

## **An Assessment of Role of Basic Amenities in Promoting Quality Elementary Education in India**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this article is to examine the measures taken since independence to improve primary school facilities. Even while access to primary schools is on the rise, the report claims that many institutions still fall short of the standards set out by the Right to Education Act of 2010. This study will examine the measures taken since independence to improve the basic education system. The goal of this article is to show that having enough infrastructure is about more than simply making sure students are comfortable while they study; rather, it's also about ensuring that they have access to the elements of the curriculum that would otherwise be inaccessible due to a lack of resources. Due to this reality, families with earnings below the federal poverty line are enrolling their children in private schools in order to provide them with a better chance at a successful future. The widespread belief that most Indian families cannot afford to send their children to private schools is, nevertheless, hard to dispute. Furthermore, empirical research suggest that the high cost of education (including opportunity cost) is a major contributor to both non-enrollment and attrition. Taking into account all of these considerations, it becomes clear that guaranteeing access to a free and compulsory public elementary school is of paramount importance in securing the right to education.*

**Key words:** Elementary Education, Right to Education, *Quality*, Infrastructure

### **Introduction**

The availability physical resources and quality of education are positive correlated, and quest for quality education, in Indian context, has led to proliferation of private schools of varying fee structure. However, majority of parents have little choice but to enrol children in government school<sup>i</sup>. In India, enrolment in elementary schools, has increased from 22.30 million children in the year 1950-51 to 188.72 million in the year 2008-09, consequently the number of primary and upper primary schools has increased from 2.10 Lakhs and 0.13 lakh to 8.4lakh and 2.19 lakhs respectively in the year 2007-08<sup>ii</sup>. In these schools government and government aided schools accounts for more than 86 percent of the total elementary schools and in this too, the education department of respective state share the major responsibility.<sup>iii</sup> More than two third of this enrolment is in government school<sup>iv</sup>. Despite this massive expansion of schooling facilities, public expenditure on elementary education as percentage of GDP has not increased substantially<sup>v</sup>.

At time of independence policy makers faced tough choice, as there was not only severe resource constraints but because of the drastic fall in public expenditure on education in forties, infrastructure were in a impoverished stage.<sup>vi</sup> Consequently there was a feeling, as articulated in First Five year Plan, that objective of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) cannot be achieved by state resources alone. Hence, a large share of the responsibility have to borne by people themselves. This approach to create infrastructure continued plan after plan, and mechanism was developed to encourage community to contribute in the development of elementary education. Providing



grants-in-aid to schools established by community was the main instrument of public encouragement. Creating a legal frame work to harness resources at local level like imposing education cess on land revenue and property tax was also contemplated seriously.<sup>vii</sup> It was argued that these efforts by local bodies to raise resources would improve infrastructure and simultaneously educational governance. The Second Five Year Plan (1956 to 1961) even visualized that once land reforms are complete, consolidation of holdings is done and the farm cooperatives become functional, the local community, as per the ethos of socialist pattern of society, would automatically solve many problems of elementary schooling –like non availability of land school building and generate resources to function the schools. Keeping the resource constraints in the early years of freedom, as stated in Third Five plan (1961 to 66), the policy makers gave top priority to primary education i.e. education of children of 6-11 years of age and thought that once substantial progress achieved in it, the upper primary education i.e. education of 11-14 years of children will be put on the top of the agenda.<sup>viii</sup> The third plan period is also the turning point in the educational policy, as in 1964 Government of India appointed Education Commission, headed by Professor D.S Kothari. Popularly known as Kothari Commission, the commission, inter-alia recommended compulsory and free education up to the age of 14 and to increase public expenditure on education to the level of 6 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These two recommendations, though the country has traversed long journey, and Right to Education is a fundamental right of every child of 6-14 years of age, are still bench mark of the education policy. During seventies, as articulated in the Fourth (1969-74) and Fifth Five (1974-1979) Plan, it was felt that physical facilities and teaching personnel are under stress as expansion of facilities is not keeping pace with the growth of enrolment, and despite considerable increase in expenditure on education the objective of UEE, is still elusive.<sup>ix</sup> Thus, need was felt to revamp the programmes of development of elementary education, make it integral part of development process and capability creation. Consequently, the Fifth Five Year Plan launched a scheme of Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) in which Primary Education in order of priority was third only to drinking water and primary health, and mid day meal, as an supportive activity to improve enrolment and retention was the fifth important priority of the programme.

