

Chapter-2

An Overview of the Educational Progress in India since 1951

2. Introduction

Elementary education has to be made free and compulsory and it has to be made available for all the children in all nations. This was affirmed in 1948 after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹ (United Nation, 1948). This basic right of the children as well as the critical social need has also been reiterated several times at different platforms and conferences at international level. The World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) adopted at the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand, 1990, and the six Education for All (EFA) goals as set out in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action in September 2000, encapsulated the commitment to achieve universal provision and access to primary schooling. These included the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) adopted at the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and the Dakar Millennium Declarations in September 2000 (UNESCO, 2008). In the latter, over 160 countries adopted the six goals aimed at providing quality basic education to all children, youth, and adults by 2015. The “Education for All” movement gained particular prominence in the same year when world leaders of nearly every country, unanimously adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) set out in 2000. To address the issues of abject poverty and hunger and to realize human life with dignity while ensuring human rights to all sections of the people, political commitments were made by world leaders from the forum of United Nations in the form of Millennium Declarations in September 2000. The 2nd and 3rd goal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) and promote Gender Equality and Empowering Women by 2015. So, how far the international community has come in meeting these two goals is a relevant international agenda and a quick look of India’s position in this respect will be very much important. Various research studies have noted that many countries of the world such as China, Sri Lanka, Japan, South Korea and Indonesia which had a similar educational record as India had in 1950, have already achieved universal elementary education. But India is still missing the goal to even achieve universal primary education.

Education policy in India was initiated after Independence in 1947 and the year 1960 was initially targeted towards achieving universal education for children belonging to the age group 5-14 years. Thereafter, several commissions (University Grant Commission of 1948 chaired by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Secondary Education Commission of 1952 chaired by Dr. L Muddaliar, Education Commission of 1966 chaired by D.S. Kothari, Teacher education Commission of 1985 chaired by D.P. Chattopadhyay and Dr. Rais Ahmed etc. are some of the noteworthy examples) and Committees expressed their concern over the non-achievement of this goal and provided recommendations for achieving the goal of UEE. In spite of the recommendations, the target remained illusive and external funding was introduced to ensure the fulfilment of the vision. In recent times programmes, funded through District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and thereafter Sarva Siksha Aviyan/Mission (SSA/SSM), have been introduced to universalize Elementary Education within a given time frame. To achieve UPE (Goal 2 of MDG) by 2015, it is expected that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling by then. To accomplish the 3rd goal of MDG, it would be necessary to eliminate gender disparity in primary & secondary education, preferably by 2005 and at all levels of education no later than 2015 (A Mid-Term Status Report on Progress of Millennium Development Goals of West Bengal, Wada Na Todo Abhiyan, West Bengal).

Providing education to all is a constitutional commitment in India. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 made education a Fundamental Right for children in the age group of 6-14 years by providing 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”. In reality, this goal is yet to be realised. A recent UNESCO Reports (India DHS 2005-06) stated that “India is the country with the largest number of children out of school.”

The reasons behind the failure to achieve the goal of universal education for the children, has thus remained a subject of research for years. In order to understand the dynamics of present day educational development it is necessary to look into the progress of education in India since the British rulers who actually laid the foundation of modern educational system in our country. This chapter briefly addresses the developmental trend of various educational policies in India over the last century in order to identify the basic problems related with Indian education especially, with Elementary Education (eight years of schooling). A brief history of the progress of education in India is thus outlined below.

Since the focus of the study is on elementary education, the history of elementary education during the British rule along with the some major policies taken by the government for universalising elementary education is also briefly traced. Social expenditure on education with special reference to elementary education in India is undertaken to elucidate the stress of policies on elementary education. Thereafter, the developmental trend of elementary schooling in India has been dealt with within the reference period. The chapter also attempts to portray the literacy trends in India during the period 1950-51 to 2000-01. Finally, recent issues, policies, and trends in educational achievement in India are outlined and key areas of concern summarized.

2.1 Progress in Education in pre-Independent India

India has a long tradition of both formal and non-formal system of education. In the ancient days, education was imparted orally to the sages and scholars. The teachers were addressed as Gurus and the scholars were addressed as shishyas. This guru-shishya system of imparting education was popularly known as Gurukul. Gurukuls were traditional Hindu residential schools of learning. Education was free, but students from well-to-do families paid Gurudakshina, a voluntary contribution after the completion of their studies. At the Gurukuls, the teacher imparted knowledge on Religion, Scriptures, Philosophy, Literature, Warfare, Statecraft, Mathematics, Medicine, Astrology and "History" ("Itihaas"). Only students belonging to Brahmin and Kshatriya communities were taught in these Gurukuls, thus limiting education to higher castes (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_education_in_India).

Another barrier existed for the common people to receive knowledge in the form of language, i.e. Sanskrit was the medium used to impart knowledge which was beyond reach of the commoners. Mass education was proclaimed only during the age of Buddha (563-483 B.C.) who successfully imparted education in the language of the masses known as 'Prakrit' spoken by them, and not in 'Sanskrit' which was the language of the elite. The dawn of Buddhism and Jainism brought fundamental changes in access to education with their democratic character. With the spread of Buddhism in India, education became available to everyone and this led to the establishment of some internationally renowned educational institutions like Nalanda, Vikramshila and Takshashila (Sharma, 2006). These institutions also received scholars from various countries and education was in its zenith.

In the medieval times (11th Century onwards), the Muslim rulers replaced the existing systems of education by introducing their own education to meet the growing needs of a Muslim administration and of a Muslim Community. They established elementary and secondary schools (Ghosh, 2007). This led to the forming of few universities too at cities like Delhi, Lucknow and Allahabad. Medieval period saw the proliferation of Islamic education and institutions leading to interaction between Indian and Islamic traditions in all fields of knowledge like theology, religion, philosophy, fine arts, painting, architecture, mathematics, medicine and astronomy.

The Hindu learning, which survived in the bordering Hindu kingdoms in medieval India, almost perished under the impact of western learning. When the British arrived in India, English education had been growing with the help of the European missionaries. Since then, Western education has made steady advances in the country. When the British replaced the Muslims as rulers, they also instituted their own system of education to meet imperial requirements. They were much interested in educating the Indians for facilitating their administration in India, while proselytisation was the primary motive behind the eagerness of the British to educate the Indians.

Besides, administration could be managed at a low cost since Indians could be paid less by the East India Company than the Englishmen. The modern educational system as developed by the British in India was completely new in concept and aspect. Although it was actually developed by the British administrators, probably, for facilitating their administration in India and also to facilitate missionary operations in India, it may still be considered as the introduction of modern educational system in India and the western education gave birth to a group of enlightened Indians who were able to free India from the British rule.

The current system of education, with its western style and content, was introduced & funded by the British in the 19th century, following recommendations of Macaulay. Charles Grant, Macaulay and Trevelyn propounded the ideology of colonial education in the early years of colonial rule. Macaulay's Minute of 1835 envisaged downward filtration where it was believed that education filtered down from the upper to the lower classes (Dave, 1992). Macaulay was of the view that education was not to be free but one needs to pay to receive education. He even went further to advocate the withdrawal of stipends from the native students. The policy to be adopted in regard to the spread of education in British India was summed up by Macaulay as, "To sum up what I have said. I think it clear that we are not fettered by the Act of Parliament of 1813, that we are not fettered by any pledge expressed or implied, that we are free to employ our funds as we choose, that we ought to employ them in teaching what is best worth knowing, that English is better worth knowing than Sanskrit or Arabic, that the natives are desirous to be taught English, and are not desirous to be taught Sanskrit or Arabic, that neither as the languages of law nor as the languages of religion have the Sanskrit and Arabic any peculiar claim to our encouragement, that it is possible to make natives of this country thoroughly good English scholars, and that to this end our efforts ought to be directed (Cultural Imperialism & Thomas Macaulay, <http://www.mssu.edu/projectsouthasia/history/primarydocs/education/Macaulay001.htm>). With the introduction of the fee system, education became inaccessible to a large section of the masses. Another official policy of the government was to introduce English as medium of instruction at the school level, thus making education a tool for the elites and the much envisaged 'downward filtration' failed to evolve as was desirable.

As opposed to downward filtration theory, Wood's Despatch of 1854 was a landmark in the history of primary education under British rule in India. The Despatch envisaged a system of grant-in-aid to educational institutions which would provide 'good secular education by trained teachers. It also mentioned the support that will be given to female education. The Despatch of 1854 also brought two very important issues to the forefront. One was the role of the government in fostering mass education, and accordingly, the policy adopted was to improve the existing indigenous schools and open new government schools. The other was the relative importance of English and the vernacular in the process of education. The Despatch envisaged English in the higher education for the few and vernacular education for many. But the then government was not seen to be interested in implementing the suggestions of the Despatch. Much was done for higher education than for the development of primary education. Eventually, no significant progress was discernible during this period (1813-1859).

Serious efforts were undertaken during the period 1859-1881 and primary education progressed rapidly during this time. Lord Stanley's Despatch of 1859 stressed on the role of government alone in providing primary education and not reliance on grant-in-aid. Local cesses for the development of primary education were levied both in rural and urban areas. In Punjab province, a cess of one percent was levied on land revenue in 1856-57 in certain areas and was generalised in all areas in 1864. A rapid expansion of primary schools was seen during this period.

The next major milestone was the establishment of Indian Education Commission of 1882 or the Hunter Commission. The Hunter Commission published its detailed report in 1884 and its focus was to explain the failure of Charles Wood's Education Despatch of 1854 and to recommend reform. The commission devoted its primary attention to elementary education. Among other things, the commission suggested that government along with local bodies should shoulder responsibility of primary education and primary education should be given through vernaculars

(Hunter, 1884). In spite of these recommendations, primary education suffered between 1881 and 1901 because of inadequate financial supports by the government.

A few efforts were also made by Lord Curzon who declared through the Resolution of 1904 that extension of primary education was one of the most important duties of the State. As a result of this Resolution, both the Central and Provincial government allotted large grants for primary education and consequently there was a remarkable improvement in school infrastructure.

The goal of universal primary education was officially accepted in 1921 when the British Government transferred the controlling power of primary education to the Indian ministers. In this respect, 1921 was a significant year in the history of primary education in India. Public opinion was also organised in the field of primary education. Accordingly, both primary schools and enrolments were increased tremendously. But the World Economic Depression of 1930 necessarily forced the government to curtail education expenditure. Consequently development was interrupted. The then government accepted the view of 'consolidation and improvement' rather than that of expansion in the field of education (recommendations of The Hartog Commission appointed in 1929 to review the conditions of Indian education). Primary education under provincial autonomy (1937-47) also suffered from various problems owing to the outbreak of Second World War in 1939. Attempt was made by the Congress Ministries to introduce Gandhiji's concept of Basic Education in several provinces. However, owing to the brevity of the period between the introduction of provincial autonomy and World War II (two years), not much headway could be made in this regard.

In pre-independent India, significant efforts were made to introduce universal free compulsory basic education by the Indian leaders and thinkers. Indian leaders began to demand compulsory education in the latter half of the 19th century. Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola and Sir Chimam Lal were among them who raised the question of introducing free and compulsory primary education as soon as possible before the First Indian Education Commission (1882). But the Commission rejected the demand by sparing a few words that it was too early to set a goal of universal education. The first successful experiment of compulsory primary education was conducted in the State of Baroda. The Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda introduced compulsory education as an experiment in the Amreli Taluk of his State in 1893. By the success of this experiment, the provision was enacted throughout the State in 1906. Gopal Krishna Gokhale made a serious effort by raising the demand of free compulsory primary education before the Imperial Legislative Council in 1910. On March 18, 1912, he moved a resolution to examine his Bill by a select committee. However the Bill was rejected by 38 to 13 votes. Shri Vithabhai Patel took Gokhale's work and in 1917 he moved a Bill in the Bombay Legislative Council for the introduction of compulsory primary education in the municipal districts of the Province. The Bill was passed with some modifications and became the first law on compulsory education in India. After World War I, some of the Provincial governments passed Primary Education Acts, in the respective provinces (e.g. Bengal Primary Education Act, Uttar Pradesh Primary Education Act and Punjab Primary Education Act in 1919). However, several reasons including the poor socio-economic background of the country posed a barrier in the path of universalisation of basic education.

2.2 Elementary Education in post-Independent India

Although several efforts were made during the British period to spread elementary education to the masses, it failed to universalise it. Consequently, the decolonized India inherited a weak educational base. The first post-independence census indicated only 9 percent of females and 27 percent of males as literate. The Government of free India fully realized the importance of mass literacy and the Constitution of India made a Directive Principle of State Policy under Article-45 as follows-

Article-45: "The State shall endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years within ten years from the date on which the Constitution comes to force."

'Kher Committee' in 1944 recommended 16 years for achieving the goal of education for all. Eventually, on January 26, 1950, when the Indian Constitution came into effect, the above

constitutional commitment was also made effective. In reality, the years went by but they could not bring forth the desired result. Policy, as it is defined and developed, gives the direction in which a country proposes to move to achieve a certain targetted goals in future (Premi, 2001). It is basically the political statement of the Government pertaining to the vision about the future (Mukhopadhyay, 2001). Eventually, educational policy assigns the proposals of the Government for future development of the educational scenario of the country. But the constitutional commitment made at the time of its commencement, proved itself that the time limit for achieving the goal of universal education was very short. It was little before the independence in 1947, Central Advisory Board of Education (popularly known as Sargeant Plan) recommended a period of 40 years for achieving the goal of free and compulsory education for all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

At the time of commencement of Indian Constitution, the primary responsibility for elementary education was given to the State Government, while the responsibility of higher and technical education was given to the Central Government. In 1978, after the 42nd Constitutional Amendment, all levels of education were placed under the concurrent list.

Having failed to achieve the goal of UEE after the 10 years of constitutional commitment, the Government of India appointed a commission in 1964 (Kothari Education Commission) to advise the government on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all its aspects. The Commission submitted its report in 1966 where it was strongly recommended to give highest priority to elementary education. It set a target before the government to universalise 5 years of schooling by the year 1975-76 and 7 years of schooling by 1985-86. It is well known that this target was not achieved. The National Policy on Education (1968) was framed following the reports of Kothari Commission which stressed to bring equal opportunities to both boys and girls and also to all social groups (Sudarsan, 2000). The National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986 that was updated in 1992 again targeted the year 1995 to achieve the constitutional goal of achieving free and compulsory education of the children aged upto 14 years.

