

Access and Equity to Education in India through Synergy of Conventional and ODL Systems: A Step towards Democratization of Education

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Abstract

India has witnessed tremendous development in educating and training its vast human resource of over one billion through sustained effort of conventional and distance mode of education. In pursuit of making Right to Education a reality, the Government has been initiating efforts for developing the educational infrastructure and training human capital. Consequently, the Country with a literacy rate of 64.84%, has 767520, 274731 and 152049 schools along with 12 open schools at primary, middle and secondary/ higher secondary levels catering to 130.8, 51.2 and 37.1 million students respectively. At higher education level, 13578 colleges and 407 universities along with 106 distance education institutions address needs of 11.7 million students.

These institutions of learning, in true sense have been instrumental in educating the vast human resource of over one billion but democratization of education i.e. access and equity to education is still a dream to be realized. This paper endeavours to explore the achievements so far and identify the challenges and constraints that have prevented the country to achieve the goal of universalisation of education and high level of literacy. It attempts to analyze the following:

1. The impact of right to education towards universalisation of education in India and role of ODL institutions in providing quality school level education and achieving the goals of ensuring right to education in India.
2. Reasons of variance in enrolling students at the various levels of education and remedial measures to overcome this challenge.
3. Evolving a synergy towards integrating conventional and ODL institutions for democratization of education in India.

1. Introduction

Education has been the main instrument of human development and its importance has been emphasized through fundamental rights, principles, statutes / acts in a number of countries. At the international level, attempts have been made at various congregations to focus on aspects of education as a part of fundamental human right. According to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948):

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Similarly, at World Education Forum Dakar, Senegal, April 2000, the framework for action was developed according to which goals for international communities were defined and these are:

1. expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;
4. achieve a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality; and
6. improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning

outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

The Dakar Framework identified education as a human right and affirmed that no country seriously committed to Education for All would be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources. The Framework's goals and objectives have been adopted by countries and donor institutions around the world. They also played an important role in the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) passed by the UN General Assembly in a special session in the fall of 2000, further strengthening international commitments towards Education for All (EFA). The MDGs are a set of specific, time-bound goals, with objectives and indicators, in education, health, HIV/AIDS, gender equality and environmental sustainability to which the countries of the United Nations have agreed. The following are the education-related MDGs:

MDG1: Achieve universal primary education.

Target: Ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Indicators:

- Net enrolment ratio in primary education.
- Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5.
- Literacy rate of 15- to 24-year-olds.

MDG3: Promote gender equality and empower women.

Target: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.

Indicators:

- Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- Ratio of literate women to men among 15- to 24-year-olds.

Education as Fundamental Right in India

In India, education has been accorded prime importance and thus it has found place in Fundamental Rights (Part III) and Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV) of the Constitution of India. The Constitution of India has given certain rights to the citizens of India which are better known as the Fundamental Rights (Article 12 to 35). According to Article 21A "Right to Education" in Right to Freedom (Article 19 to 22), the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine. Along with the Fundamental Rights there are also the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 36 to 51) which are fundamental governing principles of the country and it is the duty of the State to apply these Directive Principles

for making the laws. These Directive Principles cannot be enforced by the court of law in case of violation as is in the case of Fundamental Rights and these are directed towards social and economic freedom by appropriate action of the State.

According to Article 45 of the Constitution of India, the State has to make provision for free and compulsory education for children within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. However, a particular Act to this effect did not exist so the Government of India took initiative of framing Right to Education Act. The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002, enacted in December 2002 seeks to make free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right for all children in the age-group 6-14 years by inserting a new Article 21-A in Part III ("Fundamental Right") of the Constitution. The new Article 21A reads as follows:

"21A. Right to Education: The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine."

At present, a complete version of the draft legislation has been prepared and sent to Chief Secretaries of all States/UTs and placed on the website for comments from the public at large. Based on further consultations on the matter, it has been proposed that instead of Central Legislation, a Model Right to Education Bill should be formulated and circulated as a framework to States. Accordingly, a Model Bill on Right to Education has been drafted and sent to the states for their comments. Although the legislative process of making "Right to Education", a Fundamental Right is at present in progress, however since its independence, the Government of India has been trying to work towards achieving the objective of Democratization of Education i.e. Access and Equity to Education for All.

2. India: A Brief Insight into Education

The education system of India is one of the largest education systems in the world as it caters to the need of more than 1028 million people (as per 2001 Census). The Government of India has been focusing not only on spreading education but encouraging the people to be literate which forms the basis for universalization of education in the country. With the literacy rate of merely 18.3% in 1951, it has increased to 64.8% in 2001 and according to NSS 61st Round Survey Report No. 517, 2004-05, the literacy rate is 67.3% in 2004-05. According to the Census of India 2001, the male literacy rate was 75.26% while female literacy was

53.67% with literacy gap of 21.59%. The state of Kerala is having highest literacy rate in India with 94.24% for male and 87.72% for female with 6.52% literacy gap which happens to be the minimum in the country. On analyzing the decadal change in literacy rate from 1991, it is seen that it is 11.13% in male and 14.39% in female. During the last 10 years (1991-2001), the maximum change in literacy for males is 20.71% in the state of Rajasthan while 24.33% for females in the state of Chhattisgarh.

On further analysis of literacy rate on rural and urban perspective, India has 58.74% literacy in rural areas and 79.92 in urban areas. The state of Kerala once again has the highest literacy in rural areas which is 90.04% and 93.63% and 86.69% for male and female respectively. However in urban areas, it is the state of Mizoram which has the highest literacy rate of 96.13%. The study of literacy rate on the basis of specific social groups i.e. Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) reveals that literacy rate in SC is 54.7% and 51.16% and 68.12% for rural and urban areas respectively. In the case of ST, it is 47.1% and for rural and urban areas, it is 45.02% and 69.09% respectively.

According to District Information System for Education (DISE) adult literacy rate in 2004 was 61%. The male adult literacy rate stands at 73% while for female it is 48%. However the youth literacy rate was 76% with male youth literacy rate as 84% and female as 68%.

The efforts of Government of India in this direction can also be appreciated by focusing on the expenditure made by the Government on this sector. In 1961, the total expenditure on education was Rs. 260.3 crores which was 11.7% of total expenditure on all other sectors and 1.52% of the GDP. In 2001-02, this stood at 3.84% of the GDP and it was 12.89% of total expenditure on all other sectors. If we look at the expenditure by level of education in India, then in 1991, the expenditure on elementary education was 1.78% of GDP and 1.24% of GDP for secondary and senior secondary education and 0.77% for higher education. As per the revised estimate of 2004-05, expenditure on elementary education is 6.57% (1.89% to GDP) to total expenditure on all sectors and 3.85% (1.11% to GDP) and 2.3% (0.66% to GDP) for secondary and senior secondary education and higher education respectively.

After having focused on the achievement so far in the context for literacy in population in India, the paper now explores the development in the three levels of education namely, elementary education (class I to VIII), secondary / senior secondary education (IX to XII) and higher education. It also highlights the initiatives taken by the Government of India towards making Education

For All and thus universalizing the education in the country. This is followed by a study on the role played by distance education institutions in making education accessible to all in the country at all the three levels and thus, realizing the dream of Education For All. This study has been organized into two levels, the national and the state level. It is pertinent to mention here that India has 28 states and seven union territories (UTs) and this study makes a comparative analysis of state wise achievements and constraints in the provision of education.

3. Universalization of Elementary Education

A brief look at the following statistics reflects the overwhelming growth in the elementary education of India since last 50 years. The highlights of elementary education give a bright and promising picture of development of education in the country having 1 billion plus population with literacy level of 64.84%. The important dimensions of elementary education along with the data pertaining to present status in India have been given below.

Primary/ Junior Basic Schools: 767520

Middle/ Senior Basic Schools: 274731

Gender Parity Index:

0.93 (0.85 for SC and .88 for ST)

Teachers (% Trained Teachers):

Primary: 2160666 (86%),

Middle: 1589280 (87%)

Pupil-Teacher Ratio:

Primary Level (46), Middle Level (35)

Female Teachers per 100 Male Teachers:

Primary Level (64),

Middle Level (60)

Total Enrolment in Millions (Girls):

Primary: 130.8 (61.1),

Middle: 51.2 (22.7)

Gross Enrolment Ratio (Girls):

Primary: 107.8 (104.7),

Middle: 69.9 (65.1)

Gender Parity Index;

Primary: 0.95, Middle: 0.88

Dropout Rate (Girls):

Primary: 29 (25.42),

Elementary: 50.84 (51.28)

School Management (Govt. & Local Body):

Primary: 90.2%,

Middle: 72.2%

Growth in Elementary education institutions started with modest number of 209671 and 13596 schools at primary and middle level in 1950-51 and reached to 638738 and 206269 in 2000-01. A gradual progression in number of schools is shown below in Table 3.1. As evident from table below, there has been gradual growth in the number of primary level schools which has been accompanied by an increase in total number of

teachers, however with the passage of time, the pupil-teacher ratio has been increasing which indicates towards the fact that there is a need for

more number of teachers so as to reduce pupil-teacher ratio and compensate the increasing number of students.

Table 3.1
Schools, Teachers and Pupil-Teacher Ratio in Elementary Education

Year	Primary Level						Middle Level					
	Schools	Male teachers ('000)	Female Teachers ('000)	Total Teachers (000)	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Female/100 Male	Schools	Male teachers ('000)	Female Teachers ('000)	Total Teachers (000)	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Female/100 Male
1950-51	209671	456	82	538	24	20	13596	73	13	86	20	18
1960-61	330399	615	127	742	36	21	49663	262	83	345	31	32
1970-71	408378	835	225	1060	39	27	90621	463	175	638	32	38
1980-81	494503	1021	342	1363	38	33	118555	598	253	851	33	42
1990-91	560935	1143	473	1616	43	41	151456	717	356	1073	37	50
2000-01	638738	1221	675	1896	43	55	206269	820	506	1326	38	62
2004-05	767520	1319	842	2161	46	64	274731	992	597	1589	35	60

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2007). Delhi: Government of India

Table 3.2
Management of Schools at Elementary Level (in percentage)

Year	Primary					Upper Primary (Middle level)				
	Government	Local Body	Government & Local Body	Private	Unaided	Government	Local Body	Government & Local Body	Private	Unaided
2001-02*	47.45	43.47	90.92	3.07	6.01	47.36	29.05	76.41	7.81	15.75
2002-03*	55.77	32.98	88.75	3.63	7.83	45.37	27.19	72.56	7.37	20.07
2003-04*	42.6	48.08	90.68	2.85	6.48	39.75	32.56	72.31	6.68	21.01
2004-05*	43.33	46.87	90.2	2.55	7.24	42.96	29.24	72.2	6.41	21.39

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2007). Delhi: Government of India

If we look at the gender equity in teaching community at primary level, it is observed that there is higher number of female teachers in 2004-05 as compared to that of 1950-51. At the middle level of school education, a better picture emerges as compared to the primary level because pupil-teacher ratio stands at 35 as against 46 in primary education but towards gender equity in teaching community in primary sector, it seems to be better represented by female as there are 64 female teachers per 100 male teacher as against 60 in middle level.

