Kurukshetra seeks to carry the message of Rural Development to all people. It serves as a forum for free, frank and serious discussion on the problems of Rural Development with special focus on Rural Uplift.

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With the Right to Education Act coming into force, India has joined the league of over 130 countries which have legal guarantees to provide free and compulsory education to children. The Right to Education is now a Fundamental Right for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. The Government will be responsible for providing education to every child up to the eighth standard, free of cost, irrespective of class and gender.

However, for the target to be achieved additional infrastructure will have to be built and lakhs of new teachers recruited.

Efforts to boost secondary and higher education have also yielded results. The number of students enrolling for higher education has increased considerably. According to the latest survey done by the HRD ministry, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher education has shot up from 12.4 to 20.2.

Enrolment for higher education would however mean building more infrastructure, including additional Universities and Colleges.

The government has increased spending in the education sector. For the year 2012-13, 25,555 crore Rupees have been provided for SSA representing an increase of 21.7 per cent over 2011-12. Over 6,000 schools are proposed to be set up at block level as model schools in the Twelfth Plan and 3,124 crore Rupees have been provided for Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA).

We discuss various aspects of rural education in this issue with analysis from the ground.

Education finally helps in increasing the productivity of the nation and strengthens all bonds-social and cultural. To reap the benefits of the demographic dividend, quality education and infrastructure will have to be built across the country, especially in the rural sector.

Several studies have concluded that it is necessary to involve the Panchayati Raj Institution, in rural area for universalizing the elementary education. Whenever PRIs in rural areas have taken the initiatives to protect child rights, development indicators in areas like education, health and child trafficking improved dramatically.
Education is a dynamic process that starts from birth. Education is the mirror of the society and base of the socio-economic development. It transforms human beings from ignorance to enlightenment, from underdevelopment to faster economic and social development. Education is a process of character building and expansion of intellect.

Historical Background of Indian Education

Education in India has a history stretching back to the ancient urban centers of learning at Taxila and Nalanda. Western education became ingrained into the Indian society with the establishment of the British Raj. Since independence, the education policies of successive governments have built on the substantial legacies of the Nehruvian Period, targeting the core themes of Plurality and Secularism, with a focus on excellence in higher education, and inclusiveness at all levels.

Traditional education in India served a very limited purpose of a particular section of the society belonging to certain cost. During medieval period education was elitist, favoring the rich. These pre-existing elitist tendencies were reinforced under the British rule. The modern education system of British Raj was first developed in the three Presidencies (Bombay, Calcutta, Madras). In the early 1900s, the Indian National Congress called for national education.

The year 2009 is a landmark year in the history of elementary education, as the Government finally managed to pass the 86th amendment to the Constitution that made Right to Education (RTE) a fundamental right.
placing emphasis on technical and vocational training. In 1920 Congress initiated a Boycott of Government aided and Government controlled schools and founded several ‘national’ schools and colleges. In 1937 Gandhiji raised his voice in favor of universal education. Nehru aimed that education for all and industrial developments were seen as crucial tools to unite a country divided on the basis of wealth, cost and religion, and formed the corner stone of the anti-imperial struggle. So after independence, school curricula were thus imbued with the twin themes of inclusiveness and national pride, placing emphasis on the fact that India’s different communities could be peacefully side by side as one nation.

**Indian Education Policy**

Drawing on Nehru’s vision, and articulating of his key themes the Kothari Commission was set up to formulate a coherent education policy for India. According to the Commission, education was intended to increase productivity, develop social and national unity, consolidate democracy modernize the country and develop social, moral and spiritual values. To achieve this, the main pillar of Indian education policy was free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14. Other features included the development of languages, equality of educational opportunities and the development and prioritization of scientific education and research. The Commission also emphasized the need to eradicate illiteracy and provide adult education. On the basis of the recommendation of Kothari Commission, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi announced a new education policy, National Policy on Education (NEP) in 1986. Under this New Education Policy more than 90% of the country’s rural population was within a Kilometer of schooling facilities and more states had adopted a common education structure. New Education Policy 1986 reviewed in1990 by a newly constituted committee under the chairmanship of Acharya Ramamurti.

Apart from these policies, in order to ensure quality education following initiatives have been developed.

- Restructuring and reorganization of Teacher Education (1987) created a resource for the continuous upgrading of teacher’s knowledge and competence.
- Minimum levels of learning (1991) laid down levels of achievement at various stages and revised textbooks.
- National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (1995) Provided a cooked meal every day for children in class I-V of all govt., govt.-aided, and local body schools. Providing cooked mid – day meals in Primary schools is that this makes the school environment less hostile for the child. Mid – day meals to educational advancement is to boost school enrolment. It also leads to improved learning achievements. It also helps to counter caste prejudices and also foster gender equity, by reducing the gender gap in school participation.
- District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) (1993) emphasized decentralized planning and management, improved teaching and learning materials, and school effectiveness. This programme is supported by the World Bank and other external agencies. The resolutions of international initiatives of which India was a part, like the World Education Forum at Dakar (2000) and the millennium developmental goals compelled India to think more in terms of a time bound mission mode of programmes aimed at universalizing elementary education.
- District Primary School Council (DPSC), (West Bengal) was set up in 1990 at the district levels to administer the primary schools. DPSE is assigned the job of making recruitments, transfer and promotions of teachers.
- Sarva Shikha Abhijan (SSA) (2001) is a flagship centrally sponsored scheme for universalization of elementary education being implemented on a sharing arrangement basis between the centre and the state in the ratio of 75:25. This programme aims at:
  a) Strengthening school infrastructure by constructing new building and upgrading the existing building.
  b) Providing teachers and also building their capacities through training,
c) Seeks to provide quality education including life skills,

d) Promoting community participation in primary education by formulating Village Education Committees and involving them in planning and raising community contribution for primary education,

e) It aims at bridging social, regional and gender gaps in literacy and primary education,

f) It focuses on girl's education and children with special needs,

g) It seeks to provide computer education to bridge the digital divide.

The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shikha Abhijan (RMSA), designed by Ministry of Human Resource Development on the lines of SSA, is expected to bring in the desired investments in Secondary Education and facilitate the process of universalizing secondary education in the country.

The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) set up a committee on decentralized management in 1993 to formulate the guidelines on decentralization reforms in education in the context of the 73rd amendment of the Constitution. According to these guidelines, the three tire Panchayati Raj Institutions would form committees at concerned levels to enhance the cause of primary education the Village Education Committee (VEC) being the lowest at the village levels.

The Village Education Committee (VEC), the lowest at the village levels committee on elementary education was first set up in 1998 (West Bengal) under the West Bengal Government notification. It was required under the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), sponsored by the Department of International Development, of the British Government, which initially covered five district of West Bengal. It took another six years for the state Government to initiate VECs through out the state as part of the Sarva Shikha Abhijan (SSA) programme (2003).

After launching of the SSA in 2001, Village Education Committee (VEC) were sought to be introduced in every Gram Sansad (Village Council) area of all the districts of the state and re constituted in view of the changes in objectives and the target group of universal elementary education. The composition of the VEC was:

1) Gram Panchayat member of the respective Gram Sansad area,
2) Head teacher of the primary school located in the Gram Sansad area,
3) Siksha sahayikas of SSKs functioning in the concerned Gram Sansad area,
4) Anganwadi worker (ICDS) of the concerned Sansad,
5) One or more members from the managing committee of nearby upper primary school / MSK/shift School,
6) Six or more parent members including one parent member of disabled children of primary/ upper primary school and
7) Three nominated members; one person interested in education, one person from SC/ST community and one person from minority community.

The above composition of VEC includes representation of teachers/ parents of all the educational initiatives undertaken in a village under different Government schemes. Gram Panchayat member of the concerned Gram Sansad area as a member of VEC acted as chairperson of VEC and head teacher of the concerned primary school acted as sectary of VEC. Gram Panchayat have the power to monitor and evaluate the activities of VEC. Village Education Committee dissolves only by the recommendation of concerned Gram Panchyat to Panchyat Samiti. The Gram Panchayat has the power to advice to reconstitutes any VEC of their jurisdiction. The Panchayat bodies are entrusted with sufficient power in both constitution and monitoring of the Village Education Committee. The VEC, lowest level education committee in primary school gave ample scope to people participation in elementary education. This committee evaluates the all aspects of elementary education in primary schools. This committee also gives their valuable suggestion for the betterment of quality education and much enrolment.

Some gender specific programmes for elementary education:

In India there are some specific steps taken by the Government for correction of gender imbalances. These are:
● Mandatory recruitment of at least 50% female teachers under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA),
● Separate launching of a National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Levels (NPEGEL), under SSA in educational backward Blocks,
● Launching of residential schools for girls under Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya comes for out of school girls,
● Mahila Sanghas under Mahila Samakhya scheme for women’s empowerment,
● Scheme of free education for girl child at elementary level.

Policies for physically challenged children

● A new initiative of providing integrated education to physically challenged children has been incorporated in the DPEP. The Government has introduced measures to ensure that special facilities and infrastructure are created in not just elementary schools but also up to the senior secondary level for children with special needs.
● A new scheme called the Inclusive Education for the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS). The IEDSS scheme has provision for putting in place special educators, developing learning materials, training of general school teachers to improve their capacity to teach children with special needs in an inclusive environment and building ramps in secondary schools.

Main features of Right to Education Act:

The year 2009 is a landmark year in the development of the history of elementary education, as the Government finally managed to pass the 86th amendment to the Constitution that made Right to Education (RTE) a fundamental right.

The main features of Right to Education Act are –

1. Free and compulsory education to all children of India in 6 to 14 age group.
2. No child shall be held back, expelled or required to pass a board examination until completion of elementary education.
3. A child who completes elementary education (up to from class VIII) shall be awarded a certificate.
4. Calls for a fixed student-teacher ratio.
5. Will apply to all of India except Jammu and Kashmir.
6. Provides for 25% reservation for economically disadvantaged communities in admission to class I in all private schools.
7. Mandates improvement in quality of education.
8. School teachers will need adequate professional degree within five years or else will lose job.
9. School infrastructure to be improved in three years, else recognition cancelled.
10. Financial burden will be shared between state and central government.
11. No child shall be subjected to physical punishment of mental harassment.
12. Screening Procedure shall be punishable with fine.
13. To constitute a school management committee consisting of the elected representatives of the local authority, parents or guardians of children.
14. No teacher shall be deployed for any non-educational purposes.
15. No teacher shall engage himself or herself in private tuition.

Right to Education Act (2009) is a landmark initiative of Govt. for Strengthen education system in India. Under this Act it is mandatory to complete elementary education of all children. Now Education is fundamental Right of every Indians at primary level.

Impact of decentralized governance in elementary education

India has the second largest population in world. The total population is 1,210,193,422 as per 2011 census. Out of them 623,724,248 are males and 586,469,174 are females. The Government of India has launched several programmes after independence to uplift literacy in the country. The literacy rate in the country has increased from a meager 18.33 percent in 1951 to 65.38 in 2001 and
74.04 in 2011. The male literacy rate in the country has increased from 27.16 percent in 1951 to 75.85 percent in 2001 and 82.14 percent in 2011. The female literacy rate in the country has increased from 8.86 percent in 1951 to 54.16 in 2001 and 65.46 in 2011.

### Male Female literacy in India From 1951 to 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>8.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>28.30</td>
<td>40.40</td>
<td>15.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>45.96</td>
<td>21.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>43.57</td>
<td>56.38</td>
<td>29.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>65.38</td>
<td>75.85</td>
<td>54.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>74.04</td>
<td>82.14</td>
<td>65.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Selected educational statistics, Ministry of HRD, Department of Education.

Under various programmes undertaken by the govt. the scenario of India’s education has meager change. At present 96.5% of children in the 6 to 14 age group in rural India are enrolled in school. 71.1 percent of these children are enrolled in govt. schools and 24.3 percent enrolled in private schools. The proportion of girl students, who are out schools, has declined rapidly. The percentages of five years olds enrolled in schools increased 54.6 percent to 62.8 percent in 2010.

