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# UNIT 1 ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND TOTAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- outline the landmarks in educational development;
- explain some of the major policy initiative undertaken by the government in order to achieve UEE; and
- describe the special features of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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“The educational life of any country is like a continuum which gathers its past history into a living stream flowing through the present into the future.” One of the highest priorities in educational policy since independence has been the achievement of universal elementary education and the removal of adult illiteracy.

Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has been accepted as a national goal since 1950. The Directive Principles of the Constitution of India envisage a

provision of free and compulsory education to all children upto the age of 14 years. The Constitution was amended in December 2002 to include free and compulsory education for all children in the age group 6-14 years as a fundamental right while expanding the provision for children upto the age of six, to include early childhood care and education within the Directive Principles. The overall goal in this regard is to provide free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children. It is significant to note that the National Policy on Education (NPE) defines universal elementary education in a broad framework, changing the emphasis from enrolment and retention to enrolment, retention, and achievement.

The purpose of this unit is to build your understanding of elementary education as it obtains in the India and its implementation through major programmes.

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## **1.2 ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: CONCEPTUAL CONTOURS**

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Elementary education in India is defined as the education provided from classes I to VIII. Roughly, it covers children from the age of 6 to 14 years. Elementary education is further divided into two stages: the primary and the upper primary education. Primary education lasts upto class V and covers children in the 6 – 11 age group. Upper primary covers class VI to VIII and so the children in the age group of 11 to 14 years. While this is the national picture, however, there are minor variations here and there. Some states have primary schooling upto class IV only, while a few have upper primary upto class VII only. Universalisation of Elementary Education has been a national priority since independence. The recent amendment to the Constitution, which has made elementary education a fundamental right of every citizen, guides the formulation of policies and programmes in this area. Concerted efforts towards the goal of UEE during the last five decades have resulted in a substantial increase in the number of institutions, teachers and students. During the period 1950-51 to 2001, the number of primary schools increased by more than three times, while the number of upper primary schools increased by fifteen times. Special projects and programmes at the national level launched during the 1990s gave a further impetus to this process. The following table highlights the progress in education since 1950.

**Table 1: Progress in Education since 1950**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>1950-51</b>	<b>2000-01</b>
Primary schools	2,10,000	6,38,738
Upper primary schools	13,600	2,06,269
Teachers in primary schools	5,38,000	18,96,791
Teachers in upper primary schools	86,000	13,26,652
Enrolment in primary schools	19.2 million	113.83 million
Enrolment in upper primary schools	3 million	42.81 million

**Source:** Education for All, National Plan of Action, Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

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## **1.3 IMPORTANT COMMISSIONS ON EDUCATION**

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Several Commissions on Indian education have reviewed and suggested important recommendations for the primary, the elementary and the secondary levels of education. The Education Commission (1964-1966) was the sixth Commission appointed by the Government of India. The first was the Indian Education Commission (1882), which

dealt mainly with school education. The second was the Indian Universities Commission (1902), which reviewed the development of higher education since the establishment of the first three universities in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1957 and made recommendations for the reorganisation of Indian Universities. The third was the Calcutta University Commission (1917-1919), which reviewed the development of secondary and higher education in Bengal and made recommendations for the reorganisation of Calcutta University and the establishment of a new university in Dhaka. The fourth Commission, and the first to be appointed in the post independence period was the University Education Commission (1948-49), which reviewed the development of higher education in the country and made proposals for its future expansion and improvement. A similar function for secondary education was performed by the Secondary Education Commission, which was the fifth in the series. It may be noticed that the policy, whether in the pre-independence period or later, was looking at education as a compartmentalized institution, and no commission had been appointed to review the primary and the adult education. It was in response to this need that the Central Government appointed the Education Commission (1964-66) at the initiative Mr. M.C. Changla, the then Minister of Education at the Center and entrusted them with the task of looking at the entire spectrum of education except medical and legal education. This is therefore, the first commission in our educational history that looked at almost all aspects of education comprehensively.

