

India



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Minister of Human Resource Development

Born on 5 Jan. 1934 in Delhi, Dr. Joshi received his M.Sc (Physics) and D. Phil in Physics from Allahabad University, Allahabad. Specializing in nuclear physics, he retired as a Professor from the same University. He has received a large number of national and international awards from various foundations and international agencies. He has been a member of numerous national and international professional institutions, and has recently been elected as a Fellow of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He has been elected four

times to the Lok Sabha (in 1977, 1996, 1998 and 1999) and also to the Rajya Sabha in 1992. He has worked as the Union Minister for Home Affairs for a short period in 1996. He has been working as the Union Minister for Human Resource Development with additional charge of Science & Technology and Ocean Development since 1998.

Education for All-The Indian Effort

The theme adopted for the 46th session of the International Conference on Education has rightly emphasised "Learning to Live Together" as the focus of debate. Humankind is faced with menacing threats from ever increasing militarisation; nuclearisation; population pressure; severe depletion of natural resources and other environmental problems; lack of social cohesion and general erosion of values. Breakthroughs in science & technology, especially the advances in bio-technology and recent research on the human genome has compelled us to raise fundamental ethical questions about the meaning of life and living together. In the 21st century, living together for achieving common goals would thus become more relevant than ever before.

The whole world must put its might together to re-invent and recreate the foundation of education wherein skills for decision making, value judgement, honesty, truthfulness and such other eternal values should form the basis for planning educational and other intervention programs. The challenge is to acquire skills, competencies and values for living together with caring and sharing of resources around the world.

India has attained appreciable results in all the six educational goals enunciated at the World Education Forum at Dakar in April 2000.

□ In the area of Early Childhood Care and Education, the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) and District Primary Education Program (DPEP) are being successfully implemented.

□ Through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a national program of Universal Elementary Education, significant progress has been made to ensure that all children, particularly girls, have access to primary education of good quality. Special initiatives have been taken to bring out-of-school children and children in difficult circumstances in the mainstream through programs, such as Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative & Innovative Education Scheme.

□ Through the National Literacy Mission (NLM), 65.4% adult literacy has already been achieved with a narrowing of the male-female gap in literacy rates. Efforts to promote female literacy are being strengthened. The Census 2001 data shows that for the first time, the absolute number of illiterates has shown a decline despite the growing population.

□ All education intervention programs in India have a gender focus, namely "Balika Shivar" or residential camps for adolescent girls; community mobilization for education of the girl child; program for women's empowerment or "Mahila Samakhya", to name a few.

Assessment of learning achievement through a participatory process of continuous and comprehensive evaluation has been a national resolve and the new National Curriculum Framework for school education has further reiterated this concern. Efforts are on to improve the quality of education at all levels with special emphasis being given to equitable access for acquiring appropriate learning skills. *ℳ*