INDIA

NATIONAL REPORT ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION
The INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY:
AN OVERVIEW

The 21st Century has witnessed significant changes in the educational system in India. These changes have their origin in the evolution of the educational system during the post-independence era and are in response to the economic and social development policies ushered in during the last two decades. In the past few years, the country has witnessed a rise in enrolment at all the stages of education, a decline in dropout rates, a move towards gender parity, a substantial increase in the number of teachers in all types of institutions and a considerable expansion in the number and spread of educational institutions.

The National Policy on Education 1986 had underscored the constitutional resolve to provide quality education to all. During the last few years, the Government of India have taken important steps to achieve the goals of ‘Education For All’. The Eighty Sixth Constitutional Amendment Act in December, 2002, made Elementary Education a Fundamental Right for all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

The fresh initiatives for the transformation of the education system have gained a new impetus with the assumption of office by the United Progressive Alliance Government (UPA) in May 2004. The new Government has expressed its resolve and commitment to
the Indian ethos of truly inclusive development, keeping intact the secular, democratic fabric which is enshrined in our Constitution. This will be attempted in an atmosphere of mutual respect for diversity and harmonious relations between all its citizens, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, language, or region. Keeping in view these principles, the Government have adopted the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) which specifies the basic principles for governance of the UPA Government, as promised to the people of the country, to provide an administration that is responsible and responsive at all times.

The National Common Minimum Programme includes various new initiatives and provisions, which have a bearing on education. These provisions address the main issues relating to (a) the elimination of disparities in access, (b) empowering women, (c) securing a rightful place for the disadvantaged and the minorities, (d) eradication of illiteracy, (e) education for women’s equality, (f) improvement in the quality of education and its content and (g) decentralization of the processes of educational change with the participation of people at the grass root level through the Panchayati Raj Institutions (local government Sub-Statatal bodies).

Some of the main provisions of the National Common Minimum Programme, which have a bearing on education, are as follows:
A. The public spending in education is planned to be raised to at least 6% of GDP, with at least half this amount being spent on the primary and secondary sectors. This will be done in a phased manner. A cess is being levied on all central taxes to finance the commitment to universalize access to quality basic education. A National Commission on Education will be set up to allocate resources and monitor programmes.

B. The Government is committed to ensure that all institutions of higher learning and professional education retain their autonomy. Academic excellence and professional competence will be the sole criteria for all appointments to autonomous bodies and research institutes.

C. The Government is committed to provide for full equality of opportunity, particularly in education and employment for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes (OBC’s) and religious minorities and to fully empower women politically, educationally, economically and legally.

D. The government will ensure facilities for schooling and extend special care to the Girl Child. Nutrition programmes, particularly for the girl child are being expanded on a significant scale. A national (cooked and nutritious) mid-day meal scheme, funded mainly by the Central Government, will cover all primary and secondary schools. An appropriate mechanism for quality checks is also being set up. The Government is also committed to universalise the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme to provide a functional Anganwadi in every settlement and ensure full coverage for all children. All Non
Governmental Organisation (NGO) efforts in the area of Primary Education, would be fully backed and supported by the Government.

E. Village women and their associations will be encouraged to assume responsibility for all development schemes relating to drinking water, sanitation, primary education, health and nutrition.

F. Proper infrastructure will be created in schools for activities under the National Cadet Corps (NCC) Scheme, the National Service Scheme (NSS), physical development, sports and cultural development of all students.

G. The Government will amend the Constitution to establish a Commission for Minority Educational Institutions that will provide direct affiliation for minority professional institutions to central universities. The Government will promote modern and technical education among all minority communities and their social and economic empowerment through a more systemic attention to education and employment will be a priority concern.

As a follow up to these provisions in the National Common Minimum Programme for Governance of the country, a number of measures have been taken including the following:

(i) The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been asked to take up the revision of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE). The
The Government would ensure that the new National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) is in harmony with the idea of India, as enshrined in its Constitution and as given in the Preamble to the Constitution i.e. “We, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens: JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, EQUALITY of status and of opportunity, and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.” It would also be ensured that while undertaking the review the processes as laid down or as evolved over a period of time, are not violated and that the books emanating from a new curriculum framework are insulated from distortion.

(ii) The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), which is highest advisory body to advise the central and State Governments in the field of education, has been reconstituted recently. In the past, important decisions have been taken on the advice of CABE and it has provided a forum for arriving at a consensus on issues relating to educational development. CABE, which was reconstituted after a gap of almost 10 years, held its meeting on 10-11 August, 2004, to facilitate wider consultation and concurrence in the federal spirit. As a result of the deliberations during the meeting, the Government of India have constituted seven Committees for considering some of the critical issues in the education sector as envisaged in the National Common Minimum Programme. These are (a) the Committee on the
Free and Compulsory Education Bill and other issues connected with Elementary Education, (b) the Committee on Girls Education and the Common School System, (c) the Committee on Universalisation of Secondary Education, (d) the Committee for the Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions, (e) the Committee for the Integration of Culture Education in the School Curriculum, (f) the Committee on a Regulatory Mechanism for the Text books and parallel text books taught in schools outside the Government System, and (g) the Committee for Financing Higher and Technical Education.

(iii) To fulfill its commitment for Minority Education & Welfare, the provisions in the Education sector that have a bearing on the welfare of the minorities were discussed in a two day meeting in New Delhi on 3 & 4.7.2004. The National Minority Education Monitoring Committee, as proposed in the National Policy on Education, has recently been reconstituted and held its first meeting on 27.8.2004. The Committee will, among other things, look into the issues of recognition and affiliation of minority educational institutions, problems of the minority educational institutions, working of the existing schemes relating to minorities and advise the Government on contemporary approaches towards traditional methods of instruction.

(iv) The democratic system of decision making at the grass root level has been revitalised by the Government. The Panchayati Raj Institutions (Local Government Sub-Statal Bodies) are being strengthened to involve local grass root level bodies in the process of decision making and implementation of various schemes. The District
Literacy Societies (Zila Saksharat Samitis) would continue to oversee and run literacy programmes with freedom to synergise their strengths with those of local youth clubs, Mahila Mandals, voluntary agencies, Panchayati Raj Institutions, small scale industries, cooperative societies, etc.

(V) The Government is committed to continue its endeavor for maintaining the autonomy of the institutions of higher learning, particularly those which have achieved excellence.

Besides, the initiatives introduced during the last decades of the 20th Century including the National Literacy Mission with its stress on lifelong learning and decentralization with devolution of authority to State and district level institutions, programmes for attitudinal change, capacity building among teachers and training institutions for teachers to educate children with special needs, distance education in the school sector through expansion of the National Open School, identifying new vocational areas, providing on-demand examination, introduction of Environment Education, HIV/AIDS preventive education and improvement in access and quality in higher education were further strengthened.

There has been further growth in the number of schools, colleges and technical and management institutions in the country, both in the State sector and the private sector. To supplement the requirement of high quality manpower in the field of Information Technology, two new Institutions, viz., Indian Institute of Information
Technology, Allahabad and Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management, Gwalior were set up and have begun functioning. The entire post-graduate system of education is in the process of positive transformation to meet the challenges thrown up by globalisation.

_Legal Framework:_ Education is in the ‘Concurrent’ List of the Constitution of India after the 42nd amendment in 1976. It enjoins a meaningful and joint responsibility for the Central and state governments in the matter of educational development. The Constitution empowers the State to take recourse to special measures and affirmative policies for the educational development of the disadvantaged, the girl child and women, minorities and educationally deprived or backward groups. One of the major developments during the last decade was the decisive step to decentralize the management of education through two Constitutional amendments in 1993. They mandate states to enact laws devolving powers to elected bodies at the urban, district and village levels for development administration. The second was the landmark judgement of the Supreme court of India, declaring elementary education as a Fundamental Right of every child up to the age of fourteen years. As mentioned earlier, acting on the recommendation of the Supreme Court, ruling the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, which was notified on 13th December, 2002, made free and compulsory education to all children of the age group of 6-14 years, a Fundamental Right. The Government also act to establish a Commission for Minority Educational Institutions that will provide
direct affiliation for Minority professional institutions to Central Universities.

The statutory bodies, the University Grants Commission, the All India Council for Technical Education and the National Council for Teachers Education are vested with the responsibilities for coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of university, technical, management and teacher education respectively.

