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## CHAPTER-1



# Education for All

## *Dakar Goals in the Indian Context*

*"India's greatest resource is its people, The full potential of our human resources is yet to be effectively utilised. High priority will, therefore, be accorded to education.*

*The Government will aim at increasing public spending on education so as to ultimately reach at least 6 per cent of GDP, with half the amount earmarked for primary and secondary education, A Cess will be proposed on all central taxes to finance the commitment to universalise access to quality basic education,*

*"A national cooked nutritious mid-day meal scheme, funded mainly by the Central Government, will be introduced in a phased manner in primary and secondary' schools. The Government will progressively -universalise the Integrated Child Development Services scheme,*

*"Village women and their associations will be encouraged to assume responsibility for all development schemes relating to drinking water, sanitation, primary education, health, and- nutrition."*

*Address of the President of India  
to the first session of the newly-elected Parliament, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2004*



India has been an active partner in the worldwide movement for Education for All that began in 1990 in Jomtien. She is a signatory to the Dakar declaration. Her commitment to the six Dakar goals is backed by conviction and an all out effort. The Dakar goals are generic; they need to be contextualized for every country. More so for India, for she is the cradle of one of the world's oldest civilizations that is multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and with a multi-party electoral democracy.

India comprises 28 constituent States and seven Union Territories. Under a federal relationship, the Centre

and States share the responsibilities — certain subjects such as defence, railways and currency are the responsibility of the Centre, while certain other subjects are the responsibility of the States. There are subjects on which both the States and the Central Government have concurrent powers. Education is on the "Concurrent List" since 1976 - a joint responsibility of the Centre and the States. There are well defined constitutional provisions and mechanisms for sharing of resources and responsibilities between the Centre and the States, for harmonious exercise of their respective powers in the larger national interest.

