



Challenges in Elementary Education in India: Various Efforts Made For Universalization of Elementary Education

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Abstract

Education is a vital means for the potentialities of a human being to emerge in a positive direction so that a man can live in society with full of dignity and can mould the habits, tastes and character of individuals living in society by imparting knowledge and information. Therefore, in a democratic country like ours the government has felt the needs and importance of education and has an onerous responsibility to implement plans and programmes for democratization of education in the country. Now, education is constitutionally recognized as a birth right of the citizens of the country. So, to make education accessible to all has been a mission of the government and many targets like the Millennium Development Goal by 2015, India Vision by 2020, have been identified including that of Inclusive Growth by the government. It is appropriate for us now to assess and evaluate the progress and the prospect of the approaches which are being implemented for ensuring the universalization of elementary education in India.

Key words: Education, various approaches and its achievement.

Introduction:

As mentioned above that free and compulsory education to all children up to the age fourteen is constitutional commitment. In 1993, the Supreme Court of India declared education up to fourteen years of age to be a fundamental right of children in India. The entire school education can be divided in to four parts, namely, primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. The National Policy of Education (1968 & 1986) and its revised formulation (1992) envisaged a uniform pattern of school education (10+2 pattern, 12 years of schooling) across the states. Since education is on the concurrent list, i.e. state subject; the States & UTs are free to evolve their own pattern of school education. Eight years of primary education is envisaged in two stages: a junior stage covering a period of five years and a senior stage covering a period of 3 years. It needs to be mentioned that 8 years of compulsory education was envisaged as one integrated unit, although there were two stages in the cycle. Hence elementary education became the compulsory component of education in India (Varghese and Mehta, 1999a). It is this compulsory stage that has been incorporated as a directive principle in the constitution in 1950. The official age (entry) to obtain admission in Grade I is 6 years but a few States & UTs have 5 years as entry-age. The Government has recently decided to re-introduce the Constitutional Amendment Bill, which will make elementary education a fundamental right. This will be implemented as a part of the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*. It may however be noted that about 10-12 states have already made elementary education compulsory. But the situation in most of these states is not different than other states with regards to enrolment and retention primary education consists of Grades I to V. The National Policy advocates Grade I to V at the primary and VI to VIII at the upper primary level of education. The states that have adopted Grades I to IV as its composition of primary level generally have grades V to VII as part of the upper primary education. Like elementary education, the secondary level of education has also got divergent composition across the states. While in 19 States & UTs, secondary stage consists of Grades IX and X; it consists of Grades VIII, IX and X in thirteen States & UTs (*EFA the Year 2000 Assessment, Country Report: India*). However, it may be noted that within a state, a complete uniformity is in existence but the type of institutions that offer school education (management) vary across the states and even within its districts and blocks. Different types of institutions that are in existence are schools run by government management, schools under the local bodies and private managed schools. The private managed schools can further be divided into private aided and unaided schools. In addition, private unrecognized institutions spread over across the country both in rural and urban areas are also in existence in large number.

Ratio of Primary to Upper Primary Schools

The ratio of primary to upper primary schools during the period from 1950-51 to 1998-99 at the all-India level (Table 5) reveals that the ratio has considerably improved from 1:15.4 in 1950-51 to 1:6.7 in 1960-61. It showed a declining trend

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thereafter and it stabilized at around 1:3.3. The improvement in the ratios over a period of time indicates that the overall situation changed for the better. The *Programme of Action* (1992) also envisaged an upper primary school for every two primary schools. The trend shows that the expansion of primary education has exerted considerable pressure on upper primary education system to expand and the government has responded positively by providing larger number of schools and school places for children who are completing primary level of education. In addition, there may be a few non-formal education centers and unrecognized schools; also that impart both primary as well as upper primary education.

The state-specific ratios are presented in Table 8 that shows that states have divergent positions with regard to provision of upper primary schooling facilities. On the one-hand states, such as, Chandigarh, Maharashtra, Kerala, Mizoram and Rajasthan, have almost provided an upper primary schools for every two primary schools they have. On the other hand a few states, namely Goa, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal etc. have a high ratio, which means that they are yet to provide a large number of upper primary schools so that the ratio is improved near to 1:2. Despite all the impressive achievements there may still be a few habitations that may not have access to primary and upper primary schooling facilities within the specified norms. An analysis of indicators of access will throw more light on access conditions in the country, which is presented below.

