Module 3: Elementary education

12- SYSTEMS AND Structural organisation of elementary education in India

Elementary Education

The education system of India is one of the largest of its kind in the world. More than 102.8 million people come under this education system. The educational system is divided into four levels: pre-primary, compulsory (single structure primary and lower secondary education), upper secondary and higher education. Adult education is also available and art schools, mainly music schools.

Elementary education in India has been emphasized to increase the literacy percentage of the country. India’s post-independence period has seen the launch of various schemes by the Government to promote education among the masses and to achieve universalization of elementary education in the country. The constitutional and legal statements that appear time to time are as follows:

Constitutional mandate, 1950 - "The State shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years."

National Policy of Education, 1986 - "It shall be ensured that free and compulsory education of a satisfactory level is provided to all children up to 14 years of age before we enter the twenty first century".

Unnikrishnan Judgment, 1993 - "Every child/citizen of this country has a right to free education until he completes the age of fourteen years."

The elementary education in India starts from the early child hood days .The system includes three stages: pre-primary, primary and middle level. The pre-primary education begins at the age of five and it continues for one year. This is the initial stage of a child in his/her educational career When the child reaches an age of six, he or she prepares to go for primary education.

**Objectives of elementary education**

Primary education should provide the learner with opportunities to:

-acquire literacy, numeracy, creativity and communication skills

-enjoy learning and develop desire to continue learning

=develop ability for critical thinking and logical judgment

-appreciate and respect the dignity of work

-develop desirable social standards, moral and religious values

-develop into a self-disciplined, physically fit and healthy person

-develop aesthetic values and appreciate own and other people's cultures

-develop awareness and appreciation of the environment

-develop awareness of and appreciation for other nations and international community

-instil respect and love for own country and the need for harmonious co-existence

-develop individual talents

-promote social responsibility and make proper use of leisure time

-develop awareness and appreciation of the role of technology in national development

**Pre-primary education**

Pre Primary Education can be defined as “a set of knowledge along with skills and experience as well as behavioral rules which provides the essential for coping successfully in everyday life and at school.”

The pre primary education in India is also known as Kindergarten. Kindergarten, a term created by Mr Friedrich Frobel in 1837, which means "children's garden". Various types of Pre primary schools are now available in India, and more and more children are now attending preschool, indicating a rise in the need for education of kids. Pre-primary education is considered to be very important for the child as it is the first step towards entering the world of knowledge as well as a healthy and purposeful life. Pre-primary education helps children become more independent and confident as well as promote the all round development of the children.

The preschool tutelage in India is divided into two stages- junior kindergarten (Jr. KG) and senior kindergarten (Sr. KG). The Jr. KG class would comprise of children three to four years of age, and Sr. KG class would comprise of children aged four to five years. A child enters Class 1 of Primary School once he is done with the Sr. KG. Kindergarten plays an important part of regular schools;

**Objective o**f Pre Primary Education:

The children under the age group of 3 to 5 yrs are supposed to get growth and expansion in the field of school academics as preschoolers. To afford the holistic development akin to cognitive, social, expressive and interacting skills or in general the development of the kids counting with a variety of maturity and knowledge in a child like considerable, emotional, exciting, mental, ethical, fine motor, verbal communication, education, admiring, response etc. with other individuality build up at this phase. To promote an intelligence of self-determination and an optimistic personal likeness in the general public also grow. To take care of acceptance and admiration intended for others in the course of the value for adults and love affection for the youngsters generate among the kids.

The aptitude to interact merely in their mother tongue, they acquire the thought and inspiration of understanding or to communicate themselves in English and Hindi languages in the society, which they are conscious of.

**CURRICULUM**

The subjects which are taught at Pre Primary level of School Academics for holistic developments are:

English Language & Text:

English Language and TextIn English Language children at this stage learn the phonic sounds which are related to accent of 2 to 3 letter words and gradually it goes on for 5 to 6 letters. Where as in text they start reading and learning the sentences from the prescribed text books.

Mathematics: Mathematics

In Mathematics children grasp the knowledge of Numerals from 1-100 in the form Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division, Place Value, Greater & Smaller than, word Problems, Money etc.

EVS (Environmental Studies): Environmental Science

Environmental Studies means to acquire the knowledge of nature where they study about plants, animals, fruits, flowers, physical features of the surrounding, Sun –who gives us light and energy, clouds, Rain, Water etc.

