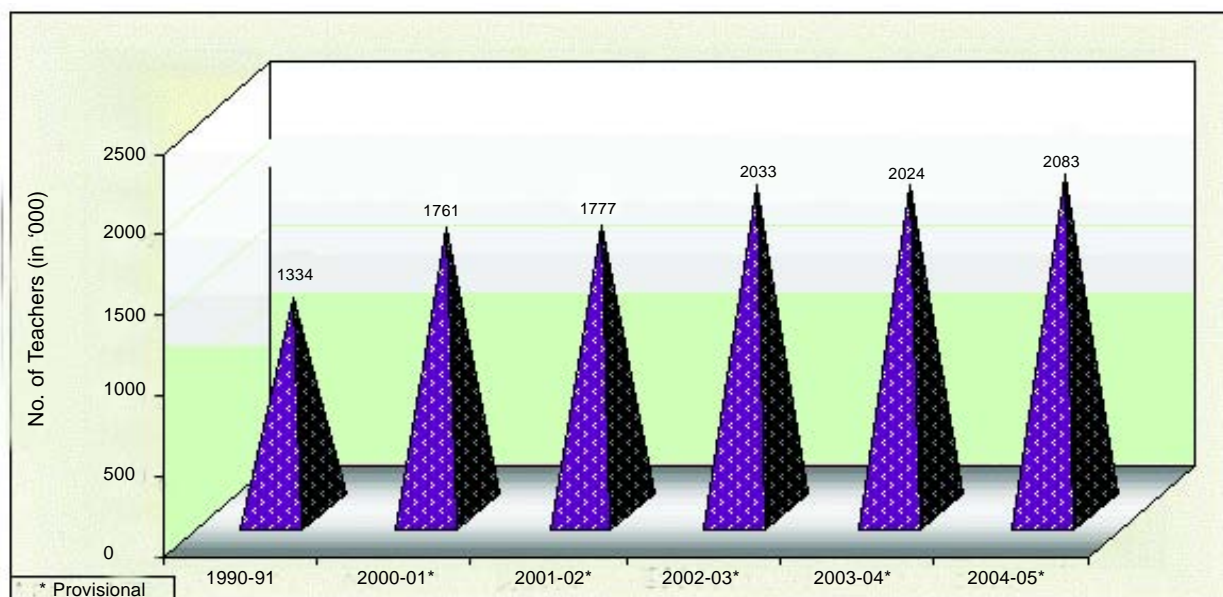


*Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi*

Figure 14: Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) in Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools
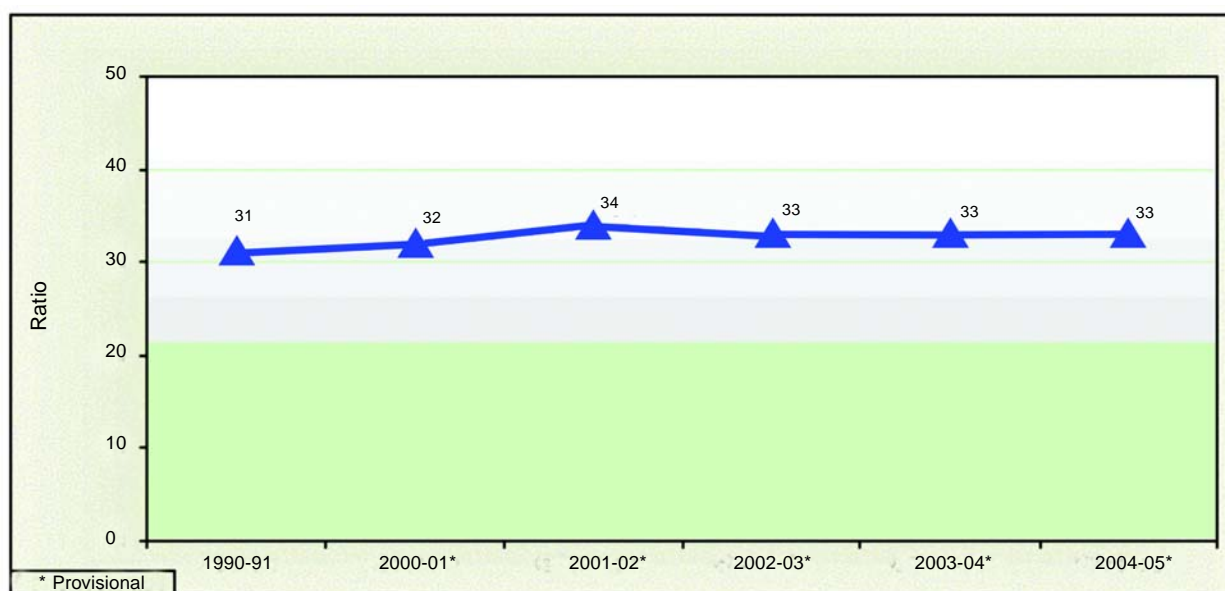


*Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi.*

Figure 15: Number of Female Teachers per hundred Male Teachers
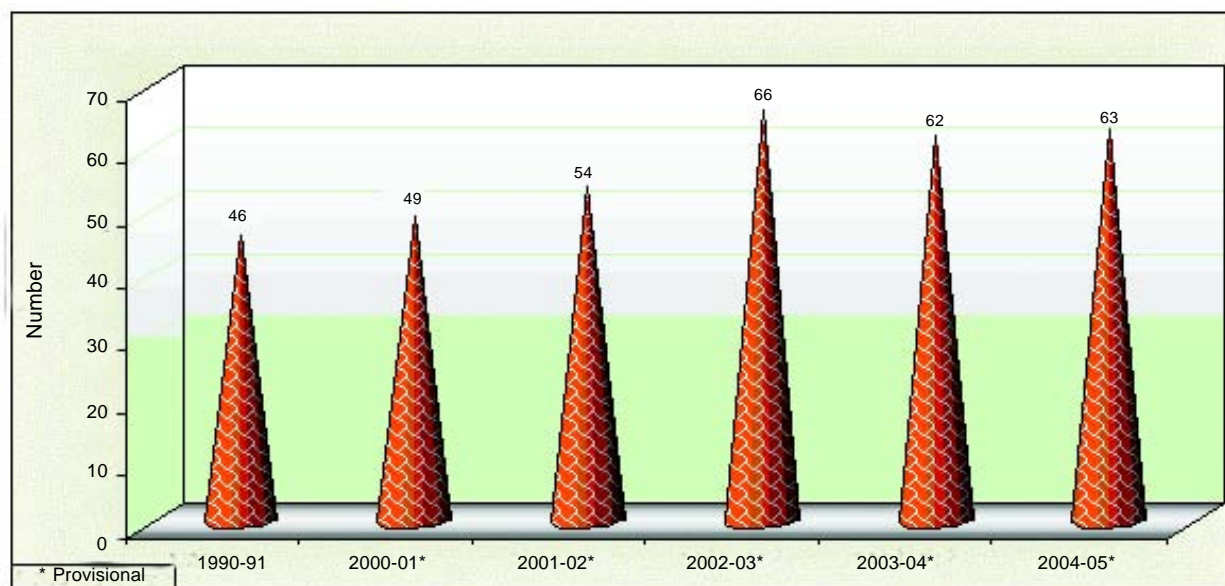


*Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi*

institutes of national importance established by Central Legislation, and 60 Agricultural/ Veterinary, Medical, inducing Ayurveda, Open universities and institutes established under State Legislature Act. Four new Central University Acts are in the process of being brought into force. The number of colleges increased by four times from 4,577 in 1990-91 to 18,064 in 2005-06 (Figure-16).

## Growth in Enrolment

The total enrolment in the higher education system increased from 0.17 million in 1950-51 to 2.75 million in 1980-81 and 4.92 million in 1990-91. From the level of 2.75 million in 1980-81, it increased by four times to 11.03 million in 2005-06 (Figure-17). During the period 1950-51 to 2005-06, total enrolment at higher education level increased at an average annual growth rate of 8.04%. At the beginning of the academic year 2006-07, the total number of students enrolled in the universities and colleges was reported to be 11.03 million. Of the total enrolment, 1.43 million (12.94%) were enrolled in University Departments and 9.60 million (87.06%) in affiliated colleges.

The number of teachers in the higher education system in India in 1950-51 was only 24,000, which increased substantially by 11 times to 271,000 by 1990-91. Later on, by 2005-06, their number marginally improved to the level of 488,000. Among the regular faculty strength, 16.15% were in universities while 83.85% were in colleges.

## Enrolment in Higher Education

Though the overall demand for higher education

Figure 16: Growth of Higher Educational Institutions in India



* Includes Central, State, Demed Universities and National Institutions of Importance; * Estimated
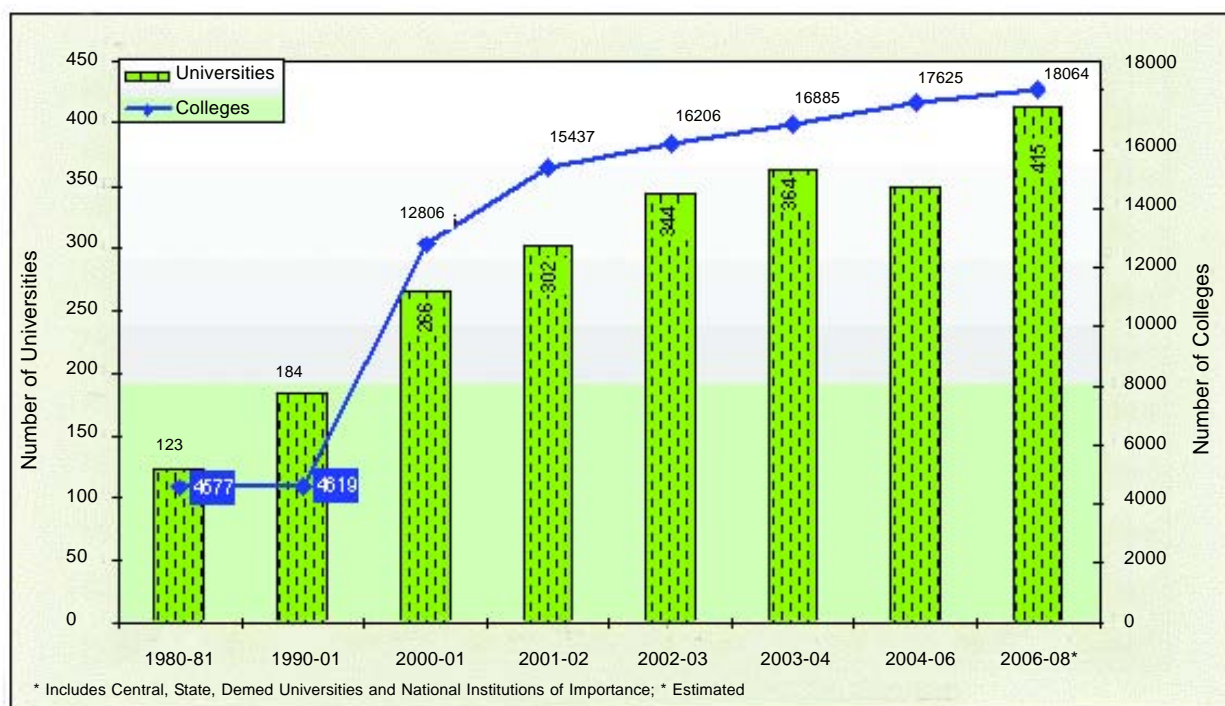
*Source: UGC Annual Reports.*

Figure 17: Growth of Enrolment and Teachers in
Higher Education in India
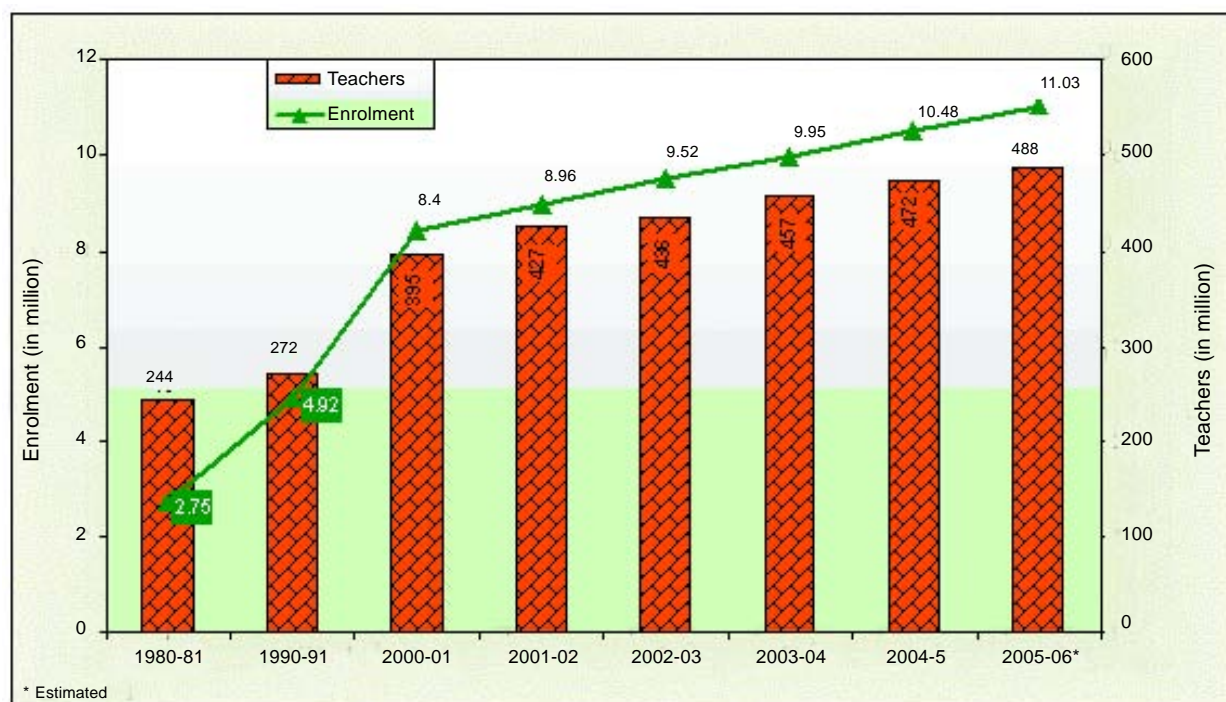


*Source: UGC Annual Reports.*

in India is increasing, there are wide variations in GER across States. The GER at the higher education level ranges from as low as 4.7% in Nagaland to as high as 14.1% in Himachal Pradesh.