Habitations Accessed to Schooling Facilities

Despite the increase in number of habitations and population, both the percentage of habitations and rural population served by primary and upper primary schools/sections within a distance of 1 and 3 kms have increased significantly over a period of time from 1965 to 1993. Of the total 1,061 thousand rural habitations in the country, 528 thousand (about 50 per cent) habitations had a primary school/section within the habitation itself in 1993-94 (NCERT, 1998). On the other hand, about 83.4 per cent habitations had a primary school/section within a distance of one kilometer, against which about 177 thousand habitations, though eligible did not have schooling facilities. The alternative and innovative programme envisages opening alternative elementary centers in all these habitations. Many of the un-served habitations are not entitled to have a school/section because of the population norms. There were about 581 thousand habitations in 1993-94 that had a population of 300 & more of which more than 40 thousand habitations (7 per cent) did not have access to schooling facilities within a distance of 1 km. It may be noted that the number of un-served habitations in 1986-87 (population 300 & more) was 142 thousand (26.76 per cent).

On the other hand, as many as 808 thousand habitations (76.15 per cent) providing access to about 85 per cent population in 1993-94 had upper primary schooling facilities within a distance of three kilometers. However, when schooling facilities in terms of number of habitations having population of 500 & more is analyzed; one notices that only 474 thousand (71.60 per cent) habitations had facilities within a distance of three kilometers. This shows that about 65 thousand habitations did not have access to an upper primary school/section but were otherwise entitled to have the same as per the norms. The aggregate data further indicates that the number of habitations having access to upper primary schools/sections declines with the decline in population size of habitation, which is quite similar to the situation at the primary level. On the other hand, a good number of habitations (474 thousand) who had population below 500 in 1993-94 had schooling facilities within a distance of three kilometers of which about 26 thousand had the facilities even within the habitation. But the percentage population to which they serve is only 5.40 per cent of the total population in that slab. It may also be noted that most of the educationally backward states still have a large number of un-served habitations. Except Sikkim, Tripura and Andaman & Nicobar Islands, all other States & UTs have more than 90 per cent habitations accessed to a primary school/section within a distance of one kilometer. Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep are the only two UTs in the country that have provided a primary and upper primary school/section to all of its habitations within a distance of one and three kilometers (Table 8). Except Orissa, educationally backward states had a lower percentage of habitations having access to upper primary school/section within a distance of three kilometers. In general, it has been observed that the states that had a lower percentage of habitations served by a primary school/section also had a lower percentage of upper primary schools/sections.

Rural Population having Access to Educational Facilities



In 1986-87, more than 95 per cent rural population had a primary school/section within a distance of one kilometer compared to 94 per cent in 1993-94. The corresponding figures at the upper primary level were 84 and 85 per cent. Although the percentage during 1986-87 to 1993-94 remained almost stagnant but is termed spectacular because of the massive increase in total number of habitations during the same period. More than 65 thousand habitations were added during 1986 to 1993. The facilities distributed according to different population slabs reveal that both the percentages of habitations and rural population accessed to schools/sections decline with the decline in the population size. It is only in Daman & Diu that the entire rural population is accessed to an upper primary school/section within a distance of three kilometers. Among the major states, Andhra Pradesh (79.43 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (72.60 per cent), Rajasthan (79.00 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (82.09 per cent) had a lower percentage of population served by upper primary schooling facilities than at the all-India level (Mehta, 1999).