General Knowledge: General Knowledge

About parts of the body, Digestive system, names of the fingers, tooth, Different system of body organs, Personal Hygiene our great freedom fighters, prayers, National Anthem, Patriotic songs, Pledge etc.

Art & Craft: Art & Craft

How to draw the objects and color them with different concepts of coloring. Craft would be concerning with Origami (paper folding- Japanese Art).

Work Experience: Work Experience

It is associated with opposites like Hot x Cold, Tall x Short, collage (paper tearing & sticking).

hymes & Action Songs: Rhymes & Action Songs

Children sing the songs by means of Rhyming Words and different events of the body with the help of actions, for instance- 12345, once I caught a fish alive.

Story Telling: Story Telling

Dramatization- Monkey and the Cap Seller and The Little Red Riding Hood etc.

Co-curricular & Extra-curricular Activities:Extra-curricular Activities

Indoor activities like kite making, rakhi, hina, decoration of Diwali oil lamps, recognition of Holi colours and Extra-curricular Activities playing Outdoor games like Khoko, Kabaddi, Basket-ball, Dog and the bone, Hide and seek-flat race etc.

Field Trip:Field Trip

Visiting Botanical Garden, Post Office, Blind School, Historical places and their importance.

Individual & Group effort: Individual & Group effort

An individual child prepares a cold drink and a group effort would be a group of children would arrange for special variety of sandwiches etc.

Importance of Pre Primary Education:

Pre school education is essential for your toddler because it prepares your child for kindergarten and future school which will be allowed to build a base for his future education.

It allows developing a child’s personality by exposing the creativity of the child in a natural way.

Pre primary education helps to learn that how a child can adjust with his/her peers and interact with outsiders.

It ensures the physical, mental and emotional growth of the child. The child develops his cognitive skills in the scientific curriculum that nurtures the child.

This is how Pre Primary education helps to nurture a child’s mind as well as grow into a healthy, socially well-adjusted child and individual.

**Primary**

The primary schooling system starts at the age of six. The Primary Stage consists of either from Classes I-V or from I-IV depending upon the education system of the state. The five years system i.e. Classes I-V is applicable in 20 States/UTs namely Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Delhi and Karaikal and Yanam regions of Pondicherry.The four year system consists of classes I-IV which is applicable in Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep and Mahe region of Pondicherry.

**Middle**

The middle stage of education consists of classes either from VI-VIII or from VI-VII depending upon the states or union territories. The 18 states which come under the first category are: Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Delhi and Karaikal region of Pondicherry. The second system (VI-VII) is effective in states like Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep and Mahe region of Pondicherry.

Primary education starts at age of 5 and ends when he or she is 12 to 13 years old. In India primary education starts from Class 1 or grade 1 and goes up to Class 6/7 or Grade 6/7.

. The Indian government has also banned child labour in order to ensure that the children do not enter unsafe working conditions. However, both free education and the ban on child labour are difficult to enforce due to economic disparity and social conditions. 80% of all recognised schools at the elementary stage are government run or supported, making it the largest provider of education in the country.

However, due to a shortage of resources and lack of political will, this system suffers from massive gaps including high pupil to teacher ratios, shortage of infrastructure and poor levels of teacher training. Figures released by the Indian government in 2011 show that there were 5,816,673 elementary school teachers in India .Education has also been made free] for children for 6 to 14 years of age or up to class VIII under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009.

There have been **several efforts to enhance quality** made by the government. The **District Education Revitalisation Programme** (DERP) was launched in 1994 with an aim to universalise primary education in India by reforming and vitalising the existing primary education system. 85% of the DERP was funded by the central government and the remaining 15% was funded by the states. The DERP, which had opened 1.6 lakh new schools including 84,000 alternative education schools delivering alternative education to approximately 35 lakh children, was also supported by UNICEF and other international programmes. In January 2016, Kerala became the 1st Indian state to achieve 100% primary education through its literacy programme Athulyam.

This primary education scheme has also not shown a high Gross Enrollment Ratio of 93–95% for the last three years in some states. Significant improvement in staffing and enrolment of girls has also been made as a part of this scheme T`he current scheme for universalisation of Education for All is the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan which is one of the largest education initiatives in the world. Enrollment has been enhanced, but the levels of quality remain low.

While the Indian government has been laying great emphasis on primary education, according to 1991 census of India, at least 35 million children between the ages of six to 14 are not attending school. To add to this, a little over one-third of all children who enroll in Class one barely make it to Class 8. Of those, 53 percent are somewhere girls in the age group of 5 to 9 years who are still illiterate.

