

# Universalisation of Elementary Education



Universalisation of Elementary Education:  
A Study of District Primary Education  
Programme from South India

By

J. Ravindra Babu

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P U B L I S H I N G

Universalisation of Elementary Education:  
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By J. Ravindra Babu

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Ravindra Babu, J

# FOREWORD



**SHANTHA SINHA**  
Chairperson

भारत सरकार  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
राष्ट्रीय बालक अधिकार संरक्षण आयोग  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS

25<sup>th</sup> May, 2009

## FOREWORD

The present book on “*Universalisation of Elementary Education: A study of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) from South India*” is welcome and timely. After passing of the 86th Amendment to the Constitution of India, education for all children in the 6-14 years age group is a fundamental right. This implies that it is the State’s obligation to ensure that every child in our country is in school and continues to enjoy her right until she completes elementary education. This predicates State’s provision of adequate infrastructure, school teachers and all other accoutrements that are necessary for a child to be in school until she completes elementary education. It also means that children who are not in school and engaged in some form of work or the other are all mainstreamed into full time formal schools. In addition children who are physically and mentally challenged and have learning difficulties are also integrated into schools as a matter of right and a Constitutional obligation.


India’s Constitutional obligation for fulfilling the goals of attaining universal elementary education and children’s right to education was reinforced by the proclamation of Jomtien conference on *Education for all*. This mood in the 90’s was captured by notable progress in adult literacy through the efforts of Union and State Governments in collaboration with the NGO’s. Consequently, it saw a tremendous expansion of educational facilities and school enrollment. Yet the policy goals within education remained to be achieved. Subsequently the Dakar Forum set new standards for attainment of education for all.

The challenge is expansion of education in India at all stages viz. pre-school, primary, elementary and secondary school with quality. It must allow for retention of all children enrolled into school. It must have a zero rejection policy and accept school dropouts and older children and prepare them for an age appropriate class. Education as a constitutional obligation and a fundamental right must become a reality for every child.

This book ‘*Universalisation of Elementary Education: A study of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) from South India*’ is about process of implementation of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in Andhra Pradesh, with reference to its objectives i.e. *access, retention, quality and equity*.

This was a Centrally Sponsored Scheme initiated across the country funded by the multilateral agencies like DFID, European Union, IDA and so on. The research study is a piece of policy evaluation contributing to the ongoing discussion on process implementation of policy in the area of primary education. It is rich in data source, both primary as well as secondary. By comparing the data with Registrar General Census of India using the age heaping technique to determine the number of children in a given in age group, the work presented in this book provides us a new tool useful in planning.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the author for giving a new direction for policy makers to look for accuracy in data. It is a useful study and a reference material for those in the field of understanding interventions for universalisation of elementary education in India. Further it is also a useful study for form practitioners in the civil society organizations on children's right to education. It is good addition to the existing literature on policy and perspective on universalisation of elementary education.

  
(Shantha Sinha)  
Chairperson, NCPCR  
Government of India

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This study is a piece in policy analysis. Policy scientist Harold Lasswell and philosopher Abraham Kaplan define policy as a “project programme of goals” Carl Frederick says it is essential for policy concept that there is a goal, objective or purpose. Governments act in a purposeful and goal oriented fashion.<sup>1</sup>

Political scientists Heinz Eulau and Kenneth Prewitt define policy as a standing decision characterized by behavioral consistency and repetitiveness as the part of those who make it and those who abide by it. Dye elaborating on his definition that public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do stated that governments distribute a great variety of material services to the members of society. Besides many other regulatory functions, governments are engaged in organizing education towards building literate societies. Though governments spending on education are not significant, yet, its function in human resource development cannot be ignored. The sub field of public policy i.e., measurement of policy outcomes is an area that received attention of not only students of economics but also political scientists, theoreticians of public administration besides other social scientists.

Policy evaluation, policy impact and study of the processes of implementation of public policy broadly constitute core of the policy analysis. For scientific understanding of the causes of policy decision and improvement of quality of policy making and implementation, policy analysis is a very important tool. Policy analysis aims at rendering effective professional advice. Understanding the policy processes through public policy studies facilitates application of social science knowledge to solve practical problems According to Dror, factual knowledge is a prerequisite to tackle the ills afflicting the society and its development facilitates professional advice which in turn helps make ‘mid policy’ corrections for achieving stated goals. Policy evaluation studies also help in evolving right goals. According to Thomas R Dye, “political science should not be silent in the face of great social and political crises. Further he maintained that an exclusive focus on institutions, processes or

behaviours makes political science as a dry, irrelevant and amoral, because, it does not attend to the important policy questions ... demanding answer from developing societies like India. Policy studies lead to enhancing the quality of political discussions to advance the levels of political awareness and finally improve the quality of public policy.