Un-served Habitations and NFE Centers

The un-served habitations may have a non-formal education center or even unrecognized institutions. At the all-India level, only 6 per cent of the total un-served habitations (within one kilometer) with 9 per cent population had a non-formal education centre in 1993-94. Of the total 121 thousand primary and upper primary centers in 1993-94, 94.52 per cent were in rural areas and the remaining 5.48 per cent centers were in the urban areas. A good number of centers are being run by the Voluntary Agencies. The average size of a non-formal education (primary) centre in 1993-94 was about 27 learners. There were about 4,553 primary and 128 upper primary centers that respectively had an average enrolment of 26 and 36 learners but did not have an instructor. On the other hand, there were about 729 primary and 22 upper primary centers that had at least one instructor but did not have a learner. In addition, there were a few upper primary centers (18) that had more than two instructors but did not have a learner, thus indicating a lot of wastage and lack of seriousness in implementing the programme. The percentage of learners in the Government run centers (primary and upper primary) to total elementary enrolment (Grades I-VIII) in 1993-94 indicates that it was as small as 2.54 and 2.33 per cent respectively in case of girls and total enrolment. The coverage of un-served habitations and enrolment in NFE centers suggests that the objective of non-formal system has not been realized in providing alternative facilities to areas where out-of-school children concentrate and schooling facilities are not available. It may be interesting to note that a little less than 50 per cent of the total villages in the country had both the unrecognized primary and upper primary schools.

Efforts Made For Universalization of Elementary Education

Since independence, India has made considerable progress towards the goal of UEE. However, past trends do not indicate that the goal is right now in the sight. However, the trend can be reversed and goal may be achieved earlier than projected, if concerted efforts are made to bring all concerned under the umbrella of education. The Union Government initiated a number of projects and programmes under the *Centrally Sponsored Schemes* most of which have been initiated after the *National Policy of Education* was evolved in 1986 and *World Conference on Education for All* held at Jomtien in 1990. Some of these projects in terms of their objectives and major achievements are briefly discussed below.

(a) The Scheme of Operation Blackboard

The scheme of Operation Blackboard (OB) was launched in 1987 to improve facilities in schools by providing for more teachers, rooms and teaching learning equipments. The OB Scheme seeks to bring both the quantitative and qualitative improvements in primary education. The scheme had three components, namely (i) an additional teacher to single teacher primary schools; (ii) providing at least two classrooms in each primary school; and (iii) providing teaching-learning equipment to all primary schools. The scheme is implemented through the State Governments with 100 per cent assistance from the Central Government towards the salary of additional teachers and teaching learning equipments. It was proposed to cover all primary schools under the OB scheme that were in existence as on September 30, 1986.

Construction of school buildings is the responsibility of the State Governments but funds were arranged for this purpose from other Ministries like the Rural Development. However in the revised scheme, assistance is made available to State



Governments on 75:25 share bases. For construction of school buildings, an amount of Rs. 2,308 corers (about 550 Million US \$) has been invested on OB scheme. About 185 thousand classrooms are constructed, 1.49 thousand teachers appointed and 520 thousand schools were provided teaching-learning equipments. Recently the OB scheme has been extended to upper primary level and sanction of third teacher to primary school having enrolment more than 100 has also been provided. During the Ninth Plan, third teacher was provided to more than 22 thousand schools and about 78 thousand upper primary schools were covered and teaching-learning material supplied.

Despite all these significant achievements, all is not well in schools. Large number of primary schools still has only one teacher and do not have adequate physical facilities and other teaching-learning material. In addition, a few schools do not have buildings and those who have, may not be in good condition and need repairs. The instructional rooms are also not adequate in a good number of primary schools. Even if the teaching-learning material is available that itself is not a guarantee that teachers are equipped to utilize these aids, which is noticed recently even in a state like Kerala also. The OB support is one time affair and the material provided under the scheme may not even traceable in a good number of schools. Even teachers in schools spread over four states that we visited recently were not aware of such equipments in schools. Teachers in other schools where the OB kits are available are of the view that they are inadequate.

It has also been noticed that teachers appointed under the OB scheme are not efficiently deployed in schools. That is why we still have single-teacher schools. On the other hand, a few schools have got more than adequate number of teachers. This is more so true in case of schools located in urban areas or in rural areas located near to towns and cities. The OB scheme envisaged that one of the two teachers appointed under the scheme would preferably be a female teacher. No doubt, OB interventions have improved number of female teachers but in many locations their share is still poor. On an average we have one female teacher for every 2 & 3 male teachers respectively at primary and upper primary level. Detailed evaluation of the scheme is presently carried out by NUEPA and the report is expected soon.