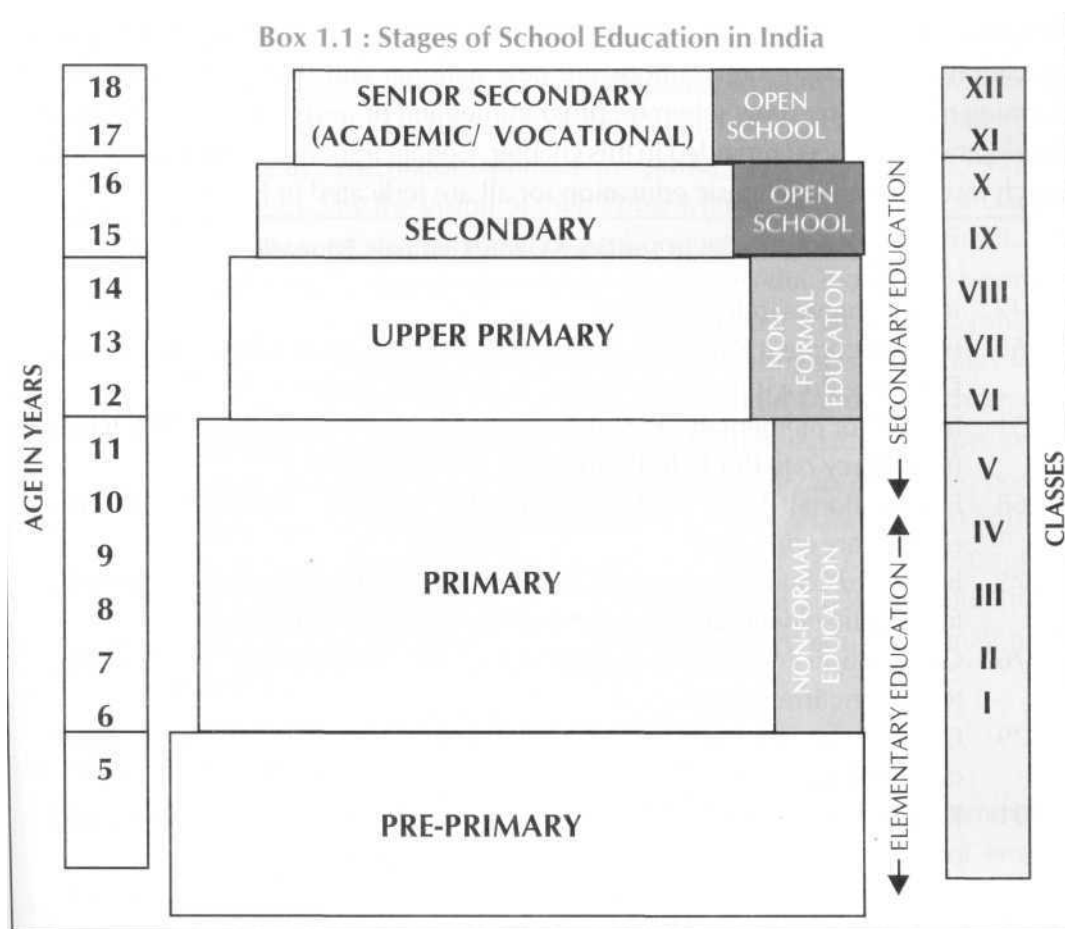
## Indian Context

India, home to 16 per cent of world's population, is spread over 3,287,263 sq. km with a population of 1,028,610,328 (Census 2001), among them 532,156,772 being males and 496,453,556 females. The Census of India 2001 records a 12.6 per cent increase over the literacy rate of 1991, the highest in any decade. **For the first time the absolute number of illiterates has fallen from 328 million in 1991 to 304 million in 2001**, despite the continuing rise in population. The nation is poised on the doorstep of total literacy with three-fourths of the male population and more than half of the female population now being literate. **The female literacy rate has increased by 14.4 per cent from 39.3 per cent in 1991 to 53.7 per cent in 2001.** The corresponding increase in male literacy is about 12 percent.

There are broadly four stages of school education in India, namely, primary and upper primary, secondary and higher secondary. In pursuance of the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1968 and of 1986, there have been attempts to evolve a uniform pattern of school education with 12 years of schooling, commonly known as 10 + 2 pattern. The 'plus two' stage refers to classes XI and XII, which constitute senior secondary stage in all the 35 States/UTs. In some States, senior secondary education is imparted by the junior colleges. The organizational patterns differ for the first ten years of schooling considerably among States/UTs. While in 22 States/UTs, secondary stage consists of classes IX and X, it consists of classes VIII, IX and X in the other 13 States/UTs. The initial schooling stage upto Class VII or VIII (as the case may be in individual State/UT) is generally called the 'elementary stage'. Stages of school Education in India are depicted in Box 1.1.

Decisions regarding the organization and structure of school education are largely the concern of the States/Union Territories. Within the overall framework of the NPE, each State/Union Territory has been independently determining the educational structure to be adopted. This is particularly true of the school stage. However, there is almost complete uniformity in the pattern of educational structure within a particular State or Union Territory and also a broad consensus has emerged for adoption by all States.

Box 1.1 : Stages of School Education in India



### Contextualising Dakar Goals

The Framework of Action as adopted in Dakar identified the following six goals of EFA:

#### Box 1.2 : The Dakar Goals

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive **early childhood care and education**, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015, all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete **free and compulsory primary education** of good quality.
3. Ensuring that the **learning needs of all young people and adults** are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
4. Achieving a **50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy** by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. **Eliminating gender disparities** in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. **Improving every aspect of the quality of education**, and ensuring excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

There have been several major interventions in India over the years to speed up pace of education for all. Such interventions are new national and state policy frameworks, planning mechanisms, new schemes, programmes and projects. An overview of recent developments has been provided in this chapter. Certain important milestones in India's march towards universal basic education for all are indicated in Box 1.3.