Both the Sixth (1980-85) and Seventh (1985-89) five-year plan underlined the commitment to achieve UEE as part of the minimum need programme. Operation Black Board (OBB) began in 1986 as a result of the Seventh Five-Year Plan National Policy on Education (NPE). The National Policy Exchange in 1986 focused on two primary areas. As a first step, all children between the ages of 5 and 14 should be enrolled and remain enrolled in school. The quality of the public education system has also improved greatly. Toys, blackboards, maps, charts, and other learning material will be provided in addition to "at least two relatively big rooms that are useful in all weather" in primary schools, as stated in the NPE. This is being done so that by 1995, all children in the designated age range would have access to a free and mandatory education. To ensure that each classroom has its own teacher, schools should hire at least two people immediately and make it a priority to hire more. There will be immediate measures to initiate a phased drive, metaphorically termed "Operation black board," to enhance Primary Schools throughout the country. Contributions will come from a broad range of sources, including federal



bureaucracy, local organisations, non-governmental organisations, and individuals. NREP and RLEGP money will be used initially for school construction. By March, 1992, OBB, covered about 80 per cent community development block of the country.<sup>x</sup> The OBB was streamlined time to time and under this programme 1.74 lakh classrooms was constructed, teaching learning material was provided to about 5.23 lakh primary schools and hundred percent primary schools got teaching/learning equipment.<sup>xi</sup> Significant achievement of this programme, as far as implementation part is concerned, is that it could effectively converge with various rural development programme, as result of it 60 per cent of the total cost of construction of additional class rooms was borne by *Jawahar Rojgar Yojana* (JRY) and 40 per cent was borne by the education department of the State Governments to meet the additional non-wage cost. The Operation Black Board (OBB) brought a paradigm shift in the infrastructural development policy, as the norms of infrastructural development of OBB by and large are still in vogue. In nineties the urgency to achieve UEE was raised at various at national and international platforms. In the world conference on Education for All (EFA) at Jomtien in March, 1990, the need to attain UEE was reemphasised. In response to these clarion calls, Government of India responded that at the close of twentieth century the country will achieve the objective of EFA<sup>xii</sup>. Concurrent to it, the economic reform programme initiated in early nineties, necessitated that government should focus on human development. With this backdrop to review the NEP, 1986 a committee under the chairmanship of Acharya Rammurti in 1990, on the request of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) was set up. The recommendation of Acharya Rammurti committee was reviewed by Shri Janardhana Reddy committee as per its recommendation. The revised NEP extended OBB to all upper primary schools and emphasised that the JRY scheme will give top priority to construction of school buildings. Every school will have at least three all weather usable rooms and three teachers, and attempts will be made that each class must have at least one teacher. The revised policy also reiterated that commitment to raise public expenditure on education to the level of 6 percent of GDP and emphasised that should be achieved by eight plan (1992-1997) and must be maintained thereafter<sup>xiii</sup>. The other important strategic shift in implementation of education policy during nineties, that has great impact on the provision of facilities in government schools, was to take district, instead of state, as unit of planning for allocating resources for centrally sponsored schemes and Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) continued to be used as a benchmark for the identification of backwardness. In Eight Five year Plan (1992-1997) 200 backward districts were identified, although most of these were in the backward states, but some from developed states also figured in this list.<sup>xiv</sup> This was a sort of prelude to the forthcoming process of decentralized planning and taking district as planning unit for achieving UEE. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74 constitutional amendments in 1992, gave statutory recognition to the Panchayati Raj institutions and included elementary education in its responsibilities. In pursuance to it state governments devolved administrative and financial powers to PRIs to manage various services and development activities including elementary education, in the village.<sup>xv</sup> Consequently the Village education committees got empowered to plan



and implement to achieve UEE. This entire process facilitated adoption of decentralized planning to achieve, which later to become the basis of formulating Annual Work Plan and Budget under DPEP and SSA.

As a follow-up to the successful Total Literacy Campaign, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was initiated in 1994 with the goal of providing primary education to all residents of a given district through decentralised administration, community mobilisation, and contextual district specific planning (TLC). By the end of the eighth plan, the programme had expanded to 120 districts across 18 states, including those in Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Gujarat; by the end of the ninth plan, the programme had expanded to 271 districts across 18 states, including those with low rates of female literacy as well as covering roughly half of the country. There was an 85% federal funding allocation to the union and a 15% state funding allocation. The international community, including the World Bank, the European Commission, the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the Netherlands, and UNICEF, provided funding for government activities.

