

Discussion Papers

# Achieving SDG 4 in India: Moving from Quantity to Quality Education for All

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Discussion Paper # 232



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विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली



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# Achieving SDG 4 in India: Moving from Quantity to Quality Education for All

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Beena Pandey\*

**Abstract:** India has made significant progress towards implementing the scheme of Education for All. Several key programmes and policies have been initiated to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right. Initiatives such as Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Right to Education (RTE) have given the desired impetus to education system in India. Though it has significantly improved the enrolment rates across the country in primary education, challenges remain to be addressed. The broad focus of the paper is on the current approaches adopted by India to contextualise Goal 4 on education of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Indian context by integrating them into the formulation of New Education Policy and its positive impact on achieving quality education, as emphasised in SDG 4. It examines the trends in education attainments at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in India and explores some major challenges facing the quality education and accessibility issues in education sector.

**Keywords:** India/SDGs/ Quality Education/ Access/Equity/ Inclusion

*If 'learning for all' is not given top most priority, if clear and achievable goals are not set, if teachers and parents are not supported in their efforts to help children learn, India will lose all the potential benefits of bringing every child to school. For a bright and hopeful future, whether as individuals, as families or even as a country, we must aim for "every child in school and learning well." (Rukmani Banerji, ASER, 2016)*

## I. An Overview

Education and literacy are the key indicators of a society that play a central role in enhancing overall socio-economic development of a country as a whole. Emphasising the education as the essence of human

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resource development, the Government of India is likely to finalise the New Education Policy (NEP) through consultative process. To meet the changing dynamics of the present day requirement with regard to quality education, innovation and research, NEP aims to make India a knowledge hub by equipping its students with skill development and up gradation including ICT and vocational training.

India has achieved significant progress towards the goal of Education for All. Constitutionally several key programmes and policies have been initiated to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right. Initiatives such as Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Right to Education (RTE) have given much required impetus to education system in India. Though it has significantly improved the enrolment rates across the country in primary education, but the challenge of quality in terms of learning outcomes remains to be addressed. (GOI, Economic Survey 2016-17). One of the goals of the SSA has been to achieve universalisation of elementary education that addresses both out of school children during the primary school going age and the children who were forced to drop out before completion of primary grade classes due to social and economic compulsions. Accordingly, Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-17) laid focus on expansion, improving quality and equal educational opportunities for all segments of society. As compared to the greying population worldwide, India has an added advantage with its young population, with an average age of 29 years, the demographic dividend can be harnessed with an improvement in health, education and skill development.

In view of the above facts, the broad focus of the paper is on the current approaches adopted by India to contextualise SDG Goal 4 on education in the Indian context by integrating them into the formulation of New Education Policy and its positive impact on achieving quality education, as SDG 4 emphasises. The next section examines the trends in education attainments at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in India. The third section while exploring some major challenges in achieving quality education and accessibility issues in education sector, also presents a brief analysis of experiences of Bangladesh in educational

strategies, as their education system is widely regarded as among the best in South Asia. The fourth section throws light on the recent initiatives undertaken by Government and on some best practices adopted in selected states to address the concerns in education sector, followed by way forward in the concluding section.

## **II. Current Approaches: Indian Context**

Most of the goals of MDGs which were conceptualised in 2000 as a set of eight global goals on diverse dimensions of development like poverty alleviation, health, education, gender equality, environment sustainability etc. aimed at building a global partnership for development are inherent in the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. Significant progress has been made in universalizing primary education, but much remains to be done. At the UN Sustainable Development Summit held in September 2015, more than 150 world leaders adopted the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals which are an inter-governmentally agreed set of seventeen goals and 169 targets relating to sustainable development issues.

Of all the SDGs, education is the most vital component for sustainable development. All the seventeen goals of SDGs seem to be more exhaustive and ambitious with focus on it's relevant to all the people of the world to ensure that '*no one is left behind*'. These SDGs aim to end poverty, zero hunger, and improve education and health standards, gender equality, clean water, sanitation and energy, and to combat climate change within stipulated time period.

On issues pertaining to education (Goal 4), inclusive and equitable quality education for all is clearly viewed as the key to social progress in all the countries. Collaborative efforts in sharing the rich experience and expertise in diversified areas such as universal mass education, higher and professional education and open and distance education with special emphasis on quality and gender equality was agreed upon. As a signatory to the SDGs, India has committed to ensuring inclusive and quality education to all children by 2030.

**Goal 4 of the SDGs on Education affirms that: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for all, states that:**

- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes
- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships



available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

- By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states

## **Overview – SDG 4**

### ***Focus of SDG Goal 4 - Ensure Quality, Access, Equity and Inclusion (QAEI)***

All the seventeen SDGs like eradication of poverty, zero hunger, health, education and clean energy etc. have been key to India's economic development planning since 1960. Given the inter-dependence of SDGs, they need to be implemented in an integrated manner, with its emphasis on quality, access, equity and inclusion at all levels of formal education. Specific targets covered under the Goal 4 are early childhood development and care, pre-primary education, learning outcomes, gender equality and vocational skills rather than mere quantum of school enrolment rates, attendance or syllabus completion. Inclusion and quality education for all reaffirms the belief that education is one of the most powerful and proven vehicle for sustainable development.

For India to achieve all targets of Goal 4 of the SDGs within a 15 year time frame, QAEI offer a window of opportunity to be the pre requisites for quality and accessibility of education for India's young population to achieve at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and maths and at the same time be productive and skilled workforce for the resurgent India.

However, series of programmes and policies initiated by India, focussing on quality and inclusiveness are already in place prior to the

adoption of SDGs. In India, Constitutionally several key programmes and policies have been initiated to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right. The Ministry of Human Resource Development works through two departments viz. Department of School Education and Literacy responsible for universalizing elementary education and Department of Higher Education engaged in establishing world class institutions of higher learning. India follows four stages of school education programme, in which pre-primary education is not a part of the formal education structure.

An initiative like the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) provides for inclusive elementary education for all and reserved 25 percent quotas in private schools for children from economically weaker sections (EWS) of the society. Education for inclusion specifically intended to give equal opportunities for all sections of society that includes gender, SC/ST, minorities, migrants, out of school children and children with special needs, require strong government intervention. Major Policies and Interventions for Education and Learning

**The RTE Act provides for the:**

- Right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school.
- It clarifies that ‘compulsory education’ means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group. ‘Free’ means that no child 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.
- It makes provisions for a non-admitted child to be admitted to an age appropriate class.