(b) District Institutes of Education and Training

The scheme to strengthen teacher education by establishing quality training institutions, such as, the *District Institutes of Education and Training* (DIET) was initiated in 1987. The scheme proposed to create viable institutional, academic and technical resource base for orientations, training and continuous up-gradation of knowledge, competence and pedagogical skills of school teachers' in the country. The guidelines provided seven academic units with 22 faculty positions that cover different areas such as planning and management, education technology, material development etc. Since then 433 DIETs have been sanctioned of which 401 are functional. Below the district level, under DPEP, Block Resource and Circle Resource Centers have been established that ensure capacity building at the grassroots level. In non-DPEP districts, such institutions are not in existence. However, the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* envisages creating BRC and CRC in non-DPEP districts. The DIETs are now twelve years old but still many of them do not function as was envisaged in its guidelines (Box 3).

(c) Non-Formal Education

The *Non-Formal Education* (NFE) scheme was initiated in 1979 to cater learning needs of working children and children in difficult circumstances are one of the other important centrally sponsored schemes. The NFE programme is for the children of 6-14 age groups who remain outside the formal system due to various reasons. Initially, the focus of the programme was on to Nine Educationally Backward states but at present it is in operation in 25 states. In 1999, there were 297 thousand NFE centers, which had a total enrolment of 7.42 million. The duration of NFE course is two years and a locally recruited and trained instructor is provided to impart education (equivalent to formal system) at a time and place most convenient to learners in smaller groups. A large number of voluntary agencies are also involved in NFE programme. The total number of centers run by voluntary agencies was 59 thousand in 1998-99. An amount of Rs. 1,195 million to States & UTs and Rs. 400 million to voluntary agencies was released in 1998-99 for the implementation of the programme. The scheme is recently revised and named as *Scheme of Alternative and Innovative Education*. The scheme envisages that all habitations that do not have an elementary education centre within a radius of one kilometer will have one at the earliest. As a part of the scheme, school-mapping exercise will be conducted to identify school-less habitations, which will help to locate habitations where alternative centers are to be provided.



(d) Total Literacy Campaigns

The *Total Literacy Campaigns* mobilize communities and contributed to greater participation of children in schools. So far 450 districts have been covered under the TLC of which 250 campaigns have moved into post-literacy and 65 to continuing education stage. The campaigns cover an estimated 148 million persons. Of 94 million persons enrolled, so far 73 million persons have been completed level III. The uniqueness of the TLC lies in the fact that it is delivered through voluntarism. The programme is being implemented through the *Zilla (district) Saksharata Samities* created for the purpose. As mentioned, literacy rate has improved from 52 in 1991 to 62 percent in 1998.

(e) National Programme for Nutritional Support (Mid-day Meal)

The *National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education* (launched in 1995) provides food grains/cooked meals to children in primary classes. The programme assures 100 grams of grains per day for attending schools for at least 80 per cent of the total school days in a month. The programme had benefited more than 98 million children spread over 0.69 million schools. In the latest year, about 9.90 million children are covered under the scheme and allocated 2.71 million metric tons of grains (Annual Report: MHRD, 1999-2000). Along with teachers, local community is also given responsibility in the distribution of grains. In previous years, a significant gap has been noticed in quantity of food grains sanctioned and actually lifted. However, only 65 and 42 per cent children of age group 6-11 and 11-14 years were found to be attended primary and upper primary schools in 1995-96 (NSSO, 1998). Since then the same, due to mid-day meal intervention might have improved to a significant effect. This is also reflected in the absolute enrolment during the period 1995-98. A few states are not keen to implement the scheme because of the administrative problems or states like Punjab even do not need such type of programme. Punjab is the highest food grains produced state of the country. In difficult areas, the administrative cost is much higher than the actual cost of the food grains. The evaluation of the programme shows that on one hand it has given boost to enrolment in a few states; on the other hand it has had a positive impact on attendance in other states.

With a few exceptions, ET equipments are not found in working condition. In a state like, Uttar Pradesh they are not at all in use. Most of the states have adopted DIET guidelines in total and as such there are no state-specific adoptions. In a large number of DIETs, units like Planning and Management, Curriculum and Material Development, Educational Technology etc. are found almost non-functional. The study found non-involvement of DIET faculty in development and implementation of plans. Even in DPEP districts, though willing, the faculty is not involved in managing and development of information systems. Libraries have been found to be totally neglected in most of the DIETs. The study found lack of coordination in organizing in-service training programmes with the activities of BRCs and CRCs in many DPEP states. Most of the DIETs are implementing standard programmes of the states and hence very little innovations are noticed. The DIETs focuses its activities only on primary school teachers and orientation of other functionaries is sporadic. The study notices that in-service programmes are conducted without a long-term perspective.

