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Country Report

India

EFA National Plans of Action
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PART I: Legal Framework

1. Article 41:

“State shall within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want”.

2. Article 45:

“The State shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years”.

The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002, to make education for children in the age group 6-14 years a Fundamental Right has been enacted by the parliament and the Act has received President's Assent on 12.12.2003. The Act has been notified in the Gazette of India on 13.12.2002.

The main features of the Act are as follows:

- Insertion of Article 21 A to provide for free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6-14 years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine;
- Substitution of the existing Article 45 of the Constitution with the following:-
“The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of 6 years.”
- Insertion of the following new Clause in Article of 51(A) of the Constitution relating to Fundamental Duties of the citizens:-
“(k) who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as case may be, ward between the age of 6-14 years.”

PARTII: NFE Components of National Plan of Action and UNLD

Overall review of the literacy/NFE components of EFA National Plan of Action (NPA)

1. **An Overview of Recent Developments in EFA:** Both on the literacy and the primary education fronts, India has been implementing a number of specially designed programmes to move towards the goals of ensuring universal primary education and of eradicating adult illiteracy. However, as a follow-up of the Dakar Framework of Action for Education for All (EFA), an attempt has been made to link national goals and targets with global targets of EFA.

Apart from the increase in literacy rates and schooling facilities, there has been development in the following areas also:

- A separate Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, headed by an independent Secretary, was created in November 1999 within the Ministry of Human Resource Development to specifically focus on EFA goals.
- A Constitutional Amendment Act has been passed by the Parliament to make elementary education a fundamental right.
 - ▶ A Central legislation to enforce this right, which is under preparation, will contain the following:
 - Delineation of responsibility of various State organs such as central govt. state govt. and local bodies
 - Setting the parameters of acceptable quality of education
 - Providing for remedial mechanism at various levels for redressal when this right is violated
- Expenditure on education as percentage of GDP increased from
- 3.84 to 4.11 in the govt. sector.
- Gender Disparity:
 - ▶ Increase in girls' enrolment by 23% in primary and 40% in upper primary between 1990 and 2000: much higher than the boys.
 - ▶ Share of girls in total enrolment has gone up from 41% to 44% in primary and from 38% to 40% in upper primary.
 - ▶ Proportion of female teachers increased from 29% to 36%.
- Early Childhood Care and Education:
 - ▶ 90% of 5,652 blocks to be covered under the scheme by 2002.
 - ▶ Number of beneficiaries increased from 22 m in 1995 to 30 m in 2000.

The following national goals, corresponding to the **six Dakar goals**, have been drawn:

- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme being universalized – Early childhood Care and Education an important component of the scheme
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Movement for Education for All) launched with the aim of providing eight years of quality education to all children in age – group 6-14 by 2010
- National Literacy Mission to provide functional literacy to all illiterate adults in the age group 15-35.
 - * Achieve sustainable threshold level of 75% literacy by 2007
- Special schemes targeted at girls, apart from focus on girls in general schemes.
 - * Removal of all disparities, including gender, in primary (class I-V) by 2007 and elementary (I-VIII) by 2010

2. Time-bound Targets and strategies in the plan:

2.1 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is being implemented by the Govt. of India in partnership with the state Governments with a long-term perspective on cost sharing and through district-level decentralized management framework involving local bodies. It is envisaged that the campaign to be launched in a mission mode, will move towards achieving the following four goals:

- i. Providing access to all children in the age group 6-14 years through formal primary schools or through other equivalent alternative delivery means by 2003.

- ii. Completion of five years of primary education by all children by 2007.
- iii. Completion of eight years of education by all children by 2010
- iv. Provision of elementary education of satisfactory quality for all by 2010.

2.2 The National Literacy Mission has fixed the following goals for achievement of EFA targets:

- i. To achieve a sustainable threshold level of 75% literacy by 2007 and to achieve a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015.
- ii. To expand continuing education programmes to cover all districts by 2007.

Strategies for planning and Monitoring:

In a vast and varied country like India, it is not easy to prepare a national plan of action for EFA, as different states are in different situation with respect to the goals of EFA. A genuine national plan will have to take into consideration these inter-state variations. In view of this a series of regional consultation meetings are held to elicit the perspective of official leadership and NGOs in different states. The states are in the process of preparing basic inputs for the EFA plan with concrete reference to the six Dakar EFA goals. A national consultation has also been held, involving NGO representatives and professionals so that the national plan of action reflects the concerns and perspective of all stakeholders.

