

CHAPTER 2.2

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

2.2.1 Education is a critical input in human resource development and is essential for the country's economic growth. Though the major indicators of socio-economic development viz., the growth rate of the economy, birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate (IMR) and literacy rate, are all interconnected, the literacy rate has been the major determinant of the rise or fall in the other indicators. There is enough evidence even in India to show that a high literacy rate, especially in the case of women, correlates with low birth rate, low IMR and increase in the rate of life expectancy. The recognition of this fact has created awareness on the need to focus upon literacy and elementary education programmes, not simply as a matter of social justice but more to foster economic growth, social well-being and social stability

REVIEW OF PAST PERFORMANCE

2.2.2 Article 45 of the Constitution stipulates that the 'State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years.' However, the task of providing basic education for all, with concrete plans of action, gained greater momentum only after the National Policy of Education (NPE), 1986 (revised in 1992). With the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) adopted in Jomtein in 1990, basic education in all its facets (Early Child Care Education (ECCE), elementary education, education for adolescents, adult education, gender equality and quality improvement) has been the focus of international attention. These international developments, together with several positive developments within the country, brought the need for recognising basic education as a fundamental right of every citizen to the centre stage. With the launching of the National Policy on Education in 1986, the Government

initiated a move to start a number of missions. The National Literacy Mission, started in 1988, was one such mission. It had the following aims:

- Increase motivation, which is the central issue in literacy;
- secure participation by creating a positive environment and through mass mobilisation;
- increase the involvement of voluntary agencies and enhance the quality of existing programmes with improved techno-pedagogic inputs;
- launch a mass movement for expanding the Mass Functional Literacy Programme (MFLP), hitherto confined to university, college and secondary/higher secondary schools, to include different sections of society;
- ensure the availability of quality learning materials, aligned to mission goals;
- universalise the outreach of literacy learning facilities to all parts of the country by 1990; and
- establish a Mission Management System for monitoring and for corrective action.

2.2.3 The central government, in partnership with state governments, has initiated a number of programmes to fulfill the Constitutional obligation and national aspirations.

Growth of Literacy

2.2.4 Over the decades, literacy rates have shown substantial improvement. The total literacy rate, which was only 16.67 per cent in 1951 rose to 52.21 per cent in 1991. The provisional results of

the 2001 Census indicate that the literacy rate has gone up to 65.37 per cent - 75.85 per cent for males and 54.16 per cent for females. For the first time, the number of illiterates has, in absolute terms, decreased by 31.9 million. The number of literates, on the other hand, has increased by 203.6 million between 1991 and 2001. During the period, the female literacy rate increased by 14.87 per cent as against 11.72 per cent in the case of males, thus reducing the male-female literacy gap to 21.7 per cent from 24.84 per cent in 1991. All states have, without exception, registered an increase in literacy rates of both males and females during the last decade. Table 2.2.1 gives the literacy rates over the decades:

Table 2.2.1
Literacy Rates 1951 – 2001

	Male	Female	Total
1951	24.95	7.93	16.67
1961	34.44	12.95	24.02
1971	39.45	18.69	29.45
1981	56.50	29.85	43.67
1991	64.13	39.29	52.21
2001(provisional)	75.85	54.16	65.37

Enrolment Trends

2.2.5 Enrolment at the primary level (grades I to V) increased from 19.16 million in 1950-51 to 113.61 million in 1999-2000. In comparison, the growth in enrolment at the upper primary level (grades VI to VIII) has been much more impressive, although it is still not adequate to attain the Constitutional goal of universal enrolment of children up to the age of 14. From 3.12 million in 1950-51, enrolment at the upper primary level increased to 42.06 million in 1999-2000, indicating a 13.5 times increase as against six times at the primary level. The percentage share of girls in total enrolment, both at the primary and upper primary levels, has increased consistently between 1950-51 (28.1 per cent) and 1999-2000 (43.6 per cent). However, girls' share in total enrolment at the upper primary level (40.4 per cent) continues to be lower than their share at the primary level in 1999-2000.

Enrolment Ratios

2.2.6 The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the primary and upper primary levels improved significantly between 1950-51 and 1999-2000, from 42.6 to 94.9 in the case of primary levels and from 12.7 to 58.79 for upper primary levels. The gap between boys and girls in GER at the primary and upper primary levels has declined significantly from 28.5 and 29.6 percentage points respectively in 1990-91 to 19 and 18 in 1999-2000.

2.2.7 The Net Enrolment Ratios (NER), obtained by subtracting the number of underage and overage children enrolled in grades I-V and VI-VIII, were significantly lower than GER in the case of both boys and girls. The NER for boys and girls was 78 per cent and 64 per cent respectively at the primary level in 1997-98. The overall NER at the primary level was 71 per cent, which suggests that at least 29 per cent of children in the 6-10 age group continued to remain out of school in 1997-98. Educationally backward states, and, within them, backward districts, have lower NER than the all-India average.

Educational facilities

2.2.8 The availability of schooling facilities is measured by a set of indicators concerning access. Existing norms stipulate that a habitation (cluster of households) is entitled to have a primary school, if it has a population of 300 and more and has no school within a distance of one km. Upper primary schools are to be located at a distance of three km from habitations with a population of 500 and more. These norms are often relaxed in case of hilly and tribal areas, difficult terrains and border districts.

2.2.9 During the period 1950-51 to 1999-2000, the number of primary schools has increased by more than three times from 2,10,000 in 1950-51 to 6,42,000 in 1999-2000 whereas the number of upper primary schools increased by about 15 times from 13,600 in 1950-51 to 1,98,000 in 1999-2000. The ratio of upper primary school to primary schools came down from 1:15 in 1950-51 to 1:3.2 in 1999-2000.

2.2.10 The total number of teachers increased from 6,24,000 in 1950-51 to 3.2 million in 1999-2000, an increase of more than five times. The number of female teachers increased from 95,000 in 1950-51 to 11,52,000 in 1999-2000, an increase of more than 12 times. The percentage of female teachers to total teachers, which was 15.2 per cent at the primary level and 15.1 per cent at upper primary level in 1950-51 has increased to 35.6 and 36.1 per cent respectively in 1999-2000. However, the teacher-pupil ratio (TPR) has worsened over the years. During 1950-51, the TPR in primary schools was 1:24, and 1:20 in middle schools. In 1999-2000, this ratio has increased to 1:43 in primary schools and 1:38 in upper primary schools.