Keeping in view the increasing demand for the skilled manpower in the emerging knowledge society, the CABE Committee in its report of 2005 has recommended that it would be necessary to provide for a substantial increase in the GER, in the range of about 20% in the next 15 to 20 years, by doubling the existing capacity. The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) proposes to increase the gross enrolment ratio by 15% by the end of year 2011-12.

Of the total enrolment in higher education, the share of undergraduate students is as high as 89%, while post-graduate enrolment is 9%. The distribution of enrolment at various levels of higher education remained almost similar during 2005-06, except that there is a marginal rise in the share of diploma and certificate courses.

Enrolment by faculty includes the stream-wise enrolment in Arts, Science, Commerce, Education, Engineering and Technology, Medicine, Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Law and others. The total enrolment at higher education level was 11 million in 2005-06. It is evident from the Figure-19 that four out of ten students in higher education were in the faculty of Arts, enrolled for courses in the humanities and social sciences in 2001-02. Nearly two out of 10 students were enrolled in science courses. The percentage enrolment for commerce

Figure 18: Enrolment by Levels in Universities and  Affiliated Colleges
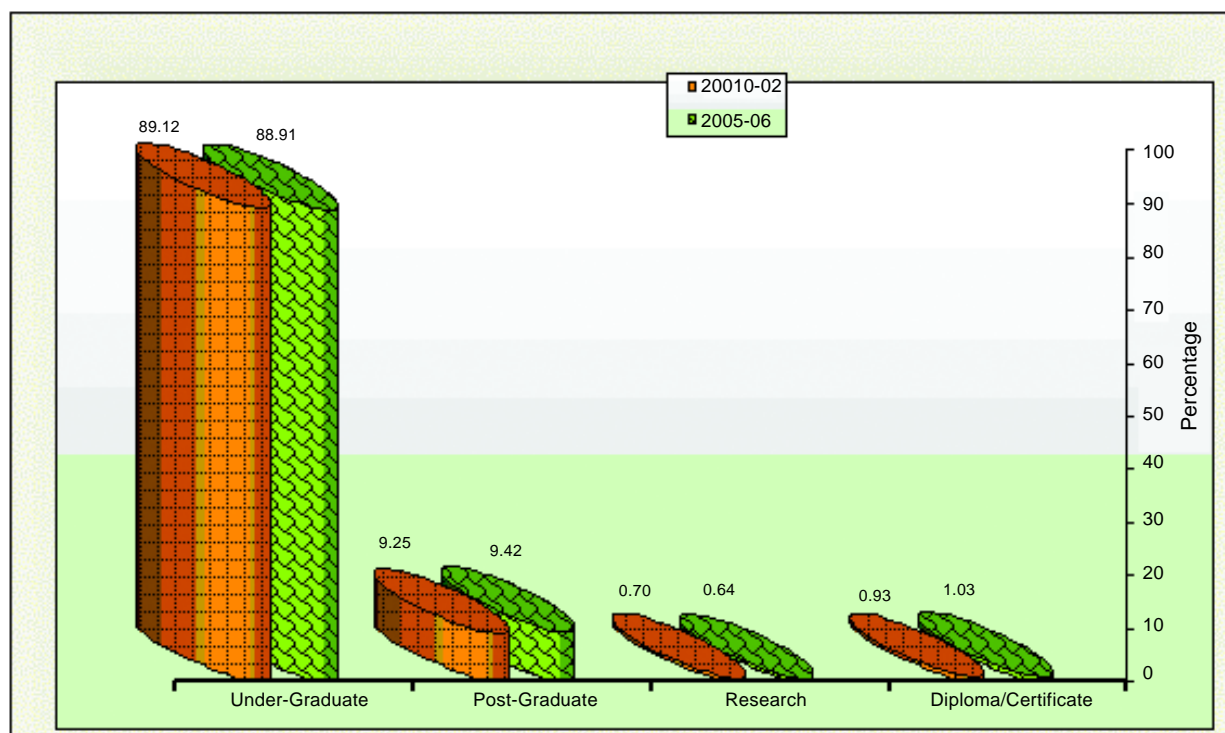


Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2001-02 and 2005-06.

marginally increased from 17.87% in 2001-02 to 18.01% in 2005-06. Over 70 percent of total enrolment was in the three faculties namely, arts, science and humanities in 2005-06 while the remaining 16 per cent were enrolled in the professional courses. Enrolment in engineering and technology accounted for only 7.5 per cent of the total enrolment. On the other hand, enrolment in agriculture was 0.6 per cent and in veterinary science, it was a miniscule, 0.16 per cent (Figure-18). It can also be seen from Table-8 that as against 2001-02, the distribution of enrolment across the faculty in 2005-06 remained more or less the same.

## Participation of Girls, SCs and STs

The institutions of higher education during its initial years largely catered to the elite sections of the society. However, with the adoption of several policies towards inclusion and to diversify the intake of higher education institutions, the winds of change have blown in favour of marginalized social groups including women. The enrolment in higher education institutions increased from 1.71 million to 10.16 million students between 1970-71 and 2005-06 (Prakash Ved, 2008)[*] (Table-8).

The share of girls and marginal groups has also increased along with the expansion of higher education. The proportion of girls in enrolment at higher education level increased from 24 per cent in 1970-71 to 39 per cent in 2005-06. The affirmative policies like special scholarships, fee waivers, separate hostels, etc for girls along with attitudinal change are responsible for these positive developments.

Figure 19: Faculty-Wise Enrolment in Higher Education in India
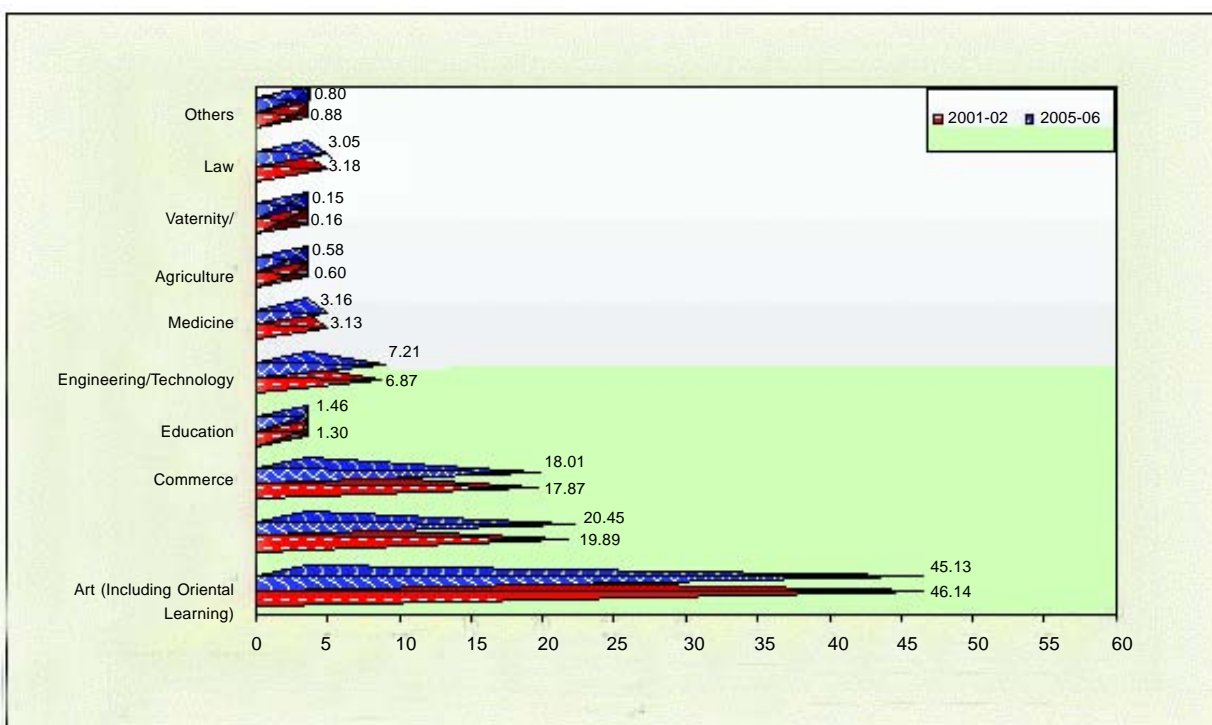


*Source: UGC, Annual Reports, 2001-2002 & 2005-2006*

The marginal groups like SCs and STs are also beginning to enter the higher education system in large numbers. This may be attributed to several affirmative actions which the government has introduced in the form of reservations, scholarships, fee waivers, relaxation in minimum requirements for entry to these institutions. The proportion of SCs in enrolment at higher education increased from 8.5 per cent in 1990-91 to 12.3 per cent in 2005-06.

The proportion of STs in enrolment at higher education increased from 2.1 per cent in 1990-91 to 4.3 per cent in 2005-06. It shows that though some ground has been covered, their share in enrolment in higher education is still less than their share in the total population.

Though Indian higher education system is considered to be the largest system in terms of number of institutions, in relative terms only a small proportion of corresponding age population is enrolled in higher education. The GER at higher education level increased from 9.2 per cent in 2003-04 to 11.6 per cent in 2005-06. The GER for girls was 9.4 per cent compared to 13.6 per cent for boys in 2005-06. Similarly the GER for SC girls was 6.4 per cent compared to 10.16 per cent for boys in 2005-06. The GER for ST girls was 4.69 per cent compared to 8.59 per cent for boys in 2005-06. It shows that the GER for girls is almost 4 percentage points lower than the GER for boys across various social groups. Concerted efforts are, therefore, required to close these gender gaps, on the one

