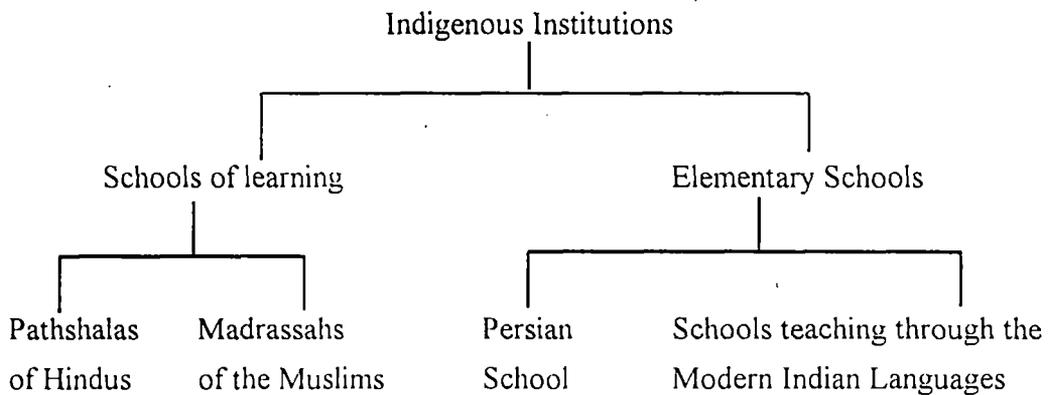


CHAPTER II

POST - COLONIAL EXPERIENCE OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN INDIA.

A mere depiction on the status of post colonial elementary education in India devoid of history will create polemics to understand the present position of elementary education in its correct perspective. Thus, a quick search of historical antecedents on the status of elementary education in India under British rule will be in order. At the end of eighteenth century Indian society was essentially a feudal society consisting of several classes and a very large number of castes and tribes. The princely governments of the day had not accepted any responsibility for the education of the people and all their educational effort was limited to the provision of some financial support to learned persons and institutions of higher learning, mainly on religious considerations. The society itself had little use for a formal system of education. Before the British came to India there was a network of indigenous schools in the name of Maktabas and Pathshalas. The indigenous educational institutions of this period were divided into four main types as follows :⁽¹⁾



The Education Policy of the British Raj developed through three marked stages between the battle of Plassey (1757) and the middle of the nineteenth century viz. through the transformation of the British from merchants to rulers, ii) consolidation of the British power in India and iii) the expansion of British power led to the foundation of an educational system in India which contributed greatly to the emergence of modern India. With the arrival of Warren Hastings (1750) as Governor General of Bengal, the educational channel opened. In this reign, Nathaniel Hatted

wrote A Code of Gentoo Laws in 1776 and Bengali Grammar in 1778 and in 1779 Charles Wilkins brought out his Sanskrit Grammar and Francis Gladwin Institutes of the Emperor Akbar in 1783.⁽²⁾

Two new factors appeared on the scene now and together they exerted the most profound influence in shaping the education policy of the British Raj. Those were the utilitarians and the enlightened Indians. The present Education system originated in the earlier of nineteenth century. In 1813 British Parliament inserted a clause in the charter of the company. "To the effect that, after defraying all civil and military expenses, a sum of not less than one lakh of rupees in each year shall be set a part and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and encouragement of learned natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the science among the inhabitants of the British territories in India." ⁽³⁾

In 1835, Lord Macaulay, Law member of Governor General's Council gave his views for rectification of Indian Education System which was known as Macaulay's Minute. The main objective of the Minute was to defuse European Learning with vernacular education. Consequently schools were established on these lines, teaching European Literature and science. These schools became popular because great interest was shown in English education by teachers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Radha Kanta Dev and others, also because education imparted in these schools became a passport for entrance into Government services.⁽⁴⁾

In 1838 William Adam was the first British Officer to suggest for introducing compulsory primary education. Captain Wingate (1852) suggested that 5% of the Land revenue be utilized to provide compulsory primary education to the agriculturists. The forty years between the Charter Act of 1813 which merely compelled the East India Company to accept responsibility for the Indian people and the Despatch of 1854 which prescribed an educational policy for Indian during the British Rule.⁽⁵⁾ In 1853, the British territories in India were divided into five Provinces of Bengal, Bombay, Madras, and the Provinces of U.P and the Punjab. The principal landmarks in official educational enterprise in India between 1823 and 1853 can, therefore, be conveniently stated according to Provinces.

The Presidency of Bengal was the first Province to take up the work of educational recognition which was made possible by the liberal attitude which the court of

Directors adopted by about 1823. In a resolution dated 17th July 1823, the Governor-General-in-Council appointed a General Committee of Public Instruction for the Bengal Presidency. The grant of one lakh of rupees provided by the Charter Act of 1813 was also placed at the disposal of the committee between 1823 and 1833, the Committee

- a) reorganised the Calcutta Madrassah and the Banaras Sanskrit College;
- b) established a Sanskrit College at Calcutta in 1824;
- c) undertook the printing and publication of Sanskrit and Arabic books on a large scale; and
- d) employed oriental scholars to translate English books containing useful knowledge into the oriental classical languages.⁽⁶⁾