2.2.11 Despite an increase in the number of habitations and population, the coverage of both primary and upper primary schools, in line with the norms, has increased significantly. Of the one million rural habitations in the country, 5,28,000 had a primary school within the habitation itself in 1993-94. About 83.4 per cent habitations had a primary school/section within a one km distance. Presently, about 1,00,000 habitations remain unserved as per prescribed norms. The alternative and innovative programme envisages opening of non-formal education (NFE) centres in habitations where opening of a full-fledged school is not economically feasible or academically viable. Over a period of time, infrastructure and other facilities in schools have also improved significantly although a large number of primary and upper primary schools continue to suffer from deficiencies, making it difficult for them to function smoothly and preventing them from providing optimal conditions for teaching and learning.

REVIEW OF NINTH PLAN

2.2.12 The Ninth Plan regarded education as the most crucial investment in human development. The Prime Minister's Special Action Plan gave emphasis to the total eradication of illiteracy, equal access to and opportunity of education up to the school-leaving stage, improvement in the quality of education at all levels, and the need for expansion and improvement of infrastructural facilities. The

thrust areas in the Ninth Plan included UEE, full adult literacy, raising the quality of education at all levels and improving learner achievement. The Plan also emphasised improvement of the educational status of disadvantaged groups, including scheduled castes (SC) and scheduled tribes (ST), girls and disabled children and the removal of regional disparities. In addition, it stressed the vocationalisation of education, revision of the curriculum to meet emerging challenges in information technology and support for development of centres of excellence at the tertiary level.

2.2.13 Elementary education was given the highest priority in sub-sectoral allocations within the education sector, indicating a strong reiteration of the country's resolve to achieve the goal of EFA during the Plan period. The goal was sought to be achieved through several measures, which included:

- Amendment of the Constitution to make elementary education a fundamental right;
- decentralisation of planning, supervision and management of education through local bodies at the district, block and village levels;
- social mobilisation of local communities for adult literacy through campaigns and for promotion of primary education;
- convergence of different schemes for UEE;
- stronger partnership with non-government organisations (NGOs) and voluntary organisations;
- advocacy and media campaign for UEE;
- 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; and
- universal participation and retention rather than universal enrolment. The goal of UEE was enlarged to include provision of education of a satisfactory quality to all children.

Achievements of Ninth Plan

2.2.14 As a result of the various intervention strategies, the progress in terms of access was impressive. According to the Sixth All-India Education Survey (1993), 94 per cent of the rural population living in 8.84 lakh habitations now has a school within a walking distance of one km. and 85 per cent have an upper primary school within a walking distance of three km. The situation has improved significantly thereafter. During the first three years of the Ninth Plan (1997-2000), over 43,000 new schools were opened and 1,30,000 new teachers recruited at the primary level, while more than 21,000 new schools and 1,02,000 teachers added in the upper primary schools. The GER at the primary level increased from 90.6 per cent in 1996-97 to 94.9 per cent in 1999-2000, while it declined from 62.4 per cent to 58.8 per cent at the upper primary level during the same period. The dropout rate at the primary level declined from 42.4 per cent in 1998-99 to 40.3 per cent in 1999-2000, while in the upper primary stage it fell from 56.8 per cent to 54.5 per cent.

2.2.15 Despite the significant improvement in access to elementary education in the Ninth Plan, the achievement is short of target as the Plan had envisaged additional enrolment of 25 million children in the primary stage and 16 million children in the upper primary stage. It had also targeted the construction of 75,000 school buildings/additional classrooms at the elementary stage and the appointment of 2,36,000 teachers at the primary level and 1,75,000 teachers at the upper primary level.

PROGRAMMES/SCHEMES

Operation Blackboard

2.2.16 The Operation Blackboard scheme, started in 1987-88, which aimed at improving the classroom environment by providing infrastructural facilities, additional teachers and teaching-learning material to primary schools and by provision of a third teacher to schools where enrolment exceeded 100, has been extended to upper primary schools. A total of 5,23,000 primary

schools and 1,27,000 upper primary schools have been provided funds for the development of academic infrastructure (teaching-learning material). Besides, 1,50,000 posts of additional teachers for single teacher primary schools, 76,000 posts of additional teachers at the upper primary stage and 83,000 posts of third teachers have been sanctioned so far.

Restructuring and Reorganisation of Teacher Education

2.2.17 The scheme of Restructuring and Reorganisation of Teacher Education, started in 1987, aims to strengthen the institutional base of teacher training by taking up special programmes for training of teachers in specified areas and other non-institutional training programmes. Other objectives of the scheme are: setting up District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) to provide academic and resource support to elementary school teachers and non-formal and adult education instructors; and establishment of Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs) for pre-service and in-service training for secondary school teachers. The scheme also envisages strengthening State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERT); orienting teachers in the use of Operation Black-board material; and implementation of the Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) strategy.

2.2.18 Under this scheme, 471 DIETs, 86 CTEs, 38 IASEs have been sanctioned so far. More than 1.9 million teachers have been trained under the Special Orientation Programme of School Teachers in the use of Operation Blackboard material and implementation of the MLL strategy. The scheme has recently been revamped with greater thrust on improving the quality of teacher training institutions in partnership with states. The revised scheme provides for more assistance to states; memorandums of understanding (MoU) with states to improve the efficiency of key resource institutes; widening the scope of the Special Orientation Programme for school teachers; and enhancing the capacities of existing personnel for the management of teacher education programmes.

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)

2.2.19 The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), launched in 1994, is assisted by the World Bank, European Commission, Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). It aims at operationalising the strategies for achieving UPE/UEE through district-specific planning and disaggregated target setting in low female literacy districts and builds on the successful Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) which has created a favourable climate for universalisation. Eighty-five per cent of the funds for the project come from external agencies through the central budget and the remaining 15 per cent is given by the concerned state governments. The programme components include construction of classrooms and new schools, opening of the non-formal/alternative schooling centres, appointment of new teachers, and setting up of early childhood education (ECE) centres, strengthening of SCERTs and DIETs, and setting up of block resource centres/cluster resource centres. It also comprises teacher training, interventions, development of teaching-learning material, research and a thrust on education of girls, SC/ST etc. A new initiative of providing integrated education to disabled children and distance education for teacher training has also been incorporated in the DPEP scheme.

