



India

Country Context

Four main issues have dominated educational policies in India over the last 50 years. Firstly, education being a fundamental human right must be a channel through which personal development can be achieved. Secondly education has a cultural and social role to play in developing unity and forging national identity. Thirdly education is a driving force that can propel the economy to higher and more competitive levels. Fourthly education should be used as a tool to achieve a more equitable and just social order and to redress some of the traditional wrongs that society has inflicted on its subgroups. The commitment of establishing compulsory, universal, primary education for all children up to the age of fourteen dates to the turn of the 19th century.

In the 1930s provincial governments under the control of the INC passed legislation authorizing local bodies to introduce compulsory education. In 1950 the Indian constitution declared " the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years." Fifty years later the Parliament has passed a legislation (86th Amendment Act) making education a fundamental right of every citizen in India. India's achievements during the last 50 years are not insignificant. There has been a substantial increase in the number of primary schools in India. An estimated 95 percent of the rural population living in 8,26,000 habitations have a primary school within one km and about 85 percent population have an upper primary school within three km. After 1993 more than 27,000 new primary schools were established. The number of primary schools has increased three times between 1951 and 1991.

The literacy rates among the population aged seven years and above for the country stands at 65.38 per cent (75.85 males and 54.16 females). The literacy rate recorded an impressive jump of 13.17 percent from 52.21 in 1991 to 65.38 in 2001. It is heartening to observe that the gap in male and female literacy rates has decreased to 21.70 in 2001. More than 150 million children are currently enrolled covering around 90 percent of the children in the age group of 6-14 years. Though the enrolment of girls has grown only six girls for every eight boys are in school. However the size of enrolment in the schools is very impressive, the population growth during the last few decades has also been high. Despite the increase in the enrolment of girl children during the last few years' gender disparity has not reduced. There are as many girls outside school as there are inside in the 6-14 age group.

The reality is that education in India has failed to address any of these serious concerns to a sufficient extent; the system is in a morass from which it will be extremely difficult to extricate it. Perhaps the foremost reason for the failure

of the dream of an educated India has been the wide divergence between rhetoric and practice. Therefore a new direction is required in every sphere of education in India hence the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: - The flagship programme of the national government that aims at a) all children in school by 2003, b) all children complete 5 years of primary schooling by 2007, c) all children complete 8 years of elementary schooling by 2010. This initiative wears different tag in different states across India, making public education work for the Indian child remains the key challenge.

Key Achievements

- CSOs supported to conduct debates on the India Education Bill review process.
- Supported CSOs drafting a policy on children in Chattisgarh and the translation of the Juvenile justice rules in Hindi.
- In Andhra Pradesh and Orissa CEF facilitated the collaboration of stakeholders on Child's rights issues leading to official banning of corporal punishment in the two areas.
- Strengthening the active community participation in the management of schools in Nagaland.

Breakdown by Criteria

CRITERION 1

CEF India made the decision not to support a nodal network on education at the national level but instead to strengthen state level networks and then to occasionally bring them together on one platform to address several issues on education. CEF funding has supported the production of several research documents, which facilitated and fuelled further discussion. One of these concerned the government's Common Minimum Programme. Another was related to violence as a structural barrier to girls' education. The latter led to public hearings, a 16-day campaign in 10 states and will now form the basis of a broader ActionAid campaign. Many other meetings were facilitated to open and share ideas between education groups. Interagency working has resulted in an alternative education bill reaching final review by the government. Considerable achievements have been made in empowering community groups including; building the capacity of children's clubs members, "communitisation of education" with 25 master trainers identified, and community participation in 21 villages across 5 districts. Successful activities are listed according to where they have taken place. It is not possible to list them all here but in Andhra Pradesh the following was achieved:

- Community has been able to demand more teachers and better infrastructure.
- A government order banning corporal punishment has been achieved.
- More than 10,000 working children were mainstreamed into schools with 85% retention.
- 150 children with disabilities have been admitted into regular schools and 25 with severe disabilities into special schools.

CRITERION 2

By self-admission, this has been a weak area for CEF India. The very complicated national allocation of funds to education in India makes budget monitoring very difficult. Equally difficult to achieve is access to secondary data from the state government. Grassroots training and community training in budget analysis is planned but is yet to take place primarily due to the very complicated nature of the education budgets.

CRITERION 3

As the MTR explains many of the achievements under criterion three have been mentioned as part of activities within criterion one. A number of projects have been successfully replicated from one area to another:

- New Juvenile Justice rules have been drafted
- A Study of facilities available at Observation Homes
- Engagement with corporate and self-help for the work with children with adult care and protection. Some well known corporate houses have provided monetary and HR assistance.
- Tamil Nadu - the inclusive education programme has scaled up to all states and learning is being transferred.

Case Study: Building capacity for tangible results

Through a coalition of organisations the campaign on Community Demand for Joyful Education was launched in late 2002 in Andhra Pradesh and a few districts of Orissa. Focusing on access to education for tribal and other marginalised children, the demand for quality education has been created in these districts.

- Regular capacity workshops are held for members of Village Education committees.
- Two Public Open Forums have been organised which has enabled the members to interact with high officials at the state level, something that they may have never achieved on their own.
- A training programme on Inclusive Education have been organised for all residential schoolteachers and senior coordinators to help them build their understanding on inclusion and identify working strategy on inclusion in their respective project location.
- Training of children in 50 schools has taken place focused on developing child led indicators. Children's forums, child led indicators have been formulated by the children and progress in school is also monitored on the basis of these indicators.
- Training was organised with the teachers unions on positive discipline in Andhra Pradesh. Positive response on this has been received from the teachers and the school management

Through these interactions the community has been able to demand more teachers and infrastructural facilities in the existing schools. They have also

been able to get a government order for the banning of corporal punishment in both the states. In addition, regular impact assessment of the rise in awareness on issues of education is undertaken.

Monitoring systems have been set up with all the partner organisations for collection of data on children previously excluded from school:

- More than 10,000 working children were mainstreamed into schools with 85 % retention, 150 children with disabilities have been admitted into regular schools,
- 25 children with severe disabilities have been admitted to special schools.