During the last six decades, India’s per capita GDP increased three times, while literacy rates increased 3.5 times and Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at elementary education level increased 2.5 times, while India has made tremendous progress in improving its literacy rates and has better literacy rates than countries in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, it is a major concern that it is still below the world and developing country’s average. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at primary and upper primary levels has improved from around 42 percent and 13 percent respectively in 1951 to more than 100 percent at primary level and 70 percent in upper primary level now. The progress in elementary education enrolments in the last decade has been most remarkable. The number of out of school children in the age group of 6 to 14 years has declined from around 45 million in 2001 to around 8 million by the end of the decade (IMRB study, 2009). The improvements in enrolment at elementary level has been most remarkable among girls, rural children, children from marginalized groups and children from economically poor backgrounds, and these improvements have been more prominent in the educationally backward states and districts. The retention rate at primary level or the primary completion rate is 75 percent and the gross primary completion rate is 84 percent. 3.7 percent GDP has been invested in education sector for betterment of the education. With in which 1.7 percent was invested on elementary education alone. On an average, around 50 percent to 55 percent of all education spending is elementary education, around 28 percent to 30 percent on secondary education and around 11 percent to 12 percent invested in higher education in India.

Impact of democratized governance in elementary education has made tremendous progress in improving elementary education. However, its progress in improving education at post elementary stages and in improving quality outcome has been modest. Apart from these advantages there are more challenges in elementary education in India. There are required systematic reforms in education by community participation as the form of decentralization to change the mindset of various stakeholders about the quality, pedagogy, governance and accountability. India still has a large number of illiterates and neo-literates. The quality of education is not good at all. Schools governance and accountability issues are hot topics of discourse not only in academic circles, but also in civil society. Large number of children does not attend school regularly; and teacher attendance is also very poor in many states. Various centrally sponsored schemes, programmes and Right to Education act will able to normalizing this types of challenges in elementary education. People participation in Village Education Committee (VEC) as members and the selection of the members will also improved the all-round development of elementary education in India. Full hearted participation of Panchayati Raj Institution in rural elementary education will also increased enrolment and ensured quality education. Therefore, India makes one of the major knowledge economics in the world in the near future by over - coming all types of challenges.

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Despite decades of reforms in education through various schemes such as Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) etc., it was realized that a vast majority of children were still out of the educational stream and efforts made by the states remain insufficient. This insufficiency created an urge to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to overcome all the existing bottlenecks in the sphere of educational initiatives, leading to the birth of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan. The core idea behind the programme was to ensure enrollment of children in school, retention of children up to upper primary stage, bridging the gender and social category gaps in enrollment and retention and ensuring significant changes in learning achievement levels of children at the primary and upper level stages. The programme aimed at improving human capabilities in all children with the help of active community-stakeholder ship.

Characterizing SSA Approach

This mission adopted a time-bound approach for ensuring “total education” across the country. It grew as a response to demand for
quality elementary education. The programme allows the government to promote the idea of “social justice” by implementing the concept of *education for all*. Not only so, the SSA involves various stakeholders which brings together the Panchayati Raj Institutions, school committees, teachers and parents associations, tribal councils and many more. For the first time the “clear political will” of the nation was reflected through insistence on universalisation of education in the country.

For this *Abhiyaan*, important roles have been assigned to bodies like NEUPA, NCERT, soneed-based capacity-building of these support-institutions have also been geared up simultaneously with SSA; at the same time Community-based monitoring of project effectiveness has been encouraged. Education of girls has been given a top priority across all caste-categories along with a major emphasis on the ideal role of teachers. Preparation of *District Elementary Education Plans* reflecting all governmental and non-governmental investments was laid upon with utmost importance.

**Impact of SSA**

The SSA has been able to generate large scale

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**Impact of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan- At a Glance**

- **96.7%** of all 6-14 year olds in rural India are enrolled in school. This number has held steady since 2010.

- Nationally, private school enrollment has risen year after year for the 6-14 age groups, increasing from 18.7% in 2006 to 25.6% in 2011. These increases are visible in all states except Bihar.

- Nationally, reading levels are estimated to have declined in many states across North India. The All India figure for the proportion of children in Std V able to read a Std 2 level text has dropped from 53.7% in 2010 to 48.2% in 2011. Such declines are not visible in the southern states.

- Basic arithmetic levels estimated in ASER 2011 show a decline. For example, nationally, the proportion of Std III children able to solve a 2 digit subtraction problem with borrowing has dropped from 36.3% in 2010 to 29.9% in 2011. Among Std V children, the ability to do similar subtraction problems has dropped from 70.9% in 2010 to 61.0% in 2011.

- At the All India level, children’s attendance shows a decline from 73.4% in 2007 to 70.9% in 2011 in rural primary schools.

- Nationally, for rural government primary schools, data suggests that over half of all classes visited are multigrade. For example, all India Standard 2 was sitting with one or more other classes in 58.3% of Std 2 classes in primary schools were sitting with another class. This figure is 53% for Std 4.

- Between FY 2008-9 and FY 2010-11 the flow of SSA grants to schools improved significantly. However, this improvement occurred largely between FY 2008-9 and 2009-10. In fact a marginal decrease in the proportion of schools receiving grants is observed between FY 2009-10 and 2010-11. The data suggest that schools tend to get their grants during the second half of the fiscal year.

- At the All India level, there has been a marginal improvement in the proportion of schools complying with RTE norms on pupil-teacher ratio, from 38.9% in 2010 to 40.7% in 2011.

- Nationally, the proportion of schools with no provision for drinking water remained almost the same – 17.0% in 2010 and 16.6% in 2011.

*Source: Annual Status of Education Report 2011*
awareness about the necessities of basic education across rural India. For the first time in India people have come forward and taken ownership of this initiative. This can be considered as the foundation stone towards a participatory democracy where efforts are made through “bottom-up” approach to deliver quality education across the country. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan has been successful in incorporating education as one of the core components of India’s developmental goals. The policy makers, political leaders have been actively involved in not only implementing the overall programme but moulding the mission to suit state-specific situations. Thus enrollment has gone up, attendance has considerably improved; accountability and monitoring of programme is effective.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan has scaled up the number of schools across the country. This has brought forward mushrooming of new schools even in the remotest part of rural India – be it hilly terrain or interior tribal villages. It has been successful in generating a huge bandwagon of teachers who are dedicated and bring in innovative pedagogy to the front. The mission has been successful in building an effective NGO-Civil Society partnership for strengthening the educational base of the country.

Way Forward

Notwithstanding the fact that SSA has been one of the most successful time bound projects of the government, certain issues can be looked into in order to make the mission more “target-oriented” – at the foremost more and more upper primary schools are needed in rural areas and urban slums. The role of civil society is essential for community participation; so their involvement should be sought for promoting awareness amongst parents of dropout children. Regularizing and monitoring of teachers attendance is a must requirement along with incentives like quality mid-day meals for ensuring students regular attendance to school. In order to ensure quality education, steps should be taken towards regular recruitments for filling up vacancies, developing a “student friendly curriculum” and emphasis on writing skills rather than on rote learning. To offer an appropriate learning environment, suitable arrangements for separate toilet facilities for girls, availability of drinking water, electricity-facilities etc are needed within the school. Ensuring effective appraisal is mandatory, hence appropriate measures should be taken regarding creating a monitoring web - where monitoring ranges from teachers performance, utility of funds, transparency and many other important aspects. This will encourage the community to come forward and develop more ownership and acceptance for the programme. Last but not the least, steps can be taken to de-centralize the different functioning and monitoring agencies so that more and more participatory democracy and political will can be attained to make the “Abhiyaan” meet its true ethos.

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Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has been accepted as a national goal in India since independence. The Indian Constitution recognised UEE as a crucial input for nation building and included it in the Directive Principles to be implemented within a period of ten years. Article 45 of the Constitution states, “The State shall endeavour to provide with a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.”

The National Education Policies have reiterated the constitutional directive. The National Policy on Education, 1986, provided that “free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality shall be provided to all children upto the age of 14 years before we enter the 21st century.” The Programme of Action (POA), 1992 outlined various strategies for achieving this goal.

In the millennium year (2000) leaders of 189 nation states including India, signed the United Nations sponsored Millennium Declaration, which set out the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to inter alia ensure that all children around the world are in primary school by the year 2015. In adherence with this declaration, the Central Government announced its Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 2001 (Education For All) programme and tabled the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002 which was passed with unanimous acclamation by Parliament.

With the Right to Education Act coming into force, India has joined the league of over 130 countries which have legal guarantees to provide free and compulsory education to children. According to the UNESCO’s ‘Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010’, about 135 countries have constitutional provisions for free and non-discriminatory education for all. In India, the Right to Education Law, providing free and compulsory schooling to children in the 6–14 year age bracket, came into force with effect from the 1st April, 2010. With the new education act now, India has joined some 20 other countries including Ajit Mondal & Dr. Jayanta Mete
Afghanistan, China and Switzerland, which have laws guaranteeing free and compulsory education for eight years of elementary education.

The 86th Amendment (December, 2002) of the Constitution includes the following changes.

**Article 21A : Right to Education :**

“The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6–14 years, in such a manner as the State may, by law determine”.

**Article 45 : Provision for Early Childhood Care and Education to Children below the Age of 6 years :**

“The state shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.”

**Article 51A : Clause ‘K’ has been Added in 51A Fundamental Duties :**

It shall be the duty of every citizen of India “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 6 and 14 years”.

**International Recognition of Education as a Human Right :**

The right to education is marked priority on the agenda of the international community since it is quintessential for the exercise of all other human rights. A number of human rights treaties accepted and recognized internationally, identifies right to education as a fundamental aspect for development and social transformation.

The right to education is clearly acknowledged in the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948, which states :

“Everyone has the right to education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit....“ (Article 26).

**The Right to Education Act, 2009 : An Overview**

Article 21-A and the RTE Act came into effect on 1 April 2010. The title of the RTE Act incorporates the words ‘free and compulsory’. ‘Free education’ means that no child, other than a child who has been admitted by his or her parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate Government, shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. ‘Compulsory education’ casts an obligation on the appropriate Government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the 6–14 age group. The key provisions of the act are overviewed as follows :

**Duties of Appropriate Government and Local Authority :**

- All children between the ages of 6–14 have access to a neighborhood school with the prescribed number of teachers having prescribed minimum qualifications, building and infrastructure as defined in the Act.
- All children are entitled to free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education (Class 1 to VIII).
- No child shall be denied any of the entitlement guaranteed under the Act on the ground of community, caste or religion, gender, rural, urban, rich or poor, able or with special needs – they will study together in an inclusive environment.
- Good quality elementary education conforming to the standards as prescribed in the Act.
- Provision of training facilities and professional development for teachers.
- Monitoring of school functioning.
- Children will study in their age appropriate class and special training will be provided for out of school children who are being enrolled and need to catch up.

**Duties and Responsibilities of Schools :**

- School shall create an environment free of fear, anxiety and stress – there will be no detention, no corporal punishment, no mental harassment and no expulsion. Teachers will care for children and respect their dignity.
- School cannot deny admission to any child
on the grounds of lack of birth / transfer certificate and they shall be admitted in their age appropriate class.

- School shall admit out of school children throughout the academic year.
- A school must have clean classrooms, safe drinking water, toilets (separate for girls / boys), play area and library facilities.
- Children will learn through activities, discovery and exploration and will be assessed through continuous comprehensive evaluation.
- Each school will have a School Management Committee comprising elected representatives who will monitor the progress of the school and draw up a school development plan.
- Prescribe minimum working days and hours for teachers.
- Private/unaided schools will reserve 25% seats for children from disadvantaged communities as stated in the Act.

**Duties and Responsibilities of Teachers :**

- Maintain regularity and punctuality in attending school.
- Conduct and complete the curriculum in accordance with the provisions of section 29 of RTE Act 2009 within the specified time.
- Maintain a file containing the cumulative records for every child which will be the basis for awarding the completion certificate when the child finishes class VIII.
- Hold regular meetings with parents and guardians and appraise them regularly about attendance of their children, the child’s learning ability, progress and any other relevant information.
- Participate in training programmes.
- No teacher shall engage himself or herself in private tuition or in private activity.

**Budget Allocation**

The RTE Act is the first legislation in the world that puts the responsibility of enrolment, attendance and completion of education on the government. To fulfill the promise the imparting education as a right, the government has enhanced budgetary funds to the education sector.

The education sector has received considerable attention in the recent budget for 2012–13, too.

