Unit 17
Education: Expansion and Growth

Contents

Learning Objectives

Following the study of this unit, you should be able to:

- know about the growth of education through different ages;
- understand the limitations and strengths of the past systems of education;
- appreciate the growth of education in terms of its ability to reach the masses; and
- develop awareness about the recent trends that have led to the expansion of the educational scenario.

17.1 Introduction

In this unit we shall trace the growth of education in India and also study its expansion. As we know, growth refers to vertical increase while expansion usually connotes lateral enhancement with increased scope for accommodation as well as diversification into various forms and types. However, at the very beginning we would like to tell you that growth and expansion of an abstraction like education are closely interrelated processes and it is difficult to separate one from the other in a clear cut manner. In the first part of the unit we shall concentrate on the growth of education. Starting from the Vedic period, we shall trace the growth of education through the Buddhist, Mughal, and British period and thereafter we shall reach the post independence period. Thus we shall study under growth of education, the inception of formal education and the major changes it underwent to reach the present form. Our study of expansion of education will mainly deal with the enhancements in the ability of our educational system to include millions of aspirants, the expansion of physical facilities for imparting education and the emergence of diverse forms and types of education that has been taking place due to the rapidly expanding knowledge base resulting in new specialsed areas of knowledge. Thus, expansion of education has been taking place mainly in response to the rapidly changing socio-economic changes in modern India, and it is all the more true for the post independent period.

17.2 Growth of Education: A Historical Overview

As a process, education is as old as the progression of human race. Right from the time of evolution of human beings, education began in one form or the other. Knowledge and skills related to processes of fulfilling basic human needs, such as gathering food, hunting, covering the body, preparing tools, protecting oneself, etc. These were passed on from one generation to the next. Education during the early period was totally informal in nature; nevertheless it was bound by certain well-defined objectives. These objectives were to fulfill the immediate needs pertaining to bodily wants such as hunger, thirst, protection, etc. and enhance the level of comfort. Thereafter with the growth of civilization,

the need of formal education for the development of the individual as well as the society was realised and gradually education got institutionalized.

Education has not remained stagnant but with the passing of time, it has undergone great changes. We could say that education has grown considerably since the form in which it existed as testified to by the earliest records. Indian history dates back to the times of the Indus valley civilization. Following that there was the Vedic age and thereafter the Buddhist period. Then India passed through the medieval age and traveling through the Mughal period, it went under colonial rule for about two hundred years. After independence, growth as well as expansion of education has been by leaps and bounds unlike the slow progress made in the past and this has been a matter that concerns us the most. Therefore, the growth of education has been taken up beginning from historical to pre-independence to post independence periods.

The post independence period, which has witnessed the rapid growth of education, merely spans a period of fifty eight years. But the period before independence stretches back to thousands of years. The growth of education since the historical past shall be studied through its different periods, namely Vedic period, Buddhist period, Mughal period and finally the British period.

Vedic Period

Let us first study the educational system during the Vedic period. Differences in opinion exist as to the exact date of this period. According to some, it could have extended between 1500 and 500 BC. The contribution of this era towards the generation of knowledge and emphasis on learning is immense. It is claimed that during the early part of Vedic period, education was not restricted for the male members of society and women too got equal opportunities regarding education. Women scholars of this period like Vishvarava, Atreyi, Maitreyi, Gargi, Lopamudra and many others are a testimony to this. However, later on during this period education for women lost its popularity.

Education had started acquiring a formal nature during this period. Education was imparted at centers of learning called gurukuls, ashrams, parishads, etc. Young students were sent from home to the residential schools where they stayed with the guru (teacher) and his family. Education was imparted for years together. Teaching- learning started following an initiation process into the world of education called *upanayan*. Education during this period mainly aimed at achieving salvation. It aimed at balanced development of the pupils and their physical, moral, intellectual, social and cultural developments were taken care of (Singh, 1992) Taxila, Patliputra, Varanasi became some of the renowned seats of learning.

The teacher used to be an expert in both theory as well as practice. The teacher was highly revered for his knowledge and integrity. He was supposed to be the epitome of erudition, character, morality, righteousness and nobility. He was therefore considered to be the representative of God. He was wholly responsible for the education and general welfare of his students. Although the concept of *gurudakshina* (fees) was there but gurus or teachers taught not for the sake of money but because it was their sacred duty. Teaching was thus not an occupation in the strict sense but rather a duty discharged toward, society.

The students were supposed to be hard working and refrain from a life of luxury. They were also supposed to lead a life of chastity, be humble and be fully obedient to their teacher. The concept of working at the teacher's place, while learning prevailed in this period. This made the pupils not only educated but also adept in the skills required in day-to-day life. Education was individualised and each learner was well cared for by the teacher. They spent

their time in gaining knowledge and skills but also had to cultivate the teacher's land, tend his cattle, beg for alms and perform the tasks assigned to him by the teacher (Sharma 1992).

The curriculum was rich and diversified with components such as mathematics, languages, grammar, literature, warfare for the kshatriyas (warriors), administration, scriptures, astrology, astronomy, etc. Stress was laid on character development. Thus as underlined by Singh, (1992) education aimed at moral development, spiritual consciousness, and was also humanitarian with salvation as the ultimate destination. There were rigid rules to regulate the conduct of pupils. Theses rules pertained to hygiene, morality, religious performances, etc. The students following the initiation ceremony would put on the sacred thread and spend fourteen years away from their home in the seclusion of an ashram or gurukul (James and Mayhew 1988). Teaching – learning were mainly through oral activities. Listening, contemplating, internalizing, reciting were emphasised over reading and writing (Sharma 1992). Even the literature of the then popular language, Sanskrit has its origin in an oral tradition and gave rise to the holy texts of the Vedic era. Panini developed Sanskrit grammar and since then a lot of literary contributions were made such as the shastras, epics, lyric poetry, stylized drama, etc. (*Academic American Encyclopedia* 1983).

Education during this period was not for the masses but only for the elites of society. Only the members of the upper castes namely Ksatriayas and Brahmins were allowed to avail the opportunities regarding education. Women's education too did not receive its due share. The entire system of education was entrusted to the Brahmins. Education for the other classes was informal, unorganized and neglected. This was a drawback of the educational system prevailing then. However, the scholarly contributions made during this period are so rich that they have acquired the status of classics. Another important feature is that the students were like the members of the teacher's family and although the concept of *gurudakshina* i.e. fees happened to be there but knowledge was held to be too sacred to be commodified for sale and profit making.

Reflection and Action 17.1

Collect information about the curriculum and teaching methods of a *gurukul* of ancient India and compare it with that of modern times. According to you what are the strengths and weaknesses of the former over the latter.

Buddhist Period

About the sixth century BC, rigidities of Vedic rituals and sacrifices along with the overwhelming dominance of the Brahmins over the lower castes became responsible for the disenchantment of the masses with the prevailing system (*Encylopaedia Britannica* Online). Gautam Buddha, the great religious leader as well as social reformer preached non-violence and social equity. He vouched for a casteless society. As a result the social discrimination in the field of education that was prevalent in the Vedic period was challenged during this period and it was the first attempt towards providing education to the masses. During the Buddhist period education was institutionalized. Educational institutions enjoying great repute, as Takshashila, Nalanda and other flourished during this period. These institutions attracted students from several countries. Young children were admitted to these institutions and education was imparted for a fixed period of time as in modern times.

During this period *sanghs* came up that were the centers of all religious instructions and activities. Later on these *sanghs* emerged as the centers that were also involved in educational activities. The *gurukuls* and *ashrams* of the Vedic age were thus substituted during this period by institutionalized *sanghs* or monasteries. These institutions were akin to the universities of the modern world. During this period entrance tests were common in educational

institutions. Only those successful at these tests were allowed to avail of the educational services provided at these institutions. The number of students in educational institutions was quite high. There were thousands of students and teachers at these institutions. Therefore, Buddhist educational institutions had a wide perspective. This was a step forward from the individualised and exclusive functioning of the *gurukuls* of the Vedic period. The educational institutions of this period being open to all sections of society were more inclusive in nature and had a collective participation.

In order that the common man did not have to grapple with the complexities of Sanskrit, which was the medium of educational and literary activities earlier, the languages commonly used, Pali and Prakrit, were resorted to. In spite of marked differences between the educational systems of the Vedic and Buddhist periods, the curriculum followed in the latter period still reflected a continuation of that of the Vedic period. Dharma or religion was the main curricular component at the monasteries. The curriculum included components such as theology, philosophy, literature, astronomy, administration, etc. Professional studies like medicine, surgery, etc. were also carried out in these institutions (Sharma 1992).

Education was imparted following the payment of fees by the students. This was the beginning of education becoming a paid service. As in the Vedic period the students were supposed to observe celibacy and be fully obedient and respectful towards their teachers. Just as the Brahmins were in charge of imparting education in the Vedic period, during this period, the monks at the monasteries were in charge of it. The monks were celibates and spent their time in prayer, meditation, and studies (*Academic American Encyclopedia* 1983). Huen Tsang, (quoted by Sharma 1992) had recorded that thousands of priests who were men of highest abilities and talent, with great distinctions and whose conduct was pure, sincerely followed the moral law. They spent their time in discourses. Thus the teachers of this period as in the Vedic period were revered in society because they were persons of character and erudition.

We thus see that during the Buddhist period the first attempts were made to impart education to the masses. There was greater social equity in imparting education. However, the education of women did not receive its due importance and the educational scenario continued to be dominated by men. The Buddhist period did not last in India and became popular abroad. For 500 years from the 4th century AD to the close of the 8th century, during the reign of the Gupta dynasty and its successors, there was a remarkable advancement in several areas. The rulers patronized scholars and remarkable contributions were made in different areas such as science, mathematics, astronomy, art, literature, etc. (*Encylopaedia Britannica* Online).

Reflection and Action 17.2

State some educational contributions that had been made during the Vedic times. What are the similarities in the educational system of the Buddhists and the Vedic period?

Medieval period

This period can be traced back to about the twelfth century AD. Muslim invaders repeatedly invaded during this period and it resulted in Islam taking firm roots in India. Political instability due to repeated invasions and aggressions adversely affected the existing educational system. During this period the education system underwent far-reaching changes. Madrasas and *makhtabs* were opened to impart education. The madrasas, which in Arabic mean 'schools', were the institutions of higher learning. They function even today as theological seminaries and Islamic law schools. The curriculum would be centered on the study of the Quran, hadith, Arabian grammar, logic, languages,

etc. The study of Islamic jurisprudence was stressed. The *makhtabs* were Muslim elementary schools that made the students competent to read the religious texts. Elementary knowledge of writing, grammar, etc. was also imparted to the young children (Srivastava1989). Instructions were imparted mainly orally in *makhtabs* and madrasas. Memorisation of Islamic texts was emphasised. The wealthy people of the society would fund these educational institutions.

Theological considerations dominated educational institutions like madrasas and *makhtabs*. Education during this period is said to have had an excessive theological bias. This was probably due to the bias of the rulers who patronized education during this period and the ulema, who controlled the educational scenario, towards theological aspects. The emphasis was thus on religious issues although the main goal was to do away with illiteracy and advance knowledge. This trend resulted in nurturing madrasas that were essentially schools of theology with auxiliary linguistic studies. These institutions provided a steady supply of quazis, muftis, and other experts in jurisprudence and administration for the state (Srivastava, 1989).

During medieval India too poets, scholars and philosophers were greatly respected and patronized by the rulers and some from abroad visited India. During the times of Firozshah Tughlaq and Sikandar Lodi special interest was taken in education and renowned madrasas as seats of higher learning were opened. Thereafter the Mughal period started in India with Babar as the first Mughal emperor. The Mughal period extended from the early part of the 16th century and extended till the middle of the nineteenth century. The Mughal emperors too were interested in providing education to their subjects. They patronized learned men and institutions of learning.