Organization, Structure and management of the Education System:

The National Policy on Education (NPE) (1986) and its Programme of Action (1992) advocates a National System of Education. It implies that, up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex have access to education of a comparable quality and common educational structure (the 10+2+3 systems). It also envisages a National Curriculum Framework having a common core with other components that are flexible. While the total number of years of general education remained ten years throughout the country, the division of the ten years of general education into Primary, Upper Primary and Secondary continued to be different in some of the states and union territories. Eighteen States/Union Territories have adopted the structure of the 5+3+2 pattern. In the twelve other State/Union Territories the general school cycle consists of four years of Primary, three years of Upper Primary and three years of secondary school.
education. Three States/Union Territories follow a 5+2+3 categorisation and one state follows a system of 4+4+2 years.

**Pre-Primary stage:** The pre-primary education as a part of educational ladder is not compulsory. Governmental intervention in the pre-primary sector is through Early Child Care and the Education (ECCE) programme which includes Universalising the programme of Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) to provide a functional Anganwadi in every settlement and ensure full coverage for all children. The Private sector, mostly in urban areas, supplements the government efforts substantially in catering to the pre-primary educational needs of children. The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) envisages a significant expansion of the ICDS Scheme to cover all States/UTs in the country.

**Elementary stage:** The administrative arrangement at the Centre has undergone a change during 2000 with the creation of a separate Department of Elementary Education and Literacy in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, keeping in view the thrust needed for the Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE).

By and large, both funding and management of primary schools was predominantly in the hands of the Government-Central and States. During the nineties, the participation of local bodies in the management of primary and upper primary schools has increased. Around 47 per cent of primary schools and 34 per cent of Upper Primary schools are under local self-governments at the district or
municipal levels. An innovative concept of an Education Guarantee Scheme introduced in the State of Madhya Pradesh, ensures a primary school in any school-less habitation, on demand, by the community. This scheme is being replicated in other states. Similarly, in another educationally less developed state, Rajasthan, the community initiated and controlled effort to universalize primary education, initiated by an NGO, has managed to bring widespread changes in access, retention and quality of education in very low literacy pockets in many districts of the state.

The most outstanding feature of educational development since the nineties is in the field of educational planning and management of expansion of primary education leading to universal primary education – access, retention, attainment of minimum standards of learning, infrastructure and teacher training. Selected districts became the units of planning and the management of primary education. At present, 271 districts in 18 states have launched district specific plans under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan” (campaign for universal education) and the largely externally assisted District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). Districts with low female literacy and with a concentration of educationally backward sections of society, like scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, were identified for implementing DPEP interventions by the respective states, whereas the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) covers all the Districts of the States, up to the elementary level. SSA was launched in 2001-02 and, as a flagship umbrella programme, it continued to build upon other primary and
elementary education projects of Government of India like DPEP, Lok Jumbish, Janshala etc., while at the same time, extending the coverage of the initiative upto class VIII i.e. the elementary level, beyond the primary classes. These programmes address access and retention of the most disadvantaged sections of the community, including Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Minorities, who continue to stay out of schools for various reasons, and also those who have left school before completing the first stage of elementary education, through interventions like Alternative Schooling. These programmes also tackle the issue of improving the quality of the educational processes and outcomes in all primary schools of the district.

Internal concurrent evaluations have shown encouraging results. Even the indirect evidence in the form of changes in literacy levels between 1991 and 2002 indicate that in many districts, DPEP & SSA have yielded good results.

These programmes are instrumental in community mobilisation and participation to accelerate the pace of Universalisation of Elementary Education through decentralized and participative approaches. The village education plans were prepared in consultation with Panchayati Raj Institutions’ (Local Government sub-statal bodies) and Village Education Committees. The perspective plans, setting the goals and strategies to achieve the defined level of Universal Primary Education (UPE), were developed in consultation
with and participation of elected leaders, village leaders, parents, teachers and active NGOs working in the district.

Secondary and Higher Education: There has not been any fundamental change over the past few years in the structure and organisation of secondary and higher secondary education. The period since the nineties witnessed growth in response to meet the demand generated by the expansion at lower levels of education. While state financing of secondary education continued to grow, participation of non-governmental organisation has also increased in the management of secondary schools with official recognition and in many cases with financial assistance. Non-governmental bodies manage around 51 per cent of secondary schools and 58 per cent of higher secondary schools. In order to meet the educational needs of those who were unable to enroll themselves in the formal system, opportunities are provided through the National and State Open Schools, utilizing multi-media packages and contact centres. Improvements in the quality of education, particularly in science, mathematics and computer literacy, are emphasized with financial support from the Government.

Efforts are also on for the integration of various emerging areas of knowledge and new branches like environment education, AIDS education and safety education in the school curriculum. To upgrade the curriculum framework, the exercise of developing the NCFSE – 2005 has been initiated. Strengthening of value-based education in the country at the school level is one of the major initiatives since
Guidance and Counselling has been recognized as an important intervention for improving the quality of school education.

Efforts are on to create awareness and convince the School Boards of Education and other State examining agencies to replace numerical marks with grades for reporting students’ performance. With a view to using evaluation as a strategy for qualitative improvement in school education, the scheme of School Based Evaluation, based on the concept of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation, has been developed and experimented with.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is offering an International Diploma Course in Guidance and Counselling through a face-to-face ‘mode’ for trainees from Asia and Africa. The NCERT has recommended inclusive schools for all without specific reference to pupils with special educational needs, in order to provide quality education to all learners.

Vocationalisation of Secondary Education: Vocationalisation of Secondary education provides for diversification of educational opportunities so as to enhance individual employability, reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of skilled manpower and a viable alternative for those not intending to pursue higher education.

The centrally sponsored scheme of vocationalisation of secondary education at the +2 level became operation in 1988 and
the revised scheme has been in operation since 1992-93. The scheme provides for financial assistance to the States to set up an administrative structure, conduct area-vocational surveys, prepare curricula, text books, work books, curriculum guides, training manuals, teachers training programmes, strengthening technical support systems for research and development, training and evaluation etc. It also provides financial assistance to NGOs and voluntary organizations for implementation of specific innovative projects for conducting short-term courses. The scheme so far has created a massive infrastructure of 20600 Sections in 7300 Schools thus providing for diversion of about 1 million student at the +2 level and the grants so far released has been to the tune of Rs.7 billion.

Based on the recommendations of the various review groups/committees, the existing scheme of vocationalisation of Secondary at the +2 level is being revised and a new scheme of Vocational Education and Training (VE&T) has been formulated. The scheme of VET shall be a distinct stream, intended to prepare students for identified occupations spanning several areas of activity.

*Nurture of Talent*: While opportunities for equal access and to a minimum level of learning achievement for all are being ensured, it is equally important to nurture the talented children, especially from the rural areas and those belonging to lower income families. The Government of India administers several programmes for the development of such talent and the residential Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas with Classes VI to XII have been established to provide
quality education to talented children mainly from the rural areas, selected on the basis of a common admission test. One such school is located in each of the districts all over the country.

The use of Information and Communication Technology in schools for providing computer aided education has been started and is being expanded.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training conducts a National Talent Search Examination to identify talent to be nurtured in Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics at the school level. Besides, participation of students from India is a regular feature in the international Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics Olympiads held every year.

The scheme of award of scholarships at the secondary stage provides a fillip to the development of potential talent in students, especially in rural areas.

Higher General Education: Though there has been no basic change in its structure, the Higher Education System in the country has seen a sixteen fold increase in the number of universities and a twenty fold increase in the number of colleges since independence.

During the mid 60s and 70s the growth of Higher Education was 12-13%. Subsequently, it declined to 4.5% in the middle of the 80s and continues to rise at the same rate. The pressure on the
tertiary level is expected to grow in the light of various programmes launched to increase the enrolment at the primary and secondary levels of education.

According to the 10th Five Year Plan (2002-2007) target, a minimum of 10% of the relevant age-group (17-23 years) is to be enrolled in Higher Education, up from the present level of 7%. The strategy could be to use both the conventional and open learning systems to reach this goal. The use of information and communication technology and maximum use of existing infrastructure will be essential to help in building a more inclusive higher education scenario.

The participation of girls in higher education has been increasingly steadily since 1950-51. The enrolment of women has risen to 3.51 million at all levels in 2002-03, constituting 39.84 per cent of the total enrolment.

During the Tenth Five-Year Plan, the emphasis is on the development of universities and colleges through strengthening infrastructure, quality and excellence, access with equity, etc. With a view to ensuring quality in Higher Education, the assessment and accreditation by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), an autonomous organisation under the University Grants Commission (UGC), has been made obligatory for all Universities and Colleges.
Technical Management Education: The last five years have seen a phenomenal increase in the number of institutions providing technical and management education in the country. The Technical Education System covers courses in engineering, technology, management, architecture, pharmacy, etc. and the Ministry of Human Resource Development caters to programmes at the undergraduate, postgraduate and research levels.