Making the plan a credible one and translating it into reality hinges critically on two factors:

- **First**, the international commitments made by the country towards EFA goals have to genuinely converge with the national level proposals. Real convergence has to be viewed not only in terms of statements of goals and targets but also in actual field level actions. Also, the institutional arrangements adopted for achieving the goals have to match the international commitments.
- **Second** important prerequisite that injects credibility to any plan of action is the political commitment of the national leadership, as well as genuine support of the civil society for the goals agreed upon.

Role of NGOs and Corporate Sectors:

The government would view NGOs which represent the third sector (or the voluntary sector) as partners in the march toward achieving the goal of Education for All. This comes out of the realization that no single delivery system, be it in public or private, alone can achieve the goal of UEE without the participation of the voluntary sector. Also NGOs that offer alternative development models have established reputation in terms of accountability, quality of services, cost effectiveness, innovation, closeness to the grass-root and effective management style.

As a broad policy, the 10th Five Year Plan stresses on greater involvement of NGOs at all levels in the social sector for achieving participatory development. The approach followed will be to enhance the role of NGOs in education. At present, involvement of NGOs is generally limited to running NFE centres and literacy programmes and implementing small scale innovative experiments in education. While continuing with existing programmes of NGOs involvement, the voluntary sector would be assigned a larger role by functioning along side the governmental sector in a significant manner.

The **corporate sector** has also taken a lead in recent times in working with the Central and State Govts and NGOs to achieve the goal of basic education. For instance, one of the India's largest financial institutions, ICICI, has set up a Social Initiative Group (SIG) to focus on development-related initiatives including pre-primary and primary education. The Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) has set up a primary education and literacy committee, through which it works with its affiliated units to build alliance to support EFA programmes. The Azim Premji Foundation set up by the Chairman of WIPRO – a leading IT company – is solely committed to the cause of elementary education and has been working with the Govts of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.

This expanding role of corporate citizens will provide an additional impetus to the EFA movement in the coming years.

Externally Assisted Projects:

The four existing externally assisted projects in elementary education – the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP), Lok Jumbish Project (LJP) and GOI-UN (Janshala) programme – would continue as part of SSA framework till the completion of their project periods. As SSA supports most of the programme components, strategies and interventions of these four externally assisted programmes, a smooth transition to SSA would be ensured in the project districts after the project period.

Major literacy/NFE programmes of NPA:

i. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):

Recognizing the importance of elementary education, the Govt. of India has been working with State Govts for achieving the goals of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). In this context, the major initiative has been the launch of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the national programme to implement the fundamental right to free and compulsory education. SSA aims at providing universal enrolment by the year 2003, 5 years of quality primary schooling by the year 2007 and 8 years of quality elementary education by the year 2010.

The programme covers the entire country and addresses the needs of 192 million children in 1.1 million habitations. The SSA has a special focus on girls and children of weaker sections. A number of initiatives including the provision of free text books, target these children under the programme. It also seeks to provide computer education in rural areas to bridge the digital divide.

ii. Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE)

The Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education programme for children in the age group of 6-14 years was operationalised from 1st April 2001.

The scheme, applicable throughout the country, is flexible and operationally proactive and would support the following broad strategies.

- Setting up of schools in school-less habitations (EGS).
- Interventions for mainstreaming of “out-of-school” children viz. bridge courses, back-to-school camps etc.
- Strategies for very specific, difficult groups of children who cannot be mainstreamed.

The EGS & AIE programme envisages flexible strategies including schools in school-less habitations or condensed courses for migrating children, bridge courses, residential camps, drop in centres for street and slum children, remedial coaching for children enrolled in formal schools, short duration summer camps etc.

iii. Early Childhood Care and Education:

Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) programme of the Department of Women & Child Development is the largest early childhood education programme in the country. ICDS was started in 1975 to provide health, nutrition, ECE and convergence services. It also provides support to the national efforts for universalization of primary education, through increased opportunities for promoting early development, associated with improved cognitive and social skills, enrolment and retention in the early primary stage. ICDS is now operating 5,725 projects in the country. The total coverage for children in the 3-6 age group under ICDS is 169 million.

iv. National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education:

A nation-wide programme of Nutritional support to Primary Education (Popularly called Mid-day

Meals Scheme or MDM) was launched on 15th August 1995 with the objective to give a boost to UPE and simultaneously impacting on the Nutritional Status of students in primary classes studying in Government, local body and Government aided schools. The programme was expanded in a phased manner and has seen all India coverage during 1997-98.

