

**Report of the CABE Committee**  
**on**  
**Girls' Education**  
**and**  
**the Common School System**



**Ministry of Human Resource Development**  
**New Delhi**  
**June 2005**

No.F.2-14/2004-PN-1  
Government of India  
Ministry of Human Resource Development  
Department of Secondary & Higher Education

.....New Delhi, the 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2004

**ORDER**

The Government of India had re-constituted the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) vide Resolution dated 6.7.2004. The first meeting of the re-constituted Central Advisory Board of Education was held on 10 & 11 August, 2004 during which some critical issues had emerged needing detailed deliberation. It was decided to set up Committees of CABE to examine in detail these critical issues. Accordingly it has been decided, with the approval of the Minister of Human Resource Development, to set up a Committee of CABE on the subject of “Girls Education and the Common School System” under the Chairmanship of **Shri Tarun Gogoi, CM**, Assam with the following composition :

S. No.	Name & Address	
1	Shri Tarun Gogoi, Chief Minister, Assam	Chairman
2	Minister (In-charge of School Education), Government of Gujarat	Member
3	Minister (In-charge of School Education), Government of Kerala	Member
4	Minister (In-charge of School Education), Government of West Bengal	Member
5	Minister (In-charge of School Education), Government of NCT Delhi	Member
6	Minister (In-charge of School Education), Government of Himachal Pradesh	Member
7	Shri Anil Sadgopal	Member
8	Shri Sandeep Pandey	Member
9	Sh. Satish Agnihotri, Secretary, WCD, Orissa	Member
10	Prof. Tapas Majumdar	Member
11	Sh. S.V. Giri	Member
12	Ms. Kumud Sharma, Former Director, Centre for Women’s Development Studies	Member
13	Secretary, Department of Women & Child Development, Government of India	Member
14	Prof. Zoya Hasan, JNU	Member
15	Prof. Krishna Kumar, Director, NCERT	Member Secretary

**The terms of reference of the Committee are :-**

- (a) To examine existing schemes, incentives and special measures aimed at reducing gender disparity and increasing the participation and retention of girls, in all sectors of education.
- (b) To make the provision in the NPE and POA regarding the Common School System, a reality.
- (c) To examine ways of promoting inclusive education and the education of all children with disabilities/special needs.

The Committee shall be provided secretarial assistance by NCERT. The Member of the Committee shall be paid TA/DA at the rates that are payable of the Member of the High Powered Committees.

The Committee shall given its recommendations within six months from the date f its constitution.

(Anil Kapoor)  
Deputy Secretary of the Government of India

Copy forwarded to :

1. All Members of the Committee of CAGE
2. All Ministries/Department of the Govt. of India
3. All Attached/Subordinate Officers and Autonomous Statutory Bodies under the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
4. All State Governments/Union Territories.
5. President's Secretariat.
6. Prime Minister's Office.
7. Cabinet Secretariat.

(Anil Kapoor)  
Deputy Secretary of the Government of India

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**Prof. Poonam Agrawal, Head, Department of Women's Studies, NCERT was nominated by Prof. Krishan Kumar, Director, NCERT, the Member Secretary, to act as Member Secretary on his behalf. This was ratified in the Meeting of the CAGE Committee.**

## Meetings held

Venue : Committee Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Zakir Husan Block,  
NCERT, New Delhi.

1<sup>st</sup> Meeting      1<sup>st</sup> December 2004  
2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting      8<sup>th</sup> February 2005  
3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting      30<sup>th</sup> April 2005

**(Minutes available from NCERT on request)**

### Composition : Drafting Committee

Members of the Drafting Committee of “ Girls’ Education and Common School System” Constituted during the Second Meeting of the Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2005.