The technical education system at the central level comprises, among others, the following: The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), which is the statutory body for the proper planning and coordinated development of the technical education system; Seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs); Six Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs); the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore; the Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management (IIITM), Gwalior and the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Allahabad, and 18 National Institutes of Technology (NITs) (converted from the earlier Regional Engineering Colleges (RECs).

A number of steps have been taken by the Government during the last five years for the growth of Technical Education in India which include;

⇒ A National Programme of HRD in Information Technology (IT) has been drawn up to meet the emerging need for quality manpower in IT and related areas.
An All India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE) has been launched for admissions to engineering, architecture, pharmacy and planning programmes. Similarly an All India Master of Computer Application Test (AIMCET) was launched for admission to the MCA programme and guidelines for admission to the Master of Business Administration (MBA) / PGDM were issued.

The Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP) launched with the assistance of the World Bank, aims at upscaling and supporting of ongoing efforts of the Government of India in improving quality of technical education. The Programme has been under implementation as a centrally-coordinated multi-state long-term programme from March, 2003.

Government has decided to set up two Institutes of Information Technology Design and Manufacturing at Kanchipuram and Jabalpur at a total project cost of Rs.1.1 billion for both the institutions during the 10th Plan.

An Indian Institute of Management (IIM) at an appropriate location in the North Eastern Region, (to be decided by the DONER in consultation with the Chief Ministers of the States in the region) is proposed to be set up; it will be operated initially
by one of the existing IIMs after which it will function in an independent manner

⇒ To give a boost to the research activities of centrally funded and other prominent technical institutions in the country, electronic access to nearly 4000 e-journals/data bases have been provided.

⇒ A National programme for Earthquake Engineering has been put in place, which shall benefit nearly 100 institutions throughout the country.

⇒ A National Programme for Technology Enhanced Learning has been started with the primary objective of enhancing learning effectiveness through technology to supplement class-room teaching.

⇒ A fully dedicated Technical Education Channel was launched on 26th January, 2003. This Channel will telecast curriculum-based programmes to supplement the technical education being provided by different institutions.

⇒ An ambitious programme of improvement of the quality of technical education in the country has been launched with an investment of Rs. 15.50 billion in the first phase.
A National Centre for Value Education in Engineering has been established at IIT, Delhi to facilitate integrating Value Education as a part of technical education.

Massive expansion of Technical Education has been undertaken to meet the growing demand of technically trained manpower in the economy. The Intake in technical institutions has increased manifold during the past few years.

To improve the quality of Technical Institutions, the accreditation process of Institutes has been expedited by AICTE. At present, 2000 programmes were accredited during the year 2002 as compared to only 21 such programmes in 2000-2001. AICTE plans to cover all eligible colleges for accreditation by 2006.

The entire Post-graduate system of education is in the process of positive transformation to meet the challenges thrown up by the globalizations.

Open/Distance and Learning : The new mode of delivery of education, namely, the distance and virtual university mode has broken down physical barriers and has the potential to provide the opportunity for higher education to persons located in any part of the country. This mode has immense capacity to enroll vast numbers of students. Distance education, and open and flexible learning, are well established and well positioned today to strategically meet the
challenges outlined above and reform the educational organization and processes. The distance higher education sector in India today comprises 10 open universities, 104 correspondence course institutes, and many private or autonomous providers in the government and non-government sectors. About two million students studying through distance education constitute nearly 20% of the total enrolment in higher education in the country. A part of the requirement for expansion of higher education facilities, could well be met by this mode of education.

Some of the other important initiatives in higher education are programmes for the general development of universities and colleges; special grants for the construction of hostels for women; provision of Day Care Centres in Universities; promotion of socially relevant programmes; strengthening of international cooperation and educational exchange programmes; setting up of Simple Sanskrit Speaking Centres in universities and colleges; establishment of Population Education Resource Centres in select universities, setting up of Women Studies Centres and Cells; networking of universities and colleges; establishment of special Cells for SC/ST in universities and establishment of Advanced Centres/Institutes for Science Education and Research. Emphasis has been laid on expansion with quality, use of ICT and promotion of quality research.

Improvement of access and quality, the adoption of State specific strategies, enhancing the relevance of higher education through curriculum reform, vocationalisation, networking, information
technology and distance education are the main highlights of the higher education sector. The approach will be to double the enrolment in higher education in the Xth Plan period i.e. 2007.

Teacher Education: The National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) was established by an Act of Parliament, to achieve planned development, maintain and regulate quality norms and standards in teacher education, throughout the country. The Government of India has also strengthened its Teacher Education Programme for providing Teacher Training facilities and curriculum through establishing the District Institutes of Education & Training (DIET’s) at the district level, State Councils for Educational Research & Training (SCERTs) at the State level, along with the National Council for Educational Research & Training (NCERT) and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), at the National level.

Keeping pace with the development in the educational field, India has taken various steps for capacity building and training of the teachers so as to keep abreast of the rapid advances such as :

⇒ Special efforts are being made by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) to train untrained in-service teachers. To ensure relevance and responsiveness of the teacher education system to the demand of teacher education on a continuing basis, the teacher education curriculum is being updated by the NCTE. A committee of experts have been set up to revise the existing norms and standards for the Bachelor
of Education (B.Ed.) Programme, to make it more relevant to the changed environment.

⇒ The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and NCTE have entered into a MoU for executing the process of assessment and accreditation of all teacher education institutions under the jurisdiction of NCTE. This will ensure continuous improvement in quality and pursuit of excellence in the profession.

⇒ The NCERT is developing self-learning materials for teacher educators, keeping in view the emerging issues and concerns. A school-based in-service training programme is also being planned in order to develop a school-based training methodology.

⇒ The Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) has been striving to meet, through generation of software, utilization of mass communication media technologies, especially radio and television, on a large scale, to extend the reach of quality education (especially in the education of the groups with special needs) and continuous training of teachers. It has been utilized by children, teachers and other target groups through its transmission on the Doordarshan and Gyan Darshan television Channels.

⇒ A revised teachers education scheme has been framed in the Xth Five Year Plan for speedy completion of ‘sanctioned’
training institutes and for improvement of quality of pre-service and in-service training programmes. At the national level, the support of Apex institutions like the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), National Institute for Education, Planning and Administration (NIEPA), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Universities etc. is being enlisted to improve its quality of the teachers. NCERT has recently formulated the Teacher Education Curriculum Framework.

⇒ An important component pertaining to the use of Information and Communication Technology in teacher education, to be coordinated by NCTE in consultation with the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and the Department of Information Technology, has been introduced.

⇒ A resource support programme, with the objective of supporting specialized research and curriculum development of teacher educators, is being conceived.

⇒ Under the joint initiative of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, NCTE and the Indira Gandhi National Open University, a six months Programme “Certificate in Primary Education” has been developed by IGNOU and recognized by NCTE, for the training of the untrained in-service teachers of NE states in distance mode. Several states have already availed the benefit of this programme.
To attract talented and qualified persons to the teaching profession, pay scales and service conditions of the teachers have been revised.

Objectives and principal characteristics of current and forthcoming reforms:

*Current Situation*: The basic characteristics of the education reforms were actually initiated during the late eighties of the last century through the National Policy on Education (1986), which was revised in 1992. The Programme of Action (1992) in the form of defined objectives, fixing responsibility and suggesting structural reforms, guided the course of educational development during the period.

The thrust areas for educational development in the 21st Century included universalisation of elementary education, achievement of full adult literacy, raising the quality of education at all levels, improving learner achievement, upliftment of the educational status of disadvantaged groups including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, girls and disabled children, removing of regional disparities, vocationalisation of education, renewal of curricula to meet the emerging challenges in information technology, environment education, HIV/AIDS preventive education and support for development of centres of excellence at the tertiary level. The momentum gathered in the preceding decade is being continued with higher allocations to different sectors so that the goals are achieved.
There will have to be a thrust towards Universalisation of Elementary Education and Education For All, along with a marked improvement in the access and quality of secondary and higher education. This assumes greater significance in the context of the ever-increasing demand for education, the opening up of the economy and the emergence of India as a major IT player. All this underlines the need for a quantum jump in the financial allocations for secondary and higher education.

Emerging Changes in Policies and Strategies: With the change of the Government at the Centre, new initiatives in regard to policy changes and strategies have evolved to achieve the National Goals and meet the Emerging Challenges of Globalisation.

*Elementary Education*: Keeping in view the 86th Constitutional Amendment making free and compulsory education to all children in the age group 6-14 years, a Fundamental Right, the policy and strategy of the government has been focussed on the universalisation of elementary education of eight years of school or its equivalent, to cover all the children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a national programme being implemented to achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education, is the main vehicle for implementing this constitutional obligation. The Government of India has also approved District Elementary Education Plans (DEEPs), amounting to Rs. 93.40 billion for the year 2003-04, including Rs. 12.15 billion for the District Primary Education
Programme (DPEP), a component of SSA, targeting primary schooling in selected districts.