**Objectives**

The objectives of primary education are as follows:

**Literacy**:The child should learn the first language the mother-tongue to a level where he can communicate his ideas easily.

**Numerac**y:The child should develop ability in four fundamental numerical operations and to be able to apply these to solve problems in his daily life.

**Technicracy**:The child should learn the method of inquiry in science and should begin to appreciate science and technology.

**Nationalism**:The child should develop a respect for national symbols like the flag and the anthem and should know about learn to dislike to casteism, untouchability and communalism.

**Human dignity**:The child should develop healthy attitudes towards human labour and dignity.

**Sanitary habits:The** child should develop habits of cleanliness and healthful living and an understanding of the proper sanitation and hygiene of the neighborhood.

**Aestetic Sense**:The child should acquire a taste for the good and beautiful and should take care of its surroundings.

**Cooperative Spirit**:The child should learn to cooperate with others and appreciate the usefulness of working together for the common good. Besides these objectives, other desirable qualities are development of character and personality through initiative, leadership, kindness, honesty etc. These should be developed during the primary school stage.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was implemented as India's main programme for universalising elementary education. Its mandate was to provide universal access to education and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children.

It also had other plans as a part of its intervention process including inter alia, construction and development of new schools, introduction of additional teachers, regular teacher in-service training, academic resource support that would ensure free textbooks, uniforms and support for improving learning outcomes. However, the outcome has been a sadly slow-paced implementation of the scheme, leading to low penetration rate. According to a 2016 survey conducted by NCERT, there has however now been a slight improvement in the overall learning levels for Class 3, 5 and 8.

Some of other popular policy interventions included the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme, E-Pathshala, Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyaan for primary and secondary education and SWAYAM, etc.

**Academic Session:**

The academic session usually begins from June after a long summer vacation in most of the states but it is different in hilly states where the winter vacation is significant.

The total number of working days is more than 200 days in all states and Union Territories.

**Curriculum**

Primary Stage (5 years)

Primary stage of education has been visualised in two segments with inherent internal continuity.

The first segment comprises Classes I and II, where children are just introduced to formal teaching and are at a stage of development which requires a smooth transition from informal and non-formal environment to a formal one. The second segment consists of Classes III-V whereinthe children get prepared to understand the environment and learn in a systematic way. The scheme of studies for these two segments is given below:

**A. Classes I and II**

(a) One Language — the mother tongue/the regional language

(b) Mathematics

(c) Art of Healthy and Productive Living

B. Classes III to V

(a) One language — the mother tongue/the regional language

(b) Mathematics

(c) Environmental Studies

(d) Art of Healthy and Productive Living

**Upper Primary Stage (3 years)**

(a) Three Languages — the mother tongue/the regional language, modern Indian language and

English

(b) Mathematics

(c) Science and Technology

(d) Social Sciences

(e) Work Education

(f) Art Education (fine arts: Visual and Performing)

(g) Health and Physical Education (including games and sports, yoga, NCC and scouting and guiding.

**Medium of Study:**

The medium of instruction at primary level is the regional language of the respective state.Teaching of Hindi and English is compulsory in most of the non-Hindi speaking states.The states like Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Karaikal region of Pondicherry have not accepted Hindi as a compulsory subject to be included in their syllabus

The National policy on Education has also given stress on primary Education mainly on two aspects:

(a) Universal enrolment and universal retention of children up to 14 years of age.

(b) A substantial improvement in the quality of education.

It has laid down that primary education cannot be accepted as complete unless children acquire minimum levels of learning (M.L.L).

**Innovative Projects and Programmes**

**I. District Primary Education Programme**

The state specific basic education projects in Bihar (Bihar Education Project), Rajasthan (Lok Jumbish & Shiksha Karmi), Andhra Pradesh (Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project), Uttar Pradesh (Uttar Pradesh Basic Shiksha Project) and the District Primary Education Programme are of recent origin. Among these, the scope and coverage of DPEP is much more wider than other programmes of similar nature. The programme that was first introduced in 1994 in 42 districts spread over seven states is now under implementation in about 240 districts of fifteen states. The programme is structured in such a fashion so that it can provide additional inputs over and above the provisions made by the state governments for elementary education. Eighty five per cent of the project cost is shared by the Government of India and the rest 15 per cent by the concerned project states. The Government of India share is resourced by external funding from IDA, European Community, Government of Netherlands, DFID (UK) and UNICEF.