In 1999, a high-powered committee comprising a group of experts (Saikia Committee) submitted their report where it was clearly recommended to allocate a public expenditure of 6 per cent GDP, which is still unattended.

In May 2000, the Government announced to achieve a sustainable threshold level of 75% literacy rate by the year 2005. This was declared before the World Education Forum at Senegalese capital Dakar for reaching the goal of Education For All. During the same year a national program under the campaign called Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) as an effort towards universal education.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court in Unnikrishnan, J.P. Vs State of Andhra Pradesh and others (1993) has categorically rendered in its judgement that every child of this country has a right to free education until he completes the age of 14 years.

The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002, enacted in December 2002 seeks to make free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right for all Children in the age group 6-14 years by inserting a new Article 21-A in Part III ("Fundamental Right") of the Constitution (Government of India, 2008).

The recent Constitutional Amendment has restructured the educational right of the Indian children upto the age of 14 years as follows –

Article 45 (Modified): "The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years."

Article 21 (A): "The State shall provide free and compulsory education for all children of the age of 6 to 14 years in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine."

It also adds Article 51 (A) (K) under Fundamental Duties as follows-

Article 51(A) (K):“Parents/guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or ward between the ages of 6 to 14 years.”

This amendment does not ensure the equal opportunities to be provided for the education of the children. Rather it stated in Article 21 (A) that education will be provided in such a manner, as the State shall by law determine. Again, by adding Article 51(A) (K), the parents are also made duty bound to provide opportunities for the education of their children. Though it is found in different surveys (PROBE; Pratiche Education Report) that there is a strong aspiration among the Indian parents to educate their children, but in reality this aspiration is far from realization. According to a senior educational official, “The Government should not force poor parents to send their children to school when it cannot provide employment for all adults. Children are an economic asset to the poor. The income they bring in and the work they do may be small, but parents close to subsistence need their help (quoted in Weiner, 1996).” A common proposition that poverty alleviation is a pre-requisite for achieving the goal of UEE has been falsified by several country experiences. Many countries have successfully made primary education compulsory and universal when per-capita income in those countries was low and poverty was widespread. Japan introduced compulsory education in 1872 and by 1910 Japan had achieved 98 per cent of its children (6-13 years) attending school. In 1949, only one-fourth of the Chinese children were in Primary School, while in 1982 the figure was 93 per cent, with 70 per cent completing the sixth grades. Sri Lanka also ensured 90 per cent primary schooling coverage of its children in 1981 of which 70 per cent was completing fifth grade. North and South Korea, and Taiwan are countries that made education compulsory shortly after World War II. In the West too, many countries have introduced the same before the onset of the Industrial Revolution. These countries have successfully ensured the universalisation of primary and elementary education in their country and they have regarded mass education as an instrument for the reduction of poverty (Weiner, 1996), justifying the need for education for poverty reduction. Beyond this poverty effect, it is obviously very difficult to cater to the educational needs of the rapidly growing population having a demographic base of 1.03 billion (Census of India, 2001) of which 0.253 billion are in the school going age group (5-14 years).

The New Economic Policy consisting of liberalization, privatization and globalization of economy in India started at the beginning of the last decade of last century. It is argued that economic reforms create space for poor and vulnerable sections of the society. But the basic question, whether they can be able to use these spaces for their economic development or not, is conditioned by whether they are educated, healthy well-feed or not. Without having sufficient access to these social needs, economic reforms would not benefit the poor and vulnerable sections of the society. As such it will be too optimistic to think that the 86th Amendment to the Constitutional Amendment (The Constitution Act, 2002) may automatically ensure universalisation of education to the Indian children. Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on July 2004 proposed to levy an Education Cess @ 2% on all major Central Taxes (income tax, excise duty, customs duty, corporation tax and service tax) that actually came into effect from November 14, 2005 (Government of India, 2008; Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation. www.aseerf.in). It has been levied to strengthen the financial assistance to primary education in the country. For the purpose, a non-lapsable fund for funding SSA and MDM has been established in the name of Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh. The constitutional amendment, promises and budgetary provisions, however, is only the beginning - not the end - of the struggle to universalize elementary education. It was soon realised that legislation alone is not sufficient to make any headway in education. A massive effort in a series of programs is required to bring the schooling system in line with the goal. However, given the dimension and gravity of the issue to universalize education, it is apparent that education has been receiving some focused attention at present and the process will be continued in the recent future too.

2.2.1 Public Expenditure on Elementary Education

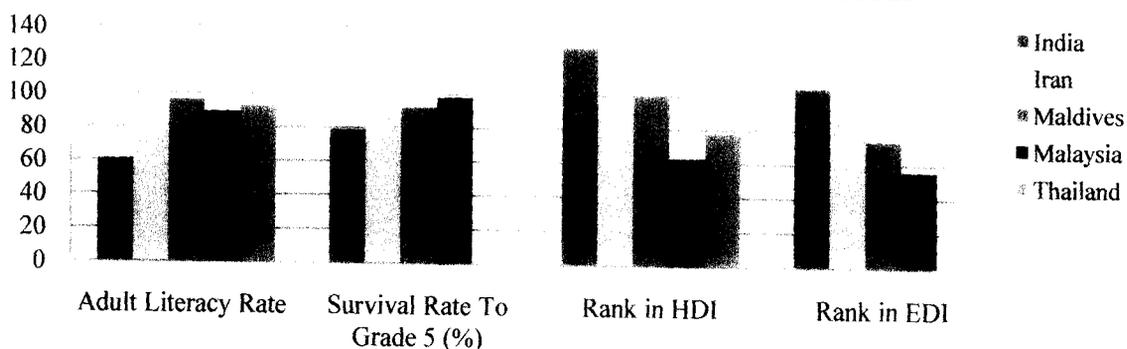
The financing of Education for All (EFA) has become a key issue in national and international efforts to achieve universal primary education. A number of studies have repeatedly stressed the importance of ensuring a sufficient and stable source of funding for education (Colclough with

Lewin, 1993; Mehrotra, 1998; Bruns, Mingat and Rakotomalala, 2003). In India, education is financed by the central government, state governments, local authorities, and a variety of private sources. But government is the major contributor of educational access and this has been done through the fund allocated by the government to the education sector. It has been argued that in India, apart from several other factors, insufficient allocation of financial resources to the education sector on the part of Government is a prime reason for non-implementation of the constitutional commitments (Tilak, 2002). As against the goal of 6 per cent of GDP, the total expenditure on education in India was 2.78 per cent of GDP (Actual) in 2006-07 and has become 2.87 per cent in 2007-08 (Revised Estimate) and currently 3.02 per cent as per the Budget Estimate of (2008-09) (GOI; Table: 10.9). Against this backdrop, the section presents and analyses the pattern of Government finances to educational sector in India during the second half of the last century with a special focus on elementary education.

The International Commission on Education for the 21st Century (<http://www.unesco.org/delors>), a UNESCO task force, recommended in the late 1990s that governments should invest at least 6 percent of their Gross National Product (GNP) on education, covering all grade levels. About one quarter of countries do, but the majority invests less than 5 percent. And even some faces the largest educational challenges that still spend less than 3 percent. As a proportion of GDP, 5.6% of the regional GDP is invested by the Governments in North America and Western Europe followed by the Arab States (4.9%) and sub-Saharan Africa (4.5%). The regions of Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Central and Eastern Europe are close to the world average (4.4%). However, the Governments of South and West Asian countries are investing only 3.6% of the regional GDP on average. Indian figure in this respect stands at 3.8%, which is below the world's average and far from the international norm (6% of GDP as proposed by UNESCO (<http://www.unesco.org/delors/>)). Table 2.1 compares the public expenditure on Education in selected Asian Countries. This comparison brings to fore some important dimensions in public expenditure on education. Public expenditure on education as proportion of GDP in India (3.8 percent in 2004) is somehow comparable to some Asian countries. However, it is far below if the comparison is made with some developed countries. For example, Norway spends 7.7% of its GDP on education. The same is 9.8% in Cuba, 8.5% in Denmark 7.4 % in Sweden, 6.5% in New Zealand and 5.9% for United States respectively (UNESCO, 2007, Statistical Table-13). Even among the Asian countries it spends less than Iran, Maldives, Malaysia and Thailand.

An important aspect that is revealed from the data is that when public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP is compared to the educational performance/outcome (e.g. Primary completion rate, Adult Literacy Rate, values of Education Index or Human Development Index) of the countries, a distinct trend is discernible between the outcomes and the social spending (Fig-2.1). In India, all these educational indicators are considerably low compare to the countries spending more on education. Even some countries like Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, China, Indonesia and Sri Lanka with a lower spending are being observed as better performed so far the educational indicators are concerned (Table-2.1).

Fig-2.1: Educational Performance in Selected Asian Countries



Source: Calculated from Table-2.1

Apart from this, the UNESCO report (2007 pp-18, 19) also draws attention to the fact that the annual public expenditure per primary student is an important indicator representing the commitment of the Governments towards achieving the goal of education for all (EFA). By expressing expenditure as a percentage of GDP per capita, education budgets can be compared in relation to national income level, which is a proxy for a country's ability to generate education financing. The UNESCO report (2007) compares the annual public expenditure per primary student as a percentage of GDP per capita for 122 countries for which data were available. The lowest public expenditure in this respect has been found in Central Asia region with a median value of 9.3% followed by South and West Asia at 9.7%. In sub-Saharan Africa, the median expenditure per primary student was almost 13% of GDP per capita being placed at the third position. The countries of North America, Western Europe have been found to spend highest proportion of GDP per capita on education and this region tend to spend close to a regional median of 22%. The same was 17% in Central and Eastern Europe and 15% in the East Asia and the Pacific region. The annual public expenditure per primary student in India is close to 9% percentage of GDP per capita.

Table-2.1: Public Expenditure on Education in Selected Asian Countries

Country	Popula- tion in thousand	GNP per capita (in US\$)	Public expenditure on education as % of GDP	Total Public Expenditure on Education as % of total Govt. Expenditure	Adult Literacy rate (% ages 15 and older)*	Survival Rate To Grade 5 (%)	Education for All Develop- ment Index (EDI)	Human Develop- ment Index
	2005	2005	2005	2005	1995- 2005b	2004	2005	2005
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Bangladesh	141822	470	2.5	14.2	47	65y	0.547 (140)	0.759 (107)
India	1103371	730	3.8z	10.7y	61	79y	0.619 (128)	0.797 (105)
Iran	69515	1600	4.7	22.8	82	88x	0.759 (94)	0.883 (90)
Maldives	329	1320	7.1	15	96	92	0.741 (100)	0.910 (74)
Nepal	27133	270	3.4y	14.9y	49	79	0.534 (142)	0.734 (110)
Pakistan	157935	690	2.3	10.9	50	70	0.551 (136)	0.540 (120)
Sri Lanka	20743	1160	NA	NA	91	NA	0.743 (99)	NA
China	1315844	1740	NA	NA	91	NA	0.777 (81)	NA
Indonesia	222781	1280	0.9y	NA	90`	89	0.728 (107)	0.935 (62)
Japan	128085	38950	3.6z	9.8y	NA	NA	0.953 (8)	NA
Malaysia	25347	4970	6.2z	25.2z	89	98x	0.811 (63)	0.945 (56)
Philippines	83054	1320	2.7z	16.4z	93	75	0.771 (90)	0.893 (82)
Thailand	64233	2720	4.3	25	93	NA	0.781 (78)	NA
Vietnam	84238	620		NA	90	87x	0.733 (105)	0.899 (79)
World#	6450253	7011	4.4	14	82	NA	--	--

Note- (x) Data are for 2002, (y) Data are for 2003, (z) Data are for 2004, (*) National estimates; # Weighted Average EDI = 1/4 (total primary NER) + 1/4 (adult literacy rate) + 1/4 (GEI) + 1/4 (survival rate to grade 5)

Source: - Column-1, 2 and 5 to 8 UNESCO, 2007^a, Column-3, 4 UNESCO, 2007 and Column-9 UNDP, 2007

This public expenditure is far below compare to the other developed even developing countries too. India's position is only a shade better than some of the sub Saharan countries (Madagascar, Congo, Zambia, Cameroon, Chad) and a few East Asia and the Pacific countries (Myanmar, Cambodia, Macao,-China, Lao PDR, Philippines). The United States alone accounts for more than one quarter of the global education budget. Countries like France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom have education budgets that exceed the spending on education in all of Sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 15 percent of the world's school-age population but combined spending on education by national governments in the region amounts to only 2.4 percent of the global education budget. The world is at the midpoint between the adoption of the

Millennium Development Goals and the 2015 target date, but without increased spending on education in Sub-Saharan Africa and other regions the goal of universal primary education is unlikely to be met.

There is another significant difference between India and other developed countries with respect to social expenditure on education by sectors of education. While India spends only 66% of total public education expenditure on primary and secondary education, the same is 88.6% in Bangladesh, 81.9 % in Korea, 70.4% in Thailand, 65.3% in Sri Lanka, 69.6% in China, 72.8% in Sweden 76.3% in UK and 74.8% in United States (Dev and Mooij, 2002).

2.2.2 Aggregate Educational Expenditure in India (1951-52 to 2001-02)

The public expenditure on education as proportion of GNP/GDP has an important role in determining the country's educational performance so far. Tilak (2002) has rightly remarked that among the several indicators relating to Government's financial commitment to education, the share of education in GNP/GDP may be considered as the most important standard indicator of all. Table 2.2 traces the public expenditure on education over the period from 1951-52 to 2001-02. Over the 50 years since independence in 1947, India has gone through a planned system of economy.

The education sector was given due importance in this term. Total Expenditure on All Sectors has been increased (by 761 times from 1951-52 to 2001-02) considerably, while the increase in Total Expenditure on Education sector is observed almost double compare to the expenditure on all sectors (by 1239 times over the same period). A time wise trend has been discussed below. It is also observed that there has been a considerable jump in literacy rate from 18.34% in 1951 to 64.84% in 2001 (GOI, 2007-2008). Presently the literacy rate has been calculated at 67.3% (GOI, 2008b).