Although, there has been growth in every aspect of elementary education but it is interesting to see that the Government is still playing a vital role in dissemination of education at elementary level. From the **Table 3.2** above, it is clear that central and state governments along with local governments/ administrative bodies still manage over 90% of schools at primary level, however their share declines to nearly 72% in middle level of educational setup. The data also suggests that primary education still does not seem to be an attractive avenue for private bodies. It can be presumed that this sector could be more quality and

facility oriented had there been greater participation of private organizations / entrepreneurs.

From the national perspective, now we move to state level educational scenario in India at the elementary level, as is summarized in **Table 3.3**. The state wise details of the elementary education setup in India shows that highest and lowest number of primary schools is in Uttar Pradesh and Lakhshwadweep (UT) and it is 129976 and 21 respectively. Similarly, in case of middle/ upper primary schools, both the states of UP and Lakhshadweep again are with highest and lowest numbers i.e. 36874 & 6 respectively. It is obvious that states/UTs having larger share of population would have larger share of enrolment and schools. In this context, the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP), the most populous state in the country, naturally has the highest enrolment and Lakshwadweep, a UT has lowest enrolment in primary level. Similarly, since UP has maximum number of schools at this level so it leads amongst all other states in number of teachers. However, Chandigarh (a UT) has lowest number of teachers. As against the national average of 86% of trained teachers, there are nine states which are credited with having 100% trained

teachers but on the other hand, there are also 12 other states which have number of trained teachers

less than the national average. If we look at the participation of female in

Table 3.3

State wise Educational Scenario in India

SN	State/ Uts	Composite EDI Ranking	Primary/ Junior Basic Schools	Middle/ Senior Basic Schools	Middle/Senior Basic School					Primary/Junior Basic School				
					Number of Teachers	% of trained Teachers	Female Teacher per 100 male teachers	Total enrollment	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Number of Teachers	% of trained Teachers	Female Teacher per 100 male teachers	Total enrollment	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
1	Andhra Pradesh	8	61680	16667	103985	87	71	3172877	31	166935	90	82	5524363	33
2	Arunachal Pradesh	33	1371	495	3069	29	42	91385	30	3630	22	44	123234	34
3	Assam	30	30068	8143	73062	10	31	1197412	16	82888	51	54	3499155	42
4	Bihar	35	39347	10963	55741	96	28	4170935	75	73202	98	24	7586572	104
5	Chattisgarh	22	33595	10799	26058	52	32	1204500	46	68819	50	38	3309197	48
6	Goa	18	1003	73	484	98	293	8025	17	2203	96	454	46763	21
7	Gujarat	13	16385	22623	182306	100	96	7109934	39	36039	100	113	1261128	35
8	Haryana	23	11800	2269	9896	92	61	298713	30	49891	89	99	2175525	44
9	Himachal Pradesh	7	11178	2210	13747	98	57	418802	30	28201	92	81	686706	24
10	Jammu & Kashmir	16	12049	4239	28279	60	69	456895	16	31910	54	62	1072779	34
11	Jharkhand	34	16572	4933	28242	100	45	1729632	61	30102	100	26	2436803	81
12	Karnataka	6	26645	26816	192418	100	130	7152469	37	64271	100	63	1677740	26
13	Kerala	1	6827	3049	45396	97	214	1232933	27	41458	98	273	1152423	28
14	Madhya Pradesh	29	96737	34641	129437	55	16	3826948	30	238868	50	36	10351093	43
15	Maharashtra	12	41669	26295	192482	96	76	7152854	37	190473	96	153	7045093	37
16	Manipur	21	2552	831	8753	31	69	172737	20	8033	32	63	239507	30
17	Meghalaya	26	5851	1759	7407	36	72	115214	16	13745	45	88	600545	44
18	Mizoram	9	1481	939	6977	60	46	56046	8	5969	58	98	102807	17
19	Nagaland	27	1520	480	6296	17	61	100006	16	8127	33	58	154254	19
20	Orissa	28	45700	15893	31393	91	34	1383361	44	99079	88	56	5214795	53
21	Punjab	14	13352	2503	13206	98	108	245087	19	38676	95	162	1654474	43
22	Rajasthan	19	55942	26201	160423	75	39	5506149	34	119969	81	38	5821280	49
23	Sikkim	11	684	185	1172	42	55	29443	25	5121	50	100	111323	22
24	Tamil Nadu	3	33470	7111	56958	100	117	2322697	41	119969	100	221	3981733	33
25	Tripura	25	1776	1001	8880	23	35	131097	15	8036	25	31	433494	54
26	Uttar Pradesh	31	129976	36874	157847	95	27	5557792	35	399457	98	40	22988532	58
27	Uttaranchal	15	14663	3861	17439	100	55	308946	18	43715	100	111	1097311	25
28	West Bengal	32	50397	1929	15474	84	37	675332	44	151665	70	38	8224277	54
29	A&N Islands	20	213	58	723	53	113	12967	18	954	52	130	18784	20
30	Chandigarh	5	25	8	191	100	173	5482	29	258	100	461	10701	41
31	D&N Haveli	24	127	91	278	99	66	11857	43	541	99	109	33624	62
32	Daman & Diu	17	53	24	281	100	111	8160	29	426	100	330	18463	43
33	Delhi	2	2463	635	9210	100	272	235292	26	24744	100	221	999465	40
34	Lakshadweep	10	21	6	148	100	70	2414	16	323	100	79	6756	21
35	Pondicherry	4	328	127	1622	93	135	34579	21	2969	97	279	71210	24
	TOTAL		767520	274731	1589280	87	60	56138972	35	2160666	86	64	99731909	46

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2007). Delhi: Government of India

Table 3.4
State wise Dropout Rate

SN	State/ Uts	Class I-V									Class I-VIII								
		All categories			SC			ST			All categories			SC			ST		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Andhra Pradesh	31.77	32.14	31.95	32.77	34.4	33.58	51.27	56.94	54.04	57.72	61.08	59.36	62.22	67.53	64.83	76.57	81.46	78.81
2	Arunachal Pradesh	45.86	48.01	46.85	17.5	26.67	20	47.91	47.74	47.83	63.23	61.9	62.63	34.29	45	38.18	68.03	66.58	67.37
3	Assam	51.58	48.34	50.07	55.85	49.86	53.15	58.65	50.15	54.98	72.41	74.6	73.38	70.15	70.49	70.3	74.17	77.41	75.53
4	Bihar	53.37	48.62	51.59	44.02	74.1	54.83	59.16	62.99	60.82	73.57	76.44	74.69	81.88	81.76	81.84	76.27	76.1	76.2
5	Chhattisgarh																		
6	Goa	0	6.26	2.43	53.68	58.66	56.1	0	0	0	4.28	9.69	6.9	62.5	69.25	65.72	0	0	0
7	Gujarat	35.72	34.27	35.09	23.31	25.57	24.37	50.04	47.26	48.8	43.63	50	46.34	39.23	56.59	47.34	64.47	70.19	67.08
8	Haryana	5.04	4.54	4.81	15.73	13.41	14.63				19.86	29.61	24.51	39.04	45.52	42.13			
9	Himachal Pradesh	5.78	9.82	7.74	16.12	16.96	16.53	0.11	6.67	3.4	13.48	18.36	15.89	31.42	35.08	33.24	11.55	22.48	17.01
10	Jammu & Kashmir	40.92	31.8	36.92	33.3	16.6	26.25	0	0	0	39.72	37.02	38.57	25.24	21.31	23.56	0	0	0
11	Jharkhand																		
12	Karnataka	16.25	15.49	15.88	24.22	14.9	19.95	9.42	6.36	7.97	49.81	50.21	49.99	42.82	51.93	47.32	44.39	51.28	47.56
13	Kerala	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.43	4.25	4.34	0	0	0	0	0	0	21.11	23.51	22.26
14	Madhya Pradesh	11.12	9.13	10.21	18.41	11.57	15.39	17.36	7.35	13.07	43.09	45.07	43.95	39.62	41.57	40.45	45.37	51.44	48.04
15	Maharashtra	6.6	6.81	6.7	6.66	8.71	7.65	28.24	36.98	32.35	26.46	31.74	28.99	25.44	34.38	29.76	54.86	62.43	58.42
16	Manipur	29.71	32.74	31.18	37.14	25.68	31.62	46.12	56.27	51	34.47	30.91	32.8	0	0	0	57.69	56.53	57.16
17	Meghalaya	51.77	48.15	49.97	52.04	46.25	49.41	54.17	47.36	50.8	65.99	62.43	64.21	63.38	61.32	62.37	70.68	68.4	69.55
18	Mizoram	50.84	48.71	49.84				50.77	48.68	49.79	68.99	64.34	66.84				68.39	63.85	66.28
19	Nagaland	41.79	43.66	42.69				39.71	37.71	38.78	41.09	43.93	42.49				44.78	40.81	42.93
20	Orissa	42.6	35.17	39.34	48.1	39.42	44.58	58.67	58.54	58.62	65.56	56.64	61.95	65.86	66.17	66	80.18	79.88	80.06
21	Punjab	27.42	19.91	23.96	32.05	25.87	29.2				32.64	34.82	33.67	53.67	51.12	52.46			
22	Rajasthan	58.92	52.9	56.59	54.49	57.59	55.83	53.72	59.51	56.22	60.85	71.33	65.34	67.55	78.05	71.97	66.27	73.74	69.14
23	Sikkim	52.01	46.8	49.44	51.82	45.19	48.55	30.51	18.27	24.47	72.48	70.02	71.22	79.83	70.09	75.49	52.14	36.05	44.49
24	Tamil Nadu	1.94	-0.14	0.94	15.77	10.1	13.66	12.41	10	11.67	24.62	23.24	23.96	28.37	25.42	26.98	44.12	23.74	35.31
25	Tripura	43.76	42.58	43.2	35.2	35.33	35.26	57.27	60.59	58.84	62.05	66.42	64.15	62.29	70.22	66.2	79.83	83.11	81.4
26	Uttar Pradesh	21.8	-3.78	12.06	25.81	38.41	30.6	27.13	16.29	22.7	43.71	39.18	41.94	51.03	67.35	57.17	23.14	23.5	23.29
27	Uttaranchal																		
28	West Bengal	43.23	44.1	43.65	51.77	58.33	54.93	48.93	47.71	48.4	63.7	63.55	63.63	70.22	75.31	72.55	81.06	73.01	78.47
29	A&N Islands	4.03	3.36	3.72				7.34	7.94	7.62	8.98	12.03	10.44				24.76	20.67	22.87

30	Chandigarh	1.46	3.91	2.59	9.65	10.82	10.2				17.03	9.14	13.4	60.41	54.31	57.53			
31	D&N Haveli	21.37	36.1	28.23	15.15	8.22	11.51	25.35	42.31	33.34	44.81	60.55	51.95	18.46	25.42	21.77	50.82	69.1	59.01
32	Daman & Diu	1.51	0.06	0.84	0	0	0	1.69	0.8	1.28	12.91	21.29	17.03	4.62	1.52	3.05	38.2	38.42	38.3
33	Delhi	0	0	0	4.67	5.28	4.95	0	0	0	27.71	28.53	28.12	0	0	0	0	0	0
34	Lakshadweep	0.77	14.51	7.62				1.03	8.24	4.5	2.91	31.24	16.41				0	0	0
35	Pondicherry	0	0	0	1.01	2.89	1.95				0	0	0	0	0	0			
	INDIA	31.81	25.42	29	32.73	36.14	34.21	42.55	42.04	42.32	50.49	51.28	50.84	55.2	59.95	57.26	64.97	67.09	65.87

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2007). Delhi: Government of India, Annual Report 2006-07, Department of School education & Literacy and Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2007). Delhi: Government of India.