Study of processes of educational achievement is an important item for policy analysis. Hon W. Kingdon of university of Michigan in an important work entitled *Agendas; Alternatives & Public policy*<sup>2</sup> wrote that “the phrase that an idea whose time has come captures fundamental realities about the movement that sweeps is politics and society. Education for all is one such idea. The universalisation of elementary education is one such imperative. There is a repeated mobilization of people with intense arguments for ending child labour. These are moves to push ‘never enrolled’ and ‘unenrolled’ children into the school system

The post liberalization, privatization and globalization scenario and subsequent developments in policy arena seem to have made the Indian policy makers change priorities. It is stated by many that State and its institutions failed in achieving the desired growth rates. The problems of distribution demanded solutions. It is often argued, especially after 1991, that state withdrawal from active economic sectors leaves some surplus for social sector including education. Within education an attempt is made to prioritize sub sectors. The candidature of primary education is picked up as a policy priority. International agencies too showed interest in giving aid and or soft loans. The bureaucracy in India is too eager to accept such aid. One of the main programmes is stepping up literacy. Universalisation of elementary education in India is earmarked as a policy. The literacy rates obtaining also convinces one to accept it as a priority item within education.

**Table 1.1: Literacy: State-wise**

Sl. No.	State	1991	2001	Decadal Difference in Literacy Rate
1	Jammu& Kashmir	n.a	54.46	
2	Himachal Pradesh	63.94	77.13	13.91
3	Punjab	58.51	69.95	11.45
4	Chandigarh	77.81	81.76	3.94
5	Uttaranchal	57.75	72.28	14.53

6	Haryana	55.85	68.59	12.74
7	Delhi	75.29	81.82	6.53
8	Rajasthan	38.55	61.03	22.48
9	Uttar Pradesh	40.71	57.36	16.65
10	Bihar	37.49	47.53	10.04
11	Sikkim	56.94	69.68	12.73
12	Arunachal Pradesh	41.54	54.74	13.15
13	Nagaland	61.65	67.11	5.46
14	Manipur	59.89	68.87	8.97
15	Mizoram	82.27	88.49	6.22
16	Tripura	60.44	73.66	13.22
17	Meghalaya	49.10	63.31	14.21
18	Assam	52.89	64.22	11.39
19	West Bengal	57.70	69.22	11.52
20	Jharkand	41.39	54.13	12.74
21	Orissa	49.09	63.61	14.52
22	Chattisgarh	42.91	65.18	22.27
23	Madhya Pradesh	44.67	64.11	19.44
24	Gujarat	61.57	69.97	8.40
25	Daman&diu	71.20	81.09	9.89
26	Dadra Nagar Haveli	40.71	60.03	19.33
27	Maharastra	64.87	77.27	12.39
<b>28</b>	<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	<b>44.09</b>	<b>61.11</b>	<b>17.02</b>
29	Karnataka	56.04	67.04	11.00
30	Goa	75.51	82.32	6.89
31	Lakshadweep	81.78	87.52	5.74
32	Kerala	89.81	90.92	1.11
33	Tamil Nadu	62.66	73.47	10.81
34	Pondichery	74.74	81.49	6.75
35	Andaman&Nicobar	73.02	81.18	8.16

*Source: Registrar General, Census of India 2001 Census.*

## 1.1. Grim Literacy Scenario in Andhra Pradesh

For the last four decades Andhra Pradesh continues to be an area of concern for educational planners. While India's average literacy rate is 65 percent, Andhra Pradesh continues to be occupying 28<sup>th</sup> position in 33 states and union territories. Of the 16 major states in India only Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan are behind Andhra Pradesh in terms of literacy. Nearly 60 percent of children, according to media reports,

dropout of schooling well before completion of middle schooling. The situation is better compared 70's when dropout rates crossed 71 percent. Thus the policy goals relating to education remain unachieved as a large part of population remains outside the system owing to lack of schools and a host of other reasons. Several scores dropout because of academic financial and other reasons. This situation was sought to be remedied by a new innovative and externally funded intervention in late 90's. It has been aptly said that half the battle is won if the causes for sickness are diagnosed. With regard to the present problems faced by the nation the best brains of the country have made the correct diagnosis and the root cause for the ills is found to be illiteracy of the Indian masses. Illiteracy as a cause of numerous problems in India has long been recognized but the implementation part is much short of expectations. It is interesting as also intellectually challenging to understand the processes and bottlenecks in this domain of social policy.