During the Mughal period the credit for organising education on a systematic basis goes to Akbar. He opened a large number of schools and institutions of higher learning for both Hindus and Muslims (Encylopaedia Britannica Online). He even introduced certain curricular reforms. The curriculum emphasised, besides theological aspects, also the study of science, history, geometry, mathematics, etc. He also opened educational institutions for his Hindu subjects where Sanskrit, its grammar, Vedant, literature, etc., were taught. The need for moral education was also emphasised. During this period, many Hindus joined Islamic educational centers and learnt Persian since it was the language used for judicial purposes. Aurangzeb opened many madrasas and makhtabs and scholarships were paid in his time to the poor but deserving students (Singh 1992).

Box 17.1 : Expansion of Education during Mughal period

Art and architecture flourished during this phase and calligraphy was an important component of the curriculum during this period. Education was provided free of cost so that people from all classes of society could avail of it. Obedience towards teachers and respect for learned people still continued in this period as in the earlier periods. Institutions for imparting education to the Hindus continued to exist if not flourished and Sanskrit, literature, mathematics, etc. were taught in these institutions. Varanasi, Mithila and Mathura were some of the centers for higher learning for Hindus. Women's education continued to be neglected and was confined only to the women from the higher classes of society. Women from well to do Hindu and Muslim families were provided with educational facilities at their homes by tutors appointed by their families.

During the Moghal period even when it flourished and reached its peak, education was still not recognized as a tool for national development and the collapse of the Mughal empire brought with it the ruin of the educational system. Developments in science and literature both among Hindus and Muslims

had taken a back seat. There was almost moral anarchy as testified to by the acquisition of power by the British in Bengal and the subsequent conversion of India into a colony. It was more a phase of treason, treachery and open rivalry for power. This had started with the death of Aurangzeb and education as a system started losing its vigour towards the close of the eighteenth century (James and Mayhew 1988). What remained was an indigenous system of education with tols and madrasas imparting Hindu and Arabic education respectively. The infrastructure of the educational institutions that were usually single teacher schools was often poor and learning was mostly in the open. The notable change was that the role of teacher was no longer the monopoly of Brahmins all over India. In Bengal, for instance, members of other upper castes too taught in schools for hindu children. But in the institutions of higher learning Brahmins still continued as teachers. Education in this period mainly comprised the study of texts. Investigative studies, experimentation, scientific studies were not given importance. Since Persian remained the court language, many Hindu boys too learnt it. Mainly mathematics, grammar, literature, religious texts, languages, were taught. Illiteracy was widespread among the people belonging to the lower castes (Basu 1982).

Reflection and Action 17.3

Explain some of the educational achievements during the Mughal period.

British Period

The British period started with the decline of the Mughal empire in the middle of the eighteenth century. The missionaries from Europe had already started arriving in India to propagate Christianity and along with the British regime, they had an active role in shaping the educational system of this period. Warren Hastings was the first Governor General of India who recognised the duty of the government to provide education to its subjects. He founded and also endowed the Calcutta Madrasa, which happened to be the earliest educational institution to be set up by the British rulers. Soon after a Sanskrit College was established in Benaras by Jonathan Duncan, the then Resident in Benaras and it was also provided with substantial funds. A college for Hindu learning was also opened at Poona by Mountstuart Elphinstone. The newfound interest in the Oriental, especially Indian literature, sacred texts and other sources of knowledge, her history and culture, led to the revival and even encouragement of a learning system that had existed prior to the arrival of the British in India. As a result Hindu educational institutions and also institutions where Arabic learning was there were encouraged by the then British regime (James and Mayhew 1988).

This trend continued till the early part of the 19th century. The evangelicals, the liberals and the utilitarians questioned this early policy of encouraging Oriental education. They were all agreed that Indian society had to be reformed (Basu, 1982). The Christian missionaries had by then started taking an active interest in the education of the natives. English education was felt to be necessary by some of the evangelists to propagate Christianity and regenerate Indian society. Although their aim was to use education as a tool for achieving the evangelisation of the natives, the cause of education too was served. Schools and colleges were opened in the early part of the 19th century by Christian missionaries at Kolkata, Serampore, Chennai, Mumbai and other places. The continuing craze for admission to Christian convent schools and the desire for western education can be traced back to this period. The people from the upper classes and even the middle classes of Bengal and other places had started realizing that western education provided in these institutions was more useful as well as liberating than that provided at the pathshalas, tols, and madrasas. Social reformers and educationists had realized the need for taking the best from the west for the progress of the Indians. Even the social reformer,

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was in favour of imparting western education, especially its science education so as to liberate the minds of Indians and modernize them. Along with indophiles like David Hare and Sir Edward Hyde East, he opened the Hindu College at Calcutta in 1817 to impart modern education. In 1823, when the first Committee on Public Instructions was set up, he pleaded against the setting up of a Sanskrit school, which he felt would teach things that were 2000 years old. He requested that a liberal system of instruction that included mathematics, science, philosophy and other subjects that were more suitable in that period be started.

Macaulay's minutes of 1835 that laid the foundation of the modern education system along the patterns of the British model is often blamed for superimposing a western model of education on the structure of education that had evolved for thousands of years. His motives are also questioned and he is still accused that the education system that has been established on account of his minutes was intended to prepare clerks for the British rulers. He is also blamed for vouching for English and disregarding Indian science, literature and other knowledge existing in other disciplines and for deriding the prevailing knowledge as antiquated. But as mentioned earlier, before Macaulay's minutes, the missionaries had already established schools and colleges imparting modern education and even the Hindu College was opened in Kolkata. Indians had started desiring western education. Macaulay had argued that advancements in the field of education made by the west should not be withheld from the natives who are craving for it. Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy too had expressed such views (James and Mayhew 1988).

Box 17.2 : Attempts for Equitable Distribution of Education in Modern India

Wood's dispatch of 1854 is looked upon as a charter of educational privileges. It considered it as a sacred duty of the government to provide education to the Indians. It was felt the masses could be taught in their mother tongue but nevertheless the knowledge of English was required. The despatch also recommended a grants-in-aid system for educational institutions. It also made several recommendations to strengthen the system of education and make its access more equitable (Singh, 1992). After a long gap since the period of Nalanda, Taxila and other such institutions, following Wood's despatch, the first universities of modern India were opened in present day Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai. Hunter's Commission presented its report in 1882. It had recommended the careful withdrawal of the government from the field of higher education, and its being taken over by private enterprise while the state paid more attention to primary education. It also emphasised the moral side of education with strict discipline being maintained in educational institutions (James and Mayhew 1988).

In 1910 Gopal Krishna Gokhale mooted the idea of free and compulsory primary education for children all over the country. The plan was shelved at that point of time but its popularity and utility remain till today. During this period the need for teacher training and adult education were also expressed. One of the recommendations made by the Sadler Commission in 1917 stressed the need for substantial increase in the output of trained teachers. In 1920 the Central advisory Board of Education (CABE) was set up to advise the government on issues related to education. It was subsequently dissolved and set up again in 1935. The need for adult education was realized by the proponents of mass education. However till the early part of the last century not much attention had been paid to it. During 1937-39 the CABE committee stressed the need for adult education to be taken up on a wider scale and also suggested that voluntary organisations may also be involved in this cause. The Sargent Commission (1944) spelt out that the responsibility for providing adult education should be shouldered by the state. During this period Indians like Vivekananda,

Mahatma Gandhi, Gijubhai Bedeheka, Rabindra Nath Tagore were actively involved in the educational process. Not only did they start educational institutions but also based them upon philosophies that were more suited to the needs and culture of India. At the same time the curriculum could also respond to the needs of modern India.

Education in the colonial period was thus markedly different from which that prevailed in the past. In spite of two hundred years of British rule, the literacy rate was abysmally low. This was especially true for the socially and economically backward sections of the society. The dropout rate was high. The transition rates from one level of education to the next higher level were also very low. The social progression was not to the extent that people would feel the indispensability of formal education. Education was also removed from the socio- cultural requirements and was considered more suited to fulfill the demands of a regime that belonged to an alien culture. It has been stated by Raza (1991) that in the colonial period education, especially at the higher levels was concentrated in and around the cities of Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai where the British had constructed ports. Thus there was enclavisation of higher education. In comparison, the other areas were neglected. It is also alleged that spreading English education was not an act of selfless magnanimity but rather a ploy to further the interests of the British government by preparing a work force that was well versed in English and make the Indians feel that the British were not aliens. It is also alleged that education was too literal in approach and areas such as vocational education and technical education were neglected. Mass education was also neglected (Basu 1982).

However, there were also certain positive aspects. For the first time the goals of education and the curriculum reflected a pragmatic approach which was more in sync with modern times. Changes in the school curriculum, diversification of education, concepts like teacher education, mass education, free and compulsory education, adult education, etc. also came up. Above all the foundations of modern education were laid during this period. The education system, when it was being established did not make any attempt to withhold the advancements made in different fields in the west from the natives but rather encouraged them towards such learning.

> **Reflection and Action 17.4**
>
> What were the strengths of the education system prevailing during the British rule in India?

17.3 Growth of Education in the Post Independence Period

The educational system inherited from the British was fraught with serious problems such as extremely low literacy level, poor retention, abysmally low educational opportunities for the backward sections of society and women and so on. These problems needed to be addressed and the educational system needed to be transformed in a major way so that it could be the means for the transformation of a nation enslaved for centuries to a modern and developed nation. The first task was to expand the educational system so that it reached the millions, especially to those at the fringes of society. There was the need to initiate the eradication of illiteracy, vocationalise education and bring about other necessary reforms in the curriculum.

In order to facilitate the growth of education, experts had to be involved. Therefore several commissions and committees were set up. In1948 the first Education Commission of free India namely, University Education Commission, was set up to suggest reformative measures in the field of higher education.

Thereafter the Secondary Education Commission was set up in 1952 to strengthen the secondary education system. In 1966, the Indian Education Commission under the chairmanship of D.S. Kothari submitted a report that covered all aspects and level of education. It was rather a blueprint of reformative action for the entire educational system of India. It came up with a unique and integrated national system of education. (Singh 1992).Discussions and deliberations on these recommendations led to the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1968. As a result a uniform pattern of education, 10+2+3 system was initiated all over the country by 1975. In 1977 under the chairmanship of Dr. M.S. Adisheshaia, the National Review Committee reviewed the curriculum of the +2 Stage of school education and emphasised the need for vocationalisation of education. Thereafter NPE, 1986, was formulated and to implement it, the Programme of Action was also developed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). Meanwhile Operation Black Board was launched in 1985 to equip primary schools with the basic infrastructural facilities. In 1990, to further review the recommendations and implement NPE, 1986, Acharya Ramamurthy Committee submitted its report (Aggarwal 1992). Apart from all these, since independence there have been other commissions and committees too to strengthen the educational system and usher in effective reforms.

Growth of Education Facilitated by Constitutional Provisions

The Indian Constitution came into force in 1950, when India became a republic. The constitution has several provisions regarding education. Education was initially a state subject but following an amendment (42nd) to the Constitution in 1976, it became a concurrent subject. As a result both the center and the state can legislate on it. The center however mainly coordinates and monitors the functioning of the states in educational matters. At the center the MHRD, is entrusted with educational matters.

Among the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution, right to education too has now been included The Directive Principle of Dtate Policy, which earlier required the state to impart free and compulsory elementary education now requires the state to provide early childhood care and education. The Constitution has provisions that require the state to care for the educational interests of the backward sections of society and also promote with special care the educational interest of women. There are also provisions to uphold the educational rights of the linguistic and religious minorities. Besides, there is a provision that requires the medium of instruction to be the mother tongue at the primary level.

In order to fulfill the constitutional obligation regarding universal elementary education (UEE), programmes like the District Primary Education Programme had been launched. The latest attempt in this direction is through the Sarva *Shiksha Abhiyan* launched in 2000. Besides, there are several other programmes like *Janshala, Shiksha apke dwar*, etc. initiated by the local governments as well as non government organisations for achieving the target of UEE.

