



## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

**Dr. Satyabrata Mishra**

Associate Professor and HOD P.G. Department of Environmental Economics, M.P.C. (A) College, Odisha.

### Introduction

“There is in our time no well educated literate population that is poor;  
there is no illiterate population that is other than poor.”

---- **Johan Kenneth Galbraith**

In recent years sustained and high levels of economic growth provide a unique opportunity and momentum for faster social sector development. Investing in education plays a key role in meeting the World Bank's social development objectives, which support inclusive growth, social cohesion and accountability in development. *Professor Amartya Sen* recently emphasized education as an important parameter for any inclusive growth in an economy. The policies have to focus on *inclusive rather than divisive growth strategies*. Japan's Fundamental Code of Education of 1872 had resulted in total literacy by 1910 and by 1913 Japan was publishing books twice as much as U.S.

The recent Education for all (EFA) Global Monitoring report 2008, released by UNESCO marks the midway in the ambitious movement to expand learning opportunity to every child 2015. The UNESCO defined six EFA goals:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met to equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programme;
4. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015;
5. Improving all aspects of quality of education and ensuring excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved, especially in literacy, numeracy and in essential life skills.

### Right to Education in India

In India the right to free and compulsory education was retained in Article 45 of Part IV of the Constitution that incorporates. The Directive Principles of the State Policy, thus making a distinction from the Fundamental Rights. The most relevant interpretation of Article 21 from education point of view was the Supreme Court's Unnikrishnam Judgement (1993). The Court ruled that Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy must be read in harmonious conjunction with Article 21 since right to life and personal liberty loses its meaning if a child is *deprived of elementary education* (Unnikrishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh, 1993, Supreme Court of India, 217).

However, though this Article 21 A has provided renewed opportunity to reduce the increasing inequality in education at the elementary level and achieve the goals of justice social, economic and political, it has yet to acquire the stature of other fundamental rights. The recent report of the CABF (Central Advisory Board of Education) Committee (2005) advocated Free and Compulsory Education Bill.

Recently, the 93rd Constitution Amendment Bill making education a fundamental right for children between six and 14 has secured the Parliament's nod. With the law backing the Centre's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Human Resource Minister, believed that all out-of-school children would now be able to attend school.

### The Existing Scenario in Education

Education is universally recognized as a central component of human capital. The role of education as a contributor to economic growth and its impact on population control, life expectancy, infant mortality, improving nutritional status and strengthening civil institutions is well recognized. Moreover, the social rates of return on investments in all levels of education much exceed the long-term opportunity cost of capital. In normal course educated parents would send their children to schools. But where parents are not educated they may send their children to schools if there are enough incentives to attract and retain the children in schools. However it has been seen that as the child grows, the opportunity cost of sending the child to schools increases and incentives become less important. It has also been observed that socioeconomic factors often come in the way of educating girls beyond a certain class. On the supply side the reasons observed for children not being in school extend from non-availability of schools, poor quality of education, including irregular opening of schools, poor learning environment etc.



Plan expenditure on education has increased rapidly since the First Five Year Plan. A high priority was accorded to this sector in the Ninth Five Year Plan, with an allocation of Rs.24,908 crore against an expenditure of Rs. 8,522 crore in the Eighth Plan, representing a threefold increase in funds available to this sector. The 11th Plan proposes 19.9 per cent share for education. Roughly Rs. 2.85 lakh crore is proposed to be set aside for Elementary, Adult Secondary and Higher Education. Top Planning Commission sources have said that in terms of percentage, this is almost 2.7 times the allocation in the last plan.

Whereas the rising enrolment in elementary schools is a source of satisfaction, there is concern about the percentage of students actually attending school and those dropping out of the education system altogether. *Though dropout rates at the elementary education stage have declined over the years, they are still relatively high especially in the case of girl students for whom the rates are 42 per cent and 58 per cent at the Primary and Upper Primary stages respectively.* Within the education sector, elementary education has been given the highest priority in terms of sub-sectoral allocations. Several schemes have been launched by the Central government to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged and for strengthening the social infrastructure for education viz. Operation Blackboard (OB), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education (EGS & AIE). Mahila Samakhya, Teacher Education (TE), Mid Day Meals Scheme, Lok Jumbish, Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP), Janashala etc. In 2001-02 significant steps have been taken towards achievement of the goals of UEE through a time bound integrated approach, in partnership with the States through launching of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The planning in SSA has been decentralized and highest priority is

**Table 1: Principal Component Loading and Coefficient of Variation for Education Variables**

S. No	Variables	Mean	Factor Loading	Coefficient of
1	Adult literacy rate	63.88	.42807	17.78%
2	Percentage of Enrollment in 6-14 age group	94.25	.70845	15.68%
3	Primary schools per thousand population	1.179	.70636	51.06%
4	Percentage of habitations having education	79.39	-.37845	17.94%
5	Teacher-pupil ratio	34.42	-.73938	37.19%
	Variation Explained			37.4%

Source: Computed

Accorded to community ownership and monitoring. This programme will subsume all existing programmes including externally aided programmes. In due course within its overall framework with district as the unit of programme implementation.