- It specifies the duties and responsibilities of appropriate Governments, local authority and parents in providing free and compulsory education, and sharing of financial and other responsibilities between the Central and State Governments.
- It lays down the norms and standards relating inter alia to Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTRs), buildings and infrastructure, school-working days, teacher-working hours.
- It provides for rational deployment of teachers by ensuring that the specified pupil teacher ratio is maintained for each school, rather than just as an average for the State or District or Block, thus ensuring that there is no urban-rural imbalance in teacher postings. It also provides for prohibition of deployment of teachers for non-educational work, other than decennial census, elections to local authority, state legislatures and parliament, and disaster relief.
- It provides for appointment of appropriately trained teachers, i.e. teachers with the requisite entry and academic qualifications.
- It prohibits (a) physical punishment and mental harassment; (b) screening procedures for admission of children; (c) capitation fee; (d) private tuition by teachers and (e) running of schools without recognition,
- It provides for development of curriculum in consonance with the values enshrined in the Constitution, and which would ensure the all-round development of the child, building on the child's knowledge, potentiality and talent and making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety through a system of child friendly and child centred learning.

Successive development policies and Five-Year national development plans have accorded high priority to education development. With a view to enhance enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving the nutritional levels among children, the Centrally assisted National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education was launched on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1995, popularly known as *Mid-Day Meal Scheme*, under which hot cooked nutritious meal provided to every child studying in classes I to VIII every day except holidays. India has world's largest Mid-day Meal scheme, at present serving nutritious food to 10-crore students in 11.5 lakh schools. Involvement of mothers in MDM has also led to significant improvement in cooking and hygiene

along with the decline in teachers' absenteeism. Similarly, the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* programme, "Education for All Movement" as a part of the constitutional right to free and compulsory education for 6-14 years old has been adapted to ensure that no child in this age group remain out of school, and are enrolled in age appropriate grades. Substantial amount of funds have been invested by SSA for recruitment of additional teachers in Government schools for improving the teacher availability.

Though India has made substantial progress in quantum expansion and equity in enrolments across level of education, there is enough scope to strengthen quality parameters. Together, it became all the more clear that absolute access was not sufficient for positive learning outcomes, despite completing four grades of primary education. Thus it is crucial to ensure that quality education, equity and inclusion in education system represent key elements of the vision for SDG 4 and measuring progress to 2030. ([sustainabledevelopment.un.org](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org)). Given the fact that, quality is difficult to define, measure and monitor, education should be inclusive in all dimensions of children's' holistic development which includes skills, knowledge, values and attitudes, besides access to health and nutrition. Evidences have shown that adequate investments in quality related inputs like textbooks and teacher training lead to better outcomes.

However, imparting quality education to children at elementary level is the major challenge, and therefore reorienting SSA programme towards quality became the foremost priority of the Government. To address the issue of quality education, at a meeting of the Central Advisory Board for Education (CABE) in 2016, specific action points were identified including the rationalization of teacher deployment, mechanisms to ensure teacher accountability, consolidation of low enrolment schools and use of technology for effective monitoring among others. Apart from this, Department of School Education and Niti Aayog, in consultation with all States and UTs have been jointly developing a School Education Quality Index (SEQI) to institutionalize a focus on improving education outcomes (learning, access, equity) as the principle aim of school education policy in India to be launched in 2017.

To monitor the implementation of SSA, a *Shagun* Portal with two components is being developed by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), i.e. first one is the Repository of Best Practices, photographs, videos, studies, newspaper articles on elementary education to provide a platform for all stakeholders to be in a competitive spirit to learn from success stories of each other. The second part is regarding the online monitoring of the SSA implemented by States and Union Territories (UTs) and will be accessed by the government officers at all levels at Department, PMO, NITI Aayog to see the implementation of the SSA and the elementary education in all States and UTs.

### **Education: Inter-sectoral Linkages**

In India, progress in education has been widespread in terms of massive enrolment, and expansion of school infrastructure, the narrowing of gender gaps in literacy and the overall literacy rate. Indeed, empowering women and girls with education is fundamental to building a sustainable future. There is a widely accepted view that various indirect returns of education are closely linked with the improvement in health and educational status of women which can be seen in terms of reduced fertility, lower population growth, reduced MMR, reduced child mortality, reduced school drop-out rates and improved nutrition show significant correlation with improvement in educational and health status of women. It has been experienced that education is a liberating force and with all-round changes taking place, it also acts as a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class smoothing out inequities imposed by birth and other circumstances.

In the same way, as mentioned earlier, education is the most vital multidimensional component for achieving most of the SDGs, because of its inter-linkages with all other SDGs and some specific targets related to poverty, hunger, nutrition, health for all, gender equality, decent employment and climate change to name a few.

### III. Tracking Progress – Trends in Education Attainments

Although India has made significant progress in access to schooling, still around 61 lakh children were out of school during 2014-15. The gross enrolment rate (GER) in primary education though declined from 118.62 per cent in 2010-11 to 111.89 in 2014-15 where as upper primary education GER increased from 81.15 per cent to 101.04 during the same period. School dropout rates have declined from 6.5 per cent in 2010-11 to 4.17 per cent in 2014-15. (Table 1)

**Table 1 School Education: Elementary**

Parameter	2010-11	2014-15
Enrolment (crores)	19.3	19.77 (Girls: 9.56 crore, i.e. 48.34%)
Number of schools (lakhs)	13.62	14.45
Dropout rate (%)	6.5	4.17
Out of School Children (OoSC) (lakhs)	134	61
GER * (Primary)	118.62	111.89
(Upper Primary)	81.15	101.04
GER: Elementary (General)	103.9	96.89 (Girls: 99.24)
Elementary (SC)	116.7	108.0 (Girls: 110.45)
Elementary (ST)	101.5	104.03 (Girls: 103.65)

\* Higher GER percentages (above 100) indicate enrolment of under-age and over-age children in the 6-14 age-group. Hence, reduction in GER indicates age appropriate enrolment, elimination of duplicate /double enrolments, admission in unrecognized private schools

**Source:** NITI Aayog, HRD Division, 2016, Access, Equity and Inter-sectoral Linkages in Education

According to the 2011 census, the overall literacy rate increased to 69.3 per cent in 2011 from 61 per cent in 2001 (Table 2). The literacy rates for male has grown by 5.4 per cent points, registering an increase from 73.4 per cent in 2001 to 78.8 per cent in 2011 as compared to increase of 11.5 per cent points for female literacy rates which rose from 47.8

per cent in 2001 to 59.3 per cent in 2011. India has shown the massive improvement in closing the gender gap from 25.6 to 19.6 during the same period. In fact there has been a continuous decrease in gender gap in literacy since 1991 (24.84 per cent point). However, the issue of quality, access, equity and inclusion in education remains critical as number of out of school children (OoSC) is 61 lakh. Further large disparities in literacy rates between male and females in rural and urban areas are matter of concern for the policy makers.