Growth of Literacy Rates

Ability to read, write and comprehend empowers people and also leads to gainful employment. Illiteracy is the greatest block in the path of socio-economic development. In the British period the need for the education of the masses was realised but not much was achieved. Soon after independence, in 1951 the literacy rate was a mere 18.33% with only 8.86% literacy among women. It was realised that literacy leads to awareness about rights and duties. Enhancing literacy was also felt to be the most effective tool for arresting the population explosion. Therefore, a campaign was started to provide education to the masses and especially to the deprived sections of society. Eradicating illiteracy from a vast country like India with over a billion people,

geographically remote places, and years of neglect and backwardness has not been very easy. Hence the National Literacy Mission was set up in 1988 to take up earnestly the cause of adult education. The results have been, if not very encouraging at least better than that made on this front in the colonial period. In 1991 the literacy rate was a little over 52% but in 2001 the literacy rate stood at 65.38%. Thus about 13% gain had been made in the literacy rate during the last decade and the goal of achieving 75% threshold literacy rate appears to be achievable. Another achievement has been in the field of female literacy. Even in 1991 female literacy was only 39.42% but in 2001 it was 53.7%. Also as per the 2001 census report the rural-urban gap in literacy has come down from 31% in1991 to 21.7%.

Reflection and Action 17.5

Explain the education scenario immediately preceding the British period. Elaborate the gains in terms of the literacy rates of the Indian population since independence.

Thus we see that since independence in the last five decades there has been significant growth in education in comparison to the British period. However, literacy merely refers to the ability to read, write and comprehend and is only a small achievement when a comprehensive term like education is considered but nevertheless attainment of literacy is the first step in all future educational attainments. Therefore, eradication of illiteracy is the prime necessity for any sort of educational growth.

In spite of great efforts being made to achieve UEE, we are still far from achieving it. Deadlines had been fixed for achieving it but they have been missed. The greatest impediment to educational growth has been the poor retention rate in primary schools. There has been a sustained campaign for UEE and as a result there have been great achievements in terms of enrolment. But the number of children dropping out is enormous. Therefore, the high enrolment ratio is unable to take us anywhere near the achievement of UEE. In spite of the enrolment ratio being as high as about 97%, the dropout rate is 36.3% in grades I-V, which means one third of the children enrolled drop out. It is still higher at 53% in grades V- VIII. Thus we see that poor retention is impeding the achievement of UEE. Enrolment as well as retention are all the more in a dismal state when it comes to the weaker sections of society namely the backward communities and female members. These are some of the factors that are slowing down educational growth.

17.4 Expansion of Education

We have already discussed that growth and expansion of education are closely interrelated terms. The ability of the education system to expand or reach out to all sections of society is increasing. Earlier education was the privilege enjoyed by the elite. But after independence it was realised that human resource development cannot ignore large sections of society and the education system has to be such that it can accommodate the masses. Hence efforts are being made to reach out and raise enrolment at different levels of education. For this educational facilities are being increased. Special attention is also being paid to the education of women and backward sections of society. Alternative means of providing education are also being explored. At the same time there is an ongoing diversification of educational streams due to changing social needs and expansion of knowledge base. Let us study some of the aspects leading to expansion of education.

Expansion of Education in Terms of Enrolment

In 1951 the population was just 36 crores. The literacy rate of 18% indicates the restricted access to educational opportunities. Today the population has

more than tripled but that the literacy rate having crossed 65% indicates that the scope of the educational system has widened. In 1951 only 27% of males and 8.86 % of females were literate but today 75% of males and about 53% of females are literate. Enrolment at the lower primary level is about 109 million and in the upper primary level it is about 40 million. There are about 1.705 million and 1.082 million teachers respectively at these levels (Gopalan, 1998). The enrolment at the primary level in 1951 was about 19.2 million. It has enhanced by about 5.75 times. For girls, enrolment since then has enhanced by about nine times in 1996-97. At upper primary level the net increase since 1951 has been about 13 times, while for girls the increase has been by about 32 times. At the secondary and senior secondary levels the net increase has been by 21 times since 1951 and for girls it has been by 49 times. The gross enrolment ratio in 1950-51 at the primary level was 42.6% while in 2002-03 it rose to 95.4%. Elementary education today in our country with149.4 million children in the age group of 6-14 years and 2.9 million teachers is the second largest in the world. These figures as indicated by Table17.1 reflect the inclusiveness of education and its expansion

Table17.1: Enrolment by stages from 1950-51 to 2001-2002 (in million)

Year	Primary (I -V)			Middle/Upper Primary (VI-VIII)			High/Hr. Sec./Inter/ Pre-Degree (IX-XII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1950-51	13.8	5.4	19.2	2.6	0.5	3.1	1.3	0.2	1.5
1955-56	17.1	7.5	24.6	3.8	1.0	4.8	2.2	0.4	2.6
1960-61	23.6	11.4	35.0	5.1	1.6	6.7	2.7	0.7	3.4
1965-66	32.2	18.3	50.5	7.7	2.8	10.5	4.4	1.3	5.7
1970-71	35.7	21.3	57.0	9.4	3.9	13.3	5.7	1.9	7.6
1975-76	40.6	25.0	65.6	11.0	5.0	16.0	6.5	2.4	8.9
1980-81	45.3	28.5	73.8	13.9	6.8	20.7	7.6	3.4	11.0
1985-86	52.2	35.2	87.4	17.7	9.6	27.1	11.5	5.0	16.5
1990-91	57.0	40.4	97.4	21.5	12.5	34.0	12.8	6.3	19.1
1991-92	58.6	42.3	100.9	22.0	13.6	35.6	13.5	6.9	20.4
1992-93	57.9	41.7	99.6	21.2	12.9	34.1	13.6	6.9	20.5
1993-94	55.1	41.9	97.0	20.6	13.5	34.1	13.2	7.5	20.7
1994-95	60.0	45.1	105.1	22.1	14.3	36.4	14.2	7.9	22.1
1995-96	60.9	46.2	107.1	22.7	14.8	37.5	14.6	8.3	22.9
1996-97	61.4	46.8	108.2	22.9	15.2	38.1	15.3	8.7	24.0
1997-98	62.3	48.0	110.3	23.6	15.9	39.5	16.1	9.3	25.4
1998-99*	62.7	48.2	110.9	24..0	16.3	40.3	17.3	10.5	27.8
1999-00*	64.1	49.5	113.6	25.1	17.0	42.1	17.2	11.0	28.2
2000-01*	64.0	49.8	113.8	25.3	17.5	42.8	16.9	10.7	27.6
2001-02*	63.6	50.3	113.9	26.1	18.7	44.8	18.4	12.1	30.5

*-Provisional data

Source: http://www.education.nic.in

Expansion Of Educational Facilities

In the last five decades the number of education institutions has grown manifold. From 1950-51 to 2001-02 the number of schools of different levels have grown by many times. Table 17.2 indicates the growing trend in educational facilities.

Table 17.2: Growth of recognised educational institutions from 1950-51 to 2001-2002

Years	Primary	Upper Primary	High/Hr.Sec/ Inter/Pre. Jr. Colleges	Colleges for General Education	Colleges for Professional Education (Engg., Tech) Arch., Medical and Education colleges)	Universities/ Deemed Univ./ Instt. of National Importance
1950-51	209671	13596	7416	370	208	27
1955-56	278135	21730	10838	466	218	31
1960-61	330399	49663	17329	967	852	45
1965-66	391064	75798	27614	1536	770	64
1970-71	408378	90621	37051	2285	992	82
1975-76	454270	106571	43054	3667	** 3276	101
1980-81	494503	118555	51573	3421	** 3542	110
1985-86	528872	134846	65837	4067	** 1533	126
1990-91	560935	151456	79796	4862	886	184
1991-92	566744	155926	82576	5058	950	196
1992-93	571248	158498	84608	5334	989	207
1993-94	570455	162804	89226	5639	1125	213
1994-95	586810	168772	94946	6089	1230	219
1995-96	593410	174145	99274	6569	1354	226
1996-97	603646	180293	103241	6759	1770	228
1997-98	619222	185961	107140	7199	2075	229
1998-99*	626737	190166	112438	7494	2113	237
1999-2000*	641695	198004	116820	7782	2124	244
2000-2001*	638738	206269	126047	7929	2223	254
2001-2002*	664041	219626	133492	8737	2409	272

* - provisional data

Source:http://www.education.nic.in

Today due to the efforts made during the last several decades since independence, about 94% of the population has access to a primary school within a radius of one kilometer. We thus see that apart from the growing number of learners leading to the expansion of the educational system another major indicator of its expansion is the development in the number of educational institutions that are today catering to millions of learners.

There are several new dimensions related to the expansion of education. Let us examine a few.

a) **Development of Women's Education**

As mentioned earlier even during the colonial period women's education was greatly neglected. Since independence greater attention has been paid to this and enrolment of women at all stages of education has been increasing steadily through the years. Since 1950-51 enrolment of girls has increased many fold in Primary, Middle, Sec./Hr.Sec stages and Hr. Education levels from 28.1% to 44.1%, from16.1% to 41.8%, from 13.30% to 39.5%, and from 10.0% to 39.9% respectively.

Table 17.3: Per centage of girls' Enrolment to total enrolment by stages

Year	Primary I-V	Middle VI-VIII	Sec./Hr.Sec./ Intermediate (IX-XII)	Hr. Education (Degree & above) level
1950-51	28.1	16.1	13.3	10.0
1955-56	30.5	20.8	15.4	14.6
1960-61	32.6	23.9	20.5	16.0
1965-66	36.2	26.7	22.0	20.4
1970-71	37.4	29.3	25.0	20.0
1975-76	38.1	31.3	26.9	23.2
1980-81	38.6	32.9	29.6	26.7
1985-86	40.3	35.6	30.3	33.0
1990-91	41.5	36.7	32.9	33.3
1991-92	41.9	38.2	33.8	32.3
1992-93	42.6	38.8	33.9	33.2
1993-94	42.7	39.1	34.3	33.5
1994-95	42.9	39.3	35.9	34.0
1995-96	43.1	39.5	36.1	36.0
1996-97	43.2	39.9	36.4	36.7
1997-98	43.5	40.3	36.6	37.5
1998-99*	43.5	40.5	37.8	38.1
1999-2000*	43.6	40.4	38.9	38.7
2000-2001*	43.7	40.9	38.6	39.4
2001-2002*	44.1	41.8	39.5	39.9

* Provisional

Source:http://www.education.nic.in)

Expansion of education cannot be holistic and inclusive if women's education is neglected. Today there are several hundred women's college and quite a few universities only for women. The number of women enrolled per 100 men in institutions of higher education in 1950-51 was just 14 but during the last decade it was about 46. However, women's participation is still below fifty per cent at all stages of education. The literacy rate of 53% is also less than 75% for men. The average number of years spent by girls in schools is also much less than that spent by boys. The situation continues to remain grim in case of women belonging to the backward sections of society and rural areas.

Besides lower enrolment of women at different levels of education, another trend that is being noticed is the relatively much lower enrolment of girls at the higher secondary level and above in the science stream and in technological courses. Most of the women learners enroll in the humanities stream. Hence, growth of women's education is yet to catch up with that of men. From female literacy of 14% in 1951 to reach a literacy rate of 53%, it has taken about 50 years. It can be expected that with sustained efforts like the *Mahila Samakhya* Project in rural areas that emphasises the centrality of education to achieve equality and the efforts of the government and non-government agencies to enroll and retain girls, 100% literacy will be attained for women in a much shorter time.

b) Development of Alternative Forms of Educational institutions

We have already discussed the growth of institutions offering education at different levels. But today even such an expanded system of education fails

to accommodate every aspirant. There are still many who have been left
behind. Therefore, alternative modes of offering education have been developing
in addition to the conventional educational system. Education imparted through
the distance mode and the non-formal education systems are forces to be
reckoned with. These alternatives are greatly aiding the expansion of education
and are parallel to the conventional system.

