

Education

10.16 A broad objective of the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 modified in 1992 has been that education should play a positive and interventionist role in correcting social and regional imbalances, empowering women and in securing rightful place for the disadvantaged and the minorities. At the international level, India is committed to the 'Millennium Development Goals' and 'Education For All'. At the national level there is the commitment under the NCMP for increasing public expenditure on education to 6 per cent of GDP and for universalizing elementary education. There is also an obligation, under the Constitution's 86th Amendment, for making available free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. To achieve these objectives, a number of programmes are being implemented out of which the two flagship programmes of the Government are the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

10.17 The goals of SSA are:

- i) All children of 6-14 age in school/ EGS (Education Guarantee Scheme) centre/bridge course by 2005;
- ii) Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010;
- iii) Universal retention by 2010;
- iv) Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.

10.18 Implemented in partnership with the States, SSA addresses the needs of 194 million children in the age group of 6-14 years. Under the scheme, 9.72 lakh existing primary and upper primary schools and 36.95 lakh existing teachers have been covered. The achievements of SSA till September 30, 2006 include opening of 1,64,477 new

schools, construction of 97,999 School buildings, construction of 2,81,001 additional classrooms, 1,50,202 drinking water facilities, construction of 1,93,608 toilets, supply of free textbooks to 5.78 crore children and appointment of 6,66,840 teachers. About 30 lakh teachers receive in-service training each year. There has been a significant reduction in the number of out of school children on account of SSA interventions. State/UTs have reported that as on March 31, 2006, there were 70.5 lakh children in the 6-14 age group who were not enrolled in a school. Allocation for SSA was increased by 41.0 per cent from Rs. 7,800 crore in 2005-06 (RE) to Rs. 11,000 crore in 2006-07(BE).

Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Scheme

10.19 Under the MDM scheme, cooked mid-day meal with a nutritional content of 450 calories and 12 grams protein is served to children studying at primary level in government, government-aided, and local body schools; and in Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS)/Alternative & Innovative Education (AIE) Centres. The Scheme is being implemented by all States/UTs. About 12 crore children studying in over 9.50 lakh schools are presently covered under the scheme. In order to improve the quality of meal, the Scheme was last revised in June, 2006. The cooking cost norm has been fixed at Rs. 2 per child per school day, with Rs. 1.80 as Central assistance for North East States and Rs. 1.50 for other States and UTs. Recognizing the need for appropriate infrastructure, assistance for construction of 94,500 kitchen-cum-stores was sanctioned for the first time to States in 2006-07(BE). Similarly, assistance to States has been provided at the rate of Rs. 5,000 per school to procure/repair kitchen devices. MDM scheme has helped in promoting school participation, preventing classroom hunger, instilling educational values and fostering social and gender equity. Allocation for MDM scheme was Rs.5,348 crore in 2006-07(BE).

National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Education (NPEGEL)

10.20 Launched in July, 2003 as a focused intervention aimed at enhancing girls' education, NPEGEL provides for development of a "model school" in every cluster with more intense community mobilization and supervision of girls' enrolment in schools. Gender-sensitization of teachers, development of gender-sensitive learning materials and provision of need-based incentives like stationery, workbooks and uniforms are some of the objectives under NPEGEL. It is being implemented in about 3,164 educationally backward blocks in 25 States.

10.21 Under NPEGEL, around 31,450 model schools have been developed, 1.97 lakh teachers have been gender-sensitized, skill building provided to girls on diverse trades and life skills; 10,419 additional classrooms constructed for bridge courses; teacher training and skill building activities imparted to girls; and over 51,345 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centres are being supported in areas not covered by Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme to help free girls from sibling care responsibilities and attend schools. Free uniforms have been given as a direct educational incentive to about 2 crore girls in educationally backward blocks. 1.84 crore girls have been benefited under NPEGEL till October 31, 2006. Outlay for NPEGEL is Rs.813.36 crore in 2006-07(BE).

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyaya (KGBV) Scheme

10.22 KGBV is a scheme launched in July 2004 for setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minority communities. It is being implemented in educationally backward blocks of the country where female rural literacy is below the national average and gender gap in literacy is above the national average. The scheme provides for a minimum reservation of 75 per cent of the enrolment for girls from SC, ST, OBC or minority communities. For the

remaining 25 per cent, priority is accorded to girls from families below poverty line.

