

Education

10.23 Literacy rates in India have risen dramatically from only 18.3 per cent in 1951, to 64.8 per cent in 2001. However, India continues to lag behind several other developing countries in the region (Table 10.10).

10.24 Census data from 1981 to 2001 indicate that the increase in population of the

age-group 7 years and over has been 26-27 per cent during each decade. The number of literates grew by 52 per cent in 1981-91 and 59 per cent in 1991-2001. The absolute number of illiterates increased during 1981-91 but substantially declined during 1991-2001. Literacy improved by 8.6 percentage points during 1981-91 while the increase during 1991-2001 was by 12.6 percentage points (Table 10.11). For the first time,

Country	Adult Literacy Rate (per cent 15 yrs & above)		Youth Literacy Rate (per cent 15 - 24 yrs & above)	
	1990	2001	1990	2001
China	78.3	85.8	95.3	97.9
India	49.3	58.0	64.3	73.3
Nepal	30.4	42.9	46.6	61.6
Pakistan	35.4	44.0	47.4	57.8
Sri Lanka	88.7	91.9	95.1	96.9
Bangladesh	34.2	40.6	42.0	49.1

Source : UNDP, Human Development Report 2003.

Census Year	Persons	Males	Females	Male-Female gap in literacy rate
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	64.84	75.85	54.16	21.69

Source : Census of India.

education efforts have overtaken the growth in population and the absolute number of illiterates has started declining.

10.25 In the five decades after Independence, the increase in literacy rate during the decade 1991-2001 has been the highest, i.e., from 52.2 to 64.8 per cent, which is an increase of 12.6 percentage points. For the first time, the country witnessed a faster growth in female literacy i.e., 14.9 percentage points (from 39 to 54 per cent) compared to that of males, which increased by only 11.7 percentage points (from 64 to 75 per cent). Through this there was a narrowing of the gender gap in literacy, which was 25 per cent in 1991 and to 22 per cent in 2001. There is also, for the first time, a converging trend in the rural-urban literacy gap. Between 1991 and 2001 rural literacy increased by 7 per cent, thereby reducing the urban-rural gap from 28.4 per cent in 1991 to 20.9 per cent in 2001.

10.26 The National Policy on Education (1986) provides a broad policy framework for eradication of illiteracy and sets a goal of expenditure on education at 6 per cent of the GDP. As against the goal of 6 per cent, the total expenditure on education by both central and state governments was only 3 per cent of GDP in 2002-03 (RE). A high priority has been accorded to this sector in the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07), with an allocation of Rs.43,825 crore as against Rs.24,908 crore made available in the Ninth Plan, representing an increase of 76 per cent. Out of this, Rs.28,750 crore has been allocated for elementary education in the Plan. The total Central Plan allocation for education in 2003-04 (BE) has been kept at Rs.7,025 crore, the same as in 2002-03 (BE), out of which the allocation for elementary education is Rs.4,667 crore, while for Adult Education, there is a provision of Rs.233 crore, and for Secondary & Higher Education it is Rs. 2,125 crore.

Elementary education

10.27 In order to fulfil the goal of universal elementary education, Constitutional (86th Amendment) Act, 2002 has been passed by the Parliament. A Central Bill containing the detailed mechanism to implement the

Constitutional Amendment has been drafted and circulated to States and Members of Parliament of leading political parties for their comments. The Bill will be introduced in Parliament once the consultative process is completed. Once enacted, this legislation would be a milestone in the country's march towards Universal Elementary Education.

10.28 A comprehensive program called Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched in November 2000 in partnership with the States. The program aims to improve the performance of the school system through a community-owned approach and to impart quality elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-14 by 2010. It seeks to bridge gender and social disparities at the elementary level. It subsumes all existing programs, including externally aided programs, within its overall framework, with the district as the unit of implementation. National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) has been launched in 2003-04 for providing additional components for education of girls at elementary level under SSA (Box 10.3).