This study is a modest attempt to understand policy, programme and expected outcomes of an important educational intervention aimed at Universalisation of Elementary Education implemented between 1998-2003 through District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) an intervention supported by World Bank, European Union and Department for International Development (DFID), a consortium of aid giving agencies based in UK. It is a massive internationally funded programme. It is the seventh in the series of such programmes in India since 80's for achieving the goal of universalization of elementary education. The other interventions funded entirely by Indian State include social education in 1950, the 10+2+3 pattern in 1960's, basic education as part of twenty point programme in 1970's, the operation black board in 1980's, aimed at creating minimum infrastructure the minimum levels of learning in 90's. The latest is DPEP, in the series of such moves, besides several social mobilization moves, popularly referred to '*Janmabhoomi*' a programme intended to identify unenrolled children during the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) regime, '*Badibata*' now initiated since six months by the present congress Government in Andhra Pradesh. The State of Andhra Pradesh for quite some time is referred to as a state surging towards knowledge society based on advances in IT sector up until recently.

The problems of universalisation are perceived by different policy scientist in different perspectives. For example the minimum levels of learning (MLL) focused on quality, while the operation blackboard looked at the need for provision of atleast two classrooms in the existing schools. DPEP that way has reportedly made a departure from the beaten track and attempted a holistic view of issues determining Enrollment, Retention,



Achievement and Quality of school education. There are other interesting features of the DPEP which are discussed with more details in chapter 3. For the present it is suffice to say that DPEP makes a difference to the policy and programme content to the primary education sector.

It has to be noted here that an important shift in policy and process of education was effected in 1976 through a constitutional amendment. Education was moved over to concurrent list which was under state list till 1976. This policy shift legitimized union of India's power through policy interventions and programme design. The implementations of this move are taken up for discussion elsewhere. What follows is a study of evolution of different interventions beginning with Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP).

## **1.2 Education for All: Institutional Framework**

The Constituent Assembly has provided a policy framework for elementary education, it was resolved that UEE should be universal and compulsory. Article 45 of the Directive Principles of state policy envisages universalisation of elementary education for all the children up to the age of 14 years with in a time frame of Ten years since the commencement of the Constitution. Needless to mention that the achievement of this noble objective has been eluding us for the past 55 years UEE continues to be one of the major policy issues and continues to figure on as an policy pronouncement. Ironically India continues to have the dubious distinction of the world's largest segment of illiterates. Andhra Pradesh, the first state to be carved out on linguistic basis remains an area of darkness, despite ascertions that the state made rapid strides as "knowledge society".

Illiteracy if left untackled can cause doom to our society and nullifies the progress achieved in terms of economic development. Perhaps realizing this, the policy makers and administrators have taken a number of initiatives to provide *education for all*. Despite these the outcomes are not commensurate with the efforts. While the unchecked population growth is one important reason for this failure, a host of other reasons like failure to provide enough schools, poverty of the masses preventing them form participation in schooling are also popular reasons cited.

As stated, policy interventions have been taken to solve the issue of illiteracy through Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) is an important and latest intervention in this direction. The present study is an attempt to validate

structure, process and outcomes of DPEP in one of the district in Andhra Pradesh.

### **1.3 Structure of School Education**

A uniform structure of school education and the 10+2 system has been adopted by all the States and Union Territories of India. However, within the States and the UTs, there remain variations in the number of classes constituting the Primary, Upper Primary, High and Higher Secondary school stages, age for admission to class I, medium of instruction, public examinations, teaching of Hindi and English, number of working days in a year, academic session, vacation periods, fee structure, compulsory education etc.

#### **Stages of School Education in India**

##### **i) Primary Education**

The Primary Stage consists of Classes I-V, i.e., of five years duration, in 20 States/UTs namely Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Delhi and Karaikal and Yanam regions of Pondicherry. The primary stage consists of classes I-IV in Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep and Mahe region of Pondicherry.