The net achievements were insignificant as compared with the vastness of the population and the backwardness of its education. Even as late as 1855, the total number of its educational institutions managed, aided or inspected by the Company was as small as 1,475 with only 67,569 pupils, and the total expenditure on education was not even one per cent of the total revenue. The redeeming features of the situation were two : the large expansion of missionary educational enterprise and the small but valuable beginning of Indian private enterprise in the modern system of education.⁽⁷⁾ The occasion for the Despatch was provided by the renewal of the company's charter in 1853. At this time, as at the earlier renewals of the Charter in 1813 and 1833, a Select Committee of the house of Commons held a very thorough enquiry into educational developments in India. On the basis of this enquiry, the Court of Directors sent down their greatest Educational Despatch on 19th July 1854. This document of immense historical importance is sometimes described as Wood's educational Despatch because it was probably written at the instance of Charles Wood who was then the President of the Board of Control.⁽⁸⁾

On the basis of the Chief recommendations, the British Government was taken the following actions :

1. A Department of Education was created in each state.
2. D.P.I was appointed to head each Department.

The Despatch as so suggests certain general considerations in the light of which each Provincial Government was expected to frame its own rules of grant -in-

aid. For instance, aid was to be given to all schools which i) impart a good secular education, any religious instruction which they may impart being simply ignored; ii) possess good local management ; iii) agree to submit to inspection by Government officers and to abide by such other conditions as may be prescribed; and iii) levy a fee, however small, from the pupils.⁽⁹⁾

During the years 1854 - 1882 it was found that mother -tongue was completely neglected as a medium of instruction. Matriculation Examination began to dominate, not only secondary education , but even the education imparted in primary schools.⁽¹⁰⁾ In 1858, Mr. T.C Hope proposed that local areas should tax themselves for the running of schools for their benefit. The history of primary education during this period can be conveniently studied under four heads: (a) the Despatch of 1859, (b) events of the period 1859-82, (c) recommendations of the Indian Education Commission (1882-83) and (d) events of the period 1882-1902.

Despatch of 1859

The Despatch of 1854 had recommended, (a) that the indigenous school should be incorporated in the official system of education, (b) that larger amounts should be spent on primary education, and (c) that a system of grants-in-aid should be evolved for private primary schools on which alone should Government mainly rely for the spread of education among the masses. But as early as 1859, another Despatch reversed these orders, directed that local rates should be levied for educational purposes, and observed that the Department should rely mainly on Government schools for the spread of mass education.⁽¹¹⁾

In Bengal, on the other hand, the system of primary education had been early built up on the indigenous schools. The following statistics of 1881-82 speak for themselves :

1.	Number of Departmental Schools	28
2.	Number of pupils in Departmental Schools	47,374
3.	Number of Aided Schools	916
4.	Number of pupils in Aided Schools	835,435
5.	Number of Unaided Indigenous Schools known to the Department	3,265
6.	Number of pupils in the above	49,238

7.	Number of Unaided but Inspected Schools	4,376
8.	Number of pupils in the above	62,038

The one defect of the system, however, was the small amount of aid afforded. In 1881-82, this was only Rs.11 a year per school.⁽¹²⁾ The proportion of pupils both male and female, to the population of school going age, is shown in the figure below:

Table 3. The proportion of pupils to the population of school going age.

Province	Percentage of males	Percentage of females
Madras	17.78	1.48
Bombay (British Districts)	24.96	1.85
(Native States)	17.85	0.93
Bengal	20.82	0.80
North-Western Provinces & oudh	8.25	0.28
Punjab	12.11	0.72
Central Provinces	10.49	0.44
Assam	14.61	0.46
Coorg	22.44	2.86
Hyderabad Assigned Districts	17.10	0.22
Total for India	16.28	0.84

To further review the position of education in the country, another Commission known as Hunter Commission (1882-83) went round the Country, surveyed the whole picture and recommended that the Government should take the entire responsibility of primary education. But unfortunately, the British Government did not appreciate their recommendation in those days.⁽¹³⁾ Another Chief recommendations of Indian Education Commission (1881-83) was that the responsibility, control and administration of Primary Education should be transferred to local bodies, the District Boards or Councils in rural areas.⁽¹⁴⁾ The failure of Government to extend primary education was due to several wrong decisions on administrative and financial issues, among which the following may be mentioned :

- (a) Failure to introduce compulsory education ;
- (b) Transfer of primary education to the control of local bodies ; and
- (c) Neglect of the indigenous schools.⁽¹⁵⁾

National awakening, establishment of Indian National Congress, appearance of leaders like Swami Vivekananda gave a fillip to the movement of compulsory education. There was a rapid growth of Indian Education since Hunter Commission (1882). The qualitative aspects of primary education where, however, the official attempts did score a number of minor successes. The main official achievements in this direction were the following :

- (a) Construction of school buildings,
- (b) Improvement in the Training and Qualifications of Teachers,
- (c) Admission of girls and pupils of low-castes,
- (c) Use of printed books,
- (d) Adoption of new methods of teaching, and
- (e) Framing of school curriculum

In 1902, Lord Curzon had appointed an Educational Commission with the following objectives :

- (a) To improve the quality of Indian education and
- (b) To raise the control of the Govt.⁽¹⁶⁾

Turning to the field of primary education, we find that Curzon's policy was slightly different. In higher education, he emphasized quality as against quantity. But in primary education he emphasized expansion side by side with improvement .As regards expansion of primary education Curzon held two views - (a) The need for expansion was greater than any time in the past, and (b) the principal cause of the slow progress of primary education was the in adequacy of grants from Govt. He, therefore, sanctioned both large non-recurring grants for primary education. He also enabled the Provincial Governments. To raise the rate of Government-in-aids to local expenditure Govt. admitted its responsibility in the expansion of primary education in the resolution on Education Policy. The most important duties of the State will be i) training of primary teachers for quality upgrading and ii) revision of curriculum interns of quality.⁽¹⁷⁾ This liberal policy at once led to a large increase in the number of primary schools and pupils. The following statistics compare the enrolment in primary schools

for the years 1881-82, 1901-02 and 1911-12 :

Table 4. Enrolment in primary schools for the years 1881-82, 1901-02 and 1911-12.