The gross or total increase in expenditure does not end the whole story. In consonance with the constitutional commitment, universalisation of elementary education and to foster social sector development, proportions of educational expenditure to all segments of expenditure and to GDP are the two important indicators that can determine the role of Government in this regard. Columns 5 and 6 in Table 2.2, shows the trend in proportional educational expenditure over the period 1951-52 to 2001-02.

The Kothari Commission in 1966 strongly recommended the spending of 6 per cent of GDP on education in India, for universalisation of elementary education in the country. The government also targeted to spend the same and it was also declared to make provisions for the recommended level by 1986. Public expenditures on education, both as a percentage of GDP and as a percentage of total government expenditure, have increased since 1950-1951. Education and training expenditure as a percentage of GDP rose from below 1 percent in 1950-1951 to over 4 percent by 2000-01 (column-6 of Table-2.2). Column-6 of Table-2.2 depicts it simply that the government had been far from its target till 2001. Expenditure on education had been below 2 % of GDP till 1970 and below 3% up to 1981-82. Actually, it does not cross the bar of 4% of GDP in any of the years except in the last years of the time period under consideration (1999-00, 2000-01). It remained still below 4% of GDP in 2004-05 (GOI, 2007). This is hardly comparable to international standards where e.g., governments of 35 countries out of 177 countries in the world are spending more than 6% of GDP on education (UNDP, 2007).

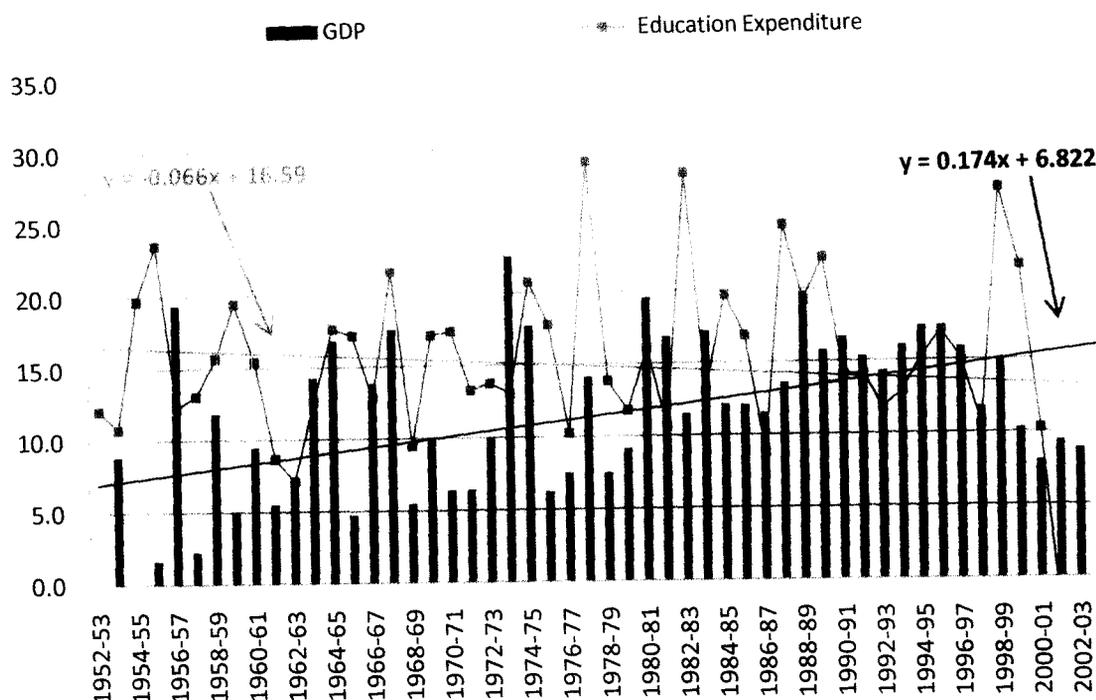
Apart from the high human developed countries like Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Finland, Denmark, Belgium, New Zealand and Malaysia, there are several countries like Ukraine, Tunisia, Fiji, Guyana, Maldives, Bolivia, Botswana, Namibia, Morocco, Kenya, Yemen with medium scale of human development which are also spending much higher than India (UNDP, 2007). It may be noted here that human development in India has been placed in the medium category along with the above mentioned countries. Exceptions like Ethiopia however spend more than 6% of its GDP on education although occupying the lower rungs in human development (UNDP, 2007)

Table-2.2: Educational Expenditure (by Education & Other Departments) in India (1951-52 to 2001-02)

Year	GDP at current prices at factor cost (Rs. In crore)	Total Expenditure by all Sectors (Rs in crore)	Expenditure on Education (Rs. In crore)	Expenditure on as %age of GDP	Expenditure on Education as %age of Public Expenditure
1951-52	10080	814.13	64.46	0.64	7.92
1952-53	9941	857.67	72.26	0.73	8.43
1953-54	10824	908.2	80.06	0.74	8.82
1954-55	10168	973.74	95.82	0.94	9.84
1955-56	10332	1111.26	118.39	1.15	10.65
1956-57	12334	1158.01	132.88	1.08	11.47
1957-58	12610	1416.62	150.26	1.19	10.61
1958-59	14106	1594.36	173.78	1.23	10.9
1959-60	14816	1770.06	207.59	1.40	11.73
1960-61	16220	1997.93	239.56	1.48	11.99
1961-62	17116	2225.4	260.3	1.52	11.7
1962-63	18302	2942.67	278.76	1.52	9.47
1963-64	20916	3488.97	313.93	1.50	9.0
1964-65	24436	3844.91	369.29	1.51	9.6
1965-66	25586	4404.82	432.61	1.69	9.82
1966-67	29123	5100.24	487.83	1.68	9.56
1967-68	34225	5619.77	593.14	1.73	10.55
1968-69	36092	6922.07	649.13	1.80	9.38
1969-70	39691	7908.07	760.23	1.92	9.61
1970-71	42222	8787.12	892.36	2.11	10.16
1971-72	44923	10610.89	1011.07	2.25	9.53
1972-73	49415	11863.56	1150.43	2.33	9.7
1973-74	60560	12884.48	1300.72	2.15	10.1
1974-75	71283	14625.03	1570.67	2.20	10.74
1975-76	75709	17958.99	1849.47	2.44	10.3
1976-77	81381	20482.83	2039.09	2.51	9.96
1977-78	92881	22666.31	2630.6	2.83	11.61
1978-79	99823	26134.84	2994.69	3.00	11.46
1979-80	108927	30915.39	3347.57	3.07	10.83
1980-81	130178	36398.39	3884.2	2.98	10.67
1981-82	152056	41715.71	4298.29	2.83	10.3
1982-83	169525	43996.18	5509.17	3.25	12.52
1983-84	198630	61889.25	6229.53	3.14	10.07
1984-85	222705	69025.45	7455.88	3.35	10.8
1985-86	249547	67091.41	8713.02	3.49	12.99
1986-87	278258	80454.66	9479.13	3.41	11.78
1987-88	315993	92518.38	11798.35	3.73	12.75
1988-89	378491	107543.75	14069.82	3.72	13.08
1989-90	438020	126045.97	17192.5	3.93	13.64
1990-91	510954	146711.53	19615.85	3.84	13.37
1991-92	589086	170370.38	22393.69	3.80	13.14
1992-93	673221	190327.45	25030.3	3.72	13.15
1993-94	781345	218535.15	28279.69	3.62	12.94
1994-95	917058	251691.92	32606.22	3.56	12.95
1995-96	1073271	286194.55	38178.09	3.56	13.34
1996-97	1243546	329389.92	43896.48	3.53	13.33
1997-98	1390148	380728.45	48552.14	3.49	12.75
1998-99	1598127	439768.11	61578.91	3.85	14.0
1999-00	1761838	512519.33	74816.09	4.25	14.6
2000-01	1902998	572160.14	82486.88	4.33	14.42
2001-02	2081474	619713.14	79865.7	3.84	12.89
2002-03	2265304	678548.31	68561.55	3.03	10.10
2003-04	2549418	743668.96	73044.93	2.87	9.82
2004-05	2855933	797345.74	81280.85	2.85	10.19
2005-06	3250932	916465.26	97224.19	2.99	10.61

Note: GDP figures for the years from 1979-80 to 1998-99 are on the base year 1993-94 series and from 1999-00 to 2006-07 are on the base year 1999-00 series; Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, GOI <http://educationforallindia.com/public-expenditure-education-in-india-1950-51-to2006-07.pdf>

Fig-2.2: Annual Growth of GDP and Educational Expenditure in India (1952-53 to 2002-03)



Source: Calculated from table-2.2

In order to comprehend the trend of growth of educational expenditure, the annual growth of GDP and the annual growth of public expenditure on education have been calculated and the same is depicted in Figure-2.2. The trend line of annual growth of GDP shows that the growth of GDP has an increasing trend, while, in contrast, the growth of educational expenditure has a decreasing trend. Actually, the growth of educational expenditure is much fluctuating in nature over the consecutive years and as such the growth pattern over the last 50 years (1952-53 to 2003-04) shows a decreasing trend. This shows that educational expenditure in India does not grow proportionately in line with the growth of GDP since independence.

2.2.3 Public Expenditure on Education over the Plan Period

The Planning Commission in India was set up in March, 1950 by a Resolution of the Government, which, while presenting its first plan before the nation, categorically stated that “-----economic planning is an integral part of a wider process aiming not merely at the development of resources in a narrow technical sense, but at the development of human faculties and the building up of an institutional framework adequate to the needs and aspirations of the people” (<http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/publications/pubf.htm>:). Education is not only an important component of human faculty development, getting the children an adequate level of education is also a strong aspiration of the Indian parents (PROBE, 1998; Pratchi Education Report). Even after more than 50 years of the planning era in India, the question that still remains significant is whether the government has been in line with its declaration. This section exclusively analyses the importance that has been given to the education sector during the plan period in terms of public expenditure on education.

The planning regime has been introduced in India taking five years as the planning period for each economic plan. This five year economic plan is expected to provide the developmental strategy to the Government. Economic intervention of the government is reflected by this plan. Since its inception in 1950 the country has gone through 10 five year plans (FYPs) and currently the economy is progressing under the 11th FYP. Table 2.3 depicts the share of education in plan outlay over the different plans.

Table 2.3 depicts the public expenditure on education Plan-wise in India along with average plan outlay beginning 1961 (3 FYP). Although absolute plan outlays have increased manifold between the 3FYP and 10FYP, it must be noted that the outlays in the table as per Economic Survey (GOI) are calculated at current prices. After allowing for calculations on constant prices, the picture no longer remains the same Tilak (2002).

Table 2.3: Share of Education in Plan Outlay in India (Rs. in crore) at Current Prices

Plans	Period	Total@	Education	% on Education
Third Five Year Plan	1961-66	8576.6	588.7	6.9
Annual Plans	1966-69	6625.4	306.8	4.6
Fourth Five Year Plan	1969-74	15778.8	774.3	4.9
Fifth Five Year Plan	1974-79	39426.2	1710.3#	4.3
Annual Plan	1979-80	12176.5	263	2.2
Sixth Five Year Plan	1980-85	109292	2976.6	2.7
Seventh Five Year Plan	1985-90	218730	7685.5	3.5
Annual Plan	1990-91	58369.3	2316.5	4.0
Annual Plan	1991-92	64751.2	2599	4.0
Eighth Five Year Plan	1992-97	434100	19599.7	4.5
Ninth Five Year Plan	1997-02	859200	49838.5	5.8
Tenth Five Year Plan (Realisation))	2002-07	945328	63224	6.7
Eleventh Five Year Plan (Projection)	2007-12	2156571	238608	11.1

@ includes both Central and State sector # includes expenditure on scientific research;
Source: Economic Survey, different years, GOI: <http://indiabudget.nic.in/>

Looking into the total plan outlays allocated to education it is evident that percentage of total plan outlay on education (Column 5 in Table 2.3) has been increasing steadily after an all time low during the Annual Plan (1979-80) and the 6FYP (1985-90). The proportion of total plan outlay was at its zenith during the 3FYP at 6.9%, and it was only during the 10FYP (6.7 percent) that it could reach close to this figure. This also shows that the basic intention of the government in the early years of the planning era was to ensure the spread of education in the country. But the scenario changed soon after the 3FYP and the proportion of educational outlay remained well below 5 percent till the 8FYP. It is only in the 11FYP that this crucial sector has been given special attention although the 10FYP outlay was marginally above 6 percent after gross neglect towards this sector for over 40 years since 1966. It took more than 40 years for the government to implement the recommendation of the Kothari Commission (1966). There has been an unprecedented increase in educational outlays in the 11FYP and it is hoped that the goal of Education for All may after all be realised. However, analysts have attributed slow growth rate of the economy to the low proportional outlay in education over the 40 year period. The rate of growth of the economy has been lower than what had been recommended by the Kothari Commission. Thus, it may be concluded that the slow growth rate of the economy along with a marginal share allocated to education may be one of the important reasons for non-fulfillment of educational right of Indian children.

There is another issue that may be addressed here. Is the 6% of GDP sufficient for a country having a billion plus population size? In India, out of a 1.02 billion population, 25% (253 million) belong to the age group of 5-14 year (Census of India, 2001). An estimate was made by the Department of Education, GOI in 1999 for the additional requirement in public expenditure on education for making Elementary Education a Fundamental Right in India by the year 2001. It has been reported that there are 377.53 lakh children in the primary age group (6-11) and 303.45 lakh are in the upper primary age group (11-14) who are still uncovered by the schooling system. Some estimates, made by individual researchers, indicated clearly that India will require more than 6% of GDP on education for having universal provision of schooling for the children in the age group 5-14 year. Seth (1985) suggests 10% of GDP, Tilak (1994) estimated about 8% of GDP as

educational outlay while Rao (1992) proposed about a quarter of GDP to be allocated on education (cited in Tilak, 2002).

2.3 Sectoral Allocation of Educational Expenditure (1990 - 2004)

Allocating 6% of GDP for educational progress is a well accepted norm to analyze government's intervention into education. But behind this 6% norm, there are issues that need to be addressed. A feasible economic rate of growth along with resources allocated exclusively for the development and expansion of elementary education are prerequisites for the spread of elementary education amongst the masses. In order to capture this particular issue relating to the priority given to elementary education, expenditure on elementary and secondary education as a proportion of total education expenditure and expenditure on elementary education as a proportion of GDP is represented in Table 2.4 for the period commencing 1990-91.