S. No.	Name & Address	
1	Prof. Tapas Majumdar	Chairperson
2	Ms. Kumud Sharma	Member
3	Dr. Janaki Rajan	Member
4	Prof. Poonam Agrawal	Member Secretary

## Foreword

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh in his address, delivered at the inauguration of the new Capital Secretariat Complex at Dispur in Assam on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2004, made a profound statement filled with boundless optimism for our beloved nation. He said that he fervently hoped that “the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be an Asian Century”. We fully share his vision on emergence of India as a pre-eminent player in the political, economic and technological scenario of Asia. In quest of this magnificent vision, education will play a fundamental role. Across the globe, more than physical and natural resources, human resources will be decisive in attaining competitive advantage of nations.

It is also an opportune moment for self-introspection. How far have we been successful in bridging the disparities prevailing among genders and various sections of population in improving their access to quality education? How can we intensify the participation of girls/women and weaker sections in the power structures of our polity? A nation marching towards an Asian Century is bound to significantly raise the education levels, in particular of girls. In this gigantic endeavor, we need to devise creative and effective strategies.

This report deals with the strategic issues of Girls' Education , Common School System and Inclusive Education. The Report results from a series of debates and discussions supported by available information and data.. We hope the report will provide a sound basis for further meaningful endeavors leading us to desired achievements.

I am grateful to the CAGE, particularly the Chairperson, Sri Arjun Singh, Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development, Government of India for giving me an opportunity to chair this Committee. My sincere thanks are due to Prof. Krishna Kumar, Director, NCERT, the Member Secretary, and his colleague Prof. Poonam Agrawal, Head DWS, NCERT, the Co-opted Member Secretary of this Committee for facilitating the deliberations and bringing out the report.

I am equally thankful to all the members of this Committee for their valuable contributions. I offer my special thanks to the Draft-Committee who took all the trouble for drafting the report on behalf of the Committee. I thank Prof. Tapas Majumdar for chairing the Draft-Committee and bringing out the report within a short time frame.

I have great pleasure in placing the report before the CAGE for further action.

June 2005  
NCERT, New Delhi

Tarun Gogoi  
Chairperson

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## Executive Summary

The three themes assigned to the committee for deliberation under the Terms of Reference viz., (a) “**Girls’ Education**”, (b) “**Common School System**”, and (c) “**Inclusive Education including Education for Children with Disabilities/Special Needs**” though different in scope, are in certain ways interrelated, because all the three themes are to be viewed in the context of the parameters of the modern Indian state. These parameters are given by the **secular, democratic** and **federal** structure of the Indian polity as set down by the Constitution of India.

In more precise terms, the present Committee understood the parameters referred to above as given by:

- (a) The Directive Principles in Part IV of the Constitution including Article 45 that stands modified by the 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment;
- (b) The Fundamental Rights in Part III, including the Right to equal treatment of all citizens irrespective of religion, caste, gender or habitation, the Fundamental Right to Education of children as under the 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the Right to Education of Minorities, the Right to (Protection of) Life;
- (c) The law of the land as set down from time to time by the relevant decrees of the Supreme Court of India deciding or clarifying the precise Constitutional positions in respect of the rights of the Indian citizen concerning human life and dignity, to the extent these decrees apply to the rights to education.

The salient features on various Terms of Reference are described below:

### **Girls’ Education : Issues and Recommendations**

**Instrumentalist approach i.e. girls’ education for fertility control, better health care, decreased expenses on health care and decreased infant mortality rate etc. needs to be vehemently opposed.** Such perceptions have a bearing, directly and indirectly, on the level and type of education offered to girls which even today is largely gender stereotyped. The emphasis remains on literacy and non-formal education (which is often sub-standard), the greatest attention of efforts and incentives remains on enrolment( at the most on retention) rather than ensuring girls’ performance and meaningful participation in all areas of education through incentives and support systems. **It is necessary that the targets to achieve should not be spelt out only in terms of**

**enrolment and retention of girl students, but also in terms of their relative achievement and performance at all levels and in all subjects. It must be realized that the education of girls has to be ensured and supported beyond the elementary level.**