The DPEP used district-specific objective formulation and planning. The project included the construction of new classrooms and schools, the launch of early childhood education centres, the recruitment and training of new educators, and the development of facilities for non-formal and alternative forms of education.

The Bihar Education Project, which started in 1991 and received money from UNICEF, the Government of India, and the Government of Bihar, was one of the several initiatives that ran throughout the whole of the Eighth Five Year Plan. The International Development Agency also contributed funding to get the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project off the ground with a lenient loan. In addition to prioritising quality issues like boosting quality (i.e. the Minimum Level of Learning), pedagogy, and the quality of teachers, these programmes also placed a strong emphasis on the construction of infrastructure, such as the creation of classrooms and Block Resource Centres. During this time period, several NGOs, such as Lok Jumbish and Shiksha Karmi, established innovative programmes.

The right to education is implicit in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, which gives every person the right to life. This provision has been regularly upheld by the Supreme Court of India during the last eight and a half years. The state may not deny its citizens access to an education because "the effect of holding that right to education is implicit in the right to life is that the state cannot deprive the citizens of his right to education except in accordance with the procedure prescribed by law," as stated by the court. The court went on to declare that the goals of Articles 45, 46, and 41 are all interrelated "The sentence ended with a comma.



"In light of these principles, it is necessary to establish the parameters and nature of the right to education. Free public education is available only to those who are less than 14 years old.

Although it is the state's duty to ensure its people have access to quality education, limited state resources make this task more difficult. Given these shifts, on 12 December 2002, the Indian Parliament approved a legislation guaranteeing all children in India under the age of six the right to quality early childhood education and care. Legal protection for the right to an education did not exist prior to the signing of the Right to Education Act on April 1, 2010. For the purpose of executing the Act, the Finance Commission allotted Rs. 25,000 crore to the States, and the Centre and the States agreed to share the cost 55:45. This is why the government has set aside Rs. 15,000 crore for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. The role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in raising funds for new public buildings is very important (PRIS). The first step in this direction has already been accomplished, with authority being devolved and the ability to raise funds via taxation and other means being granted. Unfortunately, development in this region has been sluggish. While urban areas may benefit greatly from PRIs, rural areas can only hope to see a trickle of the money they create.

### **Availability of Infrastructure**

As result of the above mentioned endeavours as the data indicate that little about 86 elementary schools in the country have their own building however in states like Goa (27.15), Jammu and Kashmir (25.69), Delhi (21.15) and Maharashtra (20.86) about one fourth schools were functioning in rented buildings.<sup>xvi</sup> The national average of class rooms per primary schools is 3.1 and in case of elementary schools it is 4.4, which although satisfy the SSA norms of at least two rooms with one veranda in primary schools and one room for each section / class in upper primary schools, but fall short of the RTE norms which states every school must have "all weather building consisting of at least one class room for every teacher and office- cum-store cum- head teacher's room". Disaggregating the figure for private and government schools, reveals that much is needed to be done, especially in government schools. As in government schools average number of rooms per elementary school are 3.6. This figure for private schools is 7.5. The worst part of the story is that in five states, viz-Assam (2.3), Meghalaya (2.6), Jharkhand (2.7) Bihar (2.9), and Goa (2.9) the average number of rooms per schools are less than 3. In 11 major states, the average number of room per government elementary schools varies from 3 to 4. <sup>xvii</sup> Whereas in private schools, barring West Bengal (2.2), Meghalaya (3.8) Assam (3.1) and Orissa (4.4.) everywhere private schools on average has more than 7 rooms per school. However, the increasing number of schools and construction of additional class rooms have reduced the overcrowding in class rooms, as the national average of class room student ratio for elementary school is 1:35. However, in some state overcrowding in class rooms is still an issue for example in Bihar in a typical elementary schools, 98 students have to be accommodated in single room. The situation in Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal is bit better vis-à-vis Bihar, but class rooms in these states are also overcrowded, as the student class room ratio in these states is