2.2.20 Under DPEP, 21,000 new formal schools and over 67,000 new alternative schools have been opened, covering 2.5 million children, and 20,000 bridge courses conducted. The programme has set up over 10,000 ECE centres and strengthened more than 50,000 pre-primary centres of anganwadis. DPEP has provided training to over three million community members and about one million teachers. About 27,700 school buildings, 37,000 classrooms and 11,100 resource centres have been completed or are in progress in DPEP districts. The programme now covers about 50 per cent of the children in the primary stage in over 271 districts in 18 states.

Shiksha Karmi Project and Lok Jumbish Project in Rajasthan

2.2.21 Two externally-aided projects for basic education are the Shiksha Karmi and Lok Jumbish projects in Rajasthan. Both are innovative projects aimed at the universalisation of elementary education together with a qualitative improvement in remote and socially backward villages with a primary focus on gender. The projects address some of the major obstacles in achieving UEE, namely, teacher absenteeism, high drop-out rate, working children, uninteresting teaching methods, lack of contextual learning materials, low motivation and competence of teachers, a centralised and inflexible approach etc. There is a special emphasis on community participation in these projects. The Village Education Committees (VECs) have contributed a great deal to the improvement of the school environment, augmentation of infrastructure and facilities, larger enrolment of children through school mapping and micro-planning in the Shiksha Karmi schools. The Shiksha Karmi project covers 2,708 villages in 147 blocks spread over 31 districts and has been responsible for a seven-fold increase in the enrolment of children in schools taken over by the project.

2.2.22 The Lok Jumbish project has been able to set up innovative management structures incorporating the principles of decentralisation and delegation of authority as well as building partnerships with local communities and the voluntary sector. The project has also made a positive contribution to quality improvement through the development of improved MLL-based textbooks for Classes I-IV, which are also being used in all schools in Rajasthan. It has conducted school mapping in 8,921 villages, opened 2,560 Sahaj Shiksha Centres covering 47,000 children and started 529 new primary schools and 268 upper primary schools. The programme has also strengthened 239 pre-school centres of anganwadis and formed over 7,600 Mahila Groups.

Mahila Samakhya

2.2.23 Another externally-assisted programme with a specific focus on gender is Mahila Samakhya,

started in 1989 in five States. It aims to promote women's education and empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly women in socially and economically marginalised groups. It endeavours to create a learning environment where women can collectively affirm their potential, gain and strength to demand information and knowledge, and move forward to change and take charge of their lives. Mahila Samakhya has reached the poor and marginal women who have been able to overcome social barriers and are addressing issues such as child marriage, child labour, and violence against women. A pool of aware women has been created through the Mahila Shikshan Kendras and there is an ever-increasing demand for literacy and education for their daughters and granddaughters. This has had a beneficial social impact like delaying the age of marriage of girls. The programme is currently implemented in over 9,000 villages in 53 districts spread over ten states.

Mid-Day Meal Scheme

2.2.24 The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education commonly known as the Mid-day Meal programme was launched in 1995. It aims to give a boost to universalisation of primary education by increasing enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving the

nutritional status of students in primary classes. Under the scheme, cooked meals are served with calorie value equivalent to 100 gm of wheat or rice per student per school day. The honour of starting the Mid-day Meal scheme in elementary schools in the country goes to Tamil Nadu (See Box 2.2.1).

2.2.25 The number of children covered under the programme has risen from 33.4 million in about 3,22,000 schools in 1995-96 to 105.1 million students in 7,92,000 schools spread over 576 districts in 2000-01. It is targeted to cover 107.2 million children in 578 districts during 2001-02. Over 15 lakh tonnes of food grains were lifted for the scheme during 2000-01 compared to 14 lakh tonnes in 1999-2000. Currently, only six states - Gujarat, Kerala, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh (174 tribal blocks) and Madhya Pradesh - and the Union Territory of Pondicherry are providing hot cooked meals under the programme. In Delhi, ready-to-eat food is being distributed. The remaining states/ Union Territories are distributing food grains (wheat/ rice). States like Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka were able to lift 95.7 per cent, 92.9 per cent, 87.8 per cent and 86.6 per cent of food grains respectively under the scheme in 2000-01 while some others such as Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand and Delhi lifted only 12.78 per cent, 25.17 per cent, 30.33 per cent and 33.98 per cent food grains respectively.

Box 2.2.1

Mid-day Meal Scheme in Tamil Nadu

The Mid-day Meal scheme in Tamil Nadu was started on a humble scale way back in 1925-26 by the Corporation of Madras with the aim to improve school attendance. Subsequently, philanthropists and voluntary organisations were urged to start free school lunch centres in villages and towns all over the state. In July 1956, the school lunch programme was launched as a 'people's movement' for organised charity as part of the 'School Improvement Efforts'. Impressed by the public response, the Government of Tamil Nadu (erstwhile Madras) took up the school lunch programme in 1957 and issued detailed rules for running the programme, which have been revised several times since then. In year 1961, the state started receiving CARE (Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere) food commodities for feeding 500,000 children through the school lunch programme. In 1978, 1.86 million children in 32,000 schools were covered and this number increased to 2.03 million in 33,306 schools in 1980-81.

The state achieved another milestone in 1982 with the launch of Nutritious Meal Programme for schoolchildren in classes 1st to Xth. This programme is being implemented through Nutritious Meal Centres located in schools and all children who are willing to enroll are fed. During 2001-02, 5.80 million children were enrolled for the Mid-day Meal Scheme.

2.2.26 The Mid-day Meal scheme has been evaluated by different agencies at different points of time. The Operations Research Group, evaluated the scheme in July 1999 in ten states with the support of UNICEF and found that the scheme has attracted SC/ST children and children belonging to lower income groups to school. The Planning Commission also commissioned two studies in April 2000 to measure the impact of the scheme and found that a cooked meal programme was preferable not only from the health point of view but also because it attracted more children to schools. Similarly, other studies conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and Public Report on Basic Education (PROBE) have also upheld the view that the scheme has had a positive impact in the direction of universalisation of primary education.