More emphasis is now being given to that section of community, which are most underprivileged/disadvantaged like Girls, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Minorities. Some of the programmes with a special focus on these groups are given below:

(A) In July, 2003, the Government of India has approved the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) as an amendment to the existing scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), for providing additional support for education of underprivileged/disadvantaged girls at the elementary level. The NPEGEL will form part of SSA and will be implemented under the umbrella of SSA, but with a distinct and separate gender component plan of SSA, with an outlay of over Rs. 10 billion. It aims to develop a Model Girl Child Friendly School at the Cluster level, i.e., group of 10 villages. Additional incentives like uniform and stationery, interventions remedial teaching, bridge courses etc. and mobilization of communities are planned under this programme which will cover nearly one third of the country identified as socially and educationally backward blocks. The efforts of the Government of India have resulted in the enrolment of the Girl Child for Primary schooling rising from 40.4 million (in 1990-1991) to 49.8 million (in 2000-2001).
For implementation of this programme, an estimated expenditure amounting to Rs.1065 billion has been proposed for the 10th Five Year plan period. The assistance under this component will be as per the parameters of SSA i.e. 75:25 sharing during the Xth Plan, and 50:50 sharing thereafter, between the Central Government and State Governments.

(B) Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

The Government of India has approved a new scheme called Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) for setting up upto 750 residential schools with boarding facilities at the elementary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities in difficult areas. The schools are proposed to be set up in the 2656 identified Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) of the selected 298 Districts, where female literacy is below the national average and the gender gap in literacy is more than the national average.

The scheme shall be co-ordinated with the existing schemes of the Department viz. SSA, NPEGEL and Mahila Samakhya. The scheme shall be implemented until the year 2010, whereafter the need for its continuation will be reviewed. The SSA pattern of financing with a 75:25 ratio of sharing between the Centre and the States during the Tenth Five Year Plan, and, 50:50 thereafter, will be adopted.
(C) Education for Minorities under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) as well the Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education (EGS & AIE) provides for support to the traditional institutions of Maktabs and Madarsas, for providing formal schooling facilities, in terms of providing free text-books to children, as in the case of EGS/AIE centers, training of teachers and provision for an additional teacher to transact the formal school curriculum. The authorized and approved Registered Societies etc. for the children of a minority community may start EGS/AIE interventions.

For a large number of children especially girls, studying in madarsas which are not recognized or affiliated, an EGS or AIE centre can be started at the madarsa, by the local body/community based organization, whereby free textbooks, an additional instructor if necessary and training to the instructor in the State curriculum, can be provided under the EGS/AIE component Of SSA. Such interventions can be planned and approved through the Annual Work Plans of SSA by the district and the State Implementation Society.

(D) One of the major goals of SSA is to bridge all gender and social category gaps at the primary stage by 2007, and at elementary education level by 2010. Some of the interventions of SSA, which are SCs STs specific are: Focus on girls, SCs, STs and minority groups; Free textbooks to girls, SCs/STs students; and
Provision of Rs.1.5 million to each district for innovative activities for SCs/STs students. The focus on the underprivileged and disadvantaged group of society will be continued in the coming years.

Secondary Education: Universalisation of secondary education is a target to be partly achieved during the coming decade, depending on the availability of resources. Steps have to be taken to increase access, retention rate, laboratory and library facilities, teacher training facilities in computers, information technology, computerization, Vocationalisation including education for the disabled children, health education, value education, environment education, HIV/AIDS preventive education and curriculum reforms. The strategies would be implemented through the existing Centrally sponsored or Central Sector Schemes by pooling the resources and adopting a convergent approach to ensure the realization of the objectives of Universalisation of Secondary Education in an effective way.

The process of review and renewal of the New National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2006 has been initiated the Government is committed to match the curricula with the idea of India, as enshrined in its constitution. It would provide an indication of the national consensus about the directions and objectives in which the Indian Educational System needs to move in the next decade.
The Government of India has taken initiatives for the total revamping of the Vocational Education Programme in order to make it flexible, modular and competency based with a proposal to set up a National Testing Agency for evaluating and certifying the competency and skill level.

The important initiatives in higher education taken by the Government during the last five years are programmes for general development of universities and colleges; special grants for construction of hostels for women; provision of day care centres in Universities; promotion of socially relevant programmes; strengthening of international cooperation and educational exchange programmes; establishment of population education resource Centres in select universities, setting up of women studies centres and Cells; networking of universities and colleges; establishment of special Cells for SC/STs in universities and establishment of Advanced Centres/Institutes for Science Education and Research. Emphasis has been laid on expansion with quality, its use of ICT and its promotion of quality research in the development of higher education.

The great demand for technical education and the need to enhance the quality and relevance to meet the changing industrial requirements call for alternate delivery modes. Distance and Web based learning will be given a greater thrust. Development of instructional material in modern multi-medial formats and their
dissemination is proposed to be undertaken by key educational technology centres.

The knowledge-based service sector is expected to grow in the coming years. The existing institutes will be supported to offer courses for this sector by opening new departments or through augmenting the existing departments. It will also be possible to increase the intake capacity by alternative delivery mechanisms like Distance and Open Learning and by providing on-line courses.

A national Programme for Earthquake Engineering has been put in place, which shall benefit nearly 100 institutions throughout the country. This programme aims to train large number of engineers in earthquake engineering.

To promote education in the area of bio-technology, the existing academic programmes at the post-graduate levels in the field of bio-technology are being strengthened by including research projects in post-graduate studies. For this, all IITs are being provided with a full-fledged Department of Bio-technology with undergraduate, post-graduate and doctoral programmes. A provision has been made to provide special funding for this purpose.

A national Programme for Technology Enhanced Learning has been started with the primary objective of enhancing learning effectiveness through technology to supplement class-room teaching.
A high quality learning environment will be created, irrespective of the institution, thus overcoming the acute faculty shortage.

To effectively use new technologies to enhance the quality of out-turn of our engineering institutions a fully dedicated Technical Education Channel was launched on 26 January, 2003. This Channel will telecast curriculum-based programmes to supplement the technical education being provided by different engineering institutions. These programmes, being produced by IIT Professors and Senior faculty members, will go a long way in improving the quality of our engineering graduates.

Major Achievements in the Recent Past

*Growth in Literacy*: The Census 2001 report indicates that India has made significant progress in the field of literacy since the 1991 census. The overall literacy rate as per the 2001 census is 64.8% as against 52.21% in 1991. The female literacy increased by 14.4 percentage points i.e. from 39.3% in 1991 to 53.7% in 2001. Out of 865 million people in the 7+age group, 561 million are now literate, of which 224 million are women. Thus, three-fourths of the male population and more than half of the female population are literate.

Fig. 1 presents the changes in literacy witnessed during 1991-2001 as compared to the previous decade of 1981-1991. The growth rate during the nineties has accelerated and, on an average, has increased by 1.32 percent per year as compared to the
corresponding figure of 0.85 per cent during the ‘eighties’. The literacy rate among females has grown faster than that of males, contributing to a reduction in the gap between the male and female literacy levels.

The most significant development, however, has been the marked improvement in the literacy levels of the disadvantaged sections of the society like the scheduled castes (SC’s) and scheduled tribes (ST’s). The literacy rate of the scheduled castes has increased from 10.27% in 1961 to 54.7% in 2001. The increase of the literacy rate of SC males was from 16.96% in 1961 to 66.6% in 2001 and for females it increased from 3.29% in 1961 to 41.9% in 2001. In respect of the Scheduled Tribes, the literacy rate increased from 8.53% in 1961 to 47.1% in 2001. The increase in literacy rates for males was from 13.83% in 1961 to 59.2% in 2001 and for females it increased from 3.16% in 1961 to 34.8% in 2001.

As per the Census 2001, 45 districts in the country have a female literacy rate below 30%. Hence, it was decided to target these 45 low female literacy districts for improvement in female literacy. As most of these districts are concentrated in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and Jharkhand, special innovative programmes have been taken up in these districts for promoting female literacy.

A significant development is reduction of regional disparities in literacy levels. This is reflected in the higher rate of growth among
several low literacy states like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh (since bifurcated into two separate states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh), Uttar Pradesh (similarly bifurcated into two separate states of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal) and Bihar (similarly bifurcated into Bihar and Jharkhand) which were considered as states with chronic educational backwardness. (Fig.2).