Reflection and Action 17.6

Collect information on the rising enrolment of people belonging to the
backward sections of society and compare it with that of the period when
India became independent.

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c) Distance education

Since the first correspondence courses offered by Delhi University in1962,
distance and open learning system has covered a long way. In 1982, the first
Open University was opened in Andhra Pradesh. In 1985, a Central Open
University, Indira Gandhi National Open University, was opened and today we
have about a dozen state open universities. Apart from the institutions that
are offering education exclusively through the distance mode, there are several
universities and academic institutions that are offering education in a dual
mode, i.e., through face-to-face mode and also through the distance mode.
The National Open School provides education at the school level Together
these institutions are catering to the educational needs of millions of students.

Open learning centers have been contributing a lot towards the expansion of
education as they are capable of taking education to the doorsteps of those
aspiring for education but cannot join conventional systems due to various
reasons. The distance education system on account of its greater flexibility
regarding time of learning, pace of learning and even educational background
of the learner, coupled with its ability to accommodate a much larger student
population, is gaining popularity rapidly. Development of distance education
system has been greatly contributing towards the expansion of education,
especially in the field of higher education. Through their regional / study
centers they are actively providing education that includes even professional
courses. There are facilities to take care of the practical component too and
hence, courses in science, engineering, medicine, nursing, teacher training,
etc, offered through the distance mode are quite common today.

d) Non-Formal Education

Non-Formal Education (NFE) comprises systematic and organized educational
activities that are carried out outside the framework of the formal system of
education. It mainly intends to serve those who cannot or could not attend
educational systems and especially the dropouts. It also intends to provide
education to those pursuing an occupation so that they may function in a
better manner. It aim is at generating awareness of contemporary social issues
that concern us like AIDS. It thus provides need-based education to a particular
section of society. Different media are used to provide non-formal education.
The sixth five-year plan emphasised its need and from rural areas it has reached
urban slums, hilly areas, deserts, tribal areas, etc. Assistance is provided to
the state governments for running NFE centers by the central government
(Aggarwal, 1992). The National Policy on Education, 1986, stressed the need
for non-formal education for school dropouts, girl children who could not
attend school and other such people deprived of regular educational facilities.

Apart from the print medium, electronic media like radio, television, audio and
video cassettes, toll-free telephonic helplines, etc. are used to impart non-
formal education. The educational programmes offered through the non- formal
mode thus commonly aim to generate awareness, develop literacy, and enhance
competence in those who are pursuing an occupation. It is provided by
government organisations as well as by non-government ones. Even formal

educational institutions may be the providers of non- formal education, for instance that provided to farmers, teachers, etc. through the extension services of universities and colleges.

17.5 Diversification of Educational Streams

The educational system of our country has undergone expansion due to the inclusion of a higher per centage of student population in comparison to the pre independence era at every level of education. There has also been expansion in terms of increase in terms of educational facilities. Besides these, expansion of education has another connotation, namely diversification of educational streams or in other words, we can say the branching out of general education into new specialized areas. Education today thus has a much wider scope than in the past.

As we have been discussing, in ancient times the curriculum included only a few areas of study such as religious texts, literature, grammar, mathematics, etc. Much later, during Muslim rule, components of the curriculum changed according to the prevailing philosophy and needs. During this period the study of Persian language began to be studied by both Hindu and Muslim students because of its utility as the court language. Later on, with British rule, the western system of education was started. Systematic study of science and social sciences became parts of the curriculum. Various branches of science such as chemistry, physics, etc., were studied. With the use of English as the court language and also with the influence of the British rulers, English was studied by the Indians from different communities.

Following independence, the study of the freedom struggle became an integral part of the curriculum of schools. Vocationalisation of education led to the addition of new areas of study. During the last few decades, due to the changing socio-economic needs and changing outlook, several new areas of study have been introduced. New disciplines have come up in response to new demands. For instance, in response to industrialization, studies related to technology as well as management of industrial organisations started. Later on the study of management further branched out with the development of new types of organisations and their growing complexities. Today we have management studies related to educational institutions, hospitals, hotels, etc. Similarly, with the invention of computers and their growing utility in all sectors, studies related to the computer sciences are very much in demand. Studies related to Information Technology are common today. Exploration of the space, the oceans, underground mines, deep forests etc, has given rise to new dimensions in these areas. Genetic engineering, biotechnology, nanotechnology, etc. are some of the upcoming areas. Population education, environmental education; peace education, etc. have come up due to the present day requirements.

Apart from the socio economic needs, the other equally important factor is the rapidly expanding knowledge base in every sphere. This is leading to specialized knowledge in different areas. Along with the emergence of new technology, there is also the ongoing phenomenon of technology getting obsolete due to rapid advancements in knowledge. Therefore, the scope of education today holds many more disciplines and in this sense education can be said to have expanded.

Reflection and Action 17.7

What is the role played by distance education in educational development in India?

17.6 Conclusion

Education is a dynamic concept that has changed with changing times. It has grown in response to the socio-economic demands of the day as well as the philosophy prevailing during a particular period. In Vedic times education was mainly for the elite of society. It was imparted in ashrams, gurukuls, etc. Study of religious texts, literature, grammar, mathematics, etc. were considered to be important. Students stayed with their teachers and were like members of his family. There was thus a close relationship between the teacher and the taught. Disciplined life was expected from them. In the Buddhist period the expansion of education started, reaching out to include students from different sections of society. Education was also institutionalized during this period and was imparted at monasteries. However, the curriculum reflected the continuation of the components of the Vedic period. In the medieval period the form of education changed and madrasas and *makhtabs* were opened as centers of learning. Learning of religious texts, jurisprudence, Persian, etc. started. In the British period western education with emphasis on the learning of science and English began. Women's education, which had so far been neglected, also started picking up.

After independence special efforts were made to strengthen the education system. The rate of enrolment was dismal. The rate of dropout was very high and much needed to be done for women's education and for the people of the backward communities. Several commissions and committees have been set up to review educational issues and policies have been framed. The Constitution also includes provisions to strengthen the educational system. The conditions regarding the education of the marginalised sections like women, backward communities and people from rural areas have today improved considerably. Expansion of education although closely related to its growth has taken place in the true sense since independence. It has been in terms of student enrolment at different levels of education, enrolment of women and other marginalized sections at different levels, increase in the number of educational facilities and also due to the diversification of general education in response to the dynamic socio-economic conditions and rapid expansion of the knowledge base.

17.7 Further Reading

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UNIT 18
Constitutional Provisions and Educational Policies in India

Contents

Learning Objectives

In this unit we shall discuss the various constitutional provisions regarding education and some of the major educational policies. Hence, following the study of this unit you should be able to:

*   know about the constitutional provisions regarding education;

*   deliberate upon the policies on education; and

*   reflect upon the linkages between educational policies with the educational provisions enshrined in the Constitution.

18.1   Introduction

In the previous unit we have discussed the expansion and growth of education in India and seen that education, over the years, has continuously evolved to become more inclusive and that it has also diversified into various streams. Such growth and expansion has not been an undirected movement. It has been directed, through certain guidelines on various issues in education. But from where do we get such guidelines? In this unit we shall take up this discussion it would include deliberations upon the constitutional provisions regarding education that happen to be the fountainhead of all policies, rules and regulations enacted for educational administration. Thereafter we shall bring forth some of the legislations that have been enacted to regulate certain aspects of education in India. Finally we shall introduce you to some of the major policies that have been framed to regulate matters pertaining to education in India. These policies, besides regulating education, also serve as points of reference for educational issues and ensure uniformity in approach. Discussing all the provisions, legislations and policies on education in detail would not be feasible in this unit. Hence, we shall restrict our study to a brief deliberation on these aspects.

18.2   Constitutional Provisions Regarding Education

A society has several aspirations that are formulated as its goals. These aspirations are generally related to social development and security, which are to be achieved through tasks like ensuring the general well being of the people, economic growth, preservation and transmission of culture, etc. To fulfill these aspirations and reach its goals, societies have acknowledged the potential of education as the means to attain these ends. This has led to the inception of the formal educational system and education gradually becoming a social responsibility. But in the past such privileges were enjoyed by a miniscule part of the population. Later on it was realized that education has become more inclusive and encompass larger sections of the population in sure that development is widespread and sustainable. As has been the United Nations, equitable social development is a velopment and it is also necessary for eradicating

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poverty. Hence, there is the need to improve and enhance well being and the quality of life of all people and through social integration create "a society for all", where every individual has an active role to play. Education is the key to attaining all these objectives. Besides, it is also the means of promoting cohesiveness in a multicultural society like India. Therefore, to fulfill these needs of society, the founders of our Constitution included certain provisions to serve as beacons for the process of development of education. In this section we shall discuss these provisions briefly.

In the beginning, education was primarily a State subject and was exclusively the responsibility of the States, the Central Government being concerned directly with certain areas like coordination, determination of standards in technical and higher education etc. In 1976, following a Constitutional amendment (42nd), education became the joint responsibility of the Central and State Government, i.e. a concurrent subject. However, the Constitution still places certain educational matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Union. These are: maintenance of Central Universities and institutions of national importance, declared as such by Parliament by law; all Union agencies and institutions for professional, vocational or technical training or for promotion of special studies or research; and the coordination and determination of standards in institutions of higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions (Entries 63,64,65 and 66 of List I). As per Article 239, the Government of India, being responsible for the administration of the Union Territories, has the executive and legislative authority for all subjects including education.

We shall now discuss the constitutional provisions regarding education briefly. There are several fundamental rights in Part III of the Constitution provided to the citizens of India and some of them have a bearing on education too. In keeping with these rights there are several provisions with a bearing on education, about which we shall discuss now.

As per **Article 28** there is the freedom to attend religious instructions or worship in certain types of educational institutions. However, as per Clause 1, of this article no religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds. But as per Clause 2, nothing in Clause 1 shall be applicable to an educational institution, which is administered by the state but has been established under any endowment or trust, which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such an institution. The third Clause states that a person attending an educational institution recognized by the state or receiving aid out of state funds shall take part in any religious instruction that may be imparted in such institution or attend any religious worship that may be conducted in such institution or in its premises only if such person consents to it or if s/he is a minor, his/her guardian consents to it.

Article 29 pertains to the Cultural and Educational Rights of the citizens. Clause 1 of this Article states that any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part of it, having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same. Clause 2 states that no citizen shall be denied admission to any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of state funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of these.

Article 30 is regarding the right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions. Its Clause 1 states that all minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. The second clause states that the state shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.

Article 21A is regarding the proposed Right to Education. It has been inserted by the **86th Amendment** of the Constitution in December 2002, but is yet to be brought into force. It states that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.

Directive Principles of State Policy on Education: This has been included in the part IV of the Constitution and some of these principles have a bearing on education. **Article 41** pertains to right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases. This Article urges the State to make effective provisions for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want.

Article 45 deals with the provision for free and compulsory education for children. This Article states that the state shall endeavour to provide, 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. But now, following an amendment as discussed above, this has been converted into the right to education (yet to be implemented), while this Article now pertains to early childhood care and education. It provides for early childhood care and education for children below the age of six years.

Article 46 deals with promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections. This Article states that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

We thus see that while certain educational provisions flow from the fundamental rights provided to the citizens, there are certain Directive Principles of state policy that urge upon the state to develop an egalitarian society by equalizing educational opportunities.

The Constitution of India also includes certain **Fundamental Duties** of the citizens, which are prescribed Article 51 A. It states, among other things, that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India:

*   to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.

*   who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years. Added by 86th Amendment of December 2002, but yet to be brought into force.

The educational implications of the fundamental duties are immense. They are reflected in the curricular and co-curricular activities, in the teaching-learning process, administration of educational institutions, i.e., in all efforts to make the children and the youth aware of them. For instance, the curriculum has to take care of the development of scientific temper in children, respect for cultural heritage, etc. Similarly value education, environmental education, being imparted in schools, etc., are also in keeping with these duties.