Table-2.4: Expenditure on Elementary Education in India since 1990 (Rs. in crore)

Year	Expenditure on Education by Education & Other Deptts.	Expenditure on Elementary Education	Expenditure on Secondary Education	Share of Elementary Education	Share of Secondary Education	Elementary Education as %age to GDP
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1990-91	19615.85	9076.28	6310.33	46.27	32.17	1.78
1991-92	22393.69	10367.83	7400.56	46.30	33.05	1.76
1992-93	25030.3	11321.5	8574.97	45.23	34.26	1.68
1993-94	28279.69	13071.14	9371.37	46.22	33.14	1.67
1994-95	32606.22	15133.05	10835.33	46.41	33.23	1.65
1995-96	38178.09	18433.93	12530.38	48.28	32.82	1.72
1996-97	43896.48	21543.63	14164	49.08	32.27	1.73
1997-98	48552.14	24083.17	15663.5	49.60	32.26	1.73
1998-99	61578.91	30191.07	20100.97	49.03	32.64	1.89
1999-00	74816.09	34068.78	25447.89	45.54	34.01	1.93
2000-01	82486.88	39274.6	26057.5	47.61	31.59	2.06
2001-02	79865.7	40019.36	25163.47	50.11	31.51	1.91
2002-03	68561.55	41747.26	27498.97	60.89	40.11	1.86
2003-04	73044.93	44349.47	28475.89	60.72	38.98	1.74

Source: column-2 as in Table-2.2, column 3&4 from Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, GOI, 2007, Table: 35, column-5 & 6 calculated

Expenditure on Elementary Education as a percentage of GDP since 1990 has been consistently remaining below 2%. As such during the period there has not been any notable difference on the part of the Government to increase its allocation to elementary education. Expenditure on Elementary Education when taken as percentage to Total Expenditure for all sectors (by comparing column-3 of table-2.4 with column-3 of table 2.2), it is observed that elementary education has not been given much importance inspite of the declaration of Jometin and Dacar conference and of the promises made at the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A study conducted by NCAER in India has calculated the cost of educating the children belonging to the elementary schooling age group and categorically reported to spend about 3.5% of GDP for reaching the goal of UEE (Singh and Sridhar, 2002). In this respect, the actual spending on elementary education has been very low. It has been suggested that the spending on elementary education needs to be doubled to ensure the smooth functioning of the elementary education system.

Intrasectoral allocation of expenditure on education is also an important aspect through which one can evaluate the importance by the government assigned to each sector of education. Analysis of this trend is not very satisfactory. In 1990-91, less than 50 percent (46.1%) of education expenditure had been provided for the elementary education. Since then it has remained more or

less static till 2000-01 (column-5 of Table-2.4). It is only after 2001-02 that an increasing trend is being observed so far as the financing of elementary education is concerned. In the recent period (2003-04), a little over 60 percent of the total expenditure on education has been earmarked for Elementary Education followed by Secondary Education, at 38.98%.

Thus it can be said that, although public expenditure on education in India is not taken to be sufficient for the billion plus population, it is heartening to note that the largest chunk of intra-sectoral allocation is towards elementary education rather than secondary or higher education.

2.3.1 Social Sector Expenditure: The Recent Trend

Universal access, enrolment, retention, achievement, and equity were the five parameters on which the 10FYP laid its main thrust. Among these five parameters, providing access to education is the primary responsibility of the government. According to the VII Educational Survey (2002), 87% of the total habitants (10.71 lakh) were provided with a primary school within a distance of 1 km and 78% (9.61 lakh) were also served by an upper primary school. To provide universal access, a sizeable number of habitants have to be provided with a school. To achieve this goal a substantive amount of financial allocation to elementary education is imperative. Figure 2.3 and 2.4 depict the trends of social expenditure on education in the recent past. A steady increase in total expenditure by the Government (Central and State combined) can be highlighted and it has more than doubled between the year 2001-02 (Rs. 644746 crores) and 2007-08 (Rs. 1355381 crores). A similar trend is also observed in the social sector in the aggregate and education expenditure in particular although the latter has shown a lower rate of growth than the former. Social sector expenditure as percentage of Total Expenditure decreased from 21.4 percent in 2001-02 to 19.3 percent in 2003-04, while recovering in the following years (22.4 per cent in 2007-08 (RE) and 24.1 per cent in 2008-09 (BE)). But, expenditure on education, which stood at 10.6 percent of Total Expenditure in 2001-02, have been remaining around 10 percentage points over the recent years (up to 2008-09 (BE)).

Nevertheless, the Government has been successful in establishing a large number of primary (1.32 lakh primary schools and 56000 Education Guarantee Scheme, EGS and Alternative and Innovative Education, AIE Centres) and upper primary (0.89 lakh) institutions in the recent past and as such access to primary education is very close to achieve the desired goal of universal access (Government of India, 2008). Government estimates show that around 1 (one) lakh habitations still remain to be covered by any primary and upper primary school.

Constitutionally, India is federal in character and as such there is a union budget at the Center along with the budgets prepared by the State Governments at State level. As education sector has been placed at the concurrent list, both the Central and State Government are allocating fund to this sector separately. But the fund allocation by the Central government has not been seen appropriately till the world conference on Education for All held at Jometien in 1990. For instance, in 1995-96 the Centre allocation to elementary education was Rs. 23.72 Crore (81.46 Crore) while it was 3424.60 Crore (2212.41 Crore) by the States (Compendium of Educational Statistics, Table-7.6, NCERT, New Delhi, 2002; figures in the parenthesis represents expenditure on secondary education). Up to the year 1990, this share was too few to be mentioned. During some years (in 1970's) it was even '0' from the end of Centre. This may be due to the fact that at the time of commencement of Indian Constitution, the primary responsibility for elementary education was given to the State Government, while the responsibility of higher and technical education was given to the Central Government. In 1978, after the 42nd Constitutional Amendment, all levels of education were placed under the concurrent list. Thus for the un-fulfillment of constitutional commitment in regard to elementary education in India, both the Central and the State Governments are equally responsible. The pressure on Indian Government by the inter-national dignitaries at this conference compelled to accord a high priority to UEE. Accordingly, it is after 1990-91 that the Centre has been sharing a sizeable amount to elementary sector of education. Yet the actual expenditure by the Centre compare to the States altogether is very marginal. However, it is a matter of ushering fact that the share to elementary education has been increasing steadily in recent years.

Fig-2.3: Recent Trends of Social Sector Expenditure by General Government* (In Rs. crore)

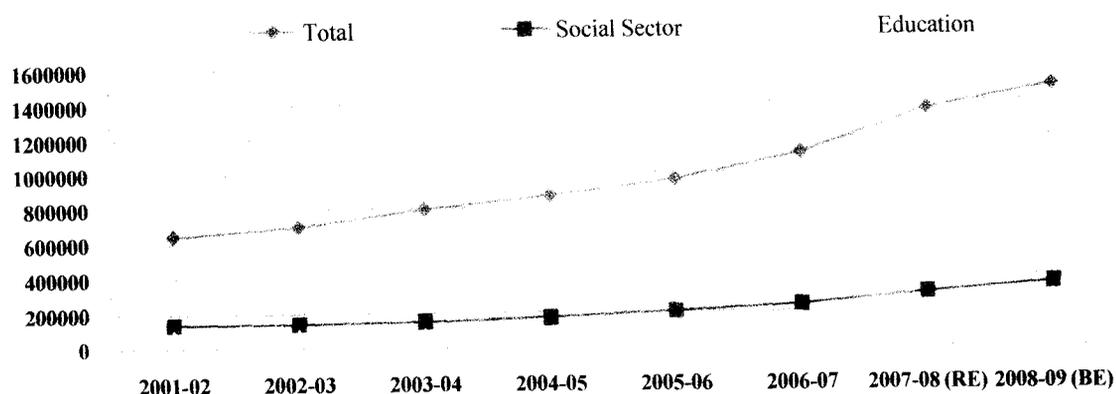
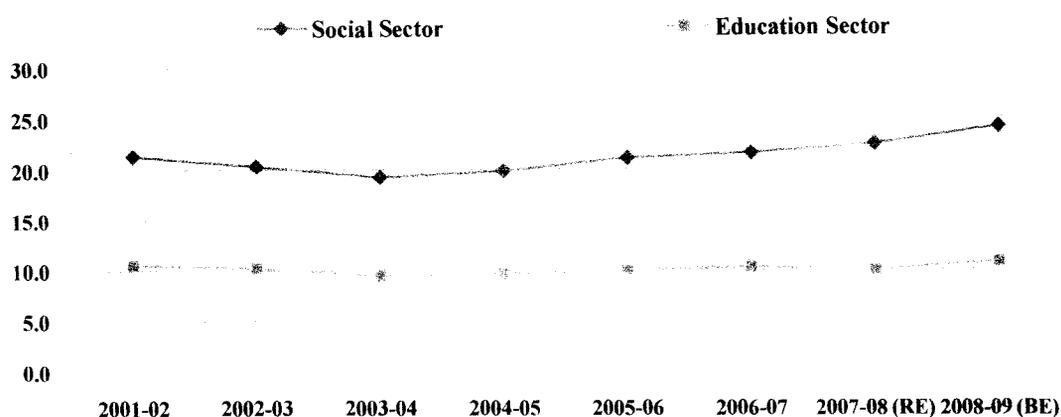


Fig-2.4: Recent Trends of Social Sector Expenditure by General Government* (In % age)



Note: * Central and State Government combined; 2006-7 Revised Expenditure and 2007-08 Budget Expenditure;
Source: Economic Survey (different years), Ministry of Finance, Government of India: <http://indiabudget.nic.in>

2.3.2 External Funding in Elementary Education

External financial support to the education sector in India has become a significant ingredient in recent times (after 1994). Prior to the introduction of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 1994, the education sector in India had been funded by foreign agencies like Andhra Pradesh Education Programme funded by DFID, UK, Siksha Karmi by Dutch funding, Lok Jumbish with the fund from SIDA, (Sarangapani et al, 2003). These funding were exclusively in the form of 'Aid' and supplemented government funding. But, after 1990, this foreign funding to education sector in India has turned out to be an integral part of the policy of structural adjustment within India's New Economic Policy. The Government of India has been allowing funding in the form of 'loan' and introduced the concept of DPEP as an umbrella under which all the foreign funding programmes have been brought together and eventually channelled to the education sector. In lieu of centralized national planning in education, DPEP aimed at decentralized planning (at district level) to pave entry into primary education and to ensure enrolment of all the out of school children into the educational system. District planning in primary education is an important dimension of the programme, but what is central to the theme is that there will not be any direct intervention by the funding agencies into the process of planning and administration. Nevertheless, an unwanted aspect is that any quantitative or qualitative improvement in primary education may

be undertaken only with external assistance. It has been argued that the policy of such foreign aid in the country had been initiated without any serious discussion or debates (Tilak, 2002). Moreover, the DPEP documents clearly specify that at the end of the programme, the recurring liabilities will be the exclusive responsibility of the State government only (Sarangapani et al, 2003). This clearly imposes future financial burden on the government inspite of immediate relief of burden to finance primary education at present.

2.4 Trend in Elementary Schooling in India: 1951-2001

Progress in elementary schooling is not a uni-dimensional process, rather it is the development of a series of indicators associated with it. Broadly, the indicators are of two types - infrastructural indicators or often called the enabling attributes (e.g., number of schools, teachers, type of building, drinking water facility, sanitation facility, etc.), and aspects of educational outcomes or achievement attributes (e.g. enrolment rate, retention rate, dropout rate, etc).

Table-2.5: Pattern of Growth in Elementary Schooling in India Since 1950 (In thousand)

Year	Primary School	Upper Primary School	Primary Enrolment	Upper Primary Enrolment	Teacher at Primary level	Teacher at Upper Primary level
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1950-51	209.7	13.6	19200	3100	538	86
1955-56	278.1	21.7	24600	4800	691	151
1960-61	330.4	49.7	35000	6700	742	345
1965-66	391.1	75.8	50500	10500	944	528
1970-71	408.4	90.6	57000	13300	1060	638
1975-76	454.3	106.6	65600	16000	1248	778
1980-81	494.5	118.6	73800	20700	1363	851
1985-86	528.9	134.8	87400	27100	1496	968
1990-91	560.9	151.5	97400	34000	1616	1073
1991-92	566.7	155.9	100900	35600	1644	1079
1992-93	571.2	158.5	99600	34100	1651	1085
1993-94	570.5	162.8	97000	34100	1623	1124
1994-95	586.8	168.8	105100	36400	1688	1156
1995-96	593.4	174.1	107100	37500	1734	1182
1996-97	603.6	180.3	108200	38100	1756	1200
1997-98	619.2	186	110300	39500	1823	1237
1998-99	629	193.1	111700	40400	1838	1289
1999-00*	641.7	198	113600	42100	1919	1298
2000-01*	638.7	206.3	113800	42800	1896	1326
2001-02*	664	219.6	113900	44800	1928	1468
2002-03*	651.4	245.3	122400	46900	1913	1581
2003-04*	712.2	262.3	128300	48700	2097	1592
2004-05*	767.5	274.7	130800	51200	2161	1589

* Provisional; Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, MHRD

Access to schools by the school-going children can be assessed by the number of schools established by the government. Table 2.5 shows the growth in infrastructural facility in the post-independence era in India. There has been a proliferation of schools during the reference period (1950-2005) with a fourfold increase in the number of primary schools as opposed to upper primary schools by more than 20 times.

However, the growth pattern shows that the increase in upper primary school has been more rapid than primary schools. This has been narrowing the gap in the ratio of upper primary to primary school. The Programme of Action (1992) envisaged an upper primary school/section for every two primary schools/sections, although this official target is yet to be reached.