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## **1.4 LANDMARKS IN EDUCATION POLICY**

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### **1.4.1 The National Policy on Education 1968**

The National Policy on Education 1968 marked a significant step in the history of education in independent India. It aimed at promoting national progress, a sense of common citizenship and culture, and at strengthening national integration. It stressed the need for a radical reconstruction of the education system and improvements in its quality at all stages, and gave much greater attention to science and technology and the cultivation of moral values. Since the adoption of 1968 policy, there has been considerable expansion in educational facilities all over the country at all levels. More than 90% of the country's rural population has schooling facilities within a radius of 1 km now. Perhaps the most notable development has been the acceptance of the common structure of education throughout the country, and the introduction of 10+2+3 system by most states. Also, a beginning was made in restructuring courses at the undergraduate level. And Centres of Advanced Studies were set up for quality Post-graduate Education and Research.

While these achievements are impressive by themselves, the general formulations incorporated in the 1968 policy did not get translated into detailed strategies of implementation to accompany them. As a result, problems of access, quality, quantity, utility and financial outlay accumulated over the years.

### **1.4.2 National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986**

The process of policy formulation in 1986 was unique in many respects. It was perhaps for the first time that a process was initiated through the preparation of a document entitled 'Challenge of Education' which gave a detailed baseline or diagnosis of the problems faced by different sectors of education. This document was widely circulated and communications in response to this document were received methodically and their contents were analysed properly. These contents, therefore, began to assume importance and found a place in the National Policy on Education 1986.

The Parliament discussed and adopted "The National Policy on Education 1986" during the budget session in 1986. A promise was made by the Minister of Human

Resource Development that he would present a Programme of Action for the implementation of the policy.

### **1.4.3 Major Thrusts of NPE 1986**

#### **National System of Education**

The concept of a National System of Education implies that, up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, have access to education of a comparable quality. To achieve this, the Government would initiate appropriately funded developmental programmes.

The National System of Education envisages a common educational structure. The 10+2+3 structure has now been accepted in all parts of the country. Regarding the further break-up of the first 10 years, efforts would be made to move towards an elementary system comprising 5 years of primary education and 3 years of upper primary education, followed by 2 years of High School.

#### **Education for Equality**

The new Policy laid special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunities by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far. Education would be used as an agent of basic change in the status of woman. The National Education System would play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women.

The central focus in the educational development of SCs is their equalization with the non-SC population at all the stages and levels of education, in all areas and in all the four cases— rural male, rural female, urban male and urban female.

Suitable incentives would be provided to all educationally backward sections of society, particularly in the rural areas. Hill and desert districts, remote and inaccessible areas and islands would be provided adequate institutional infrastructure.

Some minority groups are educationally deprived or backward. Greater attention would be paid to the education of these groups to bring about equality and social justice. This will naturally include the Constitutional guarantees given to them to establish and administer their own educational institutions, and protection to their languages and culture. Simultaneously, in conformity with the core curriculum, objectivity would be reflected in the preparation of textbooks and in all school activities, and all possible steps would be taken to promote integration based on the appreciation of common national goals and ideals.

#### **Elementary Education**

The new thrust in elementary education would emphasize two factors: (i) universal enrolment and retention of children up to 14 years of age and (ii) a substantial improvement in the quality of education.

The New Education Policy gave the highest priority to the problem of children dropping out of school and adopted an array of meticulously formulated strategies based on micro-planning, and applied them at the grass-roots level all over the country, to ensure children's retention at school. This effort was to be fully coordinated with the network of non-formal education. It aimed at ensuring that all children who attain the age of about 11 years by 1990 would have had five years of schooling, or its equivalent, through the non-formal stream. Likewise, by 1995 all children were to be provided free and compulsory education up to 14 years of age.

**Making the System Work**

The country has placed boundless trust in the educational system and the people have a right to expect concrete results. The first task is to make it work. All teachers should teach and all students study. The strategy to materialize this line of thought comprises the following steps:

- a better deal for teachers with greater accountability on their part;
- the provision of improved student services and insistence on the observance of acceptable norms of behaviour;
- the provision of better facilities to institutions; and
- the creation of a system of performance appraisals for institutions according to the standards and norms set at the National or State levels.

**Management of Education**

The National Policy on Education 1986 provides for an overhaul of the system of planning and management:

- evolving a long-term planning and management perspective for education and its integration with the country’s developmental and manpower needs;
- decentralisation of authority and the creation of a spirit of autonomy for educational institutions;
- giving pre-eminence to people’s involvement, including association of non-governmental agencies and voluntary effort;
- inducting more women in the planning and management of education; and
- establishing the principle of accountability in relation to the set objectives and norms.