Table 3.5
State wise GER and GPI

	State / Uts	All Category			SC			ST			All			SC			ST		
		Classes I-V (6-11 years)			Classes I-V (6-11 years)			Classes I-V (6-11 years)			Classes VI-VIII (11-14 yrs)			Classes VI-VIII (11-14 yrs)			Classes VI-VIII (11-14 yrs)		
		GER		GPI	GER		GPI	GER		GPI	GER		GPI	GER		GPI	GER		GPI
		Girls	Total		Girls	Total		Girls	Total		Girls	Total		Girls	Total		Girls	Total	
1	Andhra Pradesh	97.4	96.71	1.01	108.68	107.97	1.01	103.17	104.03	0.98	69.68	71.76	0.95	73.7	76.78	0.93	60.91	66.92	0.85
2	Arunachal Pradesh	115.9	123.12	0.89				123.94	131.74	0.89	69.16	75.53	0.85				74.73	80.39	0.87
3	Assam	104.8	105.2	0.99	161.27	161.61	1	116.61	113.74	1.05	67.22	69.7	0.93	112.14	115.23	0.95	90.64	95.05	0.91
4	Bihar	71.18	83.75	0.75	60.92	80.15	0.62	55.9	72.23	0.64	24.29	32.43	0.61	19.45	27.58	0.56	14.72	21.13	0.56
5	Chhattisgarh	127.53	131.84	0.94	144.6	148.6	0.95	123.38	127.79	0.93	70.19	79.87	0.79	80.06	91.16	0.79	59.02	69.61	0.74
6	Goa	108.76	110.13	0.98	104.5	105.75	0.98				98.9	100.61	0.97	41.7	44.75	0.87			
7	Gujarat	109.86	118.65	0.87	155.51	156.86	0.98	122.47	129.02	0.91	66.27	73.77	0.82	89.3	96.98	0.86	61.05	64.54	0.9
8	Haryana	84.9	82.23	1.06	105.2	102.11	1.06				74.85	76.39	0.96	73.92	75.15	0.97			
9	Himachal Pradesh	108.49	108.9	0.99	122.11	121.73	1.01	140.35	139	1.02	107.04	108.5	0.97	109.14	110.65	0.97	126.3	127.55	0.98
10	Jammu & Kashmir	82.98	83.72	0.98	111.98	117.54	0.91	90.83	101.35	0.82	55.39	60.28	0.85	91.53	96.72	0.9	64.52	79.77	0.69
11	Jharkhand	86.34	94.8	0.84	78.39	92.18	0.74	97.74	111.84	0.78	36.98	43.41	0.75	32.34	40.78	0.67	37.85	45.76	0.71
12	Karnataka	105.73	107.1	0.98	113.71	114.91	0.98	112.9	112.89	1	83.19	85.47	0.95	82.55	85.74	0.93	78.45	81.94	0.92
13	Kerala	93.69	93.61	1	105.49	107.08	0.97	116.02	116	1	95.38	98.19	0.95	99.43	103.98	0.92	97.52	98.52	0.98
14	Madhya Pradesh	128.74	132.16	0.95	144.16	146.91	0.96	139.77	147.85	0.9	76.52	83.29	0.86	87.84	94.79	0.87	62.53	72.57	0.76
15	Maharashtra	110.4	110.37	1	147.24	148.63	0.98	120.5	130.5	0.86	97.09	98.08	0.98	126.63	130.67	0.94	74.63	80.26	0.87
16	Manipur	148.88	151.69	0.96	135.1	141.52	0.91	137.13	143.23	0.92	91.53	94.69	0.94	130.15	133.93	0.95	65.84	68.99	0.92
17	Meghalaya	149.95	147.62	1.03				136.24	134.04	1.03	80.96	76.45	1.12				76.63	71.16	1.16

18	Mizoram	122.71	127.53	0.93				127.58	132.53	0.93	81.33	81.77	0.99				83.66	84.11	0.99
19	Nagaland	87.15	87.94	0.98				82.01	83.07	0.98	55.5	55.6	1				51.25	51.59	0.99
20	Orissa	127.37	129.69	0.97	135.08	138.61	0.95	114.14	119.93	0.91	69.21	74.11	0.88	54.75	61.2	0.81	34.07	41.19	0.71
21	Punjab	80.52	77.2	1.08	113.99	110.53	1.06				67.4	65.42	1.06	75.67	74.04	1.04			
22	Rajasthan	116.66	121.24	0.93	121.27	126.66	0.92	100.63	107.57	0.88	54.8	70.67	0.65	48.06	65.54	0.59	51.01	70.01	0.59
23	Sikkim	142.71	143.58	0.99	155.5	155.35	1	252.88	252.9	1	72.16	66.7	1.17	83.2	78.95	1.11	106.2	97.05	1.21
24	Tamil Nadu	117.23	118.41	0.98	102.05	106.19	0.93	101.47	128.23	0.66	104.66	107	0.96	91.84	94.08	0.95	122.4	120.63	1.03
25	Tripura	128.26	131.03	0.96	146.11	149.3	0.96	121.21	128.04	0.9	75.55	78.16	0.94	76	78.93	0.93	53.3	58.11	0.85
26	Uttar Pradesh	104.15	107.54	0.94	88.54	111.27	0.67	121.7	148.35	0.7	46.29	52.43	0.8	29.8	50.12	0.44	36.3	57.66	0.48
27	Uttaranchal	118.52	117.74	1.01	150.67	147.32	1.04	132.38	127.97	1.07	87.92	88.08	1	110.43	116.47	0.91	136.7	132.23	1.07
28	West Bengal	111.27	112.11	0.99	110.32	113.36	0.95	104.33	112.35	0.87	63.31	66.46	0.91	51.84	58.92	0.79	49.22	56.08	0.79
29	A&N Islands	107.9	108.85	0.98				173.2	121.27	1.82	109.87	106.5	1.06				83.1	94.15	0.79
30	Chandigarh	69.94	74.01	0.9	47.59	49.84	0.91				72.75	68.57	1.11	40.2	38.9	1.06			
31	D&N Haveli	129.49	134.5	0.93				129.67	131.69	0.97	66.64	79.05	0.74				62.2	76.77	0.7
32	Daman & Diu	127.08	136.01	0.88							127.17	116.57	1.17						
33	Delhi	99.72	94.42	1.11	67.86	66.49	1.04				93.54	87.59	1.13	63.72	57.86	1.21			
34	Lakshadweep	55.28	58.78	0.89				54.85	58.39	0.89	60.4	58.71	1.05				60.13	58.37	1.05
35	Pondicherry	122.7	131.64	0.87	115.11	123.84	0.86				103.48	108.22	0.92	104.88	109.63	0.92			
	INDIA	104.67	107.8	0.95	106.62	115.3	0.86	115.49	121.91	0.9	65.13	69.93	0.88	61.5	70.17	0.79	59.49	66.98	0.81

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2007). Delhi: Government of India, Annual Report 2006-07, Department of School education & Literacy and Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2007). Delhi: Government of India.

teaching then we see that the national average is 64 female teachers per 100 male teachers and there are 20 states/ UTs which have more female teachers per 100 male teachers as compared to national average. In primary level, the national average of pupil-teacher ratio is 46 but there are still nine states/ UTs which have exceeded this average with Bihar having highest pupil teacher ratio in the country, indicating towards the need for enhancing the number of teachers in the schools.

The next parameter analysed here is the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), which refers to the percentage of enrolment in classes I-V and VI-VIII and/or I-VIII to the estimated child population in the age group 6 to below 11 years and 11 to below 14 years and/or 6 to 14 years respectively. It is 107.8 at the national level in all categories and there are 19 states/ UTs out of 35 whose GER exceeds the national average while for SC and ST category, it is 115.3 and 121.91 respectively at class I-V level. There are 14 states/ UTs which have higher GER as compared to national average in both SC and ST categories. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) in primary and middle level appears to be more positive as national GPI stands at 0.95 in all categories while it is 0.86 and 0.9 in SC and ST respectively in the class I-V. If we look at the states/ UTs having GPI 1 or more than 1 then we find that there are only 8 states/ UTs in all categories and it is the same in SC and ST also. Bihar is the state with lowest GPI as 0.75, 0.62 and 0.64 for all categories, SC and ST respectively. Delhi is the state having highest GPI in India standing at 1.11.

Another important aspect worth considering is the drop out ratio of children in Class I-V. Here on analyzing the Table 3.4, it is observed that national average dropout ratio is 29 in all categories where as in Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) categories, it is 34.21 and 42.32 respectively. In the all categories and ST, the state of Bihar has highest drop out ratio where as in SC, Goa has the highest ratio i.e. 56.1 while dropout rate of girls is highest in Rajasthan (52.9) in all categories but Bihar again has highest ratio in SC and ST as 74.1 and 62.99 respectively.

In the middle level of school education, the situation is quite different as against the primary level with the state of Maharashtra having maximum number of students enrolled at this level and Lakshwadweep again has the lowest number of students. Here once again Maharashtra has the highest number of teachers followed by Karnataka and there are nine states/ UTs with 100% trained teachers and there are 21 state/ UTs which have higher percentage of trained teachers in comparison to national average. Participation of women in teaching and guiding the students at this level is

less encouraging because national average of female teachers per 100 male teachers is lower than that of primary level. There are 18 states/ UTs which fare better in this index. If we look at the pupil-teacher ratio, the picture is brighter as compared to that of in primary level with the national average of 35 pupils per teacher. Here again, there are 10 states/ UTs which have higher pupil-teacher ratio as against the national average.

The GER in class VI-VIII is rather low as compared to that in class I-V, it being 69.93, 70.17 and 66.98 for all categories, SC and ST respectively. This trend of GER is also evident because of the increasing dropout ratio from primary to middle level schools. The GPI in the class VI-VIII is 0.88 which is less than that of class I-V. For SC and ST also it is much lesser with the value of 0.79 and 0.81 respectively. Once again, the state of Bihar has the lowest GPI in all categories but in SC and ST, it is UP which is having the lowest GPI. Sikkim is the state with highest GPI in India i.e. 1.17. The state wise dropout ratio in class I-VIII is much higher as compared to that in class I-V. As against the dropout ratio of 29 in Class I-V in all categories, it is 50.84 in class I-VIII. Here again the state of Bihar has got the highest dropout ratio of 74.69 in all categories and also in SC i.e. 81.76 and in ST, this is 65.87. For the girls, the drop out ratio is 51.28 for all categories and 59.95 and 67.09 for SC and ST respectively. The State of Bihar has got maximum dropout ratio in girls and SC again but in ST, the state of Tripura has got highest dropout ratio in this category.