**Table 1 : Schedule Outlining Norms and Standards for a School**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Norms and Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Number of teachers | - 30 : 1 (for class I-V)  
- 35 : 1 (for class VI-VIII)  
- At least three subject teachers (for class VIII) |
| 2. Minimum number if working days in an academic year | - 1 classroom per teacher  
- 1 office-cum-store for headmaster  
- Separate toilets  
- Drinking water  
- Kitchen for mid-day meal preparation  
- Playground  
- Boundary wall |
| 3. Minimum number of working days in an academic year | - 200 working days of class (I – V)  
- 220 working days (for class VI – VIII) |
| 4. Minimum number of working hours per week for a teacher | - 45 teaching including preparation hours |
| 5. Teaching/learning equipment | - Provided to each class |
| 6. Library | - Provided to each school |
| 7. Play material, games, sports equipment | - Provided to each class |

*Source: RTE Act 2009. pp 12-13*
The Finance Minister set aside Rs. 25.555 crore for implementation of the RTE Act – SSA, up by 21.7% from last year’s Rs. 21,000 crore. In the Twelfth Plan, 6,000 schools have been proposed to be set up at Block level as model schools to benchmark excellence. Of these, 2500 will be set up under Public Private Partnership (PPP). For effective implementation of the RTE-SSA, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is being strengthened and re-structured. For 2012-13 an allocation of Rs. 15.850 crore has been made against Rs. 10,000 crore in 2011-12. This amounts to an increase of over 58%. National Programme of Mid Day Meals in schools has enhanced enrolment, retention, attendance and also helped in improving nutritional level among children. In 2012-13, Rs 11,937 crore has been allocated for this scheme as against Rs. 10,380 crore in 2011-12.

Recent Scenario of RTE Indicators : At a Glance

- At the All India level, there has been a marginal improvement in the proportion of schools complying with RTE norms on pupil-teacher ration, from 38.9% in 2010 to 40.7% in 2011, Kerala stands out with 94.1% of schools in compliance, and in Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland and Manipur, more than 80% schools are in compliance with these norms.

- At the All India level, there has been a marginal decline in the proportion of schools with at least one classroom per teacher, from 76.2% in 2010 to 74.3% in 2011. In Mizoram, 94.8% of schools comply with the teacher-classroom norms and in Punjab, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujrat and Maharashtra more than 80% schools are in compliance.

- All India figures for 2011 show no significant improvement in the proportion of schools with an office-cum-store. This figure remains at 74%. Similarly, for the country, as a whole, about 62% of visited schools had a playground, both in 2010 and in 2011. However, there has been an increase in the proportion of all schools that have a boundary wall, for 50.9% in 2010 to 54.1% in 2011.

- Nationally, the proportion of schools with provision for drinking water remained almost the same – 17.0% in 2010 and 16.6% in 2011. In the North East, the proportion of schools with no water provision ranged from 23.8% in Assam to 87.3% in Manipur in 2011.

- The proportion of schools with a usable drinking water facility has remained steady at about 73%. Kerala has the best record with 93.8% schools that have a useable drinking water facility.

- The All India proportion of schools where there was no separate girls’ toilet has declined from 31.2% in 2010 to 22.6% in 2011. Also, there has been a substantial improvement in the proportion of schools that have separate girls’ toilets which are usable. This figure has risen from 32.9% in 2010 to 43.8% in 2011.

- The proportion of schools without libraries has declined from 37.5% in 2010 to 28.6% in 2011. Children were seen using the library in more schools as well-up from 37.9% in 2010 to 42.3% in 2011.

Source : Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2011

Suggestions

Budgetary allocation for RTE-SSA Programme should be adequate to meet the centre’s commitment of 65% since most state governments are struggling with ballooning budget deficits. Due to paucity of funds with the Government for allotment under the Act, substantial public-private participation in elementary education may be considered for its effective implementation. The most important challenge, if the ground reality is taken into account is the abject poverty coupled with population explosion emerges as the root cause of depriving the children their right to education. If our Government is really serious about effective implementation of RTE, then poverty has to be accepted as a biggest challenge. In addition to that, the spectrum of implementation issues covering finance, accountability and monitoring need to be addressed forthwith.

[Ajit Mondal is Research Scholar, & Dr. Jayanta Mete is Associate Professor, Department of Education, University of Kalyani, Nadia, Pin – 741235, West Bengal. E-mail : jayanta_135@yahoo.co.in]
Education is the most important driving force for the progress and development of a nation. In this context, both men and women will have to play an equal and vital role in contributing to the nation’s development. Therefore, equal opportunities of education should be provided to both on equal footing. A recent study by World Bank (2003) says that educating women is not a charity, it is good economics and if developing nations are to abolish poverty, they should educate their women. This truly implies for India where more than 65% of the Indian population fall below the poverty line. But, India represents a picture of contrast when it comes to the educational opportunities for girls as compared to boys. And it is also an admitted fact that the society can progress only when its women are educated. India ranks 129 out of 146 countries on the Gender Inequality Index (GII), better only than Afghanistan. Moreover, India has the potential to become one of greatest economies in the world but lack of equal opportunities of education for women will act as a strong barrier in realizing its goal.

Women in the Margins

Of all the recommendations and sincere attempts made by the Government at all levels, the progress of women’s education is not yet satisfactory in certain regions in India particularly in rural areas. Women are still lagging far behind men in respect of educational advancement. It has been noted that among the limited number of women receiving education, a majority comes from urban areas. Rural areas on the whole, have poor levels of education.
The pace of increase in female literacy is higher in the rural areas. It has increased from 46.13% in 2001 to 58.75% in 2011. It is also to be noted that gender gap in literacy rate has narrowed down considerably over the Census but continue to be high i.e. 19.81. Whereas in the rural areas there has been a consistent increase in literacy rate of both male and female. Moreover, the steady increase in the female literacy rate has reduced the gender gap significantly in the urban areas. So, after going through the Census of India 2011, there have been an increase in the pace of female literacy in the rural areas but still women in rural India are facing some inequalities of educational opportunities as compared to men despite of many initiatives taken by the government.

The literacy rate amongst women has increased far more than among men, even though literacy among women is still quite a bit lower than among men. From 2001 to 2011 literacy among men increased from 75.26% to 82.14%, a rise of 6.9%. In the same time frame, the literacy among women increased from 53.67% to 65.46%, an increase of 11.8%. However, in 2011, women are still significantly less likely to be literate than men. The gap in the male-female literacy rate is just a simple indicator. While the male literacy rate is 82.14 according to the 2001 Census, and that of the female literacy rate is 65.46. So, still there is a gap of 16.95 between male and female literacy rate.

**LITERACY RATE IN INDIA**

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<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
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<td>1921</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>82.14</td>
<td>65.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India (2011)

Due to the regional imbalances in respect of development of educational opportunity in different parts of India; disparity of inequality of education if girls are evident. According to the state wise literacy rate of female in India, Census 2011, Kerela stands the highest in female literacy accounting for 92.0% and the state with

**CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

*Article 15(1)* states: “the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them”

*Article 15 (3)* states “nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children”.

*Article 16 (1)* states: “there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment of any office under the state”

*Article 39 (a)* states: “the citizens, men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood”

Therefore, in the Indian Constitution it is assured that no one is discriminated against on the basis of sex. This implies in the arena of education too.
least female literacy rate is Rajasthan accounting for 52.7%. One of the striking features of 2011 Census is that the sex ratio has drastically gone down from 927 in 2001 to 914 in 2011. This shows that Indian people have more preference over boy child than the female child. Female foeticide is increasing in an alarming rate in India and this is more so among the states having high literacy. This is a matter of great concern for the nation to think of. It directly indicates inequality of girls. On the other hand, the Sixth All India Educational Survey NCERT 1995 found that women formed 23% of primary teachers in rural areas as compared to 60% in urban areas; at the upper primary, the corresponding figures are 25% and 59%. There is an acute shortage of competent and qualified women teachers particularly in rural areas. Only 18.90 % teachers are female in rural schools but in urban schools this percentage is 56.22. According to the ministry of HRD (2005); 14 lakhs children with disabilities were enrolled. However literacy rates for women with disabilities continue at a dismal of 37 percent while the national average being 54 percent of girls.

Though school enrolment ratio among girls is rising in both the urban and mostly rural areas but still high rate of dropouts still continues to be a major problem among girls. This rate is higher at 10+ stage. For every women aged below 18 getting married in urban areas, three are doing the same in rural areas. Jammu & Kashmir has seen the largest dip in under-aged brides at 83%. Kerela is the only state that has seen a 50% increase in girls getting married by the age of 18. In this case some discontinue their schooling and those who want to pursue their education further; many schools and colleges do not admit married women in their institutes. Then where will these women (students) go? Certainly the correspondence course is not the answer when the student is a science student. Therefore the education of women suffers.

Some Causes of Educational Inequality

Studies across the globe pointed out that the main causes are slower economic growth, rising poverty and budget pressure in this respect.

- Poverty
- Conservative outlook of the parents
- Early marriages of girls and purdah system
- Parents’ preference for boys education to girls education.
- Unwilling to educate under male teachers etc
- Lack of qualified women teachers.
- Lack of proper security measures for girl students and women teachers.
- Lack of awareness of the necessity of education for girls in rural areas.
- Inadequate means of communication in rural areas.
- Girls involvement in the household work
- Poor quality of instruction in schools
- Corruption at all levels and at all places is the root cause of it. Out of hundred rupees allocated to any scheme, only twenty rupees reaches the target level.

Some Measures for Removing Educational Inequality

- Awareness for educating the girls should be developed in the parents specially in the conservative one’s
- Facilities like- flexibility in the timetable, provision of uniforms, midday meals, books, incentives and scholarships, means of transport etc.
- Government should try to establish schools in every village.
- Non- formal education facilities may be provided to suit the convenience of the girls.
- Trained lady teachers should be appointed
- Mass media like television and radio should broadcast programmes which help in creating a conducive atmosphere in favour of girls education in the rural villages.
- Efficient ladies may be appointed in the administrative field of women’s education for they will be in a better position to understand the problems of girls.
- Ensuring safety of girl students and women teachers.
- Providing better service condition and
residential facilities for teachers in rural areas.

- More special arrangements and provisions should be made for the proper education of the disabled girl child.

While emphasizing too much on quantity factor, the quality of education for women should also be taken care of side by side.

The Government and policy makers are doing their very best for providing every kind of educational rights and opportunities for women even in rural villages of India. We can see it through various Acts, Laws, Commissions, Committees, Plans, Policies, Operations, incentives etc. passed in favour of them. Moreover, today there are huge number of Cells and bodies who are functioning for the welfare of women education. So, it will be our foolishness to blame the Government for this cause of inequality. In India 65% of the people live below the bare subsistence level. When parents do not have the bare necessities of life and struggle for existence; it is unthinkable and unjustified to imagine that they would think of education of their daughters. But, they can be motivated to have their children educated only if educational system is directly linked with economic and social development. As long as our education system remains ignorant of the felt needs of people to solve their immediate problems and at the same time alienates them from their natural, social and cultural surroundings, they will rightly resist sending their children to school and equalization of educational opportunities for women will remain only a distant dream.

[The author is doing Research on Education from Vinaya Bhavana, Visva Bharati University; West Bengal]

From 2001 to 2011 literacy among men increased from 75.26% to 82.14%, a rise of 6.9%. In the same time frame, the literacy among women increased from 53.67% to 65.46%, an increase of 11.8%.

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India inherited a system of education that was historically elitist. Education was seen as a prerogative of the privileged classes due to the caste system norms that encouraged only the male Brahmins to receive a formal religious education from their religious schools among the Hindus. Even among the other religions, only a select few male members were allowed and could afford the luxury of education. People of lower births and women as a group were absent in the mainstream education for so long that they lost their chances for independence and upward mobility in a patriarchal, caste ridden and a colonial society. At the time of the first census post independence, we inherited an abysmally inequitable education system where only 9% women and 27% men were literate (1951). This was put down as a result of lack of proper provision for education coupled with ignorance among the masses about the benefits of having formal schooling. In a democratic India with a huge human resource, economic development was thought to be closely linked to better socioeconomic indices with a special emphasis on education. It was with achieving this goal in mind that in 1960, the Indian State decided to offer free and compulsory elementary education for children up to the age of 14. Policy measures through the National policy on Education 1968, 1986, 1992 (revised) and large scale programmes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and mid-day meal scheme improved the enrolment of children across India albeit slowly.
A 2006 survey conducted by ASER (Assessment Survey Evaluation Research) shows that elementary enrolment ratio in India has risen to 93.4%. In 2009, The Government of India enacted the Right to Education Act that defines elementary education as a fundamental right of every Indian child. In these circumstances, it is pertinent to assess how far the Indian education system has succeeded in providing accessible quality elementary education to all the children in rural India and particularly the rural girl child, who suffers the double discrimination of non-accessibility sociologically and geographically. The first part of the objective is to be examined by comparing the enrolment ratios and attendance along with quality assessment standards based on studies conducted by external organisations to determine the learning achievement of the rural Indian student. The second part on the rural girl child is done by studying the specific problems of rural education, the case of school drop-outs and finally suggesting some measures to close the gap.