At the National level the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) is to play a pivotal role in reviewing educational development and determine the changes required to improve the system from time to time. At the state level, State Governments are to establish State Advisory Boards of Education on the lines of CABE. At the district level District Boards of Education are to be created to manage education upto the higher secondary level. A very important role has been assigned to the Head of the institution. The National Policy on Education 1986 for the first time assigned local communities a role in improving the schools in their respective areas by saying that “local communities through appropriate bodies will be assigned a major role in the programmes of school improvement”. (10.8 NPE)

**Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answers.  
 b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of this unit.

1) Describe some of the major thrusts of the National Policy on Education 1986, which are relevant to Elementary Education.

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## 1.5 NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION

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As said earlier, the 'National Policy on Education 1986' was discussed and adopted by the Parliament during the Budget Session in 1986. At that time the Minister of Human Resource Development (HRD) promised that in the Monsoon Session he would present a *Programme of Action* for the implementation of the policy. Immediately after the Budget Session, the Ministry undertook an intensive exercise to prepare the promised Programme of Action.

### Task Forces

In the first place, 23 Task Forces were constituted and each was assigned a specific subject covered by the National Policy on Education (NPE). Eminent educationists, experts and senior representatives of the Central and the State Governments were associated with these Task Forces. The subjects assigned to the Task Forces were as follows:

- Making the System Work
- Content and Processes of School Education
- Education for Women's Equality
- Education of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other backward sections
- Minorities' Education
- Education of the Handicapped
- Adult & Continuing Education
- Early Childhood Care and Education
- Elementary Education (including NFE and 'Operation Blackboard')
- Secondary Education and Navodaya Vidyalayas
- Vocationalisation
- Higher Education
- Open University and Distance Learning
- Technical and Management Education
- Research and Development
- Media and Educational Technology (including use of Computers in Education)
- De-linking degrees from jobs and Manpower Planning
- The Cultural Perspective and Implementation of Language Policy
- Sports, Physical Education & Youth
- Evaluation Process and Examination Reform
- Teachers and their Training
- Management of Education
- Rural Universities/Institutes

The Task Forces were requested to examine the present situation with respect to the subjects assigned to them and to elaborate the implications of the specific statements contained in the NPE. The Task Forces were also expected to project the actions that would be necessary and indicate the broad targets and the phasing schemes of the programmes. Further, they were requested to indicate the broad financial implications with reference to each phase of activities.

In spite of time constraints, the Task Forces accomplished their work with great care. They submitted their reports in July 1986. These reports were discussed in a series

of meetings held by the Minister of Human Resource Development. After these discussions were completed, a conference of Education Secretaries of the State Governments and U. T. Administrators was convened on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 1986. Suggestions received during this meeting were carefully considered and the Programme of Action was prepared with reference to the main areas covered in NPE. The Central Advisory Board of Education met at New Delhi on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1986. The document on the Programme of Action was discussed at this meeting, and the Education Ministers of State Governments and U .T. Administrations and educationists who participated in the discussion made several valuable suggestions. All these suggestions were incorporated in the Programme of Action, which was then presented to the Parliament.

This Programme of Action was meant to provide an indication of the nature of activities needed to implement the Policy directives. It provided a broad strategy within which detailed schemes were to be subsequently drawn up; it also aimed at facilitating the preparatory work required to fully work out the operational schemes and to make them operational. Detailed projects were taken up for formulation by the various departments and agencies, in consultation with all the concerned, once the strategy outlined in the Programme of Action was examined and endorsed by the Parliament. It is necessary to emphasize that what was presented there was not an inflexible design/structure, but a projection of directions with varying degrees of detail. A certain amount of flexibility was assumed, as it was expected to help the implementing agencies in tailoring the Programme of Action to suit their contexts and to make necessary modifications on the basis of experiences and emerging scenarios. Implementation of the programmes was envisaged to be a cooperative effort involving the Center and the States with full involvement of the community and the teachers and a constant process of consultations.

**Check Your Progress II**

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answers.  
 b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of this unit.

1) How many task forces were set up under the National Policy on Education? Why was it necessary to formulate a Programme of Action.