Decentralized planning in a project mode, disaggregated target setting, community mobilization through Village Education Committees, participative planning process and autonomy to set targets, priorities and strategies are some of the salient features of DPEP . For guidance and supervision, state-specific autonomous bodies are created at the state level and at the district level, District Planning Teams were constituted. With the participation of the local community and others - both government and non-governmental agencies and individuals including the NGOs, district-specific plans were developed which are at different stages of implementation. The programme however confines to only primary level but the Government of India at present is thinking seriously to upgrade it to the upper primary level initially in 42 phase one districts. Also under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, provisions are made to cover the entire elementary level.

Over the project period, more than 8,000 new formal schools are opened in the project districts and another 15,000 are in the pipeline. About 38,000 alternative schooling centres of different types have also been set-up and about 75,000 more are planned. In phase one districts about 2,709 school buildings are constructed and another 2,027 were in the progress. In addition, a large number of additional classrooms were also constructed, drinking water and toilet facilities in schools provided and repairs of school buildings undertaken. Majority of 0.85 million teachers under the DPEP has received in-service training more than once. Teachers in a school are given Rs. 500/- per annum as teacher grant, which help them to develop local-specific teaching aids. All primary schools under the project have been granted Rs. 2,000/- per annum as school grant. More than 3 million community members have been trained and given responsibilities in the affairs of education at the grassroots level. As mentioned above, a large number of Circle Resource Centres (CRC) and Block Resource Centres (BRC) have been created where training to teachers is imparted. Teachers discuss problems and other topics of common interest in CRCs meetings.

A growth of 6.2 per cent per annum in primary enrolment has been noticed in 42 phase one (1995-98) districts with average GER at 99.7 per cent. In the phase two districts (1995-97) also, an increase of 2.55 per cent in enrolment has been noticed. Reducing the gender gap, which is one of the important objectives of DPEP is closing rapidly. Twenty-three of the 42 districts have the gender parity index in enrolment above 95 per cent. Index for social equity for Scheduled Caste children is more than 100 in all the phase one districts. Overall repetition rate has shown a decline in phase one district and come down to 5.2 per cent in 1997 from 7.5 per cent in 1995. The decline in dropout rates has been in the range of 4-20 per cent and most of the districts now have dropout rate in the range of 17-31 per cent. It may be noted that utilization rate across districts remains very low. However, in a few project districts, enrolment in Grade I has started declining which is a major cause of concern. One of the possible explanations of this phenomenon is that children started diverting from government schools to unrecognized private schools. Or with the expansion of alternate schools, children of lower age group prefer alternate schools than the formal schools.

**DPEP Objectives**

The DPEP is a centrally sponsored scheme providing special thrust to achieve UEE. It takes a holistic view of primary education development and seeks to operationalise the strategy of UPE through district specific planning with emphasis on decentralized management, participatory processes, empowerment and capacity building at all levels. DPEP aims at providing access to primary education for all children, reducing primary dropout rate to less than 10 per cent, increasing learning achievement of primary school students by at least 25 per cent, and reducing the gap among gender and social groups to less than five per cent

The significant achievements are not reflected in the all-India averages because of the limited coverage of districts under the DPEP. In view of this, as mentioned above, the Government of India has initiated SSA, which over time will cover all the districts of the country. In most of the project districts, Computerized Educational Management Information System is now in existence but poor dissemination and low utilization of data have marred this significant achievement. Districts have also undertaken micro planning and school mapping exercises but the information generated is neither properly analyzed nor is used in planning exercises. A huge amount of data is generated but only a small amount of that is been utilized. In many districts, micro planning is conducted as one time exercise. The districts have not utilized school mapping in deciding the location of a new school, which is mostly because of the fact that school mapping as such has not at all been conducted in any of the districts. Rather, the capacity to conduct school mapping is not available both at the state and district level. The utilization pattern also suggests that most of the districts do not have capacity to utilize the funds. Whatever they could utilize, a chunk of which is spent on civil work activities and activities relating to innovation, research, retention, quality improvement programmes etc. have not picked-up as per expectations. Teacher is the most important actor of the education system through whom only all the interventions are expected to reflect in the classroom transactions. But a majority of states have filled-up vacant positions by appointing para teachers.