**Table 2 : India : Adult Literacy Rate (%)  
(age 15 years and above)**

	Total	Male	Female	Gender Gap
2001	61	73.4	47.8	25.6
2011	69.3	78.8	59.3	19.6

*Source:* GOI, MHRD, Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2016

Though, it is appropriate to mention that under the scheme Saakshar Bharat – Adult Education Skill Development of the Adult Education Bureau, till March 2016, around 5.13 crore (3.65 crore female and 1.48 crore male) persons declared literate after clearing the biannual assessment tests.

Under the convergence scheme, the National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) has taken up various linkages relating to empowerment issues like electoral/financial and legal literacy, and also taken proactive initiative for alignment of Saakshar Bharat with Sansaad Adarsh Gram Yojana in achieving 100 per cent literacy. The authority also motivated and mobilized more than one crore Saakshar Bharat beneficiaries to open their bank accounts under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY).

Yet, there are several States in India where the literacy rate is below the national average (72.99 per cent), viz. Uttar Pradesh (69.72), Andhra Pradesh (67.66), Jharkhand (67.63), Rajasthan (67.06), Arunachal Pradesh (66.95) and Bihar (63.82). According to Annual Survey of

Education Report (ASER 2014) only 48 per cent of Class V children can read Class II level fluently. In this regard, Bihar and Jharkhand showed very disappointing reading levels in the past couple of years. On the brighter side, Kerala, Lakshadweep and Mizoram are the three states reported with literacy rate greater than 90 per cent.

Despite the Kothari Commission (1966) recommendations that total government spending on education be raised to 6 per cent of GNP by 1986 which was also endorsed by both original and modified version of New Education Policy. Until now at present, as evident from Table 3, since 2009-10, the expenditure on education as percentage of GDP has been hovering around 3 per cent as against 1.4 per cent for health. According to the MHRD data, about 68 per cent of the total education budget goes towards school education and remaining 32 per cent goes towards university and higher education, technical and adult education.

**Table 3 : Trends in Social Sector Expenditure**

Items	2009-10	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16 (RE)	2016-17 (BE)
As percentage to GDP					
Total Expenditure	28.6	26.7	26.4	29.1	29.5
Expenditure on Social Services	6.9	6.6	6.2	7.3	7.4
of which:					
Education	3	3.1	2.8	3.1	3.2
Health	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.5
Others	2.5	2.3	2.1	2.8	2.8

*Source:* GOI, Economic Survey 2016-17 (Volume 2)



**Table 4 : Number of Institutions By Type (Number)**

	Type	2005-06	2010-11	2013-14	2014-15
School Education	Primary	7.7	748547	790640	847118
	Upper Primary	2.9	447600	401079	425094
	Secondary		128370	131287	135335
	Senior Secondary	1.6	71814	102558	109318
	Total		1396331	1425564	1516865
	Higher Education	University			
Central University			41	42	43
State Public University				310	316
Deemed University			131	127	122
State Private University			87	143	181
Central Open University			1	1	1
State Open University			13	13	13
Institution of National Importance			59	68	75
State Private Open University					1
Institutions under State Legislature Act			5	5	5
Others			3	3	3
Total			621	712	760
Colleges			32987	36671	38498
Higher Education- Stand Alone Institution	Diploma Level Technical			3541	3845
	PGDM			392	431
	Diploma Level Nursing			2674	3114
	Diploma Level Teacher training			4706	4730
	Institute under Ministries			132	156
	Total			11445	12276

**Source:** GOI, MHRD, Educational Statistics at a Glance, Various Years

During the period 2010-2015, the number of primary schools has increased from 748547 to 847118 schools while the number of schools imparting upper primary education decreased from 447600 to 425094. Nationally, about 98 per cent of the rural habitations have a primary school within a distance of 1 km. (NUEPA, 2014) (Table 4).

In spite of higher share in the total education budget to school education, India is yet to universalize elementary education. The enrolment for the age group 6-14 has improved from 81.6 per cent in 2000-01 to 96.9 in 2014-15. As the Government spending on secondary education remains substantially low, state of affairs in secondary and higher education is not at all satisfactory. Despite, MHRD launched a centrally sponsored Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) to increase access to and improve quality of secondary education; still the GER in secondary education was 76 per cent and 52 per cent in senior secondary education during 2013 -14 (Table 5).

The GER in primary education has reached to 100 percent in 2014-15. The GER for all children in elementary education increased from 81.6 per cent in 2000-01 to 96.9 per cent (provisional figure) in 2014-15. The relatively lower level of GERs in upper primary, secondary education and senior secondary education continue to be a matter of grave concern. Between 2004-05 and 2013-14, the GER in secondary education increased from 51.7 per cent to 78.5 per cent while the GER in senior secondary education increased from 27.8 per cent to 54.2 per cent, way below the target of providing universal access to education and reaching 100 per cent enrolment. However at this juncture, universalization of secondary education can be viewed as a priority and a stepping stone in an effort to enable young people for higher education to acquire required skills to enter into the labour market.

**Table: 5 Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) (All Categories of Students)**

Year	Primary (I-V) 6-10 Years			Upper Primary (VI-VIII) 11-13 Years			Elementary (I-VIII) 6-13 Years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	2000-01	104.9	85.9	95.7	66.7	49.9	58.6	90.3	72.4
2005-06	112.8	105.8	109.4	75.2	66.4	71	98.5	91	94.9
2006-07	114.6	108	111.4	77.6	69.6	73.8	100.4	93.5	97.1
2007-08	115.3	112.6	114	81.5	74.4	78.1	102.4	98	100.3
2008-09	114.7	114	114.3	82.7	76.6	79.8	102.5	99.6	101.1
2009-10	113.8	113.8	113.8	84.3	79	81.7	102.5	100.4	101.5
2010-11	114.9	116.3	115.5	87.5	82.9	85.2	104.5	103.3	103.9
2011-12	105.8	107.1	106.5	82.5	81.4	82	97.2	97.6	97.4
2012-13*	104.8	107.2	106	80.6	84.6	82.5	95.6	98.6	97
2013-14*	100.2	102.6	101.4	86.3	92.8	89.3	95.1	99.1	97
2014-15*	98.9	101.4	100.1	87.7	95.3	91.2	94.8	99.2	96.9

**Data Source :** (i) Figure from 2000-01 to 2011-12, MHRD, GOI (website: <http://mhrd.gov.in/statist>)

(ii) figure for 2012-13 to 2014-15 ; NUEPA, New Delhi (website: <http://disc.in/>)

\* Figures related to School Education are provisional

Table 5 continued...