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**1.6 EDUCATION FOR ALL**

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Since the *World Conference on Education for All* held in Jomtien in 1990, a number of new programmes and projects have been initiated to achieve the major goals of EFA. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the latest of all such programmes, subsumes the strategies and programmes, aimed at achieving universal elementary education of eight years. Besides, in the 1990s, several policies were formulated to create an enabling condition for the effective implementation of EFA interventions. Attempts have also been made to reform the mainstream educational administration and implement the strategy of decentralised planning and management in the education

sector. During this period, the Government of India implemented the largest number of externally funded basic education projects. Also, efforts have been made to use all the means including the mass media for the advocacy and promotion of EFA activities. The implementation of these basic education projects and programmes is best characterised by the campaign approach and the mission mode of work.

Here, an attempt is made to provide a brief account of the new initiatives that have emerged since the World Education Forum met at Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000. Some of the earlier initiatives, which were further strengthened during this period, also have been included in the discussion.

### **1.6.1 National Literacy Mission**

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) established in May 1988, with the objective of achieving 75 per cent literacy by 2005, seeks to achieve this goal by imparting functional literacy to the illiterate in the age group of 15-35 years. Functional literacy level encompasses imbibing values of national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality, etc. The operations of the Mission were extended in 1999, with emphasis on lifelong learning and decentralisation, with devolution of authority to the state and the district level institutions. The basic objective of NLM is to make literacy a fundamental attribute for everyone in the country, especially women. As of today, more than 559 districts have been covered under literacy campaigns; 95 districts under the continuing education programme; 292 districts under the post-literacy programmes; and 172 districts under the total literacy campaigns. There is a special focus on the promotion of literacy among women, scheduled castes/tribes and other backward classes. All along, it has been a daunting challenge for literacy programmes to counter the effects of growing population in the country. As has been indicated earlier, however, the growth in literacy has now overtaken the rise in population, as the number of illiterates is now on the decline.

### **1.6.2 National Programme of Nutritional Support**

The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, commonly known as the Mid-day Meals Scheme, was launched in August 1995. In view of its impact on enrolment, retention and attainment levels of children, it has been decided to extend the programme to the entire country. The Supreme Court has ruled that every child covered under the programme should receive cooked meals comprising the prescribed calories. This ruling obliges the government to make necessary arrangements for cooking and serving meals to the children concerned.

### **1.6.3 District Primary Education Programme**

The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), launched in 1994, is a major initiative to achieve universalisation of primary education. The DPEP adopts a holistic approach to universalize access, improve retention and learning achievements and to reduce gender and regional disparities and disparities among socially disadvantaged groups. The strategies, central to the programme, are: decentralization of planning and management (i.e. focus on local level planning); mobilization of the community for effective participation in planning, management and supervision; local level capacity building; strengthening of the existing database (i.e. EMIS, PMIS, etc.); interventions for school improvement; and sustainability.

The programme components include: construction of classrooms and establishment of new schools; creation of alternative schooling facilities; appointment of new teachers; setting up of early childhood care and education centers; strengthening key resource institutions; imparting in-service teacher training; developing teaching-learning materials; special interventions for the education of the disadvantaged groups, girls, SCs/STs; integrated education of the disabled; and distance education for teacher training.

By November 2000, more than 11,000 new formal schools and over 53,000 alternative schools had been established under the DPEP, besides setting up of about 16,000 summer schools. In addition, over 10,000 ECE centers have been opened and more than 50,000 pre-primary education centers (i.e. Anganwadis) strengthened under the programme. It has provided training to over three million community members and about one million teachers. Presently, the programme covers 271 districts in 18 states, namely Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Haryana, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and West Bengal. So far, the programme has covered more than 50 million children in the age group of 6-10 years.