The Table 3.3 also shows country level composite Educational Development Index (EDI) ranking which has been developed by the National University of Educational Planning & Administration (NUEPA) to track the progress of the States towards Universal Elementary Education (UEE), for Primary and Upper Primary levels as well as for a composite look at Elementary Education. The EDI has been developed keeping in mind four broad parameters of access, infrastructure, teacher related indicators and outcomes. The index takes into account 22 variables for calculating EDI. These variables are for Access (Percentage of habitations not Served, Availability of Schools per 1000 Population), Infrastructure (Average Student-Classroom Ratio, School with Student-Classroom Ratio greater > 60, School without Drinking Water Facilities, School with Boy's Toilet, School with Girl's Toilet), Teachers (Percentage of Female Teachers, Pupil-Teacher Ratio, School with Pupil Teacher Ratio > 60, Single- Teacher Schools (in schools with more than 15 students), Percentage of Schools with 3 or less Teachers, Teachers without Professional Qualification), Outcomes (Gross Enrolment Ratio –

Overall, Scheduled Castes: Gross Enrolment Ratio, Scheduled Tribes: Gross Enrolment Ratio, Gender Parity Index in Enrolment, Repetition Rate, Drop-out Rate, Ratio of Exit class over Class 1 Enrolment (Primary stage only), Percentage of Passed Children to Total Enrolment, Percentage of Appeared Children passing with 60 per cent and above Marks). At the global level India falls in the group of low EDI countries with a rank of 100 and having EDI of 0.789.

The above analysis indicates towards the fact that although in last 50 years of post independence India, there has been significant growth in infrastructure of primary and middle level education leading to large number of children receiving elementary education, however there appears to be a major chunk of population so far still to be reached so the Government of India has undertaken a number of initiatives and measures to widen the educational network, increase GER and GPI and reduce the dropout rate. The detail of these initiatives follows.

4. Initiatives by Government in Elementary Education

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is an effort to universalise elementary education (UEE) with community-ownership of the school system. It is a response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country and seeks to ensure supervision with accountability to the local community for the elementary school system in the country. The SSA covers all the States and Union Territories and reaches out to 19.4 crore children in 12.3 lakh habitations. In order to ensure that the priority to UEE is translated into action, the organisational set-up and the monitoring structure draw their authority from the highest political levels in the country. The Prime Minister of India heads the National Mission for SSA which monitors the progress made under the SSA. The Executive Committee of the National Mission is chaired by the Minister for Human Resource Development. Six Sub-Missions have been constituted by the National Mission to function as review and support mechanisms for SSA implementation. They are in the areas of:

- ❖ Provision of basic minimum conditions including physical infrastructure and teachers. Training of teachers and strengthening of academic support institutions (and other aspects of quality improvement).
- ❖ Defining learning outcomes and assessment/ monitoring of students' achievement levels.

- ❖ Capacity building for planning, management, monitoring and research/evaluation.
- ❖ Education of disadvantaged groups including girls, SC/ST/minorities/urban deprived children and disabled children.
- ❖ Social mobilisation, community involvement and role of PRIs.

Each Sub-Mission reviews the performance of States on the dimensions allocated to it. The Sub-Missions suggest and facilitate capacity building exercises that can be state-specific or in the nature of cross-state sharing workshops to promote best practices. Every school is encouraged to share all information, including the grants received, with the community. 50% of the SSA funds flow through the local bodies i.e. Village Education Committee (VEC), SMC or Parent Teacher Association, etc. The Goal of SSA are All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, Back-to-School' camp by 2005; Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010; Universal retention by 2010; and Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life. The major components of SSA are opening new schools; alternative schooling facilities for out-of-school children; sanction of School grant @ Rs.2000/- per annum; teacher grant @ Rs.500/- per teacher per year; Teaching Learning Equipment for new schools; school maintenance grant @ Rs.5000/- per annum; civil works; teachers for new schools and additional teachers in existing schools to improve teacher pupil ratios; inclusive education for children with special needs; in-service teacher training; Community participation & training; innovations/initiatives for SC, ST children; promotion of girls education & early childhood care and education/computer aided learning; free text books for SC, ST & girls; Remedial Teaching; and Decentralized academic resource centres at block and cluster level Monitoring, Evaluation and research.

The major achievements of SSA programme have been: 94% of the rural population has a school within 1km; 181169 new schools opened till Nov. 2006; Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) opened for all other habitations without a school within one Km. radius; 99-100% universal access at primary level achieved; GER rises in the 6-14 age group to 108.56 in 2004- 05 from 96.30 in 2001-02 at the primary level and to 70.51 from 52.09 at the upper primary level; GPI improves from 0.89 in 2002-03 to 0.92 in 2005-06; Dropout Rate at the primary level Reduced by 10.54% to 28.49% in 2004-05 from 39.03% (2001-02); Dropout rate for girls declines by 15.08%

points; Pupil-Teacher Ratio Improves to 36:1 in 2005-06 at elementary level; and 7.38 lakh teachers recruited by December 2006.

Educational Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative & Innovative Education (AIE)

EGS & AIE supports diversified strategies for 'out of school' children: i.e. Children in remote, school-less habitations, for children who migrate, Bridge Courses/Back to school camps, Long duration residential camps for older out of school children, Remedial teaching, Short duration summer camps or schools. Under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS), educational facilities are set up in habitations that do not have a primary school within a distance of 1 km. Any habitation having 25 out-of-school children in the 6-14 age group (15 in the case of hilly & desert areas and tribal hamlets) is eligible to have an EGS centre. Formal curriculum is taught in EGS centres and all enrolled children are provided free textbooks and mid day meal. The EGS centre is managed by the local community bodies viz. PTA, VEC or the Gram Panchayats.

Till March 2006, 55196 EGS centres have been upgraded to primary schools. In 2005-06 over 1.11 lakh EGS centres provided educational facilities to cover 40.42 lakh children. For 2006-2007, the number of children to be covered under EGS is 47.71 lakh. Under the AIE component, flexible strategies are being implemented for education of children who cannot be directly enrolled in a school/ EGS centre. The strategies include residential and non-residential bridge courses, back to school camps, seasonal hostels, drop-in centres and other alternative schools. AIE has been more effective in providing education to the older age group (11-14 years) never enrolled or dropout children, children who migrate seasonally with their families, street and other deprived urban children, working children and other vulnerable children in difficult circumstances. In 2005-06, over 30.78 lakh children benefited under AIE facilities of SSA. For 2006-2007, the total number of children targeted for coverage under AIE is 56.11 lakh.

Till March 2006, 111416 EGS (primary) centres were functioning, 4042239 children have been enrolled. For 2006-07, 100654 EGS centres have been sanctioned for 4771395 children. These centres are upgraded to primary schools if they run successfully for 2 years. Accordingly 85924 EGS centres have been upgraded into primary schools till 31st December 2006 (15428 in Bihar & 13303 in Rajasthan). Enrolment in EGS centres reduced to 24.1 lakhs by December 2006, as more and more children mainstreamed to regular schools or EGS centres which got upgraded to primary schools.

Inclusive Education

The key objective of SSA is Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). Three important aspects of UEE are *access, enrolment* and *retention* of all children in 6-14 years of age. A zero rejection policy has been adopted under SSA, which ensures that every Child With Special Needs (CWSN), irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided meaningful and quality education. SSA provides up to Rs.1200/- per child for integration of disabled children, as per specific proposals, per year. The interventions under SSA for inclusive education are identification, functional and formal assessment, appropriate educational placement, preparation of Individualised Educational Plan, provision of aids and appliances, teacher training, resource support, removal of architectural barriers, monitoring and evaluation and a special focus on girls with special needs. These initiatives produced the following positive indicators:

Gross Enrolment Ratio (Primary) 108.56, boys 111.41; girls 105.48.

Gross Enrolment Ratio (Upper Primary) 70.51, boys 74.84; girls 65.76 (2004-05).

Primary girls enrolment increased by 19.8% from 2001-02 to 2004-05 at primary level and 13.67% from 2001-02 to 2004-05. The number of out-of-school children has come down from 3.2 crore in 2001 to 70 lakh in 2006-07.

Girls Education under SSA

SSA promotes girls education to equalize educational opportunities and eliminate gender disparities. SSA has made efforts to mainstream gender concerns in all the activities under the programme. A strategic shift has now been made in education planning, to target low female literacy pockets and reduce gender disparity. Special efforts to bring the out-of-school girls, especially from the disadvantaged sections, to the school are a focused strategy. A two-pronged gender strategy has therefore been adopted, to make the education system responsive to the needs of the girls through targeted interventions which serve as a pull factor to enhance access and retention of girls in schools and on the other hand, to generate a community demand for girls' education through training and mobilization. The targeted provision for girls under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan include: Free textbooks to all girls upto Class VIII; Separate toilets for girls; Back to school camps for out-of-school girls; Bridge courses for older girls; Recruitment of 50% women teachers; Early childhood care and Education centers in/ near schools; Convergence with ICDS programme ; Teachers' sensitization programmes to promote equitable learning opportunities; Gender-sensitive teaching-learning materials including textbooks Intensive community mobilization efforts; and Innovation fund per

district for need based interventions for ensuring girls' attendance and retention.

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

The NPEGEL, launched in September 2003, is an integral but distinct component of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. It provides additional provisions for enhancing the education of underprivileged/disadvantaged girls at elementary level through more intense community mobilisation, the development of model schools in clusters, gender sensitisation of teachers, development of gender sensitive learning materials, early child care and education facilities and provision of need-based incentives like escorts, stationery work books and uniforms etc. for girls. All Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) have been included under NPEGEL. The achievement of this programme are: 31,450 Model Schools developed; 1.97 lakh teachers gender sensitized in EBBs; Skill building for girls on diverse trades and life skills; 10,419 additional rooms constructed for being used as space for bridge courses, teacher training and skill building activities for girls; 9.33 lakh girls benefited from remedial teaching up to October 2006; 80,183 girls benefited through bridge courses (till October, 2006); and Free uniforms to about 2 crore girls in EBB blocks as a direct educational incentive. For 2006-07, NPEGEL coverage has expanded to 38,748 clusters in 3,122 blocks for which a fund of Rs. 813.36 crores has been allocated.

State Initiatives for Promoting Girls Education

UP: Meena Manch- Forum for adolescent girls to discuss their own issues and motivate girls to attend school.

Haryana: Bicycles are given to girls on joining class VI in a Govt. school located outside the village to prevent dropout at the end of class V and help girls to complete 8 years of schooling 16,171 girls in 2004-05 and more than 21,000 girls 2005-06 have benefited from the programme:

Uttar Pradesh: Intensive campaign for community mobilisation in selected villages; 21 days training of instructors; use of TLM; residential arrangement for girls and instructors; arrangements for sports, cultural programmes, life skills.

MP: Decentralised provisioning of additional incentives, e.g.: school uniforms, by the local bodies, to motivate girls' retention in schools.

Uttaranchal: Provisioning ECE in a convergent mode with ICDS; SSA supporting with additional TLM; capacity building; honorarium; constructing rooms in primary schools for running ECE centres; relocation of ICDS centres in/near primary schools; synchronized timings office and primary school

Orissa - Kalasi Ohana (carrying earthen vessel) - An initiative to mobilise the community and Mother Teacher Associations to monitor the

attendance of teachers and children, cleanliness of the school compound, regularity of classes being held. The designated mothers are also required to bring to school those children found to be absent by motivating their parents etc.