2.2.27 Despite the fact that the scheme has increased enrolment as well as retention of students, it has not been successful in achieving its ambitious targets for nation-wide coverage. Some of the weaknesses of the programme are:

- Non-provision of a cooked meal.
- Enrolment data, which is to be provided by the states each year and on the basis of which food grains are allocated for ten academic months, is not available. This is evident in the fact that there is a mismatch between the allocation and lifting of food grains.
- Inability of states to arrange the timely delivery of food grains. A major reason for this is the non-availability of funds with the implementing agencies to meet the initial expenditure on transportation charges, which is later reimbursed by the central government. This particularly affects schools in far-flung areas.
- Community participation in the implementation of the programme is lacking because of poor awareness and advocacy, among other things.
- Since the initial arrangement for Management Information System (MIS) through

the National Informatics Centre NET (NICNET) did not take off, close monitoring and supervision of the programme was negligible, resulting in furnishing of erratic reports on utilisation as well as beneficiaries covered under the scheme.

Non-Formal Education (NFE) and EGS & AIE

2.2.28 The scheme of non-formal education (NFE), introduced in 1977-78 on a pilot basis and expanded in subsequent years, focused on out-of-school children in the 6-14 age group who have remained outside the formal system due to socio-economic and cultural reasons. The scheme was initially limited to ten educationally backward states, covering urban slums, hilly, tribal and desert areas. The scheme has many lacunae – lack of enthusiasm of teachers, poor quality of training, ambiguity in curriculum and text-books, lack of community participation, weak management system, insufficient outlay, a lack of emphasis on mainstreaming etc. Moreover, most NFE centres were in habitations already served by formal schools.

2.2.29 The programme was revised and renamed the Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education (EGS & AIE) in 2000. It provided for opening EGS schools in habitations where there are no schools within a radius of one km. The EGS&AIE scheme will support diversified strategies for out-of-school children including bridge courses, back-to-school camps, seasonal hostels, summer camps, mobile teachers and remedial coaching. The investment cost per child per year has been increased from Rs. 375 to Rs. 845 at the primary level centre and from Rs. 580 to Rs. 1,200 at the upper primary level.

Janshala (GOI-UN) Programme

2.2.30 The Janshala (GOI-UN) Programme is a collaborative effort of the Government of India (GOI) and five United Nations (UN) agencies – UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, UN Economic and Social Commission (UNESCO), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNFPA. It provides programme support to the on-

going efforts towards achieving UEE. UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA have committed to contribute \$ 20 million for the programme while UNESCO and ILO have offered technical know-how. Janshala is a community-based primary education programme that aims to make primary education more accessible and effective, especially for girls and children in deprived communities, marginalised groups, SCs/STs, minorities, working children and children with special needs. The programme covers 139 blocks in nine states – Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh – with a total project outlay of Rs. 103.29 crore. The programme is to run for five years, from 1998 to 2002. At the state level, the programme is implemented through existing structures of educational administration. Janshala has started a large number of alternative schools in small and remote habitations in the programme areas, besides evolving strategies and setting up schools with community participation in the urban slums of Jaipur, Hyderabad, Ajmer, Bharatpur, Puri and Lucknow. Other major areas of achievement are in teacher training, multi-grade teaching, intervention for education of the disabled, setting up of block and cluster resources centres and strengthening capacities at the state, district and block level.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

2.2.31 The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched towards the end of the Ninth Plan to achieve the goal of UEE through a time-bound integrated approach, in partnership with states. The medium-term goals for the scheme are given in Box 2.2.2. The programme, which aims to provide elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010, is an effort to improve the performance of the school system and provide community-owned quality elementary education in the mission mode. It also envisages bridging of gender and social disparities at the elementary level. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has a special focus on the educational needs of girls, SCs and STs and other children in difficult circumstances.

2.2.32 Under the programme, habitation plans, prepared after micro-planning, household surveys,

Box 2.2.2

Objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

- All children to be in schools, Education Guarantee Scheme centres, alternate schools, back-to-school camps by 2003;
- all children to complete five years of primary schooling by 2007;
- all children to complete eight years of schooling by 2010;
- focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life;
- bridge all gender and social disparities at the primary stage by 2007 and at the upper primary level by 2010; and
- universal retention by 2010.

school mapping and diagnostic studies, form the basis for the District Elementary Education Plans (DEEP). Funds released to states would be channelised to registered societies at the state level. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is expected to accord the highest priority to community monitoring, transparency in programme planning and implementation of capacity building at all levels as also to the adoption of a mission approach by the mainstream Education Department functionaries. A National Mission for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was constituted in November 2000 with the Prime Minister as the Chairman and the Minister for Human Resource Development as Vice-Chairman.

2.2.33 The scheme is expected to absorb most of the existing programmes, including externally-aided programmes, within its overall framework with the district as the unit of programme implementation. To make the approach totally holistic and convergent, efforts would be made to dovetail programme implementation at the district level with all other departments. This would include programmes for children in the 0-6 age group under the Department of Women and Child Development, sports-related interventions of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, establishment of public libraries under the Department of Culture and nutrition and health programmes of the Ministry of Health.

Box 2.2.3**INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMES IN EDUCATION IN DIFFERENT STATES**

Several state governments have designed innovative programmes to improve the quality of education in schools.

HEAD START

The Rajiv Gandhi State Mission in Madhya Pradesh has introduced a project on a pilot basis for using computers to improve the quality of teaching in rural elementary schools through indigenous customised educational software. The idea is to integrate the use of computers with classroom activities to improve the child's comprehension of difficult parts of each subject as well as to instill computer literacy. A syllabus mapping the difficult areas of learning has been developed and educational software on this for all subjects is being prepared for use in the academic year 2002-03.

Started in November 2000, 648 Head Start centres were operationalised in middle schools that have a primary section and serve as Jan Shiksha Kendras or school cluster resource centres for primary schools in a radius of eight km. A total of 2,358 teachers have been given training in computer-enabled education.

GYANKALASH

The District Primary Education Programme in Himachal Pradesh, in collaboration with All India Radio, Shimla, has started a 15-minute bi-weekly programme called Gyankalash to provide academic support to primary teachers. The programme helps in improving the teachers' access to the knowledge, especially those in the remote areas as it is impossible to reach them through conventional means.