The Central support under this programme is to provide food grains free of cost to children through the Food Corporation of India. Recently the Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order directed that under the scheme, cooked meals be provided in a time bound manner. As a result, cooked meals are now being served in many states.

v. Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP):

The Shiksha Karmi Project aims at universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote, arid and socio-economically backward villages of Rajasthan with primary attention given to girls. Under the SKP, regular teachers are replaced by local teachers who are less qualified but specially trained to solve the problem of teacher's absenteeism in remote villages. A Shiksha Karmi is a local person with a minimum educational qualification. To overcome the basic lack of qualification Shiksha Karmis are given intensive training through induction programme as well as periodic refresher courses.

The programme is funded by Government of Rajasthan, Swedish International Development Agency and DFID.

vi. Mahila Samakhya :

The Mahila Samakhya Programme was started in 1989 with Dutch assistance to translate the goals mentioned in the NPE into action. Mahila Samakhya has adopted an innovative approach which emphasizes the process rather than mere fulfilment of the targets. It seeks to bring about a change in women perception about themselves and the perception of society with regard to women's traditional roles. The MS endeavours to create an environment for women to learn at their own pace, set their own priorities and seek knowledge and information to make informed choices.

The women's group (Sangha) at village level is the nodal point where all activities are planned. The Sahayogini the leader is the key link as well as motivator, supporter and guide for 10 villages. The Mahila Samakhya Programme has generated a demand for literacy and education for women and girls. It has thereby strengthened women's abilities to effectively participate in village level education process.

vii. National Literacy Mission:

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched in pursuance of National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, and its programme of action, for eradication of adult illiteracy. It was conceived as a societal mission employing political will at all levels for the achievement of Mission's goals to be achieved in a time bound manner. By the time the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) at Jomtien in 1990 began to survey the literacy efforts, India had already embarked on a programme of eradication of illiteracy in a mission mode.

A mass campaign approach emerged as the main strategy to tackle the problem of adult illiteracy. By the time the "year 2000 Assessment of Education for All" was undertaken, NLM had traversed a long distance covering most parts of India by the Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) while also fine tuning the strategies for linking literacy with skill up gradation, quality of life improvement etc., under the Post Literacy (PL) and Continuing Education (CE) programmes. Simultaneously, NLM also began to address specific issues like community involvement and NGO partnership. Thus, by virtue of constantly bench marking its strategies in relation to the EFA concerns, NLM was able to keep the target fulfilment far ahead of the dates set by the Dakar Framework for Action.

The goal of the National Literacy Mission goes beyond the simple achievement of self-reliance in literacy and in numeracy to functional literacy. The achievement of functional literacy implies imbibing values of national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality, observance of

small family norms, etc. Thus, literacy as enunciated in the National Literacy Mission is not an end in itself but has to be an active and a potent instrument of change ensuring achievement of these social objectives and creation of a learning society. The acquisition of functional literacy results in empowerment and a definite improvement in the quality of life. It helps to ensure the participation of the masses in sharing the benefits of the information era.

The NLM is operating the following schemes:

i. Total Literacy Campaign:

The campaign approach has been the principal strategy of the National Literacy Mission for eradication of the illiteracy. The focus in the TLC phase is on basic literacy consisting of reading, writing and numeracy. The TLC phase has certain positive characteristics like being area-specific, time bound, participative, delivery through voluntarism, cost effective and outcome oriented. Though the campaign emphasizes the achievement of pre-determined levels of literacy and numeracy, there are other activities linked up with TLC such as campaigns for universal enrolment and retention in schools, immunization, conservation of environment, the small family norm, women's empowerment etc.