10.29 The number of primary schools increased from 6.39 lakh in 2000-01 to 6.64 lakh in 2001-02. The number of upper primary schools increased from 2.06 lakh in 2000-01 to 2.19 lakh in 2001-02. The ratio of upper

Box : 10.3 National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)

The Objective of the scheme is to provide additional support to education of girls at the elementary level through the following additional initiatives: (i) to develop a school, as a model girl-child friendly school, at the cluster level; (ii) to provide additional incentives such as stationery, slates, work books, and uniforms and to meet any other locally-felt need within the existing ceiling of Rs.150 per child per annum; (iii) additional interventions like awards to schools/teachers, student evaluation, remedial teaching, bridge courses alternative schools, learning through open schools, teacher training and child care centers at the cluster level within a ceiling of Rs.60,000 per annum; (iv) mobilization and community monitoring within a ceiling of Rs.95,000 per cluster over a five-year period; (v) development of materials; and (vi) planning, training and management support.

primary school to primary school was 1:3 in 2001-02 as well as in 2000-01. The total enrolment at primary and upper primary school levels in India witnessed a steady increase (Table 10.12). During 2000-01 and 2001-02 the growth rate of enrolment for girls at the elementary level was higher than that of boys. Participation of girls at all levels of school education has improved appreciably over the years, but vast disparities amongst the States in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at primary/upper primary level persist with States in the North-East performing better than others (Appendix 9.2). The GER at Primary and Upper Primary levels improved in 2001-02 over the previous year (Table 10.12).

10.30 Of the estimated population of 193 million in the age group of 6-14 years in 2001-02, nearly 82.2 per cent was enrolled in schools, compared with 81.6 per cent in 2000-01. The student retention at the primary school stage was about 59 per cent (1992-97). At the primary level, the drop out rate decreased from 40.7 per cent in 2000-01 to 39.03 in 2001-02. At the upper primary level, the drop out rate increased marginally from 53.7 per cent in 2000-01 to 54.6 in 2001-02. Though the drop out rate at the elementary education stage has declined over the years, it is still relatively high,

specially in the case of girl students for whom the rates in 2001-02 were 39.9 per cent and 56.9 per cent at the primary and upper primary levels respectively. In absolute terms, the number of teachers registered at the elementary level was 3.4 million in 2001-02. The percentage share of female teachers in the total number of teachers was 37.2 per cent in 2001-02. Despite the increase in the number of teachers over the decades the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) at the primary level has remained more or less constant at 43:1 during 2001-02, while there is an improvement in PTR at the upper primary level to 34:1 in 2001-02.

10.31 Within the education sector, elementary education has been given priority in terms of sub-sectoral allocations. A number of schemes have been launched by the Central Government to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged groups (Box 10.4).

Adult Education

10.32 The National Literacy Mission was launched on May 5, 1988 as a Technology Mission to impart functional literacy to non-literates in the country in the age group of 15-35 years in a time bound manner. This age-group has been the focus of attention because

Table 10.12 Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER) (in per cent)

Year	Primary (I-V)			Upper Primary (VI-VIII)			Elementary (I-VIII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1950-51	60.6	24.8	42.6	20.6	4.6	12.7	46.4	17.7	32.1
1960-61	82.6	41.4	62.4	33.2	11.3	22.5	65.2	30.9	48.7
1970-71	95.5	60.5	78.6	46.5	20.8	33.4	75.5	44.4	61.9
1980-81	95.8	64.1	80.5	54.3	28.6	41.9	82.2	52.1	67.5
1990-91	114.0	85.5	100.1	76.6	47.0	62.1	100.0	70.8	86.0
1991-92	112.8	86.9	100.2	75.1	49.6	61.4	101.2	73.2	87.7
1992-93	95.0	73.5	84.6	72.5	48.9	67.5	87.7	65.7	77.2
1993-94	90.0	73.1	81.9	62.1	45.4	54.2	80.2	63.7	72.3
1994-95	96.6	78.2	87.7	68.9	50.0	60.0	87.2	68.8	78.4
1995-96	97.1	79.4	88.6	67.8	49.8	59.3	86.9	69.4	78.5
1996-97	97.0	80.1	88.8	65.8	49.2	58.0	85.9	69.4	78.0
1997-98	99.3	82.2	91.1	66.3	49.7	58.5	87.4	70.7	79.4
1998-99 *	100.9	82.9	92.1	65.3	49.1	57.6	87.6	70.6	79.4
1999-2000 *	104.1	85.2	94.9	67.2	49.7	58.8	90.1	72.0	81.3
2000-2001*	104.9	85.9	95.7	66.7	49.9	58.6	90.3	72.4	81.6
2001-2002*	105.3	86.9	96.3	67.8	52.1	60.2	90.7	73.6	82.4