57, 43 and 41 respectively. Since majority of schools in these states do not have electricity, therefore one can imagine how difficult it would be to brace the heat and humid environment and study or teach. It is not unusual to see, that unable to accommodate students in the room, teachers has to take class in the open or in verandas. Moreover the availability of rooms fell short of RTE norms, when considered in relation to the mandatory requirement of teachers as per number of enrolment, which specifically state that every schools must have at least two teachers in primary school, with enrollment up to 60, and three teachers in upper primary schools so that there is at least one teacher each for science and mathematics, language and social studies. The number of teachers are to be increased as per the strength of students to maintain pupil teacher ratio (PTR) of 1: 40 in primary school and 1: 35 in upper primary school. (Head teachers is to be excluded in calculating PTR, if the enrollment in primary school is above 200). The act clearly states (clause 25(11) that within six months from the date of commencement of this act appropriate government and the local authority must ensure the pupil teachers ratio as specified in the schedule is maintained in each school.

#### **Availability of Other Basic Amenities in schools**

DPEP and SSA although has contributes substantially in the development of infrastructure, and SSA invariable aims to ensure that the basic amenities like toilet, common and girls and drinking water is available in each and every school. Despite this, as the DISE data for the year 2008-09 much is to be achieved and specifically as per the RTE norms, which makes provision of these facilities mandatory. Approximately 87.77% of elementary schools have access to potable water and 66.84% have shared bathrooms, but only approximately 53.60% have gender-separate facilities. Clean drinking water is currently available in all schools in the cities of Delhi, Chandigarh, Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep, and Tamil Nadu, and in a further 11 states and union territories, the percentage of schools having access ranges from 90 to 99 percent. But in 15 states, 70 to 90 percent schools have been covered and in three state viz- and Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, only 50.61, 63.30 percent and 65.34 percent schools have drinking water facility. About two third elementary schools (about 66.84 percent) have common toilets and about 53.60 percent have separate toilets for girls. Only five states/ UTs have constructed toilets in more than 90 percent school and among them barring U.P. and Haryana in which about 93 percent, 95 percent schools have toilet, other states /UTs, Puducherry(99.28 percent), Sikkim (98.69 Percent), Andaman and Nicobar Island,(95.5) are also in this category. In three states Arunachal(25.79 percent), Assam (30.27 percent) and Meghalaya(32.82) about one third schools have toilets and in Jammu and Kashmir could provide toilet facility to little more than 35.27 percent schools. The coverage of girls toilet as mentioned above is also not very robust as in seven state less than 25 percent elementary schools have girls. toilet and in 10 states/ UT the coverage to girls toilet is between 25 to 50 percent, and in nine states, 50 to 75 percent schools have girls toilet. Only in 9 states more than 75 percent schools could provide this facility to girl students,. The paucity of resources has been largely responsible for impoverished infrastructure, as evident from the progress of electrification. Only three Union territories viz, Daman and Diu, Chandigarh, and Lakshadweep and one state Puducherry could provide electricity to hundred percent schools and 10 states i.e. Delhi, Goa, A and N islands, D & N Haveli, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu, could make substantial progress in this regards as about 80 to 90 percent schools in these states and UT have electricity supply. The worst performance in this regard is of Bihar(3.45.), Jharkhand(6.81), and Assam(8.78) and as in these states less than ten percent schools are



electrified. Availability of play ground in the country is limited only to 45 percent and 60 percent upper primary schools in the country have the facility. This situation is prevalent not only in mountainous states such as Jammu and Kashmir, north eastern states, and islands where land is scarce but in other states also the situation is not encouraging. Likewise is with the availability of Kitchen-sheds. Despite the imperative and commitment of government and decision of Supreme Court, to provide mid day meal to each and every child studying in government primary school, only 41 percent primary schools in the country are equipped with kitchen shed. The best performing state in this regards are Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Uttrakhand as more than 80 percent primary schools in these states have kitchen-sheds.<sup>xviii</sup> As mentioned earlier majority of cases government primary schools have two or three rooms and in absence of kitchen shed, in most of the schools, one room of the school is generally used to store provisions and for cooking, thereby further reducing availability of rooms for teaching.

Construction of boundary wall, in the centrally sponsored programmes has rarely been a priority issue, except in the situation where safety of children is involved. As consequence fifty percent elementary schools in the country are without boundary walls. Ironically percentage of schools with boundary walls is more in the state, where safety of children from rugged mountainous topography is an issue, for example in North eastern states, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand, the percentage of schools having boundary wall in majority of cases is less than thirty percent. Uttrakhand is only exception among these category of states as more than three fourth schools in the state have boundary walls. Recent empirical research in the Indian states of Punjab, Uttrakhand, and Jammu and Kashmir demonstrates the significance of boundary walls in maintaining a conducive learning atmosphere. Schools often suffer from poor hygiene because they are utilised for inappropriate purposes, such as hosting wedding receptions, tethering animals, or parking tractors, during the summer break. The safety of the campus and its facilities is of equal importance.