One of the other **major limitations** of the programme is that the targets, which are set out over the project period, are almost same (GER 120% and Retention 90%). The first phase districts got seven years while the phase two and three districts got only five years to implement the plan. In this process, districts, which were in position to achieve the goal earlier than seven years also, got seven years as the plan period. The upper ceiling of the plan was kept at Rs. 400 million irrespective of the size of the district. In view of this, districts proposed over ambitious proposals. A glance at few of the plan documents reveal that districts have undertaken a detailed analysis of educational development and also attempted demographic and enrolment projection exercises but the same in most of the cases is not handled efficiently. Frequent transfers of the DPEP officials at all levels across states have severely affected the implementation of the programme. Despite all these limitations, a lot of progress is made across districts and capacity of officials involved in the programme is also built-up significantly at all levels.

**II. Lok Jumbish and Shiksha Karmi Projects**

Apart from DPEP, Lok Jumbish (Peoples' Movement) and Shiksha Karmi Projects are the other two important programmes, which are, received attention at the international level. Both these projects are under implementation in Rajasthan since 1992, which is one of the most educationally backward states of India. Lok Jumbish and Shiksha Karmi are funded by SIDA. The main objective of LJP is to achieve EFA through people's mobilization and participation. Whereas, SKP focuses it attention on universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote, arid area and socio-economically backward villages with primary attention given to girls. The project identifies teacher absenteeism as a major obstacle in achieving the goal of UEE. The LJ Parishad, an autonomous society, implements the LJP. Two phases of LJP during 1992 & 1994 and 1994 & 1998 are already over and the third phase (1999-2004) with the assistance of Department of International Development (UK) is currently under implementation. For the first two phases, about Rs. 1,110 million were invested and for the third phase, an amount to the tune of Rs. 2,250 million is allocated. It has undertaken environment-building activities in 8,675 villages and has completed school mapping exercise in 6,974 villages. 529 new schools have been opened and another 268 were upgraded. LJP has been able to set-up innovative management structures incorporating the principles of decentralization and delegation of authority as well as building partnership with local communities and the voluntary sector. It has also set-up vibrant block and cluster resource groups for providing academic supervision and regular training of primary school teachers.

However, it may be noted that the LJP has covered only 75 blocks, which is just one quarter of the total blocks in Rajasthan. The management cost of LJP is high compared to other programmes of similar nature. It is also not known whether the success it has achieved, will it able to replicate elsewhere in Rajasthan and outside Rajasthan. The school mapping exercises, which are conducted under the LJP, though termed as school mapping but in fact, is a micro planning exercise. The disappointing aspect is closing down of LJP in about 10 blocks and another 9 may also meet the same fate. This is because of the DPEP, which is presently under implementation in 10 districts of Rajasthan, and another 9 are in pipeline. The Government of Rajasthan decided to close down LJP in blocks, which falls under DPEP districts.

**III. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**

In addition to the Centrally Sponsored Schemes, states have initiated schemes to give momentum to their efforts towards the goal of Education for All. More recently, the Government of India has also initiated an ambitious programme called Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA): An Initiative for Universal Elementary Education to achieve the goal of UEE. The programme is initially planned to initiate in about 50 low female districts spread over fifteen states. It is envisaged that all the districts of the country will come under the programme before the end of the Ninth Plan (MHRD, 2000b). Unlike the District Primary Education Programme, the SSA envisages to develop district-specific elementary education plans within the framework of decentralized management of education with a focus on Panchayati Raj Institutions. In the DPEP, the focus was only on the primary level. In these districts, it would be the first attempt to develop plans with the active involvement of local people in a participatory planning mode. District planning teams in these districts have already been formed and training in planning methodology is being imparted. Three of such programmes have already been organized by NIEPA at Shillong, Aizawl and Mussoorie where a large number of members of the district planning teams and states representatives were trained. This exercise will help to build-up capacity at the grassroots level, which will help district and sub-district officers in developing plans. It is expected that districts will initiate pre-project activities soon for which an amount of Rs. 5 million (upper ceiling) is allocated to each of the districts covered under SSA.