##### **ii) Upper Primary Education**

The Middle Stage of education comprises of Classes VI-VIII in as many as 18 States. Uts viz., Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Delhi and Karaikal region of Pondicherry; Classes V-VII in Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep and Mahe region of Pondicherry and Classes VI-VII in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Yanam region of Pondicherry. In Nagaland Classes V – VIII constitute the upper primary stage.

##### **iii) High School Education**

The Secondary Stage consists of Classes IX-X in 19 States/UTs. Viz., Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan ,

Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Delhi and Karaikal region of Pondicherry. The High School stage comprises classes VIII to X in 13 States/UTs viz., Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Orissa, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep and Mahe & Yanam regions of Pondicherry. However, the Higher Secondary / Senior Secondary stage of school comprising classes XI-XII (10+2 pattern) is available in all the States/UTs except in some States/UTs

### **1.4 Efforts at Universalization of Elementary Education: Post Independence Scenario**

#### **Constitutional Arrangements**

Several articles in the Constitution of India bring into sharp focus on the general principles governing educational development in the country. These are rooted in India's struggle for independence. According to Mahatma Gandhi, provision for '*basic education was one of the important goals of the freedom struggle*'. The Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) of the Constitution enjoins that "the State shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years" (Constitution Article 45).

Article 29 (1) of the Constitution provides that any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language scripts or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same. Article 29 (2) lays down that "no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of state funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them. Article 30 (1) enjoins, "All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. While Article 30 (2) lays down that "the State shall not in granting aid to educational institutions discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language". Though the constitutional provisions and institutional arrangements are in place, the goal of making education accessible to all appears to be eluding us. The low literacy of the country vis-à-vis other nations in terms of Human Development Index, a methodology evolved by UNDP, bears testimony to this.

Article 350-A lays down that “it shall be the endeavor of every State and of every local authority within the state to provide adequate facilities in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups”.

Special care of economic and educational interests of the underprivileged sections of the population is laid down as an obligation for the state under Article 46. As per the article “state shall promote with special care for the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people. And in particular, of the scheduled tribes (ST’s) and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation”

As stated earlier education was brought under the concurrent list, till then it was in the state list through 42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the constitution in 1970 and except for certain specified items in the union list like determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research, establishment and maintenance of central universities as well as specified institutions for scientific or Technical education and research. The objective of including education in the concurrent list was to facilitate evolution of – national policies in the field of education. The concept of concurrency was given an operational meaning by the National Policy on Education (N.P.E) in 1986. This policy envisages concurrency as a “meaningful partnership between the Center and States” and placed on the Union Government a greater responsibility in regard to the national and integrative character of education, quality and standards, manpower, planning, research and advanced study, and international aspects of education, culture and human resource development. This move was never questioned by political parties as all parties seem to be of the view that there will be greater integrative value, necessary for national unity than the compulsive argument that a more decentralized approach for this policy helps participation in schooling.

## **1.5 Policy Priorities and Goals**

It was decided in mid 80’s that there is need for a comprehensive review of the then existing education system and policy makers saw the need for a fresh National policy of Education (NPE). It came into effect in 1986. Within the comprehensive frame work enunciated by the NPE (1986) the developments and experiences since their incorporation into the NPE, in 1992 and a revised Programme of Action (POA-1992) was formulated. The NEP provides a comprehensive framework for guiding the development of education. Overall, the NPE is committed to address all aspects of education; Equity, efficiency, relevance, quality, content and

progress; all those aspects dealing with linkages, culture, values, society, polity and economy, besides mobilization of resources and those dealing with management. Emphasis on organic linkages with early childhood education, primary education, nonformal education, adult education, and post literacy and life long continuing education was evident. NPE 1986, tried to break away from stereotyped thinking and appears to have promoted a thoughtful introspection. In the implementation sphere, one may notice a shift from the state to the district as the unit of planning for organization of elementary education. Thus there is a structural change in organizational aspects.

## 1.6 UEE-Goals

The national policy further envisaged expansion of early childhood care and development activities especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children through a multi-pronged effort involving families, and appropriate institutions. Provision of accesses to elementary education for all children up to 14 years seems to have attained policy visibility. Universal participation till they complete the elementary stage through formal or equivalent non-formal education programmes was emphasized. Universal achievement of at least *Minimum levels of learning* was desired.

Moreover the policy provides for creation of opportunities and called for development of skills to persons who are functionally literate through formal and non-formal channels. Creation of necessary structures and the setting in motion of processes, which could empower women and make education an instrument of women's equality, was promised.