It has also been noted that if a school has unprotected unoccupied property, there is a legitimate concern that it will be encroached upon by criminals. Even while a boundary wall can't prevent these issues from happening, it can assist make the schoolyard safer for the kids and less distracting for the teachers.<sup>xix</sup>

### **The Learning Resources and Outcome**

Although data and studies at national level are not available to explore the availability of o articles of common use, but empirical studies indicate that OBB, DPEEP and SSA interventions has greatly improved the availability of learning resources like black board, chalk and dusters and text books.<sup>xx</sup> However the progress on availability of seating material is very tardy. When it comes to elementary schools, just 52.46 percent had sufficient seating (chairs, stools, and desks) for all of its students in 2007-08. These numbers are from the DISE. If we restrict our attention to primary schools just, that number falls to 46%. In addition, a number of the most populated states have a smaller percentage of schools that provide desk chairs to students than the national average.<sup>xxi</sup> On average less than 50 percent elementary schools in the country have book banks or library, whereas per RET this facility is mandatory which will provide not only text books but newspapers and also story books. Computers are available in only 14 percent schools have computers,<sup>xxii</sup>. The coverage of the regular health check is very meagre, as per the DISE data only 52.8 percent schools, private school included, do regular medical checkups of students. The studies of NIAR indicate that less than one



third government elementary schools have regularly health check up of students and first aid kit is available in less than one third schools.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Having the necessary tools and infrastructure at your disposal is crucial, but maintaining them on a regular basis is a bigger issue. Many schools have access to computers, but they are seldom used because teachers lack the necessary computer literacy to effectively use computer-assisted learning. As such, it is a major issue because a significant number of schools around the country do not have access to consistent electricity. While schools do get consistent financing for TLM, not all of them have interesting learning aids like historical charts, abacuses, and maps. Since these resources are so few, we will have to resort to oral teaching and evaluation. Empirical studies in the state of Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand indicate that the annual Teaching Learning Material grant under SSA reaches to almost every regular teachers, and barring a small fraction, all teachers consider TLM Grant useful and TLM exhibitions (*melas*) are held at Cluster, block and district level. This helped to great extent to equip the schools with teaching learning material<sup>xxiv</sup>. However, the empirical data also revealed that the pattern of use of TLM grant needs a great deal of improvement, that too in accordance with the basic objective of giving TLM grant, to facilitate teachers to prepare innovating TLM as per the specific requirement of the students. The empirical data reveal that many teachers are using TLM grant collectively with the intention to augment the supply of teaching aids in the school. Although this spirit is laudable but defeats the very objective of TLM grant i.e. availability of resources to each and every teacher to prepare context and student specific TLM. The other issue is Large number of teachers instead of preparing the Teaching Learning Material uses the grant to purchase maps and charts and even chalk and duster<sup>xxv</sup>.

Empirical research also found that although most schools had access to commonly used items like school bells and wall clocks, many did not have them in working order. There are often missing batteries in wall clocks and blackboards that require painting at many schools. These goods are durable and reliable, requiring little in the way of upkeep. Teachers, people of the community, and even parents might potentially obtain these materials if they had the motivation and pride to do so. Funding is distributed and spent, but there is no transparent accountability framework in place to verify that money is going where it's supposed to (e.g., the upkeep of school buildings, commodes, and water supply systems). This flaw causes discrepancies between policy goals and actual implementation. The Gram Panchayat's operative arms, the Village Education Committees, have not yet been orientated to prioritise the care of existing facilities on par with the construction and purchase of new ones.

### **The Way Ahead**

Looking at data it could be concluded that chasm between norms and availability is infrastructure and amenities is narrowing down. The provision of basic teaching-learning material like black board, chalk has improved considerably but there is a need to look at inter-relationship of infrastructure and quality in a dynamic context specially keeping the fact in to consideration that private schools are proliferating. These schools are of varying fee structure and even parents of lower income groups are enrolling children in them. This phenomena is narrowing down the social base of government elementary schools and confining to the poor. This is one among the several factors responsible for erosion in community pressure on schooling system and thereby quality.



