

**INITIATIVES OF HRD IN 2007
TOWARDS EXPANSION, QUALITY & EXCELLENCE, EQUITY AND RELEVANCE**

PART-I (School Education & Literacy)

1. FUNDING

The total allocation for education has risen to Rs. 32,352 crore in 2007-08, an increase by 34% over the previous year. An education cess (@ 2% on major Central taxes) was introduced to raise resources for providing universal elementary education. (A non-lapsable fund called Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh was set up to receive the proceeds of the education cess to finance elementary education, including Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the national cooked mid-day meal programme). An additional education cess @ 1% on major Central taxes has been introduced in 2007-08 for funding secondary and higher education.

2. SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

Several steps were taken in the 10th Plan to expand access to primary education, especially the expansion in the SSA and MDM scheme. As a result, the number of out-of-school children declined from 32 to 7 million indicating that SSA brought an additional 25 million children into the education system during the 10th Plan period. The Gross Enrollment Ratio(GER) for elementary schools (Class I-VIII) increased from 82.4% in 2001-02 to 93.5% in 2004-05. In the last three years, 1,40,000 schools opened, 1.3 crore children additionally enrolled and 5.76 lakh new teachers appointed.

The Cabinet decided to change the existing funding pattern of SSA programme during XIth Plan from 50:50. The funding pattern between the Central Government and States/UTs shall be in the ratio of 65:35 for the first two years of the XIth Plan, 60:40 for the third year, 55:45 for the fourth year and 50:50 thereafter. For 8 North Eastern States it will be 90:10.

3. MID-DAY MEAL

MDM expanded to the upper primary stage to 3479 Educational Backward Blocks in the current year and to all blocks across the country from the year 2008-09. With this an additional 2.3 crore children will stand to benefit from the programme. Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme is a centrally sponsored programme to support universalisation of primary education and to improve the nutritional status of children at primary stage. At present, MDM covers 12 crore primary school children. The scheme has since been revised to provide cooked Mid-day Meal with enhanced nutritional content of 450 calories and 12 gms. of protein.

4. EDUCATION INDEX

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, through the National University of Educational Planning & Administration, has developed an Education Development Index (EDI) to track progress of the States towards Universal Elementary Education (UEE), for Primary and Upper Primary levels as well as for a composite look at Elementary Education. The EDI as an exercise that will encourage the States to improve their performance. The EDI will also be calculated for all the districts. It is expected that this exercise will help more effective targeting of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to the most needy districts. The Government is already focusing on districts with substantial population of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Minorities, educationally backward districts where there are large numbers of out of school children, high gender gap and large infrastructure gaps.

5. KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA SCHEME

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme, under which 1000 new schools have been approved in the year 2006, besides the 1180 approved earlier, provides residential education to girls predominantly belonging to the SC, ST, OBC and minority communities.

6. REFORMS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Central Government is committed to make secondary education of good quality available, accessible and affordable to all children. A major initiative to expand secondary education is being taken in the 11th Five Year Plan. A scheme named “Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan” with the main objective to provide universal access by 2015 and universal retention by 2020 is proposed to be launched soon.

7. VOCATIONALISATION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Government initiated a scheme to provide one time financial assistance of Rs. 12.3 crore for establishment of 65 new polytechnics in the country and also by providing financial assistance for upgradation of infrastructural facilities in 177 existing polytechnics. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has permitted double shifts in those diploma level institutions where adequate infrastructure, faculty and other facilities are available. AICTE has also relaxed the norms for land requirement for establishment of diploma level institutes by fifty percent. In order to meet the shortage of teachers in the polytechnics, the faculty student ratio has been reduced from 1:15 to 1:20.

8. NIOS ONLINE (NI-ON) PROJECT

National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) initiated Online Admissions under its NIOS Online (Ni-On) Project from this year onwards. This unique facility, available for the first time in any Open Learning System in India, will facilitate the learners in directly accessing NIOS. It will lead to a rapid increase in the numbers of learner enrolment with NIOS and thereby assist the Government’s effort of Universalisation of Secondary Education.

9. NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005 prepared by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has suggested a shift from content-based testing to problem solving and competency based testing with emphasis on short answer type questions and well designed multiple choice questions. NCERT also held discussions with State Examination Boards in four regional meetings held at Shillong, Ajmer, Bhopal and Bhubaneswar on 17-18 July 2007, 31 July-1 August 2007, 05-06 August 2007 and 22-23 August 2007 respectively. Central Board of Secondary Education and School Boards of Haryana, Kerala and Goa have made a beginning in implementing some of the recommendations.

10. NATIONAL LITERACY

In the field of adult education and literacy, out of 600 districts in the country 597 have since been covered under various programmes – 101 under total literacy campaigns, 171 under post literacy programme and 325 under continuing education programme. About 120.39 million persons have been covered under literacy programmes as on 31.3.2006. About 60% of the beneficiaries are women while 22% and 12% belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively.

11. INDIA AND UNESCO

The 34th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO was held at Paris from October 16 to November 3, 07. The Indian Delegation was led by Human Resource Development Minister Shri Arjun Singh and also included Minister for Science & Technology, three Members of Parliament, Secretary (S&T), Secretary (I&B), Secretary (SE&L) and Secretary (Higher Education).

UNESCO has included 38 items of documentary heritage of exceptional value in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, which includes 30 manuscripts of the Rigveda dating from 1800 to 1500 B.C. These manuscripts have been kept at the Bhandarkar Institute, Pune.

12. MINORITY EDUCATION

Recommendations contained in the report of the Justice Sachar Committee in regard to education are already under implementation inter alia improve access of the Muslim minorities to all levels of education, strengthen the scheme of introduction of modern subjects in Madaras, and also incentivise States for setting up colleges in Muslim Concentration Districts which are now in Gross Enrolment Ratio for higher education or have a low density of higher educational institutions vis a vis population. Schemes such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Introduction of Modern Subjects in Madaras already have the support of the State Governments.

A Committee headed by Shri M.A.A. Fatmi, Union Minister of State in the Ministry of HRD has given its recommendations for giving a boost to Minority Education in the light of the Sachar Committee Report. These recommendations are under implementation.

13. CONFERENCE OF THE STATE EDUCATION MINISTERS

A Conference of the State Education Ministers was held on 10th and 11th April, 2007. The Conference urged that the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) continue to be implemented with the vigour and commitment and with fullest attention to issues of equity, improvement of learning outcomes, focused programmes for improving language and mathematics skills and tracking student as well as teacher attendance. In the field of Higher Education, the Conference recommended that the, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of higher education be raised from the present 10% to at least 15% .

PART-II(Higher Education)

14. MOILY COMMITTEE

Access to education is of utmost importance for achievement of disadvantaged sections. The central educational institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act has, therefore, been enacted and has been notified in Jan, 2007 in pursuance of the 93rd Amendment to the Constitution of India, to provide statutory reservations to SCs, STs and OBCs in Central Educational Institutions. With regard to OBC reservations, the Oversight Committee (Moily Committee) recommended an investment of Rs. 17,270.22 crores over a period of five years for the Central Educational Institutions to increase their intake capacity by 54% in a phased manner over a period of three years, ensuring that OBC reservations would not lead to any reduction in the seats as were available to the general category students. The issue is, however, sub-judice.

15. SAKSHAT

“Sakshat,” a free one-stop portal for education has been launched by His Excellency, the President of India in October 2006, to address education and learning needs of students, scholars, teachers and lifelong learners.

16. DISTANCE LEARNING

Access to education through the Open and Distance Learning system is expanding rapidly. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) now has a cumulative enrollment of about 15 lakh.

17. PM'S INITIATIVES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The Prime Minister in his Independence day speech announced the setting up of 6,000 new high quality schools-one in every block of the country; 370 colleges in various districts, 1600 new Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Polytechnics; 10,000 new vocational schools and 50,00 new Skill Development Centres. The Government plans to seek active help of the private sector in its initiatives. The Government also plans to set up 30 new Central Universities; 5 new Institutes of Science Education & Research (IISERs); 8 new Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs); 7 new Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and 20 new Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs).