The Education System in India

In India, Education is a concurrent subject giving the power of legislation to both the Central and State governments. This implies that any policy in Education will be a concerted effort between the two centres of power. This also forewarns that the progress made in this sector by different states may be sometimes drastically different considering the peculiar cultural background, size, economic development and possibility of penetration of each state. The programmes are implemented by The Ministry of Human Resource Development along with the State Education Departments with the assistance of National and State Councils of Education Research and Training (NCERT & SCERT). They are aided by the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET), Block resource centres in the urban areas and by Village Education Committees, Panchayati Raj Institutions and Non Governmental Organisations in rural areas.

India has an elementary enrolment ratio of 93.4%. But a closer analysis reveals that the enrolment in secondary education is considerably lower.

Access and Quality of Rural Education

According to a study by the National Centre on Education and Economy (2006), India has the second largest education system in the world after China with 6,00,000 primary schools with 115 million students and 2 million upper primary schools with 45 million students.

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER):

India has an elementary enrolment ratio of 93.4%. But a closer analysis reveals that the enrolment in secondary education is considerably lower than its primary counterpart. In the age group of 11-14 (secondary education), the GER is
only 47%. The statistics also shows inter-state and gender variations.

According to a World Bank Report 2006, Kerala and West Bengal are states with maximum enrolment and minimum gender disparity as opposed to Bihar, Uttar Pradesh or Rajasthan which are the least performing states in the sector. Whereas Kerala and Tamilnadu have pro-female secondary enrolment rates, girls in Bihar and Rajasthan were only half as likely to receive secondary education as boys.

Attendance rates:
Attendance rates reveal the retention of students in schools by exposing drop-outs and absence of students. Comparing the National Family Health Surveys 1993-99, we find that the attendance of rural girls and boys in primary school increased by 20% and 12% respectively. But a UNESCO study reveals that only 20% of the students actually attended the secondary schools in the period 1999-2000.

Learning Achievements:
A report of ESRC Global Poverty Research Group indicates that until 2006, no official data was available on the standards of the Indian schooling system. However the ASER Report by an NGO in 2006 closely followed by NCERT’s assessment conducted in 2002 reveal low learning levels. The average percentage mark for India as a whole is 50.3 per cent in science, 46.5 per cent in maths and 58.6% in language according to the NECRT data. This corroborated with the findings of the ASER report that nearly half of the children in class V did not have the reading or arithmetic capacity expected of even a class II student.

Quality of schools:
Most of the schools in rural India do not have the necessary amenities or infrastructure like a building of classrooms, a black board, toilet and drinking water. Moreover, there is only one secondary school to every five primary schools. The teacher student ratio is 1:40 on an average and the situation is exacerbated by non-teaching activity during school hours and absence of teachers.

It is safe to conclude that though enrolment rates are good and attendance rates are modestly increasing, much effort needs to be done in improving the quality of schools and trained teachers and in retaining students in the secondary education classes.

The Case of the Girl Child
The India Human Development Report 2011 states that 19% of the children in rural India drop out in the 6-17 age group. However, the official statistics of the primary level dropout rate of the rural girl child is 6.9% according to the 52nd round of National Sample Survey. The gender gap in rural drop out of 20% unfavourable to the girl child, still persists. A majority of the families are engaged in unorganised sector for employment with a low level of education accessed by the parents. This had an adverse impact on the enrolment and retention of the girl child.

The reasons analysed for the girls dropping out are given below. Interestingly, 37% of the total dropouts said that the reason for their absence is that they were no longer interested in studies. A small percent opted out to take up work. A survey conducted in the rural districts of Madhya Pradesh to study about the reasons for the girl drop out at the primary and secondary levels revealed some important results. The top reasons why girls dropped out of school were:

i. Sibling Care and Household Chores

ii. Weak Financial condition and Earning for the household

iii. Migration

iv. Social and gender discrimination

v. Poor condition of school infrastructure, such as unavailability of separate toilet for girls

37% of the total dropouts said that the reason for their absence is that they were no longer interested in studies. A small percent opted out to take up work.
even in co-educational Middle & High schools including locking up of toilets during school hours

vi. Lack of attention due to absence of teachers in school

It was interesting to note that 90% of the parents were willing to send their girl child to school but were compelled by various factors to act on the contrary and 88% of them were aware of the Government Programmes for the girl child. They rated the school conditions as good even if they had not heard of the use of teaching tools like charts and maps from their daughters. Girls who continued schooling also had aspirations for a better life through jobs that their education would eventually lead to. But shockingly, three-fifth of the girls preferred not continuing education. These facts should be analysed keeping in mind Madhya Pradesh is ranked in the lower middle group of states in the effective implementation of education schemes by the World Bank Report 2006.

This has to be read together with the NUEPA (National University of Education Planning and Administration) report 2006 that speaks of the status of elementary education in the rural areas in India. In 2005, 48 per cent of India’s rural elementary schools had no more than two teachers and half of the rural schools having two or more teachers had no female teachers. 35 per cent of the schools have less than 50 students. Several different age groups are combined in one class (India Infrastructure Report 2007). Though there have been a spectacular rise in the number of rural elementary schools, infrastructure problems plague them. About 14% of the rural schools in states like Madhya Pradesh do not have a building and about 17% do not have access to safe drinking water. Safe roads and access to toilets were minimal, turning away girls. In terms of teaching standards, the permanent teachers of government schools had a secondary level education; there were a sizable number of graduates, post graduates and even doctorate degree holders among rural teachers. Despite such a high teacher qualification, a teacher was not able to efficiently engage the children in the average 209 working days of the year due to an unmanageable teacher student ratio or disinclination and lack of motivation from the teachers due to absence of basic amenities and low salaries.

Closing the gap

A thorough study of the impact of the government flagship programmes like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan state-wise to record the actual success of the programme in achieving its goals is mandatory. Free uniforms, free bicycles, mid-day meal scheme, provision for food and lodging and gender sensitive schools will go a long way to retain girls. Once they drop out, the incentive to get back to school is very less for the girl child due to her responsibilities in her family, compulsion to get married or earn for the family. So, the priority should be her retention in schools as long as possible through scholarships and financial assistance. Sensitising the parents through programmes at the rural level should create a demand for education among the families for their daughters. Inclusion of vocational courses and bridge courses will also attract and retain girls in school. A comprehensive assessment of the impact of elementary education or the lack of it state-wise on children should be taken up at the earliest. Only by assessing the situation of the disadvantages that children face based on economic situation, caste, gender and other indices can we bring out a speedy remedial action and eventually include every child in the orbit of his/her fundamental right to learn and grow.

(The authors are independent researchers based in Puducherry. Email: francyge83@yahoo.co.uk, deepa_7ki@yahoo.co.in)
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INTEGRATING RURAL WOMEN IN INDIA INTO THE HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE
Dr Raju Narayana Swamy

Higher education has been found to have a significant relationship with the Human Development Index and also the Gender Development Index. Its significance is especially apparent for rural development. Access to higher education for women as reflected by the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is an issue of great concern. It reflects the inequality persisting among women within Indian society. The present paper looks at the access of higher education for women across rural areas.

Women being educated in the Third World nations of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East and the sum of education they receive have both expanded markedly since the 1960s. Female enrollment in primary school has more than doubled, and at the secondary and tertiary levels the increases have been dramatic. Despite these gains, women remain under represented at all levels of education relative to men. Fewer females than males enter educational programs, be they formal or nonformal; fewer receive technical and vocational training; and women account for a very small proportion of enrollment in post secondary education (Gail P. Kelly & Carolyn M. Elliott, 1982).

Education for girls has a strong and very important effect on the role of women in society. It tends to draw more women into the labour market.
This increase in female labour force participation expands income-earning opportunities for many households and better utilizes the labour, skills and talents of women. Education brings social benefits that improve the situation of the poor, such as lower fertility, improved health care of children and greater participation of women in the labour market. Research studies correlating literacy and development indicators like fertility, child mortality etc are based on women’s literacy rates. Caldwell (1979) analyzed the impact of women’s education on child health that each extra year of maternal education was associated with a 9% decrease in under-five mortality.

Higher Education in India

India made intensive efforts to improve access to higher education and it grew rapidly after independence. The government supported higher education by setting up universities and colleges. It also took over the responsibility of running the institutions set up through private sector. There has been significant growth in the number of universities and colleges. After independence there was an increase from 25 (universities) to 700 (colleges) in 1947 to 354 (universities) and 17,625 (colleges) in 2005. There are five universities and 851 women’s colleges which exclusively serve women students. But the total enrolment increased from a meager 0.1 million in 1947 to 10.48 million in 2005 resulting in only twelve fold increase in number of students. This only helped to cater only 7% of the age group population viz 18 to 25 years. The total enrolment increased from a meager of 0.1 million in 1947 to 10.48 million in 2005. The bulk of the higher education system depended on 131 affiliating universities, which contributed to about 89 percent of the total enrolment. The Human Development Index for the year 2009 ranked India at 134, one of the lowest among the League of Nations. India has been ranked 120 & 128 in adult literacy rate & GDP per capita parameters. It indicates that we require more institutions to address the issues of accessibility and we need to provide higher education at an affordable cost also.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Universities*</th>
<th>Colleges</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>348</td>
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<td>17,973</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


*Includes central, state, private and deemed-to-be-universities as also institutions of national importance established both the central and the state legislatures.

The total enrolment in the higher education system increased from 0.17 million in 1950-51 to 2.75 million in 1980-81 and 4.92 million in 1990-91. From the level of 2.75 million in 1980-81, it increased by four times to 11.03 million in 2005-06. During the period 1950-51 to 2005-06, total enrolment at higher education level increased at an average annual growth rate of 8.04 percent. At the beginning of the academic year 2006-07, the total number of students enrolled in the universities and colleges was 11.03 million. Of the total enrolment, 1.43 million (12.94%) were enrolled in University Departments and 9.60 (87.06%) in affiliated colleges. The GER at the higher education level ranges from as low as 4.7% in Nagaland to as high as 14.1% in Himachal Pradesh (Status of Education in India, National Report).

Literacy of women in India

Traditional concepts recognize higher education as an instrument of personal development. It helps in growing an individual’s intellectual horizons, wellbeing and potential for empowerment. With the promotion of economic reform policies, the role of higher education is being reinterpreted and redefined. Market-promoting policies are posing a challenge to Higher education, and are being considered as both a powerful force of economic progress
and the focal point of learning in a society. Higher education has assumed responsibility for transmitting accumulated knowledge both cultural and scientific. The effect of modernism and technological progress will increasingly demand competencies and pose challenges requiring more vibrant content. Higher education needs to be reoriented to increase women’s access to traditionally male dominated courses and equip them to take up entrepreneurial administration and leadership roles and responsibilities. The three specific needs related to women and higher education are:

- Recognition of women as an essential human resource base of each country;
- A strong commitment to equip women with the necessary range of managerial skills empowering them in their decision making role;
- Institution of a feminine leadership model suited to the needs of social development across all sectors (Ranjana, Bamerjee, year not mentioned).