| Table 8: Enrolment in Higher Education | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | PG and Ph.D. | Graduation | BE | B. Ed | MBBS | Total |
| **A. Total Enrolment** | | | | | | |
| 1970-71 | 136825 | 1363060 | 88494 | 48893 | 78244 | 1715516 |
| 1980-81 | 316788 | 1886428 | 103195 | 68250 | 67822 | 2442483 |
| 1990-91 | 387684 | 3285776 | 241368 | 92217 | 84393 | 4091438 |
| 2000-01 | 692342 | 7244915 | 418193 | 121733 | 148699 | 8625882 |
| 2002-03 | 847947 | 6864812 | 708643 | 118593 | 208465 | 9516773 |
| 2003-04 | 872252 | 7052274 | 772923 | 114681 | 223236 | 9035366 |
| 2004-05 | 845619 | 6728029 | 696609 | 155192 | 256748 | 8682197 |
| 2005-06 | 1230054 | 6741592 | 1681716 | 199676 | 308705 | 10161743 |
| **B. Share of Girls' Enrolment (%)** | | | | | | |
| 1970-71 | 25.8 | 24.4 | 1.0 | 37.3 | 22.4 | 23.6 |
| 1980-81 | 31.7 | 27.8 | 3.6 | 40.9 | 24.3 | 27.5 |
| 1990-91 | 32.2 | 34.7 | 10.9 | 44.2 | 34.3 | 33.2 |
| 2000-01 | 36.7 | 37.4 | 22.3 | 42.8 | 40.6 | 36.8 |
| 2002-03 | 42.3 | 42.0 | 22.6 | 52.0 | 41.6 | 40.1 |
| 2003-04 | 42.8 | 41.5 | 23.8 | 49.9 | 42.0 | 45.3 |
| 2004-05 | 44.2 | 41.2 | 26.4 | 36.9 | 36.5 | 40.1 |
| 2005-06 | 33.6 | 41.9 | 26.0 | 43.7 | 47.5 | 38.5 |
| **C. Share of Enrolment of SCs (%)** | | | | | | |
| 1990-91 | 8.7 | 8.7 | 5.7 | 8.4 | 8.6 | 8.5 |
| 2000-01 | 10.1 | 9.6 | 8.7 | 12.3 | 9.6 | 9.7 |
| 2002-03 | 11.4 | 12.0 | 6.7 | 13.9 | 13.2 | 11.3 |
| 2003-04 | 11.6 | 12.0 | 6.3 | 15.7 | 13.0 | 11.5 |
| 2004-05 | 12.5 | 12.7 | 8.5 | 12.9 | 11.5 | 12.3 |
| 2005-06 | 9.5 | 13.3 | 9.7 | 16.2 | 14.5 | 12.3 |
| **D. Share of Enrolment of STs (%)** | | | | | | |
| 1990-91 | 1.8 | 2.2 | 1.1 | 2.3 | 0.7 | 2.1 |
| 2000-01 | 2.6 | 3.0 | 3.3 | 5.3 | 3.6 | 3.0 |
| 2002-03 | 2.7 | 3.7 | 3.2 | 5.0 | 4.9 | 3.6 |
| 2003-04 | 2.8 | 3.8 | 2.0 | 5.5 | 4.5 | 3.6 |
| 2004-05 | 4.0 | 4.4 | 3.1 | 5.9 | 3.7 | 4.2 |
| 2005-06 | 3.2 | 4.6 | 3.5 | 4.7 | 6.2 | 4.3 |

*Source: Prakash, Ved, 2008 based on Selected Educational Statistics (various years), MHRD, (BE: Bachelor of Engineering; B.Ed.: Bachelor of Education)*

Figure 20: Level-Wise Share of Girls in Total Enrolment in Higher Education
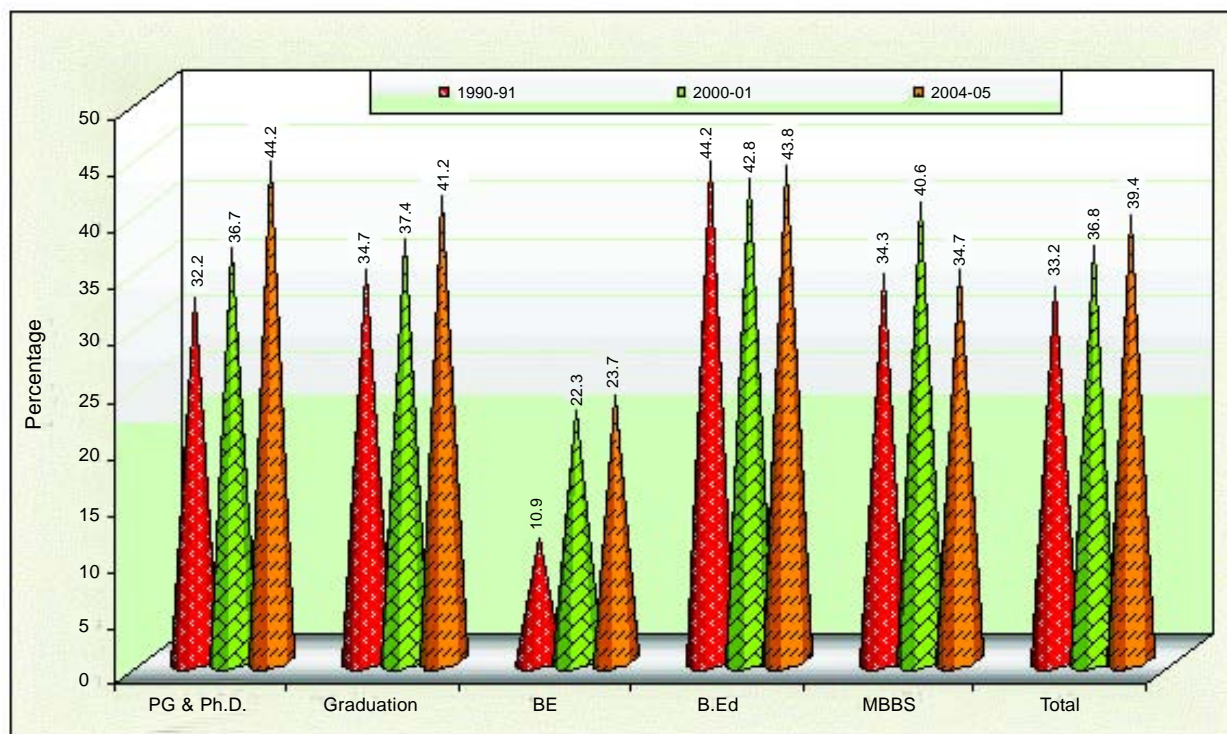


*Source: Selected Educational Statistics, Various Years*

Figure 21: Level-Wise Share of SCs in Total Enrolment in Higher Education
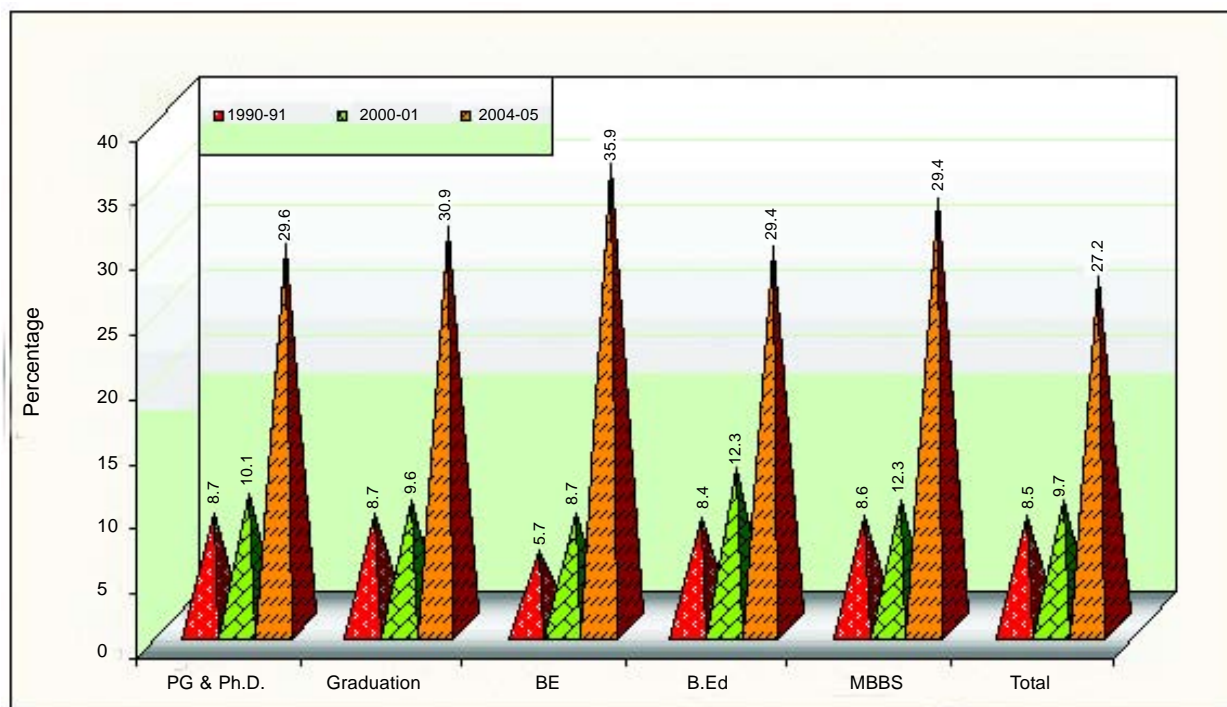


*Source: Selected Educational Statistics, Various Years.*

Figure 22: Level-Wise Share of STs in Total Enrolment in Higher Education
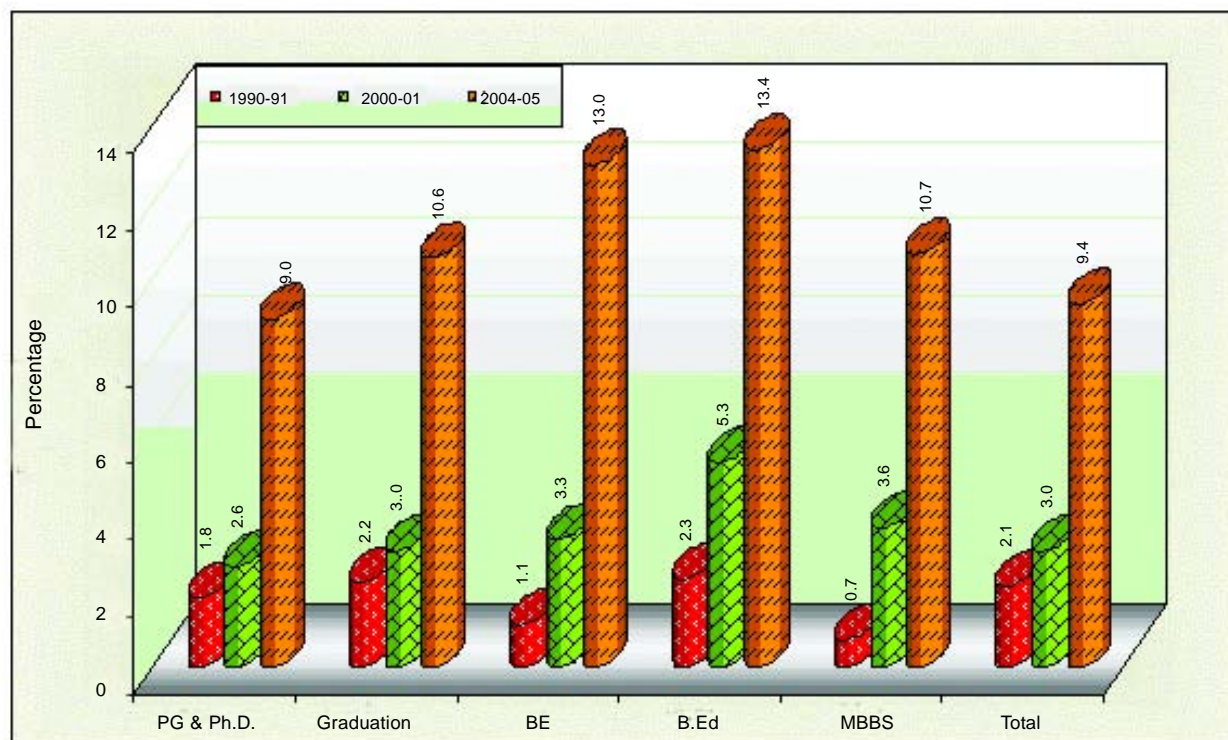


*Source: Selected Educational Statistics, Various Years.*

hand, and increase their participation rates, on the other.

## Inclusion in Higher Education

The Government of India has launched from time to time a number of schemes and programmes for the purposes of enhancing the participation of deprived classes in higher education. India has about 21,092 institutions of higher learning including universities, institutes of national importance and colleges. The Government has made it mandatory for all these institutions to provide 15% reservation to SCs, 7.5% reservation to STs. In addition, the Central Government has now provided for 27% reservation to OBCs and students with disabilities are also given 3% reservations in all centrally funded institutions of higher

learning. Apart from reservation, there is also a relaxation given in the minimum qualifying marks for admission for these students. Besides, seats are also reserved in hostels for these students.

The SC/ST students who secure admission in the notified institutions are given scholarship to meet the requirements for full tuition fees, living expenses, books and stationery. The scholarship once awarded continues till the completion of the course, subject to satisfactory performance. Under the 'Book Bank Scheme' the SC and ST students pursuing Medical, Engineering, Agriculture, Veterinary, Polytechnic, Law, Chartered Accountancy, MBA and Bio-Sciences courses are also provided books. The Scheme provides for sharing of

textbooks by two students at undergraduate level and separate set of books at post-graduate level.