The TLC has an assumed duration of 12-18 months of which half of the time is devoted for preparation and for creating favourable environment and another half of the time is devoted for actual teaching/learning activities. The three-legged management structure of TLC consists of popular committees from district to village levels, the ZSS supported by the subject specific sub-committees, and the officials of the district and block level administration. At the end of the programme the district is subjected to both internal evaluation and external evaluation by an outside agency.

ii. Post Literacy Programme :

On the conclusion of the Total Literacy Campaign the post literacy programme is implemented by the district for a period of one year. The objective of the programme is to enable the neo-literates to learn the application of literacy skills as a problem solving tool, so that learning becomes relevant to living and working including functionality and awareness components.

One of the important tasks of PL Programme is mopping up of learners left out (including drop-outs) during the basic literacy phase. The post literacy programme specifically aims at remediation, retention and consolidation of literacy skills in the first phase through guided learning. In the second phase, the learners are provided with a variety of supplementary reading materials and library services to help them continue learning through self-directed process. The programme also emphasizes on the integration of skill development programme to enable the neo-literates acquire skills for their economic self-reliance. PLP is also regarded as the preparatory stage for launching continuing education programme.

iii. Continuing Education Programme :

Under the scheme of continuing education programme, the main thrust is on setting up of continuing education centres which will function as a focal point for providing learning opportunities such as library, reading room, learning centre, training centre, information centre, charcha mandal, development centre, cultural and sports centre and other individual interest promotion programmes. One CEC is set up for a population of 2000 to 2500. For a group of about of 10-15 CECs, there is a nodal CEC which monitors and oversees the activities of those clusters of CECs.

The CEP also provides the opportunities to undertake diverse activities involving alternative and innovative approaches to cater to the needs of the learners. Taking into account local conditions and the resources available, various target specific activities such as Equivalency Programmes (EPs), Quality of Life Improvement Programmes (QLIPs), Income Generating Programmes (IGPs) and Individual Interest Promotion Programmes (IIPPs) are organized for specific groups of beneficiaries.

The scheme of CEP envisages hundred per cent assistance to the States for the first three years of the implementation. The State govts are required to share 50 per cent of the expenditure during the 4th & 5th year of the project.

iv. Scheme of Support to NGOs :

The scheme of support to voluntary agencies in the field of adult education is in vogue for quite some time. The objective of the scheme is to secure extensive involvement of NGOs in NLM. Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided for various literacy activities.

v. Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS):

The Scheme of Jan Shikshan Sansthan or Institute of People's Education is a polyvalent or multifaceted adult education programme aimed at improving vocational skills and quality of life of individuals. The objective of the scheme is educational, vocational and occupational development of the socio-economically backward and educationally disadvantaged groups of urban/rural population particularly neo literates, semi literates, SCs, STs, women and girls, slum dwellers, migrant workers etc. At present 122 Jan Shikshan Sansthans are functioning in different parts of the country.

NLM Thrust Areas:

- Achievement of 75% literacy level by 2007.
- A multi-pronged strategy in order to address the regional, social and gender disparities in literacy.
- Refocusing the Literacy, Post Literacy (PL) and Continuing Education (CE) programmes to increase and strengthen women's participation, so as to bridge the gender gap in literacy.
- Encouraging PL and CE districts to pay special attention to mobilization and organization of women into neo-literate and self-help groups (SHGs).
- The priority areas for the 10th Five Year Plan were set up, which included special attention to socially disadvantaged groups like SCs/STs and women.
- Regional disparities, and especially low literacy States, were identified for special attention. 45 districts with female literacy rates below 30% have been targeted for a multi-pronged strategy to improve the female literacy rates.
- An integrated approach to make basic literacy, post literacy and continuing education phases into a learning continuum.
- District literacy society (Zila Shaksharta Samiti) the autonomous body which implements and oversees the literacy, post literacy and continuing education programmes, would have freedom now to use grass-roots participatory networks like youth clubs, mahila mandals, voluntary agencies and local self-government bodies like Panchayats, cooperatives, etc as partners in CE implementation.

Present Status:

Out of 600 districts in the country, 596 have since been covered under adult education programmes – 167 under TLCs, 191 under Post Literacy Programme and 238 under the Continuing Education Programme. About 106.76 million persons have been made literate till March 2003. About 60 per cent of the beneficiaries are women, while 22 per cent and 12 per cent belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively.