Reflection and Action 18.1

There are constitutional provisions that seek the advancement of the weaker sections of society. In your view what has been their impact on the educational attainment of these sections?

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Part XI of the Constitution deals with the relationship of the Center with the states. In the seventh schedule (Article246) there are three Lists, List I, Union List; List II, State List, and List III, Concurrent List.

List I (Union List)

Entry 63: Institutions known at the commencement of the Constitution as Benares Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University and Delhi University; the Universities established in pursuance of Article 371E; any other institution declared by Parliament by law to be an institution of national importance are included in this list. Lateron other institutions too have been included in this List.

Entry 64: Institutions for scientific or technical education financed by the Government of India wholly or in part and declared by Parliament by law to be institutions of national importance.

Entry65: Union agencies and institutions for professional, vocational or technical training, including the training of police officers; or the promotion of special studies or research; or scientific or technical assistance in the investigation or detection of crime.

Entry 66: Co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions.

List II (State List)

This list includes educational issues of the state including universities (subject to the provisions of List 1 and Entry 25 of List III)

Entry 12: Libraries, museums, and other such institutions controlled and financed by the states; ancient and historical monuments and records, other than those declared to be of national importance.

List III (Concurrent List)

Entry 20: This provision has an indirect but significant bearing on education and is concerned with "Economic and Social Planning". Education Planning being an essential element of economic and social planning, the Government of India and the State Governments are to work together in preparing and implementing the national plans for the reconstruction of education.

Entry 25 - Vocational and technical training of labour:

Article 350A facilities for instruction in mother tongue at primary stage. This Article requires the Government to safeguard the interests of the children belonging to linguistic minority groups and to ensure adequate facilities for them to receive at least primary education through their mother tongue.

Article 351: places a special responsibility on the Government of India for promoting the spread of Hindi language and its development so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all in the composite culture of India.

Article 343 deals with the Official language of the Union. This Article states that:

a) The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devnagari script. The form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union shall be the international form of Indian numerals.

b) Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union.

At present Hindi is the Official Language of the Union of India and English is the associate official language. Thus the Constitution has provisions to regulate the language policies to be implemented in schools.

Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. The third clause of this Article empowers the state to make special provisions for women and children and this includes education too.

Reflection and Action 18.2

You have read about the constitutional provisions regarding education. How would you summarize the social reasons for including such provisions?

18.3 Educational Policies

Now that we are aware of the constitutional provisions regarding education, let us discuss some of the major National Policies on education. The Government of India through its various agencies formulates policies on education and also revises them. We know that the Republic of India is governed on the basis of the Constitution of India, which came into force on 26th January 1950. Educational policies are framed by various agencies of the central as well as state governments in the perspective of the provisions in the Constitution. The policies framed by the agencies of the central government have a national jurisdiction and prevail over the policies framed by the states in case of conflict between them. These policies have a direct role in shaping the educational scenario and assist educational administration by ruling out doubts and ambiguities.

The constitutional provisions were framed way back but since then with the changing socio-economic milieu, there has been new thinking on social issues including education. Therefore, to comply with the demands of a changed socio-economic order the country and also to cope with those put forth by a changing global situation, policies on education have been changing. To accommodate these changes the constitutional provisions regarding education too have been amended from time to time. Therefore, the policies on education are dynamic in nature and are framed to respond to the existing political, social, economical and cultural needs of society. Policy decisions on individual issues can also be taken by the government or its agencies as and when felt necessary - in the form of Resolutions, Schemes, Guidelines, Orders, etc. The policies framed are a reflection of the existing philosophy of education and strongly display the outlook of society, and especially of the government, regarding educational issues.

Reflection and Action 18.3

Do you think we have succeeded in fulfilling the constitutional obligation regarding universalisation of elementary education? Justify your answer.

Apart from the Constitution that has provisions on education, educational policies are also articulated through legislations. Some of the important Central legislations having a bearing on the subjects allotted to the Department of Secondary and Higher Education are:

The University Grants Commission Act, 1956: The University Grants Commission (UGC) was established through this Act to regulate important issues pertaining to the functioning of the universities.

The All India Council for Technical Education Act, 1987: It led to the establishment of an All India Council for Technical Education basically for the proper planning and coordinated development of the technical education system in India.

The National Council of Teacher Education Act, 1993: It led to the establishment of a National Council for Teacher Education for achieving planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system, the regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in the teacher education system and for other related matters.

The National Council for Minority Educational Institutions Act, 2004: This Act regulates the educational institutions of the minorities of India.

The Copyright Act, 1957: This Act is regarding the various aspects related to copyright of literary, artistic, and architectural and other such aspects.

The Apprentices Act, 1961: This Act is regarding apprentices and their training.

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995: This Act is an important step in ensuring equal opportunities for people with disabilities and their full participation in nation building.

We thus see that policies on education emerge mainly from the constitution and also from the legislations/agencies of the government. Now let us discuss some of the major policies on education.

National Policies on Education

In India since independence, there have mainly two comprehensive statements regarding the National Policy on Education, viz. those of 1968 and 1986. The former contained decisions of the Central Government mainly based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Education, 1964-66. The latter was a result of the renewed priority assigned to Education by the government then. The 1986 policy was thereafter reviewed by a Committee constituted in 1990 under the chairmanship of Acharya Ramamurti. On the basis of the recommendations of this Committee, certain provisions of the 1986 policy were modified in 1992.

National Policy on Education, 1968 (NPE 1968): Several policies were formulated on various aspects of education. For instance a policy was made that the state should put in strenuous efforts to implement Article 45 and provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. There were also policies regarding status, education of teachers, development of languages, equalization of educational opportunities, etc. But one of the most significant policies was that regarding the uniform educational structure with 10+2+3 pattern to be followed in all the schools of the country. We shall not discuss NPE, 1968 in detail, as there has been another national policy after it in 1986.

National Policy on Education, 1986: The adoption of the educational policies formulated in 1968 led to considerable expansion in educational facilities all over the country and schools came up even in many parts of the rural areas within a radius of one kilometer of habitations. There was sizeable augmentation of facilities at other stages of education also. However, problems of access, quality, etc. that had accumulated over the years had assumed such massive proportions that they had to be dealt with utmost urgency. Apart from these reasons, a variety of new challenges and social needs made it imperative for the Government to formulate and implement a New Education Policy for the country.

It has been rightly mentioned in NPE (1986) that every country develops its system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of the times. During this period India reached a stage in its economic and technical development when a major effort had

to be made to derive the maximum benefit from the assets already created and to ensure that the benefits of such development reach all sections and it was also felt that education is the highway to reach this goal. So as to fulfill these aims, the Government of India initiated the formulation of a New Education Policy for the country and this is how the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) came about.

Programme of Action (POA, 1992): In order to implement the provisions of NPE, 1986, a Programme of Action was developed. The POA 1992 was circulated in 1993 to all the States and Union Territories to draw their own State Programme of Action (SPOA) by 31 December 1993 as per the decision taken in the 49th Meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) held on 15 October 1993.

Now that we are aware of the backdrop of NPE 1986, let us discuss the policies that emerged following the formulation of NPE (1986) and the POA, 1992. We shall bring to you the various sections of the entire policy so that your idea about the policies on various aspects of education is comprehensive.

- **The Essence and Role of Education**

Education has been considered by the NPE, 1986 to be essential for all as it is fundamental to all-round development - material and spiritual. It has also been expressed that education has an acculturating role and that it refines sensitivities and perceptions that contribute to national cohesion, scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit, which in turn further the goals of socialism, secularism and democracy as enshrined in our constitution. Education is thus considered as a unique investment in the present as well as the future and this cardinal principle is the key to the National Policy on Education.

- **The National System of Education**

NPE, 1986 vouched for a National System of Education, which would imply that up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, have access to education of a comparable quality and to achieve this, the Government will initiate appropriately funded programmes.

- **Education for Equality**

NPE, 1986 accords great importance to removing disparities and equalizing educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality. There would be efforts to uplift weaker and neglected sections of society like women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The policy aspires to use education as an agent of basic change in the status of woman. Special educational facilities for students of weaker sections of society like SCs and STs and recruitment of teachers from these sections were also envisaged. Similarly educational facilities would also be provided to other groups like those from other educationally backward sections and areas, physically handicapped people and the minorities as certain minority groups are yet to advance educationally Hence, greater attention will be paid to the education of these groups in the interests of equality and social justice. For the handicapped the objective is to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence. Policies regarding adult education have been formulated to strengthen the cause of adult education through various and systematic programmes of adult and continuing education.

Reflection and Action 18.4

There are constitutional provisions that seek the advancement of the weaker sections of the society. In your view what has been their impact on the educational attainment of these sections?

•   Reorganization of Education at Different Stages

Policies have been made for the reorganization of education at different stages:

Early childhood care & education (ECCE): The National Policy on Children emphasizes investment for the welfare of young children, particularly those who are from those sections of the populations, where most of the children happen to be the first generation learners. Further, the programmes for (ECCE) would cater to the holistic nature of child development, viz., nutrition, health and social, mental, physical, moral and emotional development. ECCE will receive high priority and be suitably integrated with the Integrated Child Development Services programme, wherever possible.

Elementary education: Regarding Elementary education the policy places thrust on two aspects: (i) universal enrolment and universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and (ii) a substantial improvement in the quality of education. Also there would be a child centered approach that would be warm, welcoming and encouraging so that children are attracted to school and motivated to learn.

Primary schools would be provided with essential facilities. The scope of Operation Blackboard will be enlarged to develop and upgrade the infrastructure and it would be extended even to the upper primary level. The number of teachers would also be increased.

Non-formal education: The Non-formal Education Programme, would be strengthened and expanded to provide education to school dropouts, children from habitations without the facilities of schools like border or remote areas, working children and girls who cannot attend whole-day schools.

A Resolve: The New Education Policy accords highest priority to the problem of dropout and resolves to arrest the high rate of dropout of children from schools by adopting strategies based on micro-planning, applied at the grassroots level all over the country so as to ensure retention of the children enrolled in schools.

Secondary education: This policy envisaged widening of access to secondary education with an emphasis on enrolment of girls, SCs and STs, particularly in science, commerce and vocational streams. It also desired that Boards of Secondary Education be reorganized and vested with autonomy so that they can improve the quality of secondary education. Providing computer literacy in secondary level institutions so that children are equipped with necessary computer skills and are prepared for the emerging technological world was also considered.

Pace setting schools: To provide quality education to children with special talent or aptitude and offer them opportunities to utilize their potential, pace setting schools would be set up for them, and, if required, free education, would be provided to them.

Vocationalisation: The introduction of systematic, well-planned and rigorously implemented programmes of vocational education was envisioned as it is crucial for educational reorganisation and to enhance employability, bridge the gap between the demand and supply of skilled manpower and to provide an alternative for those not interested in pursuing higher education.

Higher education: Higher education contributes to national development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and skills and being at the apex of the educational pyramid, it has a key role in producing teachers for the education system. In the context of the unprecedented explosion of knowledge, higher education has to become dynamic. It was also decided that

urgent steps would be taken to protect the system from degradation.

Open university and distance learning: As per the NPE, 1986, open learning system has been initiated to augment opportunities for higher education, as an instrument of democratising education and to make it a lifelong process. The flexibility and innovativeness of the open learning system are particularly suited to the diverse requirements of the citizens of our country, including those who had joined the vocational stream. It was decided that Indira Gandhi National Open University, established in 1985 to fulfill these objectives, will be strengthened and establishment of open universities in the states would be supported. The National Open School will be strengthened and open learning facilities extended in a phased manner at the secondary level in all parts of the country.

Delinking degrees from jobs: A beginning will be made in de-linking degrees from jobs in selected areas. However, this cannot be applied to occupation-specific courses like Engineering, Medicine, Law, and Teaching etc. Similarly, it would not be applicable to services requiring specialists with academic qualifications in humanities, social sciences, sciences, etc.