A broad assessment of situation after nearly two decades of experience reveals that India has the largest number of illiterates and out of school children in the world which is 30% of the world's adult illiterates and 21.87% of out of school children. About 19 to 24 million children, in the age group of 6-14 are out of school of whom about 60% are girls, and more than 35 million are adult illiterates in the age group of 15-35 of whom majority are women. The Public Report on Basic Education in India an authentic appraisal of state of affairs in this sector, further dampen and the enthusiasm of students of public policy besides a host of other reports.

However the policy makers cutting across party affiliation continue to lay emphasis on education especially elementary education. The benefits of investing in basic education, both for its intrinsic value in enhancing human capabilities, as well as for its social development and economic growth, greater efficiency and better functioning of democratic institutions are often quoted. Policy pronouncement on the ability of education to

empower women and men to acquire greater control over the circumstances that dominated their lives is frequently cited. Demographers categorically state that fertility regulation cannot be a matter of mere promotion of contraception. A number of works state that the socio-economic factors which strongly influence fertility behavior include female literacy. Aspects like infant mortality rate, sex ratio are related to the Universalisation of Elementary Education.

The UEE has a stronger regional and gender dimensions. The Indian experience encompasses the entire third world experience. At one end we have states such as Kerala which have achieved universal literacy as well as UEE in terms of school participation. Even this state may not be the best in terms of learning achievement with social indicators compared to Scandinavian countries. However on the other end of the spectrum we have states like, UP, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and MP with indicators worse than some countries in Africa. To the extent that gender disparity is pronounced, UEE is the problem of girl child. Teacher competence, motivation and performance are areas which require greater attention. These ofcourse remain crucial inputs in Universalisation of Elementary Education.

The continuing challenge before the nation, therefore, is to enhance universal participation and universal achievement of certain minimum levels of learning. In terms of numbers alone this is the greatest challenge that human society ever faced. More so if one were to adhere to the task decided in the NPE – 1986, achieving universalisation before the commencement of twenty first century; it is now postponed to 2005 as part of Millennium goals- ironically set by G-8 the highly developed countries.

In the debate on rights based approach to development, the states role in public education assumes critically. In Indian context, while the Union and the state governments having their full share of responsibility; observers opine that people's involvement in educational development makes crucial difference to the task. While the challenge that confronts in this sector is formidable, studies on successful states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu provide useful lessons. The policy response ought to be individually and collectively be faced. All the stake holders i.e. public, teachers and educators; NGO's the industrial sector, the media, politicians, panchayat leaders, grass root workers and others have to regard it as achievable task.

## **1.7 Primary Education -Major Interventions Since 1986**

### **(a) Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL)**

Addressing quality as the main policy instrument, the educational administrators evolved a scheme. India is one of the few developing countries, which took the initiative in 1991 to lay down norms for MLL at primary stage. This places emphasis on integrating different components of curriculum, classroom transaction, and evaluation. With these norms the programme was implemented through 18 voluntary agencies, research institutions, and SCERT's. The MLL programme through various institutional mechanisms was implemented throughout the country. The NCERT, Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs), SCERTs and DIETs are involved. By 1996-97, more than half of the states are associated with implementing the programme. Curriculum revision, rewriting of textbooks to make them competency based, enhancing their pedagogical value, training of teachers in the classroom processes are the major activities being undertaken. The DPEP has adopted MLL as a major strategy for improvement of quality for primary education. MLLs are a part of the large curriculum reform endeavour to achieve greater relevance and functionality in primary education.

### **(b) Operation Black Board (OBB)**

The National Policy on Education 1986 further refined quality improvement in primary schools. It tried to make school environment attractive. Efforts are made to give a face lift to building and additional material was supplied to schools. Motivating factors impinging on enrolment and retention are identified. This initiative was symbolically called 'Operation Blackboard'.

The scheme started off in 1987-88 with the motive of i) At least two reasonably large all-weather class rooms along with ii) two teachers of which one is a woman; iii)provisioning essential teaching and learning material including blackboards, maps, charts, a small library, besides toys; and games at the school.

The *Operation Blackboard* envisioned that the construction of school buildings be given as the responsibility of state governments. To begin with Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment earmarked 48% of the funds under Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) for construction of educational infrastructure.