India is one of the last literate societies in the world. The Census of India 2001 revealed that despite a host of schemes and programmes only 65.38 per cent of Indian people are literate (75.85% men and 54.16% women). Literacy rate in the States of Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh were below 37 per cent according to 2001 census. For SC/ST students the figures are even below 24 per cent.

The recent Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2005) prepared by Pratham to assess the learning levels of children across schools reveals a rather dismal picture which is the inability of class III to read a story of class II level. This is more glaring when it comes to subject like Mathematics where a class V student is unable to solve problems of class III level. There are also considerable rural-urban differentials in the Gross Primary School Enrolment Ratio (GPER) particularly among girls. According to Selected Education Statistics, 2006, 99 per cent boys and 82 per cent girls aged 6-10 years are enrolled in schools. However it is also a fallacy that a staggering number of children, close to 38.41 per cent of boys and 51.88 per cent of girls in the age group of 6-14 years are not attending school at all. This has also been more or less confirmed in the ASER 2005-06 Report by Pratham India Educational Initiatives. Disaggregated data on-out-of school children who have never enrolled in schools reveal a disproportionate presence of special groups like working children, residents of far-flung habitations, SCs/STs. Within all these categories, the percentage of girls is very high. A large proportion of the child labourers belong to the scheduled caste/scheduled tribe community working in unorganised sector. Many of them again are girls which are the neglected and deprived lot. These children are often referred to as "no-where children" neither on account of the fact that they show up neither in labour statistics nor at schools.



The ASER Report 2006 shook the world in its path-breaking survey. The finding of the report is striking and important for any future policy formulation:

- In rural India, of 100 children in the age group 7-16, 71.3 per cent go to government schools, while only 18.5 per cent go to private schools.
- In recent years preference for private schools has increased on account of three reasons- firstly, government schools have low-quality teaching, secondly, government schools are non-English medium and lastly, Dalits and Muslims are often not welcome at government schools in rural areas on account of pre-dominance of the upper castes.
- Free government schools which are mostly well-funded are rejected in favour of small private schools mostly missionary.
- Nearly 30 per cent of children in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, UP, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Goa and Kerala find going to private schools more favorable.
- Another revealing fact is the quality of teaching at these government schools. Though the enrolment rates become a matter of triumph for the government; learning skills which ought to be found in the 2nd standard are often achieved only by the 8th standard.

The District Information System of Education (DISE) has published its Analytical Report in 2005. The analysis of data reveals that many schools in the country are still not equipped with many of basic facilities. So much so that about 4 per cent primary schools and 12 per cent upper primary schools do not have a proper building. Nearly 17.5 per cent primary schools and 7.7 per cent upper primary schools have only one teacher. More than 9-10 per cent of schools do not have provision of blackboards and drinking water facilities are available to only one-fifth in these schools. Playground and boundary walls are not available in most of the schools along with any toilet facilities. Girls' toilets are not available in more than two-thirds of the upper primary schools. More than 90 per cent of schools are deprived of electricity connection and hence computer facilities. From the above it is clear that the country's top priority today has to be education focused if the goals of quality universal elementary education have to be achieved.

Thus, though the literacy rates across the country increased impressively from 52.2 per cent in 1991 to 65.38 per cent in 2001, the country still has more than 296 million illiterates of age 7 & above and male/female differential in literacy is also high at 22 percentage points. The literacy of Dalit women in Rajasthan is 1/5th of the national average.

Prima-facie, it seems that the Census data do not present the true picture of the literacy status of the population. There may be measurement errors in enumeration also, which maybe because of a variety of reasons:

- First, those who are treated as literates, many of them may be illiterates. Their ability to read and write with understanding is questionable. This can be checked on sample basis. The external evaluations conducted in the past also support this argument (NLM, 1994).
- Second, many a time when children in households are reported to be in schools, the enumerator unconsciously treated them as literates, which may not always be true. In all practical purposes, a child of Grade I was treated as literate in 2001 Census so as the Child of Grade II. A child aged 9 or 10, if reported enrolled in school, may also not necessarily be literate because of the lateral entry. Many of them may still be in Grade I or II.
- Lastly, the majority of enumerators in Census 2001 were the local school-teachers. This may also perhaps be one of the factors that might have influenced number of literates.