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## **1.7 NATIONAL MISSION FOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (SSA)**

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The Conference of the State Education Ministers held in 1998 resolved to pursue a holistic and convergent approach for achieving the goal of universal elementary education following a mission-mode operation, within a defined timeframe. As an outcome of the Conference, a Committee of State Education Ministers under the Chairmanship of the Minister for Human Resource Development was set up to work out the modalities of pursuing the goal of UEE using a mission-mode operation. The SSA, the first national programme for universal elementary education, has been formulated on the basis of the recommendations of this Committee. Through the SSA, India for the first time, is attempting to translate its commitments into a programme of UEE, which provides for greater democratic participation and community involvement; decentralised planning and management with a view to the specific requirements and needs of the disadvantaged regions, social groups, girls and the children in difficult circumstances. The SSA, launched in the year 2000, covers all the districts of the country now.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the flagship programme for achieving the goals of EFA, envisages the use of mainstream management structures for implementing the programme. At the national level, however, a separate Department of Elementary Education and Literacy has been created in order to focus efforts on EFA activities and provide the framework for achieving UEE and attaining 75 % sustainable literacy. In order to facilitate convergence and build a holistic perspective, a National Mission for Elementary Education (NMEE) has been constituted. The Prime Minister, with the Minister for Human Resource Development as its Vice-Chairperson, heads the General Council of the Mission. At the sub-national levels, the State Mission Authorities for UEE and District Implementation Societies have been established for implementing the EFA programmes.

The National Mission is expected to play a critical role in developing capacities, and will, therefore, improve capacity building activities at the state level in consultation with the State Missions. Similarly, State Missions will meet the capacity development needs in planning and management of elementary education in districts in relation to their requirements. The State Implementation Societies also act as effective monitoring and operational support units.

### **1.7.1 Major Objectives**

The SSA is a major intervention towards achieving the long cherished goal of universalisation of elementary education (UEE) through a time bound integrated approach in partnership with the states. It aims at providing useful and quality elementary education to all children of the 6-14 age group by 2010. The specific objectives of the SSA include:

- to have all children in school, EGS Center/alternate school/back-to-school camp by 2003;
- to have all children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007;
- to have all children complete eight years of schooling by 2010;
- to provide elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life;
- to bridging all gender and social gaps at the primary stage by 2007, and at the elementary education level by 2010; and
- to effect universal retention by 2010.

### **1.7.2 Strategies Central to SSA**

The SSA is conceived as an “umbrella programme” which subsumes all the on-going projects, programmes and schemes aimed at developing basic education. A convergent approach will, it is expected, help overcome the problems of coordination between intra- and inter-sectoral programme initiatives and at the same time facilitate effective planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EFA programmes. Convergence between education and development programmes, aimed at poverty alleviation, employment generation, food for work, promotion of household industries and enhancing the quality of life (health, family welfare, availability of drinking water, rural housing, etc.) is being effected currently. In turn, these programmes increase the capacity of households to seek and support the education of children.

### **1.7.3 Institutional Reform**

As part of the SSA, institutional reforms are being carried out in all the states. The states have to make an objective assessment of their existing education systems, including educational administration, achievement levels in schools, financial issues, decentralisation and community ownership, review of the State Education Acts, rationalisation of teacher deployment and recruitment of teachers, monitoring and evaluation, education of girls, SCs/STs and disadvantaged groups, policy regarding private schools and ECCE. Many states have already effected institutional reforms to improve the delivery system for elementary education

### **1.7.4 Community Empowerment**

The programme calls for community ownership of schools and interventions through effective decentralisation. This is facilitated by the involvement of women’s groups, Village Education Committee (VEC) members and members of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Local level institutions are expected to undertake training if community leaders and community representatives to enable them to undertake planning, programming and monitoring tasks.

### **1.7.5 Institutional Capacity Building**

National and state level institutions like the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) and State Institutes of Educational Management and Training (SIEMATs) have been given capacity building responsibilities, as it is realized that improvements in quality requires a sustainable support system for educational planning and management at the national, the state, the district and the sub-district levels . Of particular importance is the capacity building of local level institutions for decentralising the process of preparing curricula and teaching-learning materials relevant to local contexts.

### 1.7.6 Community Based Monitoring

It is envisaged in the SSA that the educational management information system (EMIS) would correlate school level data with community-based information from micro-planning exercises and field surveys. For example, every school will have a notice board showing all the grants received by the school and other details. The SSA envisages cooperation between teachers, parents and PRIs, as well as accountability and transparency on the part of every individual and agency involved.

### 1.7.7 Focus on the Education of Girls and Special Groups

Education of girls, especially those belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, is one of the principal concerns in SSA. It follows a *mainstreamed gender* approach. Efforts provide for mobilisation at the habitation/ village/urban slum level; recruitment of female teachers; nutritional support; provision of free textbooks and uniforms; back-to-school camps for adolescent girls and organisation and constitution of Mahila Samooths. Focused attention is given to activities that enhance participation of children from SCs/STs, religious and linguistic minorities, disadvantaged groups and the disabled children.

