

## Literacy and Education

10.17 The National Policy on Education (1986) provides a broad policy framework for total eradication of illiteracy and a commitment to make primary education free and compulsory up to V standard, besides ensuring higher government and non government expenditure on education that should constitute 6 per cent of GDP. Several schemes were launched by the Central Government to meet the needs of not only the educationally disadvantaged but also for the overall strengthening of the social infrastructure for education. The total Central Plan allocation on education has been raised from Rs. 4385 crore in 1999-00 (RE) to Rs.5449 crore in 2000-01 (BE).

## Elementary Education

10.18 Based on the data available upto 1998-99, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for primary school children was 92.14 per cent in 1998-99. However, GER for the upper primary stage (Class VI-VIII) was still low at 58 per cent. The proportion of girls enrolled both at primary and upper primary levels continues to be lower than the gross enrolment of boys. Amongst the states, Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, M.P., Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu had high gross enrolment ratio for the primary level. It was substantially low in U.P. and Bihar. Surprisingly, it was relatively lower in Kerala. At the upper primary level, Kerala as might be expected, exhibit the highest enrolment, followed by Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Again, Bihar, U.P., Orissa and Andhra Pradesh exhibit low GER for upper primary level (Table 10.7).

## Secondary Education

10.19 Secondary education is essential for generating skilled manpower. Such manpower, after subsequent specialised vocational training, becomes a vital source for skilled labour for the organised industry and services sector. There are at present 110 thousand secondary schools which can accommodate about 27.8 million children. Many more schools would be required and soon their number may have to be raised to 200,000.

## University and Higher Education

10.20 A higher growth path of the economy is bound to generate higher demand for new skills.

There are at present 185 universities, 42 deemed universities and 5 institutions established through State and Central legislation and nearly 11,100 colleges in the country in addition to the unrecognized institutions in the higher education sector. Accreditation of all universities and colleges has been made mandatory. It has now been made possible for Deemed Universities to open campuses abroad. In addition, all higher educational institutions at all levels (postgraduate and undergraduate) can now have 15 per cent supernumerary seats for foreigners. All these steps will cumulatively promote quality in higher education and make the system globally more competitive.

## Technical and Vocational Education

10.21 The technical education system has played a significant role in the economic and technical development of India by producing quality and hightech manpower. The role of the Government has been the most dominant in providing the basic thrust for creation of high quality technical manpower. Strong linkages between technical institutions and industry were developed particularly through technology development missions between IITs and Bangalore based IISc. While polytechnics in 17 States and UTs brought in integrated development under the World Bank Aided Project, 25 polytechnics in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala made significant impact though HRD based activities under the Canada – India Institutional cooperative project. Institutes and universities of higher learning face acute shortage of funds. Improving quality of higher and technical education would entail raising the entrance fee to sustain higher standards of education.

## Adult Education

10.22 The overall per centage of literacy has increased from 52.2 per cent in 1991 to 62 per cent in 1997 as per NSSO estimates and 63.1 per cent in 1998 according to National Family Health Survey ( NFHS) 1998-99. The male literacy rate has touched 74.5 per cent and the female literacy rate also improved to 51.4 per cent by 1998. The urban literacy rate has increased to 80.1 per cent though the rural literacy rate was still low at 56.7 per cent in 1998.

**TABLE 10.7**  
**Gross Enrolment Ratio in Classes I-V and VI-VIII for Major States\*—1998-99**  
*(per cent)*

	Primary (I-V)			Upper Primary (VI-VIII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Andhra Pradesh	99.20	94.50	96.89	50.86	40.93	46.03
Assam	118.78	100.16	109.63	69.41	52.42	61.12
Bihar	93.20	61.51	78.02	42.43	23.13	33.55
Gujarat	122.92	100.70	112.22	72.06	58.00	65.39
Haryana	82.25	84.05	83.09	67.17	61.09	64.37
Karnataka	111.35	104.38	107.90	70.94	61.06	66.08
Kerala	88.69	87.00	87.86	97.15	93.24	95.22
Madhya Pradesh	119.58	96.46	108.35	75.03	48.09	62.25
Maharashtra	114.38	111.01	112.74	89.28	83.29	86.40
Orissa	109.53	79.82	94.91	64.79	37.43	51.31
Punjab	81.33	84.16	82.66	67.29	65.02	66.22
Rajasthan	125.52	75.68	101.82	78.57	33.60	57.56
Tamil Nadu	109.47	107.10	108.31	97.67	87.94	92.91
Uttar Pradesh	75.97	49.31	63.35	48.88	26.41	38.57
West Bengal	100.06	87.01	93.66	56.99	43.60	50.50
All India	100.86	82.85	92.14	65.27	49.08	57.58

\* Major States include States with population of 10 million and above as per 1991 Census.

Source : Ministry of Human Resource Development.

10.23 There is a national and political commitment to achieve the objective of eradicating illiteracy in the country. The non-Formal Education (NFE) programme was launched to cater to school dropouts, girls, working children and, those belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

10.24 As a result of the efforts intensified under the National Literacy Mission (NLM), literacy rate has shown a much sharper increase during 1990's as compared to the previous decades. According to the NSSO Survey and National Family Health Survey (NFHS), 1998-99 the literacy rate has gone up by about 11 per centage points during 1991-98.