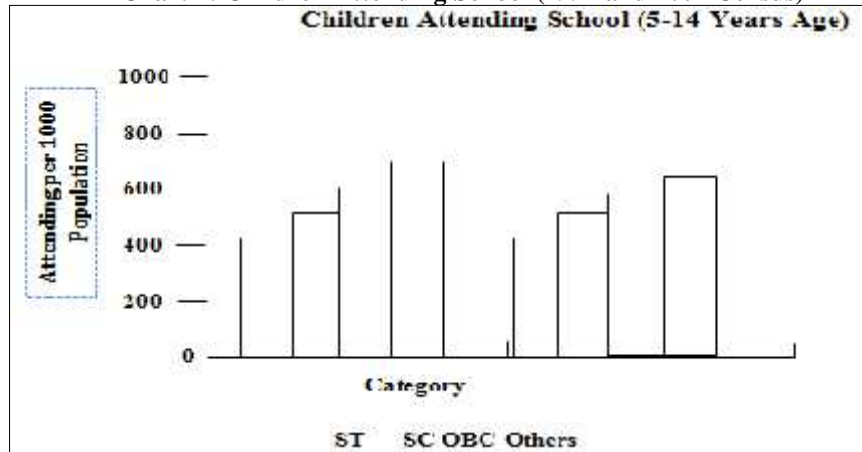
**Table 1: Percentage of Rural Habitations Having Primary and Upper Primary Schooling Facilities (1993-02)**

S. No	Name of the State	Primary Within Hab. Up to 1 Km				Upper Primary Within Hab. Up to 3 Km			
1	Andhra Pradesh	69.73	78.49	88.57	93.91	13.82	24.49	65.40	74.73
2	Karnataka	60.36	67.44	83.75	88.41	24.71	30.66	85.32	88.26
3	Maharashtra	64.70	67.64	84.22	91.17	25.37	28.95	78.42	78.18
4	Orissa	48.96	51.54	82.42	82.93	13.47	19.77	77.24	73.55
5	Rajasthan	51.11	53.41	74.58	79.84	14.59	21.07	64.43	78.26
	India	49.79	53.04	83.36	86.96	13.87	18.45	76.15	78.11

Source: 6th and 7th Educational Survey (2005). NCERT, Government of India, New Delhi



**Chart 1: Children Attending School (1991 and 2001 Census)**



From the above it is clear that Andhra Pradesh ranks highest in dropout rates in all categories of SC/ST children, with girls being greater victims in all classes. In most of the cases the axe falls on the girl child. *With meager income, many parents with four or five school-going children on an average find it difficult to spend equally for the schooling needs of all children. So the variations of choices emerge, namely educate one child, withdraw the girl child, push the better performing child to another level or let the girls continue in government schools and move the boys to hostels. These are the extra costs among all the factors that deter the poorest from accessing schools even if they are in the same village.*

As per 2001 Census, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis declared as Minority by Government notification 1993, constitute 18.42 per cent of total population. The main factor responsible for socio-economic backwardness of the minority communities, particularly the Muslim community, is the lack of access to the common school system. This is particularly true in the case of Muslim girls. In 2006-07 financial year, the corpus of the Maulana Azad Education Foundation which provides financial assistance to implement educational schemes for the benefit of the educationally backward minorities has been enhanced to Rs. 200 crore from Rs 100 crore. The High Level Sachar Committee in 2005 made some important recommendations relating to measures to be undertaken for "high good quality education", good quality government schools specifically for Muslim girls. Quality Education is thus an important tool to uplift the weaker sections to enable them to join the main stream for inclusive growth.

**Table 2: Drop-out Rates Among SC and ST Boys and Girls (2006)**

Categories	(Percentage)				
	AP	Karnataka	Maharashtra	Orissa	Rajasthan
Dropout SC Boys I – V	44.09	6.12	17.02	44.99	53.07
Dropout SC Girls I - V	44.12	14.03	18.21	42.36	36.29
Dropout SC Boys VI – VIII	63.41	27.19	30.03	63.73	69.65
Dropout SC Girls VI – VIII	68.87	51.61	38.22	67.17	80.07
Dropout ST Boys I – V	63.29	4.88	34.42	59.58	52.19
Dropout ST Girls I – V	68.47	4.96	42.82	63.19	38.31
Dropout ST Boys VI – VIII	76.80	53.81	59.12	76.49	70.42
Dropout ST Girls VI – VIII	82.49	56.80	65.14	76.56	79.63

Source: Select Education Statistics (2006), Government of India, New Delhi

The Indian Constitution assigns special status to the Scheduled Tribes (STs) also. Traditionally referred to as adivasis, vanbasis, tribes, or tribals, STs. constitute about 8 Per cent of the Indian population. There are 573 Scheduled Tribes living in different parts of the country, having their own languages, which are different from the one mostly, spoken in the state where they live. There are more than 270 such languages In India. According to the 2001 census, the tribal population in India is 74.6 million. The largest number of tribes is in undivided Madhya Pradesh (16.40 million), followed by Orissa (7 million) and Jharkhand (6.6 million).