#### Check Your Progress III

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answers.  
 b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of this unit.

1) What is the major objective of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan?

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2) Describe any two strategies central to SSA.

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## 1.8 MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

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The Central and the State governments are implementing the SSA together in partnership with local governments and the community. To signify the national priority for elementary education, as already said, a ‘National Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission’ has been established with the Prime Minister as the Chairperson and the Union Minister of Human Resource Development as its Vice-Chairperson. States have established State level Implementation Societies for UEE under the Chairmanship of respective Chief Ministers/ Education Ministers. The SSA does not attempt to disturb

the existing structures in the states/districts, it only tries to help convergence of efforts. The emphasis is on functional decentralisation down to the school level in order to improve community participation. Besides recognising the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Tribal Councils in Scheduled Areas, including the Gram Sabhas, the states are being encouraged to enlarge the accountability framework by involving women's organisations, NGOs, teachers, activists, etc. in the implementation of SSA.

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## 1.9 PROGRESS IN SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

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As a fully operational mission, SSA completed its 3<sup>d</sup> year of operation in the year 2002-03. For its operations during 2001-2003, a total outlay of 1,52,875 million was approved under the programme with the component of SSA targeting primary education in selected districts. SSA also addresses the issue of general parity and that of eliminating the gender gaps through special components aimed exclusively at the girl child. The special incentives and provisions to ensure enrolment and retention of the girl child include free textbooks, community mobilization and gender sensitizations of teachers.

The accelerated efforts towards EFA, which are already showing results, have firmly set the country on a path that ensures a better quality of life for all the citizens. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the National Literacy Mission targeted at the child and adult populations respectively are together rapidly changing the educational scenario in India. SSA is bringing more and more children to and retaining them in schools, especially girls, while the NLM is enabling more and more adults to become literate. The special programmes being implemented by the NLM are sharply focused on the requirements of equitable access to learning, life skills programmes and rapid reduction in the gender gap in literacy.

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## 1.10 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit an attempt has been made to discuss the various commissions and also two major policies that have shaped the development of education in Indian. The National Programme of Action was prepared to spell out in greater detail the strategies with respect to the formulations contained in the National Policy of 1986.

A special section has been devoted to discuss the programme called Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and its special features. Since this programme is currently under operation, you will have opportunities to know more about its different phases of implementation from all your readings.

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## 1.11 KEY WORDS

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- Policy** : A policy consists of directions, intentions, goals and objectives which a nation sets for herself for implementation over a time frame. Policies operate within the overall political and social ethos of the country.
- National Mission for Elementary Education (NMEE)** : This Mission has been created in order to focus on EFA activities and also provide the framework for achieving Universalisation of Elementary Education in a particular time frame.

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## 1.12 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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## 1.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress I

- 1) The major thrusts of the National policy on Education pertain to and focus on three major reforms:
  - a) Equal opportunities of access to all the levels of education;
  - b) Equal opportunities for completing education;
  - c) Equal opportunities for specific categories, such as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, women, minorities, handicapped learners, etc.

The major thrust in elementary education is therefore on enrolment, retention and quality of education.

### Check Your Progress II

- 1) Twenty-two Task Forces were set up under the National Policy on Education 1986 to examine the situation in terms of the themes/subjects assigned to them. The Task Forces were expected to project the action that would be necessary with reference to each of the subjects and also indicate the broad targets and the phasing scheme of the programme. It was followed by a Programme of Action so that the strategy of implementation could be spelt out clearly in relation to each of the subjects. In each area or sector of education, the broad parameters, thrusts, targets and implementation strategies have been spelt out. The Programme of Action was essential to guide the implementers at the State and the District levels with respect to each of the areas.

### Check Your Progress III

- 1) The major thrust of SSA is to achieve quality universal elementary education with community ownership of the school system.
- 2) One of the major strategies of SSA is to prepare district elementary education plans through a process of participatory planning. The programme also calls for community ownership of school and interventions with effective decentralisation. In addition to this, local level institutions are also expected to undertake training of community leaders to enable them to undertake planning, programming and monitoring tasks.