DPEP Objectives

The significant achievements are not reflected in the all-India averages because of the limited coverage of districts under the DPEP. In view of this, as mentioned above, the Government of India has initiated SSA, which over time will cover all the districts of the country. In most of the project districts, *Computerized Educational Management Information System* is now in existence but poor dissemination and low utilization of data have marred this significant achievement. Districts have also undertaken micro planning and school mapping exercises but the information generated is neither properly analyzed nor is used in planning exercises. A huge amount of data is generated but only a small amount of that is been utilized. In many districts, micro planning is conducted as one time exercise. The districts have not utilized school mapping in deciding the location of a new school, which is mostly because of the fact that school mapping as such has not at all been conducted in any of the districts. Rather, the capacity to conduct school mapping is not available both at the state and district level. The utilization pattern also suggests that most of the districts do not have capacity to utilize the funds. Whatever they could utilize, a chunk of which is spent on civil work activities and activities relating to innovation, research, retention, quality improvement programmes etc. have not picked-up as per expectations. Teacher is the most important actor of the education system through whom only all the



interventions are expected to reflect in the classroom transactions. But a majority of states have filled-up vacant positions by appointing Para teachers.

One of the other major limitations of the programme is that the targets, which are set out over the project period, are almost same (GER 120% and Retention 90%). The first phase districts got seven years while the phase two and three districts got only five years to implement the plan. In this process, districts, which were in position to achieve the goal earlier than seven years also, got seven years as the plan period. The upper ceiling of the plan was kept at Rs. 400 million irrespective of the size of the district. In view of this, districts proposed over ambitious proposals. A glance at few of the plan documents reveal that districts have undertaken a detailed analysis of educational development and also attempted demographic and enrolment projection exercises but the same in most of the cases is not handled efficiently. Frequent transfers of the DPEP officials at all levels across states have severely affected the implementation of the programme. Despite all these limitations, a lot of progress is made across districts and capacity of officials involved in the programme is also built-up significantly at all levels.

Lok Jumbish and Shiksha Karmi Projects

Lok Jumbish (Peoples' Movement) and *Shiksha Karmi* Projects are the other two important programmes, which are, received attention at the international level. Both these projects are under implementation in Rajasthan since 1992, which is one of the most educationally backward states of India. Lok Jumbish and Shiksha Karmi are funded by SIDA. The main objective of LJP is to achieve EFA through people's mobilization and participation. Whereas, SKP focus its attention on universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote, arid area and socio-economically backward villages with primary attention given to girls. The project identifies teacher absenteeism as a major obstacle in achieving the goal of UEE. The LJ Parishad, an autonomous society, implements the LJP. Two phases of LJP during 1992 & 1994 and 1994 & 1998 are already over and the third phase (1999-2004) with the assistance of *Department of International Development* (UK) is currently under implementation. For the first two phases, about Rs. 1,110 million were invested and for the third phase, an amount to the tune of Rs. 2,250 million is allocated. It has undertaken environment-building activities in 8,675 villages and has completed school mapping exercise in 6,974 villages. 529 new schools have been opened and another 268 were upgraded. LJP has been able to set-up innovative management structures incorporating the principles of decentralization and delegation of authority as well as building partnership with local communities and the voluntary sector. It has also set-up vibrant block and cluster resource groups for providing academic supervision and regular training of primary school teachers.

However, it may be noted that the LJP has covered only 75 blocks, which is just one quarter of the total blocks in Rajasthan. The management cost of LJP is high compared to other programmes of similar nature. It is also not known whether the success it has achieved, will it able to replicate elsewhere in Rajasthan and outside Rajasthan. The school mapping exercises, which are conducted under the LJP, though termed as school mapping but in fact, is a micro planning exercise. The disappointing aspect is closing down of LJP in about 10 blocks and another 9 may also meet the same fate. This is because of the DPEP, which is presently under implementation in 10 districts of Rajasthan, and another 9 are in pipeline. The *Government of Rajasthan* decided to close down LJP in blocks, which falls under DPEP districts.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