It may however be noted that a recent SSA discussion document envisages habitation/cluster as a unit of planning as has been experimented in the Lok Jumbish Project. The document is not clear how this would be achieved? Do we have education offices at the habitation level? Or will it be achieved through convergence? Do we have other governmental offices at the habitation level? Are some of the important questions, which should be dealt with? Therefore, the proposal at this stage may be treated over ambitious and challenging one specially keeping in view that a large number of persons that would be required to involve in this task. Of the total 1061 thousand habitations in the country, 581 thousand had population 300 & more and are eligible for schooling facilities. An average of 4-5 persons per habitation would need at least 2-3 million persons to be trained and involved in this task. Do we have capacity to build-up capacity of these grassroots people? Can DIETs handle this mammoth task? Certainly we are not ready to take up this challenging task at this stage, which is more specifically true in the light of quality of training facilities that are available at lower levels (see Box 3). To begin with it would be better to develop district-specific plans with block as the basic unit of planning. DPEP is said to be successful in achieving significant increase in both enrolment and retention and also in creating effective information system, management structures and training centres both at the block and cluster levels. Can’t we adopt this model in the SSA districts? This is what exactly has been done in SSA but inputs from other programmes, like the Lok Jumbish Project has made it too heavy and over ambitious. It seems that there are too many eggs in a basket.

The SSA, which is a holistic programme, envisages involving community in a big way. The community ownership is central to the SSA programme (Box 5). All the existing centrally sponsored schemes discussed above will come under one umbrella programme i.e. SSA. This is expected to smoothen the flow of funds from Central Government to State level registered societies and District Planning Teams created for the implementation of the programme. However, not a single district covered under SSA has yet estimated actually how much funds over time have been received and utilized under different Centrally Sponsored Schemes or how much are they spending on elementary education.

The targets under the SSA is that all children will bring back to school by 2003 and complete five years of schooling by 2007 and eight years by 2010. Accordingly, all children of age-group 6-11 years will have to be enrolled by the year 2002-03 and retain till 2007 to achieve UPE. As per the proposals, all the districts of the country will come under the SSA before the end of the Ninth Plan i.e. 2002. By no magic, it can be achieved. Even, the Dakar Framework for Action to which India is a signatory envisages achieving the goal of UPE by the year 2015. Therefore, the target dates should be left to the districts which can adopt district and block-specific targets and if necessary separately for boys and girls, SC and ST children and would be based on their present status of educational development. It may also quite possible that a few states and districts may achieve UPE even earlier than 2007. The focus of the programme is on to bridge gender and social category gaps at the primary by 2007 and elementary level by 2010 and universal retention by 2010.

Strategy Frame for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

The SSA a people's movement for EFA will provide useful and relevant elementary education of satisfactory quality for all by 2010 bridging all social and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community in the affairs of school. To achieve UEE, in a holistic and convergent approach, the following key strategies have been worked out:

· Emphasis to be laid on retention and achievement rather than on mere enrolment;

· Adopt incremental approach for creating school facilities. Education Guarantee Centres in unserved habitations and 'back to school camps' for out of school;

· Focus to be shifted from educationally backward states to educationally backward districts;

· Adoption of disaggregated approach with focus on preparation of district specific and population plans;

· Universal access to schooling facilities particularly to girls, disaggregated groups and out of school children;

· Make education relevant by curricular reforms to promote life skills;

· Improvement in school effectiveness, teacher competence, training and motivation;

· Decentralization of planning and management through Panchayati Raj Institutions/Village Education Committees and stress on participative processes; and

· Convergence of different schemes of elementary education and related services such as early childhood care and education, school health and nutrition programmes etc.

**Medium of Study:**

The medium of instruction at primary level is the regional language of the respective state.Teaching of Hindi and English is compulsory in most of the non-Hindi speaking states.The states like Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Karaikal region of Pondicherry have not accepted Hindi as a compulsory subject to be included in their syllabus.

e-pATHSHALA

The digital India campaign has promoted extensive use of ICTs in the teaching learning process. The ePathshala, a joint initiative of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Govt. of India and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been developed for showcasing and disseminating all educational e-resources including textbooks, audio, video, periodicals, and a variety of other digital resources. The ePathshala Mobile app is designed to achieve the SDG Goal no. 4 as well i.e. equitable, quality, inclusive education and lifelong learning for all and bridging the digital divide.

Students, Teachers, Educators and Parents can access eBooks through multiple technology platform that is mobile phones and tablets (as epub) and from the web portal through laptops and desktops (as Flipbook). ePathshala also allows users to carry as many books as their device supports. Features of these books allow users to pinch, select, zoom, bookmark, highlight, navigate, share, listen to text using text to speech (TTS) apps and make notes digitally.