There were 16 million ST children (10.87 million of 6-11 years and 5.12 million of 11 -14 years) as of March 2001, out of the total child population in India of about 193 million in the age group of 6 to 14 years (*Selected Educational Statistics - 2000-01, Government of India*). Education of ST children is considered important, not only because of the Constitutional obligation but also as a crucial input for total development of tribal communities.

An increasing number of researchers strongly advocate the use of the mother tongue or home language as medium of instruction in early stages of education. This assumes greater significance in the context of education of tribal children because their mother tongue is often quite distinct from the prominent languages in the state or regional languages. ST children face problems wherever teachers do not speak their dialect at all. From the perspective of language, it is desirable to have a local teacher from the same tribal community.

Although research evidence has demonstrated the positive consequences of bilingual or multilingual on cognitive development and social interaction processes, tribal children would require special programs to be able to cope. The Constitution of India allows the use of tribal dialect (mother tongue) as the medium of instruction if the population of the tribe is more than 100,000.

### **Some relevant Action-Points and Strategies to Meet the Challenges to achieve Inclusive Education**

#### **(a) Drop-outs and Enrolment**

- Enrollment targets achieved to be closely monitored by the concerned local Committees, by recording the date once every month.
- Regular checks on number of absentees of children at lower classes and for long durations may be done. The Committees to contact the parents in case of long absentees.
- Retention is as much of importance as enrolment since the latter is one time affair and these figures are no guide to actual number of children attending classes in practice.
- Mere incentives alone are not sufficient in themselves to enhance children's access to quality education. Most of the times, scholarships and sponsorship creates negative impact on the siblings of the family. This needs to be carefully thought out with proper monitoring and guidance.
- Midday Meal Scheme needs to be streamlined properly, enhancing the present amount of Rs. 2/- per pupil to at last Rs. 3/- as is being done in Tamil Nadu. Involvement of appropriate NGOs is to be strengthened for better implementation of the scheme.

#### **(b) Teachers Absenteeism / Training and Awareness**

- Teachers' absenteeism to be monitored and noted not only by government officials but by parents and community as a whole. Appropriate systems at school level needs to be worked out.
- The ACER 2006 revealed that only 33 per cent of schools reported all teachers present with no absenteeism. The large percentage of Absenteeism of teachers, particularly at Primary level needs to be rectified.
- Teachers' duties from government work on Surveys and all other duties not related to teaching to be reduced as far as possible and some alternative teachers/para teachers/ vidya volunteers to be appointed to enable regular teaching in cases where such duties are unavoidable.
- Investment in teachers and teacher education need to be made in a systematic way that appreciates the inter-relationship among the economic, political, structural, and practice aspects of the education system.

#### **(c) Educational Incentives and Reforms**

- The 'single text book policy has to be replaced by the textbooks for multiple linguistic communities', thereby making the curricula much easier for the rural masses.
- Further, Education reforms that promote change from content-based syllabi to a 'learning outcomes' model have significant implications for learning resources.
- The passing and implementation of the Right to Education Bill, again on priority basis will help the disadvantaged groups.
- To enable multiple exit points after class VII to enable students to take up vocational training.
- School uniforms and alternative transport system can help poorer students ease some problems of clean and variety clothes every day. In this effort the Community can contribute small amounts and start bus services.
- Scholarships and sponsorships can help promote girls' education.
- Delays in purchase of equipments even lapse of grant funds for a particular financial, years were found to be common reasons for poor performance in schools. Timely sanction of funds by Government authorities need to expedited.



- Campaign on child labour, in particular girl child to be spread to all districts of the state. Study conducted showed 20 per cent of these children are full time workers and 60 per cent in the age group of 5-4 years have never attended any school or had any formal education.
- The Mid Day Meal Programme an incentive for children to attend school has to cater to the prescribed nutritional norms. There is need for revision. 'Single Dish Meals' with broken wheat (dalia) or rice incorporating some amount of pulse or soyabeans along with seasonal vegetables can be an alternative for achieving these norms.
- Separate Toilets for Girls and Boys should be mandatory not only to facilitate proper sanitation facilities, but also to enable retention of girl students in particular.