	1881-82	1901-02	1911-12
Number of recognised primary schools	82,916	93,604	1,18,262
Number of scholars in above	20,61,541	30,76,671	48,06,736

N.B- Figures of all years include some Indian States and exclude Burma. The year 1911-12 is taken because the full effect of Curzon's policy was noticeable only by this time.

It will be seen that the increase in the enrolment of primary schools in the years from 1901-02 to 1911-12 was nearly twice the increase in the enrolment during the twenty years following the report of the Indian Education Commission. Gokhale's Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council on Primary Education (March 19, 1910) 'that a beginning should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory throughout the country' is to be considered the next important document in the development of primary education, though unfortunately for India his bill was turned down after a fierce debate that raged for ten days in the council. The report of the Hartog Committee (1929) provided another important document. It found cause to lament the sheer waste and ineffectiveness throughout the whole educational system. 'In the primary system, which from our point of view should be designed to produce literacy and the capacity to exercise an intelligent vote, the waste is appalling for only a small proportion of those who are at the primary stage reach class iv, in which the attainment of literacy may be expected.'

Quantitative Position of Primary Education (1921-22) : Owing partly to the absence of compulsion and partly to the official predilection for quality rather than quantity, the expansion of primary education after 1911-12 was relatively slow and in 1921-22, the quantitative position of primary education in India was far from happy. The number of children at school was only 2.6 per cent of the population (instead of the expected 15 per cent) and the statistics of literacy of the census of 1921 were equally disappointing. Commenting on them, the Hartog Committee observes :

Between 1892 and 1922, the percentage of male literates of five years and over in British India increased by only 1.4 per cent (13.0 to 14.4) and that of female

literate by 1.3 per cent (from 0.7 to 2.0). The percentage of literates of both sexes and all ages was only 7.2 in 1921. Progress has been extremely slow.

Qualitative Improvements in Primary Education (1905-22) : If Government thus failed to bring about a rapid expansion of primary education, it would have been some compensation at least if the official drive to improve quality had borne material success. But even this did not happen. By far, the best qualitative achievement of this period was the improvement in the training of primary teachers. Even since the momentous directions given by the Indian Education Commission (1882-83), the problem of the training of primary teachers had received considerable attention, especially in the period 1901 to 1921. The following statistics of trained and untrained teachers working in recognized primary schools in 1921-22 (excluding the teachers of English or classical languages) in British India including Burma are available ⁽¹⁸⁾ :

Table 5. Statistics of trained and untrained teachers working in recognized primary schools in 1921-22

Primary Schools managed by	Trained teachers	Untrained teachers	Total
Government	1,155	888	2,043
Local boards	38,757	31,002	69,759
Municipalities	5,898	5,767	11,665
Aided	20,689	65,229	85,918
Unaided	1,114	10,787	11,901
Total	67,613	113,673	181,286

The year 1937 saw the submission of two important documents- the Abbot-Wood Report in June and the Zakir Husain Committee Report in December. The Abbot-Wood Report emphasized that the education of children in the primary school should be based more upon the natural interests and activities of young children and less upon book-learning, that the mother tongue should as far as possible be the medium of instruction and that the pre-service education course of Teachers and primary schools.

The scheme of 'Basic Education' enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi remains undoubtedly the most epoch-making event in the history of primary education in modern India. When the Congress Ministries assumed office in 1937 in seven provinces they had to face the problem of introducing universal free and compulsory primary education, in the shortest time possible, without adequate resources for it. A solution to the problem came into sight as Mahatma Gandhi put forth his proposal of self-supporting free primary education of seven years through the help of useful and productive craft. A storm of controversies over several aspects of the revolutionary proposals ushered in the First Conference of National Education at Wardha on 22nd and 23rd October 1937 to consider the new system of education. The Conference resolved that : free and compulsory education be provided for seven years ; the medium of instruction be the mother tongue ; the process of education should centre round some form of manual productive work. The conference expected that this system of education would be gradually able to cover the remuneration of teachers. A Committee was then appointed under the presidentship of Dr. Zakir Husain to prepare a detailed syllabus on the lines of the resolution. The Zakir Husain Committee submitted a detailed report (Dec. 1937) which has since become a fundamental document on basic education.

In the history of education thought, Sargent Report (1944) occupies a very prominent place, since it gives very bold recommendations towards primary education during British regime. The report recommended for the first time a system of universal compulsory and free education for all boys and girls between ages of 6 and 14. Even in free India, we have been craving for it and have not been able to succeed so far.⁽¹⁹⁾ The Kher Committee (1948) recommended the introduction of universal compulsory basic education for the children between the ages of 6-11 within a period of ten years (i.e by 1958) and the children between the ages of 6-14 within 16 years (i.e by 1964).