Table 5 continued...

Year	Secondary (IX-X) 14-15 years			Senior Secondary (XI-XII) 16-17 years			(IX-XII) 14-17 years			Higher Education 18-23 years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2001-02	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	38.2	27.7	33.3	9.3	6.7	8.1
2002-03	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	41.3	33.2	37.5	10.3	7.5	9
2003-04	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	42.9	34.3	38.9	10.6	7.7	9.2
2004-05	57.4	45.3	51.7	30.8	24.5	27.8	44.3	35.1	39.9	11.6	8.2	10
2005-06	57.6	46.2	52.2	31.4	25.2	28.5	44.6	35.8	40.4	13.5	9.4	11.6
2006-07	58.6	47.4	53.5	31.5	26.1	28.9	45	36.8	41.1	14.5	10	12.4
2007-08	62.6	53.2	58.2	36.3	30.4	33.5	49.4	41.9	45.8	15.2	10.7	13.1
2008-09	64.8	55.5	60.4	37.5	31.6	34.5	51	43.5	47.4	15.8	11.4	13.7
2009-10	66.7	58.7	62.9	38.5	33.5	36.1	52.5	46.1	49.4	17.1	12.7	15
2010-11	69.2	60.9	65.2	42.3	36.2	39.4	55.7	48.5	52.2	20.8	17.9	19.4
2011-12	69	63.9	66.6	47.6	43.9	45.9	58.8	54.5	56.8	22.1	19.4	20.8
2012-13*	69.6	67	68.1	41.9	39.5	40.8	57	56.5	56.8	22.7	20.1	21.5
2013-14*	76.8	76.5	76.6	52.8	51.6	52.2	62.5	62.6	62.5	23.9	22	23
2014-15*	78.1	78.9	78.5	54.6	53.8	54.2	64.9	65.8	65.3	25.3	23.2	24.3

NA - Not Available

Data Source:

(i) figure from 2001-02 to 2011-12: MHRD, GOI, (website: <http://mhrd.gov.in/statist>)

(ii) figure for 2012-13 & 2014-15: NUEPA, New Delhi (website: <http://dise.in/>)

\* Figures related to School Education are provisional  
For Higher Education:-MHRD, GOI, (website:<http://mhrd.gov.in/statist>)

**Table 6 Average Annual Drop-Out Rate in School Education  
(All Categories of Students)**

Classes/ Year	Primary			Upper Primary			Secondary			Senior Secondary		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2011-12*	5.89	5.34	5.62	2.13	3.2	2.65	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2012-13*	4.68	4.66	4.67	2.3	4.01	3.13	14.54	14.54	14.54	NA	NA	NA
2013-14*	4.53	4.14	4.34	3.09	4.49	3.77	17.93	17.79	17.86	1.48	1.61	1.54

*Source* : MHRD: Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2016

\* Figure related to School education are provisional

Table 6 gives data relating to drop-out rates which indicate that though declining from year to year, it still remains a major challenge. With the increased number of schools, improved facilities in schools and enrolment, the annual dropout rate at primary level for all categories of students has lowered down by 1.28 percentage point from 5.62 per cent in 2011-12 to 4.34 per cent in 2013-14. As against this, during the same period, the annual dropout rate at upper primary and secondary level for all categories has increased to 3.77 per cent from 2.65 per cent and reached to the highest 17.86 per cent from 14.54 for the secondary level.

There are many reasons of high level dropout rates in India, as some studies in Rajasthan pointed out that sometimes reluctance of parents and simply lack of interest in going to school are the major constraints. Besides infrastructure, lack of qualified teachers, pupil-teacher ratio, crimes against children like, child labour, child marriage and child trafficking are the main reasons that causes school drop outs. An administrative responsibility of schools at primary levels on teachers also has had an adverse impact on learning outcomes. Long distances, infrastructural facilities, care of siblings and elderly, engagements in cattle rearing, poor access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, and corporal punishment are the biggest offender in deteriorating inclusiveness in education system.

Table 7 presents the performance of schools in different states with respect to Right to Education indicators. Haryana tops among the availability of girls useable toilets followed by Gujarat. Likewise, since 2014 Bihar has done fairly well in terms of availability of drinking water in schools. However, India has a long way to achieve the progress in the number of schools meeting the infrastructural requirements mandated by RTE.

## **IV. Quality Education: A Major Concern**

### **Low Learning Outcomes**

An important concern in India that is often raised in the context of school education, despite the quantum of high enrolment and attendance rate, relevant learning outcomes at all levels varies across sections of the society. This has also been pointed out in several studies including ASER 2014 (Economic Survey 2016-17). According to ASER 2014, about a quarter of all children enrolled in Std VIII have difficulty in reading a simple text at the Std II level of difficulty and close to half still cannot do a simple division problem (*Studies are being carried out in Nalanda in Bihar, Satara in Maharashtra, Hardoi in UP and in Sambalpur in Odisha*). (ASER 2014) The report also presented some worrying interrelated trends that firstly, in 2014 the basic ability of std VIII children seems to be lower that of children who were in Std VIII in 2008/09 and secondly if a child did not learn the basic skills by Std V, chances are very low that he or she will pick up these skills in later years. As a result, despite an increase in the number of years spent in school, basic capabilities as measured by ability to read and to arithmetic remain stagnant, at least for some children. (Banerji, ASER 2014). Arithmetic is also a major cause of concern as only 26 per cent students in Std V can do a division problem.

At the national level, between 2014 and 2016, the enrolment for all the age groups marginally increased. (ASER 2016). Nationally, the proportion of children in Std III who are able to read at least Std I level text has gone up from 40.2 per cent in 2014 to 42.5 per cent in 2016. This

proportion shows substantial increase among children in government schools in many states, viz. Punjab, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Telangana. Similarly, overall reading levels in Std V who could read a Std II level text improved by more than 5 percentage points from 2014-2016 in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tripura, Nagaland and Rajasthan. However, reading levels in Std VIII show a slight decline since 2014 from 74.7 per cent to 73.1 per cent in 2016.

In 2014, only 25.4 per cent of Std II children could do a 2 digit subtraction, but in 2016 this number has risen to 27.2 per cent. Children's ability to read English is slightly improved in Std III but relatively unchanged in Std V. In 2016, 32 per cent children in Std III could read simple words in English as compared to 28.5 per cent in 2009 (ASER 2016).