The Scheme has been further extended to cover upper primary schools, provision was made for atleast i) one room for each class; ii) a

Headmaster-cum-office room; iii) necessary toilet facilities; iv) a contingency grant of Rs.1000 per annum; v) library facilities vi) essential equipment; vii) at least one teacher for each class/section. Primary schools with enrolments more than 100 and two teachers aim now being provided with a third teacher.

The salary of one additional teacher is met by the Central Government for the plan period. Rs.50, 000 is provided to each school for essential teaching learning equipments including Rs.10,000 for library facilities. In order to promote community participation in this venture; preference is given in selection to the villages where community contributes 20% (Rs.10, 000) towards equipment in which case Central contribution will be Rs.40000. However in Tribal (ITDA) areas entire 100% assistance will be provided by the Central Government. There is an appreciable rise in retention though it is still short of the goal.

#### **(c) Orienting Primary Teachers**

Another initiative for strengthening the primary education was special orientation taken up to acquaint primary teachers in teaching languages, mathematics and environmental studies. Apart from state agencies other agencies are involved in this task.

The following five agencies participated in the gigantic task of making education accessible to all an achievable goal. Let's review the contribution of those agencies in different states.

#### **(d) Shiksha Karmi Project**

In Rajasthan since 1987 with the assistance from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Siksha Karmi Project (SKP) in Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) is under implementation its objective is qualitative improvement of primary education in remote and of inaccessible backward villages in Rajasthan. The primary target group is girls. In a report it is stated that teacher's absenteeism is one of the major reasons for low achievement of UEE. The Government of Rajasthan through Rajasthan Shiksha Karmi Board (RSKB) is implementing the project with the assistance of voluntary agencies.

#### ***UEE: Need for Public-Private Partnership***

The project has been so designed to ensure that both the state government and non-governmental organizations work in partnership. This project is one of the innovative educational interventions aiming at overcoming major problems of poor enrolment and high dropout of children,



particularly girls. Siksha Karmi Project runs *Prehar Pathasalas*, *Angan Pathasalas*, and *Mahila Prakashan Kendras* as innovative activities.

Further this project succeeded in checking teacher absenteeism, social and gender inequality in access though in a limited way and also addressed quality question. According to reports there has been a three-fold increase in enrolment of children in schools given to this agency. Furthermore, it is gathered that nearly one fifth of those of where project is implemented there is a 62 percent rise in retention. A significant number of children covered by the SK schools are from scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households. The project as of 2003 covered 1785 villages in 113 blocks of Rajasthan. 4271 *Shiksha Karmis* provided primary education to approximately 1.50 lakh children in day schools and *prehar pathasalas*. Thus the experiment in public-private partnership to a large extent met the goals.

**(e) Bihar Education Project (BEP)**

Bihar is one of the educationally backward states. A number of initiatives are needed to reach the goal of UEE. Bihar Education Programme is one of them launched in 1991 with the objectives of bringing about quantitative and qualitative improvement in the elementary system. It laid emphasis on the education of deprived sections such as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and women. Participatory planning and implementation remain highlights of the project.

Some major achievements reported are i) emergence of a strong Mahila Samakya Component ii) organization of Village Education Committees and Community involvement in programme implementation at grass root level; iii) offering non-formal education through NGO's.

The other objectives of the Programme include i) Universalisation of Primary Education, as a composite programme of Universal access, universal participation and universal achievement (nearer to the minimum levels of learning) ii) Drastic reduction in illiteracy iii) Modification in the educational system to serve the objects of equality for women and their empowerment. iv) Inculcating equality and social justice in educational endeavours. v) Relating education to the working and living conditions of the people. vi) Laying special emphasis on all educational activities on science and environment.

The goal of social reconstruction through education does not remain a distant dream says a report. The Bihar Education Project (BEP) went through the processes of to achieve goals. It registered appreciable progress in the problem plaguing the primary education sector in one of the largest states in the country. However it needs to be stated that much

more needs to be done in Bihar as the retention levels suggest. Let's look another major state i.e., U.P's programme of Universalisation of Elementary Education.

**(f) Uttara Pradesh Basic Education Programme (UPBEP)**

Like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh too attempted a major drive. A Project 'Education for all' prepared by the government of UP was approved for funding by the World Bank in June 1993. The progress of implementation for the last decade is reported to be satisfactory though more needs to be done. Let's get into details.