The rate of change in the literacy rates of the backward states accounting for more than one third of the population of India is a matter of some satisfaction. Bihar and Jharkhand had the benefit of the Bihar Education Project during the nineties. Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh had implemented the UP Basic Education Project (mostly in the full districts of the present day Uttaranchal) and DPEP (mostly in districts in the plains) during the decade. Similarly, Madhya Pradesh had more than 50 per cent of its districts covered under DPEP, including many districts located at present in Chhattisgarh. Rajasthan, showing the most spectacular result had the benefit of Lok Jumbish (a peoples movement led by an NGO for community managed schools with local teachers and contextual curricula), Shiksha Karmis (barefoot teacher), Mahila Samakhya and DPEP. Underlying all these efforts in primary education was the Total Literacy Campaign, to eradicate adult illiteracy among the age group of 15-35, through district level planning and implementation. The literacy campaigns not only improved literacy levels of the adult population but also gave rise to demand for primary education for their children. Thus, the nineties witnessed the narrowing of the
disparities across different regions of the country and among different states and union territories.

The social mobilization generated by the literacy campaigns has had an impact on the other social sectors, most notably, women’s empowerment, health and environmental awareness. Democratic participation has been enriched by promoting articulation in society, especially of the disadvantaged and under privileged. The campaigns have served the cause of promoting equity, in redefining gender relations and in questioning caste-based social categorisation.

Access to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE): The well being of children has been an integral part of India’s developmental planning since 1951. By the constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002, Article –45 of the Directive Principles enjoins the State “to provide early childhood care and education to all children until they complete the age of six years”. Realising the importance of preschool learning and ECCE, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan aims to support (i) strengthening the pre-school component in ICDS by need based training of the Aanganwadi Sevika, provision of an additional person, learning materials etc, (ii) setting up balwadis as pre-school centres in ‘uncovered’ areas, (iii) building advocacy for the importance of early child development, (iv) development of materials and (vii) promoting convergence between the schools system and the ECCE. The scheme has provision for Rs. 15 lakh per district per year for opening ECCE centres. The Government is also
committed to universalise the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme to provide a functional Anganwadi in every settlement and ensure full coverage for Universal Primary Education (UPE).

Access to Primary Education: Universal Primary Education (UPE) is receiving the high priority of the Government. There has been a gradual expansion of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and Sarva Siksha Abhiyan over the last couple of years. Against the initial coverage of 42 districts in 7 States in 1994, the programme at its peak covered 273 districts in 18 States namely, Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Uttranchal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan covers the entire country and addresses the needs of 192 million children in 1.1 million habitations, 0.85 million existing primary and upper primary schools and 3.3 million teachers. The programme seeks to open new schools in habitations which do not have schooling facilities and strengthen the existing school infrastructure through provision of additional class rooms, toilets, drinking water, a maintenance grant and an annual school improvement grant. Functioning schools with inadequate teacher strength are also provided with additional teachers under the programme.

Other programmes include the National Programme for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL), the Kasturba
Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) and the Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP).

Access to Secondary Education: As against an expenditure of Rs 645 million in 1951-52, the expenditure in school education has increased to Rs 825 billion in 2001-2002. The number of secondary schools in the country have increased from 7,416 in 1950-51 to 133,491 in 2000-01. The emphasis during the 10th Plan period is to increase the access to quality education by increasing the number of schools, encouraging private participation by giving assistance to strengthen the infrastructure and also to encourage inclusive education for disabled children. Further, the universalisation of Secondary Education will be the logical follow up to the achievement of universalisation of elementary education.

Access to higher Education: The Higher Education System in the country has seen a sixteen fold increase in the number of universities and a twenty fold increase in the number of colleges, since independence. Though in the last 50 years there has been an impressive growth in higher education with a large increase in universities (from 18 to 314), colleges (from 691 to about 15,000) and students (from 0.2 million to 9.2 million), the participation in higher education is still confined only to about 7% of the Indian population in the relevant age group of 17 to 23. The participation of girls in higher education has been increasing steadily since 1950-51 and the enrolment of women has risen to 3.51 million at all levels in 2002-03, constituting 39.84 per cent of the total enrolment.
The open and distance segment of higher education in India today comprises 11 open universities (the Indira Gandhi National open University (IGNOU) and 10 State Open Universities), 64 university correspondence course institutes and many private or autonomous providers in the government and non-government sectors. About two million students studying through distance education constitute nearly 20% of the total enrolment in higher education in the country.

Gender Equity in Education: It has been the endeavour of the Government to provide equity in education. Special emphasis has been laid on the Education of Girls through various targeted interventions.

The gap in male-female literacy rate has decreased from 24.84% in 1991 to 21.70% in 2001. Female literacy has increased by 14.87% i.e. from 39.29% to 54.16%, whereas male literacy increased by 11.72% i.e. from 64.13% to 75.85%, during the last decade. Gender equity and women’s empowerment is also visible as a result of which 60% of the participants and beneficiaries being women. The Mahila Samakhya programme was designed to mobilise and organise marginalised rural women for education by creating an environment for learning. The programme was launched in 1989 as a 100% Dutch-assisted project. Mahila Samakhya is being funded by the Government of India from the year 2003-2004 and currently covers over 11,000 villages spread over 56 districts in nine states.
The National Programme for Education of Girls at the elementary level has been launched in September 2003. It provides additional components for education of girls at the elementary stage, especially from disadvantaged communities.

Quality in Education: A National Resource Centre for Value Education (NRCVE) has been set up in the NCERT. The Center has a Reference Library and many publications to its credit.

A Standing Committee of NCERT called the Educational Research and Innovation Committee acts as a catalyst to undertake, coordinate, promote and support research in priority areas of school and teacher education and allied disciplines.

The first International Diploma Course in Guidance and counselling was offered in the year 2002-03 for teachers and teacher educators deputed from Maldives, Sri Lanka and Zambia. The need assessment survey conducted by the NCERT revealed the demand for this kind of training in many countries in the region. It is proposed to offer another such course in the year 2004-05. In order to meet the demand from African countries, an International Diploma Course in Guidance and Counselling through online/distance mode has been planned in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning, with its headquarters in Canada.
Physical Access: In terms of physical access, 94 per cent of the rural population, living in 826 thousand habitations have a school within a walking distance of 1 km. 84 per cent of the habitations have one upper primary school within a walking distance of 3 km. There are, however, many small and difficult to reach habitations without schooling facilities. The innovations like the education guarantee scheme of Madhya Pradesh or the approach of the Lok Jumbish Project in Rajasthan and the flagship programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are set to provide educational facilities even in such small habitations.

Enrolment: Based on the projections, for the first time, it is expected that the primary age group of 6-10 would stabilize, with only a marginal increase of 2.5 million during the nineties and decline by the end of the first decade of the new century. The growth of the upper primary age group is likely to be higher than the primary age group during the last decade and also reduce absolute numbers during 2001-2010 (Table I).
TABLE-1

Projected Child Population in India (in million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age Group (6-10 years)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Age Group (6-10 years)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991 (Actual)</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>116.7</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001*</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>118.2</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005*</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>109.1</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Projected figure

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2001-2002, MHRD, GOI

Growth of Enrolment between 1990-1991 and 2000-2001: The magnitude of resource requirements can only be understood when seen with the absolute number of children in school over the years. Table 2 reflects the change in the number of children attending school between 1990-1991 and 2000-2001. The total enrolment at the primary stage during this period increased from 100.9 million to 113.9 million. At the upper primary stage of education, it has increased from 35.6 million in 1990-91 to 44.8 million in 2000-2001. Similarly, in the high/higher secondary/inter/pre-degree stage, it has increased from 20.4 million in 1990-91 to 30.5 million in 2000-2001.

The proportion of girls in the total enrolment has reached around 44.1 per cent at primary, 41.8 per cent at the upper primary and 39.5 per cent at the secondary and higher secondary levels.
TABLE-2

Sex-wise Enrolment by Stages Classes of School Education (in million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th></th>
<th>Upper Primary</th>
<th></th>
<th>High &amp; Higher Secondary</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>100.9</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>107.1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>108.2</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>110.3</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998*</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>110.9</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999*</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>113.6</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000*</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>113.8</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001*</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>113.9</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Provisional

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2001-2002, MHRD, GOI

Gross Enrolment Ratio (National): The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in 2001-2002 (provisional) stood at 105 per cent in the case of boys and 87 per cent in the case of girls, at the primary stage. The table shows the GER is nearly steady around 105 per cent in the case of boys while it has increased from 73 per cent to 87 per cent for girls, during the last five years. The total GER has reached around 96 per cent. The GER at the Upper Primary level for boys is 68 per cent and 52 per cent girls, and overall 60 per cent at the end of 2002 (provisional) (Fig.3 & Fig.4).