In the first phase of Gyankalash, topics were identified and radio scripts developed in workshops organised for the purpose. Resource persons, teacher educators from state and district level, practising teachers in secondary and primary schools participated in the workshops.

In the next phase, teachers and students from government primary schools were involved in the production and broadcast of the spots.

In order to motivate teachers, certificates were given to teachers on the successful completion of the training under different phases of Gyankalash.

NALI KALI

The Nali Kali programme in Karnataka was introduced in privately managed schools in 1999. Under the programme, learning takes place in an interactive situation in accordance with age-wise competency. Children are divided into groups and they master one level of competency, then move to another group to learn the next level of competency. Children learn at their own pace and the move from one level of competency to another is not dependent on the whole group's learning achievement. All teaching-learning processes involve songs, games, survey, story telling and use of educational toys. This method effectively eliminates the formal system of roll calls, examination, promotions, ranking – all these now deemed unhealthy – at least between the of 5 and 14.

Table 2.2.2
Financial Performance during Ninth Five Year Plan

(Rs. crore)

S. No.	Sub-sector	Eighth Plan (Expenditure)		Ninth Plan (outlay)		Expenditure Ninth Plan					Total Anticipated Expenditure Ninth Plan
		Rs. crore	% age	Rs. crore	% age	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	
1.	Elementary Education	4,006.55	47.0	16,369.59	65.7	2,234.94	2,749.83	2,851.97	3,117.39	3,569.16	14,523.29
2.	Adult Education.	7,18.14	8.4	630.39	2.5	78.85	72.29	87.08	108.16	174.00	520.38

(Note) : percentage expenditure under Elementary Education and Adult Education during the Eighth Plan is expenditure under these sub-sectors expressed as percentage of total expenditure in the education sector. Similarly %age outlay under these sub-sectors during the Ninth Plan is outlays for these sub-sectors expressed as percentage of total outlay of the education sector).

Source : Report of the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Ninth Five Year Plan, Planning Commission
Department of Elementary Education and Literacy

2.2.34 The financial performance of the elementary education sector during the Ninth Plan is summarised in Table 2.2.2.

GOALS, TARGETS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE TENTH PLAN

Goals and Targets

2.2.35 In the elementary education sector, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is in place with clear focus and medium-term goals as specified in Box 2.2.2. The Tenth Plan targets in respect to elementary education are:

- All children in the 6-14 age group should have access to primary schools, upper primary schools or their alternatives within a walking distance of one km and three km respectively.
- All children in the 3-6 age group must have universal access to early childhood care and education centres.
- Need-based expansion of upper primary education facilities, particularly for the disadvantaged sections. There should be

one upper primary school for every two primary schools.

- All schools should have buildings, toilets, drinking water, electricity, playgrounds, blackboards and other basic facilities. There must be provision of one classroom for every teacher at the elementary stage.

Universal Enrolment

- Enrolment of all children in schools or alternative arrangements by 2003.
- All children to complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.

Universal Retention

- Universal retention in the primary stage by 2007.
- Dropout rate to be reduced to less than 10 per cent for grades VI-VIII by 2007.

Universal Achievement

- Improve the quality of education in all respects (content and process) to ensure reasonable learning outcomes at the elementary level, especially in literacy, numerics and in life skills.

Equity

- Bridge all gender and social gaps in enrolment, retention and learning achievement in the primary stage by 2007 and reduce the gap to 5 per cent in the upper primary stage by 2007.
- Special interventions and strategies to include girls, SC/ST children, working children, children with special needs, urban deprived children, children from minority groups, children below the poverty line, migratory children and children in the hardest-to-reach groups.

STRATEGIES FOR UNIVERSALISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

2.2.36 The strategies and interventions during the Tenth Plan will mainly be guided by three major considerations: (a) magnitude of the task; (b) present challenges; and (c) the existing administrative and policy framework and the one that will be in place during the Plan period.

2.2.37 **Magnitude of the Task:** The Working Group on Elementary and Adult Education for the Tenth Five-Year Plan has estimated that in order to achieve the goal of UEE by 2010, enrolment at the primary level needs to grow at an average annual growth rate of 1.12 per cent for boys and 4.16 per cent for girls during the Plan period. At the upper primary level, the growth rate must be 4.62 per cent for boys and 8.03 per cent for girls. The average

growth rate for boys and girls taken together should be 2.51 per cent at the primary and 6.08 per cent at the upper primary levels. The year-wise estimated additional enrolment during the Plan period are given in Table 2.2.3.

2.2.38 **Present Challenges:** Achieving the goal of UEE poses three main challenges: (i) access to basic education for the unreached segments and social groups; (ii) qualitative improvement in content and processes so as to raise learning achievements; and (iii) tackling high drop-out and low retention rates in primary and upper primary schools.

2.2.39 **Administrative and Policy Framework:** The administrative and policy framework needs to be guided by the following concerns.

- The national resolve to provide free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children up to the age of 14 years, as stipulated in the National Policy on Education;
- The 93rd Constitutional amendment making the right to elementary education a fundamental right and enforcing it through necessary statutory measures; and
- The spirit of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments setting the stage for greater decentralisation of power and a significantly enhanced role for local bodies, community organisations as well as voluntary agencies in the efforts towards UEE.

Table 2.2.3
Year-wise Estimated Additional Enrolment

(in million)

Year	Additional Enrolment					
	Primary (Grade I-V)			Upper Primary (Grades VI-VIII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2002-03	0.67	2.01	2.68	1.14	1.44	2.58
2003-04	0.67	2.10	2.77	1.19	1.54	2.73
2004-05	0.67	2.18	2.85	1.25	1.67	2.92
2005-06	0.69	2.27	2.96	1.31	1.81	3.12
2006-07	0.69	2.37	3.06	1.37	1.95	3.32
Total	3.39	10.93	14.32	6.26	8.41	14.67

2.2.40 Given this backdrop, the Tenth Plan strategy for achieving UEE must have the following salient features:

2.2.41 **Holistic and Convergent Approach :** As the existing policies and programmes are either for specific target groups/regions, there is need for an all-comprehensive programme covering the entire country. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is such a programme and will be the main vehicle for achieving the goals of UEE.

2.2.42 **Community Participation in UEE Programmes :** The involvement of the community will be made more systematic by involving the panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) and urban local bodies. Further down the hierarchy, VECs, Mother-Teacher Associations (MTA) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) would have a formal role in the management of schools in the village.