Some of the underlying causes contributing to low quality of education in the primary sector are teacher absenteeism and the shortage of professionally qualified teachers. Though the share of teacher component in total SSA budget has been increasing over the years from 35 per cent in 2011-12 to 59 per cent in 2014-15, teacher absenteeism and shortage of professionally qualified teachers remain an issue to be addressed (Economic Survey 2016-17).

In order to address the issue of teacher absenteeism, the biometric attendance of all the teachers in primary schools that record the arrival and departures with little control on their activities during the working hours are being explored and put in public domain to be monitored by local communities and parents. Further it was agreed that the issue can be supported by teaching aids and recorded lectures etc. to fill in for absentee teachers. A pilot project of biometric attendance are being accompanied with an evaluation of learning outcomes in one district of every State may be initiated for six months to be expanded to all districts in three years. (Economic Survey 2016-17). A provision for teacher training during summer vacations by SCERT to help strengthen skills and in turn improving learning outcomes in children are in the process.

As far as in secondary school education is concerned, the main driving force for students seems to be only clearing examination through massive private coaching industry in secondary education rather than relevant learning outcomes. Banerji opines that simply universalizing the provision of secondary schooling, providing inputs and building infrastructure to channel children into the next stage of education is not at all sufficient for young generation need nor does it address the challenge that India has been facing in terms of imparting quality education.

In a recent move, the government reiterated that starting this academic session, the focus should shift from syllabus completion to improving learning outcomes from class I to VIII. The indicators pertaining to learning outcomes should be self explanatory for the teachers to track the student progress regularly and thereby introduce corrective measures and communicate progress to the parents.

In this context, a Centrally sponsored scheme Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) envisages provision of a secondary school within a reasonable distance of any habitation and to improve quality of education imparted at secondary level need to be strengthened by making all secondary schools conformed to prescribed norms like gender equality, ICT, vocational education, girls hostels and socio-economic and disability barriers etc.

### **Quality related deficiency in ECCE**

India has one of the most comprehensive early childhood care and development programme, the Integrated Child Development Studies (ICDS) which in 2013 covered 63.5 per cent of children in the age group of 6 months to six years. The scheme is the foremost symbol of country's commitment to its children and nursing mothers, as a response to the challenge of providing pre-school non-formal education on one hand and breaking the vicious cycle of malnutrition, morbidity, reduced learning capacity and child mortality on the other. ([icds-wcd.nic.in](http://icds-wcd.nic.in)). This initiative reinforces the fact that investment in early childhood care results in greater cost savings than investment later in the life cycle. Several



international agencies/development partners including UNICEF, DFID and WFP provide technical assistance to ICDS programme both at the Centre and State level. Currently, Government of India collaborates with UNICEF on a five year Country Programme Action Plans (CPAP) with an estimated budget of US\$ 750 million.

Despite there has been significant progress in the implementation of ICDS scheme during the last three consecutive Five Year Plans, both in terms of increase in number of operational projects and Anganwadi Centres, it has not led to significant reductions in malnutrition and early childhood learning. However, its implementation require a strong focus on the instructional content must be such that it develops early cognitive skills, especially reading and maths, and teams of trained specialists must be provided to Anganwadi workers to improve their instructional and interactive skills to trained the pre-primary children for formal schooling.

### **Multi-Pronged Approach to Counter Challenges by Bangladesh**

Provisions for qualitative early childhood development and lifelong learning opportunities form the basic framework of education system in some South Asian countries. Though, with the diverse education system in South Asia, the privileged sections of the society send their children to elite private schools, while the majority of the population have access to poor educational systems. Despite the provision of constitutional right to education to all in South Asian countries, access to quality education for disadvantaged groups remains a distant dream. Constitutionally, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have incorporated the right to compulsory education for children in the age group of 5-14 years, as an enforceable law.

In fact, Bangladesh altogether has been taking diverse approaches to counter the major educational challenges include poor quality of education, high dropout rates, promotion of equity and accessing education, decentralization of education administration and education for special needs. Research analysis reveals that the country faces broad challenges that affect children's access to schools and their performance include high levels of poverty, especially children living in under

slums, late enrolment of children and limited area-based planning and management of education access and participation.

In order to ensure the quality of primary education for all eligible children in the country, in 2004, Bangladesh's Second Primary Education and Development Programme (PEDP-II) (2005-11) improved the quality of teaching and promoted the learning outcomes by increasing access to primary school for the disadvantaged and strengthened planning and management in primary education system. Decentralization of school management through the School Level Improvement Plans (SLIPs) was an important activity with PEDP-II supported by UNICEF. Through SLIPs, parents, teachers, school management committees (SMCs) and local communities worked to improve the quality of learning for children. SLIPs activities have empowered head teachers and teachers, strengthened their professional motivation thereby enhanced their sense of school ownership of the school.

In many decentralization reforms, the SLIP activities have strengthened the participation of teachers, SMCs, parents and community involvement in the schools. Use of SLIP funds in 2008 & 2009 included purchase of cleaning materials for toilets, books and bookshelves, musical instruments, clearing of the school playground and small scale repairs to school benches and latrines added to the enabling environment for enhanced learning. To support planning at local level, PEDP II also provided training to government officials at districts Upazila school management committee members and head teachers. Further, to improve the quality of education, PEDP III focuses on in-service teacher training, teachers are trained in interactive teaching approaches and also receive subject based training.

However, management of education system in Bangladesh falls under two ministries viz. Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) which takes care of pre-primary, primary and mass literacy programmes. The other, Ministry of Education is responsible for secondary, tertiary and vocational education. Under PEDP II, the Government introduced pre-primary classes popularly referred to as

baby classes. The SLIP initiative begun with the aim of improving the quality of education at the school level by providing modest amount of funds to school to manage and implement activities according to their own identified school requirements.

These two initiatives have contributed significantly towards the government efforts to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals and particularly valuable towards achieving SDG goal 4 i.e (improve quality of education) in Bangladesh. Further, the National Education Policy, 2010, primary education also extended to grade VIII, which is likely to become universal within the next decade. The launching of Sixth Five Year Development Plan (2011-16) and the vision for “Digital Bangladesh” proposed by the Government present both opportunities and challenges in the field of education.

### **Rationale for Strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)**

Historically, pre-primary education (PPE) initiative was mainly accessible by privileged groups who were served by kindergartens. The main objective of PPE is to foster physical and mental preparation before children enter into grade I of formal primary school. In managing pre-primary education, NGOs are the forerunner, including BRAC, Save the Children, Care Bangladesh, Action Aid, Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Gonoshahajjo Sangstha. In addition, madrasas, temples and private kindergartens also offered pre-school education.