The differentials in GER between boys and girls are narrowing, both at the Primary and upper primary levels. In the initial stage of
expansion, the GER is likely to be inflated due to over age children entering the school for the first time. Gradually it would stabilize somewhere between 90 per cent and 100 per cent as universalisation is achieved and maintained at a constant level. Another indication of stability would be the merger of GER and Net Enrolment Ratio (NER). However, the NER requires age specific information of children studying in schools, which is not available; it is difficult to obtain NER details at the national level. Apart from enrolment, the indicator of retention would provide, more accurately, the status of elementary education. Table 3 provides the rates of dropouts at the end of each decade, starting from the sixties. At the end of nineties, the dropout rate was around 43 per cent (40 in the case of boys and 46 for girls) at the primary stage. The corresponding figure for the entire elementary stage was around 67 per cent (59 for boys and 65 for girls). It is observed that the bulk of school dropouts leave school before completing the primary school cycle and the probability of dropping out of school among those who complete the first cycle of elementary education is quite low. The dropout rate for the entire elementary stage was reported at 55% in 2002 (53 for boys and 57 for girls).
TABLE-3

Dropout Rates at the Primary and Elementary Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classes I to V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes I to VIII</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Provisional

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2001-2002, MHRD, GOI

Teacher: In absolute terms, a substantial increase in the number of teachers has been registered from 1990-91, in all types of schools. The total number of teachers increased from 4.1 million in 1990-91 to 5.2 million in 2000-2001. In the primary schools, it has increased from 1.64 million in 1990-91 to 1.93 million in 2000-01 and in upper primary schools from 1.07 million to 1.46 million in the same period. In high/higher secondary schools also, the trend has been maintained, where it has increased from 1.38 million in 1990-91 to 1.77 million in 2000-01. The trend indicates that the number of teachers started increasing at the primary and upper primary during the mid-nineties with a near constant increase at the secondary school level with a sharp rise during 1998-99. (Fig.5)
Educational Institutions: There has been considerable increase in the spread of educational institutions during the period 1990-91 to 2000-02. While primary schools increased by 1.20 times, upper primary schools increased by 1.40 times, higher/inter/pre/junior colleges increased by 1.55 times, colleges for general education increased by 1.90 times, colleges for professional education increased by 2.90 times and universities/deemed to be universities/institutions of national importance increased by 1.50 times. (Fig.6)

Enrolment in Higher Education: Throughout the nineties, the enrolment in higher education had grown at a constant rate of around 6.0 per cent (Table 4). The absorption of increased influx had created demand for opening new institutions (Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-91</td>
<td>4924868</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96-97</td>
<td>6842598</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97-98</td>
<td>7260418</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98-99*</td>
<td>7705520</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99-00*</td>
<td>8050607</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01*</td>
<td>8399443</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02*</td>
<td>8821095</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2001-2002, MHRD, GOI
TABLE 5

Growth of Educational Institutions: Higher Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>General Education</th>
<th>Professional Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-91</td>
<td>4862</td>
<td>886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-92</td>
<td>5058</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92-93</td>
<td>5334</td>
<td>989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-94</td>
<td>5639</td>
<td>1125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94-95*</td>
<td>6089</td>
<td>1230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-96*</td>
<td>6569</td>
<td>1354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96-97*</td>
<td>6759</td>
<td>1770</td>
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<tr>
<td>97-98*</td>
<td>7199</td>
<td>2075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98-99*</td>
<td>7494</td>
<td>2113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99-2000*</td>
<td>7782</td>
<td>2124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>7926</td>
<td>2223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>8737</td>
<td>2409</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2001-2002, MHRD, GOI

Educational Finances: Expenditure on education shows a continuous upward trend since Independence. This trend registered a sharp increase after education was brought in the Concurrent list of the Constitution of India and more particularly after the adoption of the National Policy on Education (1986), when a number of new initiatives were taken by the Central Government. These include the establishment of the National Literacy Mission and launching of a number of Centrally sponsored schemes. The expenditure on education by Centre and States as a percentage of Gross National Product (GNP) increased steadily from 1.2 per cent in 1950-51 to 3.94 per cent in 1999-2000, though it is still far short of the 6 per cent
target mentioned in the National Education Policy. More than 80% of the expenditure spent on education development during the decade went towards development of school education including adult education (Table 6).

**TABLE - 6**

Plan and Non-Plan Expenditure Outlays Centre and States

<table>
<thead>
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<td>8.0</td>
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<td>12.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical and others</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
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<td>Total Education</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2001-2002, MHRD, GOI*

The Main Problems and Challenges Ahead

Basic Education – Concerns for Access and Equity: Though India has made rapid progress in providing Primary and Elementary Education to all sections of the society, the gains achieved and the process have to be further consolidated as universal primary education is not a one time target. Though gender disparities have been narrowed, the enrolment of girls children at all levels is still below 50%. The 86th Amendment, making Elementary Education
as a Fundamental right for all children up to the age of 14, has thrown up new challenges before the policy makers and administrators. The challenges include achieving universal primary education, reducing gender disparity and removing hurdles in the way of access and equity of education due to caste and region related disparities. The access to basic education of eight years and meaningful participation in the education of girls and the disadvantaged segments of the population will receive the highest priority in the development plans.

Raising resources: State funding alone may not be adequate to meet the daunting task. The fast expanding enrolment at all stages of education has necessitated harnessing of community resources for educational development. This is more so because there has been substantial decline in the contribution from private sources, including cost recoveries from the students.

At the school stage, there is need for active involvement of the community in financing and management of educational institutions. Decentralization of educational management through the establishment of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the states is a step in this direction. The Government has recently announced that the public spending in education would be raised to at least 6% of GDP with at least half of this amount being spent on primary and secondary sectors. This will be done in a phased manner. The Government has also decided to introduce a cess on all central
taxes to finance the commitment to universalize access to quality basic education.

The new partnership of Education with industry and various income and profit generating sectors will have to be developed to meet the resource constraint. Stress has also to be laid on cost effective designs of structures and methodologies of education that can cater to the needs of the massive programmes of education. The advances in information and communication technology, specially satellite-based teleconferencing, have made it possible to use distance education for training in virtual classrooms. It is expected that technology, with appropriately designed software and quality inputs will, at the same time bring down the costs and increase the efficiency of the educational system.

Decentralised Planning and Management:

India is a vast country, with multiple culture, languages and religions along with a wide variety and inter and intra-state disparities. These diversities and regional disparities pose a different set of challenges for educational planning and management. Recognising this, India has steadily shifted from a centralized planning mode to decentralized education planning and management. The Panchayati Raj Institutions (Local Sub-Statatal bodies) are being strengthened to involve local grass root level bodies in the process of decision making and implementation of various schemes. The District Literacy Societies (Zila Saksharata Samitis) would continue to oversee and
run literacy programmes with freedom to synergies their strengths with those of local youth clubs, Mahila Mandals, voluntary agencies, Panchayati Raj Institutions, small scale industries, cooperative societies, etc. The movement towards planning at block and cluster and village levels, in partnership with NGOs, will be encouraged and supported.

Increased Role of NGOs: The Government is committed to promoting the role of NGOs at all levels in the social sector with a view to achieve participatory development and reduce the burden on the administration, which is charged with the implementation of development programmes. This approach will be followed by enhancing the role of NGOs in the educational development programme as well.

Partnership between Public and Private Sector: There is an increasing awareness regarding the potential of the private sector in complementing the efforts of the Government in achieving the goals of education in the country. Policies are being framed and strategies being developed so that the public and private sector can mutually benefit and play a complementary role rather than a competitive one. The private sector can contribute not only in monetary terms but also in terms of expertise for quality improvement through effective management of systems and development of locally relevant teaching-learning material.
Promotion of Alternative Delivery Systems: The school education programme has to look beyond the rigid formal framework in a flexible and adaptive fashion. Part-time formal, or non-formal education, seasonal learning centres for children of migrant labour, voluntary schools by NGOs, post-primary ‘open’ learning, camp approach for adolescent girls, etc., will all have to be systematically promoted. The government has already revised the non-formal education programme. The new programme called ‘Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) is being implemented with more vigour.

Quality Improvement: It is recognized that quality improvement has a significant impact not only on the enrolment and retention of children in the school but also on the possibilities of further education for increased productivity and in the exercise of citizenship rights and responsibilities. The tasks of quality improvement will be pursued through qualitative improvement in content and process of education; reorientation and strengthening of teacher education – both pre-service and in-service, provision of appropriate infrastructural facilities; focusing on strengthening the institutional management processes; and establishing a reliable system of learner assessment. Efforts will be made to strengthen the internal management of schools; and to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process.
Literacy and Continuing Education: While enhancing the relevance and reach of adult literacy and continuing education programmes for adults will continue to receive emphasis, an effort will be made to review the content of illiteracy eradication programmes in the context of various scientific and technological developments and their application to production processes which require a higher level of knowledge and skills on the part of workers engaged in various production activities. The objective will also be to facilitate meaningful and intelligent use of environmental resources and other facilities for the general upgrading of the quality of life.