**(d) Public-Private Participation/Private-Private Partnership approach**

- In the Private-Private Approach, there are good examples of *International Clubs like Lion's, Rotary and others* joining hands with other NGOs, both internationally and nationally in their endeavours in the field Education.
- Infrastructure is one area where there is urgent need of both Private-Public Participation as well as Private-Private Participation. From ACER 2007 it is clear that only 16-20 per cent of schools both at Primary and Upper Primary levels on an average had toilet facilities and about 30 per cent had no drinking water facilities. There is hence need to re-examine the designs and school building models for different capacities of schoolchildren.

**(e) Community Participation-The Inclusive Model**

- The "whole school approach" creates an inclusive environment for the entire community.
- Building strong People's Movement and thinking many steps ahead laterally and not vertically. The "Inverted Pyramid" is the model to be adopted for total community participation. Closer and frequent coordination with elected representatives of PRIs.
- The Government should adopt common school system imparting same quality of education throughout the country. Recently a Survey has been conducted and recommendations submitted regarding common school system to the Bihar Government.
- Creating awareness and viable open communication channels between education administrators/implementers and local officials, teachers, parents and children, with Right to Information.
- The community-based associations of youth groups have been playing a key role in supporting the new leadership of women, dalits and tribals in Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies in India.

**(f) e-Learning**

- New systems of distance learning and Web -enabled education can be used to reach remote and underserved regions and segments of the population.
- Students, teachers, parents and the whole community can benefit a great deal with ICT programmes on Education.

**Conclusion**

These above interventions enables engagement of citizen leaders in initiating range of collective as well as individual actions at the community level. They facilitate bottom-up local level planning and are competent to mobilize Gram Sabhas, Ward Sabhas, Line Departments and Governance Institutions for accessing services. Schools have an important role to play-diminishing all social-cultural distances by building a sense of solidarity. Community elders with their positive participation and involvement can help solve many existing problems both financial and physical. Thus what is required is a systematic, accountable and transparent approach without piecemeal input. This would help to meet the challenges of universal access to inclusive quality education.

**References**

1. Sen. Amartya (2007), Development as Freedom, Oxford University Press, London.
2. Annual Report 2006-07. Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.
3. Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition, BWHC at a Glance, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
4. Bihar Education Project (SITAMARHI).
5. Child Labour (Prohibition, Rescue and Restoration of Childhood), Act, 2007.
6. Common, School Education System (2007), Report by Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of
7. Professor Muchkund Dubey on schools in Bihar.
8. District Elementary Education Report Card (2005-06), SarvaSikshaAbhiyan, Government of India.
9. Economic Survey, 2005-06, Government of India.
10. Rao, Hanumantha V. (2006), Growth of Elementary Education: Fifty Years of Andhra Pradesh 1956-2006.
11. Indira KranthiPatham, Unleashing the Power of the Poor from the Grassroots, Department of Rural Development Government of A.P.



12. Meera, Lal (2008), "Convergence of Quality Education and Delivery of Health Services to Weaker Sections in Andhra Pradesh", Report submitted to C.G.G. Govt. of A.P. by Indian Institute of Economics, Hyderabad.
13. Mehta KapurAasha& Shepard, Andrew (2006), Ed. Chronic Poverty & Development Policy in India, Sage Publications, Delhi.
14. Mehta Arun C. (2005), Elementary Education in India-Where Do We Stand? State Report Cards. NIEPA, New Delhi.
15. Radhakrishnan R. and Rao, K. Hanumantha and Reddy B.' Samby (2006), Extreme and Chronic Poverty and Malnutrition in India: Incidence and determinant in Edited Book Mehta and Shepard.
16. Vimala, Ramchandran, Mehrotra, Rishiand and Jandhyala, Kamaeshwari (2007), Incentives in Elementary Education. Do they make a difference? Journal of Education Planning and Administration Vol. XXI Number 2, April, 2007.
17. Successful Governance Initiatives and Best Practices, Experience from Indian States, Planning Commission and Government of India.
18. The Probe Team (PROBE, 1999), Public. Report on Basic Education in India. Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
19. Thomas P.V., Chronic Poverty in Rural Areas: the Role of Government Policy, in Edited Book Mehta and Shepard.
20. UNESCO World Education Report 1995, (1995), Paris.
21. Working Group Report of the Development of Education of SC/ST/Minorities/Girls and other Disadvantaged Groups for 11th Five-Year Plan (2007-2012), Government of India, Planning Commission, New Delhi.