18. CENTRAL UNIVERSITY FOR SIKKIM, ONE IIM IN SHILLONG

Prof. Mahendra P. Lama becomes first Vice Chancellor of Sikkim University. The Central Government notified on 2.7.07 the coming into force the Sikkim University Act, 2006 . Now all States in the North East have one Central University each. One new Institute of Management has recently being opened in Shillong.

19. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY

National Institutes of Technology Act, 07 becomes operational on 15th August, 2007. Erstwhile Regional Engineering Colleges/Government Engineering Colleges have been converted into National Institutes of Technology (NITs) with changes in their governance structure. There are 20 NITs at present.

20. RAGHAVAN COMMITTEE ON RAGGING

The Central Government has drawn the attention of States and regulatory institutions (like the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), University Grants Commission (UGC), Medical Council of India) to the various recommendations contained in the Report of the Committee for Prevention of Ragging for implementation. This Ministry has also launched a media campaign through newspapers. Provisions of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 are attracted in appropriate instances and the directions of the Apex court mandates filing of First Information Reports by institutions with local police authorities, wherever victims are not satisfied with the action taken by the institutional authorities.

21. INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL TRIBAL UNIVERSITY

Parliament passed the Bill for to establish Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, a teaching and affiliating university at Amarkantak in the State of Madhya Pradesh to facilitate and promote avenues of higher education and research facilities for the tribal population of India.

22. WORKERS TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

The Committee constituted by this Ministry under the Chairmanship of Dr. G. Sanjeeva Reddy has since submitted its report in December, 2006. The report recommended establishment of a Workers Technical University for inter-alia training the students from workers family and those belonging to economically poor sections of the society particularly from rural areas to make them more relevant to the needs of today's technology intensive and knowledge driven industrial society. The Committee recommended that the jurisdiction of the proposed National Workers Technical University shall be the whole of the country, having the main campus at Hyderabad with regional centres at different major cities in the country.

23. PROMOTION OF LANGUAGES

A three-day National Seminar on "1857: Renaissance and Indian Languages" was organised by Central Institute of Hindi, Hyderabad Centre from 16-18th March, 2007 to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of India's First Struggle of Independence.

24. MONITORABLE TARGETS

To monitor the progress of education in India, five targets have been proposed at the national level. These monitorable targets are: (i) Reduction in the drop out rates of children from elementary school from 52.2% in 2003-04 to 20% by 2011-12, that is by the end of the Eleventh Plan, (ii) Developing minimum standards of educational attainment in elementary schools, to ensure quality education, (iii) Increasing the literacy rate for persons of age 7 years or more to 85% by 2011-12, (iv) Lowering the gender gap in literacy to 10 percentage points by 2011-12, and (v) Increasing the percentage of each cohort going to higher education from the present 10% to 15% by 2011-12.

25. PM ON EDUCATION IN 11TH FIVE YEAR PLAN

Education is an area of special focus in the XI Plan. Already, we can see that faster growth is leading to skill shortages and increases in wages and salaries for people with the right type of skills. We need a greatly expanded supply of educated and skilled labour to support our ambitious growth targets. Education is also our best hope for achieving inclusiveness and for

spreading development to backward regions and marginalized groups. Nothing will ensure an effective spread of opportunity to all sections of the population more than the availability of good quality education particularly in rural areas. The XI Plan attempts to bring about a massive transformation in this area through many new initiatives. While strengthening the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a new scheme for universalizing secondary education is being proposed. In addition, 6000 model schools in all Blocks, 30 new Central Universities, 370 new colleges in educationally backward districts, a Skill Development Mission to cater to 1 crore students per year and a huge expansion in the number of Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, Indian Institutes of Information Technology, Indian Institutes of Science Education & Research are proposed in the XI Plan. This is a decisive start to bridging the knowledge gap in our country. But all these ambitious investments will bear fruit only if the Central and State Governments work purposefully to see that results are in line with expectations and that the quality of these institutions do remain top-class.'

.....

HB/SB/SB/achievements 07