Rural university: The new pattern of the rural university will be consolidated and developed on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi's ideas on education so as to take up the challenges of micro planning at grassroots levels for the transformation of rural areas.

- **Technical and Management Education:** It was decided that although the two streams of technical and management education are functioning separately, it is essential to view them together, because of their close relationship and complementary concerns. It was also decided that the reorganisation of Technical and Management Education should take into account the anticipated scenario by the turn of the century, with reference to the likely changes in the economy, social environment, production and management processes, the rapid expansion of knowledge and the advances in science and technology.

- **Making the System Work:** It was envisioned that all these tasks related to education could not be performed in a state of disorder. Hence, education needs to be managed in an atmosphere of intellectual rigour, seriousness of purpose and, at the same time, with freedom essential for innovation and creativity. While far-reaching changes will have to be incorporated in the quality and range of education, the process of introducing discipline into the system will have to be started.

Reflection and Action 18.5

In your view what should be the considerations leading to policy formulation on an educational issue?

- **Reorienting the Content and Process of Education**

This involved the following:

The cultural perspective: The existing schism between the formal system of education and the country's rich and varied cultural traditions need to be bridged. The preoccupation with modern technologies cannot be allowed to sever our new generations from the roots in India's history and culture. Education can and must bring about the fine synthesis between change-oriented technologies and the country's continuity of cultural tradition.

Value Education: The growing concern over the erosion of values is necessitating readjustments in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values.

The Evaluation Process and Examination Reform: Assessment of performance is an Integral part of any process of learning and teaching and hence, NPE, 1986 considered the following as necessary:

The objective will be to re-cast the examination system so as to ensure a method of assessment that is a valid and reliable measure of student development and a powerful instrument for improving teaching and learning; in functional terms, this would mean:

a) The elimination of excessive element of chance and subjectivity;

b) The de-emphasis of memorization;

c) Continuous and comprehensive evaluation that incorporates both scholastic and non-scholastic aspects of education, spread over the total span of instructional time;

d) Effective use of the evaluation process by teachers, students and parents;

e) Improvement in the conduct of examination;

f) The introduction of concomitant changes in instructional materials and methodology;

g) tradition of the semester system from the secondary stage in a phased manner;

h) The use of grades in place of marks.

Policies were also developed on many other issues like books and library, languages, media and educational technology, environmental education, population education, yoga, physical education, role of the youth, mathematics and science teaching.

- **The Teacher**

As per the NPE 1986, the status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society and it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. The Government and the community should endeavour to create conditions, which will help motivate and inspire teachers on constructive and creative lines. It was also expressed that teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs and capabilities of learners and the community.

- **Teacher education**

Teacher education is a continuous process, and its pre-service and in-service components are inseparable. As the first step, the system of teacher education will be overhauled. The new programmes of teacher-education will emphasize continuing education and the need for teachers to meet the thrusts envisaged in this Policy.

- **The management of education**

An overhaul of the system of planning and the management of education will receive high priority. The guiding considerations will be steps such as evolving a long-term planning and management perspective of education and its integration with the country's developmental and manpower needs; decentralization and the creation of a spirit of autonomy for educational institutions; giving pre-eminence to people's involvement, including association of non-governmental agencies and voluntary effort, etc.

- **Resources**

NPE 1986 stated that resources, to the extent possible, will be raised by mobilizing funds from the community, involving them to maintain school buildings and supplies of some consumables, raising fees at the higher levels of education and saving resources through the efficient use of facilities

- Review

NPE, 1986 expressed that the implementation of the various parameters of the New Policy must be reviewed every five years. Appraisals at short intervals will also be made to ascertain the progress of implementation and the trends emerging from time to time.

- The future

According to NPE, 1986, the future shape of education in India is too complex to envision with precision. Yet, given our tradition, which has almost always put a high premium on intellectual and spiritual attainment, we are bound to succeed in achieving our objectives. The main task is to strengthen the base of the pyramid, with about a billion people. Equally, it is important to ensure that those at the top of the pyramid are among the best in the world. It has further been expressed that further intensifying the nation-wide effort in Human Resource Development, with education playing its multifaceted role, is now possible.

We have not discussed the policies in details here, nevertheless you would find that NPE, 1986 covers all the major aspects related to education and the process of implementing these policies all over the country has started.

Reflection and Action 18.6

You have read that policies on educational matters are formulated on the basis of the constitutional provisions and the legislations. There has been a directive from the Supreme Court of India to teach environmental science in schools and similarly with the funds from UNICEF, some teacher education programmes are now preparing to impart education related to AIDS. How would you relate them to the fundamental duties and other constitutional provisions on education?

18.4 Conclusion

Since independence, there has been considerable growth and expansion of education in India. The goal of a modern secular and democratic society like India is to strive for egalitarianism through equalization of educational opportunities and also to enable itself to meet the challenges of the modern world. Therefore, educations has to be more inclusive and reach the vast majority of our population and at the same time equip the learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for ensuring the development of the nation. To fulfill these demands the growth of education has to be well directed and along certain guidelines. These guidelines are the educational policies framed by the government and its agencies from time to time. These policies are formulated in the perspective of the constitutional provisions regarding education, which, following an amendment of the Constitution is a concurrent subject and is the joint responsibility of the center and the states. However, certain educational matters are still within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Union.

Our Constitution provides us with certain fundamental rights. In keeping with these rights there are several provisions with a bearing on education, for instance, freedom to attend religious instructions or worship in certain types of educational institutions in certain cases; in keeping with the cultural and educational rights of minorities, the right to set up educational institutions and administer them, etc. Similarly some of the Directive Principles of State Policy too have a bearing on education, as for instance Article 41 urges the state to ensure the right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases. Article 46 is for the promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections. The Constitution of India also includes certain Fundamental Duties of the

citizens and through education learners are to internalize them. Besides the Constitution has provisions regarding the use of mother tongue for providing instructions, promotion of Hindi, etc.

From these provisions and the different legislations made by the government, policies on education have emerged. In 1968 we had the first national policy on education and thereafter in 1986 we had the new national policy on education. In 1992, Programme of Action was developed to implement the NPE, 1986. NPE, 1986 has accorded great importance to the role of education for the development of the nation and has reiterated the importance of national system of education. It envisages education to bring about equality among the different sections of the population. It also aspires to reorganize education at different stages right from early childhood to higher education, vocational education, distance education, etc. It provides directions for technical and management education, reorienting the content and process of education, for the general well being and professional growth of teachers, planning and management of education, etc. Thus the policies on education provide a direction to the field of education in our country.

In your view have we succeeded in fulfilling the constitutional obligation regarding universalisation of elementary education? Justify your answer.

In your view what should be the considerations leading to policy formulation on an educational issue?

18.5 Further Reading

Rao, D.B. 1998. *National Policy on Education Towards an Enlightened and Humane Society.* Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi

Sharma, Y.K. 2001. *History and Problems of Education.* Volume1 Kanishka Publishers: New Delhi

Unit 19
Universalization of Elementary Education

Contents

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

*   explain the need and importance of universalization of elementary education in India;

*   describe the structure of elementary education;

*   describe various developments that took place for universalization of elementary education during pre and post independence periods;

*   discuss the present scenario of elementary education in India;

*   discuss various innovations, initiatives and strategies taken for universalization of elementary education; and

*   explain the role of distance education in teacher training at elementary level.

19.1   Introduction

After India attained independence, elementary education became one of the most important item on the agenda of successive governments at the centre. This is because the makers of Indian Constitution had made a provision that within a period of ten years from 1950, free and compulsory elementary education would be provided to all children up to 14 years of age. The rationale behind such a provision was to make all the citizens of the country literate so that they could become productive members of society. Elementary education is provided to the children in the age group 6-14 years. This is the most important and formative period in a child's life. Apart from imparting a child the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, necessary care is taken to foster all round development of the personality through curricular and co-curricular activities. A person with elementary education can become a self-reliant, sensible and productive citizen of the country. Research has shown that increasing the average primary schooling of the labor force even by one year can increase output substantially (World Bank). The Social benefits of elementary education are immense. Educated parents send their children to school. Elementary education leads to perpetuation of benefits from one generation to another (Sinha 2000). The importance of elementary education is very crucial not only for the country but also for all the citizens of the country. The concept of elementary education in its structural sense varies from state to state. However, there is a common structure of education, which has been accepted as the national system of education. Let us examine the structure of elementary education in the national system of education.

19.2 Structure of Elementary Education

The national system of education was enunciated by the National Policy on Education (1968) in the form of 10+2+3. The National Policy on Education (1986) defined that the structure of elementary education would consist of 5 years of primary education and 3 years of upper primary education. But there are variations in the states with regard to organization of elementary education. For example, some states have 4 years of primary and 3 years of upper primary structure. Some states have 5 years of primary and 2 years of upper primary structure. In spite of these variations, elementary education structure is understood as defined by the National Policy on Education (1986) as presented in Figure 1.1.

Age 4-6	Pre-Primary	
Class I-V Age 6-11	Primary	Elementary Education
Class VI-VIII Age 12-14	Upper Primary	
Class IX-X Age 15-16	Secondary	
Class XI-XIII Age 17-18	Senior Secondary	

Fig.1.1: National System of Education

Although serious concerns for elementary education to all were expressed during the post-independence period, one can also find similar concerns before the country became independent. Let us look at the concern for elementary education from a historical perspective.

19.3 Historical Perspective

During Vedic times, elementary education was imparted through *Guru-Shishya Parampara* (teacher-taught tradition). The children went to the Ashram (School) of the Guru where they were taught religious texts. With the rise of Buddhism children were taught through the monastic system of education. By the tenth century, there were *pathshalas* and tolls, which provided primary education to children. During the medieval period, *Maktabs* attached to mosques used to impart elementary education. The *Maktabs* were concerned with teaching children how to read and write and special emphasis was given on how to read the Quran.

The Pre-Independence Period

Serious concern for education among Indians during the pre-Independence period, i.e., the British period, started with the Macaulay's Minutes. The main purpose of Macaulay's Minutes was to spread western education among the masses. During that time, there were indigenous elementary schools, providing for the teaching of the three Rs — reading, writing and arithmetic — to a few categories of people like priests, business community and rich farmers. The British government introduced elementary education to educate Indians to help it in administrative work. The content of education was mostly western ideas, concepts, history of England, mathematics and science, etc. But the system of elementary education was not suitable for the local community. Hence, the Indian Education Commission of 1882 which emphasized elementary education suggested transfer of elementary education to the local community. With awakening among the masses for education, there was a great demand for elementary education.

The first ever demand for compulsory primary education was made by Gokhale. But his resolution was these a Parlimanet in India in 1910? was unfortunately defeated. During 1921-37, elementary education came under Indian control and made remarkable progress. But the large-scale expansion got a setback with the Hartog Committee Report in 1928. However, the committee emphasized improvement of improving retention, reducing wastage and stagnation and improvement of elementary education. Another landmark during the pre-independence period was that of the Basic Education Programme of Gandhiji. Popularly known as the Wardha scheme of education, it advocated a system of elementary education, which emphasized earning while learning. Teaching of craft, child-centredness, activity-based, close interface between school and community were some of the features of the basic education programme.

Post-Independence Period

The post-independence period witnessed a series of committees, commission and constitutional amendments recommending for free and compulsory elementary education. In 1947, the Kher Committee was set up to explore means to promote universal elementary education and it made recommendations on the association of local bodies with the administration of primary education and the creation of education bodies.
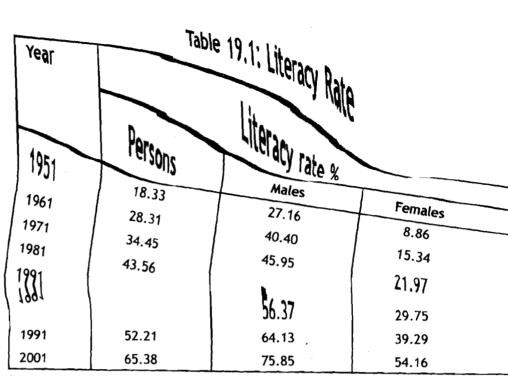
But the first milestone to universalize elementary education was laid by the Constitution of India, adopted in 1950. Article 45 of the Indian Constitution under the Directive Principles of State Policy says: "The state shall endeavour to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete 14 years."