The government of Bangladesh first pre-primary education as a substantial public sector activity in 1992 started through a project entitled the Integrated Non-formal Education programme. However, the government did not mobilize the necessary resources to implement the project. Nevertheless, some NGOs took up the programme and began operating pre-primary classes (GOB, 2013). It was only in 2010, with the inclusion of pre-primary education in the national primary education programme (PEDP II), major initiative begun. In order to move towards standard content delivery, the government developed a national

PPE curriculum in 2011 as a pilot test. In order to reach the goals, the government recognized the GO-NGO collaboration guidelines and GO-NGO implementation plan involved with the government to universalize good quality pre-primary education. (UNESCO, 2015).

Based on the experience of PEDP II, PPE was adopted as an important sub component of the new sector wide programme PEDP III with the aim to create permanent system and structure for PPE linked to the primary education and to provide a standardised service that will gradually reach all pre-school aged children. Under the learning and teaching component of PEDP III, a PPE expansion plan was recently developed by DPE with technical assistance from the UNICEF, aiming for expansion of PPE to all government schools and to all Recognised non-government primary school (RNGPS) and other far flung areas.

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) prepared the learning materials and teaching learning aids for PPE on the basis of curriculum approved by the MoPME. Apart from this, a training manual for a 15-day course for PPE teachers was developed by the NAPE, the NCTB and the DPE in consultation with other relevant stakeholders, including NGOs.

Education management information system (EMIS) data collected by DPE in 2013 indicate that out of 4.5 million children enrolled in grade I of primary school at the beginning of 2013, 2.5 million had enrolled for pre-primary education. It was also indicated that the actual participation in PPE was higher than the actual reporting. The government of Bangladesh also committed to universalize PPE in association with NGOs, as there is a growing demand for PPE from parents itself.

The government plan under PEDP III has been to open one pre-primary class at each of the country's 37,672 GPS. Support has also been given to the opening of pre-primary classes by recruitment of teachers in some RNGPS, which number over 23,000 and are now being brought under government management and are entitled to the same government support as GPS.

As noted above, in 2010 the government's PPE initiative began first in the Government primary schools which serve the largest number of children, reaching the children through more than 37,000 primary schools. According to the survey conducted for 10 pre-primary classes based in primary schools found that teachers and management are committed and motivated and already aware of the teaching learning techniques and materials.

Evidences and experiences have shown that improving early childhood care and education can lead to long lasting benefits, both to individuals and society at large. The perspective behind investing in ECE can be grouped into three broad categories like, i) equalizing learning and earning opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds, ii) maximizing returns to investment, and iii) preparing children for formal schooling to improve their learning levels in school and accelerate human capital accumulation. (World Bank, 2014). Holistically, the rationale for investing in ECE covers all the equity, economic and school readiness argument as prerequisite norms for achieving SDGs.

There is substantial evidence that children from economically disadvantaged families are at greater risk of poor cognitive development than children from richer households. (Aldermann, 2011; Nadeau, 2011). Paxon and Schady (2005) reveal the differences in vocabulary scores among three year old children are generally small; the gap in scores between the poorest and wealthiest income quintiles increases progressively for older children and is quite substantial for six year olds. Studies show that gaps in cognitive development begin early and continue to widen overtime. The provision of high quality ECE for economically disadvantaged children can compensate for the deficiencies they face in their home environment and ultimately help break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

Furthermore, there are evidences that ECE investments yield much higher returns than investments in formal schooling and job training, as ECE also enhances school readiness and educational outcomes. Improved performance on standardized tests, reduced school drop-out

rates and increased grade retention rates are some of the key positive impacts of ECE on educational outcomes. Evidence from OECD countries participating in 2009 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows that school students who had participated in an ECCE program for one year or more scored 33 points higher than their counterparts who had not participated in an ECE program, after accounting for socio-economic factors (OECD 2010).

In its education policy planning, Bangladesh has been giving due emphasis on public-private partnership in improving access, enrolment and excellence in secondary education. More than 97 per cent and 54 per cent of primary education in the country has been provided by private providers. In 1985, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), the largest NGO started its Non-Formal Primary Education Programme in 22 one-room schools which later grew to 32,000 primary schools in 2007 enrolling 11 per cent of primary school children. In order to improve quality of secondary education, BRAC supports government initiatives by improving teacher quality and school management.

### **Innovative Model for Secondary Education in Bangladesh**

An educational site, launched by BRAC for high school teachers and students to view or download interactive educational material based on national curriculum and textbook board. Apart from this, educational CDs for General Science, General Maths and English for high school education have also been launched. This e-education helps in enhancing teaching quality, retention and leads to reduction in dropout rate.

Similarly, the ADB and World Bank funded, the Female Secondary School Assistance Project in Bangladesh aims to improve and access the quality of secondary education by girls through financing teacher education, training and support; incentive awards for school performance, for student achievement and improved school facilities specifically providing access to safe drinking water and sanitation. The second component aims at increasing access to education and retention of girls by supporting stipends and tuition and an outreach programs.

Low completion and low transition rates of girls in primary education was the major ground for initiating the Female Secondary School Stipend Programme in 1982 aimed at addressing the existing social norms like child marriage of girls, vulnerability of adolescent girls etc which had an adverse impact on girls' participation in secondary education. Later the Ministry of Education launched the successful programme nationwide to increase their enrolment in secondary education and support them to qualify SSC examination to enhance their employment opportunities in the field of education, health sectors and be part of NGOs. With the implementation of the programme, there was a shift from accessibility to secondary education to gender equity and addressing regional, rural and urban disparities in access of girls in secondary education. According to the grades, universal stipends are paid only to all the unmarried females of secondary schools enrolled in recognized institutions outside the metropolitan areas, with 75 per cent attendance and those who have achieved 45 per cent of marks in the examination. In order to empower girls, the payment is directly transferred to the girls' bank accounts. Surprisingly, despite the significant improvement of girls in enrolment and attendance at the lower secondary level nationwide, the retention and performance in school have not picked up as expected, yet it has wider positive impacts on the increase in age at marriage, greater birth spacing, smaller family size and higher employment and earning levels.

Equally, *Medhabikash*, "Promoting Talent" a scholarship programme is an innovative initiative of the BRAC education programme where disadvantaged talented students receive financial support to pay their college fees both at home and abroad. Apart from the financial assistance, it also consists of specially designed training modules to develop students' confidence and skills in English and computer studies. The IT training covers the elementary skills essential to carry out normal office tasks including basic competency in MS word and Excel. Through some of these innovative models of secondary education, Bangladesh provides evidences of increasing sustainability and scalability effective in successful implementation of the programme.