Across the country, development of infrastructure is primarily the responsibility of education department and now SSA is supplementing the efforts. These agencies are constantly endeavouring to improvise infrastructure but face constraints of resources. This could be lessened to a great extent by dovetailing of efforts of various agencies. For example convergence with Total Sanitation Campaign(TSG) could help to provide water and toilet facilities to schools. As a matter of fact it is one among the objective of TSG to provide water and toilet facility to all schools by 2008<sup>xxvi</sup>. All that is required to conduct regular health checks for children is better communication between educators and public health care professionals. If the rural development department was requested to do so as part of one of their employment guarantee plan programmes, they could level the school grounds, construct a playground, and even even construct a new classroom wing.<sup>xxvii</sup>. The effectiveness of this convergence mechanism will save resources of education department and of SSA, which could be used in quality improvement.

Even if normal maintenance of infrastructure is equally as vital as the construction of new infrastructure and amenities, the mechanism to insure maintenance and effective and optimum utilisation simply isn't there. One of the most important parts of the local community is the Village/Ward Education Committee (VEC). The implementation of VEC plans requires the creation of an accountability structure with well-defined roles and responsibilities. Researchers at NIAR found that although state and local governments have paid close attention to the quality of water and sanitation in schools, they have paid far less attention to the cleanliness of the regions immediately around these buildings. There is no running water, and in some cases, people have found the toilets to be unsanitary after being left for days without being used.

#### References

<sup>i</sup> Studies across countries show that parent 's investing in their children's education is the most effective way to boost the learning achievement . But poverty limits most of the Indian parents to make the necessary investment. *World Bank (1997) Development in Practice – Primary Education in India , Allied Publisher New Delhi.*

<sup>ii</sup> Besides these data of recognized schools , there are large number of schools , which have not been recognized by education department of various states for want of norms- specially lack of professionally trained teachers. Study conducted by Arun C Mehta in Punjab reveals that in many cases the unrecognized schools are better in many aspects –vis-à-vis government schools. For examples private schools have better PTR, more qualified teachers, better amenities like drinking water, electricity and toilets. However, these schools are- concentrated more in urban area and generally are English Medium. Majority of the teachers in these schools are untrained. The gender and social parity index in these schools is low compared to other schools For instance the gender parity index in unrecognized private schools is about 0.68 compared to it in government schools it is 0.88. In unrecognized private schools the percentage of scheduled caste children is little less than 10 percent . *Arun C . Mehta (2005) Elementary Education in Unrecognized Schools In India A study of Punjab based on DISE 2005 data , National Institute of Education Planning and Administration , New Delhi pp 1 to 4*

<sup>iii</sup> In some of the state and Union territories the share of government schools total schools is well above 80 percent e.g. in Lakshadweep all elementary schools are owned and managed by government, in Bihar 99.79 percent ,in Tripura 95.83 percent , in Jharkhand 93.49 and in Arunachal Pradesh 93.13 percent schools are owned and managed by Education Department of state government *Arun C Mehta (2010) Progress of Elementary Education in India Towards UEE Flash Statistics DISE 2008-09 National University for Educational Planning and Administration , New Delhi*

<sup>iv</sup> There is a great controversy about the share of private schools in the total enrollment. Independent scholar have disagreement with these figures specially those pertaining to rural areas . Using data of household survey conducted by various agencies like NCEAR and ASER 2006 , they argue that in rural areas about 19.4 percent in primary standards and equal number of children about 20.4 percent in upper primary



standards are enrolled in private schools . *Geeta Gandhi Kingdon( 2007) The progress of school education in India pdf* p 19 Global Poverty Research Group <http://www.gprg.org/> p 19

<sup>v</sup> In the year 1990-91 the expenditure on elementary education ( of states and central government combined ) was 1.78 percent of the GDP which increased to 2.06 percent in the year 2000-01 but again came down to 1.88 percent in the year 2003-04. This slide continues as in the year 2007-08, this figure was 1.69 percent . [www.education.nic.in/stats/detail/26](http://www.education.nic.in/stats/detail/26).