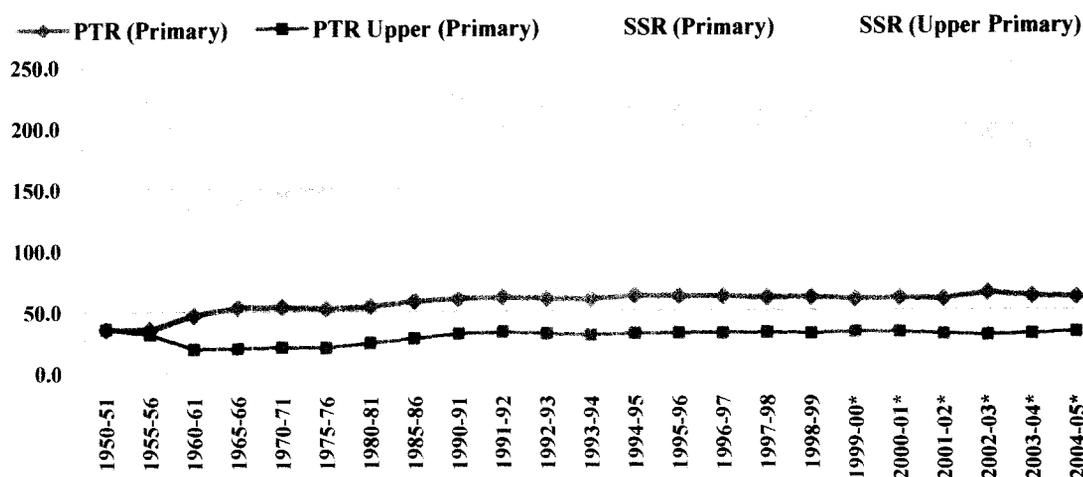
School enrolment since 1950-51 has been increasing steadily except during 1993-95. The growth in enrolment figure appears to be impressive especially after 1999-2000. Enrolment figures, like

the number of institutions, also show that at upper primary level, the increasing trend has been sharper over the specified period. The trend in 'teachers in position' at primary and upper primary levels also reflects a similar trend.

2.4.1 Enabling Attributes of Elementary Education

Apart from this gross development trend, two strands of analysis are commonly undertaken for in-depth analysis. They are firstly the ratio analysis and secondly, the gender analysis. Student per school and student per teacher are two important ratio indicators relating to school education. A high load of students on a school may reduce the opportunity of a student to avail facility from common resources of a school (e.g. library, laboratory, computer access). On the other hand, a high load of student on a teacher may lower the time to be devoted to an individual student. Figure 2.5 has been calculated to depict the teacher-pupil ratio and student-school ratio over the period 1950-51 to 2004-05.

Fig-2.5: Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) and Student School Ratio at Elementary Level in India 1950-51 to 2004-05



* Provisional; Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, MHRD

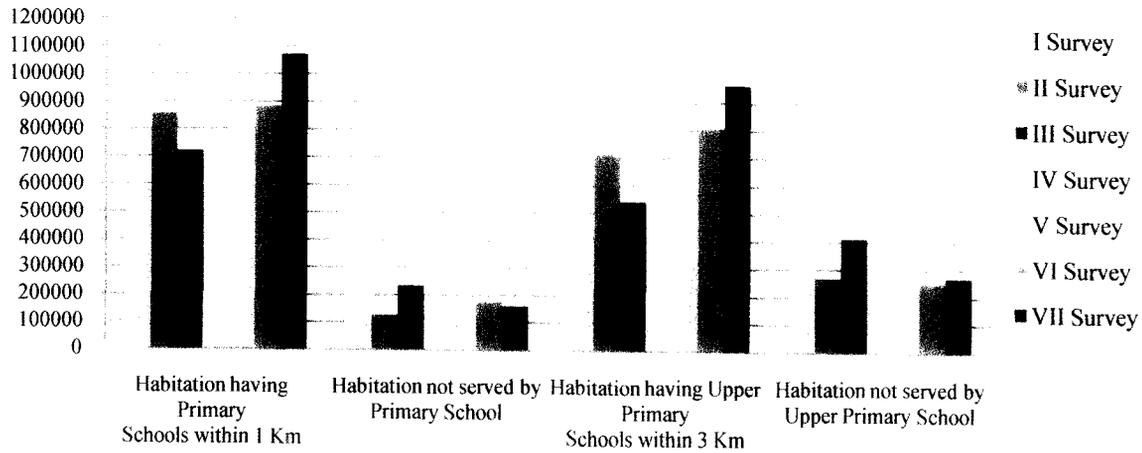
Both the ratios are expected to display a declining trend to imply positive educational outcomes. In other words, if there is an increase in the values of the ratios, it will lead to a negative impact on the indicators of educational outcome such as enrolment ratio, gender parity index, etc. The pupil teacher ratio is an indicator of education quality. It is commonly believed that in a crowded classroom with a high number of pupils per teacher, the quality of education tend to suffer. In spite of the fact that there has been a tremendous growth in gross enrolment figures, in number of institutions and teachers, the pupil teacher ratio has not improved since 1950 as it should have. Starting with a pupil teacher ratio at around 36 in 1950-51, it became 60 in 2004-05 (Figure-2.5). The ratio has been actually consistently increasing since 1950 instead of the much desired declining trend. However a more vivid picture can be traced by drawing the Student classroom ratio which is important in the sense that a class room with a small size (i.e., having fewer numbers of students) is much more teaching-learning friendly than a big size classroom. However, owing to the non-availability of data, year wise trend of this particular ratio indicator is not represented here.

Data from UNESCO (UNESCO, 2008) on the pupil-teacher ratio in primary school show that crowded classrooms are more common in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia than in other parts of the world. The highest ratios in this respect exist in Sub-Saharan Africa (40.7) and Southern Asia (37.8). In contrast, the average pupil-teacher ratio in the developed countries is 13.7. In Western Asia (17.8), the Commonwealth of Independent States (17.9) and in the Oceania (19.8), the average pupil/teacher ratio is below 20. The global average is 24.6 (for the year 2006)

for pupils per teacher in primary school. India has recorded the highest pupil-teacher ratio (64) among all the South-Asian countries. The ratio has also been highest for the upper primary level. The higher pupil-teacher ratio in India as depicted in Figure 2.5 indicates that increase in enrolment is not substituted by sufficient allocation of teachers which increases the ratio consistently. The international data depicts that the area/region shows dismal educational outcomes where the pupil-teacher ratio is high. For example, the UNESCO (2007a) data shows that GER at primary level is found to be lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa (80) followed by Arab States (90) and South and West Asia (94). The other related outcome indicators such as, school life expectancy, adult literacy rate, dropout rate are also very low in those region. It may therefore be said that with such a high pupil teacher ratio at elementary level the UEE within a time frame is still a distant goal.

Access to school cannot be explored through number of schools. Location of schools closer to households is much more important and it is also considered to be an important strategy for achieving the goal of UEE. Kothari Commission recommended the provision of primary school within walking distance from a village. In order to capture the issue, habitation served by schools is commonly used in the literature on education. A habitation has been said to be served by a primary school if a school is located within 1 km of the habitation and by an upper primary school if there is a school within 3 km. (educational surveys conducted by National Council of Educational Research and Training) distance from the habitation. On this basis, Figures 2.6 & 2.7 illustrate the habitations served/unserved by school within a reasonable distance in rural India over the last seven survey periods carried out by the NCERT between 1957 and 2002. So far, 7 such surveys have been conducted by the NCERT and the findings are enumerated below.

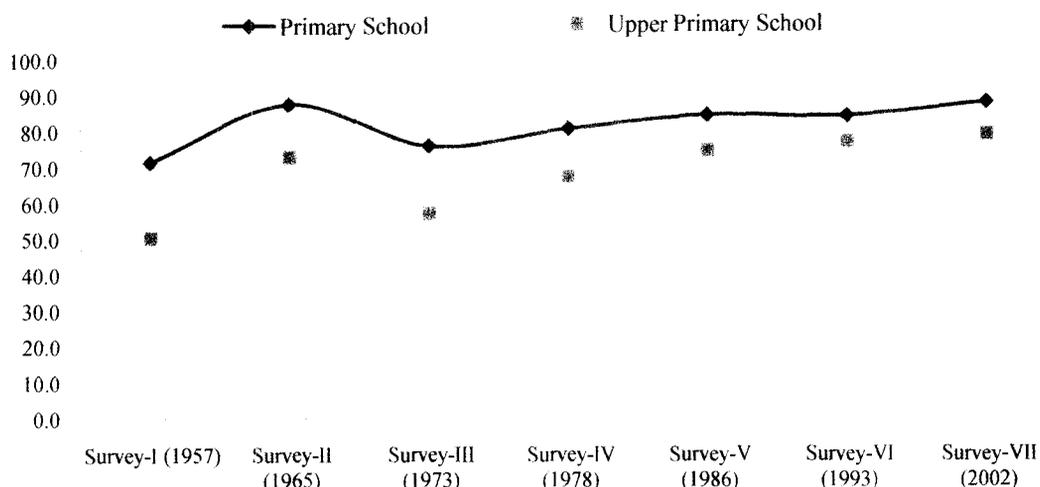
Fig-2.6: Rural Habitation (Total) Served/Unserved By School 1957-2002



Source: National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2002 and 2005

During the period between 1957 to 1965, total number habitations increased from 8,40,033 to 9,82,251 (17% increase) but the number of habitations covered by primary school increased from 5,99,985 to 8,56,816 (43% increase). Proximity of school to the habitation was found to be comparatively better during the survey period II when more than 87% of the rural habitation was served by at least one primary school and 73% by an upper primary school (Fig-2.7). Although during the period Survey II and III (1965-73) there has been a considerable decline in coverage, it has been consistently increasing since 1973. Nevertheless, till the Seventh All India Educational Survey (2002), 13% of the rural habitation (1.61 lakh) were still uncovered by any primary school while nearly 22% (2.7 lakh) by upper primary school.

Fig-2.7: Rural Habitation (in %) Served by School 1957-2002



Source: National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2002 and 2005.

Thus a fourfold leap in the number of primary schools or upper primary schools by more than 20 times over the period 1950-51 to 2004-05, there still is no room for complacency until the schools are located within the reasonable distance norm for the rural households. The encouraging aspect is that the coverage has been steadily increasing since 1973 and one can expect that more rural households will be brought into its fold by the time the VIII survey report is presented.

2.4.2 Gender Disparity in Elementary Education: Enrolment, Dropout Rates and GER

Regarding the gender aspect in education, an area of concern for India is the dearth of female teachers in schools. As mentioned earlier, employing female teachers can enhance the enrolment possibilities in schools, which in turn has a positive impact on the educational outcomes like high literacy rates and enrolment rates etc. (Bhatty, 1998; Debi, 2001; Pratchi Education Report, 2002; Reddy and Rao, 2003; Thind and Jaswal, 2004). Sri Lanka with 79 percent of female teachers at primary level in 2005 exhibits 89 percent adult female literacy rate (15 years and above) in 2001, China with 55% of female teachers exhibits 87% adult female literacy rate, Islamic Republic of Iran with 61% exhibits 77% of adult females as literate. On the other hand, India has the proportionate share of female teacher at primary education only 34% (in 2005, UNESCO estimation) and the female literacy rate (adult) for the year 2001 was recorded only at 41 percent level (UNESCO, 2007, Table-3 & 15). Proportion of female teachers, especially at primary level, around the world, is higher compared to the Indian average. The world average in this respect was 62 (UNESCO, 2007, Table-3.), while it was 84% for North American and Central Asian countries, 81% for Central and Eastern European countries. The proportion for India was calculated by the UNESCO at only 44% which was even lower than the average of Sub-Saharan African countries (45%).

Against this world perspective, the year-wise trend in the proportion of female teachers to total teachers is shown in Table 2.6. With an initial strength of only 15%, the share of female teachers at both primary and upper primary level increased to near 40% over the period 1950-51 - 2004-05 (Table-2.6).

Gender disparity in enrolment is calculated on the basis of proportion of girls' enrolment to total enrolment vis-à-vis boys. Between 1950 and 1980 enrolment of girls in India was below 40 percent and it has been increasing since then although it is lagging behind boys' enrolment. At upper primary level, it was also below 40% till 1996-97 but increased to 44.4% by the year 2004-05. Compared to this, the world average of girls share in primary enrolment was more 47% in all the regions including Sub-Saharan African and Arabian countries (UNESCO, 2007).

Table- 2.6: Trend in Elementary Education by Gender

Year	%age of Girls Enrolment at Primary	%age of Girls Enrolment at Upper Primary	%age of Female Teacher at Primary	%age of Female Teacher at Upper Primary
1950-51	28.1	16.1	15.2	15.1
1955-56	30.5	20.8	16.9	12.6
1960-61	32.6	23.9	17.1	24.1
1965-66	36.2	26.7	19.1	26.3
1970-71	37.4	29.3	21.2	27.4
1975-76	38.1	31.3	22.7	28.8
1980-81	38.6	32.9	25.1	29.7
1985-86	40.3	35.6	26.9	31.5
1990-91	41.5	36.7	29.3	33.2
1991-92	41.9	38.2	29.9	33.8
1992-93	42.6	38.8	31.1	34.7
1993-94	42.7	39.1	31.6	36.1
1994-95	42.9	39.3	31.5	35.5
1995-96	43.1	39.5	32.2	35.9
1996-97	43.2	39.9	32.2	35.9
1997-98	43.5	40.3	32.7	35.9
1998-99	43.9	40.8	32.9	36.3
1999-00*	43.6	40.4	35.6	36.1
2000-01*	43.7	40.9	35.6	38.2
2001-02*	44.1	41.8	37.1	37.3
2002-03*	46.8	43.9	39	40.8
2003-04*	46.7	44	39.9	40.7
2004-05*	46.7	44.4	39	37.6

* Provisional; Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, MHRD

The goal of universal primary education and gender parity at all levels of education by 2015 was the main thrust area endorsed at the United Nation's Millennium Development goal (MDG). Latter on, meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000, the World Education Forum committed to the attainment of the six goals. It has categorically stated in both the forum to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality (UNESCO, 2000, United Nation, 2007). In 2005, 94 girls started Grade 1 for every 100 boys, according to the global average. Overall, gender disparities in access have improved since 1999, especially in South and West Asia (from 83 in 1999 to 92 girls per 100 boys in 2005). The number of girls enrolment compare to the enrolment of boys in India is presented in Table-2.7 below.

The goal of eliminating gender disparities in both primary and secondary education by 2005 had already been missed in most of the regions. International data (UNESCO, 2007a) shows that out of 181 countries, Only 59 countries, had achieved the gender parity goal. The report adds that gender disparities persist in many countries, particularly at the upper levels.