Article 45 of the Indian Constitution directed that free and compulsory education for all children until the age of 14 years should be provided by 1960. For the first three Five Year Plan , the substantial development in respect of involvement of children of group 6-11 and the number of primary schools. In forth Plan (1969-74), the major programmes included were :

1. To provide primary schools within easy walking distance from all villages.

2. To increase the enrolment of girls and of children of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections of the community.
3. To reduce wastage and stagnation.
4. To initiate pilot projects for the organization of part-time schools for those children who cannot attend on a whole time basis.

In classes I-V, the target of enrolment was to increase from 539 lakhs or 75.1% of the age group to 686 lakhs or 85.3% of the age group. Before 1976, education was exclusively the responsibility of states, the central government was only concerned with certain areas like coordination and determination of standards in technical and higher education, etc. In 1976, through a constitution amendment, education became a joint responsibility of states and centre. Decisions regarding the organisation and structure of education were largely the concern of the states. However, the union government had a clear responsibility regarding the quality and character of education.

In addition to policy formulation, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Department of Education, shares with the states the responsibility for educational planning. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), set up during the pre-Independence period in 1935, continues to play a leading role in the evolution and monitoring of educational policies and programmes.⁽²⁰⁾ There is a provision for periodic appraisal of plan performance and every year 'Annual Plans' are drawn up with due modifications but within the frame work of the Five-Year Plan. The first four years of independence witnessed great educational expansion on a year to year budgetary planning till the birth of the National Planning Commission in 1951, the year of launching the First Five-Year Plan.

First Five-Year Plan (1951-52 to 1955-56)

While it is possible to lay down a strict order of priorities, in view of the closely interlinked character of the various stages of education, as well as the widely varying conditions in different parts of the country, it may broadly be recommended that the highest priority should go to the improvement and remodelling of existing institutions on right lines. To an extent of this will necessitate giving high priority to experiments and research in improved educational methods, the training of teachers and the preparation of literature. The special needs of the plan and the great dearth of

existing facilities would require high priority for basic and social education, technical and vocational education at lower level and the development of facilities for training high grade of standards and the development of postgraduate research work should be given in university education. The quantitative targets that should be aimed at during the period of the plan should be the provision of educational facilities for 60 percent of the age group 6-11, to be developed as early as possible to bring children up to the age of 14 into schools, and for 15 percent of the relevant age group to secondary education and also the field of social education in the wider sense of the term. In the case of girls the respective targets should be 40 percent, 10 percent and 10 per cent.(21)

Second Five Year Plan (1956-57 to 1960-61)

The chapter on 'Education' begins with these remarks, "The system of education has a determining influence on the rate at which economic progress is achieved and the benefits which can be derived from it. Economic development naturally makes growing demands on human resources and in a democratic setup it calls for values and attitudes in the building of which the quality of education is an important element." Again in the concluding part of the chapter on 'Education' the framers of the Second Five - Year Plan state, "For economic development to make its full contribution to the well-being of the mass of the people, programme of education should be ahead of economic plans. Modern economic development calls for a wide diffusion of the scientific temper of mind, a sense of dignity in labour and discipline in-service to the needs of the people. These values and attitudes will be realized in everyday life in the measure in which they are expressed through educational ideas and practice."

Main features of the Programmes are as follows :

1. Emphasis on basic education.
2. Expansion of elementary education.
3. Diversification of standards of college and university education.
4. Improvement of facilities for technical and vocational.
6. Implementation of social education and cultural development programmes.⁽²²⁾

Third Five-Year Plan (1961-62 to 1965-66)

In the programme of education the main emphasis was on the following :

1. Provision of facilities for universal education for the age-group 6-11.
2. Improvement of science education at the secondary and university stages.
3. Training of teachers at all grades.
4. Expansion of technical education.⁽²³⁾

Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-74)

Priority was given for the expansion of elementary education and the emphasis will be on the provision of facilities for backward areas and communities and for girls. A survey of the deficiencies in respect of buildings and equipment of educational institutions had been made with a view to removing them according to phased programme. Other programmes of importance were : improvement of teachers education; expansion and improvement of science education; raising standards of post-graduate education and research; development of Indian languages and block production, especially text books; and the consolidation of technical education including reorganization of polytechnic education and its closer linking with the needs of industry and its orientation towards self employment. Increased efforts had been made to involve people in educational programmes and to mobilise public support. Youth service had been developed. It is supposed to effect economic utilization of existing facilities to the maximum possible extent, streamlining of the planning, implementing and evaluating machinery, increasing the use of educational technologies - part time and correspondence courses, modern media of communication, optimum with minimum investment and without lowering standards; and undertaking new tasks only after careful preparation through pilot projects. Activities like improvement of curricula and text-books, in service education of teachers and research in methods of teaching, which do not require large funds have a wide impact, had been encouraged. Educational programmes were increasingly related to social and economic objectives. This was related, among other things like co-ordination with perspective plan on the basis of manpower needs, social demand, and likely availability, material and human resources.⁽²⁴⁾

Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-78)

Broadly speaking, the Fifth Plan laid emphasis on (i) ensuring quality of educational opportunities as part of the overall plan of ensuring social justice, (ii) establishment closer link between the pattern of education, on the one hand, and the needs of improvement of the quality of education imparted; and (iii) involvement of the academic community including students, in the tasks of social and economic development.⁽²⁵⁾

Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85)