Nearly 10 years after implementation, the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Programme appears to be showing remarkable results. Enrollment at the primary as well as upper primary school levels in the Uttara Pradesh Basic Education Programme districts has shown a major increase. At the primary level enrollment increased by 66.8% and at the upper primary level by 64 percent. If one compares girl's enrollment in project and non-project districts in UP, the increase is reported to be nearly 67% and 33.11% respectively. Improvements have also been recorded in the mid-term learning assessment conducted in 1996 in which composite mean scores for grade 5 in language improved over the baseline from 34.18 to 37.30 and mean scores from mathematics were higher in project districts as compared to the non-project districts.

Classroom activities also reflect a variety and 60% - 90% of Teachers report constructing and using teaching aids as compared to 25-60% in the baseline survey. The project has also built capacity with the support of the state institute of Educational Management and Training which will serve as a training and resource institution for the northern region. Thus the special intervention programmes intended for improving access, equity, retention, and quality-major goals of these programmes seem to be showing good results in major states.

**(g) National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE)**

One of the problems identified by policy planners for failure to retain children in schools is lack of nutritional meals. Union and states attempted to remedy the situation. NP-NSPE commonly known as mid-day meal scheme was launched on August 15, 1995. It must be stated that states like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have launched this programme much earlier with unidentical results. The supreme court directed the union government to implement this programme. The programme is intended to

give a boost to universalization of primary education by increasing enrolment, retention and attendance, and simultaneously improving up on nutritional levels of students in primary classes (I-V). The ultimate aim under the programme is to provide wholesome cooked / processed food having a calorific value equivalent to 100gm of wheat / rice per student. Food grains (wheat / rice) at the rate of 3kgs per student per month were being given initially linked to attendance of 80% and community participation was sought. People's participation is ensured at every level like school location, micro-planning, training of core teams. Country wide reports show encouraging levels. The correlation studies linking this programme with the broad objective of the universalisation though available, are not many. However enquiries in study area chosen by researcher seem to be encouraging.

#### **(h) Lok Jumbish Project**

Lok Jumbish, a well known civil society initiative in Rajasthan has succeeded in setting up several new schools, non-formal education centers through systematic school mapping exercise with the help of local communities. In about a decade, 246 new primary schools 185 child labour (shiksha karmi) schools and 1016 NFE centers have been opened by the agency. The agency identified woman's education as priority area. It has set up Mahila Shikshan Vihars for providing quality education in a residential type of atmosphere to rural women. It is 6078 women members in 1611 core teams are reported.

It has also initiated several innovative programmes activities like school health programme to generate awareness among the school children on health issues. Measures such as enrolling minorities to mainstream education, supply of the uniforms / free text books to schools seem to have resulted in better enrolment and retention of children, especially girls, in the schools. Low cost hostels for the benefit of tribal children also helped the cause in extending to cover 5.57 lakhs primary class children in the 4426 blocks comprising employment assurance scheme (EAS) / Revamped Public Distribution System and the lok jumbish initiatives calls for a more intensive analysis.

The project is implemented by "Lok Jumbish Parishad" an autonomous society registered under the Societies Registration Act. Decentralized management structure is the hallmark of the LJP. Lok Jumbish has been able to build partnership with the local communities.

## **1.8 The Role of International Agencies in Primary Education: Strengthening of Primary Education**

### **(a) World Bank**

Absence of a sound institutional arrangement for imparting primary education (according to a report of World Bank - Primary Education in India) is reported to be preventing India from rapid growth. In one of the reports it is stated that the country is not able to catch up with economies of the so-called Asian Tigers because of poor educational foundation. It is also stated as one of the reasons for low standard of living and high gender inequalities. While our country is at the top in the number of doctors, engineers and other high-tech personnel capable of competing with the best in the World, it may be shocking to note that average education of Indian worker is just around 2-4 years only in the schools.

The World Bank study stresses that making primary education compulsory is most urgent. The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, in a collaborative research programme with the World Bank, brought out the report. It is stated in this report that the country has the second largest education system after China with 67 million children aged 6-10 in schools. However the report noted that 32 million primary school children are not in upper schools. This leads one to infer that the returns on primary school education are not optimal. According to the report India's average level of educational attainment has not yet reached the critical threshold where benefits are greatest and high economic growth rates are sustainable. What is required is policy response to reform the system to improve the educational attainment to reach an average of four to five years by the middle of next century.

It is widely known that primary education leads to better family health lowers fertility, and put brakes on population growth. It helps workers to take advantage of technological change which raises their productivity and learning.