<sup>vi</sup> The public expenditure ,on recognised educational institutions in rural areas, as per the data given in , the First Five Year plan , public expenditure on education , fell from 36 per cent of the total expenditure in 1937-38 to 30 per cent in 1949-50 . Government of India Planning Commission, *First five year Plan Chapter 23 : Education* <http://planningcommsion.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/welcome.html>

<sup>vii</sup> Government of India Planning Commission, Second Five year Plan Chapter 23: Education ., <http://planningcommsion.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/welcome.html>

<sup>viii</sup> Government of India Planning Commission, Third Five year Plan chapter 29, <http://planningcommsion.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/welcome.html>

<sup>ix</sup> The Fourth five Year plan estimated that expenditure on education from all sources has increased from Rs. 344 crore in 1960-61 to Rs. 850 crore in 1968-69 and during the same period, expenditure from Government sources increased from Rs. 234 crore ,( i.e. about 68 per cent of the total expenditure ) , to an estimated sum of Rs-640 crores (75 per cent of the total expenditure on education ) in the year 1968-69. *Government of India, Planning Commission, Fourth Five year Plan chapter 16.* <http://planningcommsion.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/welcome.html>

<sup>x</sup> *Government of India Planning Commission, Fourth Five year Plan chapter 16.* <http://planningcommsion.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/welcome.html>

<sup>xi</sup> *Government of India Planning Commission, Ninth Five Plan 3.2.27,* <http://planningcommsion.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/welcome.html>

<sup>xii</sup> This goal of Universal Elementary Education, besides being included in the Child Rights under Right of Development and the emphasis that has been placed on it in UN resolutions adopted at Jomtien, Dakar and other places, Universal Elementary Education has also been included in the Millennium Development goals (MDG) to be achieved by 2015, as per the resolve of UN General Assembly in 2000. *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a fragmented World*, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Oxford University Press, New Delhi p.19.

<sup>xiii</sup> Government of India , Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development , (1998), National policy on Education 1986, (As modified in 1992) with National policy on Education 1986, <http://education.nic.in/policy/npe86-mod92.pdf> , pp 13-14

<sup>xiv</sup> Explaining the rationale behind replacing, state by district, as a unit of planning, for granting central assistance under Centrally Sponsored Scheme , Plan document states that ,the district-wise data of various indicators of educational development, however, show that the inter-district variations are more significant than the inter-State variations. Moreover, the State is too large and variegated an area to serve as a homogeneous unit for educational planning and it felt there is no guarantee that assistance to backward States will necessarily flow to backward districts. Government of India Planning Commission, Eighth Five Plan chapter. <http://planningcommsion.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/welcome.html>

<sup>xv</sup> In pursuance of the Constitutional (73rd and 74th) Amendments ,many states for instance Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh enacted legislation to devolve financial and administrative powers to village Panchayat and empowered them to raise resources and execute the plans for the development of village – largely improving the delivery of education health,, drinking water, services conservation of natural soil and water resources . State finance commissions were constituted to suggest methods to develop resources to PRIs. For example the state finance commission of UP suggested a four percent of its tax revenue to PRIs. Besides these several items were identified on which PRIs can levy tax , like cess on land revenue, cess on use of government tube wells for irrigation. The proceeds of PRIs – Gram Sabha is deposited in Gram Nidhi ( Village Fund) , The Village Panchayat officer , an employee of government of UP and elected members of Gram Panchayat jointly operate the funds. Government of UP has empowered village Panchayat to manage village level activities of eight department which includes Women Child Development , Elementary Education , Primary Health, Water Management, through various committees- like Education Committee ,which is headed by the *Up Pradhan* ( Vice president ) of Gram Sabha . However, as



far as transfer of resources from the state is concern, the things are moving by and large properly but there are very little efforts on the part of Gram Sabhas to raise resources – specially by levying taxes or cess.

<sup>xvi</sup> Ibid

<sup>xvii</sup> AS per the DISE Data 2007-08, the in following thirteen states, average number of class room per government elementary schools, varies from 3 to 4. The states are, Chhattisgarh (3.0) Andhra Pradesh (3.0) Jammu and Kashmir (3.0), Madhya Pradesh (3.1) Arunachal Pradesh (3.2), Himanchal Pradesh (3.2), Orissa (3.5), Uttarakhand (3.7) Rajasthan (3.8), Uttar Pradesh (3.9), Mizoram (3.9). Arun C Mehta (2010) *National University of Educational Planning and Administration (2010) : Progress of Elementary Education in India Towards UEE Flash Statistics DISE 2008-09 page 4.*

<sup>xviii</sup> Arun C Mehta (2010) National University for Educational Planning and Administration (2010) Elementary Education in India, Analytical tables 2007-08, table 2.11,

<sup>xix</sup> NIAR, LBS National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie (2005) *Base Line social Assessment study of Elementary Education In Punjab – District Amritsar* page 90.