With the adoption of several policies the participation of women in higher education has changed. The enrolment of girl student in higher education is increasing continuously. But the ratio of the dropout also is going up. Our education system fails to adopt the girls in higher education. This acts as an obstacle to the human development in India. The gaps in the male-female literacy rate are an indicator of gender discrimination persisting in India. The male literacy rate is more than 75% and that of female literacy rate is only 54.16% as per 2001 Census¹. According to the higher education department of India, total enrollment in higher education in India is 1,43,23,566 students and only 54,91,818 girl students are enrolled in Year 2008. The data clearly reveal that the overall representation of women in higher education is poor. Please see tables 2 and 3 below:

### Table: 2 Enrolment in Higher Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>P.G. &amp; Ph.D</th>
<th>Graduation</th>
<th>B.E.</th>
<th>B.Ed.</th>
<th>MBBS</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Total Enrolment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>136825</td>
<td>1363060</td>
<td>88494</td>
<td>48893</td>
<td>78244</td>
<td>1715516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>316788</td>
<td>1886428</td>
<td>103195</td>
<td>68250</td>
<td>67822</td>
<td>2442483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>387684</td>
<td>3285776</td>
<td>241368</td>
<td>92217</td>
<td>84393</td>
<td>4091438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>692342</td>
<td>7244915</td>
<td>418193</td>
<td>121733</td>
<td>148699</td>
<td>8625882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>847947</td>
<td>6864812</td>
<td>708643</td>
<td>118593</td>
<td>208465</td>
<td>9516773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>872252</td>
<td>7052274</td>
<td>772923</td>
<td>114681</td>
<td>223236</td>
<td>9035366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>845619</td>
<td>6728029</td>
<td>696609</td>
<td>155192</td>
<td>256748</td>
<td>8682197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>1230054</td>
<td>6741592</td>
<td>168176</td>
<td>199676</td>
<td>308705</td>
<td>10161743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Share of Girls’ Enrolment (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


BE: Bachelor of Engineering; Bed: Bachelor of Education.
Table 3
Enrolment of the Scheduled Tribes (2004-05)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph. D</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>1337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>14271</td>
<td>8808</td>
<td>23079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Sc.</td>
<td>3324</td>
<td>2160</td>
<td>5484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Com</td>
<td>2296</td>
<td>1347</td>
<td>3643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA/B.A (Hons)</td>
<td>124645</td>
<td>71533</td>
<td>196178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Sc/B.Sc (Hons)</td>
<td>33142</td>
<td>16620</td>
<td>49762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.Com/B.Com (Hons)</td>
<td>31353</td>
<td>17018</td>
<td>48371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Others (not included in specified faculty)</td>
<td>38754</td>
<td>27445</td>
<td>66199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Others include data of Open and Distance Learning Institutions in 8 states namely Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Hurdles with women participation in higher education

The status of the girl child has been a subject of much argument and debate. There are still overwhelming cultural and economic reasons in India, which keep female children from not receiving educational attention as their male counterparts. In the rural areas, the girl child is made to perform household and agricultural chores. This is one of the many factors limiting girls’ education. Cleaning the house, preparing food, looking after their siblings, the elderly and the sick, grazing the cattle and collecting firewood are some of the key tasks they have to perform. Households are therefore reluctant to spare them for schooling. Physical safety of the girls, especially when they have to travel a long distance to school and fear of sexual harassment are other reasons that impede girls’ education. Another constraint was lack of access to decent and productive rural employment and non-agriculture income generating activities. Most of the rural women are employed in low productivity jobs, working on small farms as paid or unpaid labourers, or running small enterprises. They could not become involved in non-agricultural income-generating activities as there were policies, legal and cultural barriers, including customary laws that prevented women from accessing credit.

Access to education for girls also does not rely on proximity of schools only. It is part of a larger structural concern, including the practice of son preference, which creates inherent discriminatory practices. Education initiatives hence cannot rely solely on building educational infrastructure, but also need to address some of the root causes of discrimination against women and girls which affect the decisions made by parents (Reecha, Upadhyay). In the urban areas, however, there is a discernible difference in the opportunities that girls get for education and employment. There is...
an element of awareness of gender issues in the more educated sections of society in certain regions. Moreover, urban spaces permit greater opportunity for personal autonomy to girls (Higher Education for Women in India: Choices and Challenges).

Institutional and cultural barriers deny rural women’s right to land. Land not only is an economic and productive resource, but also a source of position and recognition in the society. The extent to which women were involved in technology, research and development, and had access to new technologies, is another challenge. UNESCO articulated the close relationship between educational development and the incorporation of women’s issues within the educational process more explicitly. It states: “The exclusion of the issues of women’s subordination, discrimination and emancipation form the arena of scientific and intellectual discussion has contributed to their continuation and has facilitated the perpetuation of false rationalizations or justifications of subordination as resulting from natural or biological causes. Such facile generalizations continue to influence women’s access to and role in all levels of education and research, including special sectors that carry weight, prestige and power, such as science and technology” (Vina, Mazundar). There are only few institutions addressing the social, political and economic structures limiting the empowerment of rural women. It was therefore necessary to achieve institutional change.

Making education accessible

The main challenge to women’s higher education is to provide gender fair education. It should involve a hostile move away from prominence on separate and harmonizing spheres for men and women and on gender-stereo typed careers to expanded options and outcomes. The achievement of equality and empowerment should be an open, overarching aim in a healthy social environment. If education is to become a vigorous agent for ending gender discrimination, it requires a new perception and new understanding about the origin of women’s subordination. In the increasingly open global economy, countries with high rates of illiteracy and gender gaps in educational attainment tend to be less competitive, because foreign investors seek labor that is skilled as well as inexpensive. Various global trends pose special challenges to women who are illiterate or have limited education (Farzaneh, Roudi-Fahim & others, year not mentioned). In addition, the benefits of female education for women’s empowerment and gender equality are broadly recognized:

- As female education rises, fertility, population growth, and infant and child mortality fall and family health improves.
- Increases in girls’ secondary school enrollment are associated with increases in women’s participation in the labor force and their contributions to household and national income.
- Women’s increased earning capacity, in turn, has a positive effect on child nutrition (Ibid.).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the need for higher education of women, and in particular of rural women, is overwhelming. The value of educating girls is not recognized fully in rural areas. The problems of access, quality, content and the devaluing of non-formal education reduce enrolment. According to the Country Report of the Government of India, ‘Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power’. Education among women is the most powerful tool of attaining power in the society. It helps in lessening inequalities and functions as a means for improving their status within the family. Educated women are more politically active and better informed about their legal rights and how to exercise them.

[The author is a senior IAS officer working as Commissioner Civil Supplies, government of Kerala.]
Three year old Sivakami is a pleasant, pony-tailed girl whom I see every day. She is the culinary assistant and assistant waiter at the small mess where I have breakfast and meals on a regular basis. Besides being cheap, the food one gets in such messes that can be seen all over Tamilnadu is of excellent quality.

However, the quality and low expense comes up with a specific price tag. The mess depends mainly upon labour of Sivakami as well as her elder brother Sivanesan, who is studying for his Plus 2. The only silver lining is that both Sivanesan as well as Sivakami have been allowed to continue with their studies.

But this is not the case for many others. The Planning Commission’s report on Child labour says that according to the 2001 Census there are 1.26 crores economically active children in the age-group of 5-14 years. Among the states, Uttar Pradesh accounts for a larger share of close to one fourth of all child labour in India followed by Andhra Pradesh.

Maharastra and West Bengal respectively garnered nine and eight percent of India’s child employment. The share of Uttar Pradesh has dramatically shot up in the last one decade from less than 13 per cent in the mid-1990s to close...
to 23 per cent in 2004-05, which is a cause for concern. On the other hand, the share of Andhra Pradesh seems to have declined quite considerably during this period.

Though there are clear provisions in our Constitution to safeguard the interest of children by ensuring that they receive education and are not forced to work for a living, it is unfortunate that the problem of child labour exists to a large extent in our country. In fact, child labour is the result of various ills in the society. Poverty and illiteracy are two such manifestations, which are visible but there are many other factors inbuilt in our society, like the position of women in the family, traditional and cultural practices and feudal attitudes in the country, perpetuating this problem.

The Global Picture

The most recent estimates suggest 127 million boys and 88 million girls are involved in child labour with 74 million boys and 41 million girls working in bad condition.

National laws or regulations in countries differ from one to another. Some countries may permit the employment of 13-15 year olds in light work which is neither prejudicial to school attendance, nor harmful to a child’s health or development. In yet other countries children in the ages 12-14 can apply for light work. Still other countries prescribe a minimum age of 14 for becoming employed.

India’s Latest Approach to Child Labour: 12th Plan

The strategy for dealing with Child Labour during the 12th Five Year Plan Period has been formulated based on the suggestions given by the members of the working group in the two meetings conducted on 27th May and 8th July 2011. The broad highlights of the suggestions are:

- The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act should be strengthened and amended.
- The problems of working children of the migratory families should be addressed. Child labour survey should specifically capture migration of children. Residential schools should be opened in each Metro and Mega cities and also in every district.
- It is important to run residential schools for rehabilitation of child labour.
- The NCLP (National Child Labour Project) Scheme should expand further to a large geographical coverage.
- Emphasis should be given to the monitoring and tracking of NCLP school children.
- The convergence approach should be followed to enhance social protection and welfare measures for working children.
- The NCLP Scheme should be realigned in the light of Right to Education Act 2009. The teachers of the NCLP Special schools should be properly trained.
- Three tier Monitoring Committee at the District, State and National level should be made for effective implementation and monitoring of the NCLP Scheme.

The NCLP Scheme

The NCLP Scheme (National Child Labour Project), which began with a modest number of only 12 districts, has been progressively extended to various parts of the country with the coverage of 271 districts in 21 States of the country. It is functioning in 18 districts of Tamilnadu also.

There have been demands from various States for expanding the coverage of NCLP Scheme to more districts, there is, therefore, a need to expand the Scheme in all the 600 districts in the country.
Right to Education

India’s landmark Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) has been hailed universally as an essential foundation to ensure that all children are in school and out of child labour. Education for all was unanimously agreed as a target towards reaching the goal of elimination of child labour, in addition to scaling up efforts through poverty reduction, social protection and building political commitment to tackling child labour.

The 12th Plan Proposal of the Planning Commission calls for an effective alignment of the NCLP Scheme with the provisions of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE Act, 2009). Accordingly, the NCLP Schools will serve as Special Training Centre for un-enrolled and out-of-school children in accordance with the provisions of Section 4 of the RTE Act and Rule 5 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Rules, 2010. For this purpose, all such children will be admitted to a neighborhood school of the State government/local authority. After such admission, the children will undergo the special training for being mainstreamed into the regular school in an age appropriate class.

World Day Against Child Labour 2012

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is commemorating World Day Against Child Labour here on 12 June, 2012. The theme for this year is “JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN – END CHILD LABOUR”. The aim of commemorating this day is to highlight the need to protect the rights of the child and eliminate child labour and other violations of fundamental rights of children, in all forms.

The World Day Against Child Labour was launched by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2002 to generate awareness about the practice of child labour in different sectors. ILO estimates that there are 21.8 crore child labourers worldwide. The Government of India’s 2001 census estimated that 1.27 crore are involved in child labour. This means that about 3.6% of the total labour force in India is constituted by children! By entering the labour market prematurely, they are deprived of education and training that can help to lift them, their families and communities out of a cycle of poverty. As child labourers they are exposed to physical, psychological or moral suffering that can cause long term damage to their lives.

This year the World Day Against Child Labour will provide a spotlight on the right of all children to be protected from child labour and from other violations of fundamental human rights. In 2010 the international community adopted a Roadmap for achieving elimination of the worst forms of Child labour by 2016. This document stressed that child labour is an impediment to children’s rights and a barrier to development. World Day Against Child Labour 2012 will highlight the work that needs to be done to make the roadmap a reality.

(PIB Feature.)

127 million boys and 88 million girls are involved in child labour with 74 million boys and 41 million girls working in bad condition.
The development of a strong nation requires that the human resources of the country are endowed with higher level of education, skill and specialization. The recently released United Nations Development Report 2011 ranked India 134 out of 187 countries. It also presents a strong case for governments all over the world to encourage human mobility. Migration, including those of low skilled workforce pays dividends all around. While economic growth is extremely important, it has to be accompanied by improvement in the quality of life of the people for the development process to be sustainable in the medium to long run. More importantly it has to be inclusive in nature. Ultimately, a healthy, educated and an empowered population contribute to improved productivity which, in turn sustain growth. Literacy as a qualitative attribute of the population is one of most important indication of the socio economic and political development of a society.

Education is the single most important instrument for social and economic transformation. Education has been well rooted in Indian society since ancient times; with several well-known centre of learning that no longer exist today. Changes to the system and a joint effort of government and development partners in the last decade have resulted in improvements in the educational system, although a number of problems remain. Education today is not only seen as a pillar of economic growth but also as a pre-request to Indian long term development, empowering individuals to become fully active citizens. In the recent budget, education and health are the key development indicators did not fare too well. Central govt. Total allocation for education is 0.73 percent of the GDP, marginally up from 0.69 percent in 2011-12. Finance minister provided rupees 25,555 crore for implementing the Right to Education through the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan which is 21.7 percent higher from the last year.

Primary education is a basic human right, both transformative and empowering. Beyond this intrinsic importance it is also indispensable for the enjoyment of other human rights and is a means
for accessing broader social, economic, political and cultural benefits. Education contributes to building more just societies through reducing poverty and inequalities. Primary education is a powerful driver for the realization of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and for Sustainable development more broadly.

The achievement of universal primary education, which is the second of the MDGs and the subject of one of the education for all goals requires that every child enroll in primary school and completes the full cycle of primary schooling. A lack of primary education in recent decades has led to high levels of adult illiteracy. Overall one sixth of the world population, approximately 760 million persons, cannot read or write.