Students with disabilities amongst SCs and STs are also provided specified special allowances like readers allowance, transport allowance, escort allowance etc. Not only that the Government of India provides 17 overseas scholarships each year to the meritorious SC and ST students who wish to pursue higher studies abroad. These students pursuing higher education are also provided free remedial coaching to enable them to upgrade their merit. Besides, they are also provided free coaching for entry into the services.

In order to provide relevant and good quality higher education in an equitable manner, the Government has proposed a number of measures to remove regional, social and gender disparities. The XI Plan envisages increase in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of the students in the age group of 18-24 years by 5% during the plan period. While the Central Government has taken initiative to set up several new institutions, bulk of the enrolment has to be increased through the state level institutions.

The Government proposes to establish 370 new colleges in districts with GER less than national average, 14 world class universities and 16 Central Universities in hitherto uncovered states. The government is also committed to provide increased financial assistance to institutions located in border, hilly, remote and educationally backward areas. The central government is also going to provide increased support to institutions with large percentage of SC, ST, OBC, girls and minority population. Besides, the government is also committed to build more hostels for the students belonging to underprivileged sections of the society. Focus will be on access and affordability in SCs, STs, OBCs, and minority concentration districts and

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### Box 5: Inclusive Education

The objective of inclusiveness in higher education will be achieved through the following:

- Reduction of regional imbalances;

- Support to institutions located in border, hilly, remote, small towns and educationally backward areas;

- Support to institutions with larger student population of SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, and physically challenged;

- Support to the SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, physically challenged, and girl students with special scholarships/ fellowships, hostel facilities, remedial coaching, and other measures;

- Setting up of an 'Equal Opportunity Office' in all universities to bring all schemes relating to this group under one umbrella for effective implementation.

*1.3.25 of XI Plan Document, p 26 Vol. II, GOI, 2008*

implementation of the recommendations of the Sachar Committee with respect to educational development of the Muslim community.

The XI Plan document (1.3.32, p27, Vol. II, 2008) also points out that focus on the disadvantaged sections (SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities) holds the key to achieving the GER of 15% for the Plan. This cannot be achieved without initiatives for Inclusive education by the states. Financial assistance will be provided to the States on the basis of specific projects submitted for these social groups. Girls' hostels will be constructed in districts with low female GER and high concentration of SCs STs, OBCs and minorities.

## Role of Private Sector in Higher Education

Private (un-aided) education has also grown at a rapid rate in the last several years. However, no firm estimates are available of the share of private education in total enrolment. The only source of such information is the NSS 52nd Round, which gives estimates for 1995-96. According to the estimates generated from the household data of the NSS 52nd Round, 8% of enrolment in the higher education sector was in private un-aided institutions. Private institutions, particularly in the areas of management, engineering, medicine, computers etc, have comeup in large numbers, raising issues of access, equity, quality and regulation. The share of private education was higher in technical and professional education (20 per cent in engineering, 10 per cent in medicine). Enrolment in private un-aided managements is projected to increase to 16% of the total enrolment by 2006- 07 and 20% by 2011-12. The share of private education in technical education is, however, projected to touch 40 per cent by 2006-07 and 60 per cent by the end of the Eleventh Five Year Plan. Box-6 gives the gist of initiatives and dialogue with states which also indicate the possibilities of the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) mode.

## Box 6: Initiatives to Expand Infrastructure in
## Higher Education during 2007-2012

With a view to increasing access and improving quality of higher education, the Government of India has decided to take several initiatives. It is proposed to set up 8 new Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat during the XI Plan period and start B. Tech Courses in three branches with a limited batch of about 120 first year students from the academic session of 2008-09. It is also proposed to convert the Institute of Technology, Benaras Hindu University into an IIT. These new IITs will be mentored by the existing IITs of Madras, Guwahati, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Delhi and Mumbai respectively.

One Indian Institute of Management (IIM) at Shillong has already been established and has commenced its academic session from 2008-09 with an initial intake of 60 students based on CAT 2007 score. It has been decided to locate the remaining six IIMs in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Tamil Nadu and Haryana. State Governments have been requested to allot adequate land free of cost for setting up the new IIMs, having excellent road connectivity as also physical and social infrastructure. Further, State Governments are expected to suggest two or three options, from which the best suited location for IIMs could be chosen.

Three Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs) at Mohali, Pune and Kolkata have already been functioning and two more at Bhopal and Thiruvanthapuram will start their classes in the ensuing academic session in August 2008. Twenty Indian Institutes of Information Technologies (IIITs) are proposed under the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) mode. Two Schools of Planning & Architecture are to be set up at Bhopal and Vijayawada.

The Department of Higher Education, M/ HRD has prepared a scheme on Sub-Mission of Polytechnics under National Skill Development Mission. Under Sub-Mission of Polytechnic, it is proposed to take up the following four components:

i)      Setting up of 1000 polytechnics (300 in Government Sectors, 300 through PPP mode and 400 private polytechnics;

ii)     Strengthening of existing 500 polytechnics;

iii)    Construction of women's hostel in 500 polytechnics; and

iv)     Revamping of the Community Polytechnics scheme and increasing their number from 669 to 1000.

Polytechnics in Government sector are to be set up in such districts, which do not presently have polytechnic.

Establishment of 16 Central Universities in the uncovered states and 14 Central Universities aiming at world class standards.

Creation of these new institutions would benefit States in many ways including new opportunities for enrolment of students and employment in teaching as well as non-teaching careers, even though these selections would be made on all India basis and on merit.

*Based on the Background Notes for the State Education Ministers Conference, Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education (August 23-24 2008)*

# Inclusion in Education of Children and Persons with Disabilities*

The past few decades have seen many new initiatives being launched by the Government of India both in terms of legislations, policies and schemes in order to address the educational needs of children with disabilities. In 1974, Government of India launched the *Integrated Education for Disabled Children Scheme (*IEDC); in 1988 the *Project Integrated Education* (PIED) for the disabled, in 1985 the *District Primary Education Program* (DPEP) with aims to move towards "Universalisation of Elementary Education" and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001 for meeting the EFA Goals.

The objectives of the Integrated Education for Disabled Children Scheme (IEDC Scheme) was to (a) to provide educational opportunities for disabled children in common schools to facilitate their retention in the school system; (b) to integrate the disabled children with the general community at all levels as equal partners; and (c) to prepare them for normal growth and to face life with courage and confidence. The categories covered under the scheme are (i) Orthopaedically Handicapped, (ii) Blind and visually impaired, (iii) Hearing impaired, (iv) Mentally retarded (Educable); and (v) Cerebral Palsy.

Under the IEDC Scheme, the benefits extended to the disabled children for Books and Stationery allowance , Uniform allowance ,Transport ,Escort allowance, Reader Allowance and Actual cost of equipment subject to a maximum of Rs.2000/- per child for a period of five years. While reviewing the National Policy 1986, the Acharya Ramamurthy Committee had observed that education of students with disabilities was a "social welfare activity" and critiqued the implementation of Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) in terms of running "mini special schools within general schools" (MHRD, 1990). Since then the Government of India has enacted three legislations for persons with disabilities as has been mentioned earlier.

Currently, the Government of India under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has proclaimed its intent to provide 'Education for All' by the year 2010.This also implies a commitment to providing education to all children including children with disabilities

"*SSA will ensure that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided education in an appropriate environment. SSA will adopt 'zero*

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* Mainly based on Mukhopdhyay, S. and Renu Singh (2008) and Mukhopadhyay, S. (2007) and   GOI, Eleventh Five Year Plan, 2008.

*rejection*' *policy so that no child is left out of*. *The thrust of SSA will be on providing integrated and inclusive education to all children with special needs in general schools."*(Article 5.2)

The SSA framework, in line with the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995 mentions that a child with special needs should be taught in an environment, which is best suited to his /her learning needs. These might include special schools, Education Guarantee Scheme or even home-based education. SSA also offers each district flexibility to plan for Inclusive Education (IE) activities, depending on the number of children identified and the resources available to effectively implement the IE programme.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCERT, 2000) had recommended inclusive schools for learners with special educational needs by making appropriate modifications in the content, presentation and transaction strategies, preparing teachers and developing learning-friendly evaluation procedures.

## Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS)

The Integrated Education for Disabled Children scheme has now been replaced by a new scheme called inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) approved in September 2008. The main features of the scheme are as under.

i) The scheme will cover all children of 14+ age passing out of elementary schools and studying at secondary stage with one or mores disabilities as defined under ' Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995' and national Trust Act 1999, namely:

Figure 23: Coverage of CWSN under Different Schemes/Programmes
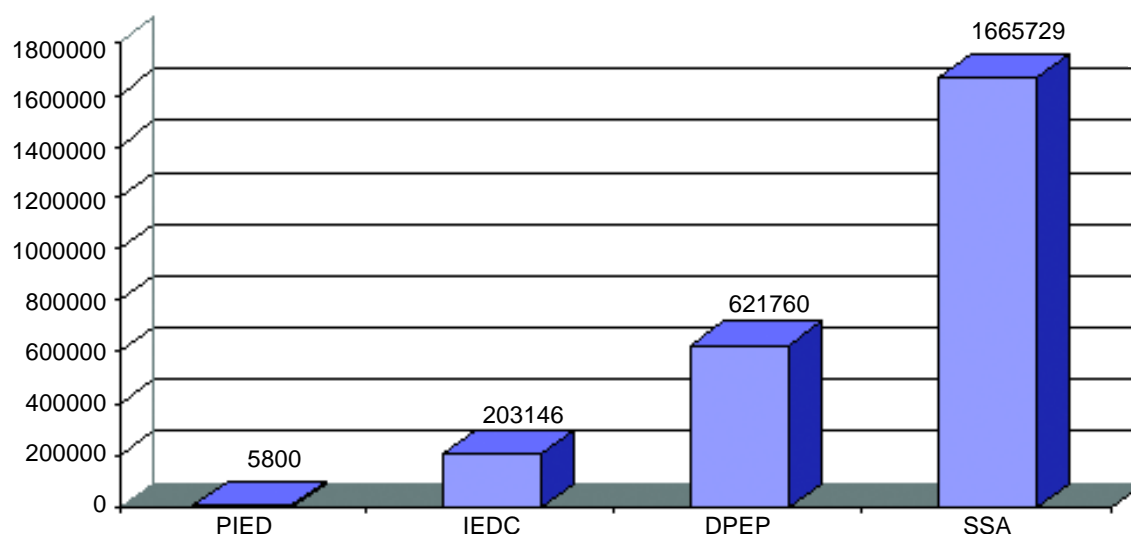


*Source: MHRD, 2006*

a) blindness, b) low vision, c) Leprosy cured, d) hearing impaired, e) Locomotive disabilities, f) Mental retardation, g) mental illness, h) autism, i) cerebral palsy.

ii) 100% assistance would be provided to States and U.Ts and other Organizations for following two components:

a) Rs. 3000/- per child per annum for students oriented components such as material and educational assessments, books and stationary, uniform allowances, reader allowance, stipend for girls, assistive devices, boarding and lodging facilities etc, In addition to the above central assistance State Govt. would also provide Rs. 600/- per child per annum as scholarship.

b) Other components such as appointment of special education teachers, special allowance for normal teachers, teacher training, orientation of school administrators and community members, provision for barrier free environment, provision of resource room etc.

## Achievements in Education of Children with Special Needs

Thus, in India, the past three decades have witnessed a spurt of legislative and policy initiatives aimed at addressing the educational needs of a very large "forgotten" and "invisible" population of children with disability. To capture the achievement towards providing access, equity and quality education as far as children with disabilities are concerned, it is vital to place it against the backdrop of achievements in the educational field for all children.

Official estimates on the population of people with disabilities exist in the form of Census and National Sample Survey statistics- though both these estimates differ mainly due to differences in definitions of disability adopted. The Census 2001 results reveal total population of persons with disabilities in India as 21,906,769 (Male:12,605,635 Female:9,301,134) estimated at 2.13% of the total population, whereas the National Sample Survey 58th Round, 2002 estimates the total population of disabled people in thecountry, to be 18.49 million disabled people, i.e., 1.8% (Males 10.89 million and Females 7.59 million ).

Persons with Disability Act 1995 is the legal reference point for this definition but it left out various disabilities, some of which were addressed consequently through the National Trust Act of 1999. Today we talk about ten disabilities as compared to the four, which were initially mentioned by the Kothari Commission. These are: blindness, low vision, leprosy cured, hearing impairments, locomotive disabilities, mental retardation, mental illness, autism, cerebral palsy and multi-disability.

Over 3 lakh disabled children studying in 64000 schools have been covered. 5500 Special Education Teachers have been engaged for these children.