Higher Education: The universalization of primary education would throw up new demands and challenges for the management and structure of higher education in India. The present problems of the Indian higher education system i.e. of access, equity, number, relevance, quality, and resource crunch would further increase. The public universities are already facing several severe constraints at present. Globalization is having its impact on education as well and this is being felt more because of new modes of delivery and disappearing borders as a result of the information and communication revolution.

To meet the challenges of the present times, various policy initiatives in the higher education sector are necessary. These initiatives must aim to seek a profound transformation of higher education in order that it becomes an effective promoter of sustainable human development commensurate with the specific
requirements of the country to meet the challenges of 21st century. Higher education should be restructured so as to improve its relevance with closer links with the world of work. For this purpose, it is essential that the students at the tertiary level should be provided enough opportunity to undergo an add-on course simultaneously with their under graduation programmes to enhance their vocational skills. The recently introduced University Grants Commission’s (UGC) programme of dual degrees needs to be effectively implemented by identifying the suitable vocational courses and providing necessary infrastructure for delivering these courses.

Educating the youth shall continue to remain the main responsibility of State universities, though it may not be their sole responsibility. With a view to enhancing access, private initiatives need to be encouraged. In the recent past, various States have taken the initiative to open private universities in their respective States. However, there is a need to regulate the establishment and operation of such universities so as to ensure that this does not lead to the commercialization of education on the one hand and on the other hand to ensure that necessary standards of teaching and research are maintained in the private universities.

Similarly, there is also a need to regulate the establishment and operation of educational institutions in India by foreign universities. This can be done by empowering the UGC to frame appropriate regulations. An amendment in the University Grants Commission Act would be necessary for this purpose. The University Grants
Commission is the apex body responsible for funding the universities and also for the maintenance of standards of education and research in the institutions of higher learning. The functioning of the University Grants Commission needs to be geared up to meet the emerging challenges in higher education.

Distance education, and open and flexible learning, are well established and well positioned today in India to strategically meet the challenges outlined above and reform educational organization and processes. The Indian distance higher education sector in India today comprises 10 open universities, 104 correspondence course institutes, and many private or autonomous providers in the government and non-government sectors. About two million students studying through distance education constitute nearly 20% of the total enrolment in higher education in the country. A part of the expansion of higher education facilities, could well be met using this mode of education.

In addition to meet the challenge of growing requirement for higher education, optimum utilization of the existing infrastructure in universities and colleges should be ensured by introduction of extra shifts, especially in metropolitan areas and large cities. The Xth Plan proposals of the Ministry of HRD, inter alia, highlight the fact that the existing infrastructure of colleges and universities are used only for less than one fourth to half of their capacity. This is owing to the structure of education as also the prohibition on the use of the infrastructure by any other organization, or even the same
organization, for other than a defined institutional purpose. This underutilization of existing infrastructure should be corrected if the vision of 10 per cent enrolment in the relevant age group population is to be achieved.

Another aspect which has to be kept in mind while expanding the horizons of higher education is that it need not follow the traditional path of degree or diploma programs. It has to be necessarily modular, flexible and provide for, life skills, job skills and knowledge skills oriented for meeting different requirements in different areas. The approaches on expansion have, therefore, to be different from those used in the past.

To promote equity and access during the Xth Five year Plan, UGC has also decided to make a special provision for giving special development grants to universities located in the backward regions and to young universities. The mandatory adoption of the approach outlined above can be made a precondition for sanction of such grants.

Educational Content and Learning Strategies for the Twenty-first Century

Curriculum Development, Principles and Assumptions:

The Decision Making Process: The National Policy on Education stipulated that the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) would carry out a review of the curriculum every five years. Process review and renewal of the curriculum has been
initiated since the present curriculum framework was released four years ago. Apart from policy concerns, NCERT has also felt that curriculum development is not a one-time venture but an ongoing process that has to be sensitive and responsive to the entire gamut of societal, pedagogical and other changes at all levels. Any curriculum development/revision undergoes two stages of development—the development of a National Curriculum Framework for Secondary Education (NCFSE) and the second, translating the areas of educational experiences into areas of studies by various states. While there is a common structure of school education throughout the country, there is variation in the division of first ten years of schooling into different stages of education and medium of instruction. While the core areas of the curriculum are common, there is sufficient flexibility to include local specificity to the curricular details worked out for transaction at the school level. The basic spirit of NCFSE would however be in harmony with the idea of India, as enshrined in its Constitution.

Curriculum Planning and Design: keeping the learner at the centre, the curriculum has to respond to the demands made by the family, culture, economy and polity. Hence, the exercise of developing the curriculum framework and selection of knowledge, subject areas and subject matter need widespread consultation and transparency in the decision-making process. The process is one of continuous change in response to the circumstances and changes in view of rapid globalization. These factors will impel education to undergo vast changes in respect of its objectives, content and methods. It will
have to bear responsibility for generating new knowledge and wisdom, incorporating the arts for harmony and beauty and appropriate skills suited to developing technologies and crafts. It will also be required to set more exacting standards of excellence and an attempt towards perfection.

The convergence between information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has opened new vistas for social and economic development. It is estimated that the contribution of knowledge led business to global GDP will double in the next ten years and would account for two-thirds of the growth in global GDP. Being the largest producer of scientific and professional manpower, India has already established its comparative advantage in the knowledge-led business. Education would play a significant role, both as a producer of world class manpower as well as in using ICTs for its own transformation, for reaching the unreached and to ensure minimum levels of educational attainment by all citizens. Introduction of computers in schools is a major step in preparing the next generation of workers. A number of innovations, including the smart schools, are under way for popularising the use of information technology in education and training. As a result of the recent initiatives of the Government of India, a policy framework and information technology action plan has been prepared for the long-term human development.

Determining New Objectives and content: A difficult task ahead is to imagine the new objectives of education in the coming decades. It will not be enough to promote specialised knowledge and skills of
professional excellence; a deeper and subtler aim will be to develop abilities to think globally and to resolve emerging tensions between the rationalistic, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual elements of personality. The objective of an all round education for a complete human being will need to be underlined as of the highest importance.

Content and interdisciplinary studies will have to be so devised that they will foster an understanding and appreciation of national history in the context of the goal of multi-cultural understanding and of creating in the world a harmonious human family appropriate to the ancient Indian ideal of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”.

Towards a Learning Society: Although the priorities, which are being assigned today to the task of ‘Education for All’ will continue to call for greater investment at all levels of education, measures will simultaneously have to be taken to refine, diversify and upgrade education and research programme.

Teachers - New Dimensions of Their Role: In view of the emphasis on quality education and the ICT revolution in education, the role of teachers in imparting quality education becomes extremely important. The strategy and planning for capacity building and training of the teachers assumes special importance as a societal need.
Value Education: Value orientation in education is a complicated task, it implies education in human values as well as value inculcation. Although education in human values can be achieved to some degree through theoretical education, value inculcation requires a combination of strategies. The recent initiatives taken by the Government for value education include use of curriculum, teacher training, curricular material, media and education technology with host of other strategies. National centres for education in human values were set up in NCERT for School Education; the University Grants Commission for Higher Education. The All India Council for Technical Education for Technical and Management Education; the National Council for Teacher Education, the Central Board of Secondary Education(CBSE) for Schools affiliated to the CBSE; and the National Open School for students enrolled by it.

HIV/AIDS Education: In view of the HIV AIDS emerging as a serious public health issue, especially in the 15-29 years age group, there is an urgent need to create awareness among school and college going students. The National Population Policy, 2000, recognised this and emphasized that education of the adolescents should comprise information, counseling, population education and a proper understanding of a healthy attitude towards sex related issues. The efforts to appropriately include this in the curriculum has already been initiated.
Environment Education: The fast degrading environment including the economic and health related issues have necessitated the need for early environment education to be included in the school curriculum. The future strategies and policy decisions to make it a core subject is under process consequent to directions from the Supreme Court in this regard.