In India, considerable increase in the enrolment of girls has been observed since 1950-51 both at elementary (primary and upper primary) and secondary level of education (Table-2.7). Still, the enrolment figure shows that there are 88 girls enrolled at primary level (grade- I to V), 80 at upper primary level and 71 at secondary level as against 100 boys enrolled at these level of education. Thus, it seems that the Millennium Development goal -2 or the EFA goal-5 will become very tuff for India. Actually, India had already missed the first part of this goal (eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005) and without having specific policy measures the second part of the same (achieving gender equality in education by 2015) will be missed too.

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Table-2.7: Number of Girls Enrolment per Hundred Boys Enrolled: 1950-51 to 2004-05

Year	Primary (I-V)	Upper Primary (VI-VIII)	Secondary (IX-X)
1950-51	39	18	16
1960-61	48	32	23
1970-71	60	41	35
1980-81	63	49	44
1990-91	71	58	50
1991-92	72	62	52
1992-93	72	61	51
1993-94	76	66	57
1994-95	75	65	57
1995-96	76	65	57
1996-97	76	66	58
1997-98	77	67	58
1998-99	78	69	62
1999-00*	77	68	65
2000-01*	78	69	63
2001-02*	79	72	65
2002-03*	88	78	70
2003-04*	88	79	70
2004-05*	88	80	71

* Provisional; Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, MHRD

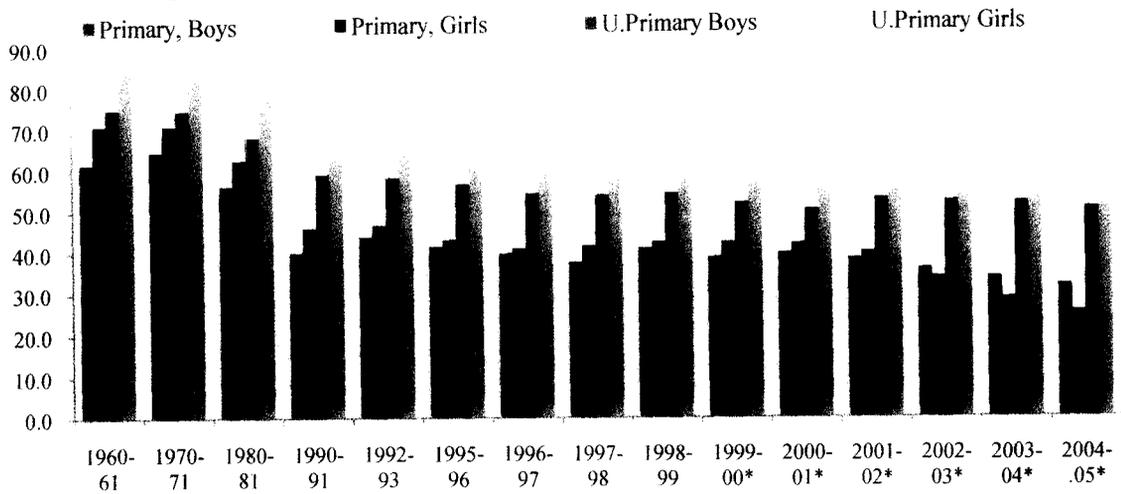
Based on enrolment data, about 72 million children of primary school age were not in school in 2005 of which 57 were girls. In sub-Saharan Africa, 54% of out-of-school children were girls compared with South and West Asia at 66% and the Arab States at 60% (UNESCO, 2008b). Universal retention of children at school up to eight years of elementary education is necessary for achieving UEE. To reach this goal within the time frame, it is imperative that the dropout rate at this stage is declining and is approaching the much desired zero level. But in reality, along with the problem of universal enrolment, India is faced with still another major problem which is of the high dropout rate associated with the school education system. Figure 2.8 illustrates the trend in dropout rate at primary and upper primary levels of education in India between 1960-61 and 2004-05. The bar diagram reflects firstly, that the rate of dropout tends to be higher for higher levels of education. Secondly, it is also observed that the girls register higher dropout rates in school than the boys at both primary and upper primary stages. Thirdly, the dropout rate has been falling steadily over the years. Fourthly, although there are gender disadvantages in this respect, the gap of dropout rates between the boys and girls is narrowing in primary as well as upper primary level. Finally, it is a matter of significance that since 2002-03, the gender gap in dropouts has narrowed at primary stages and even has become equal to the boys at upper primary level. This implies that dropout rates amongst the girls have been declining faster than the boys.

Inspite of the promising trends in dropout rates, even in 2004-05, half of the children at upper primary stage (50.84%), and 29.00% at primary stage dropped out of school before completion (Government of India, 2007). With such a high rate of dropout, it naturally raises the question of achieving the UEE within a time frame as set out in the MDGs.

Gross enrolment ratio (GER) is another indicator of school education system by which the extent of children attending school can be captured. Global primary school enrolment rose from 647 million to 688 million (6.4%) between 1999 and 2005, with increases especially marked in sub-Saharan Africa (by 29 million, 36%), and South and West Asia (35 million, 22%). The GER at primary level increased from 80 to 97 in sub-Saharan Africa and in South and West Asia from 94 to 113 between 1999 and 2005 (UNESCO, 2008b). Data from India shows that between the period (1999 and 2005), primary enrolment rose from 111.7 million to 130.8 million thereby showing a

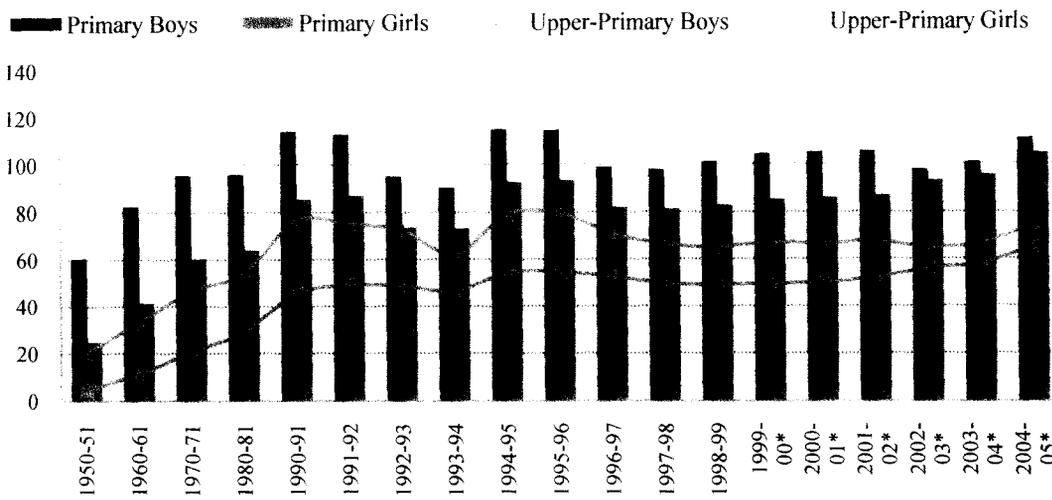
17% increase in all (Table-2.5). This is comparatively lower than the regional average (22%). The year-wise trend in the ratio by gender and levels of school education is shown in Figure 2.9.

Fig-2.8: Drop-Out Rates at Elementary Stages (1960-61 to 2004-05)



* Provisional; Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, MHRD.

Fig-2.9: Gross Enrolment Ratio, 1950-51 to 2004-05



* Provisional; Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, MHRD

Setting off with a very poor education base in 1950-51 (GER around 61% at primary and at upper primary only 19.2), the trend in enrolment of the children into schools had been increasing steadily till the year 1990-91. It is after 1991 (globalisation period in this country) that a fall in the ratio is being observed. It was after 1996-97, the ratio has been seen to be an increasing trend. However, between the period 1999 and 2005, the GER at primary level rose from 92.8 to 107.8 which was also to be considerably lower than its regional increase. Moreover, the trend in GER shows a sharp gap between primary and upper primary levels of education as also between U boys and girls. The important point of the trend of GER is that the gap between the GER of boys and girls is steadily narrowing, similar to the dropout rates.

2.5 Pattern of Literacy Development in India

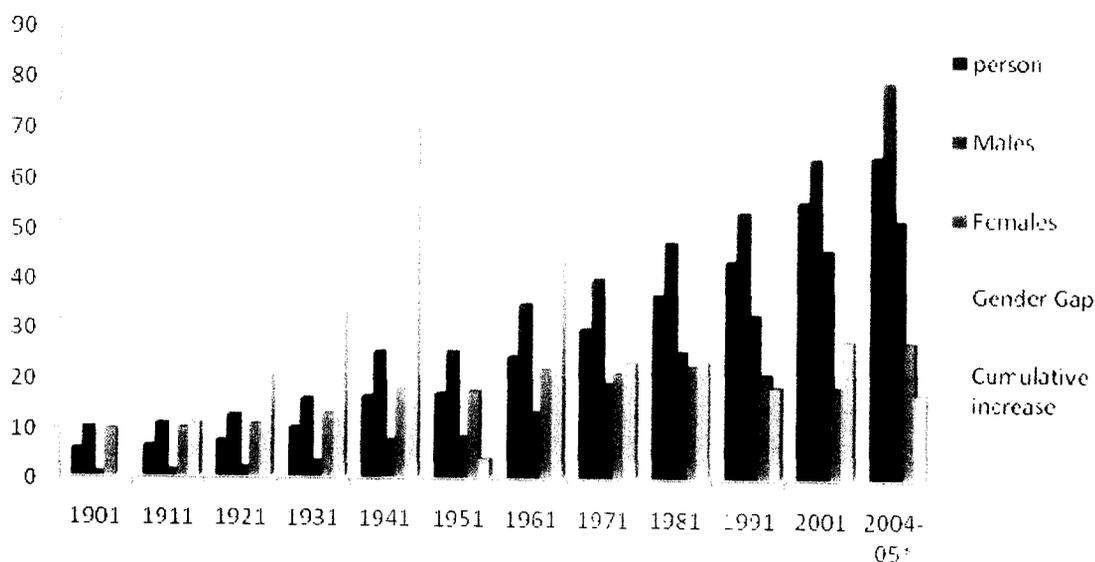
Literacy can be viewed as a gateway that enables a person to learn new skills for both the classroom and the workplace, while assuming their rights and responsibilities in society. It is an established fact that literate parents are more likely to keep their children healthy and send their children to school. It is also observed that literate people are better able to access other education

and employment opportunities and, collectively, literate societies are better geared to meet development challenges. Achieving widespread literacy can only happen in the context of building literate societies that encourage individuals to acquire and use their literacy skills. It is for these reasons, many would say that literacy is not only an important social variable, rather it is a human right (UNESCO, 2008c). The potentiality of a society to operate with the problems such as discrimination, poor health, social exclusion and powerlessness mostly depends upon the basic literacy skill that is equipped with a particular society. It is thus, rightly remarked, "Literacy is at the heart of the social, cultural, economic and political wellbeing of individuals, communities, societies and nations, indeed of the world" [Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP); www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/pdf/LAMP/LAMP_EN_2005.pdf].

Globally, literacy rate (census figures) increased from 56% in 1950 to 70% in 1980, then to 75% in 1990 and to 82% in 2000- 2004 (UNESCO, 2008c). Worldwide, the adult literacy rate increased at a faster pace in the 1970s than in the subsequent decades. Literacy rates have been increased by more than 10% between 1990 and 2000 in the regions of sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia, and the Arab States. The international data in this report also shows that despite these substantial increases and because populations have grown rapidly, the overall numbers and distributions of illiterates have hardly changed in these regions. It reiterated the fact that the problem of illiteracy is most significant in the most populous countries like Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan (the E9 countries).

'Literate' is an English word denoting a meaning "familiar with literature" or, more generally, "well educated, learned". It is since the late 19th Century that the word has been referred to as the ability to read and write text while maintaining its broader meaning of being 'knowledgeable or educated in a particular field or fields' (UNESCO, 2008c). France adopted the term 'littérisme' in August 2005 to represent "the ability to read and understand a simple text, and to use and transmit written information of everyday life" (OCED, 1997; Limage, 2005). In India, Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner is the official source providing data on literacy rate, according to which, a person is considered literate if he or she can read and write with understanding, in any language. However, a person who can merely read, but cannot write, is not recorded as literate in census.

Fig-2.10: Growth of Literacy (Crude) Rates in India:1901 to 2004-05



Source: Census of India, 2001; NSSO, 2008

In order to trace the trend of one hundred years of progress in literacy, the crude literacy rate³ has been taken into account in Figure 2.10. In addition to literacy rates of male, female and person, the gender gap along with cumulative increase in decadal literacy rate is represented separately by the

five coloured bars for the decades beginning 1901. A cursory look at the bar diagram delineates some interesting trends in the literacy data, of which, it is important to note that every census year has experienced a jump in literacy rate compared to the earlier census and it is applicable to both males and females till the last census 2001. This aspect is also supported by the recent NSSO (2008) Report. This increase is true in absolute terms. There are still other qualifying characteristics of the literacy data which is explored below.

The gender gap in literacy rate is a common indicator to measure the gender disadvantage in literacy achievement. It is seen from the diagram that the gap instead of being narrowed down, the gap has been, by and large, increasing since 1901. But this interpretation seems to be confusing as because a significant increase in literacy rate has been observed over the last 100 years. Gender aspect in literacy rate is better understood by some indices proposed by different researchers (Naik, J. P., 1971; Tilak JBG, 1983, Kudu et al, 1986). The present study adopts the methodology of Kundu et al [i.e., (Male-Female)/Total x 100] to probe into the aspects of gender disparity in education. These estimates are represented as decade-wise indices in Figure 2.11. A continuous decreasing trend has been observed in the values of the index for different decades. It thus makes sense that an increase in female literacy cannot be overshadowed by a similar or a larger increase in male literacy rate if a simple gap is calculated. The decade 1961-71 experienced the increase in male literacy that was higher than female literacy rate. Significantly during the last three decades, increase in female literacy (5.74%, 7.35% and 12.98% respectively) has got an edge over the male literacy rate (5.01%, 5.85% and 10.5% respectively). This clearly suggests that the country is on an optimistic path of narrowing down the gender gap in literacy rate in the near future.