2.2.43 **Target-Groups Oriented Strategy :** The Tenth Plan will lay emphasis on identifying the problem areas and formulating a separate strategy for each area, under the overall umbrella of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. There will be special focus on children who have never enrolled or those who have dropped out without completing eight years of elementary schooling. Specific strategies would be devised for the difficult-to-reach groups in order to ascertain the reasons for their staying away from school system and to take steps to provide them quality elementary education.

Programmes for Achieving UEE

2.2.44 The following schemes would be the instruments by which these strategies would be translated into action during the Tenth Plan. Scheme-wise break-up of the Tenth Plan outlay is given in the Appendix.

2.2.45 **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan :** Out of the approximately 207.76 million children in the 6-14 age group in 2000, the number of children not attending the schools is 40 million. Those outside the school system are mostly girls, SCs/STs children, working children, urban deprived children, disabled children and children in difficult circumstances. Providing access and motivation to these

difficult to reach groups, without compromising on the quality of education, would be the challenge that the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan would tackle in the Tenth Plan.

2.2.46 The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will totally subsume all existing programmes, barring the Mid-day Meals scheme, and the scheme of Restructuring and Reorganisation of Teachers' Education. All legal agreements regarding externally-aided projects such as Mahila Samakhya, DPEP, Lok Jumbish, Shiksha Karmi, etc, will continue to apply unless specific modifications have been made in consultation with the funding agencies. In order to achieve a holistic and convergent approach, efforts would be made to dovetail programme implementation at the district level with all other programmes. This would include programmes for children in the 0-6 age group under the Department of Women and Child Development, sports-related interventions of the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs, establishment of public libraries under the Department of Culture, nutrition and school health programmes of the Ministry of Health and the employment generation / poverty alleviation programmes of Ministry of Rural Development. This dovetailing exercise would be undertaken while formulating the DEEPs.

2.2.47 **Gender-Specific Programmes :** The Tenth Plan would also rely on some women-centric programmes such as the existing Mahila Samakhya, and two new schemes, the Kasturba Gandhi Swatantra Vidyalaya (KGSV) and the National Programme for the Education of Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL). Mahila Samakhya will be expanded both in terms of geographical reach and activities like the Mahila Shikshan Kendras. However, it will retain its objectives, identity and non-negotiable principles.

2.2.48 The KGSV and the NPEGEL are proposed to be taken up during the Tenth Plan, with the following features:

- Focus on educationally backward areas in girls' education;
- focus on girls from the disadvantaged sections like those belonging to SC/ST, minorities, etc;

- tackling gender-specific issues that prevent girls and women from having access to education;
- providing women and adolescent girls with the necessary support structure, and an informal learning environment to create opportunities for education;
- creating circumstances for larger participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education programmes; and
- helping girls to overcome socio-cultural and economic factors inhibiting their access to elementary education.

2.2.49 Mid-day Meal Scheme : A Supreme Court order in 2001 makes it obligatory for states to provide cooked meals instead of dry rations within the stipulated time-frame, under the Mid-day Meals scheme. Further, in order to achieve the goals set in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme, modifications would be made in the scheme in the light of feedback received from evaluation studies, the experience gained from the working of the scheme, and the opinions of experts. The modifications would include the following :

- Expanding the programme to cover the children of the EGS & AIE scheme.
- Ending the present practice of distributing food grains and providing hot cooked meals or ready-to-eat food based on sound nutritional principles.
- Allowing adequate flexibility in the management of the programme by the local bodies/community through VECs, School Management Committees (SMCs), PTAs etc. Also, fostering stronger community participation in the implementation of the programme and encouraging the participation of credible NGOs, wherever possible.
- Decentralising the management of the programme to enable reduction in leakages and mismanagement etc.

- Providing funds in advance to the implementing agencies through their state nodal officer for the transportation of food grains.
- Limiting teachers' involvement in the programme to supervision activities.
- Extensive use of the computerised MIS (CMIS) net for monitoring purposes. External agencies are to be involved in monitoring and supervision to ensure greater accountability. Elected representatives will also be involved in supervision.
- Linkage with poverty alleviation programmes in rural and urban areas, adequate support of the Union Ministry of Health and the state Health Departments for a school health programme and support from the Department of Women and Child Development for nutrition education.
- A memorandum of understanding be entered into with the key stakeholders (state governments, local bodies, etc.) on the key parameters of the programme.

Strategies for Quality Improvement

2.2.50 While the goals of universal literacy and enrolment are laudable in themselves, the achievements in these areas would remain hollow without ensuring quality education. A qualitative improvement in the content and processes of basic education, in order to make them more responsive to the learning needs of individuals and the development needs of different socio-economic sectors, continues to be a major challenge. The challenge for providing quality education at the elementary level involves improvements in the preparation, motivation and deployment of teachers, the quality of textbooks and of infrastructural facilities. It also involves making education relevant to society's needs and strengthening the management and institutional capacity of educational institutions especially at the state, district and local levels.

2.2.51 Improving the quality of textbooks is crucial as they are the main instructional aids in elementary schools, and are the only reading material for most students.

2.2.52 The quality of infrastructural facilities (particularly toilets for girls), equipment and support services, also has a significant impact on enrolment and retention. In this context, the main challenge is to provide a classroom for every teacher in the primary and upper primary schools and a separate room for the headmaster in upper primary schools along with playground facilities and clean toilets. Although one-third of the expenditure approved under DEEP is earmarked for the construction of buildings etc., there are still a substantial number of primary schools without these facilities. The main thrust in the Tenth Plan should be to ascertain that all the primary schools have *pucca* buildings with all supporting infrastructural facilities.

Teachers Education

2.2.53 Improving the performance of teachers is the most important challenge in elementary education as they are the principal instruments of education. Besides, teachers' salary claims the major share of the state education budget. Although a lot has already been done to improve the quality of teachers, historical deficiencies in teachers' education and training has resulted in many of them having little understanding of the material they teach, poor teaching skills and poor motivation levels.