Following the constitutional directives, the Five-Year Plans allocated large finance for elementary education. There was an attempt to adopt Basic Education of Gandhiji as the national pattern of elementary education. However, the attempt did not get support. The Education Commission (1964-66) recommended the 10+2+3 pattern of education, which was accepted by the first ever National Policy on Education (NPE 1968). But the most comprehensive policy on education was the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986), which was reviewed and revised in its Plan of Action (POA 1992). Both NPE (1986) and POA (1992) took universalisation of elementary education with serious concern and emphasized universal access, universal enrolment and universal retention. In 1990, Acharya Rammurthy Committee also recommended for compulsory primary education. In 1992, India signed 'UN Convention on Right of the Child' and committed itself to providing compulsory elementary education. In 1993, the Supreme Court upheld elementary education as a fundamental right. The Saikia Committee also recommended making elementary education a fundamental right in 1997. In 2001, the 93rd Amendment Bill was introduced to make free and compulsory elementary education a fundamental right. The 93rd Amendment Bill was passed (renumbered as 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002) by the Parliament in December 2002 and free and compulsory elementary education became a fundamental right of every citizen.

Reflection and Action 19.1

Trace the development of Elementary education in India.

19.4 The Present Scenario

Table 19.1: Literacy Rate

Year	Persons	Literacy rate %	
		Males	Females
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86
1961	28.31	40.40	15.34
1971	34.45	45.95	21.97
1981	43.56	56.37	29.75
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29
2001	65.38	75.85	54.16

Source: Selected Educational Statistics (2000-2001), MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi, 2002

From the Table 19.1, we find that the literacy rate has significantly increased from 18-33 in 1951 to 65.38 in 2001. Although literacy rates of males and females have increased since 1951, the literacy rate of females is still far behind that of males.

Table 19.2: Number of Primary and Upper Primary School in India

Year	Primary Schools	Upper Primary Schools	Ratio of Primary to Upper Primary Schools
1950-51	2,09,671	13,596	15.4
1960-61	3,30,399	49,663	6.7
1970-71	4,08,378	90,621	4.5
1980-81	4,94,503	1,18,855	4.2
1990-91	5,60,935	1,51,456	3.7
1995-96	5,90,421	1,71,216	3.4
1998-99*	6,26,737	1,90,166	3.3
1999-2000*	6,41,695	1,98,004	3.2

* Provisional

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1990-2000, MHRD, Government of India, 2001.

From the Table 19.2, it is evident that the number of primary and upper primary schools has significantly increased since 1950-51. Now let us look at the Gross Enrolment Ratio, All India Level, 1950-51 to 1999-2000.

Table 19.3 : Gross Enrolment Ratio, All India Level

Year	Primary Level			Upper Primary Level		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1950-51	60.6	24.8	42.6	20.6	4.6	12.7
1960-61	82.6	41.4	62.4	33.2	11.3	22.5
1970-71	95.5	60.5	78.6	46.5	20.8	33.4
1980-81	95.8	64.1	78.6	54.3	28.6	41.9
1990-91*	98.1	75.9	80.5	79.8	54.6	62.1

From Table 3, it is clear that enrolment figures in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at primary and upper primary levels have improved from 1950-51 to 1999-2000. Moreover, the differences in the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) have also reduced. But, the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) at Primary level for boys was 78 per cent and for girls 64 per cent in 1997-98. The overall NER was 71 per cent suggesting that 29 per cent of children at primary level in 6-11 age group continued to remain out of school. Educationally backward states have even lower NER than the national average of 71 per cent. (Sinha 2004). Moreover, dropout rates continue to be high, retention of children in schools is poor, achievement levels are low, and wastage is considerable. Despite increased participation of girls, disparity still exists, more particularly among scheduled castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) (Gopalan 1998).

The National Policy on Education (1986) and the Programme of Action (1992) took up the challenge of universalization of elementary education seriously. The following three are the main points of emphasis of these policy documents.

- Universal access

- Universal enrolment

- Universal retention

Apart from emphasizing these three aspects, the documents advocated:

- decentralized participative planning with community involvement;

- infrastructure support provision in terms of improved school environment; satisfactory condition of school buildings, provision of teaching and learning materials;

- qualitative improvement in elementary education through child-centred, activity based teaching learning process;

- Restructuring of pre-service and in-service training;

- addressing the issues of access and quality.

The concern of the NPE and POA got further strengthened by the international efforts made by UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank. The World Conference on Education for All (EFA), held on March 5-9, 1990 in (Thailand), organized by UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank, adopted a Declaration calling upon 155 member states and international agencies to take effective steps for achieving EFA by the year 2000. It emphasized basic learning needs of all children like literacy, oral expression, numeracy, problem solving and basic learning contents such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.

For fulfillment of these learning needs, the Declaration of EFA took a broadened vision of basic education as consisting of formal schooling, non-formal education programmes as well as open learning systems which together attempt to provide basic-education to all children as well as adults (DEP-DPEP 2003). As a follow-up to the Conference, the World Education Forum of Education for All met at Dakar, Senegal, during April 26-28, 2000. The six goals adopted by the forum are:

- Expanding and improving comprehensive early education care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged sections.

- Ensuring that by 2015, all children, particularly girl children, in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

- Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skill programmes.

- Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving 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.

- Improving every aspect of the quality of education and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and life skills.

Box 19.1: National and International Level Initiatives for achieving Universal Elementary Education

The national/international level initiatives like, the resolution of the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Programme of Action (1992) to ensure free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children upto 14 years of age by 2000, the Education for All (EFA) Summit of the nine high-population (E-9) countries held in New Delhi in December 1993, the World Conference on Education for all in Jomiten, in March 1990 and subsequent Dakar Framework for Education for All (2000) emphasizing on E-9 countries to generate their own approach towards achieving EFA, have resulted in a number of innovations, initiatives and strategies being implemented in India to achieve universalisation of elementary education.

19.5 Initiatives, Innovations and Strategies

Although the government of India has recently made concerted efforts to universalize elementary education several initiatives were taken right after NPE (1986). Let us discuss the initiatives taken after 1986.

Operation Blackboard: The scheme of Operation Blackboard was launched in 1987. The basic aim was to improve the school environment and enhance retention and learning achievement of children by providing minimum essential facilities in all primary schools. According to this scheme, the following are provided to each school.

i) At least two reasonably larger all-weather rooms, with a verandah and separate toilet facilities for boys and girls;

ii) At least two teachers — one of them a female — for each school; and

iii) Essential teaching-learning materials including blackboards, maps, charts, toys and equipment for work experience.

As part of this scheme, some 523,000 primary schools have been covered as originally envisaged with central government assistance.

Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project: The Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP) was initiated with the assistance of Overseas Development Agency (ODA) with an estimated outlay of Rs.1000 million during the 8th Plan. It adopted a two-pronged strategy of improving classroom transaction by training teachers and giving a fillip to school construction activities.

Bihar Education Project: The Bihar Education Project (BEP) was launched in 1991. The main aim of the project was to bring about quantitative and qualitative improvement in the elementary system, with emphasis on the education of deprived sections of society, such as SCs, STs and Women. The project emphasized participatory planning and implementation. The total project outlay was Rs.3600 million, which included the total outlay for the second phase (1996-98) i.e. Rs.613 million which was shared by the UNICEF, Government of India and Government of Bihar.

Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Programme: The Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Programme (UPBEP) was launched in 1993 with the assistance of the World

Bank, through its International Development Agency (IDA). It had an outlay of Rs.7,288 million spread over seven years. The UP Government had to share 13 per cent of the total project cost. The project emphasized construction work of schools, Block Resource Centres (BRCs), preparation of training materials for teacher trainers and training of in-service teachers.

Reflection and Action 19.2

Why do you think it is essential to reach elementary education to every one in the society?

Non-Formal Education (NFE): The scheme of Non-Formal Education was introduced by the Government of India in 1979-80 with the objective of supporting the formal system in providing education to all children upto the age of 14 years . Initially, it targeted 10 educationally backward states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. But the NPE (1986) reviewed the scheme and concluded that it was not catering to the children from habitations without schools, working children, and girls. Hence, the Policy suggested that apart from focusing on 10 educationally backward states, the scheme needed to be extended to urban slums, hilly, tribal and desert areas and working children in other states and UTs as well. It also recommended central grants to Voluntary Agencies (VAs) for running NFE centers. The Programme of Action (POA) 1992 further suggested some strategies for strengthening of the NFE scheme as mentioned below:

i)   Setting up NFE centers based on micro-planning exercise carried out for UEE.

ii) Central role for community by involving them in setting up of the centre, identification of the instructor and supervision of the NFE centre.

iii) Efforts to evolve different models of NFE programme for different target groups.

iv) Adequate training and orientation of NFE instructors (30 days initial training of instructors and 20 days in subsequent years etc.).

v)   Linkage with the formal school to facilitate lateral entry of the learners from the NFE stream.

vi) Efforts to link non-formal courses with formal schools.

vii) Adoption of learner-centred approach. The learning levels for the learners to be equivalent to the formal system.

The NFE scheme had certain shortcomings in terms of very low investments; poor community involvement; problems in release of funds; several quality issues including training of instructors, and number of hours of teaching per day. Evaluation studies on the scheme of NFE were carried out by Parliamentary Standing Committees on Human Resource Development and on the dropout problem. Similarly, another study was conducted by the Planning Commission. Based on the findings of the studies, the scheme of NFE was restructured and renamed as Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative Innovation Education (EGS and AIE). The new scheme was introduced with effect from April 1, 2001. According to MHRD (2001-2002), "EGS and AIE envisages flexible strategies including schools in unserved habitations, seasonal hostels or condensed courses for migrating children, bridge courses, residential camps, drop-in centers for street and slum children, remedial coaching for children enrolled in formal schools and short-duration summer camps".

The scheme would support the following broad strategies:

i)   Setting up of schools in school-less habitations

ii) Interventions for mainstreaming of 'out of school' children viz. through bridge courses, back to school camps, etc.

iii) Strategies for very specific, difficult groups of children who cannot be mainstreamed.

These schemes became, later on, a part of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) the overall programme for Universalisation of Elementary Education.

National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day Meal-Scheme), 1995: The scheme was launched on 15th August, 1995 to give a boost to Universalisation of Elementary Education. It emphasized increasing enrolment, retention and attendance in primary classes by supplementing nutritional requirements of children attending primary schools. The scheme was implemented in 2408 Blocks in the first year, and covered the whole country in a phased manner by 1997-98. The programme originally covered children of primary stage (Classes 1 to V) in government, local body and government aided schools. It was extended to cover children studying in Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative Innovation Education (AIE) Centres in October 2002.

National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL): NPEGEL aims at providing education to under privileged/disadvantaged girls from class I to VIII as a separate and distinct gender component plan of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The programme is necessary to achieve UEE for girls in educationally backward areas.

The objectives of NPEGEL are:

a) To develop and promote facilities to provide access and to facilitate retention of girls and to ensure greater participation of women and girls in the field of education.

b) To improve the quality of education through various interventions and to stress upon the relevance and quality of girls' education for their empowerment.