## **V. Recent Indian Initiatives in School Education Sector: Need for Effective Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation**

At the outset, in India, if one follows Bangladesh, there is an urgent need to initiate one year of pre-school education in all primary section to all children. Ensuring attendance of teachers in schools and the provisioning of services like water and sanitation facilities separately for boys and girls in schools for retention is the need of the hour. The mandate of SDGs can be taken care by India's long term development planning, considering demographic dividend; there is need for India to act swiftly.

However, in pursuance to 'Transforming India' the Government of India has initiated many flagship programmes in transforming education sector with the motto of 'Education for All, Quality Education'. The next section would highlight some of the flagship programmes initiated by India in order to achieve quality education, a pre requisite for achieving SDG 4.

***Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat (PBBB)*** – (Early Reading and Writing with Comprehension and Early Mathematics Programme) is a nationwide sub-programme of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to ensure quality at the foundational years of schooling i.e., classes I & II, as these classes are the important stages for developing the important skill of reading, writing with comprehension and Mathematics with a purpose. Children who fail to learn to read in the first two grades of school are likely to fall behind and have difficulty in learning other subjects as well. PBBB is planned in a twin track approach (i) Early Reading and Writing with Comprehension (ERWC) to improve language development by creating an enduring interest in reading and writing with comprehension; and (ii) Early Mathematics (EM) to create a natural and positive interest in mathematics related to the physical and social world. As a follow-up to the foundational programme, the National Reading Initiative Programme was launched in 2015-16 to develop and promote the habit of reading among students in elementary schools, thereby extending the programme up to class VIII. States were provided token funds to plan and implement



innovative activities to promote reading. During 2014-15, ₹ 456 crores were sanctioned which has been increased to ₹ 525 crores (approved) for 2015-16. Already 15 States have reported having dedicated teachers for classes I & II. Many states and UTs have been implementing specific interventions like ABL in Tamil Nadu, Nalli Kali in Karnataka, Pragma in Gujarat to develop specific teacher training modules for teachers teaching students in classes I and II. Punjab, Meghalaya and Delhi have introduced programmes for strengthening teaching of maths in classes I and II, in Sikkim schools have set up reading corners for children in the foundational classes through support from community members. (PIB, GOI, MHRD, 2016)

***Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*** (BBBP) – (Save Girl Child, Educate Girl Child) is one of the most leading and ambitious flagship programme launched by Government of India in 2015 to address the issue of decline in Child Sex Ratio (CSR) initially in 100 gender critical districts, covering all States and Union Territories (UTs) as a pilot with at least one district in each state. The scheme was launched with an initial corpus of ₹ 100 crore. It is a tri-ministerial effort to improve CSR and status of girl child by Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

The objective of BBBP has been to prevent gender biased sex selective elimination; ensure survival and protection of the girl child and ensure education of the girl child. This initiative implemented through two major components, firstly, a national mass communication campaign which aims at ensuring girls are born, nurtured and educated without discrimination to become empowered citizens of India. Secondly, focused multi-sectoral actions have been drawn to ensure survival, protection and education of the girl child in consultation with MoHFW and MHRD.

***The Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan (RAA)*** – RAA initiative was launched in 2015 to strengthen learning of maths and science in upper primary classes to motivate and encourage children of the age-group 6-18 years in science, mathematics and technology. This initiative is also on

a twin track approach like systemic improvements in the school system and initiatives to encourage science, mathematics through alternative strategies. In some states, schools have been adopted for mentoring by institutions of Higher Education like IITs, IISER's and NIT's, even the students have been taken for exposure visits to factories and research hubs. In schools, through science and mathematics clubs which are being formed at the school levels students participate in competitions and exhibitions to showcase their innovations in subjects like science, maths and technology.

***Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)*** – Digital Initiative has tremendous potential to impact the education of students, capacity building of teachers and educators and provide solutions to mitigate challenges being faced in the Indian education system. The Government of India has taken several initiatives for introducing good governance of school system through ICT- based initiatives in 2015 which includes:

***Saransh*** is an initiative of CBSE to allow schools for online self-review tool for schools to identify areas of improvement in students, teachers and curriculum and take necessary measures to implement change by comparison of results. It is an initiative to provide an analysis of results vis-à-vis other schools of class IX-XII to take actionable decisions.

***Shaala Siddhi (Self-assessment of all schools and External Evaluation of sample schools)*** An initiative by NUEPA aims to enable all schools to self evaluate their performance and monitors their strengths and areas of improvement, both at the elementary and secondary levels. Its main objective has been to establish an agreed set of standards and benchmarks for each school by focusing on key performance domains and their core standards. So far around 9000 schools have implemented Shaala Siddhi covering 25 states and UTs. National Achievement Survey will be conducted annually from 2017 instead of once in every 3 years as per current practice.

**Shala Darpan** – to provide services based on School Management Systems to the students, parents and communities. Under school information services, certain services like school /student profile management, employee information, student attendance, leave management, report cards, curriculum taking custom, SMS alerts for parents/administrators on student and teacher attendance are being enabled.

**e-Pathshala** is an online platform for showcasing and disseminating digital resources containing textbooks and other learning resources like audio, video, periodicals and a variety of other print and non-print materials for its stakeholders-students, teachers, educators, researchers and parents.

**Aadhar Link** - All school going children in the age group of 5-18 years in the country are being covered under Aadhar which would help in tracking of drop out children from school and also for monitoring their academic performance and for ensuring benefits to be disbursed to them in cash or kind under various centrally sponsored schemes. Currently, 23.24 crore children in this age group have already covered by Aadhar against the total enrolment of 26.07 children in the same age group. Similarly, in States and UTs all the teachers are also being covered Aadhar card to prevent fake teachers in the school. A provision of grade wise photos of the government and aided school teachers are being displayed on the school notice board to enable all students and their parents to know the regular teachers and discourage the practice of proxy teachers.

**Swachh Vidyalaya** : The Government has launched Swachh Vidyalaya initiative under the Swachh Bharat Mission with an objective to provide separate toilets for girls and boys in all government schools within the timeline of 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015. The target was achieved and the States and UTs reported that 4,17,796 toilet blocks were constructed or made functional in 2,61,400 schools within the given timeline.

Apart from the government's recent policy initiatives for the qualitative improvement in the field of education, some best practices in different states are already placed for replication in other states as well.

## **Select Best Practices in India in Education**

### ***Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Yojana – Bihar***

In the past few years, Bihar State experienced high number of dropout rates among school going children especially girls. In order to boost retention in education among girls, Chief Minister of Bihar launched Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Yojana. Under this scheme, Chief Minister provides a bicycle to every girl child or Rs. 2000 , who are enrolled in class IX and X in Bihar to go to her school. Such programme has not only improved the school enrolment among girls but has drastically reduced the dropout rates.

