**NATIONAL ELEMENTARY EDUCATION MISSION(NEEM)**

 **The National Policy on Education, 1986 (as updated in 1992) and its Programme of Action (POA), 1992, reaffirm the national commitment for Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). The policy resolves that free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality should be provided to all children up to 14 years of age before we enter the 21st Century. It has envisaged launching of a national mission for achievement of this goal. The POA, 1992, states that launching of a national mission for achievement of UEE is an important and immediate task, for which suitable mechanisms will be worked out to identify objectives, strategies, functions and structures. In this process, wide consultations will be held between the State Governments, voluntary agencies, educational and social institutions, educationists, women activists, etc. The POA mentions that the proposed mission will have the central objective of mobilising all resources— human, financial and institutional—necessary for achieving the goal of UEE. According to the POA, the mission would be made operational during the year 1993-94, when all central schemes such as micro-planning, Operation Blackboard, NFE, MLL for quality improvement, etc. would be transferred to the mission so that implementation of UEE at the State, District, Block and Village levels can be operationalised through the mission.**

**NEEM should have following specific**

**objectives:-**

**a) to support State, district, block and village level governmental and non-governmental organisations including all Panchayati Raj Institutions in the achievement of UEE;**

**b) to promote a people’s movement for making elementary education a**

**fundamental right of children in the 6-14 age group;**

**c) to strengthen advocacy for involvement of local communities in**

**improving school effectiveness;**

**d) to promote research, innovation, monitoring and evaluation that are**

**community-based and that provide an opportunity for learning in the**

**process of programme implementation; and**

**e) to encourage decentralised initiatives and to document successful local**

**initiatives that could be of relevance to other districts and States in the**

**country.**

**The functions of NEEM should be:-**

**a) to provide policy and strategic guidance for UEE; ensure convergence**

**and synergisation of efforts towards UEE; undertake media publicity**

**and advocacy for UEE; promote research and facilitate innovation**

**and experimentation for promotion of UEE.**

**b) In pursuance of these tasks, the specific functions of the Mission**

**should include to:**

**• secure necessary political commitment and national consensus for**

**UEE**

**• develop and nurture alternative paradigms and approaches in**

**elementary education**

**• evolve strategies and make interventions to address gender, caste,**

**sectional and regional disparities in elementary education**

**• review and monitor the progress of UEE in the country**

**• promote holistic planning for achieving UEE**

**• effectively harness all resources and institutions including**

**Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRls), CBOs, NGOs and the corporate**

**sector in the national endeavour to achieve UEE**

**• assist and strengthen existing structures and institutions for**

**promotion of elementary education in the country and attempt to**

**build synergy in their efforts**

**• integrate and coordinate efforts for achieving UEE**

**• encourage and strengthen efforts to promote early childhood care**

**and education**

**• facilitate convergence of all national and internationally assisted**

**programmes for basic education and adult literacy**

**• build public opinion and mobilise social support for UEE**

**• elicit active and constructive participation of public representatives,**

**teachers, academicians, educational thinkers, planners,**

**practitioners, and voluntary organisations in the task of UEE**

**• launch and sustain a national media and advocacy campaign for UEE**

**• critically look at Centrally Sponsored Schemes to give them full**

**contextual flexibility in implementation**

**• assist and promote basic and field research to improve the**

**efficiency and quality of the elementary education system**

**• promote and support innovation and experimentation in the field**

**of elementary education**

**• initiate and support local initiatives and community based efforts**

**for improving functioning of schools and the quality of elementary**

**education**

**• assist States/UTs and non-governmental organisations in evolving**

**and implementing programmes aimed at promotion of quality and**

**equity in elementary education**

**• act as a clearing house for dissemination**

**The Goal of NEEM should be to achieve**

**U niversalisation of Elem entary**

**Education in a given time frame.**

A. To fulfil its goal, the Mission should endeavour to achieve the following objectives on the premise that every child in the country has a right to free elementary education:

a) universal access and enrolment;

b) universal retention of children up to 14 years of age; and

c) a substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning.

PROGRAMMES UNDER NEEM

The National Education Mission itself is made of four umbrella schemes as follows:

National Education Mission – Sakshar Bharat

Saakshar Bharat Mission

Saakshar Bharat is the centrally sponsored nation-wide literacy scheme of the Indian Department for School Education and Literacy (DSEL) focusing on increasing women´s literacy in India. It was launched by the prime minister on International Literacy Day in September 2009. Its aim is to significantly reduce the number of non-literate adults in India and foster an environment within communities that encourages lifelong learning.

The mission aims to promote and strengthen adult learning, reaching out to those who missed the opportunity to access or complete formal education. As well as basic literacy/basic education, it covers vocational education and skill development, applied science and sports. Due to its approach Saakshar Bharat is described as a ‘people’s programme’, with the government acting as facilitator and resource provider, but working closely with local communities to tailor the programme to their needs.

Objectives

The Mission consists of four objectives:

1. Provide basic literacy and numeracy to non-literate and non-numerate adults. This represents the accomplishment of basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy. It also aims to help the individual understand how to achieve personal and community development, tackling causes of poverty.

2. Provide qualification equivalent to formal educational system and establish learning for neo-literates beyond basic literacy. This provides further educational opportunities to neo-literate adults, who can achieve a qualification which gives them access to further studies. From the lifelong learning perspective, this aspect is one of the most crucial factors.

3. Provide Vocational education. Imparting learners with relevant skill development programmes is crucial to improving their working and living conditions. This is achieved through the Vocational Education phase which provides skill development training to non-literate and neo-literate adults based on their local context and the personal requirements of the learning group.

4. Promote a learning society by providing opportunities to neo-literate adults for continuing education. The Continuing Education aspect of the programme creates a sustainable learning environment for neo-literates to continue using and improving their skills. This is done through the provision of libraries and reading rooms, based in the Adult Education Centres. Such facilities also host short term thematic courses on issues such as health, nutrition and environment, according to the requirements of the local population. It uses a range of printed materials sourced locally and relevant to the community.

Adult Education Centres (AEC): Lok Shiksha Kendra

National Education Misson – Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

National Education Mission – Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiskha Abhiyan (RMSA)

National Education Mission – Teachers Training

Professional development of personnel

Saakshar Bharat must utilise a large number of Volunteer Literacy Educators to help reach the overall target of 70 million literates.

The programme places emphasis on development of its human resources through on-going training of its teachers, literacy facilitators and supervisors. Key resource personnel at the district level are provided with managerial training, and volunteer teachers are given in-service training in local languages, methodology and practice of teaching adults.

In the eventuality of qualified volunteers not being a resident within a particular village, as an alternative approach, instructors may be engaged outside the village or community to live with the community and provide instructional teaching. On average one resident instructor will be required to teach 30 learners over a year. Through this approach the centre functions for 7-8 hours every day and groups of learners attend classes for a couple of hours or more depending on their available free time.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a programme for Universal Elementary Education. This programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to all children through provision of community -owned quality education in a mission mode.

The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is a flagship scheme of Government of India, to enhance access to secondary education and improve its quality. It aims to increase the enrolment rate by providing a secondary school within reasonable distance of every home. It also aims to improve the quality of secondary education by making all secondary schools conform to prescribed norms, removing gender, socio-economic and disability barriers, and providing universal access to secondary level education.