10.23 Funded on cost-sharing basis between the Government and the States in the ratio of 75:25, KGBV scheme is being implemented in 24 States and 1 Union Territory. Of the 1,180 KGBVs sanctioned by Government, by September 30, 2006, 782 had been operationalised with 52,186 girls – of whom, 13,779 are SCs and 14,637 are STs enrolled in them.

Adult Education

10.24 The objective of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) is to impart functional literacy to non-literates in the 15-35 age-group. The goal of the Mission is to achieve sustainable threshold literacy rate of 75 per cent by 2007. The main programmes of the Mission include Total Literacy Campaign to provide basic literacy to the non-literates, followed by Post-Literacy Programme for the reinforcement of the literacy skills to the neo-literates and the Continuing Education Programme to provide facilities for life-long education to the community at large. At present, 101 districts are implementing Total Literacy Campaigns, 171 districts Post-Literacy Programmes and 325 districts Continuing Education Programmes.

10.25 The scheme of Continuing Education is now the flagship programme of the NLM. As more neo literates emerge out of the literacy campaigns, the thrust is on providing continuing and life-long learning to these people. For this purpose, the focus is on setting up Continuing Education Centres (CECs) and Nodal Continuing Education Centres (NCECs) which serve a population of about 2,000-2,500 people and provide facilities of library, reading room, learning centre, sports and cultural activities, information window, *churha mandal* (discussion groups) and target specific programmes, individual interest promotion programmes and income generation programmes. In the reading room and library set up in the CECs, a variety of books on different topics specially prepared for the neo-

literate by the State Resource Centres as well as magazines and newspapers are made available.

10.26 In addition, 194 Jan Shikshan Sansthan have been set up to provide vocational training to the neo-literates and backward sections of the society and 26 State Resource Centres have been established for providing academic and technical resource support for the literacy programmes. A special drive is in operation in 134 districts which have the lowest literacy rates in the country. The drive has a special focus on the minority groups, SCs, STs, women and other backward sections of the society by drawing up implementation strategies suited to their specific needs.

Secondary Education

10.27 Secondary education, which has a 2+2 structure and starts with classes IX-X leading to higher secondary classes XI-XII, prepares young persons in the age group 14-18 for entry into the world of higher education and work. The number of secondary and higher secondary schools has increased from 7,416 in 1950-51 to 1,52,049 in 2004-05. The corresponding increase in total enrolment has been from 1.5 million in 1950-51 to 37 million in 2004-05. While gross enrolment ratio (GER), which shows total enrolment in secondary stage (IX-XII class) as a proportion of total population in the relevant age-group, has also increased steadily from 19.3 per cent in 1990-91 to 39.91 per cent in 2004-05, it continues to be low. GER for Class IX-X (14-16 years) was 51.55 per cent and for Class XI-XII (16-18 years) was 27.82 per cent on September 30, 2004. With rapid scientific and technological changes, the productivity and average earning of a secondary school certificate holder is significantly higher than that of a person who has studied only up to class VIII. There is a need to increase the GER at the secondary level, particularly now that

the SSA aims to enroll all children of elementary school going age in elementary schools by 2010, and the target should be to provide a secondary school within 5 kilometers of any habitation during the Eleventh Plan period. Not only universal enrolment, but universal retention and satisfactory quality of learning should also be priority areas.

10.28 The intervention of the Central Government in secondary education has primarily been in two areas (i) through apex level bodies, and (ii) through various CSSs. Central Government supports autonomous organizations like National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) and Navodaya Vidyalaya Sangathan (NVS) and Central Tibetan School Administration (CTSA), the first one for providing research and policy support to the Central and State Governments, CBSE for affiliating Secondary Schools and the remaining three for their own school systems. There are 919 functional Kendriya Vidyalayas and 539 Navodaya Vidyalayas which are pace setting schools in the country.

Higher Education

10.29 There has been an impressive growth in the area of higher education with an increase in annual student enrolment from 7.26 million in 1997-98 to 10.48 million in 2004-05. Enrolment of women students rose from 2.45 million in 1997-98 to 4.04 million in 2004-05, constituting 40.4 per cent of the total enrolment. As per NSSO survey (55th Round 1999-00), there were inequalities in enrolment in higher education across various social groups in rural and urban areas, and also in terms of gender. Women belonging to SCs and STs and those living in rural areas are the most disadvantaged.