Bihar: Summer Camps for Remedial Teaching, provided to girls.

Madhya Pradesh: Open Learning for many girls who are unable to complete elementary education due to poor access. A tie up with State Open School where there is a 50:50 cost sharing between SSA & State Open School for the girls fees.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

KGBV, a girl's school scheme in the memory of Kasturba Gandhi, wife of Mahatma Gandhi, launched in July 2004, was designed to encourage greater participation of girls in education at the upper primary level. Under the scheme, 2075 residential schools at upper primary level have been sanctioned for girls belonging predominantly to SC, ST, OBC and minority communities in educationally backward blocks having high gender gaps and low female literacy. A minimum of three-fourths of the seats are reserved for girls from marginalized or minority communities and the remaining are made available to girls from families below the poverty line. 428 KGBVs have been set up in blocks having predominance of Muslim population and 441 in ST blocks. Up to Dec. 2006, 6400 (approx.) girls have been enrolled in 1039 KGBV schools opened of which 27% are SCs and 30% are STs. This scheme will be working as part of SSA w.e.f. 1.4.2007. The Government of India has sanctioned 1000 (March 07) KGBV schools. Thereby, 2180 EBBs will get covered with residential facilities for girls at upper primary level, as a direct measure to help girls continue and complete their elementary education up to class VIII. The outcome of initiatives are: Girls enrolment to total enrolment has increased by 8.67% at the primary level from 86.91% in 2001-02 to 105.48% by 2004-05; Reduction in dropout rate by 15.08% points from 39.9 in 2001-02 to 24.82% points in 2004-05; Gender and social differentials in learning achievements of pupils have also shown that the gender and social differences in achievement levels in Math and Language has been brought down to below 5%.

Prambhik Shiksha Kosh (Elementary Education Fund)

Prambhik Shiksha Kosh (Elementary Education Fund) was created in Public Account and approved by Government of India on 6th October 2005 for receiving the proceeds of education cess. A two per cent Education Cess was levied on all major Central taxes through the Finance (No. 2) Act, 2004, to help finance the Government's commitment to "quality basic education." The

amount under PSK would be non lapsable and would be spent exclusively on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All Programme) and Mid-Day-Meal (MDM) scheme.

A provision of Rs.8746 crores for the initial transfer to the newly created PSK has been made in the Union Budget 2006-07 against estimated receipts of Education Cess. During the year 2006-07, the Schemes of SSA and MDM were financed from PSK to the following extent:-

SSA	Rs. 5831 crores
MDM	Rs. 2915 crores

Mid Day Meal Programme (MDMP):

The MDMP undoubtedly exerts a positive influence on enrolment and attendance in schools. Hunger drains children of their will and ability to learn. A hungry child is less likely to attend school regularly. Chronic hunger delays or stops the physical and mental growth of children, and leads to malnutrition. A malnourished child finds it difficult to concentrate on and participate in teaching-learning activities in school. Apart from enhancing school attendance and child nutrition, mid-day meals have an important social value and foster equality. As children learn to sit together and share a common meal, there is erosion of caste prejudice and class inequality.

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme was originally launched as a Centrally Sponsored programme in August, 1995 to support universalization of primary education and to improve the nutritional status of children at primary stage. The programme was revised in September, 2004 to ensure provision of cooked mid-day meal of minimum 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein for children studying at primary level in government, local body and government-aided schools as also children studying in Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) Centres. To achieve this, an important component of assistance to States towards cooking cost was introduced.

The MDMP is critical to reduction of gender gap in education, since it enhances female school attendance. It is effective in:

1. Promoting school participation: Mid day meals have big effects on school participation, not just in terms of getting more children enrolled in the registers but also in terms of regular pupil attendance on a daily basis.

2. Preventing classroom hunger: Many children reach school with an empty stomach. Even children who have a meal before they leave for school get hungry by afternoon and are not able to concentrate, especially children from families who cannot give them a lunch box or are staying a long distance away from the school. Mid day meal can

help to overcome this problem by preventing "classroom hunger".

3. Facilitating the healthy growth of children: Mid day meal can also act as a regular source of "supplementary nutrition" for children, and facilitate their healthy growth. For instance, mid day meals rich in iron can help to prevent "anaemia", a widespread cause of weakness and poor growth among children.

4. Intrinsic educational value: A well-organised mid day meal can be used as an opportunity to impart various good habits to children (such as washing one's hands before and after eating), and to educate them about the importance of clean water, good hygiene and other related matters.

5. Fostering social equality: Mid day meal can help spread egalitarian values, as children from various social backgrounds learn to sit together and share a common meal. In particular, mid day meal can help to break the barriers of caste and class among school children.

6. Enhancing gender equity: The gender gap in school participation tends to narrow, as MDMS helps erode barriers that prevent girls from going to school.

7. Psychological Benefits: Physiological deprivation leads to low self-esteem, consequent insecurity, anxiety and stress. The MDMS can help address this and facilitate cognitive, emotional and social development.

Some of the highlights of the progress are as follows: The scheme reached out to 12 Crore children enrolled over 9.50 lakh schools/EGS centres; Management structures were set up with designated nodal officers / agencies at State, District, Block and School level; Centralized kitchens run by NGOs have come up mainly in urban areas; and The programme has generated employment opportunities, mostly for women of disadvantaged sections. The details of MDMP in all the states/ UTs is summarized in the **Table 4.1**

5. School Education

Having completed eight years of primary and middle schools, a child progresses to a secondary level of education that consists of two years of secondary and another two years of senior secondary schooling. Let us now see how successful has been the Indian institutional set up in providing secondary and senior secondary level education to its people in the last five decades. Before analyzing the senior secondary/ secondary school education setup and its achievements in detail, what follows here is the highlights of prevailing situation in secondary/ senior secondary school level.

Secondary/Senior Secondary Schools: 152049

School Management (Government & Local body):
41.05%
Teachers (Female): 2083000 (801000)
Pupil-teacher Ratio: 33
Female Teachers per 100 male teachers: 63

Total Enrolment in Millions (Girls):
33371171 (15388506)
Gross Enrolment Ratio (Girls): 39.91 (35.05)
Gender Parity Index: 0.79
Dropout Rate (Girls): 61.92 (63.88)

Table 4.1
Mid day Meal Programme

SN	States	Children Covered	Food Grain Allocated (in MT)	Cooking Cost	Transport Subsidy	MME @ 1.8%	Kitchen Sheds @ 6000/ per unit	Kitchen Devices @ 5000/ per unit
1	Andhra Pradesh	6700878	131002.17	16289.84	400.55	135.9	5993.61	1164.08
2	Bihar	13493393	248029.83	21876.75	11.81	256.26	5591.75	838.97
3	Chhattisgarh	3104473	69222.56	8668.74	153.36	98.67	1940.68	525.98
4	Goa	67686	1317.51	84.14	3.29	2.37	0	15.84
5	Gujarat	5392225	75470.66	8782.18	274.72	177.3	2201.16	525.5
6	Haryana	1872490	32895.18	2801.83	59.06	84.7	1109.69	155.89
7	Himachal Pradesh	555378	11424.13	1206.14	104.97	6.14	0	177.3
8	Jammu & Kashmir	1093617	18757.93	1147.29	0	63.2	0	262.71
9	Jharkhand	4280489	84905.33	10097.31	455.13	108.35	1928.94	351.69
10	Karnataka	4653694	96517.61	12282.26	849.24	317.88	3346.81	720.05
11	Kerala	2281187	32308.22	4248.07	19.45	51.18	157.15	73.65
12	Madhya Pradesh	9425240	188693.84	23508.25	847.81	314.48	8093.88	1359.87
13	Maharashtra	9258736	164135.22	20032.34	1126.88	368.32	0	995.91
14	Orissa	5002269	91938.2	11681.42	502.99	197.27	5257.53	806.7
15	Punjab	1488412	29401.81	1964.7	75.23	75.2	1592.39	217.37
16	Rajasthan	7696898	133312.81	15285.46	255.93	349.51	2816.18	339.33
17	Tamilnadu	4875103	73115.37	9122.8	204.03	74.76	159.1	406.17
18	Uttaranchal	795423	14535.96	1796.72	0	6.99	1450.52	198
19	Uttar Pradesh	18719628	281543.2	36584	3966.69	812.78	7985.41	1473.28
20	West Bengal	10879355	174499.36	20397.56	681.9	280.07	0	936.7
	Total	111636574	1953026.9	227857.8	9993.04	3781.33	49624.8	11544.99
NE States								
21	Arunachal Pradesh	252589	4558.7	261.37	0	11.7	707.27	63.89
22	Assam	4700623	78617.92	6277.43	55.86	98.81	5533.76	883.28
23	Manipur	299859	5665.84	400.48	0	11.72	0	72.85
24	Meghalaya	627596	10543.61	659.73	28.16	26.56	0	72.48
25	Mizoram	123872	1624.98	107.2	8.34	2.83	112.45	36.34
26	Nagaland	175689	3541.4	100	20.01	12.4	322.44	49.93
27	Sikkim	101670	1960.7	39.4	0	0.79	147.23	22.32
28	Tripura	544185	10787.04	741	0	16.42	177.05	98.91
	Total	6826083	117300.18	8586.61	112.37	181.22	7000.2	1300
Uts with legislature								
29	Delhi	1144712	19579.14	0	0	9.17	0	112.1
30	Pondicherry	55200	879.54	63.34	0	1.77	0	15.4
	Total	1199912	20458.68	63.34	0	10.94	0	127.5
Uts without legislature								
31	A&N islands	31704	668.25	38.88	0	1.29	0	6.35
32	Chandigarh	65000	1228.66	77.03	0	3.86	0	2.28
33	D&N Haveli	32251	610.2	0	0	1.88	59.57	4.09
34	Daman & Diu	27800	302.94	0	0	0.18	15.43	1.62

35	Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0	0.4	0	0.66
	Total	156755	2810.05	115.91	0	7.59	75	15
	Grand Total	119819324	2093595.8	236623.66	10105.41	3981.09	56700	12987.49

Source: Annual Report 2006-07, Department of School education & Literacy and Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2007). Delhi: Government of India.

According to Table 5.1, there has been a steady rise in the number of schools with 7416 schools in 1950-51 to 152049 schools in 2004-05 with an average decadal growth of 319.93%. Similarly, there has been an increase in the number of school teachers also from 127 thousand in 1950-51 to 2083 thousand in 2004-05 which has an average decadal increase of 257.32%. In initial 20 years of post independence period, the growth was 134% and 114% in 1960-61 and 1970-71 respectively for schools and 133.1 and 112.5% for number of teachers respectively. At the regional level, as is evident from Table 5.2, the state of Maharashtra has the highest number of secondary/senior secondary schools (18717) where as there are only 161 schools in Sikkim. However, Maharashtra does not have the maximum number of teachers, it is in fact Tamil Nadu which has the maximum number of teachers (142362) and 100% of them are trained. Of course the minimum number is again in Sikkim but only 51% of them are trained.