India is a nation of young people – out of a population of above 1.21 billion, 672 million people are in the age-group 15 to 59 years, which is usually treated as the “working age population.” It is predicted that India will see a sharp decline in the dependency ratio over the next 30 years, which will constitute a major ‘demographic dividend’ for India. This young population should be considered as an invaluable asset which if equipped with knowledge and skill, can contribute effectively to the development of the national as well as the global economy. Our vision is to realize India’s human resource potential to its fullest in the education sector, with equity and inclusion. The three pillars of education are expansion, inclusion and excellence.

Although the Indian census were conducted since 1881 and the data series on literacy was available since 1901 census, one can notice that only 5 people out of 100 were literate in 1901, 18% in 1951. It has taken another 50 years for literacy to increase from a meager 18% to 65.4% in 2011. Female literacy has increased from a very low of 8.9% in 1951 to only 65.46 in 2011, an increase of six times while male literacy increased by three and half time during the same period.

Further it is essential to note that educational disparity is starting between various states and regions of India. While the state of Kerala is exceptional with 93% literacy with low gender disparity, and the least state is Bihar with only 63.82% of its citizen are educated.

Various Education schemes started by Govt. are;
1. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan,
2. National Programme for education of Girls at Elementary Education
3. National Programme of Mid day Meals in school:
4. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidalaya for SC, ST, OBC and other minority communities
5. Thrust for female literacy (Saakshar Bharat): The National Literacy Mission has been launched recently as Saakshar Bharat in which at least 7 crore non-illiterates will be made literate to achieve 80% literacy and to reduce gender disparity in literacy from 21% to 10%. 365 districts in the country, with adult female literacy rate of 50% or less, have been identified for the implementation of Saakshar Bharat.
6. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan: The Gross Enrollment Ratio(GER) at the secondary level is currently around 60 percent which is woefully low. To improve this ratio, this scheme with the scheme of model schools was launched in the Eleventh plan to improve Enrollment and quality in secondary education.

Despite rapid growth in literacy in Post independence India, gender deprivation still exists and needs to be overcome. Despite the gains in female literacy only 2011, 65.46 percent of females are literate against 82.14 percent males as shown in recent conducted census. It may be seen that it took almost five decades for male-female disparity to recede to half of what it was in the 1960s.

Education in India comes under the concurrent list and thus both the central and state governments are involved leading to multiple control and regulations by the Govt. and statutory bodies. There is an urgent need for replacement of bureaucratic controls in education by professional regulation along with Private-Public Partnership to ensure universal primary education

Table 1: Male-Female literacy gap in India (In percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Male-Female Literacy gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>8.86</td>
<td>18.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>28.30</td>
<td>40.40</td>
<td>15.35</td>
<td>25.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>45.96</td>
<td>21.97</td>
<td>23.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>43.57</td>
<td>56.38</td>
<td>29.76</td>
<td>26.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
<td>24.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>64.83</td>
<td>75.26</td>
<td>53.67</td>
<td>21.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>74.04</td>
<td>82.14</td>
<td>65.46</td>
<td>16.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India 2011

Rural urban divide

The improvement in literacy rate in rural area is two times that in urban area. The rural urban
Literacy gap which was 21.2 percentage points in 2001 has come down to 16.1 percentage points in 2011 as shown in table below. There is improvement in female literacy than males in both rural and urban areas. The gender gap in literacy has come down from 24.6 in 2001 to 19.8 in 2011 in rural areas from 13.4 in 2001 to 9.8 in 2011 in urban areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table:2 Literacy Rates (in %)</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>+9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>+10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>+5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Challenges**

The landmark legislation giving every child the fundamental right to have compulsory elementary education is just one step towards setting right what is wrong with the sector. The emphasis on education in the eleventh plan, the setting up of knowledge commission, and Yash pal committee to advise on revamping and rejuvenating higher education have all helped to discuss the more reality to education that need to be advanced urgently.

The challenge of quality in Indian education has many dimensions for eg.

- Providing adequate physical facilities and infrastructure.
- Making available adequate teacher of requisite quality
- Effectiveness of teaching learning processes.

Besides the need to improve quality of our education institute in general, it is also imperative that an increasing number of them to attain world class standards and are internationally recognized for them, quality and skill development is also a major area that needs attention. In the present context, education policies and strategies have to reckon with emerging challenges and opportunities that come from increasing globalization. The task of nation building has to take into account increasing demand for certain professional skills and knowledge that is linked to the labour market. A globalized world will ultimately require the outsourcing of human skills in regions which will witness a ‘demographic deficit’. Skilled human capital will have to be improved to certain regions to sustain economic growth. This can offer tremendous opportunities for employment and growth provided the youth are equipped with requisite knowledge and skill.

Faced with the complexity of current and future global challenges, institutions of education have the social responsibility to advance our understanding of multifaceted issues, which involve social, economic, scientific and cultural dimensions and our ability to respond to them. To do so, institutions must increase their interdisciplinary focus and promote innovative thinking which contributes to the advancement of peace, well being and development, and the realization of human rights, including gender equity.

In line with the goal of nation building, India has been committed to providing free and compulsory education to all children. Towards this end, Indian Parliament has enacted a legislation making free and compulsory education a Right of every child in the age group of 6-14 years which has come into force from 1st April 2010, the act mandates all teachers need to complete and meet training requirements within three years of legislation.

**Conclusion**

Even when the Government is luring poor people by giving them free food, books and even uniforms to send their ward to school, so that enrollment ratio improves. But these people prefer to send their children to work so that they can earn some bucks for the family. This is the problem of our education system where even higher education does not guarantee employment. So there is a need to improve our primary as well as secondary education system.

Education is no doubt an important tool of Human development, and improved Human Development plays very important role in improving living standards of the people. Improved education and health facilities can also help in economic development of the country. No doubt the entire education sector is expectedly buzzing with activity. The HRD ministry is taking steps to improve education standard in India. Indian national policy since 1968 wanted to raise public expenditure of education to 6% of GDP. On the other hand outlay of Central and State Governments for educations amounted to about 3% of GDP. Thus the gap allocation for education is still substantial, and need to be urgently addressed. To make India one of the major knowledge countries in the world in the near future, it is important to continue the current level of focus and commitment, along with the right amount of resources in an improved governance and service delivery framework.

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Ippocrates said ‘let food be your medicine’. Food that is rich in vitamins, proteins, carbohydrates is one of the indicators for robust or balanced health of any child. Non-balanced diet could lead to malnutrition. Malnutrition impedes motor, sensory, cognitive and social development of the child. So malnourished children will be less likely to benefit from schooling, and will consequently have lower income as adults. Malnutrition and infant death are caused due to the status of the women, poverty, illiteracy of the parents. Illiterate and poor parents are ignorant of food they eat. Eating raw carrot is a good supplement for A vitamin. Children or adults after sitting by the computer hours together, needs vitamin A supplements. Eating carrot will help them getting vitamin A directly. Children of mothers with no schooling are nearly two times more likely to be underweight than children of mothers with more than 8 years of schooling. Children of mothers with 6-8 years of schooling are more than two times more likely to be underweight than children of mothers with more than 12 years of schooling. Interestingly, unlike the case of infant mortality, the gender disparity in child underweight rates does not seem to narrow with mother’s schooling.

ICDS project is the landmark in the history of nutrition in India. It is the mother to all the food, nutrition and all insurance policies. This project was started with the noble objectives and lofty activities of Anganwadi. However its achievements are of mediocre, and lacks rudder. It gave birth to many projects like NHRM etc. Now, it has attracted the attention of people of every walk of life. Reforms are needed for every organization for reaping good and quick results.

Facts:- 47% of India’s children below the age of three years are malnourished (underweight)
47% of Indian children under five are categorized as moderately or severely malnourished.

South Asia has the highest rates- and by far the largest number – of malnourished children in the world.

The UN ranks India in the bottom quartile of countries by under-1 infant mortality (the 53rd highest), and under-5 child mortality (78 deaths per 1000 births).

At least half of Indian infants deaths are related to malnutrition, often associated with infectious diseases.

The most damaging effects of under-nutrition occur during pregnancy and the first two years of a child’s life.

These damages are irreversible, making dealing with malnutrition in the first two year crucially important.

A close reading of available statistics shows the problem to be far from uniform.

Vitamin A supplementation coverage rate (6-59 months). 2004 UNICEF statistics.

The decrease in the children population by 2011 census in India, is not a benchmark victory. Much of the government nutritional expenditure in India is on the ICDS program. The empirical results further indicate that the (inverse) association between child malnutrition and levels of government nutritional expenditure is stronger in the poor states than in the non poor states. However, neither public spending on health and family welfare per capita nor per capita GDP in the child’s state of residence has a significant association with child underweight rates.

Objectives
1. To study the reasons for recent deaths of new born babies in the year 2010, 2008 in Hyderabad
2. To study weakness of ICDS project in terms of administrative structure and Delivery system of its activities.
3. To list out the Types of Food Models and its coverage in Andhra Pradesh.

In Hyderabad, as many as 624 children of perinatal stage died in the year 2008, it has increased to 1389 in the year 2010. Boys are more prone to this calamity than the girls, this is because the weak immune system, it could be due to congenital facts.

The girls can overcome even with weak immune system. According to new scheme, Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) will visit homes of new mothers. They have to visit on days like 3,7,14,21,28 and 42. One additional visit can be done in case of institutional delivery within 24 hrs. The Director National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) has said’ in Hyderabad 60% of people under the clutches of Non Balanced diet. 40% of people are suffering from low calorie food. 20% of people are fed more and facing health problems. These things are happening just because of changed life styles and working culture of women. Ready made foods and packed foods have the list of tables at the back side which is highly ignored by the customers.

Each aganwadi centre is staffed by a village woman with 5-8 years of schooling and an assistant, which is highly objectionable. The anganwadi worker receives a cash income of Rs. 1,000 per month to provide growth monitoring, food supplementation, and pre-school education to targeted children aged 0-6 years in the village. Although the program covers all the villages in the country, recent surveys from a few states suggest that relatively few (only about 10-30%) children aged 0-6 years in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan regularly attend the AWC in their community (Heywood2003). This may be because the amount of food supplementation provided to children is meager or irregular or both. While the Central government pays for the salaries of the anganwadi worker and assistant, the individual states are responsible for lifting the food grains from the stocks of the Food Corporation of India and paying for the cost of transporting and distributing these food grains to the AWCs.

It is believed that, the amounts spent by most states are low—typically below Rs. 200 per child per annum. Second, there are large inter-state disparities in spending on nutrition. The poor, high-malnutrition states, such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, spend only Rs. 30-50 per child, while Gujarat, Punjab, and Haryana spend Rs. 90-100. Tamil Nadu’s expenditure is about Rs. 170, while spending in the Northeastern states is above Rs. 500. Is there an association between child underweight rates and per-child spending on the ICDS? Pooled data on 14 states for two years – 1992-93 and 1998-99 – suggest an inverse association. However, since there is no control for other variables, such as per capita income, the association does not necessarily indicate a positive effect of public spending on nutrition.
In Andhra Pradesh, there are as many as 91307 mini anganwadis and anganwadis. The clientele are children, pregnant ladies, lactating mothers, women between 18-45 yrs. work at each anganwadi begins at 8 a.m. The type of food given here is like Modified therapeutic food, hot cooked food, snack food etc. Two boiled eggs for two days in a week. Anganwadi employs women candidates, hence employment is generated. Capacities have been built. Supplementary food here is not crispy, has no fat and gives more calories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl no</th>
<th>Types of food</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Awc’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ready to eat food</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>51467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Local food model</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>38123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Community Managed supplementary nutrition food</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nandi Foundation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Akshayapatra</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>387</td>
<td>91307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggestions: ICDS project has been criticized from all the quarters of the society. Since the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) accounts for much of the public spending on nutrition in India, it may be instructive to analyze the impact of that scheme on child nutritional outcomes. Unfortunately, such an evaluation is stymied by the lack of availability of relevant data.

However, at the time the NFHS-1 data were collected in 1992-93, ICDS did not fully cover all the villages in the country. The NFHS-1 data indicate that 34.5% of villages in the NFHS sample had an AWC. Overall, the data show the child underweight rate (for children under 4) to be somewhat lower in the villages having an AWC than in village not having one (51% versus 55%). However, upon disaggregating the numbers by sex, it is found that the presence of an ICDS anganwadi center is associated with a much larger reduction in malnutrition for boys than for girls.

We need to have brand ambassadors even for programmes like Mid Day Meals, ICDS, NHRM. ICDS is the foremost symbol of India’s commitment to her children – India’s response to the challenge of providing pre-school education on one hand and breaking the vicious cycle of malnutrition, morbidity, reduced learning capacity and mortality. A big publicity has to be done at the launch of social report by Ministry concerned, Hence community has a great role to play.