2.1 Education and Gender Equality: Equality among sexes has been established as a Fundamental Right under the Constitution of India. There is a need to develop and implement gender inclusive and gender sensitive curricular strategies so that boys and girls grow up in a caring and sharing mode, as equals, and not as adversaries. Books are to be free from gender bias. As a result of the Government’s policies to ensure facilities for schooling and extend special care to the girl child and expansion of nutrition programmes particularly for the girl child, from 1950-51 to 2001-2002, the participation of girls has increased many fold in the Primary, Middle, Secondary./Higher Secondary stages as well as in Higher Education, from 28.1% to 44.1%, from 16.1% to 41.8%, from 13.30% to 39.5%, and from 10.0% to 39.9% respectively.

2.2 Quality Education and the Key Role of Teachers: To create a viable institutional infrastructure, i.e. an academic and technical resource base for orientation, training and continuous upgradation of knowledge competence and pedagogical skills of school teachers in the country, about 500 District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), 87 Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and 38 Institutes
of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs) have been set up. Both pre-service and in-service courses provide the much needed additional inputs. The 4-year integrated Bachelor of Elementary Education Course was developed by Delhi University for improving Elementary Teacher Education. The two-year B.Ed (Secondary) course was introduced in the four Regional Institutes of Education and Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad, on an experimental basis, for improving the quality of the Secondary Teacher Education Programme. NCERT has recently formulated the Teacher Education Curriculum Framework.

The Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) has been striving to meet through generation of software, utilization of mass communication, media technologies, especially radio and television, on a large scale for extending the reach of quality education (especially in the education of the groups with special needs) and continuous training of teachers. It has been utilized by the children, teachers and other target groups through its transmission on Doordarshan and Gyan Darshan Channels. CIET is also trying to keep abreast with changing technologies viz., development of multimedia programmes and satellite based interactive network proposed to be set up by ISRO with an uplink hub at the IET and interactive terminals using V-SATs (Very Small Aperture Terminals) at 100 remote locations in the country. A number of organizations shall be able to use the hub and interact with their units in different locations through transponder on the soon to be launched EDUSAT.
2.3 Education and Social Inclusion: The Government is committed to provide an Education System with emphasis on social inclusion of the under privileged and backward sections of the society and minorities. The Government has taken various measures to provide full equality of opportunity, particularly in education and employment for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and religious minorities. The Government is committed to establishing a Commission for Minority Educational Institutions that will provide direct affiliation for minority professional institutions with central universities. The Government is also initiating special schemes to promote modern and technical education among all minority communities and social and economic empowerment of the minorities through a more systemic attention to education and employment will be a priority concern. The state of Jammu and Kashmir and all North Eastern States, which are in a relatively remote part of the country, are being given special assistance to upgrade and expand the infrastructure.

On account of these interventions of the Government, the total Scheduled Castes enrolment at the primary, upper primary and secondary/senior secondary stages of school education from 1980-81 to 2001-2002 increased by 1.9, 3.4 and 3.7 times respectively. The Scheduled Castes Girls enrolment increased by 2.5, 4.9 and 6.6 times respectively during the same period. The Scheduled Tribe enrolment increased by 2.5, 4.5 and 5.2 times respectively, while that of ST
girls, increased by 3.3, 6.4 and 7.5 times, respectively, during the same period for the above stages of school education.

A scheme, titled “Integrated Education for Disabled Children” to integrate the children with mild to moderate disability in mainstream education is already under implementation by the Government in partnership with the non-Governmental organizations. It is proposed to cover all the disabled children in general education. The scheme is also under revision to be in line with the Salamanca Declaration. This inclusive model envisages not only providing better access to education for children with disabilities but also seeks to achieve the goal of harmonious coexistence.

2.4 Education for Sustainable Development: The issues of sustainable development have received due importance and attention in the National Policy on Education, Programme of Action and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education. The Supreme Court of India, while passing orders on the public interest litigation on Environment Education, has given a clear-cut direction to the Union Government, State Governments and apex educational institutions like the University Grants Commission and National Council of Educational Research and Training that Environment Education should be made a separate and compulsory subject in all classes. A separate curriculum and syllabus for environment education has been prepared by NCERT, which has been accepted by the Supreme Court. This overarching intervention by the Supreme Court of India and subsequent implementation by all concerned State Governments
and Union Government have reinforced the existing environmental education programme. There are several innovative and experimental approaches to environmental education, which are not only relevant to the needs of the local people but also help in enriching the children in their appreciation of environmental concerns. Many of the schools take out the students on eco tours to the hills and rivers so as to acquaint them with nature.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education gives special importance to education as a lifelong process. The core issues of human rights, value education, poverty and development, social inclusion and secularism, health and environment education, physical education etc. are included in all subjects in a crosscutting manner. The present problem of terrorism, which poses a challenge to the development of society, is included in the textbooks of social sciences. The outlook of the school children is sought to be broadened through a curriculum which encompasses the global perspectives of civilizations, trade and commerce, international cooperation and the like.

In India, the importance of national integration finds its place in the textbooks. The emphasis on unity in diversity, respect for all, irrespective of caste, creed, gender or religion, are emphasized in school education. Cultural exchange programmes and migration of students from one school to another help in promoting mutual understanding and cooperation. The learning of three languages by
the students under the Policy of the Three Language Formula helps in promoting national integration.

Reaching the unreached through the distance and open learning system has increased not only access to education at the secondary and senior secondary levels, but also empowering the youth who otherwise might have discontinued their studies. The coverage of open learning is increasing to encompass vocational as well as professional courses.

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-14) will be implemented with the necessary policy interventions and programmes. Seminars and workshops on the theme are attended by representatives from the Ministry and its organizations in order to plan and implement the necessary programmes. The detailed plan for implementation of the declaration is being finalised.

2.5 Education and competencies for life: It is being increasingly recognized that the Education System should not only provide bookish knowledge to the students but also develop their skills and competences so as to enable them to earn their livelihood. A strong feature of the school system is work-based education. Work education, in one form or the other, with different nomenclature in the different states, is an integral part of the school curriculum in India. Work experience, work education, life-oriented education, Vocationalisation and pre-vocational education are a few examples.
The extent of time devoted to it at different stages also varies from state to state. Work-based education aims at involving school going children in a variety of production or service oriented activities, matching with their interest and abilities to the extent of a maximum of 20% of the total school time. Development of work related attitudes and values, along with vocational proficiencies with remunerative prospects are the expected outcomes. The education scenario in the 21st Century, with a world globally integrated through trade, information and science, will be one where individuals would have to adapt continuously to a changing work environment.

Conclusion: India looks upon the future with realistic optimism despite the difficult challenges and contemporary problems of globalisation, those facing the environment, and emerging public health issues such as HIV/AIDs. In meeting all these challenges, education will have to play a crucial role. In view of the recent initiatives taken by the Government under the National Common Minimum Programme, we are confident that we will meet the six Dakar goals under EFA, and provide quality education. Providing new dimensions to the delivery system will help change society and prepare our youth to shoulder the heavy responsibilities of a difficult future based on the principles enshrined in our Constitution of liberty, equality, justice and fraternity.
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Appendix

TABLE 1
(Literates as per cent of Population of 7 years and above)

<table>
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</table>

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2001-2002, MHRD, GOI

TABLE 2
Literacy Levels and Change during 1990-2001 in Backward States
(Literates as per cent of Population of 7 years and above)

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<td>Persons</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Persons</td>
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<td>VI-VIII Primary (11-14 years)</td>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
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*Provisional

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2001-2002, MHRD, GOI

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TABLE-5

Growth of Educational Institutions/School
1991-2002

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*Provisional
Source : Selected Educational Statistics 2001-2002, MHRD, GOI
CONTENTS

SECTION 1. The Indian education system at the beginning of the twenty-first century: an overview

The organization, structure and management of the education system; curricular policies, educational content and teaching; objectives and principal characteristics of current and forthcoming reforms

SECTION 2. Major achievements, both quantitative and qualitative in the recent past:

Access to education;
Equity in education;
Quality of education;
Content of education;
Policy dialogue, partnerships and participation by civil society.

The main problems and challenges facing the education system at the beginning of the twenty-first century

SECTION 3. Educational Content and Learning Strategies for the Twenty-first Century:

Curriculum Development, Principles and Assumptions;
Changing and Adapting Educational Content.

SECTION 4. Quality education for all young people: challenges, trends and priorities

Education and gender equality
Education and social inclusion
Education and competencies for life
Quality education and the key role of teachers
Education for sustainable development

REFERENCES

APPENDIX

(Literates as per cent of Population of 7 years and above)

TABLE 2: Literacy Levels and Change during 1990-2001 in Backward States
(Literates as per cent of Population of 7 years and above)

TABLE 3 : GER according to Gender and Levels of Education

TABLE-4 : Distribution of Teachers by Level of School since 1991 to 2001

TABLE-5 : Growth of Educational Institutions/School 1991-2002