## Access to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

While ECCE is important for all children, early intervention is very critical for children with disabilities both for diagnosis, early identification and interventions as well as readiness for inclusion in mainstream programmes. This is particularly important to note, since many disabilities e.g. intellectual, physical, multiple and speech impairments have the highest onset during childhood and early childhood care particularly health services are critical for

children with disabilities and their long-term prognosis. The immunization programme in India affects morbidity, mortality as well as disability. The role of pre-school education in the age group three to six then takes on tremendous importance, particularly because of the criticality of intervention in the early years for children with disabilities.

## School Education for Children with Disabilities

Learning from DPEP, SSA has adopted a more pragmatic approach to implementing the programme of inclusive education. SSA framework clearly states, *"the thrust of SSA will be on providing integrated and inclusive education to all children with special needs in general schools. It will also support a wide range of approaches, options and strategies for education of children with special needs. This includes education through open learning system and open schools, non formal and alternative schooling, distance education and learning, special schools, wherever necessary, home based education, itinerant teacher model, remedial teaching, part time classes, community based rehabilitations (CBR) and vocational education and cooperative programmes."*

These practices and innovations in SSA are leading to a gradual increased identification of Children With Special Needs (CWSN). As compared to 14.59 lakh CWSN identified in 2003-04, 30.38 lakh CWSN were identified in 2006-07. Similarly, the enrollment of children with disabilities/ CWSN in 2006-07 has gone up to 19.97 lakh, as compared to 11.71 lakh in 2003-04(SSA,2007).The current coverage of children with disabilities is 21.86 lakh (71.99%),thus leaving approximately 30% of the

**Box 7: Inclusion in ECCE – An Exemplar**

The National Resource Centre of India (NRCI, Mumbai) carried out a project in Early Childhood Intervention in the slums of Dharavi, by focusing on inclusion of most disadvantaged children like children with disabilities, girls and poor children. The project worked towards capacity building of the Anganwadi workers and community members including parents, health officials and Municipal corporation members. The project demonstrated learning and developmental progress for all children, including children with disabilities.

identified children with disabilities out of the education ambit.

DISE Report 2006 estimated that in 2005-06 about 1.40 million disabled children were enrolled in elementary schools across the country, of which 1.02 million were in lower primary and 0.38 million were in upper primary classes. This is estimated to account for one per cent of the total enrollment in elementary schools. Not surprisingly, the enrolment ratio was the highest amongst children with locomotor disability and the lowest among those with mental retardation, and also, higher among the boys than amongst the girls.

The share of girls with disability to total such enrolment in primary and upper primary classes in 2005 was 40.52 and 40.69 per cent respectively compared to 41.49 and 39.21 per cent in 2004. The Gender Parity Index calculated irrespective of the level in case of disabled children works out to be much lower than the same in case of overall enrolment. The GPI was as low as 0.68 in primary, 0.71 in upper

### Box 8: Inclusion under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

Under the SSA, different service delivery options have been developed apart from mainstreaming in regular schools e.g. Non-formal schools as well as home-based programmes for children with severe to profound disabilities. So far in SSA, 1.70 million children with disabilities have been enrolled in regular schools (MHRD, 2007). States like A.P., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and U.P. have conducted residential bridge courses for children with disabilities with the main objective of preparing them for formal schools, thereby endeavouring better quality inclusion for them. Whereas Rajasthan is conducting these bridge courses entirely through NGOs, U.P is conducting them through the resource teachers especially recruited by the District SSA Societies for this purpose. Andhra Pradesh has adopted a mixed model, with some districts conducting these courses through NGOs and others through the District SSA Societies. Besides this AIE model, 11 States are also covering children with disabilities through the Education Guarantee Scheme. So far in SSA, 112033 children with disabilities are being covered through AIE/EGS in 17 States. Another practice adopted by SSA States (21 States so far) is that of the home-based education for children with severe-profound disabilities with the objective of either preparing CWSN for schools or for life by imparting to them basic living skills. Again States have adopted different ways to provide home-based support to CWSN. States like Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are using NGOs for this purpose, whereas States like Haryana and Kerala have appointed resource teachers who visit the homes of CWSN to provide them basic functional skills. Still other States like Tamil- Nadu are using special schools as resource centres to provide short-time or part-time help to individual children with special needs and their parents. Through home-based education, SSA has been able to cover 77140 children with disabilities. A notable feature of this programme has been an increased and a sustainable school-community linkage by actively involving parents in the educational process of their wards.

*Source: Based on the Report of the National Workshop on Inclusive Education in SSA,* Confluence*, Pp21-34,Vol.4, January 2008*

| Table 9: Enrolment by Type of Disability (%) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Disability in** | **Grades** | | |
| | **I-V** | **VI-VIII** | **I-VIII** |
| **Seeing** | 15.39 | 24.78 | 17.95 |
| **Hearing** | 9.11 | 12.14 | 9.94 |
| **Speech** | 13.82 | 11.71 | 13.24 |
| **Moving** | 34.85 | 38.08 | 35.73 |
| **Mentally Retarded** | 18.44 | 6.25 | 15.12 |
| **Others** | 8.39 | 7.04 | 8.02 |
| **% to Total Enrolment** | 0.86 | 1.01 | 0.90 |

*Source: DISE, 2006Enrolment by Type of Disability (%)*

primary and 0.69 at the elementary level in 2005-06. This has definitely improved over the years; but the trend is more favourable in urban areas.

## Educational Achievement and Transition

The National Sample Survey 2002 revealed that even amongst those with mild disabilities, 6.8% of the sample completed middle school, 0.1% in the moderate category had completed secondary schooling and none accessed higher education. In short, very few children with disabilities, in spite of the mild disability are able to go beyond primary school.

## Overcoming Inequities for Children with Disabilities

It is evident that inability to ensure that children with disabilities receive effective educational services results in their exclusion from the labour market and other forms of marginalization and dependency. The net result is that individuals with disabilities and their families live in poverty, and in many cases, the most profound levels of poverty. Since there

exist so many inter-state and intra-state disparities it is important to plan keeping in mind disparities in the availability of services and quality of education as one move from richer to poorer districts, from urban to rural areas and from well resourced to remote distant geographic locations of the country.

As a first step, the inequitable service provision between urban and rural areas needs to be addressed. More than 70% of the population with disabilities lives in rural areas; however, the concentration of resource support continues to be concentrated in metropolitan cities. Today special schools have a very important role to play in terms of providing technical resource support to mainstream schools – however, the 3,000 special schools are in cities and furthermore are dealing with a single disability, with the result that all children even within these locations may not get adequate resource support. The resulting access to services provided for the privileged and urban few fails all moral and equity tests. Instead the focus must shift to the provision of educational services to all children with disabilities – urban and rural,

| Table 10: Educational Achievement of Children with Disabilities by Severity | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Indicator | Severe Disability | Moderate Disability | Mild Disability |
| Attend School | 25.7% | 56.3% | 67.9% |
| Illiterate | 72.2% | 42.6% | 34.9% |
| Primary or less | 26.4% | 52.0% | 58.2% |
| Middle School | 1.5% | 5.3% | 6.8% |
| Secondary | 0.0% | 0.1% | 0.0% |
| Higher | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

Source: NSS 58th Round, 2002

Figure 24: Disabled Persons Education Status
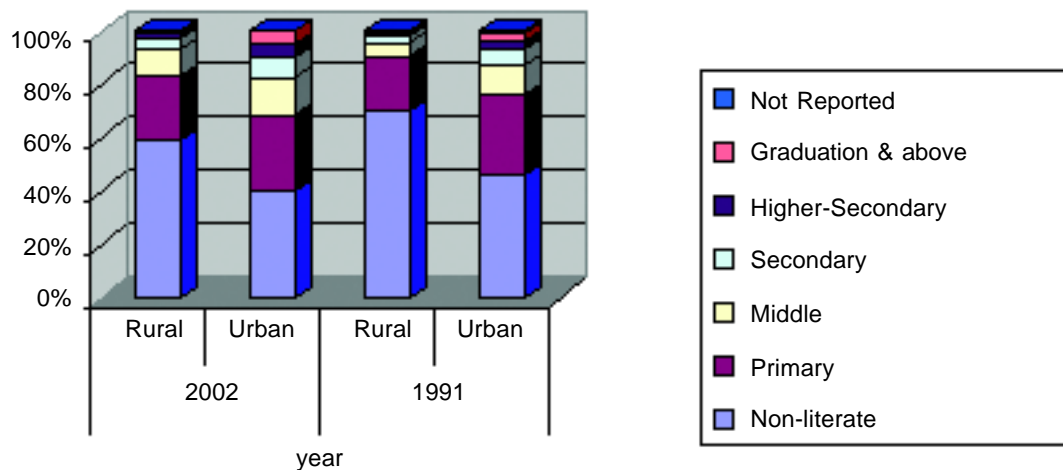


*Source: NSS Rounds 47th and 58th in 1991 and 2002*

Figure 25: Disabled Persons Social Composition (Percentage)



*Source: NSS Rounds 47th and 58th in 1991 and 2002*

for the underprivileged as well as the privileged, the girl child and the child with disability belonging to a socially disadvantaged social group (SC &ST).
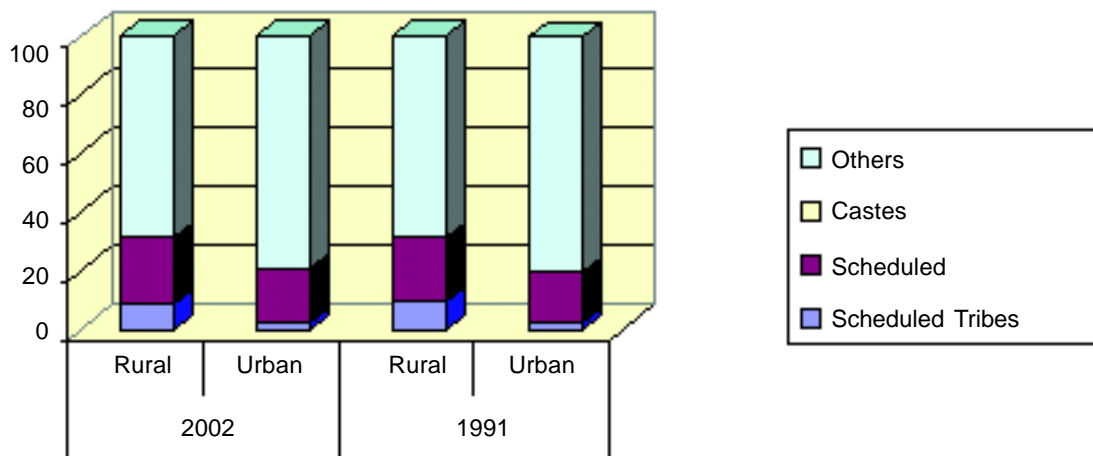
Even within the disability population, inequity persists since children with mild disabilities fare best and those with physical impairments are perceived as 'least difficult' to include. The hierarchical model of merit deeply entrenched within the education system, slowly pushes out children with intellectual impairments and as seen earlier those with multiple disabilities find it difficult to even get admission in schools.

The lucky few children with disabilities who get access to schooling face exclusion within schools. Increasing *equity* for all children requires pedagogies that respond to the social construction of difference in the school system, and also in society at large (issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, and ability). It is vital that we help overcome attitudinal barriers and any misconceptions of peers, parents, school personnel and teachers vis-a-vis children with disabilities. As more children with disabilities will access early childhood education services, many of these prejudices may be overcome by peers since children at a younger age are more accepting of differences. However, it is the adults who will need to be sensitized to respecting each child with disability and seeking his/her strengths and building on them.

It is important to ensure accessibility not only to the physical infrastructure, but more importantly to the curriculum through required aids, adaptations and accommodations in the teaching learning process. Schools across the country still have much to be desired to make them physically accessible. Buildings must be made accessible for those in wheelchairs, and

it must be recognized that building ramps, accessible washrooms, wide doorways, tactile signage and so on is just the beginning. The provision of personal support from an assistant also needs to be available if the school is to be able to accommodate students with multiple and severe disabilities. The choice of subjects is often limited due to non-availability of accessible laboratories etc. Most schools are not equipped or staffed to meet these needs and achieving the goals of EFA, and thus of inclusion of children with disabilities will be difficult until they are met. Only 18 per cent of SSA schools nationally were considered accessible in 2005, and the share is as low as 2 and 6 per cent in Jammu & Kashmir and Bihar respectively. Nor does the accessible share follow predictable patterns, with generally good performers like Karnataka and well-off states like Punjab with less than 8 percent of schools accessible. At the same time, recent efforts have resulted in the figure for 2007 rising to around 47 per cent accessible schools (MHRD, 2007).