Need for greater reforms in ICDS project:

According to the 1991 census of India, it has around 150 million children, constituting 17.5% of India’s population, who are below the age of 6 years. Child population in 0-6 age group, which accounted for 13.35 % of total population in 2001 census, dropped to 10.2 % in 2011 census.

By 2011, census the total population of children below 6 years, stood at 15,87,89,287. Out of which male population is 8,29,52,135: female population stood at 7,58,37,152. The population of children above 7 years is stood at 1,05,14,04,135. Out of which males stood at 54,07,72,113 and females at 51,06,32,022. The total of which will be (0-6 & above7) 1,21,01,93,422.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in weeks</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-7 Peri natal</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-28 neo natal</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-48 infants</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,085</td>
<td>957</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source enadu daily news.5.04.12

The author is Assistant professor, Department of Education, Hyderabad.
This Unique Identification Number (UID) project or ‘Aadhar’ was initiated to provide every resident of India an identification number and ensure efficient ‘service delivery’ of welfare schemes. Data collected through demographics and biometrics would be used to construct a centralised database that would be used to authenticate the identity of the individual. However, acquiring a UID is voluntary.

This paper makes a brief critical analysis of UID’s claims of empowering the marginalised with specific reference to two welfare schemes namely, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGA) and the Public Distribution System (PDS). It concludes that the scheme in its present form may fail to justify its claims unless some important issues are addressed. The scope of this paper does not extend to cover other contentious aspects of UID such as privacy and data protection.

**Giving the Marginalised an Identity**

Supporters of the UID claim that it is essential to provide the extremely poor and homeless people of India with an identity. Such people lack the required documentation to acquire identification and are consequently often excluded from the Government’s welfare schemes. For example, to obtain a job card a person has to be a resident of a village, this becomes problematic for nomadic
tribes who do not reside in any village. Moreover, this will allow migrant workers to open accounts in banks that seemed impossible due to lack of a permanent address. Also, much of India’s working population is self-employed in jobs that require frequent migration. These people would benefit immensely from UID which allows portability of benefits.

However, without an effective system to identify and exclude illegal migrants, the UID may legitimize and encourage illegal immigration straining India’s limited resources.

**Improving Effectiveness of MNREGS**

As regards MNREGS, the UID project makes multiple claims about how it would help ‘eliminate financial exclusion, enhance accessibility, and uplift living standards for the poor. Firstly, payment of wages will be made easier as the UID will replace the need for Know Your Customer (KYC) documentation, thereby making the opening of back accounts easier. Secondly, it would tackle the problem of underpayment and over-reporting of quantum of work done by requiring UID authentication at the work site to ensure that number of hours claimed by the worker and reported officially tally. Thirdly, it would eliminate the problem of beneficiaries holding multiple job cards or cards belonging to fictitious people as each person would have a unique number and the de-duplication process would eliminate frauds. Fourthly, it would allow beneficiaries who relocate and migrate from one place to another to continue to enjoy benefits of the scheme.

However, critics like Reetika Khera deny the existence of the problem of “identity fraud” that UID is seeking to ‘fix’ and argue that the transition to bank payments is already near completion. Further, the difficulty with obtaining bank accounts was not KYC documentation, but the fact that the bank branches are poorly-equipped and understaffed. Khera also suggests that corruption would persist even if measures were taken to ensure that only the beneficiary withdraws the wage from the bank. Therefore, the UID is not the solution to the problems it seeks to fix.

In fact Nikhil Dey, Aruna Roy, Jean Derez and others have impassionedly pleaded to the Government not to merge UID and MNREGA. MNREGA guarantees work within 15 days by following simple localised procedures and UID would jeopardize this right. This is because all villages do not have constant electricity supply or manual back-up and that there is a chance that biometrics would not work. For many villages internet access and mobile connectivity is a distant dream, implanting UID without the requisite infrastructure in place would mean categorically excluding such villages from welfare schemes. Thus, essentially, combining UID with MNREGA not only fails to fix the existing problems but also reverses the achievements of MNREGA as it stands.

Critics argue against leaving a vital scheme like MNREGA in the hands of biometric authentication. With a huge proportion of the population engaged in hard manual labour, biometrics is deemed a dangerous idea as fingerprints of manual labours are likely to change or become ‘noisy’ due to their work, burns, callouses etc. leading to negative validation during authentication. People with weak irises and cataract will face similar problems. Further, many agencies are unable to record the biometrics of such people and issue UIDs, defeating the purpose of UID as a means of empowering the marginalised. Moreover, UID may just be adding another potential extortionist middleman in the form of the official in charge of authentication instead of removing the problem UID counters this criticism by claiming that it is only for 0.23% of population that both forms of authentication (finger prints & iris scan) fail.

Further, many people will get denied access to MNREGA on account of not having UID. This was witnessed during the transition to bank payments. In the absence of a strong bank network, the process of issuing bank accounts to every job card holder was slow and flawed and in this process, the labourers were denied work. This would also set a dangerous precedent of arbitrarily experimenting with the basic rights of people.

A ‘Transparency Wall’ which is a better local solution to the problem of corruption in MNREGA successfully allows the local community to see when funds were received and who was paid. This leaves the power in the hands of the local community and block level officers, as opposed to UID which puts that power in the hands of the centralised authority which is inaccessible to the beneficiaries.
It would appear that MNREGA is not ready to handle an over-haul like UID more so given that UID still has malfunctions to fix, especially when simple localised solutions handle the problems better.

**Leak-Proofing the PDS**

The UID project makes similar claims vis-a-vis the PDS. Firstly, it seeks to improve inclusion and accessibility of the scheme by providing everyone with a unique number allowing them access to the PDS while eliminating duplicates, fakes and ‘ghost’ cards. It also allows subsidy on an individual level instead of on a basis of household units. Secondly, it allows portability of the benefits of the PDS as the beneficiaries would not remain restricted to one Fair Price Shop (FPS) allowing more choice as well as migration. Thirdly, it seeks to fix the last mile problem by enabling tracking at the last level allowing the Government to check how much subsidy is actually reaching the beneficiaries.

Khera contends that the problem of inclusion would not be solved by UID as the real problems of PDS are lack of coverage and misclassification. Misclassification occurs due poorly formulated criteria for Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. Therefore even if UID succeeds in including all BPL families, this would not remedy those wrongly excluded from BPL. Moreover, being voluntary, UID may not succeed in including even the existing BPL families. The claim of portability of benefits has also been debunked stating that even if the beneficiary decides to access the FPS of the neighbouring village, the FPS would have sufficient supplies only for the members of that village.

UID suggests this problem could be fixed using the system of authentication of off take. However, this gives rise to a number of operational issues of matching an unpredictable supply and matching it fast enough.

As regards UID fixing the problem of last mile authentication, critics contend that far more cost-effective alternatives exist in the form of smart cards and food coupons. Further, elderly or disabled people who rely on friends and relatives to collect for them would be left without an option. UID’s response to this suggests a system of nomination of another person by the elderly and disabled. However, the feasibility of this solution is debatable.

**Conclusion**

It needs to be pointed out that for UID’s claims of de-duplication, financial inclusion and removing corruption to succeed UID needs to be mandatory. Being voluntary, the changes that UID seeks to bring could easily be side-stepped. However, UID is indirectly mandatory as it is intimately being tied to many important schemes and procedure. While this practice has been criticized. The author considers this a necessary evil for a number of reasons.

Firstly, simply having a UID number does not come with any problems. In fact, it allows access to avenues which were inaccessible for a majority of the poor till now. Secondly, much of the true potential of UID would be unlocked by making it mandatory. Hence, it is felt that UID should be made mandatory and all pervasive.

Also, given that most of the criticism is directed towards the unreliability of the biometrics system, fool proof alternative provisions must be made available uniformly, in the event of a system failure.

In the opinion of the author, another major issue is that the government while ensuring that the benefits reach only the targeted beneficiaries by merging UID with welfare schemes, may end up excluding rather than including many sections of the marginalised. This is because from a scenario where some individuals and officials embezzled subsidy from the government, we are moving to a scenario where only UID cardholders will get their share of the subsidy. The collateral damage of this process is many eligible beneficiaries lacking UID could be entirely excluded from welfare schemes.

Infrastructure is another major problem as the UID project substantially relies on sound infrastructure being put in place. Hence, it is suggested that instead of putting UID in place and then fixing its faults, the schemes must be safeguarded against every problem that UID may encounter thereby placing the people’s basic rights above the government’s need to curb wastage. Once these problems are fixed, UID will be important instrument of empowerment for the marginalised by streamlining and fixing inefficiencies in the system, and increasing access.

(The author is a law student and an associate editor of the Journal of Indian law and Society.)
It is critical to detect and prevent under-nutrition, as early as possible, across the life cycle, to avert irreversible cumulative growth and development deficits that compromise maternal and child health and survival, achievement of optimal learning outcomes in primary education and gender equality. The national plan of action on nutrition will be centred around the following critical facts related to malnutrition: [1] Every fifth child in the world lives in India [2] 22% babies are born with low birth weight [3] 42.5% of children 0-5 years are underweight [4] 53 out of 1000 live births do not complete their first year of life [5] 79% children (6-35 months) are anemic [6] Declining female/ male ratio in children Under-6 yrs – from 945 to 927/1000 [7] 35.6 % women with low BMI.

**Nutrition Challenges: Some Facts**

Some nutritional challenges include: [1] Maternal and Child Under-nutrition is the underlying cause of more than one third of the mortality of children under five years. [2] One fifth of child mortality (under 5 years) in India can be prevented by universal exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and appropriate complementary feeding practices after 6 months. [3] One fifth of neonatal mortality can be prevented by ensuring the universal practice of early initiation of exclusive breastfeeding (around 22% of neonatal mortality can be averted.
One fifth of child mortality (under 5 years) in India can be prevented by ensuring universal exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and appropriate complementary feeding practices after 6 months (along with continued breastfeeding till 2 years and beyond).

Over one fourth of all child deaths would be reduced in the short term, by available nutrition interventions, implemented at scale.

**The Policy Framework and Key Interventions:**

Priorities, process indicators and need for convergent action: The Eleventh Five Year Plan positions the development of children at its centre and recognizes nutrition as critical for ensuring child survival and development. It accords high priority to addressing maternal and child undernutrition through multi sectoral interventions by different sectors.

**Table: Process indicators for achieving the above objectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Process Indicators</th>
<th>Current Status as per the last surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth</td>
<td>40.2% (DLHS*-3, 2007-08) 24.5% (NFHS**-3, 2005-06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Exclusive breastfeeding of children under 6 months</td>
<td>46.4% (DLHS-3 2007-08 &amp; NFHS**-3, 2005-06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Introduction of complementary feeding upon completion of 6 months, along with continued breastfeeding for 2 years</td>
<td>In the age group of 6-9 months 23.9% (DLHS-3 2007-08) 56.7% (NFHS-3 2005-06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Appropriate Infant and Young Child Feeding</td>
<td>20.7% (NFHS 3, 2005-06)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The nutritional status of the population is the outcome of complex and inter-related set of factors and cannot be improved by the efforts of single sector or action alone. The National Plan of Action on Nutrition 1995 lays down a systematic framework for collaboration among national government agencies, State Governments, NGOs, the private sector and the international community. It is a multi-sectoral framework for implementation of the national nutrition goals to be reached by 2000 AD. The multi-sectoral plan states the objectives and tasks of 14 different sectors namely, Agriculture, Food, Civil Supplies & Public Distribution, Education, Forestry, Maternal & Child Health, Food Processing Industries, Health, Information & Broadcasting, Labour, Rural Development, Urban Development, Welfare, Women & Child Development.

[1] **National Nutrition Policy (NNP):** The National Nutrition Policy (NNP) 1993 identified key areas of action in various areas like agriculture, food production, food supply, education, information, health care, social justice, tribal welfare, urban development, rural development, labour, women and child development, people with special needs and monitoring and surveillance. The core strategy envisaged under NNP is to tackle the problem of nutrition through direct nutrition interventions for vulnerable groups as well as through various development policy instruments which will improve access and create conditions for improved nutrition. The National Plan of Action on Nutrition (NPAN) 1995 laid down the framework for systematic collaboration among national government ministries/departments, State Governments, NGOs, the private sector and the international community. Specific implementation arrangements suggested by NPAN includes National Nutrition Council headed by the Prime Minister, Special working groups in concerned Ministries/Departments, constituting similar bodies like Coordination Committees, Nutrition Council etc. at the state and district levels by the State Governments, among others.