Yet another factor worth mentioning here is the gradual increase in the number of female teachers per 100 male teachers, as seen from Table 5.1, initially in 1950-51 there were only 19 female teachers per 100 male teachers which now happens to be 63 out of 100 male teachers. This points towards two major developments, firstly, there has been greater participation of women in provision of education over the years and secondly, more number of women are qualified and trained now as compared to that in the earlier years in post independence India, so they are able to shoulder this important responsibility of ensuring universalisation of school education. When we focus on enrolment, it is worth observing here that the states with maximum number of schools and teachers are incidentally not the ones with highest enrolment. It is in fact the northern state of UP which leads with 6357173 students having pupil-teacher ratio of 45. Considering these facts, one can state that a large state like UP needs to focus on setting up of wider network of schools with more number of teachers in order to better cater to the educational requirements of its large population. When we compare this with the national level record, the scenario is quite disturbing because in 1950-51 it was 21 which have now risen to 33 in 2004-05. The reason for this could of course be linked to certain factors, one of the important being rising population and need for more teachers in

order to reduce this ratio and ensure better quality education to the students by greater teacher-student interaction.

The next dimension to be analysed here is GER which is 39.91 at the national level for all category wherein the state of Himachal Pradesh (HP) has the highest value of 131.26 and Jharkhand has the lowest with 14.8. For girls and boys it is once again HP with highest GER i.e. 126.56 and 135.69 respectively. In the category of SC and ST, the national level GER is 34.68 and 27.68 respectively while Maharashtra and UP at the state level have the highest GER of 73.15 and 75.23 respectively. The next factor that has been focused here is dropout ratio at this level of schooling. Although the state of UP tops the list with maximum enrollment but there is a marked fall in the number of the students actually completing this level of schooling. This state has dropout ratio of 43.77 in which girls stand at 48.99 and boys are at 40.49. There are of course other states which have much higher dropout ratio, highest being 83.06 in Bihar while Kerala is the state with the least dropout ratio of 7.15% and incidentally this state also happens to be one of the states with very high literacy rate of 93.19%. This indicates towards the fact that the people of Kerala have not only been actively acquiring basic education but have been equally aware towards completing senior school education. Besides, Kerala also has impressive GPI of 1.04 which directly points towards the fact that the state has been paying greater attention to provision of education to its female population. But this varies greatly in other states where states like Rajasthan and Bihar have GPI of only 0.48 which indicates towards a greater need for awareness generation amongst the people for educating the girls in the state.

The analysis here demonstrates the efforts taken by the conventional system of education to make quality educational facilities available to everyone in the country irrespective of their place, caste, creed, religion, gender and age. However considering the large size of the country and its vast population, it was deemed necessary to think of an alternative that would help in bridging the gap and reaching the people located at the remotest corners of the country. So in pursuit of further enhancing the reach and making education more easily accessible, steps were initiated by the Government of India to establish institutions at the school level that would provide learning opportunities through open and distance learning mode. So the initiative

was taken for establishing institutions of open and distance learning that would provide educational facilities at the school level. This led to the establishment of National Open School (NOS), re-named as National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) which had the status of being the apex body at the national level for promoting and disseminating education throughout the country.

This organization was also responsible for coordinating with the state governments towards establishment of open schools at the respective levels. These open schools have been proactive in developing and delivering educational facilities to the people by focusing on their needs and aspirations. What follows here is the analyses of how successful have been these

Table 5.1
Secondary / Senior Secondary Schools and Teachers

Year	Sec/SS	Male Teachers ('000)	Female Teachers ('000)	Total no. of Teachers ('000)	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Female/100 Male
1950-51	7416	107	20	127	21	19
1960-61	17329	234	62	296	25	27
1970-71	37051	474	155	629	25	33
1980-81	51573	669	257	926	27	38
1990-91	79796	917	417	1334	31	46
2000-01	126047	1184	577	1761	32	49
2004-05**	152049	1282	801	2083	33	63

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2007). Delhi: Government of India, Annual Report 2006-07, Department of School education & Literacy and Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2007). Delhi: Government of India.

Table 5.2
State wise Secondary / Senior Secondary Schools and Teachers

SN	State/ Uts	No. of Schools	Number of Teachers	% of trained Teachers	Female Teacher per 100 male teachers	Total enrollment	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
1	Andhra Pradesh	17710	43960	95	36	1465310	33
2	Arunachal Pradesh	214	1894	66	25	58537	31
3	Assam	5374	22909	29	40	556035	24
4	Bihar	3629	17720	96	14	504211	28
5	Chattisgarh	2670	19443	62	43	493864	25
6	Goa	445	1362	88	103	29021	21
7	Gujarat	7718	40245	99	40	1410269	35
8	Haryana	5222	35541	97	87	969329	27
9	Himachal Pradesh	2341	16654	98	61	339732	20
10	Jammu & Kashmir	1347	8322	66	54	138720	17
11	Jharkhand	1196	3873	100	110	76745	20
12	Karnataka	11818	16482	100	30	782665	47
13	Kerala	5402	38635	99	297	572801	15
14	Madhya Pradesh	8301	59710	79	118	929317	16
15	Maharashtra	18717	120427	99	42	5033059	42
16	Manipur	706	3075	40	80	70280	23
17	Meghalaya	711	995	36	118	15806	16
18	Mizoram	512	845	29	85	10283	12
19	Nagaland	379	1757	27	105	61384	35
20	Orissa	8661	16701	100	29	518480	31
21	Punjab	3980	38782	99	134	1139532	29
22	Rajasthan	10144	57701	94	44	1403357	24
23	Sikkim	161	419	51	57	7476	18
24	Tamil Nadu	9234	142362	100	152	4755815	33
25	Tripura	652	9199	39	53	229710	25

26	Uttar Pradesh	12766	139906	97	17	6357173	45
27	Uttaranchal	1855	22085	100	40	647361	29
28	West Bengal	7971	61795	85	41	3091433	50
29	A&N Islands	95	1882	49	95	39041	21
30	Chandigarh	118	2655	100	402	69974	26
31	D&N Haveli	22	71	100	115	2006	28
32	Daman & Diu	28	50	100	39	1766	35
33	Delhi	1712	49330	100	198	1495724	30
34	Lakshadweep	11	164	100	49	3624	22
35	Pondicherry	227	3161	96	116	91331	29
	TOTAL	152049	1000112	90	63	33371171	33

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2007). Delhi: Government of India, Annual Report 2006-07, Department of School education & Literacy and Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2007). Delhi: Government of India.

organizations in achieving the objective of “Education for All”.

6. National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), formerly National Open School (NOS), with approximately 1.5 million cumulative enrolment has emerged as the largest Open schooling organization in the world. NIOS initially started as a project on Open Schooling under Central Board of Secondary Education in 1978. But in 1989, it was established as National Open School (NOS) by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The nomenclature of this national level open school was changed to NIOS in July 2002. Keeping in view the diversified needs of the target groups, NIOS has been offering through Open and Distance Learning pre-degree level programmes ranging from basic education to senior secondary education together with a large number of vocational education courses. In 1990, the Government of India through a Gazette Notification vested in NIOS with the authority to examine and certify learners registered with it up to Pre-Degree level.

The NIOS, with international recognition and presence, provides access to sustainable and learner-centric quality school education, skill up-gradation and training through open and distance learning and ensures convergence of open schooling organizations, resulting in an inclusive learning society, human resource development, national integration and global understanding. It provides opportunities to interested learners by making available the following Courses/Programmes of Study:

- Open Basic Education (OBE) Programme: The objective of this programme is to provide an elementary education at three levels, i.e. for school drop outs and neo-literates, out of school learners through accredited agencies. It caters to the basic educational needs of children upto the age of 14 years, adolescents and adults at A, B and C levels that are equivalent to classes III, V and VIII of the formal school system i.e. OBE level A is equivalent to Classes I-III, level B is equivalent to Classes IV-V

and level C to Classes VI – VIII of the formal school system. This initiative of NIOS acts as an alternative educational programme which is equivalent to the Elementary Education programme of the formal education system launched as a part of “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan” by the MHRD, Government of India so as to provide Basic Education to all children, youths and adults of the country. For implementation of OBE programme, the NIOS has partnership with about 339 Agencies in different States providing facilities at their accredited OBE centres. It is a sort of academic input relationship with partner agencies. The NIOS provides resource support, such as adaptation of NIOS model curricula, study materials, joint certification, orientation of Resource Persons and popularisation of OBE, to the voluntary agencies and Zila Saksharta Samities (ZSSs) for implementation of its OBE programme. So far, 169632 learners have been certified under the OBE programme through accredited OBE centres. The Table 6.1 below shows the gradual increase in the number of certified students in this programme and as is evident, there were a total of 12888 students in 2006, out of which there were 62.59% females and 35.41% males.

- Secondary Education Course: This Course is equivalent to the 10th class of formal system. A student can choose subjects from the Scheme of Studies, however, he/she will be required to successfully complete a minimum of five subjects, which is compulsory for certification.
- Senior Secondary Education Course: This Course is designed for those who have passed the 10th class or equivalent examination and would like to continue their education towards a Senior Secondary Certification, equivalent to 12th class. Similar to the 10th class scheme of study, a student can choose subjects from the Scheme of Studies however, he/she will be required to successfully complete a

minimum of five subjects, which is compulsory for Certification.

- Vocational Education Courses/ Programmes: These programmes have been classified as stand-alone, package, six month and one year courses and they are of various natures offered for students of different levels i.e. secondary and senior secondary levels. These programmes focus on providing skills of varied kinds and discipline such as library science, radiography, rural technology, computer applications, rural health, plumbing,

tailoring, carpentry, bio-gas technology, food processing, poultry farming, etc.

- Life Enrichment Programmes: Besides, the programmes mentioned above, NIOS has been also providing some general programmes on Yoga, public health, Indian culture and heritage, etc.