*Provisional

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2001-2002, Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Box 10.4 : Initiatives to encourage elementary education

District Primary Education Programme

Launched in 1994 in 42 districts, this is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme aimed at providing access to primary education for all children, reducing primary dropout rates to less than 10 per cent, increasing learning achievement of primary school students by at least 25 per cent and reducing gender and social gaps to less than 5 per cent. The programme is presently continuing in 129 districts of 9 States namely; Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and West Bengal. Rs.1,200 crore was allocated in the budget for 2003-04.

National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day-Meal Scheme)

The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education commonly known as the Mid -Day Meals Scheme was launched in August, 1995 with the objective of boosting universal primary education by increasing enrolment, attendance and retention, while simultaneously impacting on nutritional status of children in primary classes. Presently, 29 States/UTs are providing meals fully/partially to about 5.78 crore children which is 54.8 per cent of the targeted 10.57 crore children. The total allocation in the budget for 2003-04 was Rs.1,375 crore.

Mahila Samakhya

The Mahila Samakhya scheme was started in 1989 for the education and empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly those from socially and economically marginalized groups. It focuses on enabling a greater access to education, generating a demand for education, building capabilities and strengthening women's abilities to effectively participate in village-level processes for educational development. The scheme is being implemented in nine States: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal. The programme covers over 12,000 villages in 59 districts.

they are in the productive and reproductive period of life. The National Education Policy – 1986, as modified in 1992, also has recognized the National Literacy Mission as one of the three instruments to eradicate illiteracy from the country, the other two being Universalisation of Elementary Education and Non-formal Education.

10.33 The Mission objective is to attain a sustainable threshold literacy rate of 75 per cent by 2007. The Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) has been the principal strategy of National Literacy Mission for eradication of illiteracy in the target age-group. These campaigns are area-specific, time-bound, volunteer-based, cost effective and outcome-oriented. They are implemented by Zilla Saksharata Samities (District Level Literacy Societies).

10.34 The objectives of the literacy movement are broadly two fold. One, imparting functional literacy in the initial TLC phase, its consolidation and upgradation to a self-reliant level in the post-literacy phase, and self-directed learning and its application through continuing education, towards a learning society. The second objective relates to improvement not only through the ability to

approach literacy skills, but also through the upgradation of life and occupational skills.

Secondary Education

10.35 The Secondary Education sector prepares students in the age group of 14-18 years for entry into higher education as well as for the world of work. The number of secondary and senior secondary schools during 2001-02 is 1.33 lakh with an enrolment of students of 30.5 million.

University & Higher Education

10.36 There has been an impressive growth in the area of university and higher education. Accreditation of all Universities and Colleges has been made mandatory. The University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines for grant of Deemed University status have been revised and simplified to provide for grant of provisional status of Deemed University to de-novo institutions as well in the emerging areas and for opening of centers of Deemed Universities anywhere in India and abroad. Student enrolment in higher education rose from 7.26 million in 1997-98 to 9.2 million in 2002-03. Enrolment of women students rose to 3.69 million with women constituting 40 per

cent of the total in 2002-03. The Open University System is a step towards diversification of courses offered for focusing on the educational needs of women, the rural segment as also for professional training of in-service personnel. There has been a significant increase in the students' enrolment under Open and Distance Education System.

Technical and Professional Education

10.37 Technical and professional education in the country has played a significant role in economic and technical development by

producing quality manpower. There are 1,265 approved engineering colleges at the degree level. Apart from this, 1,034 institutes offer a Master of Computer Application (MCA) programme. There are 958 approved Management Institutes imparting MBA courses. All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has delegated the powers of approval of diploma level technical institutes to the State Governments. Strong linkages have been developed between technical institutions and the industry.