The key question is whether accessible schools take into account the principles of Universal Design or whether it is limited to construction of ramps on the entrance of the school, with no thought given to access to classes on the first floor or the design of the laboratories, playground etc. An example of universal design is doors with sensors that make them automatically open for individuals walking with packages, those using wheelchairs, the elderly who experience weakness, teachers carrying books and workers using carts to deliver products. Universal design puts high value *both* on diversity and inclusiveness.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, in order to provide an equitable education for students with disabilities, it is imperative not only to make

schools barrier-free, but also to provide the necessary supports to students within educational settings. In terms of learning, universal design means the design of instructional materials and activities that make learning goals achievable by individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand, attend, organize, engage and remember. Universal design for learning is achieved by means of flexible curricular materials and activities that provide alternatives for students with differing abilities. These alternatives are built into the instructional design and operating systems of educational material—they are not added on afterwards as an after thought. Just as after-the-fact architectural accommodations are often awkward and expensive, after-the-fact curriculum adaptations can be time consuming to design and difficult to implement in classrooms of diverse learners. A more efficient way to provide student access is to consider the range of user abilities at the design stage of the curriculum and incorporate accommodations at that point. This "built-in" access for a wide range of users, those with and without disabilities, is the underlying principle in universal design. This has wide implications for NCERT, NCTE and other teacher training institutes in the country.

## Teachers

Today, the key to the implementation of inclusive education is the underlying philosophy that students remain in the regular education setting availing support in and out of that setting as dictated by the needs of the student. Very important to provide along with aids and appliances are interventions in the form of assistive technology which ensures that the student with disabilities can benefit from meaningful participation in activities. Students can utilize computers to do assignments, touch screens to complete worksheets, and communication devices to share their thoughts and feelings.

This not only necessitates that teachers in regular schools must be trained to deal with learning needs of students with disabilities, but also highlights the importance of hiring resource teachers in schools. According to MHRD (2007), the number of resource teachers in SSA is about 6,678 which is rather small and majority of these teachers have been trained through distance teaching courses in special education, which may not equip them sufficiently.

The Rehabilitation Council of India currently runs 56 long term and short-term courses for 16 categories of professionals run by various Universities/ Institutions. 1176 professionals and 1791 personnel have been registered in the Central Rehabilitation Register taking the total number of registered professionals and personnel to 30,935 (MSJE, 2007). These efforts need to be further supported.

The general education teachers fear the diversity amongst learners in their classrooms. They feel that they do not have the expertise necessary to adapt to a range of learning styles and rates. The attitudes and fears of regular education teachers are partly a result of their training. Universities need to be pursued for instilling the values of inclusionary education in future preparation programmes. There are lots of expectations from the strategies currently being worked out towards this end.

## Management of Provisions for Persons with Disabilities

Issues in education are closely related to other empowering processes for children and persons

with disabilities. Ever since the last ten years there has been a gradual shift from a welfare-based approach for the disabled to a rights-based approach. The enabling legislations such as Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act 1995) cover a wide range of activities, which include issuance of disability certificates and prevention and early detection of disabilities; promoting the integration of disabled students in mainstream schools and removal of architectural barriers from schools, colleges and universities; providing incentives to private sector employers to ensure that persons with disabilities constitute at least 5% of their workforce; and framing a scheme for payment of an unemployment allowance to those disabled people who have been registered with a Special Employment Exchange for over two years but could not be placed in any gainful employment (6.174 of The Eleventh Plan, p130, Vol. I, 2008).

It was, however, recognized during Tenth Plan itself that that the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, being the nodal Ministry, should play a lead role in ensuring the objectives of the PWD Act,1995. The concerned Ministries/ Departments were expected to formulate detailed rules and guidelines for 852 government-run and 105 privately run Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) to provide 3% reservation in seats for persons with disabilities. The SGSY, Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) provide for 3% reservation/benefits to disabled people. The National Handicapped and Finance Development Corporation provide loans on concessional terms to self-employed persons with disabilities.

Aids and appliances are provided to the disabled under the Scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/ Appliances (ADIP). To enhance the economic potential of disabled people, by the end of the Tenth Plan, 128 District Disability Centres have been made operational. The National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability has, so far, registered 731 NGOs. Under the scheme to promote voluntary action for persons with disabilities during 2005–2006, 1533 voluntary organizations were supported financially for providing services to 1.8 lakh disabled persons. The government has been encouraging education among persons with disabilities. Five hundred scholarships were provided every year during the Tenth Plan for higher and professional courses. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has initiated a number of programmes for the prevention and reduction of the incidence of various disabilities.

In the Eleventh Plan, a firm four-pronged approach has been indicated to: (i) delineate clear-cut responsibilities between the concerned ministries/departments; (ii) concerned ministries/departments to formulate detailed rules and guidelines within six months of approval of the Eleventh Plan; (iii) ensure that each concerned ministry/department shall reserve not less than 3% of their annual outlay for the benefit of disabled persons as enjoined in the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995; (iv) set up monitoring mechanisms at various levels and develop a review system so that its progress can be monitored on a regular and continuing basis.

Recognizing that some women suffer greater deprivation and discrimination than others, the Eleventh Plan plans to refine the norms of

women and child programmes to prioritize the most vulnerable as beneficiaries, particularly SC, ST women, Muslim women, single women, differently abled, and HIV-positive women, among others (P200, Vol. II, GOI, 2008). The specific concerns of women with disabilities have to be adequately reflected in the planning process. The Eleventh Plan sensitization programmes of government departments, police, and health care personnel will include sensitization to the needs of women with disabilities. Laws will be strictly enforced in cases of discrimination (P197 Vol. II, GOI, 2008).

Chapter XII of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 mandates the appointment of a Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) at the Central level and Commissioners at the State level to look into complaints of deprivation of rights of persons with disabilities and non-implementation of laws, rules, regulations and executive orders. The CCPD is also expected to coordinate the work of the Commissioners and monitor the utilization of funds.

To ensure adequate financial support to efforts to support the disabled, the Tenth Plan advocated the introduction of a 'Component Plan for the Disabled' in the budget of various Ministries/Departments.

The Eleventh Plan endeavours to create awareness about ADIP and other such schemes. This is one scheme which must be universalized. Any disabled person should be able to approach the district magistrate and derive benefit from her/him. The income ceiling for availing assistance is to be raised to Rs 10000 per month. Moreover, the income ceiling for purchase/ fitting of aids and appliances should also be enhanced to Rs 25000 per

> ## Box 9: India's Commitment under UNCRPD
>
> India being a signatory of United Nations Charter for Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), it is now obligatory to incorporate the essence of the convention in planning, implementation, monitoring and review processes. The eight basic principles of the Convention are: (i) respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons with disabilities; (ii) non-discrimination; (iii) full and effective participation and inclusion in society; (iv) respect for difference and acceptance of disabled people as part of human diversity and humanity; (v) equality of opportunity; (vi) accessibility; (vii) equality between men and women; and (viii) respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for their right to preserve their identities. There is an urgent need to review all the four disability legislations and to amend them suitably to bring them in consonance with UNCRPD.

month. For manufacturing these aids and appliances, there is need to enhance the production capacity and ALIMCO should not be a monopoly supplier. The approach should be to provide the best possible assistive devices by encouraging multiple manufacturers, and even through imports. The Eleventh Plan shall allocate adequate funds for strengthening ADIP.

The Eleventh Plan shall support vigorous implementation of the Comprehensive Action Plan for the Inclusive Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities, as announced by the HRD Minister in 2005. A commitment has been given in Parliament that education would be

made disabled friendly by 2020. If this commitment is to be fulfilled, certain urgent steps are necessary, including the setting up of disability units in the University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), and all other apex education bodies. The scholarships provided by the Central Government and stipends for pre-matric education, mostly provided by the States, should be made equivalent to similar scholarships and stipends given to students belonging to SCs and STs (GOI, Vol. I, Pp132-133, 2008).

It is important to recognize that education of children with disabilities was initiated and undertaken primarily by NGO's in India, who largely catered to a specific disability group. A total of 687 NGOs are involved in the IE programme in 28 States. The service provision was largely provided in segregated settings within special schools – in isolation from the larger education system. With the education system increasingly taking charge of the child, the role of the NGOs is changing. Undoubtedly, there are a number of NGOs who are doing commendable work at providing service delivery to meet the varied needs of children with disabilities, but in light of the fact that majority of children with disabilities are attending regular schools, it is vital to plan innovatively.

■■

# Major Challenges and Way Forward

Today, the education system in India as a whole has achieved much but there are also many issues of concern. These pertain to access, equity, quality and relevance, resources, and planning and management of educational programmes. All of these are on the agenda of the government and civil society is also getting more conscious about its pro-active role.

Expenditure on education has shown a continuous upward trend since independence. This trend registered a sharp increase after education was brought in the Concurrent list of the Constitution of India, and more particularly after the adoption of the National Policy on Education (1986) when a number of new initiatives were taken by the Central Government through a number of centrally sponsored schemes. The expenditure on education by the Centre and States, as a percentage of Gross National Product, increased steadily from 0.64% in 1951-52 to an all-time high of 4.3% in 2000-01. However, the same level of allocation could not be maintained during 2004-05, which depicted a decline to 3.68%. It is far short of the 6% target mentioned in the National Policy on Education. The trend of the public expenditure on higher education indicates that during 1990-91 and 2005-06, the public expenditure in elementary education has gone up by six times. The public expenditure on secondary, higher and technical education has increased by five times. The size of the total public expenditure on education in India in 2005-06 (Budgeted) is Rs. 9623100 millions (Rs. 962.31 billion) (GOI, 2007).

The sectoral allocation of public expenditure on education for all these years on elementary, secondary, higher (general) and technical education remained at around 50, 30, 12 and 4 percentage points respectively (Figure-26).

*Universalisation of elementary education* has already set the stage for an exponential growth of demand for secondary education. The full impact of SSA is likely to be reflected during the terminal years of the Eleventh Five Year Plan. If the goal of universal retention at the elementary level is achieved by 2010, steps will have to be taken to expand facilities for secondary education in a big way. At the secondary level, though there has been substantial progress in the growth of institutions, infrastructure facilities, participation and number of teachers, it still suffers from lack of access, low participation and equity on account of inadequate availability of secondary schools in many backward states/locations and insufficient facilities of open and distance learning. To meet the above challenges, the Government of India is in the process of launching a comprehensive centrally-assisted programme called "*Scheme for Universal Access and Quality at the Secondary Stage (SUCCESS)*" which aims at making good quality secondary education available, accessible and affordable to all young

**Table 11: Sector-wise Plan and Non-Plan Budgeted Expenditure for Education Departments of States and Centre (Revenue Account)**

*Figure Rs. in 10 million*

| Year | Elementary | Secondary | Higher | Technical | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1990-91 | 9119 | 6111 | 2165 | 613 | 19028 |
| 1995-96 | 15218 | 10344 | 3871 | 1290 | 31517 |
| 1996-97 | 17850 | 11736 | 4288 | 1450 | 36372 |
| 1997-98 | 20392 | 13262 | 4859 | 1623 | 41109 |
| 1998-99 | 25150 | 16782 | 6117 | 2073 | 51225 |
| 1999-00 | 27905 | 20845 | 8248 | 2459 | 61281 |
| 2000-01 | 29758 | 19743 | 9195 | 2528 | 62498 |
| 2001-02 | 32493 | 20431 | 8087 | 2560 | 64847 |
| 2002-03 | 33474 | 22049 | 8859 | 2820 | 68561 |
| 2003-04 | 36366 | 23350 | 9060 | 2833 | 73045 |
| 2004-05(R) | 44083 | 25818 | 9998 | 3275 | 85687 |
| 2005-06(B) | 50952 | 27709 | 10689 | 3720 | 96231 |

*Source: Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education, various yearsin GOI, 2007*

persons, irrespective of gender, socio-economic, disability and other barriers (Box-8).