In order to see the decadal achievement in literacy rate, a cumulative increase⁴ in literacy rate over the past decade has been calculated and illustrated in the same figure. It is seen that the decade 1931-1941 is the decade when increase in literacy rate was the highest (an increase of 69.5% in 1941 over 1931). The following decade (1941-51) (i.e. the critical years of independence) recorded the lowest literacy achievement so far. Starting from 1941 to 1991 the decadal cumulative increase actually has been declining substantially. It may be noted here that during this period, most of the world's contemporary economies like China, Vietnam, USSR, Cuba, Srilanka, Indonesia etc. had succeeded in achieving higher literacy rates than India (Bolashetty and Girija, 2004). It is only in the last decade 1991-2001, India's performance appears to have changed drastically with a substantial increase in literacy rate in 2001. However, a recent sample based study (NSSO, 2008) again shows a considerable decrease (from 27.2% between 1991-01 to 16.7% to between 2001-2005). One has to watch out for the next Census for further development in literacy achievement.

Literacy development can be further disaggregated by region of which the focus on rural-urban disparity in literacy rates is important. The pattern in this regard is portrayed in Figure 2.11 and 2.12.

The literacy rate⁵ in general for person, male and female at rural and urban areas in the country has been increasing over the decades. The rural-urban gap in literacy rate is evident for the decades under consideration and literacy rates for all categories are lower in the rural areas than the urban areas. However, the gap between the literacy rates for males and females has been narrowing in both rural and urban areas since 1951. Rural-urban disparity in literacy rates is at its minimum (21.1%) over the last decade (1991-2001), with rural female literacy registering the highest increase. If one considers the literacy rate for the urban areas, it is seen that the increasing trend in literacy rate (person, male and female) is accompanied by the diminishing trend in gender disparity. This scenario is not observed in the rural areas till 1981. It is only after 1981 that the gender gap in literacy in the rural areas has been narrowing down along with increases in literacy rates. The index of gender disparity for both rural and urban areas, however, has been decreasing over the last six censuses. But the index has been remaining much higher in the rural areas compared to its urban counterpart. Thus, in order to achieve progress in literacy, it is important that equity is maintained in terms of gender and an equitable access in both rural and urban areas.

An observation that is favourable for rural India is that the cumulative increase in literacy rate over the last five decades has been consistently higher than the cumulative increase in literacy urban

India. Till 1971-81, it was the urban literacy rate that has grown faster than the rural literacy rate. But over the last two decades (1981-91 and 1991-01) the scenario has changed with rural literacy increasing at a faster rate, e.g. in the last decade, the rate of increase in rural literacy is recorded at 14.01 percentage points which is more than double compared to the urban rate (6.82 percent). This is a positive sign in bridging the rural-urban gap in literacy achievement throughout the country. However, it must be noted that the rural literacy rates have been very low in the earlier decades and hence even a small increase in the number of literates will register as a high growth rate in literacy. Nevertheless, the Census of India 2001, which is the fourteenth census in the continuous series from 1872 and the 6th since independence, reveals that there are as many as 560,687,797 persons (64.8 %) in the country belonging to the age group 7 years and above who are literate. It shows a gap of 21.6 percentage points between the sexes at the national level.

Fig-2.11: Regional Aspect of Literacy Development

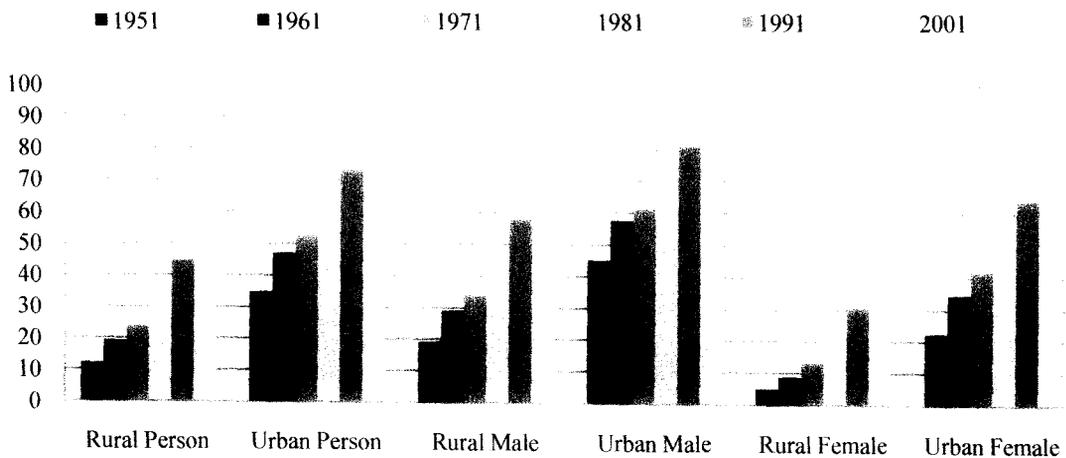
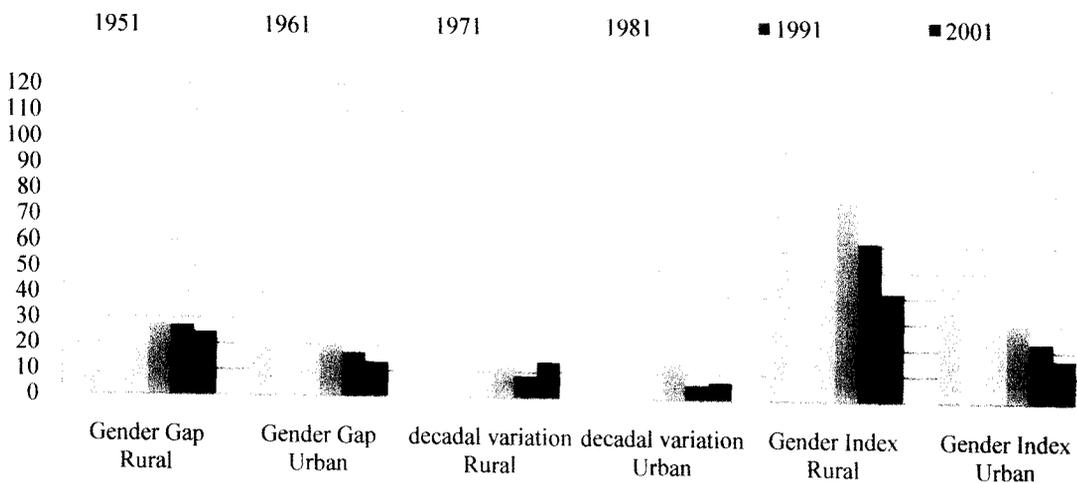


Fig-2.12: Variation and Gap in Literacy Rate



Source: Census of India (Various Years)

2.6 Recent Issues and Policies towards Educational Development in India

2.6.1 Key Areas of Concern

The goal of achieving universal primary education (UPE) has been on the international agenda since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirmed in 1948 that, elementary education is to

be made free and compulsory for all children in all countries. This objective was restated subsequently on many occasions, by international treaties and in United Nations conference declarations. Such statements are found in the declarations that emerged from a series of United Nations regional conferences on education in the early 1960s, in the treaties that formed the International Bill of Human Rights in the 1970s, in the World Declaration on Education for All adopted at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, 1990 and in the Millennium Declaration and the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000. The last two reaffirmed the commitment to achieve universal provision and access to primary schooling by 2015. The goals adopted regarding Education for All at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 were to -

1. Expand and improve early childhood care and education;
2. Provide free and compulsory universal primary education by 2015;
3. Provide equitable access to learning and life-skills programs;
4. Achieve a 50% improvement in adult literacy rates;
5. Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and at all levels by 2015.
6. Improve all aspects of the quality of education.

The second Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of achieving universal primary education is to - 'Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling'. The third MDG of promoting gender equality and to empower women is to - 'Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015'. This is an integral part of Education for All goal as set out by the UN member countries across the world. These two Millennium Development Goals are time-bound and quantified targets for addressing the basic educational needs of the world's children. These are the critical issues related to basic education and literacy that, the countries of the world have to achieve. Although a substantial increase in primary enrolment is evident in the recent period, especially after the Dakar Declaration, yet it is apprehended/projected that in line with the current trends, fifty-eight out of eighty-six countries that have not yet reached universal primary enrolment will not achieve it by 2015. One third of all the countries in the world missed the goal of achieving gender parity in primary education by 2005. Two thirds of all countries missed the goal of gender parity in secondary education. According to projections of UNESCO (2007a) more than 90 countries will not achieve gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2015 (UNESCO, 2007a). The report has also projected that there are still 101 countries far from achieving 'universal literacy', of which 72 will not succeed in halving their adult illiteracy rates by 2015. The EFA Development Index as prepared by UNESCO shows that out of 129 countries, 51 have achieved or are close to achieving the four most quantifiable EFA goals, 53 are in an intermediate position and 25 are far from achieving EFA as a whole (UNESCO, 2007a). It is projected that the UPE goal ($NER \geq 97$) is already achieved in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka out of nine South and West Asian countries, while, India has been moving towards the goal, with steady progress (UNESCO, 2008). It is expected that the country have a high chance of achieving the goal by 2015.

As discussed earlier, India is also burdened with missing targets in elementary education. Faced with the international targets and commitments, it is necessary to review the policies adopted by the Indian government to address the educational issues and to assess the progress achieved so far. The present section thus takes a close look at the matter to identify the predisposing factors affecting education at a disaggregated level.

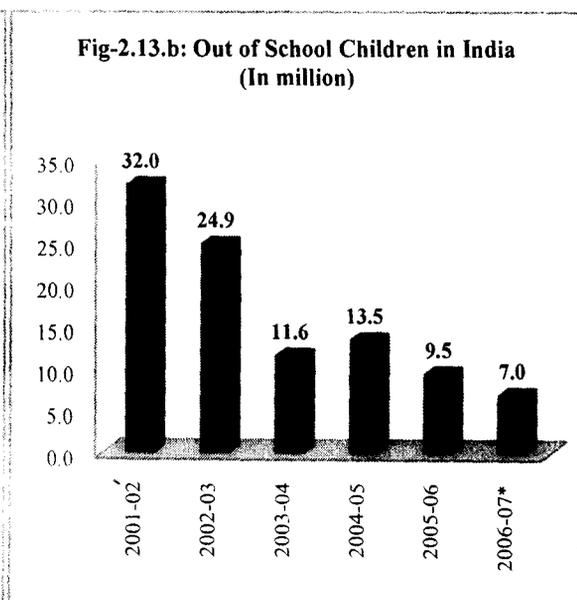
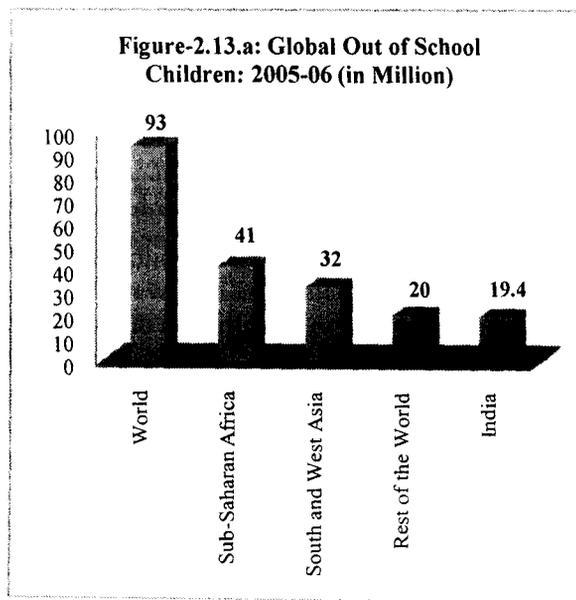
2.6.2 Policy Initiatives

Before discussing the measures taken by the government to promote the universalisation of education, it is important to delve into economic scenario in India. India has been experiencing

considerable economic growth over the past decade. The growth rate of the economy, which was around only 1% per annum from 1900 to 1950, rose to 3.5% through the 1950s and 1960s. Since the early seventies, the economic growth rate suddenly picked up and since 1993, the economy was growing at a faster rate. Since 2005, the rate of growth of the economy reached an all-time high at 9% (Basu, 2007). This has largely been sustained by strong agricultural growth, a rapidly expanding service sector (Chanda, 2007; Basu and Maertens, 2007) and with a spurt in export-based and other manufacturing activities (World Bank, 2004). This rapid economic growth has led to significant declines in poverty rates (Chen and Ravallion 2004; Bajpai, Sachs, and Volavka, 2004). Beyond such a growth, India has still been facing some challenges towards achieving the MDGs. Important among them are high rates of under nutrition, large numbers of children out of school, poor health indicators, and wide disparities in social and economic indicators, particularly for women, girls, and members of low-caste and tribal population (UNDP, 2005).

A recent estimate of UNICEF (2007) based on household surveys reveals that the number of children of primary school age who are out of school⁶ has declined markedly from 115 million in 2002 to 93 million in 2005–2006. Of these children, 48 million were girls and 45 million boys (UNICEF, 2007). Region-wise, 41 million lived in Sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the world's lowest primary school enrollment rates, 32 million in South Asia with a substantial number belonging to (19.4 million) India, the country with the world's largest population of children not in school (Fig-2.13.a). One in six children of secondary school age attends primary school because they started school late or had to repeat grades. However, a very recent Indian estimate gives some more promising trend. Especially after SSA interventions, the number of out-of-school children have been brought down from 32 million in 2001–02 to 7.0 million in 2006–07 (Fig-2.13.b). There were as many as 48 districts in 10 States, each of which accounted for over 50,000 out-of-school children in 2001-02. The number of such districts declined to 29 in 2005–06.

National policy intervention and initiatives so far adopted in India since 1990 shows government's positive viewpoint in achieving the targets of MDGs and EFA goals as set out internationally. Some of the recent policies in core human development areas are – Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Total Literacy Campaign of the National Literacy Mission, 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments providing reservation for women, commitment for women's empowerment in the national Common Minimum Programme, National Rural Health Mission, Total Sanitation Campaign, Bharat Nirman, etc. With these policy measures, it is expected that the government of India is stepping onto the correct path towards achieving the goals by 2015, as internationally proclaimed. For achieving the goal of basic education and literacy, some specific policy measures has been adopted.