### ***Migration Card and Migration Monitoring Software - Gujarat***

Migration for seasonal employment is one of the most crucial factors for dropouts from school. The Migration Card initiative was introduced in Gujarat in 2001 to track and monitor students migrating from one cluster, block, district or state to other state with their parents. The programme also aims at increasing retention and reducing the dropout rate of students in Gujarat. Under the Migration Card Initiative, intra-state children are covered in seasonal hostels at their domiciles while inter-state-children are covered under Tent-Special training Programmes (Tent STPs) in temporary schools set up at the worksites of their parents.

### ***Pota Cabins – Residential Schools for Children in LWE-affected areas***

It is an innovative educational initiative for building schools with temporary materials like bamboo and plywood in Chhattisgarh. This initiative has helped reduce the number of out-of school children and improve enrolment and retention of children since its introduction in 2011.

### ***Pratibha Parv – Strengthening Quality of Education in Government Schools***

Pratibha Parv, a festival of excellence, is a comprehensive initiative of the School Education Department, Govt of Madhya Pradesh in 2011, for

the assessment of teaching and learning and evaluation of educational facilities and activities. This initiative has successfully contributed to raising the attendance of primary school students from 71 to 78 per cent (2011-13), raised middle school attendance from 79 to 84 per cent and reduced the fear of conventional classroom examinations among students. This initiative has covered approx. 1,00,00,000 students in 1,12,788 schools.

### ***Saakshar Bharat – Sustaining and Enhancing Efforts in Adult Education***

This programme has facilitated opportunities for continuing education by extending educational options to adults who have dropped out of, or never entered the formal education system. With its emphasis on basic literacy, post-literacy and continuous education, the initiative forms a continuum as opposed to segmenting adult education. Enrolment of the programme has increased from approx. 15 lakhs to over 45 lakhs between the years 2010-11 and 2012-13.

### ***“Each One Teach One Method” - Mizoram***

Mizoram is among those states where education was first initiated and popularized by the British. Today, the state of Mizoram is ranked at the first position in India with a literacy rate of 91.1 percent. It was after the state of Mizoram changed over to the “*each one, teach one,*” method in the post-1990 through which excellent progress has been made. A systematic effort was made to identify illiterates in far-flung villages, once these villages are spotted, then number of volunteers labelled as animators are appointed and simultaneously village adult education committees are formed to oversee the entire project. This method ensured the involvement of a broad spectrum of people and organizations such as village councils, church bodies, teachers and social workers. The Mizoram government drew up a detailed plan towards achieving total literacy. Each animator was given the task of teaching five persons at a time. As an incentive, animators are given prescribed teaching-learning material free of cost, a hurricane lantern and kerosene oil so as to carry on teaching even after sundown. Evidently, the method has paid off. Today,

Mizoram is highly literate state but for the fact that a large percentage of Chakma and Reang population, who form a minority in the state, are not as keen as their “Mizo counterparts to attain literacy.

### ***Reaching to out of School children – Himachal Pradesh***

The state government has gone to the extent of “embedding teachers, who travel and live with nomads in the hills in order to teach their children. The state has committed high levels of investment in provisioning elementary education in sparsely inhabited areas such as Lahaul and Spiti where formal schools are functioning for extremely small numbers of children and the average school size is very small. The average pupil teacher ratio in this district is very low. In all there are 204 primary schools serving 2594 children and 63 upper primary schools covering 1,475 children in 2006. There are no out of school children in this district.

## **VI. Way Forward to Achieve QAEI**

Education is a very vast subject, India in the 21<sup>st</sup> century surging ahead through its innovative flagship programmes to achieve the QAEI factor to achieve SDG on education within a time frame. To ensure that no one is left behind as SDG emphasises, there is need for adequate physical infrastructure, safe, inclusive environments that nurture learning outcome for all, regardless of sex, background or disability status.

In general, the aforesaid selected flagship programmes of India and stated significant education policies of Bangladesh and the best practices can act as the trend setters. Owing to their pragmatic approach and adaptability, they can be replicated in any part of India as well as through regional cooperation in South Asian region as well. The Government with the existing NGOs and civil societies have to play very effective role in order to bring significant improvement in the education sector. Further, NGOs who play the complementary as well as supplementary role to the concerted efforts of the government agencies in imparting education at different levels need to actively and efficiently impart their role in achieving SDGs across different goals. Similarly, efforts should also be made by NGOs and civil societies to raise general awareness and sensitize

the community about the positive and rationale of quality education for their own benefit. Despite the large number and multiplicity of flagship programmes, their effective implementation and monitoring can pave the way for better results. In view of their huge number and variety, there is much less justification to start new flagship programmes rather than strengthening the existing ones for more effective implementation. Lack of proper coordination among various programmes and the organizations/ ministries concerned for achievement of the common goal has found to be generally responsible for duplication of efforts, wastage of time and financial resources, loss of complementarities and ineffective division of labour all leading to low quality learning outcomes.

Positive learning outcomes, qualified teachers, close proximity to school, relevant curricula, provision of proper infrastructure including blackboards and boundary walls, safe drinking water facilities, usable toilets, MDMS are some of the deciding factors that influence the demand for quality education. Regardless of the RTE enactments in India, still millions of children are out of school is a matter of grave concern. At this juncture, conditional cash transfer schemes can play a transformative role, unless the parents are convinced about the benefits that education can bring in their lives.

SDGs agenda has a very balanced approach towards quality education and decent productive jobs. It provides scope for regional cooperation in South Asia, as sharing of best practices in neighbouring areas can combat cross-domain challenges. As indicated above, all the goals are interlinked together, so there is need to involve all stakeholders relevant to SDGs. There is need to coordinate the State and Centre plans to ensure equity in education outcomes along with the need to invest in quality learning and the importance of technical and vocational training in the education sector. The allocation of adequate funds to education sector in India is an essential pre-requisite condition for improving access, quality, and learning outcomes and of course safety and security of all the children.

Standardization, harmonization and periodicity of data related to education would help to measure and quantify the SDG 4 effectively. These indicators can be compared across all states as well as across districts to measure the achievements. This exercise will also help in understanding where the states lag behind so that targeted policies and interventions can be directed to achieve desired education outcomes. For that, it will be essential to strengthen dataset from administrative and household sources. India has already identified the nodal ministries and departments for each goal that shows the sincerity of the government approach to achieve sustainable development goals. Education is a cross-cutting issue and a goal in itself which calls for an inter-sectoral actions and initiatives along with the allocation of adequate resources to finance education need to be strictly implemented and reviewed on a regular basis.

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