*Governance* issues are important and move is towards decentralization. India is a vast country, with multiple cultures, languages and religions, and a wide variety of inter- and intra-state disparities. These diversities and regional disparities pose different sets of challenges for educational planning and management. Taking cognizance of these features, India has steadily shifted from a centralized planning mode of education to decentralized education planning and management. The Panchayati Raj Institutions (Local Sub-Statal bodies) are being strengthened to involve them at the grassroots level in the process of decision-making and implementation of various schemes. The District Literacy Societies (*Zila Saksharata Samitis*) would continue to oversee and run literacy programmes with freedom to synergise their strengths with those of local youth clubs, mahila mandals, voluntary agencies, Panchayati Raj Institutions, small scale industries, cooperative societies etc. The movement towards planning at block, cluster and village levels, in partnership with NGOs, is encouraged and supported. Representation of all the marginalized groups in decision making and implementing programmes is promoted through various instruments such as steps taken for constitution

Figure 26: Sectoral Allocation of Public Expenditure on Education by
Levels of Education in India
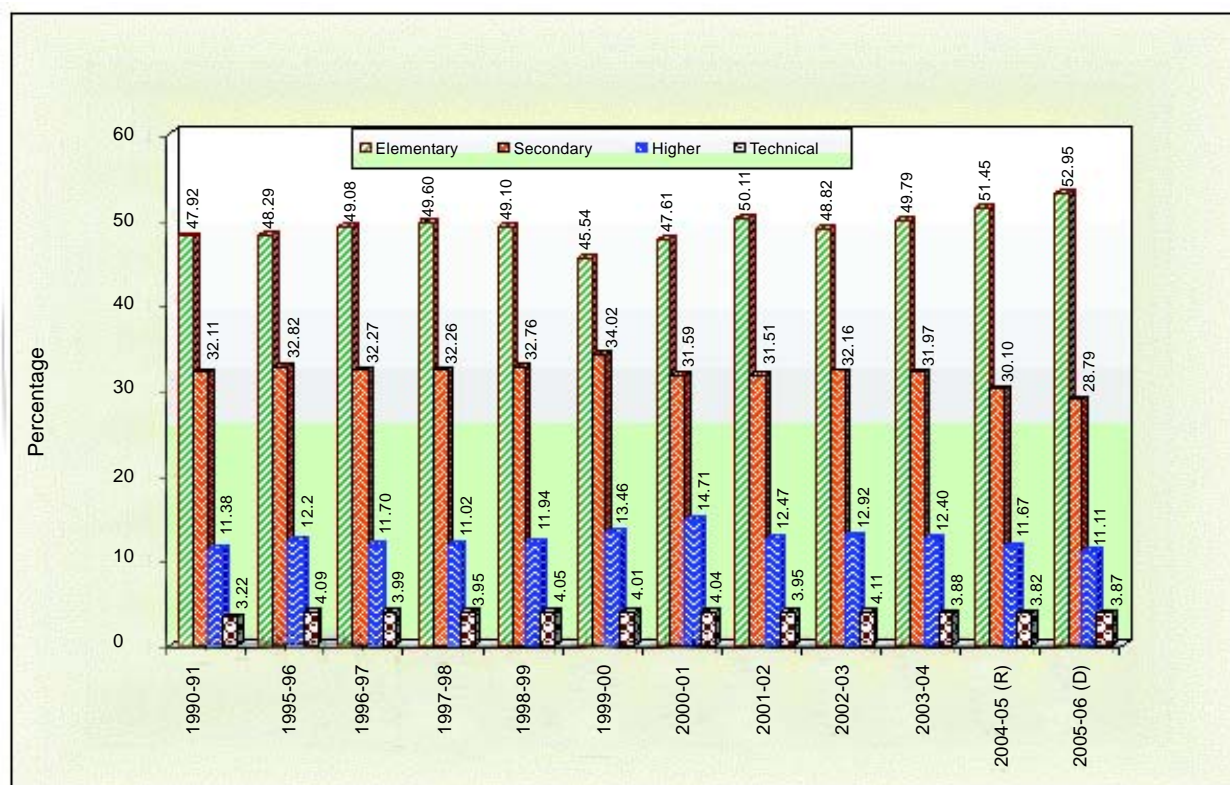


*Source: Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education, various years.*

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**Box 10: Objectives of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)
for the 11th Five Year Plan**

■ To achieve a GER of 75% for classes IX-X by the end of 11th Plan by providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance of every habitation

■ To improve quality of education imparted at secondary level through making all secondary schools conform to prescribed norms

■ To remove gender, socio-economic and disability barriers

■ Universal access to secondary level education by 2017, i.e., by the end of 12th Five Year Plan.

■ Universal retention by 2020.

*Source: Annual Report, 2006-07, MHRD, Government of India*

of Village Education Committees and powers now shifted to PRIS for education.

*Quality of schooling and achievement* is recognized as a significant influence not only on the enrolment and retention of children in the school but also on the possibilities of further education for increased productivity, as also in the exercise of citizenship rights and responsibilities. The tasks of quality improvement is to be pursued through qualitative improvement in the content and process of education, reorientation and strengthening of teachers, provision of appropriate infrastructure facilities, focusing on strengthening the institutional management processes, and establishing a reliable system of learner assessment. Efforts will be made to strengthen the internal management of schools and to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process.

Quality improvement is one of the most important components under SSA. To ensure useful, relevant, and quality education, SSA provides support for teacher recruitment and training, curriculum/ textbook renewal, development and distribution of teaching-learning materials, annual school grants, pupil assessment systems, remedial teaching, computer-aided learning, establishment of decentralized academic resource support centres, distance education, monitoring and research activities related to quality issues (Box-11).

A continuous and comprehensive monitoring and supervision system under SSA has been developed by the NCERT in collaboration with academic bodies across the country, in the form of Quality Monitoring Tools. The monitoring tools include analytical formats for the cluster, block and district levels, monitoring the primary role

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**Box 11: Renewal of Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbooks**

"The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005 has been developed by NCERT through extensive dialogues. NCF-2005 addresses the issues relating to curriculum load and quality of education. The Guiding Principles of NCF-2005 are:

- Connecting knowledge to life outside the school.

- Ensuring the learning shifts away from rote methods.

- Enriching the curriculum to provide for overall development of children rather that remain textbook centric.

- Making Examination more flexible and integrated into classroom life.

The syllabi and textbooks for Classes I to XII have also been revised by NCERT and introduced in phased manner. In the light of NCF-2005, technical and financial support is being provided to States to facilitate renewal of their curriculum and textbooks. NCERT also constituted 21 National Focus Groups in the 21 significant areas of national concerns to produce research based position papers, providing a comprehensive review of existing knowledge, representing an awareness of the field reality, specially in rural schools. Reports of Focus Groups were used in preparation of NCF-2005 and syllabi and textbooks."

*Source: Annual Report, 2006-07, MHRD, Government of India*

of BRC/CRC as academic resource support and quality improvement institutions under SSA. All the States and 2 UTs have already trained their personnel for operationalsing the tools effectively. The tools cover monitoring feedback

on children's attendance, community support and supervision of schools, teacher availability and teacher preparation availability and use of teaching- learning materials, classroom practices and processes used, learner achievements, monitoring and supervision by BRCs/CRCs.

Implementation of this monitoring exercise has helped the States extensively in identifying the issues which they need to focus upon in order to improve quality in elementary education under SSA (Box-12). The States have been able to recognize their own bottlenecks, problems in planning and implementation. There are many States, which could relate poor learner achievement in select subjects with problems in classroom transaction. This is helping the

States to plan in a focussed manner and improve their training and teacher functioning. This exercise has empowered the States to focus on quality dimension as per their specific needs and requirements. NCERT is now organizing Level II workshops to help the States in analysis and to draw better learning from the collected information and data.

At the secondary level, the major factors affecting quality are inadequate teachers and physical facilities in existing schools, large variations in terms of avoidable facilities in different kinds of schools; inadequate relevance of curriculum, out-dated instructional methods and poor quality of teaching-learning, resulting in low attainment levels of students etc. The government recognizes the need to make

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### Box 12: Educational Development Index

The National University of Educational Planning & Administration (NUEPA) has developed an *Educational Development Index (EDI)* to track progress of the States towards Universal Elementary Education (UEE), for primary and upper primary levels as well as for a composite look at elementary education. The EDI ranking will encourage the States to improve their performance and have a closer look at both the inputs and the outputs of the parameters that effect elementary education. It is expected that the EDI will also enable more effective targeting of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) to the most backward districts.

The EDI has been developed keeping in mind four broad parameters of access, infrastructure, teacher-related indicators and outcomes. The index takes into account 22 variables for calculating EDI. These variables are: for Access- Percentage of Habitation not served, Availability of Schools per 1000 Population; Infrastructure- Average Student-Classroom Ratio, School with Student-Classroom Ratio Greater>60, School without Drinking Water Facilities, School with Boys Toilet, School with Girls Toilet; Teachers- Percentage of Female Teachers, Pupil-Teacher Ratio, School with Pupil-Teacher Ratio>60, Single-Teacher Schools, Schools with 3 or Less Teachers, Teachers without Professional Qualification; Outcomes- Gross Enrolment Ratio– Overall, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Gender Parity Index in Enrolment, Repetition Rate, Dropout Rate, Ratio of Exit Class over Class 1 Enrolment (Primary stage only), Percentage of Passed Children to Total Enrolment, Percentage of Appeared Children Passing with 60 percent and above Marks.

*Source: Annual Report, 2006-07, MHRD, Government of India*

available secondary education of good quality and accessible and affordable to all young persons. It is working towards achieving this objective with the proposed scheme of SUCCESS.

The process of review and renewal of the new National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2006 (NCFSE) has been initiated following the approval of National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005). The government is committed to match the curricula with the idea of India, as enshrined in its Constitution. It would provide an indication of the national consensus about the directions and objectives in which the Indian Educational System needs to move in the next decade. Considering the prevailing diversity and the federal character of our nation, serious involvement of all the States and UTs in translating NCF-2005 ideas into reality becomes imperative. In addition to the academic and technical support, financial support of Rs. 1 million to each State & UT will be provided so that they undertake systematic review of syllabi and textbooks keeping in view States'/UTs' specific needs.

At the higher education level, issues of quality and excellence of higher education should be given more importance. Quality and excellence are the watch-words in today's liberalized environment. Making higher education globally competitive, therefore, needs higher priority. The focus is now on enhancing the quality of educational institutions in general with a focus on Faculty Development; Infrastructure Development; Curriculum Development; Use of Technologies; Data-Base Management; Development of Intra-Lingual Facilities; and Special Scheme for Person with Different Abilities. With a view to ensuring quality in higher education, the assessment and accreditation by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), an autonomous organization under the University Grants Commission (UGC), has been made obligatory for all universities and colleges.

*Disparity in enrolment and retention of girls* in secondary schools is a matter of concern. Whereas attempts have already been made under *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* to improve the gender parity ratio at the elementary level, there is a need to bridge the gender gap at the secondary stage also. Realizing the need for an incentive scheme to overcome the obstacles inhibiting girls' access to, and retention in, secondary school, the Finance Minister in his budget speech for the year 2006-07 states," I propose to provide a further incentive to the girl child who passes the VIII Standard Examination and enrolls in a secondary school. A sum of Rs. 3000 will be deposited in her name, and she would be entitled to withdraw it on reaching 18 years of age" (para 38). Later, it was also proposed by the Finance Minister to commence a merit-cum-means scholarship scheme at secondary level w.e.f. 2007-08.

At the higher education level, the Eleventh Five Year Plan proposes to have more women as Engineers, Lawyers, Professors and Architects by following the strategies of:

■ Provision of more fellowships for women students, hostel facilities and creation of more infrastructure by the universities, to bring more women students in the realm of higher education; and

■ Imparting of good training in fields like special education by the institutions, which may not be conventional academic in nature, may be looked at with different perspective.

Inclusive Education is the underlying approach under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The Focus is to ensure that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided education in an appropriate environment. The interventions for inclusive education include early detection and identification, functional and formal assessment, appropriate educational placement, preparation of individualised educational plan, provision of aids and appliances, teacher training, resource support, removal of architectural barriers, monitoring and evaluation, and a special focus on girls. A zero rejection policy has been adopted under SSA, which ensures that every Child with Special Needs (CWSN), irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided meaningful and quality education. A Comprehensive Action Plan for Inclusive Education for Children and Youth with Special Needs has been formulated translating this statement into specific points of activity in each of the identified sectors of pre-school, elementary, secondary and higher education. The Action Plan has been circulated to Ministries/ Departments/ Organisations concerned with implementation and necessary feedback. The Government of India has initiated steps to launch a new scheme called 'Inclusive Education for the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS).

Enhanced participation of NGOs is being promoted by the government at all levels in the social sector with a view to achieving participatory development and complimenting the government efforts to eliminate child labour and contain the number of out of school children. This approach is being followed by enhancing the role of NGOs in the educational development programme as well. Their role and contribution in promoting self-help groups, creating awareness, raising red-alerts is vital for good governance at the grassroot level. Slowly, civil society is emerging as a critical as also a complimentary force ( Box-13).

Partnership between Public and Private Sector has the potential for complementing the efforts of the government in achieving the goals of education in the country. Policies are being

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### Box 13: Bhonga Shala…..Bringing the Schools to the Children

Bhonga Shala is an innovation to provide education to children from brick kilns in Thane district of Maharashtra. In Marathi 'Bhonga' means temporary hut and 'Shala' is school. So Bhonga Shala is a 'school run in a temporary hut.' Vidhyayak Sansad, a local NGO started five Bhonga Shalas in 1995 in two blocks of the district. Today, with support from SSA, Maharashtra, there are as many as 250 such centres in 7 blocks of Thane district. These are catering to the educational needs of more than 5000 children from the brick kilns. Bhonga Shalas ensure that education of the children continues, and is not hampered due to migration. For the entire brick kiln season (December to May), primary level (Standard I-IV) education is provided at the brick kiln site through these centres. The syllabus covered is the same as the mainstream schools, but taught in a non-formal, open atmosphere, using songs, dance and playway activities.