The Sixth Five-Year plan for 1980-85 laid emphasis on : (i) programmes of adult education including eradication of adult illiteracy; (ii) universalization of elementary education; (iii) vocationalisation of together programmes of importance was : improvement of teacher education; raising standard of postgraduate education and research; development of Indian Languages and book production, especially textbooks, and the consideration of technical education including recognition of polytechnic education and its closer linking with the needs of industry and its orientation towards self-employment. Increased efforts were made to involve people in educational programmes and to mobilize public support. Youth service was developed.⁽²⁶⁾

Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90)

Education, Culture and Sports

Human resource development has necessarily to be assigned a key role in any development strategy, particularly in a country with a large population. Trained and educated on sound lines, a large population can itself become social change in desired directions. Education and in ensuring social change in desired directions. Education develops basic skills and abilities and fosters a value system conducive to, and in support of, national development goals, both long-term and immediate. In a word where knowledge is increasing at an exponential rate, the of education in the diffusion of new knowledge and, at the same time, in the preservation of new promotion of what is basic to India's culture and ethos is both complex and challenging. The resolution of the National Policy on Education adopted in 1968 pointed out that the great leaders of the India freedom movement realized the fundamental role of education and, throughout the nations's struggle for independence, stressed the unique significance of education for national development.

Strategy and Thrust Areas in the Seventh Plan.

The Seventh Plan provides for reorientation of the education system so as to prepare the country to meet the challenges of the next century. The main thrust areas in the Seventh Plan were (i) achievement of universal elementary education; (ii) eradication of illiteracy in the age group 15-35 years.; (iii) vocationalisation and skill-training programmes at different levels of education; (iv) upgradation of standards and modernization at all stages of education with effective links with the world of work and with special emphasis on science and environment and on value orientation; (v) provision of facilities for education of high quality and excellence in every district of the country; and (vi) removal of obsolence and modernization of technical education. The major strategies for achieving these objectives were included effective decentralized planning and orientational reforms, promotion of non-formal and open learning system, adoption of low cost alternatives and optimum use of resources, forging of beneficial linkages with industry and development agencies, and mobilization of community resources and social involvement.⁽²⁷⁾

Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)

The catalytic role of education in encouraging the human resource development comprising better awareness, health, nutrition, improved socio-economic condition, congenial natural environment and sound ecological balance has, in fact, attracted the attention of every civilized nation cutting across space and time. In order to erect the basic foundation of overall human resource development, India has adopted a number of public policies on education. The principal thrust area of 8th plan is that the need for according the highest priority to universalisation of elementary education (UEE) is, therefore, well established. Within the over all school-age population, the focus would be on girls, who account for two-thirds of target, and among adults the focus would be on women's literacy which has a beneficial impact on children's literacy as well as other national objectives like population control and family welfare. So far as UEE is concerned, the NPE stress on retention, participation and achievement, rather than more enrolment would be reinforced.

It is estimated that additional enrolment to be achieved during the 8th plan to reach universalisation is approximately 5.61 crores children. Enrolment of about 4.38 crores would be achieved through formal schools, about 1 crore through non formal

centres and the best through the open learning channel of upper primary stage. The targets are much higher than the 7th plan achievement. The main strategy for achieving the targets was : a) adoption of the decentralised approach to educational planning and management at all level through Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI); (b) combining this approach with a convergence model of rural development involving integrated utilisation of all possible resources available at Panchayat, Block and District level for activities relating to elementary education/literacy, child care/development and rural health programmes ; (c) large scale participation of voluntary agencies and (d) development of innovative and cost-effective complementary programmes including upper learning system (OLS) supported by Distance education techniques.⁽²⁸⁾

Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)

Following the Direction given by National Policy On Education 1986 (and revised in 1992), Primary Education was given an over riding priority in order to realise the goal of UEE during the seventh & Eighth Five Year plans. Despite this, backlog has continued in enrolment and drop-out rate is still high. Two major initiatives taken during the Eighth plan are the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the Nutrition support to Primary Education (Mid-day Meals) with a view to addressing the problem of equity, access, retention and quality at the primary stage. During this period the enrolment of girls, of scheduled castes and S.T, has shown an increase at the primary stage and the drop-out rates have shown a declining trend. However, there is still a long way to go to achieve UEE. The National Literacy Mission (NLM) with a mandate to make 100 million people literate in the age group of 15-35 by the year 1997 has achieved (1996) a target of 56.1 million.

In the Ninth Plan, apart from carrying out the direction given by NPE (1992), and keeping in view the declaration of education as the aspect of fundamental human right to life, making the nation fully literate by the year 2005 will be a committed goal. Around 6% of the GDP was earmarked for the education sector by the year 2000 and 50% of that was spent on primary education. Further, substantial funds have been earmarked for imparting technical and vocational skills and training, in order to turn out more more employable and self employed youths. NLM will achieve the coverage of 100 million adults by the year 1998-99 with special attention and effort for the spread of literacy among women and in the states with high incidence of illiteracy. The

Mid-day Meal Scheme through giving rice was implemented in all the states to ensure regular attendance and retention in primary and middle schools. In every initiative to promote the spread of education, the girl child was a special focus of attention.