New Initiatives:

Special Focus on Low Female Literacy Districts: According to 2001 Census, 45 districts in the country have female literacy rate below 30 per cent. Most of these districts are concentrated in Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. Special innovative projects are being taken up to raise the level of female literacy in these areas. Special efforts are being made to target female Panchayati Raj functionaries and make them literate.

Since this problem is most acute in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, to begin with, 8 low female literacy districts in Uttar Pradesh have been brought under an Accelerated of Female Literacy Programme (AFLP), which is being implemented through a network of about 100

NGOs. Approximately 2 million women are expected to be made literate within a period of about 6 months. In Bihar, a different model has been adopted to cover the 15 low female literacy districts, with the involvement of Panchayati Raj functionaries, Women volunteer teachers and Women self-help groups. Approximately, 3 million non-literate women are expected to be covered over the next 6 to 12 months. Similar projects are on the anvil for the other states as well.

Growth of Literacy:

Over the decades, literacy rates have shown substantial improvement. The total literacy rate was only 18.33 per cent in 1951, which rose to 52.21 per cent in 1991 and has further increased to 65.4 per cent in 2001. According to the Census of India, 2001, the literacy rate has gone up to 75.85 per cent for males and 54.16 per cent for females. For the first time, even with an overall increase in the population, the number of illiterates has decreased in absolute terms by 31.9 million. The number of literates, on the other hand, increased by 203.6 million during the last decade.

At present, over three-fourths of the male population and over half of the female population are literate. During the last decade, female literacy rate has shown much higher growth, increasing by 14.87 percentage points as against 11.72 for males thus reducing the male-female differential in literacy rates from 24.84 in 1991 to 21.7 in 2001. All states have registered an increase in literacy rates and 60 per cent male literacy has been achieved without exception. However, disparities between and within states continue, although the gap between the educationally advanced and backward states has been diminishing over the years.

PART III: Literacy/NFE Programme

1. ACCU-UNESCO supported project on "Alternative Models of Education and Information Systems (AMEIS)" is being implemented in Indore district of Madhya Pradesh. A consultative meeting on development of an integrated NFE, Literacy and Continuing Education monitoring package was organized at Indore from 12-14 September by ACCU, UNESCO and LRC Indore. A diagnostic study was undertaken which helped in reviewing the existing AME activities along with service providing agencies and profile of beneficiaries. A clear picture emerged about the existing database system, methods of data collection and analysis.
2. A capacity building workshop on NFE-MIS software and database developed by UNESCO was organized at Mumbai from 24-28 March 2003 with the objective of familiarizing stakeholders with prototype NFE database and its usage. The methodology of the workshop included sharing of experiences of various pilot projects in Cambodia, India Tanzania and Bangladesh and technical sessions included hands-on training sessions.
3. In order to prepare guidelines on participatory information collection and analysis for the AMIES Indore project, a workshop was organized by ACCU and UNESCO at NIEPA from 30 June-4 July, 2003. The guidelines on participatory data collection evolved included techniques like semi structured interviews, brainstorming, focus group discussions, PRA activities such as mapping, Matrix ranking etc.
4. Major Activities undertaken by Learning Resource Centre (LRC) project being implemented by SRC Jaipur with support of ACCU.

Adaptation and publication materials:

- i. A handbook for non-formal adult education Facilitators produced by UNESCO-Bkk was adopted and printed in Hindi to make it available in local language.
- ii. The Clip Art in English produced by ACCU in 8 volumes was brought out in Hindi language.
- iii. In order to share the experiences LRC Jaipur is bringing out a quarterly Newsletter 'Literacy Grass-roots Breakthroughs'. The first issue of Aug-Oct. has already been printed and circulated.

Strengths and Weaknesses of LRC:

The training workshops of LRC personnel for curriculum and material development, evaluation workshop, field studies have strengthened the academic activities. There is a marked improvement in network activities with different organizations. This has also enhanced professional capabilities of LRC to a considerable extent.

Suggestions for strengthening of LRC activities:

The ACCU-LRC network presently covers the activities of 15 LRCs in different Asia-Pacific countries. It may be necessary to broaden the sphere of the network by including the UN agencies like UNESCO. Increased number of networking activities will attract more and more NGOs as well as govt. agencies.

There is much scope of running community learning centres in rural areas in association with local NGOs. A proposal in this connection can be developed and discussed with partners as well as donor organizations.