

EDUCATION

Primary Education

10.25 The 86th Constitutional Amendment of 2002 led to inclusion of a new Article 21-A in Part III of the Constitution that made Free and Compulsory Education to all children of 6 to 14 years of age a Fundamental Right. Pending enactment of a suitable follow-up legislation envisaged in Article 21-A, the 86th Constitutional Amendment has not yet been enforced. However, it is imperative to

give good quality elementary education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. Policies and programmes in this direction are also necessary for honouring the country's commitment to the "Millennium Development Goals" and "Education For All" as well as commitment under the NCMP for increasing public expenditure on education to 6 per cent of GDP and for universalizing elementary education at the national level.

Box 10.4 Primary Education Schemes

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is being implemented in partnership with States to address the needs of children in age group of 6-14 years. The achievements under SSA up to September 30, 2007, include construction of 1,70,320 school buildings, construction of 7,13,179 additional classrooms, 1,72,381 drinking water facilities, construction of 2,18,075 toilets, supply of free textbooks to 6.64 crore children and appointment of 8.10 lakh teachers besides opening of 1,86,985 (till 31.3.07) new schools. About 35 lakh teachers receive in-service training each year. Central allocation for SSA in 2007-08 was Rs. 10,671. With significant success in enrolling children in schools, the SSA's thrust areas are now on reduction of dropouts and improving quality of student learning.

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

The programme is aimed at enhancing girls' education by providing additional support for development of a "model girl child friendly school" in every cluster with more intense community mobilization and supervision of girls enrolment in schools. Under NPEGEL, 35,252 model schools have been opened in addition to supporting 25,537 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centres. Besides, 24,387 additional classrooms have been constructed, and 1.85 lakh teachers have been given training on gender sensitization. Remedial teaching has also been provided to 9.67 lakh girls, apart from holding bridge courses covering 1.53 lakh girls and additional incentives like uniforms, etc. to about 71.46 lakh girls (up to October 31, 2007). An outlay of Rs. 708.44 crore was provided under NPEGEL for 2007-08.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme was 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. The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya scheme ran as separate scheme for two years but was merged with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan w.e.f. April 1, 2007. About 2,180 KGBVs were sanctioned by Government of India up to March 2007. Of these, 270 KGBVs have been sanctioned in Muslim concentration blocks, 583 in ST blocks, 622 in SC blocks. As on October 31, 2007, 1,564 KGBVs are functional (71.74 per cent) and 1,09,786 girls (26 per cent SC girls, 33 per cent ST girls, 26 per cent OBC girls, 11 per cent BPL girls and 5 per cent minority girls) were enrolled in them.

National programme of mid-day meals in schools

The National Programme of Mid-Day Meals in Schools covers approximately 9.70 crore children studying at the primary stage of education in 9.50 lakh Government (including local bodies), Government aided schools and the Centres run under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative & Innovative Education (AIE) scheme. The programme was extended, with effect from 1.10.2007, to children in the upper primary stage of education (classes VI-VIII) in 3,479 Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs). Approximately 1.7 crore additional children in classes VI-VIII in EBBs are expected to be included. In 2007-08, a provision of Rs. 7,324 crore was made under the scheme.

The programme provides a mid-day meal of 450 calories and 12 grams of protein to children at the primary stage. For children at the upper primary stage, the nutritional value is fixed at 700 calories and 20 grams of protein. Adequate quantities of micro-nutrients like iron, folic acid and vitamin-A are also recommended under the programme. To meet the nutritional norm, the Central Government provides foodgrain @ 100 grams per primary school child/school day and 150 grams per upper primary school child/school day.

In 2007-08, Central Government also approved the inclusion of Inflation Adjusted Index (Consumer Price Index) for calculation of Central assistance towards cooking cost once in every two years. This will be applicable from 2008-09 for primary and upper primary stages. The programme has helped in promoting school participation, preventing classroom hunger, instilling educational values and fostering social and gender equality.

Secondary Education

10.26 The number of secondary and higher

Box 10.5 Scheme for Universalization of Access to Secondary Education

Since universalization of elementary education has become an important goal, it is also essential to push this vision forward to move towards universalization of secondary education, something which has already been achieved in a large number of developed countries and several developing countries. Not only universal enrolment, but universal retention and satisfactory quality of learning should also be a priority. The major challenge before secondary education is that of meeting the surge in demand due to success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) whose target is to ensure that all children of elementary school going age enroll by 2010. It has been therefore decided to launch a centrally-sponsored scheme viz., Scheme for Universalization of Access to Secondary Education (SUCCESS) and improvement of quality at secondary stage during the Eleventh Five Year Plan. The main objective of the programme is to make secondary education of good quality available, accessible and affordable to all young students in the age group 15-16 years (classes IX and X). The target of the scheme is (i) Universal access of Secondary level education to all students in the age group 15-16 years by 2015 and (ii) Universal retention by 2020. It envisages (i) provision of necessary infrastructure and resources in the secondary education sector to create higher capacity in secondary schools in the country and for improvement in quality of learning in the school; (ii) provision for filling the missing gaps in the existing secondary schools system (iii) provision of extra support for education of girls, rural children and students belonging to SC/ST, minority and other weaker sections of the society and (iv) a holistic convergent framework for implementation of various schemes in secondary education.

secondary schools has increased from 7,416 in 1950-51 to 1,52,049 in 2004-05. Total enrolment in secondary and higher secondary stage has increased correspondingly from 1.5 million in 1950-51 to 37.1 million in 2004-05. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), which shows total enrolment in secondary stage (Class IX to XII as a percentage of total population in the relevant age group has also increased steadily from 19.3 in 1990-91 to 39.91 in 2004-05. GER for Class IX-X (14-16 years) was 51.65 and for Class XI-XII (16-18 years) was 27.82 in 2004-05. With the rapid growth of Indian economy, coupled with the need to improve quality of life and reduce poverty, skill development is essential at school level also. It is essential that a student at the end of secondary education acquires a level of knowledge and skills.

Higher & Technical Education

10.27 There has been significant growth in higher education during the academic year 2005-06. According to the University Grants Commission (UGC), enrolment in various courses at all levels in universities/colleges and other institutions of higher education in 2005-06 was 11.34 million as compared to 10.50 million in the previous year. Out of this, the number of women students was 4.58 million constituting 40.39 per cent. There has also been a significant expansion of central institutions of higher education in recent years (Box 10.6). With the increased demand for higher quality education, training of teachers has become even more important and out of box thinking is required to ensure adequate supply of quality teachers.

Box 10.6 Recent Expansion of Higher Educational Institutions

- Two State Universities in Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura were converted into Central Universities and a new Central University has been established in Sikkim. With this, all the eight States in the North-eastern Region have at least one Central University each.
- Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, which was earlier a Deemed University, has been converted into a Central University.
- Two Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs) were established during 2005-06 at Kolkata and Pune, and a third one at Mohali in 2006-07. Two more IISERs have been approved at Bhopal and Thiruvananthapuram during the Eleventh Plan.
- The 20 National Institutes of Technology (NITs) were earlier being managed by individual registered societies. They were brought under a common statutory framework during 2007-08 by enacting the National Institutes of Technology Act which came into force on 15.08.2007.
- The seventh IIM, namely the Rajiv Gandhi Indian Institute of Management, has been established at Shilong in 2007-08. It will admit the first batch of students in 2008.
- The Indian Institute of Information Technology, Design & Manufacturing, Kanchipuram, has also come into being during 2007-08.