The unfinished task of UEE was partly completed with special focus on the backward states/districts, the girl/child and other disadvantaged states/districts, the girl child and other disadvantaged population groups, emphasising decentralised and disaggregated planning with the participant of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the corporate sector and various other groups. Linkages were developed between adult education and formal and non-formal education including open Learning, Quality in UEE had been still not fully achieved through better pedagogical and management practices. Performance of teacher were improved through better content and facilities for training programmes and community participation in supervision. Strategies were developed for mobilising financial support through community effort. Gender justice remained a distant goal as more than two hundred million women are still illiterate in the country. Therefore, efforts were partly made to fulfill the goal Education for women's Equality as laid down in the revised National Policy of Education (NPE), 1992.⁽²⁹⁾

Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07)

The performance in the field of education is one of the most disappointing aspects of our developmental strategy. Out of approximately 200 million children in the age group 6-14 years, only 120 million are in schools and net attendance in the primary level is only 66% of enrolment. This is completely unacceptable and the Tenth Plan should aim at a radical transformation in this situation. Education for all must be one of the primary objectives of the Tenth Plan. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which has been launched to achieve this objective, indicates a strong reiteration of the country's resolve to give the highest priority to achieve this goal during the plan period. It should also be our resolve that the process of integrating our educational system with the economic needs of the people and of the nation must begin at the primary school stage itself. The objective of education is the total development of a child's personality, in which, character building and physical education, including sports are crucial ingredients. Assertion of the dignity of labour and vocationalisation of curricula are essential to ensure that a disjunction does not take place between the educational system and the work place.

Universalisation access to primary education and improvement of basic school infrastructure must be a care objective of the Tenth Plan. This would mean targeting the provision of one teacher for every group of 40 children for primary and upper primary schools, opening of a primary/alternate schooling facility within 1 Km of every habitation, provision of free text books to all SCs/STs children and girls at the primary and upper primary school, management and repair of school buildings through school management committees, provision of opportunities for Non-Formal and Alternative Education for out of school children in the most backward areas and for unreached segments of the population in response to local needs and demands articulated at the grass root level. Mere establishment of schools and hiring of teachers will not lead to an improvement in education if teachers remain absent as happens in many parts of the country, especially in rural areas. It is therefore essential that control over Schools and teachers should be transferred to local bodies which have a direct interest in teacher performance. States should be encouraged to implement the 73rd and 74th amendments of the constitution, which facilitate the transfer of management of primary and upper primary schools to panchayats/local bodies. Planning, supervision and management of education would have to be through local bodies at district, block and village levels. Efforts should also be made for social mobilization of local communities for adult literacy campaigns and for a promotion of primary education.

Steps would have to be initiated to fill up all the existing vacancies of the teachers through in a time, bound manner, with defined responsibilities to local bodies and communities, and to remove legal impediments in the recruitment of para-teachers. For quality education, provision of adequate academic support/training to all the teacher will be necessary. In this connection, the use of IT needs to be explored in terms of teachers capacity building as also for spread of literacy through TV, media. The Mid-Day Meal Programme has made a difference in attendance and retention wherever a proper cooked meal is served. The practice of only providing grains followed by some State Governments, and that also not according to the prescribed norms in all cases, is vitiating the very purpose of the scheme. The State Governments must take efforts to provide hot cooked meals. It is not possible to cover all the primary schools, efforts must be made to cover all schools in the backward and tribal areas, so that at least the children who really need this extra nutrition are covered.⁽³⁰⁾

During the last five decades the progress of education, especially in terms of

number of institutions and teachers, have been quite impressive. The number of Primary and upper primary institutions has increased from 210 and 14 thousand in the year 1950-51 to 573 and 156 thousand in the year 1997-98 which shows compounded growth of 2.37 and 5.77 per cent respectively. The rate of growth of Primary and Upper primary institutions during the period 1980-81 to 1993-94 was 1.13 and 2.03 per cent respectively as compared to 1.06 and 2.10 per cent after the National Policy on Education (1986) was announced. The number of pre-primary schools has also increased from 303 in 1950-51 to 17,172 in year 1993-94 which shows spread of early childhood care and development activities. Yet, as the Sixth All India Educational Survey (1993) revealed, about 523 thousand of the total 1,059 thousand habitations in the country in year 1993 -94 had no primary schooling facilities within the habitation.⁽³¹⁾ More than 53 thousand (5.35 per cent) habitations in 1986-87 did not have primary sections even upto a distance of two kilometres and 10.16 per cent habitations without Upper primary schooling facilities even up to five kilometres. More than 70 thousand Primary schools and about 13 thousand Upper Primary schools in year 1986-87 were being run in Kachha (make-shift) buildings.⁽³²⁾ The number of non-formal education centres in the country increased from 126 thousand in 1986 to 215 thousand by March 1994, with girls' centres increasing from 21 thousand to 79 thousand. During the same period enrolment in NFE centres rose from 4 million to 5 million.⁽³³⁾ Though educational facilities are available to a large segment of population both in rural and urban areas, still a large number of institutions do not have minimum infrastructural facilities required for effective functioning, which is evident from the findings of the recently conducted base-line studies in the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) states.