Source: Annual Report, 2006-07, MHRD, Government of India

framed and strategies being developed so that the public and private sector can mutually benefit and play a complementary role rather than a competitive one. The private sector can contribute not only in monetary terms but also in terms of expertise for quality improvement through effective management of systems and development of locally relevant teaching-learning material.

*Promotion of Alternative Delivery Systems* beyond the rigid formal framework in a flexible and adaptive fashion is vital to serve all as per need, aspirations and contexts. Part-time formal, or non-formal education, seasonal learning centers for children of migrant labour, voluntary schools by NGOs, post-primary open-learning, camp approach for adolescent girls, etc, will all have to be systematically promoted. The governments have already revised the non-formal education programme. The new programmes called Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) are being implemented with more vigour (Box-14).

In higher education sector, efforts are being made to make Open Universities more attractive and relevant, to ensure quality of study material, timely dispatch, dedicated teachers at the study centre, provision of necessary infrastructure, use of ICT, etc. There are already 12 open schools and 13 universities offering distance education. EDUSAT launched on 20 September

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### Box 14: AIE Interventions – Some Examples

- Hard to reach children centres (Assam)

- Residential Bridge Course for Domestic Child Workers and Boat Schools for fishermen community (Andhra Pradesh)

- Learning Centres and Residential Bridge Courses for street and working children (Delhi)

- Residential Camps for Older Children (Gujarat)v Special Schools for Migrating Community (Jammu & Kashmir)

- Flexi-schools, Tent Schools, Mobile Schools & Sandhya Kalika (Karnataka)

- Mobile Schools & Shiksha Ghar for Migrating Children & Human Development Centre for Urban Deprived Children (Madhya Pradesh)

- Seasonal Schools and Residential Camps for Migrating Children (Maharashtra)

- Seasonal Hostels for Migrating Children (Orissa)

- Drop in Centres and Special Residential Camps for older children (Tamil Nadu)

- Residential Bridge Courses (Uttar Pradesh)

- Multigrade Learning Centres for children in forest areas (Kerala)

*Source: Annual Report, 2006-07, MHRD, Government of India*

2004 has opened new avenues with 72 Channels now available for education. The advances in information and communication technology, especially satellite-based teleconferencing, have made it possible to use distance education for training in virtual classrooms. It is expected that technology, with appropriately designed software and quality inputs, will at the same time bring down the costs and increase the efficiency of the educational system.

*Raising Resources* is essential to meet the daunting task of expansion, consolidation, equity and quality. The fast expanding enrolment at all stages of education has necessitated harnessing of community resources for educational development. This is more so because there has been substantial decline in the contribution from private sources, including cost recoveries from the students. The government has recently announced that the public spending in education would be raised to at least 6% of GDP with at least half of this

amount being spent on primary and secondary sectors. This will be done in a phased manner. The Government of India has introduced a cess on all central taxes to finance the commitment to universalise access to quality basic education. A two percent Education Cess was levied on all major central taxes to help finance the government's commitment to basic education.

The proceeds of this Education Cess is earmarked for the non-lapsable fund called *Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh* (PSK) and would be spent exclusively on SSA and Mid-Day Meal Scheme (Box-15).

India looks upon the future with realistic optimism despite the challenges and contemporary problems of globalization, of environment, and emerging public health issues, such as HIV/AIDS. It recognizes the critical role of education in meeting these challenges. Accordingly, as part of the National Common Minimum Programme, the country is

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**Box 15: Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh (PSK)**

- A two per cent Education Cess was levied on all major central taxes through the Finance (No.2) Act, 2004, to help finance the Government's commitment to "quality basic education'. Education Cess is being increased to 3 per cent since 2007-08 to cover secondary and higher education.

- In order to receive the proceeds of this Education Cess, this Ministry has created a dedicated, non-lapsable fund called *Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh* (PSK) and would be spent exclusively on SSA and Mid-Day-Meal Scheme.

- A provision of Rs 8746 crores for the initial transfer to the newly created PSK has been made in the Union Budget 2006-07 against estimated receipts of Education Cess. During the year 2006-07, the Schemes of SSA is to be financed from PSK for about Rs 58310 millions and MDM for about Rs 29150 millions.

making concerted efforts not only to meet the EFA goals but also to improve both access and quality at all levels. Besides, the government is also committed to improving the efficiency of the delivery system, a key change required to transform the youth into meaningful citizens imbibed with the principles of liberty, equality, justice, and fraternity.

It hardly needs any mention that any vibrant civil society would undoubtedly require that all humans are treated equal and with dignity and that all must be supported to the fullest possible development. Such a conviction would obviously warrant a wise affirmative action policy on the grounds of social justice and equity. Here, one needs to know that while access could be ensured in a variety of ways, it is the equality of opportunity which is much more important than

anything else as it requires the support of whole range of antecedental variables commencing from curriculum to pedagogy, differential inputs, assessment, remediation, feedback, attitude, institutional care, etc.

Another important challenge is to look at *Impact of Globalization* on services especially for the Disabled. Traditionally international trade has been in the goods and services. But goods and merchandise formed the major part of bi-lateral and multi-lateral negotiations. Since the establishment of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) under the rounds of negotiations during 1986-93 Uruguay Round of International Trade Negotiations led to agreement for establishment of World Trade Organization (WTO). Trade Ministers in Marrakech, Morocco, approved its creation in

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### Box 16: Accounting for Inclusion

Today, 'inclusion' is high on the agenda against exclusionary practices, need of the hour is to reflect on what type of monitoring do we expect in the years to come!

*Inclusion as an approach*

If inclusion is seen as an approach to minimize or abolish exclusion from the education programmes, then any assessment for the purpose will pervade all indicators of monitoring EFA such as ECCE, GER, NET, Attendance, Achievement etc. This would also mean that children with special needs will also be covered for planning and monitoring at par with other children of that age group. *However, the very absence of information on these children not being generated either periodically or on regular basis indicates that this practice is not being followed today.*

*Inclusion as a goal*

If inclusion is seen as a time targeted mission or goal evolving from the country's specific agenda for EFA, then there would be a need to define the mission in observable terms within the specific time targets. This would also generate indicators which can be monitored and assessed, initially at specified time intervals and later on regular basis as part of inclusive approach.

*Mukhopadhyay, S., p154, 2001*

April 1994. Finally it was launched in January 1995. This replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which acted since 1948 as a negotiating forum.

It is to be noted that WTO and GATS may have implications for persons and children with Disabilities especially as these also cover *education and health sectors*. While both these sectors in poor countries have suffered in terms of outreach and quality, the issues thrown up by turning theses into 'trade' would further complicate the matter. Commercialization with inbuilt spirit of 'Profit', 'Purchase Power', etc. may affect the future of challenged person. The services for disabled as presently classified are mainly for facilitating development of human resource. This would mean identifying the nature and impact of a disabling conditions (continuum of core providers e.g. parent, teachers to technical support providers such as rehabilitation workers and professionals), minimizing the impact of a disability (such as alternative to print media for VI) etc. Many of these are today seen as social service/public support or government support activities. But it needs to be examined that with WTO and GATS covering education and health as a broader spectrum, what would be the impact on these sectors.

Another significant challenge is that of overcoming multiple discriminations. The Information Technology can further increase this. Will the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Treaty of 1995 and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), who benefit the Blind persons through negotiations with World Blind Union and IFLA Sector of Libraries for the Blind get affected by these new rules and regulations? This is where the countries need to analyse and see the strengths

and limitations of Globalization instruments for the people likely to be significantly affected by such decisions. *"We must have courage to think globally, to break away from traditional paradigms and plunge boldly into the unknown. We must so mobilize our inner resources and outer resources that we begin consciously to build a new world based on mutually assured welfare rather than mutually assured destruction"( Karan Singh in Learning the Treasure Within, UNESCO,1996, p226)".*

## The Way of the Future

India is very conscious that all its dreams for national development will remain incomplete until weaker sections of the society also benefit from these developments. There have been arguments in favour and against the role of economic growth in poverty elevation. For example as early as 1997 some of the messages from the World Bank were that it is through rapid growth that India will be able to reduce poverty and generate resources to invest in the health and education of its people – who will in turn sustain this growth (Gaiha and Kulkarni 1998). As in 2008, the Government of India is committed to mainstreaming the marginalized in the process of economic growth. Education is one of the most important sectors in the Eleventh Five Year Plan to actualize this vision. For example, while SSA is to ensure universal coverage for the children of educationally backward sections as well as all other focus groups, "At the same time, all state plans to access SSA funds will be reviewed to ensure that minority children have equal space to participate in the state's school system. As SSA only covers children up to elementary (class VIII) level, measures will be undertaken to ensure that minority children have equal

access to education up to the senior secondary level (Class XII). The Eleventh Plan will also look at issues like recruitment of female teachers, provision of amenities and transport to reach schools and setting up of girls' hostel and girls' schools (GOI, p.127, Volume I, 2008).

In this connection it is important to look at the poverty alleviation interventions as linked with education. The guidelines issued under the Prime Minister's new 15-Point Programme acquire a very important place as part of the implementation strategies of the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

To quote once more from the Foreword to the Eleventh Five Year Plan by the Prime Minister of India "The higher rate of growth that we have set out for ourselves, coupled with our thrust on the growth process being inclusive, should ensure that the struggle for the removal of chronic poverty, ignorance, and disease will register major gains in the Eleventh Plan, I am confidant that the Eleventh Plan will achieve its targets and objectives despite the challenges we face. This would be a major step in realizing our vision of a prosperous, inclusive, happy, and caring India where all citizens reap the benefits of economic development and feel empowered."

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**Box 17: Prime Minister's New 15-Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities**

**(A) Enhancing Opportunities for Education**

- **Equitable availability of ICDS services**: A certain percentage of ICDS projects and Anganwadi Centres to be located in blocks/villages with a substantial population of minority communities; equitable availability of benefits to be ensured.

- **Improving access to school education:** A certain percentage of all schools under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme, and other similar government schemes will be located in villages/localities having a substantial minority population.

- **Greater resources for teaching Urdu:** Recruitment and posting of Urdu language teachers in primary and upper primary schools.

- **Modernizing Madarsa Education:** Strengthening the Central Plan Scheme of Area-Intensive and Madarsa Modernization Programme to provide basic educational infrastructure in areas of concentration of educationally backward minorities.

- **Scholarships for meritorious students from minority communities:** Formulation of schemes for pre-matric and postmatric scholarships for students from minority communities.

- **Improving educational infrastructure through the Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF):** To expand the activities of MAEF more effectively.

**(B) Equitable Share in Economic Activities and Employment**

- **Self-employment and wage employment for the poor:** A certain percentage of the physical and financial targets under some schemes, for example, the SGSY, SJSRY, Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana SGRY), will be earmarked for beneficiaries belonging to the minority communities and living below the poverty line in rural areas. Simultaneously, a certain percentage of the allocation will be earmarked for the creation of infrastructure in such villages which have substantial population of minorities.

- **Upgradation of skills through technical training:** A certain proportion of all new ITIs will be located in areas predominantly inhabited by minority communities and a proportion of existing ITIs for upgradation to 'Centres of Excellence' will be selected on the same basis.

- **Enhanced credit support for economic activities:** To strengthen the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) by providing it greater equity support to enable it to fully achieve its objectives. An appropriate percentage of the priority sector lending in all categories to be targeted for the minority communities.

- **Recruitment to State and Central services:** In the recruitment of police personnel, Central and State Governments will be advised to give special consideration to minorities. The composition of selection should have Minorities' representation. Employment opportunities

to be provided in the Railways, nationalized banks and PSEs. An exclusive scheme is to be launched to provide coaching to minority candidates.

**(C) Improving the Conditions of Living of Minorities**

■ **Equitable share in rural housing scheme:** This is sought to be achieved through the Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) for poor beneficiaries from minority communities in rural areas.

■ **Improvement in condition of slums inhabited by minority communities:** Ensuring provision of physical amenities and basic services to be equitably extended under the schemes of the Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme and JNNURM to the minority communities and to cities/slums with minority concentrations.

**(D) Prevention and Control of Communal Riots**

■ **Prevention of communal incidents**

■ **Prosecution for communal offences**

■ **Rehabilitation of victims of communal riots**

*GOI, Eleventh Five Year Plan ,p 125,Vol.I 2008*

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