<sup>xx</sup> The studies conducted by NIAR, LBSNAA, that almost all schools have more than three black boards. SSA mission provides free text books to all scheduled tribe, scheduled caste children and girls. This has considerably improved the availability of text books to students, as persuaded by SSA many states like Uttarakhand provide text books to rest of the students, to free distribution of text books universal. As per the studies of JB G Tilak, based on the NSS (1995 - 96) 52nd round, adjusted for increase in prices, based on GDP deflators, per capita house hold expenditure of extremely poor, on elementary education in the year 2007-08 in rural and urban areas was about Rs 20.64 and Rs.36.23 for all classes it is 40.55 in rural areas and Rs 106.26 in urban areas. Tilak J B G (2009) *Household Expenditure on Education and Implications for Redefining the Poverty Line in India* Background Paper, prepared for the Expert Group on the Review of the Methodology for Estimation of Poverty (Planning Commission, May 2009). table 13. In this study Tilak has also estimated the various items of education expenditure (all schools) and came to the conclusion that books alone account for 13 percent of the total expenditure (figure 4 in the above mention paper). Thus provision of free text books has contributed substantially in reducing the opportunity cost of schooling.

<sup>xxi</sup> These states in which more fifty percent or more students sit on mats in the class rooms are Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himanchal, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, and West Bengal. Arun C Mehta (2010) National University for Educational Planning and Administration (2010) Elementary Education in India, Analytical tables 2007-08, table Table 2.12.

<sup>xxii</sup> The fact is, if the Union territory of Delhi, Puducherry, Daman and Diu, Chandigarh, Lakshadweep and state of Kerala are excluded, this average will come down substantially, as in some major state like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Orissa, the percentage of schools, having computer is less than 10 percent. Almost similar is the situation in case of book banks, as, as many as in 12 states - Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Orissa, Sikkim, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tripura, Bihar, less than 30 percent elementary schools have book banks Arun C Mehta (2010) *ibid* table 2.7 for availability of computers and 2.9 for availability of book bank.

<sup>xxiii</sup> The data of Health Check provided by NUEPA also have serious variation in this figure across the state, for instance In Assam, 6 percent, Lakshadweep 8 percent, Arunachal Pradesh 9 percent, Manipur 13 percent, Bihar 18 percent and Jharkhand 18 percent, Tripura 19 percent, Puducherry 20 percent Mizoram 21 percent, Nagaland 22 percent, Uttar Pradesh 34 percent and west Bengal 36 percent schools reported that they have regular health check of the students. The empirical studies conducted by NIAR in government and government aided elementary schools indicate that in Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and in Punjab indicate that very few schools undertake health check up of students regularly

<sup>xxiv</sup> The DISE data collected by National University of Educational Planning and Administration New Delhi, for across the states reveal that more than 90 percent schools across the state, barring Jharkhand and Nagaland, where about 79 and 82 percent and M P, Punjab and Sikkim where about 89,84 and 88 percent schools uses TLM. Grant Arun C Mehta (2010) *op.cit* table 2.20

<sup>xxv</sup> National Institute of Administrative Research, LBS National Academy of Administration Musoorie (2002) Base line Social Assessment Study of Elementary Education in Seven Districts of Uttaranchal, (2005). Base line Social Assessment Study of Elementary Education in All the Seventeen Districts of Punjab. (2009) Base line Social Assessment Study of Elementary Education in Jammu and Kashmir (see appendix for details).



<sup>xxvi</sup> A programme on Total Sanitation Campaign (TSG) has been launched by the Govt. of India. As per their guidelines all the rural household, primary schools and Anganwari should be covered with toilet facilities. In these schemes there is provision of separate toilets for the boys and girls in the school. It is aim of the scheme that by end of 2008 rural areas will be free of open defecation.

<sup>xxvii</sup> The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act could accommodate SSA, the material cost component could be covered by SSA and the labour component by the employment scheme, this serve the purpose of providing employment as well as saving the labour cost of SSA. The saved resources could be utilized for quality improvement