Source: UNICEF, 2007

Source: Government of India, 2008; * up to July 2006

Enhanced financial provision for elementary education is one of the significant steps towards achieving the MDGs. A non-lapsable fund in the name of Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh has been approved by the cabinet and it is being developed and maintained by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Elementary Education and Literacy. The fund for the purpose is being procured from the tax collected as an Educational Cess imposed through the Finance (No.2) Act, 2004 on all central taxes. An amount of Rs. 8746 crores have been initially transferred to the Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh as per provision of Union Budget 2006-07 out of which Rs. 5831 crores for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rs. 2915 crores for Mid-Day Meal Scheme respectively (Government of India, 2008).

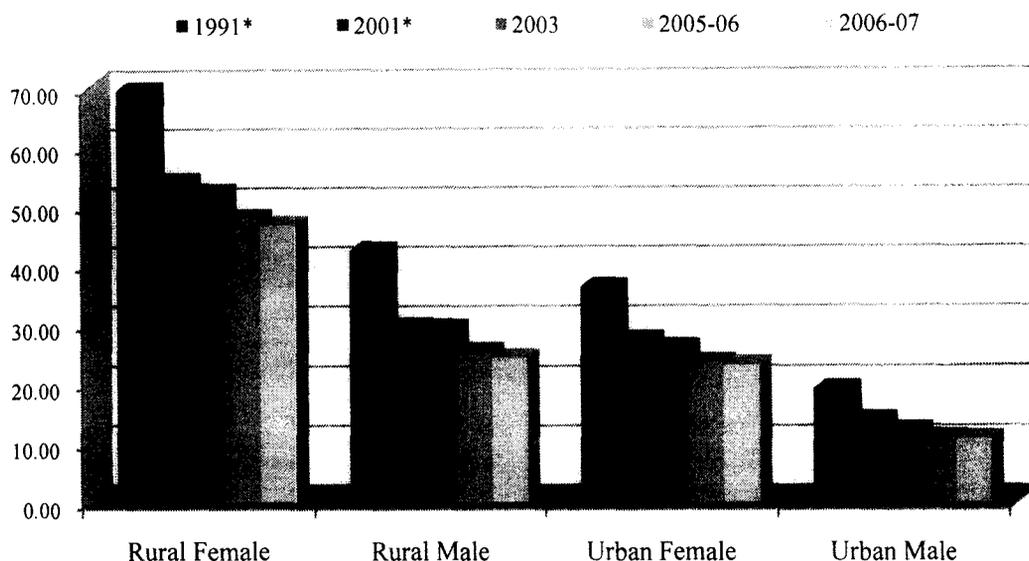
Keeping in view the objective of improving the nutritional status of children and encouraging the poor and disadvantaged children, to attend school more regularly, and help them concentrate on classroom activities, the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on 15th August 1995 (Government of India, 2008). At the time of its launching in 1995, it covered 2408 blocks in the country. In October 2007, the scheme has been further revised to cover children in upper primary (classes VI to VIII) initially in 3479 Educationally Backwards Blocks (EBBs) and subsequently it is targeted to cover all areas across the country from 2008-09. Some recent survey based studies have found the practicability of the Scheme. The scheme has been found to be much more effective in enrolling the girl children and children of the backward class families.

Under the coordination of SSA, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) Scheme is an important central initiative for the girl students at elementary level, belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minorities sections of society in difficult areas. The blocks with a female literacy rate (2001) below the national average along with a high gender disparity (more than national average) are identified as educationally backward blocks and the scheme envisages the setting up of residential schools in these areas. Presently, there are as many as 1564 KGBVs which are operational (as on 30.9.2007) as against 2180 KGBVs sanctioned in 25 States. These schools in aggregate having an enrolment figure of 1.10 lakh girls belonging to the SC/ST and other disadvantaged groups (Government of India, 2008). The fund allocation to this scheme increased to Rs.68929.59 lakh in the year 2007-08. Along with these, the 83rd Amendment of Indian Constitution is a milestone in ensuring one of the basic needs of children so far the government resolution is apprehended. Having taken such new policies, a positive impact is being observed in the indicators responsible for progress of elementary education in the country. The outcome bears reference to the research questions under study which is elaborated below.

A substantial increase in the literacy rate since 1991 among the 7+ population is noteworthy. The Tenth FYP had set a target of achieving a sustainable threshold level of 75% literacy by 2007 and during the Eleventh FYP (2007-12), it is targeted to achieve 80% literacy rate and reduce gender gap in literacy to 10% (Government of India, 2008). In respect of this threshold level of literacy rate (75%), it is seen that the Indian males both from rural and urban areas have crossed the same (Fig-2.14).

The urban females have crossed the same after 2003. Special attention and intervention is required in the rural areas where a little less than 50% of the rural females are still illiterate. After the implementation of SSA, the intervention of this scheme has brought down the number of out-of-school children from 320 lakh (32 million) million in 2001-02 to 70 lakh (7.0 million) in 2006-07 (Government of India, 2008). Along with this, the dropout rate at elementary level has come down from 68.3% in 1999-00 to 61.92% in 2004-05. The allocation of funds for elementary education increased from Rs. 39274.6 crores in 2000-01 to Rs. 44349.47 crores in 2003-04. Intra-sectoral share in educational expenditure shows that much attention has been paid on elementary education. The share, in this respect, on elementary education has been increased from 47.61% in 2000-01 to 60.72% in 2003-04 (Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, MHRD). As such, the number of Institution at elementary level grows from 8.5 lakh in 2000-01 to 10.6 lakh in 2005-06 (a 25% increase) and enrolment figure rose from 15.7 crores to 18.4 crores (a 17% increase) at elementary level in the same period. This indicates a further decrease in the number of out of school children in the near future.

Figure-2.14: Percentage of Illiterate Person aged 7 Years and above



Source: NSSO, 2006; 517,* Census 2001

In spite of such a development in the field of literacy achievement and elementary education, the country still has 26 per cent of its rural households and about 8 per cent those in the urban areas, wherein the 15+ population cannot read and write a simple message with understanding (NSSO, 2006). Female literacy is much more important within a household to make the children enrolled in school. Based on a household survey conducted during July, 2004 to June, 2005 it is found that 50 per cent of the rural households and 19.5 per cent of the urban had no literate female members of age 15+ years (NSSO, 2006). It is also observed that the proportion of non-literates was found to be the highest in the bottom monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE) class (Rs. 335 –395) and it decreased gradually as the MPCE increased. Still there are 50 percent of people in the age group 5-29 years, who were not currently attending educational institutions (NSSO, 2006).

In 1950, the target to achieve universal elementary education within 10 years was assumed to be an adequate time-period to reach the goal. After 50 long years, India's commitment at the international forum once again places her at a critical juncture although there is substantive ground to believe that the two education-related goals of MDGs could be accomplished by 2015. With the change in the perspective, the spread of education could be expedited. Firstly, the demographic change that had occurred over the past decade and more - as reflected in the Census - is quite reassuring. The rate of growth of population per annum between the years 1983-84 to 1993-94 was 2.11%. the same is decreased to 1.98% between the years 1993-94 and 1999-00, 1.69% between the years 1999-00 and 2004-05 and finally more decreasing trend between the years 2004-05 to 2008-09 at only 11.49% per annum (Economic Survey, GOI, different years). The second major supportive factor is the current state of the Indian economy. The economy has been experiencing a substantially high rate of growth in the recent years to enable the planners to reallocate more funds to the education sector. A nine percent rate of growth of GDP at factor cost at 1999-2000 prices has been observed in the financial year 2007-08 (GOI, 2008-09). A series of measures to ensure mass participation in the process of educational development have been undertaken with the launching of SSA after 2001. People's participation i.e., those who seek education as well as those who seek to support educational activities, has grown by enormous proportions, indicating that India is not far behind in achieving UEE and 75% of the threshold level of adult literacy in the near future.

2.7 Concluding Observations

The main objective of this chapter, as stated earlier, is to identify the critical issues relating to literacy and school education in the country that need immediate intervention. For this, it was necessary to look into the history of Indian educational process along with the development of literacy and elementary education in the country. Attention has been drawn towards the various indicators that enumerate educational outcomes along with the enabling infrastructural factors related to the process. The available evidences bring to light the following issues among others –

- It is observed from the history of development of education that universalisation of primary education was advocated even under British rule and a constitutional commitment was also done in free India. But the very basic need of our children regarding their education has still been remaining as an illusive one and appeared as a distant goal. It also appears that time and again it was decided to achieve the goal from the end of government. But whatever time limit has been targeted has proved itself to be unrealistic. Even the target year 2010 of SSA by which it is being tried to universalise eight years of schooling does not appear to be realistic one. We have to look forward up to the international target year of 2015 for the goal.
- Financial assistance to education was a subject of neglect both in British and post independent era and still remains the same. Per capita spending on education in India is significantly low even when it is compared with the countries like Bangladesh, Korea, Thailand and Sri Lanka. Actually we are spending more or less half what we need for UEE.
- During the entire post-independence period, government expenditure on education has been remaining well below the 6% of GDP (Kothari Commission's recommendation), thereby witnessing the government's apathy to reach the goal of UEE.
- In India, primary responsibility of school education lies with State government but being a subject of concurrent list, the Union Government can't bypass its responsibility in this respect. It has been observed that the Centre has been sharing a sizeable amount to elementary sector of education only after 1990-91. Yet the actual total expenditure by the Centre compare to the States altogether is very marginal.
- The first post-Independent census indicated only 18.3 percent of India's total population as literate, while the same becomes 64.8 percent in 2001, still half of the females and one fourth of males in India are reflected as illiterate, whereas the developing countries in the world are approaching to universal literacy.
- Significantly during the last two decades (1981-91 & 1991-01), increase in female literacy has got an edge over the male and the same is also seen for rural literacy compare to the urban sects. This suggests that the country has been approaching to a more equitable literacy development in respect of gender and regional pattern in the process. Still there is a gender gap in literacy achievement by 21.6% at the national level and it is more prominent in rural areas 24.6% than in urban (13.4%) frame of the country.
- The overall achievement in literacy development has been satisfactory in the rural India. Up to the decade 1971-81, it is the urban literacy rate that grows faster than the rural literacy rate (Fig-2). Since then, the scenario has become opposite and during the last decade, the rate of increase in rural literacy is recorded at 14.01 percentage points which is more than doubled compare to the urban rate (6.82). But in achieving the overall literacy (person) there is still a substantial gap (21.2%) in rural –urban frame of the country. For the females it is 26.8% and for the males it is 15.6% so far the last Indian Census is concerned.
- In physical number, a tremendous increase in educational institution has been recorded during the period (1950-2005), a fourfold jump in the number of primary schools has been observed and the upper primary schools by more than 20 times.
- This increase of number can't be credited unless and until schools are located within the reasonable distance of the rural households and a reasonable pupil teacher ration is maintained. According to the VI All India Educational Survey (1993) nearly 17% of the rural

habitation (1.77 lakh) still uncovered by any primary school while 24% (2.53 lakh) by upper primary school. One thing that seems to be encouraging is that the coverage has been steadily increasing since 1973 and as such we can expect more rural households to be covered by schools as soon as the VII survey report will be published. The decadal trend of the pupil-teacher ratio at primary level clearly suggests government's failure to provide adequate access to primary education in the country. The ratio remains as high as around 60:1 throughout the years of last decade (1991-2001) as against the official level of 40:1.

- In our country the acute shortage of female teachers has been an area of concern and debate. Proportion of female teacher, especially at primary level, around the world is far high compare to the Indian average. Though the proportion has been increasing, yet it is too low (around 35% at elementary level of education) to compare at international scenario.
- Starting with a pupil teacher ratio at around 36 in 1950-51, it became 60 in 2004-05. The ratio has been actually consistently increasing since 1950. This supply side issue is a major remaining concern in this country.
- But it may be noted here that Gross Enrolment ratio at primary level has been decreased from 114 to 104 for the boys and from 85.5 to 85.2 for the girls during the period from 1990-91 to 1999-00 (Selected Educational Statistics 1999-2000, MHRD, GOI, 2001). This trend is also being observed for the upper primary level too.
- The dropout trend of the children has been decreasing slowly but shows it clearly that the girls are more dropping out of school than the boys both at primary and upper primary level. At the same time the problem becomes more acute at upper primary level than at primary level of education. This deprivation against the girl child is a major concern of our research and will get special attention in our latter discussion.
- One important recent trend of decrease in absolute number of out of school children quite marginally assures us in achieving the 2nd MDGs

The review and analysis of educational development in India since independence as it has been seen and sketched in this chapter does not seem to be satisfactory, especially when it has been compared with international perspectives. Eight year of schooling (Elementary Education) is a basic right of the children born in a society and it is also a social need for any country. This, for realisation, requires a series of efforts from several dimensions in different ways. It is not a single dimensional effort. Rather it is a holistic schema. Parents should be well aware and responsible in sending their children to school, society should have a positive direction so that the parents may be encouraged in the process, political leadership should have a clear-cut agenda regarding this need and above all the Government will have to ensure universal access so that each and every child can get at least the feasible schooling facilities. Beyond this, there should have 'minimum quality' of the teaching-learning process for universal retention of the children getting enrolled at school. All these can ensure and achieve the goal and fulfil the need.

Note

1. Article 26 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 - a. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
 - b. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding,

tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

c. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

2. A habitation is a distinct cluster of houses existing in a compact and contiguous manner; with a local name; and its population should not be less than 25 in plain areas and not less than 10 in hilly/desert/sparsely populated areas. In case there exists more than one such cluster of houses in a village, they will not be treated as separate habitations unless the convenient walking distance between them is more than 200 meters.

3. The Crude Literacy Rates is computed with the total population as base without removing the mandatory illiterate population aged 0-4 or 0-6 from the denominator.

4. Cumulative increase in literacy rate is calculated as $-\left[\frac{\text{PLRd} - \text{PLRd-1}}{\text{PLRd-1}} \times 100\right]$ where PLRd represents the person literacy rate in decade 'd' and PLRd-1 is the literacy rate (person) of the previous decade.

5. Literacy rates for the years 1951, 1961 and 1971 censuses relate to the population aged five years and above while those for the 1981, 1991 and 2001 censuses relate to the population seven years and above.

6. Primary-school-age children out of school refer to children of this age group who are not in primary or secondary school but who may be in preschool or in other schools outside the formal education system.

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