In addition to the Centrally Sponsored Schemes, states have initiated schemes to give momentum to their efforts towards the goal of *Education for All*. More recently, the Government of India has also initiated an ambitious programme called *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA): *An Initiative for Universal Elementary Education* to achieve the goal of UEE. The programme is initially planned to initiate in about 50 low female districts spread over fifteen states. It is envisaged that all the districts of the country will come under the programme before the end of the Ninth Plan (MHRD, 2000b). Unlike the *District Primary Education Programme*, the SSA envisages to develop district-specific elementary education plans within the framework of decentralized management of education with a focus on *Panchayati Raj Institutions*. In the DPEP, the focus was only on the primary level. In these districts, it would be the first attempt to develop plans with the active involvement of local people in a participatory planning mode. District planning teams in these districts have already been formed and training in planning methodology is being imparted. Three of such



programmes have already been organized by NIEPA at Shillong, Aizawl and Mussoorie where a large number of members of the district planning teams and states representatives were trained. This exercise will help to build-up capacity at the grassroots level, which will help district and sub-district officers in developing plans. It is expected that districts will initiate pre-project activities soon for which an amount of Rs. 5 million (upper ceiling) is allocated to each of the districts covered under SSA.

It may however be noted that a recent SSA discussion document envisages habitation/cluster as a unit of planning as has been experimented in the *Lok Jumbish Project*. The document is not clear how this would be achieved? Do we have education offices at the habitation level? Or will it be achieved through convergence? Do we have other governmental offices at the habitation level? Are some of the important questions, which should be dealt with? Therefore, the proposal at this stage may be treated over ambitious and challenging one specially keeping in view that a large number of persons that would be required to involve in this task of the total 1061 thousand habitations in the country, 581 thousand had population 300 & more and are eligible for schooling facilities. An average of 4-5 persons per habitation would need at least 2-3 million persons to be trained and involved in this task. Do we have capacity to build-up capacity of these grassroots people? Can DIETs handle this mammoth task? Certainly we are not ready to take up this challenging task at this stage, which is more specifically true in the light of quality of training facilities that are available at lower levels (see Box 3). To begin with it would be better to develop district-specific plans with block as the basic unit of planning. DPEP is said to be successful in achieving significant increase in both enrolment and retention and also in creating effective information system, management structures and training centers both at the block and cluster levels. Can't we adopt this model in the SSA districts? This is what exactly has been done in SSA but inputs from other programmes, like the *Lok Jumbish Project* has made it too heavy and over ambitious. It seems that there are too many eggs in a basket.

The SSA, which is a holistic programme, envisages involving community in a big way. The community ownership is central to the SSA programme (Box 5). All the existing centrally sponsored schemes discussed above will come under one umbrella programme i.e. SSA. This is expected to smooth the flow of funds from Central Government to State level registered societies and District Planning Teams created for the implementation of the programme. However, not a single district covered under SSA has yet estimated actually how much funds over time have been received and utilized under different *Centrally Sponsored Schemes* or how much are they spending on elementary education.

The targets under the SSA is that all children will bring back to school by 2003 and complete five years of schooling by 2007 and eight years by 2010. Accordingly, all children of age-group 6-11 years will have to be enrolled by the year 2002-03 and retain till 2007 to achieve UPE. As per the proposals, all the districts of the country will come under the SSA before the end of the Ninth Plan i.e. 2002. By no magic, it can be achieved. Even, the *Dakar Framework for Action* to which India is a signatory envisages achieving the goal of UPE by the year 2015. Therefore, the target dates should be left to the districts which can adopt district and block-specific targets and if necessary separately for boys and girls, SC and ST children and would be based on their present status of educational development. It may also quite possible that a few states and districts may achieve UPE even earlier than 2007. The focus of the programme is on to bridge gender and social category gaps at the primary by 2007 and elementary level by 2010 and universal retention by 2010.

Conclusion:

Thus it is a right time for the government to take the action for removing these barriers in order to achieve the democratization of education. Besides we are heading towards the target year of Millennium Development Goals, where accessibility of education to all is a major concerned. But thing is that the education must be cater the needs of the learners that can produce the functional literate and enhance the life skills of the learners. The government is responsible for providing education to every child up to the eight standards, free of cost, irrespective of class and gender. It has paved the way for building a strong, literate and empowered youth of this country.

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