The scheme would be applicable in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average and the gender gap is above the national average, blocks of districts which have at least 5% SC/ST population and SC/ST female literacy rate below 10%, and selected urban slums. The target groups under this scheme are out of school girls, dropout girls, over-age girls who have not completed elementary education, working girls, girls from marginalized social groups, girls with low attendance and girls with low levels of achievement. The programme aims at development of teaching learning material CDs, films, guidelines for gender concerns, compilation of supplementary reading material, etc.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV): The scheme called Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) has been approved by the Government of India to set up upto 750 residential schools with boarding facilities at elementary level for girls belonging to SC, ST, OBC and minorities in difficult areas. The scheme will be coordinated with the existing schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Mahila Samakhya (MS). The objective of KGBV is to ensure access and quality education to the girls of disadvantaged groups of society by setting up residential schools with boarding facilities at elementary level. The scheme will be operational in these Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBS) where, as per Census data of 2001, rural female literacy is below the national average and gender gap in literacy is more than the national average. Among these blocks, schools may be set up in areas with:

• Concentration of tribal population, with low female literacy and/or a large number of girls out of school;

- Concentration of SC, OBC and minority population, with low female literacy and/or a large number of girls out of school;

- Areas with low female literacy; and

- Areas with a large number of small-scattered habitations that do not qualify for a school.

The scheme will be implemented by the State Government through the Mahila Samakhya (MS) Society in MS states and through the SSA in case of other states. Training for teachers and staff at the residential schools will be coordinated by the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Block Resource Centres and the Mahila Samakhya Resource Groups.

Lok Jumbish Project: Lok Jumbish Project was initiated in Rajasthan during 1992-94 in the first phase and extended upto 1998 in the second phase. The expenditure in the project was shared between Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA), Government of India and Government of Rajasthan. It is a unique project in which government agencies, teachers, NGO elected representatives and the people worked together to promote universalisationof primary education. The allocation for the project was Rs.1100 million for Phases I and II and Rs.4000 million for Phase-III. The seven guiding principles of Lok Jumbish are:

- A process rather than a product approach;
- Partnerships;
- Decentralized functioning;
- Participatory learning;
- Integration with the mainstream education system;
- Flexibility of management; and
- Creating multiple levels of leadership committed to quality and mission mode.

Janshala Programme: The Janshala Programme aimed at supporting ongoing efforts of the Government of India towards UEE. The programme was a joint effort of five UN agencies - UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO and UNFPA to universalise primary education. These agencies provided financial and technical support to the Government of India for a community-based primary education programme called the Joint Government of India-UN System Education Programme, the Janshala Programme. Special focus was given to the problems of girls and marginalized children. Though the programme was initiated in March 1997, the implementation was carried out in August 1998. Nine states were covered under this programme. In these states, the districts and blocks, which were not covered under DPEP, were taken into account by identifying blocks with low female literacy, high concentration of SCs, STs and high incidence of child labour. The main objectives of the programme were:

- To enhance and sustain community participation in effective school management;
- To improve performance of teachers in the use of interactive child-centred and gender-sensitive methods of teaching, especially in multi-grade classrooms;
- To improve performance of teachers in the use of interactive child-centred and gender sensitive methods of teaching, especially in multi-grade classrooms; and
- To redress social constraints which affect attendance and performance of children (Mainly girls).

The project period was for five year (1998-2002). The total project outlay was Rs.1031 million. The states covered under the programme were Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhatisgarh.

Free and Compulsory Education as a Fundamental Right: The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act 2002, enacted in December 2002 sought to make free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right for all children in the age-group 6-14 years by inserting a new Article 21A 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."

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP): The DPEP was launched in November 1994 to achieve universalisation of elementary education through district-specific planning and disaggregated target setting. The programme as conceptualized based on the experiences of APBEP, BEP and UPBEP. Unlike the earlier programmes, which had schematic piecemeal approach, the DPEP took a holistic view of primary education. The major features of DPEP were decentralized management, community mobilization, and district specific planning based on contextuality and research-based inputs.

While 85% of the cost involved in the programme was borne by the Central Government, the rest of the cost was the responsibility of the State Governments. The Central Government managed the fund with external funding. IDA provided $260 million and $425 million under Phase-I and Phase-II respectively. The European Union (EU) provided 150 Million ECU. The ODA (UK) extended a grant of $80.21 million. The grant from the Netherlands amounted to $25.8 million. The first phase of the programme covered 42 districts in the states of Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and Madhya Pradesh. The second phase covered 80 districts of Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat and all the states of Phase-I. The districts were selected on the basis of female literacy below national average and (Total Literacy Campaign) TLCs have made a demand for elementary education in these districts.

Box 19.2 : Objectives and Achievements of DPEP

The main objectives of DPEP are:

- To provide all children with access to primary education either in the formal system or through the non-formal education (NFE) programme.

- To reduce differences in enrolment, dropout rates and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than 5%.

- To reduce overall primary dropout rates for all students to less than 10%.

- To raise average achievement levels by at least 25% over measured base line levels and ensuring achievements of basic literacy and numeracy competencies and a minimum of 40% achievement levels in other competencies by all primary school children.

The achievement under DPEP obtained so far is as below:

- Opening of new schools numbered 0.160 million of which 0.084 million were alternative schools.
  - Creation of additional schooling facilities.
  - 45,900 new school buildings
  - 46,800 additional classrooms
  - 15,302 resource centers
  - 46,500 toilets
  - 16,700 drinking water facilities
- Appointment of para teachers/shiksha karmis (0.177 million)

Source: MHRD Annual Report (2002-2003

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA): The scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was approved by the Government of India in November 16, 2000. It would subsume all existing programmes of UEE except Mahila Samakhya and Mid-day Meal Scheme. The districts would be units of programme implementation. Apart from improving the efficiency of the delivery system for quality-based education up to Class VIII, it would bridge the gender gap by involving the community in school management. The broad objectives of the scheme are:

- All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, Back-to-School Camp or bridge course by 2003;

- All children in the 6th age group complete five years of primary schooling by 2007;

- All children in the 6-14 age group complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010;

- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life;

- Bridging of all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010; and

- Universal retention 2010.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a massive mission-mode campaign which covers the entire country and seeks to address the needs of 192 million children in 1.1 million habitations. Nearly 0.85 million existing primary and upper-primary schools and 33 million existing teachers would be covered under the Abhiyan (MHRD, Annual Report 2002-2003).

> **Reflection and Action 19.3**
>
> Critically evaluate attempts of government of India for the universalisation of elementary education

19.6 Innovative Intervention in Teacher Education for Universalization of Elementary Education

Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP)

The project was initiated in Rajasthan in 1987 with assistance from the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA). The project aims at UEE in socio-economic remote backward villages in Rajasthan with emphasis on girls' education. It identified teacher absenteeism as the main cause of high dropout rates. Under this project, regular teachers are replaced by local teachers who are less qualified, but specially trained. The Shiksha Karmi is a local person with a minimum qualficiation of Class VIII for men and Class V for women. She is given both induction training programme as well as periodic refresher courses. One of the outstanding achievements of SKP was 100% enrolment of children in 576 villages i.e. more than one fourth of the project villages.

MV Foundation Programme

This programme is implemented in the Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh to achieve universalisation of elementary education. The main concern of this programme is to eradicate child labour and put children into regular government schools by releasing them from child labour. Under this programme, the para teachers are appointed:

- To campaign against child labour;

- To mobilize children, parents and the community in favour of schooling;

- To run bridge courses for children released from labour for giving them basic literacy and numeracy skill and getting them used to school life; and

- To assist the government teachers in teaching, and to retain the new entrants recently released from labour and put into school after an intense campaign.

The programme started in 1991 and had been successful in putting children back into schools.

Himachal Pradesh Volunteer Teacher Scheme (HPVTS)

The scheme was introduced by the State Government in 1984. Under this scheme, an additional volunteer teacher was provided to single teacher primary school. This was done as there was increase in the enrolment in government schools. Another objective of this scheme was to provide unemployed youth job in schools. These volunteer teachers after serving for 10 years got permanent employment as Junior Basic Teacher in Schools.

19.7 Role of Distance Education in Teacher Training at Primary Level

With a well-established distance education system fully equipped with latest communication and information technology, teacher training at primary level has received focused attention from all national and state level institutions and agencies. The role of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and National Council of Educational Research and Training is noteworthy.

IGNOU in collaboration with NCERT launched a Certificate Programme in Guidance (CIG) in 1993 for primary school teachers and parents. A similar kind of collaborative effort between the two organizations culminated in the development of a comprehensive programme titled "Diploma in Primary Education (DPE)", which was launched for training of untrained primary school teachers in North-Eastern States, Sikkim and Jammu and Kashmir. The programme broadly emphasizes developing knowledge and understanding of primary school curriculum, factors affecting child development and role of teacher in the socio-cultural and political context of the country in general and in the primary education system in particular. The programme is conducted through print material, audio-visual aids, conduct of practicals, handbooks, teleconferencing and evaluation.

The NCERT also made use of interactive video technology in 1996 to train primary school teachers of Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka under its "Special Orientation Programme for Primary School Teachers (SOPT)". It was a seven day training programme covering topics such as Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL), Teaching Aids, Multi-grade Teaching, and Strategies for Teaching Mathematics, Environmental Studies and Languages.

Distance Education Programme Under IGNOU in Collaboration with NCERT

IGNOU in collaboration with NCERT launched Distance Education Programme (DEP) as part of DPEP in 1996. The project was financed by MHRD through a loan from the International Development Association (World Bank) towards the cost of second phase of DPEP. The broad goal of DEP-DPEP was to strengthen the ongoing training programme of primary education personnel by using distance learning inputs and materials. This was to help evolve a sustainable system of in-service training linked to improving effectiveness of the teaching-learning process in primary schools (DEP-DPEP, IGNOU, 2003).

Distance Education Programme Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (DEP-SSA)

The DEP-SSA was created by the MHRD as a national centre for distance education activities under SSA on July 1, 2003. The implementation of the project in states and UTs has been entrusted to IGNOU. The main aim of the project is to support the states and UTs to achieve the objectives of SSA.

It covers 28 States and 7 UTs for elementary school stage. It caters to the needs of elementary teachers, BRC/CRC coordinators, VEC members, community leaders and parents, alternative school functionaries/para teachers, faculty of Distance Institutes of Eduation and Training (DIETs), State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), State Institutes of Education (SIEs) and Non-Governemntal Organizations (NGOs) (IGNOU Profile 2006). It provides printed self-learning materials, audio-video programmes and organizes teleconferences.

Reflection and Action 19.4

Do you think appropriate teacher training will facilitate spreading the elementary education. What are the requirements for such teacher training programmes?

19.8 Conclusion

Through this unit we made an attempt to present to you in a synoptic manner the concept, history and the present scenario of universalization of elementary education and the initiatives and strategies taken by both central and state governments to achieve universalisation of elementary education. Elementary education is very crucial not only for the country but also for all the citizens of the country. The makers of the Constitution had made a provision that within a period of ten years from 1950, free and compulsory elementary education would be provided to all children up to 14 years of age. Before independence the demand for compulsory primary education was proposed by Gokhale. After independence, the first milestone to universalize elementary education was laid by the Constitution of India in 1950, but, the serious concerns to universalize elementary education were shown by the National Policy on Education (1986) and Programme of Action (1992). The concerns of the NPE and POA got further strengthened by the international efforts made by UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank through the Declaration of Education for all (EFA). Several initiatives innovations and strategies have been taken by both central and state governments towards universalisation of elementary education. Some of them are Operation Blackboard, APPEP, BEP, UPBEP, NFE, Mid-Day Meal scheme, Lok Jumbish Project, Janshala Programme, Free and Compulsory Education as a Fundamental Right, District Primary Education Programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Several initiatives in teacher education have also been taken for universalization of elementary education. Some of them are Shiksha Karmi Project, MV Foundation Programme, HPVTS, etc. Distance and Open Learning have also played a part in universalization of elementary education. IGNOU offers academic programmes for training of primary school teachers. Distance Education Programme (DEP-SSA) is also supporting the states and UTs to achieve the objectives of SSA.

19.9 Further Reading

Gopalan, K. 1998 *Indian Strategies to Achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education*. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts: New Delhi

Sinha Shabnam 2004, "Elementary Education in India". in J.S. Rajput (Ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Indian Education*. National Council of Educational Research and Training: New Delhi