The number of primary teachers has increased from 538 thousand in 1950-51 to 1,703 thousand in 1993-94, showing an annual exponential increase of 2.72 per cent compared to 6.06 per cent at the Upper primary level and the percentage of primary schools without a teacher and single-teacher primary schools has declined from 0.62 to 0.43 per cent and from 34.75 to 28.91 per cent during the period 1978 to 1986. About 92 per cent primary teachers were trained but female teachers constitute only 29.76 per cent of the total primary teachers. About 2,274 primary schools were without teachers and 1,52,856 with only one teacher (1986). The same is also evident from the status of the "Operation Blackboard" scheme where, in 1992, about 23 per

cent schools in 16 per cent community development blocks and 71 per cent municipal areas were not covered under the scheme.⁽³⁴⁾ Only 103 thousand (67.76 per cent) teachers could be appointed as against the target of 152 thousand single-teacher schools identified for coverage and only 115 thousand (48.12) class rooms had been constructed, as against the target of 239 thousand. Also, as against the optimum teacher-pupil ratio of 1:25, at the all India level, it was: 50 in year 1993-94 and teachers salaries constitute more than 90 per cent of the total recurring expenditure on primary education. So far as the share of education to Gross National Product (GNP) is concerned, the increase is not as envisaged in the policy document (6 per cent); however, it has increased from 1.2 per cent in year 1950-51 to 3.7 per cent at 1992.⁽³⁵⁾ Also, the Prime Minister announced that education would get an outlay of six per cent of the national income from the Ninth Five Plane which amounted to about Rs. 53,000 Crore.

So far as, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the Primary level is concerned, it has increased from a low 42.6 per cent in 1950-51 to 104.5 per cent in year 1993-94, the corresponding ratio at the Upper primary level being 12.7 and 67.7 per cent respectively. Over a period of time the share of girls' enrolment to total enrolment at the primary level improved significantly from a low 28.1 per cent in 1950-51 to 42.9 per cent in year 1993-94. Enrolment ratio of Scheduled Caste (107.81 per cent) and Scheduled Tribe (106.97) population also improved significantly and is almost on par with the general population.⁽³⁶⁾

Enrolment Analysis

Growth of school education in India has been analysed for which enrolment data at different levels of education during the period 1950-51 to 1993-94 has been used. Generally, data at five year intervals has been presented. For measuring growth, enrolment statistics has been converted into a variety of indicators and results are analysed at the all-India level which is briefly presented below.

At the time of the adoption of the Constitution in the year 1950, enrolment at the Primary level was 19.16 million of which girls constituted only 5.39 million (28.13 per cent). The gross enrolment ratio at that time was 42.6 (total) and 24.8 (girls) per cent corresponding to which the enrolment ratio of boys was 60.6 per cent which shows boys-girls' differential in enrolment ratio to be 35.80 per cent at the Primary

level compared to 22.40 per cent in the year 1993-94. During the next five years, enrolment in Primary grades was added by another 5.9 million children of which girls contributed 2.2 million (37.29 per cent). Further, it has been observed that enrolment ratio (gross) had improved significantly to 52.8 per cent in the year 1955-56 compared to 32.8 per cent of girls. Thereafter, it started a rising march until the year 1985-86 but slightly declined in the next year in both absolute and ratio forms.

Table 6. Growth of Enrolment at Primary Level (Grades I-V) :All India : 1951-1994

Year	Total	Index Numbers	
		Boys	Girls
1950-51	100.00	100.00	100.00
1955-56	130.73	126.81	140.74
1960-61	182.29	171.01	211.11
1965-66	262.86	233.19	338.70
1970-71	296.87	258.70	394.44
1975-76	341.98	294.57	463.15
1980-81	384.22	328.19	527.41
1985-86	455.42	378.62	651.67
1986-87	453.80 (100.00)	374.49 (100.00)	656.48(100.00)
1987-88	471.15 (103.82)	387.75 (103.54)	684.48(104.28)
1988-89	475.36 (104.75)	390.14 (104.18)	693.24(105.64)
1989-90	480.99 (105.99)	393.26 (105.01)	705.19(107.45)
1990-91	516.25 (113.76)	421.01 (112.42)	759.63(115.74)
1991-92	529.06 (116.58)	429.13 (114.59)	784.44(119.53)
1992-93	584.80 (120.93)	438.04 (116.97)	831.85(126.75)
1993-94	563.54 (124.18)	447.83 (119.54)	859.26(131.07)

Interestingly, girls' enrolment maintained its rising march but fall in enrolment noticed in year 1986-87 was due to decline in boys' enrolment from 52.25 million in the year 1985-86 to 51.68 million next year. The corresponding enrolment ratios were 111.08 and 109.99 per cent respectively in the years 1985-86 and 1986-87. Despite the increasing trend in girls' enrolment (in absolute terms), the improvement in GER was not significant. After 1986-87, enrolment at the Primary level again started looking up which continued till the year 1993-94. Data for the year 1986-87 onwards when analysed, reveals that enrolment in Grades I-V has increased from 87.13 million in the year 1986-87 to 92.35 million in the year 1989-90 which shows a rate of growth of

1.96 per cent per annum. During the period 1989-90 to 1993-94, enrolment in primary grades (boys) increased at the rate of 3.30 per cent per annum which is 7.53 million in absolute terms, corresponding girls' enrolment increased by about 5.06 per cent i.e. 8.32 million. In ratio form, enrolment over a period of time at the Primary level also increased significantly which is at present 115.3 and 92.90 per cent respectively in the case of boys and girls. However, the same do not present the real progress because of the inclusion of overage and underage children in enrolment at the Primary level.⁽³⁷⁾

Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has been accepted as a national goal since 1950. In order to achieve the goal, concerted efforts have been made and as a result, the elementary education system in India has become one of the largest in the world with 150.74 million children enrolled in 1995-96 in the age group of 6-11 years covering about 91% of the children in this age group. Of these, 109.73 million children were enrolled in 5,90,421 primary schools and other 41.01 million in 1,71,216 upper primary schools. There are 2.90 million teachers - 1.74 million employed in primary schools and 1.16 million in upper primary schools. 95% of rural population living in 8.26 lakh habitations have a school within a walking distance of 3 km. The percentage of girls enrolled is 43.11% at primary stage and 39.42% at upper primary stage. Recent trends in drop-out have shown significant decline. The retention rate has improved and it is 64% at primary stage and 47% at upper primary stage.