2.2.54 Besides addressing the issue of quality, the Tenth Plan would also place an exclusive emphasis on teacher education. Some of the broad strategies, which would be followed, are:

Development and strengthening of teacher education institutes

2.2.55 The focus of teacher education would be on the development of the following institutions :

- **District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs) :** Each state would be encouraged to rethink the structure of its

DIETs as per needs of the district and effectiveness of the institution. Each DIET would be encouraged to draw up a development plan for itself, defining its role and setting goals for itself. Special attention will be paid to the development of libraries in DIETs, as well as providing computer facilities (including computer literacy training), exposure visits, networking and sharing among DIETs and other academic institutions on professional issues and the establishment of district resource groups. Further, new DIETs would be set up only in those states where the existing ones are functional and steps are taken to improve sub-standard DIETs.

- **College of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs) :** The need for CTEs and IASEs in each state would be ascertained in terms of the needs for secondary teacher education and identified institutions would be strengthened. The identified CTEs/ IASEs would need to prepare their individual plan of development, mentioning the areas in which they need to be strengthened and make a need assessment survey in the areas of their jurisdiction. They must also develop schedules and materials of in-service teacher training to cover secondary teachers and implement the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) project on imparting information technology (IT) literacy to the teachers. IASEs would be encouraged to play a greater role in elementary education and education of teacher educators.

- **Strengthening of State Councils for Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) :** The SCERT is identified as a key area for teacher education in the Tenth Plan. The state governments need to fulfill some essential conditions for being eligible for funds for strengthening of SCERTs, such as recruitment of appropriate faculty, linkage to DIETs, resource centres and schools, autonomy of SCERTs and proper

maintenance of buildings etc. Only then would the central government fund capacity building and training of SCERT faculty, development of infrastructure, computers and IT literacy programmes and hostels for residential training programmes, etc. SCERTs should be equipped to plan for computer education curricula, teacher training etc. at the school level, strengthening of cells for teaching of English language at the elementary level, strengthening of pre-service education etc, pre-service as well as In-service Training of Teachers, including Para-Teachers.

Professional Development of Teachers

2.2.56 The focus in the Tenth Plan would be on:

- Ensuring pre-service training to all elementary school teachers so that all untrained teachers can be trained within a period of three years, including through the distance learning mode.
- Enhancing pre-service training facilities in selected districts where the present capacity is not adequate.
- Improving the quality of elementary teacher pre-service education.
- Extending the provision of pre-primary teacher training by strengthening existing institutions that provide, or are willing to provide, pre-service education for the pre-primary stage.
- Developing specialised correspondence courses, of two months to one year's duration, for elementary teachers in collaboration with open universities, higher education institutions, good IASEs, NGOs with experience in quality education, and other professional organisations.
- Development of courses for in-service education of teachers that will carry credits and linking these to promotions and benefits.

Strengthening of Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs)

2.2.57 With an emphasis on providing academic support to the teachers locally, depending on context-specific needs, DIETs would have close linkage with BRCs and CRCs whose personnel get academic support from them.

Professional development of practitioners, i.e. teacher educators, managers and others

2.2.58 New courses for teacher educators and curriculum developers would be developed and tried out on a pilot basis. Innovations and pilot projects in pre-service and in-service teacher education will be supported. Another major focus area would be networking of teacher education institutions and strengthening of teacher education by expanding access to digital resources. The networked institutions would then be able to use the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for online sharing of resources and for breaking the isolation of institutions.

Systematic learner evaluation

2.2.59 A mechanism for regular learner assessment will be designed and put in place to evaluate the impact and efficacy of measures taken for improvement in school quality.

Strategy for Drop-outs

2.2.60 A large number of children drop out of school because of reasons relating to the school environment. These include attitude of teachers, irrelevant curriculum, sub-standard and uninteresting teaching, teacher absenteeism, corporal punishment, poor school infrastructure, inability to cope with the pace of learning, lack of parental support in the case of first generation learners, maladjustment, etc. Girls form the majority of the dropouts in all categories. The National Family Health Survey-II (NFHS-II), conducted in 1998-99, also observed that the main reasons for students dropping out include their not being interested in studies, the high private cost of education and the need for them to work, whether in their own farms,

business/households or outside. These reasons held true for 75 per cent of dropouts.

2.2.61 The main challenge for education authorities at the central, state and district levels is to (a) improve the supply, quality and retention power of education, particularly in rural primary schools and in the unreached segments; and (b) introduce innovative methods of providing education to identified disadvantaged and difficult groups to suit their timing and interests. The focus in the Tenth Plan would, therefore, be on pedagogic improvement and adoption of child-centered methods, which have been developed in programmes like DPEP; and building a positive environment that would include more attractive classroom designs, local contextual curriculum and more friendly evaluation techniques. Apart from a number of steps undertaken under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to reduce the private cost of education, an incentive scheme linked to attendance has been suggested for girls, SCs/STs and poor children.

2.2.62 Where the children are dropping out because of the need to work, the emphasis would be on involving the community in motivating the parents to bring their children back to school so that they are in a position to complete eight years of elementary education. For those children who have already dropped out, suitable alternative education systems such as bridge courses, remedial teaching, back to school camps, etc., would be provided so that they can be mainstreamed into the formal system.

Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

2.2.63 Early childhood development is globally acknowledged as a significant input for lifelong development and successful completion of primary education. The Tenth Plan acknowledges ECCE as the first step in the education ladder. The major provider of ECCE is the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme which covers 15.8 million children (17.8 per cent of the child population of 3-6 years) through about 5,20,000 anganwadis in 35 states and Union Territories. Early Childhood Education or Pre-School Education is among the six components of the ICDS scheme and is one of

its weakest. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan aims to support (i) strengthening the pre-school component in ICDS by need-based training of anganwadi sevikas, provision of learning materials, etc.; (ii) setting up balwadis as pre-school centres in uncovered areas; (iii) building advocacy on the importance of early child development; (iv) organising training programmes for community leaders; (v) providing for intensive planning for ECCE; (vi) development of materials; and (vii) promoting convergence between the school system and the ECCE.

Community Participation In Elementary Education

2.2.64 Decentralisation provides a clear correlation between the needs of people and the steps taken by the Government to meet these demands. Planning from below and contextualised resource allocation for basic services would not only be more cost effective and produce better results but will also ensure that the quality of the services is directly proportional to the degree of community control and supervision. People's participation in the provision of basic services can, as mentioned in the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Ninth Five-Year Plan, contribute to the achievement of four main objectives, i.e., effectiveness, efficiency, empowerment and equity.