The interventions to address nutrition challenges in India mainly stem from the National Nutrition Policy and the National Plan of Action on Nutrition and policies of related sectors such as health, food and agriculture.

The Government of India has over the past few years, expanded the coverage under a number of programmes, which have the potential to improve the current nutrition security situation of the country. These programmes include the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme, Mid Day Meal Scheme, National Food Security Mission, Horticulture Mission, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission and the National Rural Drinking Water Programme. The table below discusses the existing government schemes/ interventions listed by life cycle focus area.
### Table-1: Existing government interventions (listed by life cycle focus area)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BENEFICIARIES</th>
<th>SCHEMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant and Lactating Mothers</td>
<td>ICDS, RCH- II, NRHM, JSY, Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) – The CMB Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 0–3 years</td>
<td>ICDS, RCH- II, NRHM, Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 3–6 years</td>
<td>ICDS, RCH- II, NRHM, Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme, Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School going children 6–14 years</td>
<td>Mid Day Meals, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Girls 11–18 years</td>
<td>Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for the Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG), Kishori Shakti Yojana, Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schemes like, National Rural Health Mission (2005–06), National Horticulture Mission (2005–06), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (2005–06), Janani Suraksha Yojana (2006–07), Total Sanitation Campaign, Mid Day Meal (2008–09), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme (2008–09) and National Rural Livelihood Mission (2010–11) have been expanded / universalized in the recent past, and hence better results could be awaited in the years to come. All these schemes address one or the other aspect of nutrition.

While the ICDS scheme continues to cater to the supplementary nutritional needs of children below six years and pregnant and lactating mothers, and the Mid-day Meal scheme takes care of the school going children (6-14 years), the recently introduced Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG), namely, SABLA would provide a package of services including health and nutrition to adolescent girls in the age group of 11-14 years for out of school girls and 15-18 years for all girls for nutrition in 200 districts as a pilot. Additionally, a new scheme, the Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) – The CMB Scheme would provide a better enabling environment for improved health and nutrition to pregnant and lactating mothers and support for providing early & exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life on pilot basis in 52 districts initially. In order to address the India’s
nutrition challenges every State Government and UT Administration has a crucial role to play. The National Nutrition Policy 1993 and the National Plan of Action on Nutrition 1995 specify clear institutional structure from national to grassroots level. Although some States/UTs have taken a few initiatives in this regard, the implementation of provisions and structures laid down in the National Policy and Plan of Action have largely not been put in place or made effective. Most of these programmes are being implemented by the State Governments/UT Administrations.

[2] Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA): The Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA) was launched in November 2010. The objectives of the Scheme are to address nutritional problems and improving the health status of adolescent girls in the age group of 11-18 years, equipping them with knowledge on family welfare, health and hygiene, providing information and guidance on existing public services and mainstream out of school girls into formal or non-formal education. The major activities that would take place in the next five years from 2011 till 2016 would mainly be implementation in 200 districts to begin with, followed by evaluation and further expansion across the country. The deliverables envisaged for the Scheme, in line with major activities to be performed between 2011 till 2016, are to ensure that nutrition and non-nutrition components of the Scheme are delivered to adolescent girls, utilisation of funds takes place as per norms and evaluation of pilot is conducted.

[3] Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY): Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) has been approved by the Government of India in October 2010. The objectives of the Scheme are to improve the health and nutrition status of pregnant, lactating women and infants by the promotion of appropriate practices, care and service utilisation during pregnancy, safe delivery and lactation; encouragement of women to follow (optimal) Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices including early and exclusive breast feeding for the first six months; and by contributing to better enabling environment by providing cash incentives for improved health and nutrition to pregnant and lactating mothers.

[4] National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD): National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The objectives of the Institute are to develop and promote voluntary action, research, training and documentation in the overall domain of women and child development. NIPCCD takes a comprehensive view of child development and promotes programmes in pursuance of the National Policy for Children and evolves a framework and perspective for organizing children’s programmes through governmental and voluntary efforts.

The current thrust areas of the institute relating to child development are maternal and child health, nutrition, early childhood education, positive mental health in children and child care support services. The institute conducts research and evaluation studies; organises training programmes, seminars, workshops and conferences; and provides documentation and information services in priority areas in public cooperation and child development. The Institute functions as an apex body for training of functionaries of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Programme. The Institute as a nodal resource agency has also been entrusted with the responsibility of training and capacity building of functionaries at the national and regional level, under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS).

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Five months after the infamous Jarawa Video incident featuring scantily clad Jarawa tribal women allegedly dancing for tourists in return for food and money, the Central Government finally acted on the matter by approving the proposed amendments in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956. The execution of the law that brings into effect a ‘buffer zone’ in a five-kilometer radius around the Jarawa tribal settlements in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and provides for imprisonment of up to seven years for those violating government norms for this area, has been approved by the Union Cabinet.

The regulation also provides for tough penal provisions to deter unauthorized entry, photography, videography, hunting, use of alcohol, inflammable material or biological germs, or even advertisements to attract tourists in the buffer zone. Any violation can attract a prison sentence of three to seven years and a fine up to Rs. 10,000.

This step seems to have received wide acceptability as the embarrassment that the video brought at an international level is not likely to be given a second chance. However, the intention behind the amendments is being questioned by many and has invited resentment from among the non-tribal settlers in the marked area who fear abuse of such laws.

Since the onset of discussions on the proposed amendment in the regulations, the settlers have had sleepless nights fretting over the implications for them. The issue of the proposed buffer zone always took center stage in these meetings.

“*We are worried about our village. There is a creek separating us from the Reserve and Jarawas have never visited our village. Without properly marked boundaries, there are chances of inadvertent harassment,*” said Kumar, Pradhan of Shoal Bay Panchayat.

**WHY JARAWAS DON’T HAVE A SAY?**

Zubair Ahmed, Port Blair

“We are worried about our village. There is a creek separating us from the Reserve and Jarawas have never visited our village. Without properly marked boundaries, there are chances of inadvertent harassment,” said Kumar, Pradhan of Shoal Bay Panchayat.
organized by the administration, sidelining the actual purpose of those meetings.

Soon after the Cabinet cleared the proposal, the administration issued a clarification saying that the amendment brought forth will in no way affect the peaceful co-existence and the day-to-day activities of the villagers settled in the vicinity of the Buffer Zone. The law enforcing authorities have already been instructed to be very careful before registering any criminal case so that no innocent settler is harassed. However, the attempts of the administration to clarify their stand and convince the general public that the regulations will not be misused have not gone down well with the settlers.

In 2007, the decision of the Administration of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a Union Territory, to declare a 5-km Buffer Zone around the Jarawa Reserve in South and Middle Andaman, closing all tourism and commercial activities within the 5-km Zone, was challenged in the High Court. The Calcutta High Court dismissed the notification on the grounds that the principal regulation only permitted such notifications for ‘reserved areas’ and the Regulation had no reference to ‘buffer zones’.

But now, when the approval of the regulation has been given by the Central Government, the possibility of the Apex Court accepting the buffer zone is high. If approved, this is likely to create a new furor in the Islands as it will alter the lives of thousands of non-tribal islanders of the thirty one revenue villages settled by the same Administration shortly after Indian Independence in 1947.

The problem lies essentially in the demarcation of the Buffer Zone. Of these thirty one villages, the ones which have not witnessed any presence or visit of the Jarawas but fall within the demarcated area will also be required to follow the same Regulation. “We are worried about our village. There is a creek separating us from the Reserve and Jarawas have never visited our village. Without properly marked boundaries, there are chances of inadvertent harassment,” said Kumar, Pradhan of Shoal Bay Panchayat.

“As is highlighted everywhere, the motivation behind the amendments were not very honest and in right earnest,” says Debkumar Bhadra, a blogger from the Islands. “The point is that the islands has been populated by Government of India under various colonization and rehabilitation schemes starting from 1949 i.e. well before enactment of original ANPATR (in 1956). Having said so, it is only obvious that any amendment in the ANPATR should have been effected keeping in view the presence of islanders, their needs and aspirations as well. But what has happened is in stark contrast to the principles of natural justice,” he said.

And what about the ‘protected’ Jarawa group seen with one-litre PET bottles packed with rice grains; and floats made of table-sized thermocol sheets and tightly capped empty plastic cans in their hands? Do they have a say in the decision being taken on their behalf? Even that has been “banned” as the Administration in a release directed the Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti (AAJVS) volunteers/officials to tactfully advice Jarawa Tribals (without asking them what they want?) not to interact with non-tribals, settlers and others.

In fact, in many places where the Jarawas venture out of their reserve, a frequent barter of food items in exchange of forest produce has been reported. This routinely takes place in Tirur, a village in South Andaman district. During their visits to the revenue villages, Jarawas bring forest produce for barter with local residents living at the fringes of the forests. Bringing crabs, honey and other products, they are lured by the offer of tobacco and old clothes, and more interestingly, pepe, or cash. If they did all this willingly, then they must be having an opinion on the approval; they are, after all, an intelligent lot that has survived thousands of years in seclusion and complete harmony with their surroundings.

Overlooking the participation of Jarawas in the decision, one can only wait for the changes this approval will bring on the ground, for without sincere efforts to protect the reserve from plunderers; there is little hope for the Jarawas. Many doubt whether the lack of proper mechanisms that fail to implement even the existing regulation will be able to bring any major change. “It’s more about their land and their resources which needs protection rather than the Jarawas themselves,” opined a tribal rights activist.

[courtesy Charkha features]
Maize is the third most important cereal crop of India, after wheat and rice. It is grown in many parts of the world, including the hunger and malnutrition prone Asia and Africa. Besides, it needs less water (987m³/ton) as compared to the other food crops like rice (1400m³/ton), wheat (1160m³/ton) and soyabean (2750m³/ton) as well as less fertile soil and fertilizers. Therefore, as the production of rice and wheat are approaching their limits, in spite of all the developments in agricultural science and technology, expansion of maize cultivation must attract attention, to eradicate the twin problems of hunger and malnutrition in our country. Moreover, it can also be an important source of bio-fuel, starch and alcohol.

Maize

Maize is a good source of carbohydrates, dietary fibres, fats, vitamins, minerals and its protein contents can be favourably compared with other cereals (Table-1). However, its protein is considered to be of low quality, which is particularly deficient in two essential amino acids viz, lysine and tryptophan (Table-2). It also has a poor protein efficiency ratio and biological value (Table-3). The poor quality of maize protein is due to the presence of the largest concentration of alcohol soluble fraction called prolamin (also known as zein). Its nitrogenous contents are 7% albumin (water soluble protein), 5% globulin...
(saline soluble protein), 52% prolam (alcohol soluble protein), 2.5% gluteline (alkali soluble fraction), 6% non-proteinous nitrogen and 5% residual nitrogen. The nutritional qualities of the 4 soluble fractions of cereal proteins are albumin > globulin > gluteline > prolam.

However, all varieties of maize are rich in dietary fibres, now accepted as an essential part of nutritionally balanced diet, which prevent a number of diseases starting from constipation to colon cancer, obesity, diabetes, hyper tension and certain types of heart ailments.

Besides, in recent years breeders and biotechnologists have gone a long way in developing new varieties of maize which contain proteins with better nutritional qualities known as Quality Protein Maize (QPM), which have nearly 80% biological value, 92% true protein digestibility and are relatively richer in essential amino acids like lysine and tryptophan. These varieties have come up well in field conditions.

Therefore, extensive cultivation of maize, both traditional as well as the newly released hybrids must be encouraged not only to fight hunger and malnutrition, but also, for making other value added products out of it through various agro-industries. Moreover, it can enhance our land use, as it can be grown in soil, not quit suitable for cultivation of rice, wheat and many other food crops.

<p>| Table-1: A comparison of the Average Nutritional Constituents of Maize with Rice &amp; Wheat (g/100g of edible portion) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Constituents</th>
<th>Maize</th>
<th>Rice</th>
<th>Wheat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Moisture</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Fibre</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Other carbohydrates</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Minerals</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-2: Essential Amino acids contents of Maize (g/ g N)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Essential amino acids</th>
<th>Maize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Lysine</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Isoleucine</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Leucine</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Threonine</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Tryptophan</td>
<td>0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Valine</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Methionine</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Phenylalanine</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Histidine</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total N in g/100g of grain is 1.78)

Table-3: Biological values and Protein efficiency ratios of protein of maize and some other food grains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Food grains</th>
<th>Biological value (%)</th>
<th>Protein efficiency ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Bengal gram</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Red gram</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Groundnut</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>