Table 7. Growth of no. of Institutions (in lacks)

	<u>1950-51</u>	<u>1995-96</u>
Primary Schools (Classes I - IV)	2.10	5.90
No of Teachers (in lakhs)		
Primary Schools (Classes I-V)	5.38	17.40
Gross Enrolment		
Primary Stage		
Total Enrolment (in millions)	19.2	109.8
Gross Enrolment Ratio (percentage)	43.1	104.3

In pursuance of Constitutional directives, State Governments have abolished tuition fees in the Government, local and aided Schools up to the upper primary level. Accessibility of Schooling facilities is no longer a major problem. 8.26 lakh habitations covering 94% of the country's population have now Schooling facilities within

one km. Distance at primary stage. At upper primary stage also 726 lakh habitations covering 83.98% of rural population have a school within 3 km distance. Enrolment ratio is 104 classes I-V and for classes VI-VIII. While the gross element ratio (GER) at the primary stage in the country as a whole and in most of its States exceed 100 percent, there are quite a few States where the ratio is considerably lower. These include Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir and Meghalaya. At the upper primary stage, these States and in addition, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Sikkim have GERs lower than the national average.⁽³⁸⁾ Most of these States have literacy rates lower than the national average also. There is thus a strong regional dimension of UEE.

While Universalization of elementary Education is the ultimate goal, no strategy or programme of action can succeed without addressing itself to gender and regional dimensions specifically. Gender disparities are conspicuous in regard to enrolment and retention. Girls' enrolment has grown at the primary stage from 5.4 million in 1950-51 to 47.4 million in 1995-96 and at upper primary stage from 0.5 million to 16.0 million. The rate of growth of enrolment of girls has been higher than that of boys. But disparities still persist as girls still account of only 43.2% of enrolment at stage 39.0% at upper primary stage. The dropout rate of girls is much higher than that of boys at the primary and upper primary stages. According to the 1991 Census, the population of Scheduled Castes (SCs) was 138.12 million (16.33%) and that of Scheduled Tribes (STs) was 67.8 million (8.01%) of the country's population. SC and ST population are heterogeneous target groups in all respects. There are wide variations among different SC and ST groups regionally. Thus, SC girls in Kerala are likely to be better paved than non-SC boys in some of the more backward States and districts. Because of the affirmative policies of the Government, the enrolment of SCs and DTs has increased considerably at the primary stage. The participation of SCs and STs is now more or less in proportion to their share in population at the primary level. Drop outs, though declining over the years, are significantly large. Gender disparities are very conspicuous among SCs and STs also.

In order to achieve Universalization of Elementary Education by 2000 AD, the following key strategies have been worked out in consultation with States and UTs. They are viz. a) overcome the problem of school drop outs and lay emphasis on retention and achievement rather than on merely enrolment, b) strengthen the alterna-

tives of schooling, particularly the Non-Formal Education system for working children from other disadvantaged or marginalised sections of the society; c) shift focus from educationally backward States to educationally backward districts, d) adopt disaggregated approach with a focus on preparation of district specific and population specific plans, e) provide universal access of schooling facilities, particularly to girls, disaggregated groups and out-of-school children, f) improve school effectiveness, teacher competence, training and motivation, g) introduce Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) for enhancement of learner's achievement. Micro planning will be the framework of universal access and universal participation while MLLs would be the strategy for universal achievement, h) overall planning and management and stress on participative process and i) convergence of different schemes of elementary education and related services such as early childhood care and education and child health and nutrition programmes etc.

India is one of the few developing countries which took the initiatives in 1991 to lay down Minimum Level of Learning to be achieved at primary stage. This new approach intergrades various components of curriculum, classroom transaction, evaluation and teacher orientation. The first phase of the programme was implemented through 18 voluntary agencies, research institutions, SCERTs etc. The results of the projects showed significant improvement in learning attainments of school children. The Ministry has now decided to upscale the MLL programme through institutional mechanisms throughout the country. National resource institutions like the National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT), Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs), SCERTs and DIETs are being networked for this purpose. In 1996-97, more than half of the States were implementing the programme with the assistance of more than 200 DIETs. Curriculum revision, rewriting of textbooks to make them competency based, enhancing their pedagogical value, training of teachers in the classroom process are the major activities being undertaken. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Gujrat, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Pondichery, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have reported introduction of MLL in some of their primary schools. Madhya Pradesh, Chandigar, Haryana and Lakshadweep are in the process of introducing MLL in their primary schools. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) has adopted MLL as a major strategy for improvement of quality for primary education, Non-formal education programme is also adopting MLLs where

appropriate.⁽³⁹⁾

Laying down of MLL is a part of the larger curriculum reform endeavour to achieve greater relevance and functionally in primary education. The implications of this exercise are : a) lightening the curriculum of its textual load and also burden of memorizing unnecessary and irrelevant content of facts, b) relating textual content with a meaningful process of understanding and application, c) ensuring the acquisition of basic competencies and skills to such a level where they are sustainable and would not easily allow relapsing into illiteracy, and d) facilitating mastery in learning not only by brighter children in the class but also by almost all children including first generation learners.

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