**Module 3:**

**13- Universalization of elementary education**

Universalisation of Provision means that school facilities should be provided to all the children between the age of 6 to 14. Universalisation of Enrollment means that all the children between the age of 6 to 14 must be enrolled.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is being implemented as India's main programme for universalizing elementary education. Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children

**Issues and challenges of universalization of primary education in India**

There are some problems of elementary education such as out of school children, working children, or child labourers, parents ignorance ,family's poor financial conditions, attitude of parents towards girl's education, distance of the school from the place of residence, lack of provision of basic infrastructure .

Expanding literacy to approximately three-quarters of the population in the 7–10 age groups by 2011, India has made progress in terms of increasing the primary education attendance rate over the years.

As per the stats, around 29 percent of students in the 6 to 14 age group in the country receive private education.

In India, 80 percent of all recognized schools at the elementary stage are government run or supported, thus, making it the largest provider of primary education in the country.

Under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, education for children for 6 to 14 years of age or up to Class 8 has been made free by the government.

With an aim to universalize primary education in India, the District Education Revitalization Programme (DERP) was launched in 1994. Its main focus was to reform and vitalize the primary education system.

The student-teacher ratio in India stands at 24:1 across all levels of schooling. This seems healthy in light of the Right to Education Act stipulation of a ratio of 30:1.

The RTE act has called for sufficient infrastructure, but less than 5% schools have all the 9 facilities mentioned in the act. Over 30 % schools had no toilets and over 60 % had no playgrounds.

In the past few years, this primary education scheme has shown a high Gross Enrollment Ratio of 93–95 percent in some Indian states.

**Few challenges**

As of 2011, the enrollment rate for pre-primary schools is 58 per cent and 93 per cent for primary schools. However, as per the studies, among rural children of age 10, half could not read at a basic level, despite. the high overall enrollment rate for primary education

Some of the reasons cited for the poor quality of education in schools include the absence of around 25 per cent of teachers every day. Also, as per some online reports, the pupil to teacher ratio within the public school system for primary education is 35: 1.

A study of 188 government-run primary schools found that 59 per cent of the schools had no drinking water and 89 percent had no toilets.

The District Information system for education (DISE) data shows that only 6 out 10 schools in the country have access to electricity. Bihar is the worst offender with only 10 % of its schools having access to electricity. This a major issue for students to bear such a temperature during hot summers.

The quality of teachers is also important for the learning outcomes but the DISE data shows that only 69 % of all school teachers in the country have a graduate degree or more.

**Strategies for Achievement of Universalization on Primary Education:**

In order to solve the problems of universalization of primary education the government both central and state level have undertaken some of the strategies which are as follows:

i. The constitution (Eighty third Amendment) Bill, 1997 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 28” July, 1997 to make right to free and compulsory education for 6-14 years of age a Fundamental Right. Accordingly the Lok Sabha, on November 28, 2001, unaxionously passed a constitution amendment making education for children in the age group of 6-14 years of fundamental right.

In this regard the parliament passed the 26′” Amendment Act, 2002 to make elementary -education a Fundamental Right for children in the age group of 6-14 years.

. In order to create parental awareness and community involvement, a new scheme Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was evolved to pursue universal elementary education in a mission mode.

iii. It is essential to ensure appropriate economic incentives like free uniforms, free learning materials and compensation to the families of children to economically and socially backward sections of society scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

iv. The scheme of operation Blackboard was lunched in 1987-88 with the aims of providing improved infrastructure in schools.

v. District Primary Education programme was launched in 1994 as a major initiative to achieve the objective of Universalization of Primary Education.

vi. A National Programme of Nutritional support to primary education commonly called the Mid-day meals scheme launched on 15 August, 1995 is aimed at improving enrolment, attendance and retention in primary classes.

vii. The scheme of Non-formal education (NFE) was introduced in 1970-80 to target out of school children in the age group of 6-14 years who had remained out-side the formal schooling.

viii. Steps were taken the check the wastage and stagnation in primary education level.

ix. Universal Provision of girl’s education would be a major step forward to the attainment of universal compulsory primary education councils for the Welfare of women and children both at the centre and stake levels should contribute their best efforts in this direction.

x. Shicksha Karmi and Shiksha Sahayak Project aim at universalization and qualitative improvement of primary education on remote and backward areas.