To accommodate all eligible children in 6 to 10 age groups it is estimated that the country requires at least 1.3 million classrooms. The World Bank report is optimistic that the 80 per cent of the financial resources required will be available in the next decade. If fiscal discipline is observed by India, the study says that 80 per cent of six-year-old children will be in schools<sup>3</sup>. Banks interest in India's education raises suspicions as many hold the view that Indian nation can raise resources to meet its domestic compulsions like education for all.

In a related development the Supreme Court recently declared that for stable democracy children must be given *free and compulsory primary education*. The court ordered the authorities to ensure that compulsory education was provided to all children. The Band Mukti Morcha headed by Swami Agnivesh moved the court for abolition of child labour from U.P.'s carpet industry and to provide education, health care and dignified life for children. Observing that neglecting children is a loss to the society as a whole, the two member bench in a 17 page order regretted that despite constitutional mandate children are denied access to basic and elementary education <sup>4</sup>

## 1.9 Print Media and Primary Education

Eenadu the third largest circulated daily news paper in the country organized a massive survey on status of primary education in Andhra Pradesh recently<sup>5</sup>. Reiterating the fact that Andhra Pradesh occupies 28<sup>th</sup> position in the literacy as per 2001 census (61.11%) it noted that in the states category 21 are before it in the rank order, a combined rank order along with union territories.

Attempting a fresh probe into the state of primary education in Andhra Pradesh the Eenadu survey selected 9813 teachers spread over 959 mandals<sup>6</sup>. A majority of teachers interviewed expressed dissatisfaction (70%) with the basic infrastructure facilities available in schools. Again equal number felt that curriculum prescribed for school children is irrelevant. A good number (33%) felt that the mandal resource persons are not relevant. What is interesting is that nearly 10% of teachers themselves felt that they lack commitment. More than 50% of teachers admit their children in a private school nearer to an urban area (this number touched 70% in case of Hyderabad). Around 55% teachers felt that parental indifference is the main reason for low standards and quality obtaining in public schools.

Of the other aspects nearly 50% respondents are of the opinion that the quality improvement programmes those offered for updating knowledge levels are unimplementable.

Thus the media glare on primary education may serve as an eye opener for those interested in an honest feedback. But it is doubtful whether radical steps will be taken to remedy the situation as education system in every state is a victim of bureaucratization.

The English news papers too are responding to the situation. The Hindu some time ago in its lead page pointed out that gross enrollment ratio at the primary stage is fairly satisfactory in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa

and Sikkim falling at upper primary stage. Further it was stated that a strong link could be established between literacy and universalisation of elementary education. If the latter is achieved, half the task is achieved. The Union Government has outlined a strategy, the salient features of which include: emphasis on retention and achievement rather than enrollment; strengthening the alternatives of schools, shifting the focus from States to districts while considering educational backwardness. It is observed that programmes meant for attainment of total literacy look-good on paper and seems to be well conceived but then the Achilles heel has been identified as the lack of sustained efforts<sup>7</sup>.

### **1.10 Education and Development: Some Perspectives**

Education is the cornerstone of political development and social development and is regarded as a principal means of improving the welfare of individuals. The Encyclopedia of Britannica defines Education as transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of society. It increases the productive capacity of societies and their political, economic and scientific institutions. It also helps reduce poverty by increasing the value and efficiency of the labour offered by the poor and by mitigating the population, health and nutritional consequences of poverty. The social effects of education in developing countries are equally positive. According to Frederick Harbison and C.A. Myers, "Education is the key that unlocks the door to modernization"<sup>8</sup>. In the words of Goel, "Education affects economic development both directly and indirectly through productivity, employment, composition of labour force, division and mobility of labour etc., and indirectly through savings, limitation of the size of family and by inculcating the right kinds of attitudes and skills and by removing some of the obstacles to social change and progress"<sup>9</sup>. Recognising such importance of education, one of the Five Year Plan document stated that, "Education is the single most important factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress and in creating a social order founded on the values of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity"<sup>10</sup>. Although articulations slightly differ, all plan documents referred to the significant role of education, especially primary education.

Primary education is the most important constituent of the whole process of education policy. Primary education has two purposes –1) to produce a literate and numerate population that can deal with problems at home and at work and 2), to serve as a foundation upon which further education is built. Higher education and training need to rest on a solid