Analysis of Contribution made by NIOS towards Universalization of Education

What follows here is an attempt to analyze the

Table 6.1
Open Basic Education (OBE) Certification

Year	A level			B level			C Level			Total		
	Total	% Male	% Female	Total	% Male	% Female	Total	% Male	% Female	Total	% Male	% Female
2001	2996	38	61.98	734	45.91	54.09	271	62.36	37.64	4001	41.11	58.89
2002	11048	35.3	64.71	4345	46.01	53.99	1022	61.94	38.06	16415	39.79	60.21
2003	14686	28.8	71.2	6391	46	54	4919	62	38	25996	39.31	60.69
2004	35138	31.3	68.7	13157	46.33	53.67	14571	63	37	62866	41.8	58.2
2005	46649	24.4	75.62	510	39.8	60.2	307	54.07	45.93	47466	24.74	75.26
2006	10065	30	70	1375	44.65	55.35	1448	64.3	35.7	12888	35.41	64.59
Total	120582	31.3	68.7	26512	44.79	55.21	22538	61.28	38.72	169632	37.03	62.97

Source: National Consortium for Open Schooling. Retrieved on November 25, 2007 from <http://www.nios.ac.in/ncos.htm>, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS): Precise Information. Retrieved on November 25, 2007 from <http://www.nios.ac.in/obe.htm>

Table 6.2
School Education through ODL Mode

SN	States / Uts	NIOS						
		Secondary	HS	Total Enrollment 2006-07	Regional Center	Total Institutions including OBE	No. of OBE Centers	State Open Schools
1	Andhra Pradesh	678	2822	3500	1	150	10	1
2	Arunachal Pradesh	235	618	853		15	0	
3	Assam	9397	3635	13032	1	23	1	
4	Bihar	2191	470	2661	1	181	32	
5	Chhattisgarh	2442	845	3287		27	2	
6	Goa	1359	770	2129		16	1	
7	Gujarat	8992	5479	14471		39	8	
8	Haryana	1063	763	1826		264	31	1
9	Himachal Pradesh	1394	1373	2767		88	2	
10	Jammu & Kashmir	5494	3970	9464		33	3	1
11	Jharkhand	1360	31	1391		90	8	
12	Karnataka	2473	1049	3522		47	12	1
13	Kerala	402	265	667	1	145	12	1
14	Madhya Pradesh	2023	871	2894	1	153	15	1
15	Maharashtra	2261	1090	3351	1	188	17	
16	Manipur	3	30	33		49	1	
17	Meghalaya	27861	24479	52340		9	0	
18	Mizoram	4491	10287	14778		11	0	
19	Nagaland	423	678	1101		17	0	

20	Orissa	7299	1754	9053	1	59	8	
21	Punjab	940	435	1375		74	3	1
22	Rajasthan	1558	2624	4182	1	127	46	1
23	Sikkim	255	279	534		8	0	
24	Tamil Nadu	1	4	5		112	45	1
25	Tripura	37551	35266	72817		6	0	
26	Uttar Pradesh	610	436	1046	1	395	41	
27	Uttaranchal	5173	2515	7688	1	117	9	
28	West Bengal	3455	3948	7403	1	87	7	1
29	A&N Islands	1697	1084	2781		10	0	
30	Chandigarh	14218	13685	27903	1	17	2	
31	D&N Haveli	6408	4981	11389			-	
32	Daman & Diu	3892	1552	5444		1	0	
33	Delhi	765	548	1313	1	444	22	1
34	Lakshadweep						-	
35	Pondicherry					5	1	
	Miscellaneous	2427	1556	3983	13	187	-	11

Source: National Consortium for Open Schooling. Retrieved on November 25, 2007 from <http://www.nios.ac.in/ncos.htm>, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS): Precise Information. Retrieved on November 25, 2007 from <http://www.nios.ac.in/obe.htm>

Table 6.3
State Open Schools in India

SN	State/Uts	Year of Establishment	SOS Status	Courses on offer	Enrollment			Study Centers		
					OBE	Secondary	Sr. Sec.	OBE	Secondary	Sr.Sec.
1	Andhra Pradesh	1991	Autonomous Registered Society	OBE, Secondary	9822	13916	-	3216	199	-
2	Karnataka	1996	Private Trust	Secondary	-	1705	-	-	56	-
3	Tamil Nadu	1982	Integral part of DTERT							
4	Madhya Pradesh	1996	Registered Society	OBE, Secondary, Sr. Sec.		15672	46145	12	195	195
5	Punjab	1991	Branch of Punjab School Education Board	Secondary, Sr. Sec	-	17195	-	-	260	75
6	Jammu & Kashmir	2001	Part of Board of Secondary Education							
7	Delhi	2005	Autonomous Registered Society							
8	Kerala	1999	Wing of SCERT	Secondary	-	4605	-	-	70	-
9	Rajasthan	2005	Autonomous Registered Society	Secondary	-	38298	-	-	32	-
10	Haryana	1994	Part of State Board of School Education	Secondary, Sr. Sec	-	13916	12388	-	25	25
11	West Bengal	1997	Part of School Education Dept.	OBE, Secondary, Sr. Sec.		15328	1242	538	125	44

Source: National Consortium for Open Schooling. Retrieved on November 25, 2007 from <http://www.nios.ac.in/ncos.htm>, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS): Precise Information. Retrieved on November 25, 2007 from <http://www.nios.ac.in/obe.htm>, State Open Schools. Retrieved on November 25, 2007 from <http://www.nios.ac.in/sos1.htm>

educational milestones reached so far by NIOS towards universalization of education in India and

thus, assess how far NIOS as a distance education institution has been successful in implementation of

right to education. Since its establishment in 1990-91, with the modest start of 40000 enrolment, the learner strength has increased to 290983 in 2006-07. On analysis of distribution of enrollment and educational infrastructure of NIOS in the country, it is seen that maximum enrollment is observed in the state of Tripura both in secondary and senior secondary education as 37551 and 35266 respectively in 2006-07. NIOS is disseminating education through a large network of 13 regional centers covering a total network of 3194 accredited institutions (AI), accredited vocational institutions (AVI) and accredited agencies (AA) for OBE. Out of these 3194 institutions/agencies, there are 341 AAs which cater to OBE. The last five years' cumulative enrollment has been 1395322 for academic and 113273 for vocational programmes.

Although over the last one and a half decades, NIOS has emerged as the world's largest open school and has made significant contribution in providing basic school education to a large number of children up to 14 years of age and also to adult learners. But here it needs to be understood that in a diverse multi-lingual and multi-cultural country like India, it is just not possible for NIOS as a single institution to cater to the regional requirements. Therefore, NIOS has evolved alternate model of State Open Schools (SOSs) and State Centre for Open Schooling (SCOS). So far, with active collaboration and support of NIOS, SOSs have been setup in 11 states of India details of which are given below in Table 6.3.

These SOSs have the prime role of extending the educational opportunities in their regions in regional medium. As is evident from the Table 6.3, the southern state of Andhra Pradesh (AP) has been most successful so far in reaching the un-reached with highest cumulative enrollment of 603119 in a span of seven years (1998-2004) and out of this, 496762 i.e. 82.36% have been enrolled in Open Basic Education (OBE) programme. This is followed by Madhya Pradesh (MP) which has a total of 355374 students with 240708 pupils enrolled for secondary programme.

Although this number is not that significant as compared to the enrollment of the students at this level through conventional mode, which is 5524363 and 929317 in AP and MP respectively but considering the fact that these SOSs were setup in 1991 and 1996, so far they have made good progress towards their mission. The presence of SOSs in the eleven states and in developing stage yet another eight states, signifies the vital role these have as DEIs in implementing the Right to Education for all. Similar initiatives also need to be taken by those States and UTs where SOSs are yet to be setup. With a task of such a large magnitude and time bound targets to achieve, it was considered appropriate to establish a forum under the NIOS which would further

systematize the collaboration and interaction between NIOS and SOSs. So the National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS) was launched in September 1997 with the major objective of sharing resources, expertise and experiences of NIOS with SOSs, providing professional, technical and academic support in establishing of SOSs/SCOS, designing of need specific curriculum and self instructional material, research and development, human resource development and management information system. The above analysis clearly shows that open and distance learning is playing a vital role for providing education both at the elementary as well as senior school level. Keeping in consideration the vast enrollment at the elementary level, gradually increasing drop out rate and widening gender parity, the need is to establish either separate open learning elementary educational setup or NIOS and SOSs should integrate their efforts both in backward and forward directions i.e. not only they should cater to schooling at secondary and higher secondary level but they should develop modalities for covering a larger segment of population at the elementary level where conventional education is facing greater challenges. The next segment of this paper focuses on the conventional setup of higher education and the contribution therein of ODLE mode in making higher education better accessible for the masses.

7. Higher Education in India and Open and Distance Learning

The growth in educational network at the school level has been accompanied by similar growth at the higher education level in the country. With the gradual increase in population, greater awareness towards acquiring higher degrees and higher demand for qualified human resources both in the public as well as private sector, the Government of India has been endeavouring to widen the system so as to cover those regions which have been so far lacking in higher education facilities and provide better quality educational facilities of international standards. The highlights of the present setup have been given below:

Higher education institutions: 13985
 College (G): 10377
 College (P): 3201
 Universities/Deemed to be Universities: 407
 Teachers: 471931
 Pupil-teacher Ratio: 25
 Total Enrollment in Millions (Girls):
 11777296 (4641576)
 Gross Enrollment Ratio (Girls): 9.97 (8.17)
 Gender Parity Index: 0.71

Over the last 50 years, India has witnessed tremendous growth and development in the field of higher education, with a modest start of total 605 institutions of higher learning i.e. 370 colleges of general education, 208 colleges of professional

education and 27 universities / deemed universities / institutions of national importance, it has reached to total number of 13985 institutions of higher learning in 2004-05 catering to over 11.7 million students. These institutions include 10377 colleges of general education, 3201 colleges of professional education and 407 universities/ deemed universities / institutions of national importance. These institutions together achieve a pupil-teacher ratio of 25 at the national level while have GPI of 0.71 for all the categories of population. However despite the overwhelming growth of higher educational institutions, the overall GER in the age group of 18-24 years stands at 9.97 at the national level. This shows that there is a greater need for more conventional mode of institutions or alternative mode of higher learning institutions or synergy of conventional and ODL mode of institutions so as to achieve the objective of universalization of higher education in India.

At the state level, the scenario of higher education shows that Maharashtra is the state

leading over all other states in growth and development of higher education. Except for colleges of general education, which is highest in Andhra Pradesh (1340), Maharashtra tops the list in colleges of professional education (450), universities (42), number of teachers (57937), and total enrollment (1534613) with a pupil-teacher ratio of 26, slightly more than the national level i.e. 25. The highest pupil-teacher ratio is observed in Delhi while least being 9, is observed in four states/UTs. If we look at the GER, we find that it is far below as compared to that in primary and secondary education. It is 9.97 in higher education as compared to 107.8 and 39.91 in primary and secondary school education respectively. Delhi is the state having the highest GER of 37.25, followed by Chandigarh which is 37.01. The GER in SC and ST category stands at 6.72 and 4.86 respectively while Manipur (13.66) and UP (24.36) are having highest GER in SC and ST categories.