2.2.65 The thrust on decentralised planning and management came as early as in 1986, in the National Policy of Education, which had proposed decentralisation as a fundamental requirement for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of educational planning and management and for evolving a meaningful framework for accountability. The Approach Paper to the Tenth Five-Year Plan has also reiterated that the mere establishment of schools and hiring of teachers will not lead to an improvement in education if teachers remain absent, as is common, especially in the 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. Planning, supervision and management of education would have to be through local bodies at the district, block and village levels. Efforts should also be made for the social mobilisation of local communities for adult literacy campaigns and for the promotion of primary education.

2.2.66 While the decentralisation of governance, through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments, has facilitated the transfer of the management of schools to panchayats/local bodies, the real challenge now is to create an enabling environment for the qualitative participation of all groups. The qualitative participation should mean that the community is able to have a voice and exercise its choice. It also involves the development of human, organisational and management capacity to solve problems and sustain the improvements.

2.2.67 Recognising the fact that community participation is the surest way to ensure UEE and improve the quality of education, several state governments have already initiated the process of decentralising the management of elementary education by involving the community. Other states would also be encouraged to transfer the management of primary schools to panchayat/local bodies with special emphasis on :

- Encouraging community participation in promoting enrolment, retention and other aspects of education. PRIs and grassroot level organisations like VECs, PTAs, MTAs etc. should become the vehicles of community mobilisation;
- Evolving a community-based monitoring system evolved with full transparency;
- Making community mobilisation through intensive micro-planning and school mapping mandatory; and
- Participatory implementation of goals and strategies.

2.2.68 This shift in planning and management strategy will also require a massive effort to train and continually support educational bodies set up under the PRIs/urban local bodies. There is an urgent need to reorient the outlook of government functionaries and their perception of their roles. Efforts will be made to reorient the programmes of various resource institutions at the national and state levels to meet these requirements. Towards this end, the local level institutions in education and allied sectors will be strengthened adequately. Besides, it is envisaged that distance education mechanisms will be suitably strengthened and

reoriented to play a significant role in the task of building capacities among local-level functionaries.

2.2.69 Pursuing the goal of decentralisation, along with partnership between the Centre and the states, demands careful orchestration of policies and programmes, particularly in the area of elementary education. As envisaged in the National Policy on Education, and subsequently reiterated by several bodies, the central government and its institutions will continue to play a major role both for coordination and capacity building. It will continue to monitor the progress of attaining national goals in the field of elementary education.

Synergetic Partnership with the Private Sector

2.2.70 The task of providing basic education in a country with diverse conditions is so stupendous that it is difficult to expect the government sector alone to do this effectively. Even though private initiatives have always been a part of the school education endeavour, it has neither been large nor of a sizeable magnitude in the efforts to universalise elementary education. The private sector can contribute not only in monetary and material terms, but also in the form of expertise for improving quality through effective management of the system and the development of locally relevant teaching-learning materials. Some efforts in this direction have already been made by many states including Karnataka, which has a school adoption scheme. More collaborative efforts at the institutional level as well as in programme implementation will be designed to expand the role of private initiatives in elementary education. A synergetic public-private partnership would be built up during the Tenth Plan to achieve the objective of UEE. Specifically, the following measures would be encouraged:

- More collaborative efforts with the private sector and expansion of the role of private initiatives.
- Improve the functioning of government schools in partnership with the private sector, within the broad parameters of state policy.
- Provide support to initiatives introduced by private schools for deprived children.

- Encourage the opening of private schools, without compromising on quality.
- Provide computer education to children, utilising the expertise and resources of the private sector.

Convergence as a Strategy for Optimum Utilisation of Resources

2.2.71 Cost effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of services under various educational programmes, which are mostly affected by the socio-economic and political conditions, can have a far-reaching impact on the most important determinant of development, i.e., human capital formation. Effectiveness of the delivery of services in the social sector also needs a high degree of integration and convergence in the planning and implementation of programmes of related social sectors. Services like literacy, elementary education, primary health care, nutrition, mother and child care, family welfare and rural development have strong linkages and can only be strengthened through an appropriate integrated approach which will optimise public expenditure and reinforce the effective delivery system. All efforts would be made in the Tenth Plan to achieve convergence both in the formulation of schemes/programmes as well as in their implementation through effective coordination at the national/state level and lower levels of administration.

THE PATH AHEAD

2.2.72 Education has an intrinsic value for the development of the society and helps in the achievement of a better social order. Greater literacy and basic education help individuals to make better use of available economic opportunities. The Government has decided to make free and compulsory elementary education a fundamental right.

2.2.73 The Government has taken a major initiative by launching the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which aims at universalisation of elementary education within a given time frame, in partnership with states. However, it will have to be ensured that there is no compromise on quality. In fact, the lessons learnt

from all the successful programmes on literacy should be made an integral part of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan on a continuous basis.

2.2.74 The implementation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will result in a significant increase in the number of children completing elementary education. This will simultaneously increase the demand for secondary education. This aspect has to be dovetailed in the planning for education and steps have to be taken to gradually strengthen the secondary schools along with other facilities to keep pace with the increased demand.

2.2.75 It is important that the Centre make adequate provision of funds for the fulfillment of the objectives of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and this has to be backed by a complementary on the part of the states. Needless to say, the programme cannot succeed without proper utilisation of the available funds. Effective methods have to be evolved to transfer responsibility for funds and personnel to PRIs so as to assign greater role to them as envisaged in the Constitution.

2.2.76 Systematic mobilisation of the community and creation of an effective system of decentralised decision-making are essential pre-requisites for the achievement of the objectives of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. This involves the cooperation of all stakeholders — the central government, the states, local government bodies, teachers, parents, NGOs, academic institutions and the children themselves. There is also a need for capacity building at all levels to make the programme self-sustainable. The implementation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan with the involvement of all the stakeholders must ultimately result in a transparent and broad-based system of education.

2.2.77 Finally, the need to impart value-based education to the children at the early stages of schooling can hardly be overemphasised. The essential elements of such education should be based on the development of concern towards the needs of society and the nation among the children. In this contemporary world, the value should also be based on the functional utility of education and should highlight the dignity of labour. The idea of creation of wealth should be incorporated into the education system.