**Box 1.3 Milestones in India's March Towards Education For All**

- 1947 India achieves independence
- 1950 India becomes a Republic. Free and compulsory education enshrined as a Directive Principle of State Policy in the new Constitution
- 1951 (i) GER for elementary stage (Classes I-VIII) 32.1% (overall), 17.7% (girls);  
(ii) Literacy rate (5 + ) 18.3% (overall), 8.9% (female)
- 1968 First National Policy on Education (NPE) adopted. Priority to universal elementary education
- 1975 Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme launched to provide for holistic development of children up to the age of 6 years.
- 1976 Constitution amended to change "education" from being a "State" subject to a "Concurrent" one
- 1979 Centrally-assisted scheme of Non Formal Education for out-of-school children launched
- 1981 Programme of Functional Literacy for Adult Women expanded after a pilot phase
- 1986 New National Policy on Education adopted; renewed emphasis on UEE
- 1987 Many large centrally-assisted schemes like "Operation Blackboard" and "Teacher Education" launched to accelerate progress towards UEE
- 1988 National Literacy Mission launched
- 1992 NPE 1986 revised
- 1994 DPEP launched to universalize primary education in selected districts
- 1995 Centrally-assisted Mid-Day Meal scheme launched in government and semi-government primary schools all over the country, with central assistance by way of free food-grains
- 2001 (i) GER for elementary stage (Classes I-VIII) 82.4% (overall), 73.6% (girls);  
(ii) Literacy rate (7 + ) 65.4% (overall), 53.7% (female)  
(iii) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) launched to universalize elementary education of good quality all over the country
- 2002 Constitution amended to make Free and Compulsory Education a Fundamental Right
- 2004 (i) Education Cess levied for raising additional finance needed to fulfil Government's commitment to universalize quality basic education  
(ii) Mid-Day Meal scheme revised to provide central assistance to meet cooking cost as well  
(iii) EDUSAT, a satellite dedicated to education, launched

## Policy Framework

India's commitment to education for all was pronounced right at the dawn of her Independence as indicated by Article 45 of the Constitution. The commitment was reaffirmed subsequently. The major landmark in policy was the National Policy on Education 1986, inspired by the vision of then Prime Minister Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi, that laid the foundation of several schemes and projects for education for all. This resolve was strengthened by the international movement on education for all beginning with the Jomtien Conference in 1990. The new Government that came to power in 2004, has made several important pronouncements indicating the new policy thrust on education for all, and has adopted a National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP), which makes an unequivocal commitment of providing at least 6 per cent of GDP for education. The Government has also decided to levy a cess of two per cent on all Central taxes thereby generating an additional revenue of about Rs 50 billion or \$1 billion a year, for providing universal education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. The new Government has also decided to create a non-lapsable Primary Education Fund so that the revenue generated for elementary education may not be diverted to other expenditure.

## Recent Developments in EFA

Both on the literacy and the primary education fronts, India has been implementing a number of specially designed programmes to move towards the goals of ensuring universal primary education and of eradicating adult illiteracy. As a follow up to the Dakar Framework of Action for EFA, an attempt has been made to link national goals and targets with the global targets on EFA, as stated earlier. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) recognized that the World Declaration on EFA was, from the national point of view, a reaffirmation of the policy orientation given to elementary education in the NPE 1986. The CABE endorsed the Declaration and called for further strengthening of the processes initiated through the NPE 1986.

Other important developments have included the following:

- A separate Department of Elementary Education & Literacy, headed by an independent Secretary, was created in November 1999 within the Ministry of Human Resource Development to specifically focus on EFA goals.
- Constitutional Amendment Act was passed by the Parliament making elementary education a Fundamental Right.
- Public expenditure on education as percentage of GDP increased from 3.84 in 20(31-02 to 4.11 in 2002-03.
- Gender Parity Index has significantly improved from 0.38 in 1950-51 to 0.81 in 2001-02.
- Early Childhood Care and Education provided coverage to a large majority of the 5652 blocks.

## Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) was designed with dual objectives - to provide necessary maturational and experiential readiness to the child for meeting the demands of the primary curriculum, and simultaneously providing substitute care facility for younger siblings. The integrated concept of ECCE, rather than emphasizing teaching of 3-R's clearly represents the spirit of holistic development. Programme of ECCE has been under implementation on a large scale in rural areas through Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme. Pre-school education in urban areas, which is fairly wide spread and is continuously expanding, is largely in the hands of the private sector.

## Elementary Education

Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) is a national goal. NPE 1986 redefined UEE, shifting emphasis from enrolment to retention and achievement. This has been captured in the comprehensive scheme — Campaign for Education for All (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan).

### Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a nation-wide programme with an unprecedented outreach and comprehensiveness to universalize elementary education through community-ownership of the school system. The programme has subsumed the erstwhile District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), which covered about 270 districts in the country. The magnitude of the thrust under SSA can be estimated from the fact that from 01.04.2001 to 30.09.2004, about 160,000 new schools, 748,000 additional teachers, 127,000 new school buildings and 241,000 additional classrooms were sanctioned under the programme. Total enrolment at the elementary stage increased from 157 million in 2000 to 169 million in 2002. Dropout rate for boys fell from 62 per cent in 1961 to 40 per cent in 2001-02, while the rate for girls came down even more sharply from 71 per cent to 41 per cent in the same period. **Number of out-of-school children is estimated to have decreased from 35 million in 2000 to about 8 million by September 2004.**

SSA provides special components for girls, children from SC/ST and other backward and minority communities. Its focus is on educationally backward blocks, and it includes special programmes like Education Guarantee Scheme, Alternative & Innovative Educational Scheme (EGS & AIES); it has also converged with several of the schemes already initiated for UEE.

## Empowering Women and Girls

The Mahila Samakhyas programme, especially designed for empowering women, has been implemented in 9,000 villages in 57 districts in 10 States; it is being extended to

240 districts. The programme views education as the critical factor for the empowerment of women, with adult education, non-formal education, and vocational training introduced in a phased manner, responding to the needs and priorities expressed by women. Under SSA, National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Residential Schools for Girls have been introduced. The NPEGEL is targeting girls' education in the 2656 educationally backward blocks with a predominantly SC



and ST population. In the residential schools scheme, nearly 500-750 residential schools, catering mainly to girls belonging to SC, ST, other backward classes (OBC) and minority groups are being set up in a phased manner.

## Adult Education and Literacy

Adult literacy was taken up in a mission mode and the National Literacy Mission (NLM) aimed at full literacy (i.e., a sustainable threshold level of 75 percent by 2007), focussing on functional literacy in the age group 15-35. Consequently, despite the population growth rate of more than 2 per cent per year, the absolute number of illiterates has steadily declined; the 12.6 per cent increase in literacy between 1991 and 2001 is an all time high.

Adult literacy programme has been provided support through Continuing Education (CE) Programme and Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS). The CE programme has been made operational in 235 districts. Another 7500 CEs would be established in the districts covered by the literacy programmes, and full time facilitators appointed. Under JSS at present, more than 250 types of courses and activities are offered and 200,000 persons have been imparted vocational training so far. To accelerate the outreach, 30 JSSs have been selected for expanding activities to one additional neighbourhood district and funds are being sanctioned by NLM.

To provide a fillip to the literacy programme the National Literacy Mission has identified 45 districts in the country where the level of female literacy was below 30 per cent as per the 2001 Census. Most of these districts are in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Orissa,

Bihar, and Jharkhand. The NLM is implementing local-specific interventions in these States with the participation of NGOs and local communities and is accelerating the implementation process over a period of 6-12 months.

## Targets for EFA 2002-2015

The SSA, in partnership with the State Governments, will move towards achieving the following three goals:

- Completion of five years of primary education by all children by 2007;
- Completion of eight years of elementary education by all children by 2010; and
- Provision of elementary education of satisfactory quality for all by 2010.

The programme provides adequate opportunities for NGOs and private sector to contribute towards the achievement of these goals and lead towards a community owned initiative for universalizing elementary education. Keeping in view past experiences, efforts under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are underscored by decentralization, sustainable financing, cost effective strategies, interesting curriculum, community owned planning and implementation and focus on girls, marginalized caste groups and ethnic minorities.

As would be evident from the overview given above, the campaign for education for all is meticulously planned with the involvement of the community, primarily through decentralised district based planning. Implementation is continuously reviewed and is an ongoing process that provides meaningful feedback for midcourse corrections.

A critical element in India's march towards education for all is the partnership between the Centre, the States and the civil society (including NGOs) within the federal structure. With broad policy, planning and financial parameters designed at the central level, Central Government also acts as a mentor encouraging States to innovate and generate local specific approaches to planning and implementation of education for all, which is essential because of the enormous diversity of India.