**Table 7.1
Higher Education through ODL mode in India**

SN	States / Uts	IGNOU		O U s							DEIs				
		Enrollment	SC/PSC	Enrollment	Number	Programme	RC	SC	AC	Teaching	Enrollment	Number	SC	Programme	Teaching
1	Andhra Pradesh	15164	60	128391	1	25	29	200	5344	89	129102	11	249	377	140
2	Arunachal Pradesh	1178	10	0	0						0	0			
3	Assam	5941	57	0	1						2895	2	47	11	272
4	Bihar	33818	63	8484	1	22	0	7	452	6	400	2	4	5	67
5	Chhattisgarh	21551	22	0	1						1717	1		12	32
6	Goa		-	0	0						125	1			
7	Gujarat	16859	58	23058	1	40	3	250	979	39	63	1	-	-	4
8	Haryana	11444	25	0	0						72043	3	53	103	29
9	Himachal Pradesh	5923	37	0	0						33558	1	4	26	41
10	Jammu & Kashmir	11275	53	0	0						4270	2	5	11	9
11	Jharkhand	53549	27	0	0										
12	Karnataka	17014	58	33172	1	33	8	186	1050	63	1817	3	6	70	116
13	Kerala	10774	50								36448	4	82	57	609
14	Madhya Pradesh	9745	56	151353	1	77	11	1049	8000	36	3119	5	99	18	25
15	Maharashtra	13765	55	103255	1	78	10	1425	8949	39	70138	5	116	23	26
16	Manipur	2192	10												
17	Meghalaya	3032	54								9	1	3	5	
18	Mizoram	3384	20												
19	Nagaland	1610	8												
20	Orissa	18645	102								394	5	46	6	2
21	Punjab	21073									1686	2	42	43	249
22	Rajasthan	13623	50	10124	1	33	6	52	2465	30	746	3	622	126	55
23	Sikkim	1755	7												
24	Tamil Nadu	21909	115	9361	1	24	0	252	875	20	194089	8	245	413	301
25	Tripura	1885	32								638	1	2	4	63

26	Uttar Pradesh	28451	88	22172	1	38	0	65	885	11	2465	3	30	51	25
27	Uttaranchal	6749	20	-	1						-	1	0	5	3
28	West Bengal	25409	89	4441	1	8	1	121	2473	4	14084	5	36	11	22
29	A&N Islands	1768	8												
30	Chandigarh		-								14146	1	6	22	74
31	D&N Haveli		-												
32	Daman & Diu		-												
33	Delhi	65624	117								39152	2	7	12	78
34	Lakshadweep		-												
35	Pondicherry		-								14212	1	-	31	3
	Miscellaneous	3311	60												

Source: Information base on distance higher education in India, DEC, IGNOU (2004). New Delhi, India, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University. Retrieved on September 18, 2007 from <http://www.braou.ac.in>, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University. Retrieved on September 18, 2007 from <http://www.baou.org>, IGNOU (2003). Regional Services Division Information base 2003. New Delhi, India, IGNOU (2005). IGNOU Profile 2007. New Delhi, India, IGNOU (2007). IGNOU Vice Chancellor's Report 2007. New Delhi, Karnataka State Open University. Retrieved on September 18, 2007 from <http://www.ksoumysore.com/>, MP Bhoj Open University. Retrieved on September 18, 2007 from <http://www.bhojvirtualuniversity.com/>, Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University. Retrieved on September 18, 2007 from <http://www.ycmou.com>, Netaji Subhash Open University. Retrieved on September 18, 2007 from <http://www.wbnsou.com>, Tamil Nadu Open University. Retrieved on September 18, 2007 from <http://www.indiavarta.com/education/tamilnaduopenuniversity/index.asp>, U.P. Rajarshi Tandon Open University. Retrieved on September 18, 2007 from <http://www.uprtou.com>, Nalanda Open University. Retrieved on September 18, 2007 from <http://www.nalandaopenuniversity.com>.

The participation of girls in higher education stands at 39.41% of total enrollment in higher education, which is why the GPI at the national level is below 1 (0.71). Kerala is the state having the highest percent of girls in higher education i.e. 58.81 and the least being 19.97 in Orissa. This means that the girls are outnumbering boys in higher education in Kerala. The percentage of girls in higher education in SC and ST categories is 37.21 and 36.27% respectively. The states of Jammu & Kashmir (16.13%) and Orissa (8.33) have the lowest percentage of girls in higher education in SC and ST categories respectively while highest percentage of girls in SC and ST categories is observed only in UTs which are Pondicherry (51.41%) and A & N Islands (57.43%). The GPI for all the categories is 0.71 and it stands at 0.64 and 0.55 in SC and ST categories respectively. It is very interesting to note that Kerala is the only state in India having GPI of more than 1 in all the three categories i.e. 1.22 in all, 1.41 in SC and 1.01 ST categories.

The existence of very low GER and less than 1 GPI in higher education in the country gives a valid reason for establishment, expansion and growth of alternative mode of providing higher education. Thus is the presence of a network of one national Open University (OU) and 13 state open universities and over hundred distance education institutions (DEIs) providing quality higher education through ODL mode. A composite profile of distance education network is summarized in the Table 7.1 above.

The network of OUs and DEIs as shown above in the Table 7.1 reflects gradual growth and development of higher education in ODL mode. One national OU i.e. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) with the mandate of disseminating higher education nationwide and 13 State Open Universities (SOUs) along with over

100 DEIs are catering to the need of the people for higher education. With the small enrollment of 4528 in 1987, the student strength of IGNOU has increased to 468444 in 2006-07 and it has cumulative student strength of over 1.4 million. Currently with 129 academic programmes and approximately 1100 courses on offer, it is extending provision of higher education through 64 regional / sub-regional centers and 1621 study centers (SCs). Approximately 25 thousand academic counsellors are engaged in providing their services to the students through SCs. Till March 2007, a total of 731765 students were awarded degrees/diplomas/certificates by IGNOU.

The efforts of the IGNOU have been also supplemented by the open universities existing at the state level. They together with 68 regional centers and 3607 SCs and 31472 academic counsellors are providing access to higher education in their respective states. The SOU of the state of Madhya Pradesh, MPBOU, has the highest enrollment of 151353 while the SOU of Maharashtra, YCMOU, has the highest number of academic programmes on offer i.e. 78. On analyzing the contribution of DEIs which are located in the conventional universities / colleges, it is found that together with 1704 SCs, they are providing access to higher education in their respective states / areas of jurisdiction. The state of Tamil Nadu shows maximum enrollment through DEIs which is 194089.

Having discussed growth of educational facilities and its availability to the vast population of India and the various parameters of education such as educational infrastructure, trained teachers, pupil-teacher ratio, GER, GPI, drop out rate, etc, we find that access and equity to education and universalization of education in all the three segments i.e. elementary, secondary/senior secondary and higher education is still a major goal to be achieved by India. The following section

explores the various possible options / strategies that could be implemented in order to enhance the reach of education.

8. Future Strategies

Although significant progress has been made in India towards enhancing literacy in the country and universalization of basic education, but there still remains a lot to be accomplished in order to achieve the mission of 100% literacy along with increasing the enrollment of children in the schools and motivating them to complete the schooling, thus reducing the drop out ratio at various stages. Also what is needed is to generate awareness amongst the people especially in the rural and remote areas towards girl child education and in this process, women working in various social organizations can play an instrumental role in encouraging the mothers to send their girls to the schools. What is presently required is integration of conventional and ODL system so that both the systems can effectively share the resources and benefit from each other's expertise. The following suggestions are proposed as a part of creation of synergy of conventional and ODL Institutions towards achieving the objectives of Education for All.

- ❖ Share the facilities or infrastructure between conventional and ODL institutions at various locations where so far the concentration of schools is very low or where the setup does not exist.
- ❖ It should be mandatory for all the states and UTs to have State open schools with the primary responsibility of providing basic education.
- ❖ District level schools should act as the nodal body for coordinating between the educational centers at villages and the headquarters of the state open schools and they should be vested with the responsibility of monitoring the progress of these educational centers located at rural areas.
- ❖ Provision of mobile schooling for remote areas.
- ❖ ODL system has to be used for literacy mission and increase in the enrollment at the primary level and accordingly, state level primary ODL schools could be setup in the pattern of state open schools which would have the prime responsibility of enhancing literacy and providing basic school education. Similarly, state open schools should also be vested with the responsibility of providing elementary education and spreading literacy.
- ❖ Services of retired teachers can be taken in the rural areas where there is shortage of teaching staff, thus reducing the pupil-teacher ratio. Also region specific qualified and trained but unemployed youth could be involved in these

schools as they would be aware of the local problems and issues besides having knowledge of the local language so would be able to teach better the children of those remote areas.

- ❖ By improving working conditions of teachers and giving them suitable compensation, the teachers can be encouraged to take up positions in rural and remote areas. This could include providing good quality housing facilities, supplementary pay and allowances for being posted in rural and remote areas, better promotion prospects and development opportunities for these teachers.
- ❖ Public-private partnership should be encouraged by involving more number of private schools in the national literacy mission.
- ❖ Gender sensitization towards school education of girl child needs to be taken up.
- ❖ Encourage business houses to adopt sub-divisions/village level schools for infrastructure maintenance and provision of better facilities and this could be termed as School adoption programme as a part of fulfilment of their social responsibility.
- ❖ Involvement of the leading and reputed private school campus which are located at the rural areas to have ODL centers for people to get their children admitted for school education.
- ❖ Greater dependence on audiovisual aids for teaching purpose so as to encourage learning by doing and supplement face-to-face with audio-visual teaching.
- ❖ Promote investment in schools and primary learning centers by giving tax rebates or exemptions on such investments.
- ❖ Setting up of evening schools in the presently existing infrastructure which could be managed or given on contractual basis to the private organizations or semi-government or non-government organizations for managing them.

All these measures if implemented properly, could direct towards enhancing literacy, increasing GER, reducing gender disparity and decreasing dropout rate. Efforts should be aimed at bringing education and schools at the doorstep of the children rather pushing them to schools. No doubt, if efforts are taken with sincerity, commitment and zeal for success, this mission although is difficult but not impossible to achieve, for a country like India.

Key Definitions

1. Government – Includes both Central and State Governments, unless otherwise stated.
2. State - A state is an administrative division of India with its own elected local government. India is a federal republic of twenty-eight states.

3. Union Territory - A Union Territory is also an administrative division of India. These are ruled directly by the national government and are administered by the President through an Administrator appointed by him. There are seven Union territories in the country, however Delhi was made the National Capital Territory in 1991 and is on its way to statehood.
4. Local Bodies – Includes District Boards, Municipal Boards, Cantonment Boards, Town Area Committee, Panchayat Samities, Zila Parishads, etc.
5. Literacy - A literate in India is a person aged 7 and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language.
6. Adult literacy rate - Number of literate persons aged 15 and above, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. Different ways of defining and assessing literacy yield different results regarding the number of persons designated as literate.
7. Youth literacy rate - Number of literate persons aged 15 to 24, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group.
8. Pre-Primary School/Classes – Includes all Nursery, Kindergarten and other such schools/classes.
9. Higher Secondary Schools (10+2 Pattern) – All those schools after passing out from which, the students can be admitted in degree classes in Colleges/Universities.
10. Gross Enrolment Ratio- GER is defined as the percentage of enrolment in classes I-V and VI-VIII and/or I-VIII to the estimated child population in the age group 6 to below 11 years and 11 to below 14 years and/or 6 to 14 years respectively.
11. Gross Drop Out Rates - It is defined as the percentage of pupil who drop out from a given period or cycle or level of education in a given cycle/school years.
12. EDI – It is the composite index aimed at measuring overall progress towards EFA. At present, the EDI incorporates four of the most easily quantifiable EFA goals – universal primary education as measured by the net enrolment ratio, adult literacy as measured by the adult literacy rate, gender parity as measured by the gender-specific EFA index, and quality of education as measured by the survival rate to grade 5. Its value is the arithmetical mean of the observed values of these four indicators.
13. Scheduled Caste (SC) - These are special socio-economically backward communities of India who have been notified as Scheduled Castes as per provisions contained in Clause 1 of Article 341 of the Constitution of India.
14. Scheduled Tribe (ST) - These are special socio-economically backward communities of India who have been notified as Scheduled Tribes as per provisions contained in Clause 1 of Article 342 of the Constitution of India.
15. Lakh - Denomination for hundred thousand.
16. Crore - Denomination for ten million.
17. DISE - The information system covers eight years of schooling in all primary, upper primary and primary/ upper primary sections of the secondary and higher secondary schools. District is nodal point for collection, computerization, analysis and use of school level data.

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