The Committee feels the need to emphasise that the constitutional commitment is to provide Education of a Comparable Quality to All, hence, **there is no alternative acceptable to regular schooling of good quality to all the girls.** The Committee feels that **incentives offered for promotion of girls' education need to be revisited and the measures taken need to be of such nature, force and magnitude that they are able to overcome the obstacles posed by factors such as poverty, domestic/ sibling responsibilities, girl child labour, low preference to girls' education, preference to marriage over education of the girl child, etc.**

The discrimination in subject choice available to girls is common. The rationale for having the choice of Elementary Mathematics and Home Science, and other 'womanly' optional subjects stems from the need to respond to 'demand'. **It should be realised that the school also has a reformatory role to play, create 'demand' for more rewarding subjects and not only passively respond to demand.** These practices perpetuate the gender disadvantage and school system becomes an agent of reinforcement rather than of change in the process. The POA (1992) noted the issue of non-availability of Mathematics and science teachers in girls' schools and emphasizes the need to change the situation. However, there rarely exists any monitoring mechanism to ensure actions on these policy directions. **In fact the choice of opting for 'non-womanly' subjects remains only notional in most of the single sex girls' schools for want of teachers in non stereotyped courses. The reinforcement of this gender divide can be seen even in the choice of vocational courses.**

A number of courses and subjects are now being promoted in the name of relevance. For instance, reproductive health, safe motherhood, etc., what is not realized is that **it is equally important for boys to understand basics of parenting etc. Such courses need to be introduced for both boys and girls, making it compulsory for both.** It would also help break the established notion that care and parenting are only the mothers' responsibilities.

**The Committee feels that greater effort in gender sensitization should be made.** Genuine mobilization based on participative involvement, consistently pursued over a long time is essential.

**Creation of separate toilet facilities for girls** is considered crucial, however, even now, the coverage is extremely limited.

**The Committee strongly believes that - in every educational institution there must be female teachers and female attendants, women teachers should also be provided suitable conditions to work effectively.**

**ECCE needs to be made universally available.** This will provide the girl child the healthcare, nutrition and stimulation necessary for developing the capacity to participate meaningfully in the process of education and develop into a confident, productive and empowered individual.

#### **Other Recommendations :**

**This Committee recommends that alongside the 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment the Government of India bring in another Act to protect the fundamental right to life of the child in the form of the right to live in a civil society with full provision by the state of both primary health needs and early educational care for children up to 6 years.**

Considering the fact that the age group 6 to 14 and the elementary classes I to VIII do not necessarily match, particularly in the rural areas and among children from disadvantaged families, the fundamental right under the 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment should be constructively construed as the right to education in **regular schools from at least 6** up to 14 years of age regardless of class and from Class I to at least Class VIII, regardless of age.

The definition of the “child” as up to 18 years of age is international practice. **The Committee recommends that CABE and other competent bodies should endeavour to see that the apparent contradiction between Indian and accepted international practice in defining the upper age limit of a child is resolved.**

#### **The Common School System**

**Common School System** means the National System of Education that is founded on the principles and values enshrined in the Constitution and provides education of a comparable quality to all children in an equitable manner irrespective of their caste, creed, language, gender, economic or ethnic background, location or disability (physical or mental), and wherein all categories of schools – i.e. government, local body or private, aided or unaided, or otherwise – will be under obligation to (a) fulfill certain minimum infrastructural (including those relating to teachers and other staff), financial, curricular, pedagogic, linguistic and socio-cultural norms and (b) ensure free education to the children in a specified neighbourhood from an age group and/or up to a stage, as may be prescribed by the appropriate authority.

## **Recommendations for a Common School System**

- i. The state should pursue the common school system as the key strategy for preventing commercialism and exploitation of education and making good quality education available to all students in all schools at affordable fees as a primary commitment of the Common School system.
- ii. The state should encourage heterogeneity of the social mix of children in all schools recognising this to be essential for quality education for all children, both the rich and the poor
- iii. The unaided private schools should reserve 25-30 % seats for meritorious but poor students. A percentage of fees from the elite students may be used to create a corpus fund for meeting the fees of above students.
- iv. The state should invest in public schools system with standards, norms, building etc. similar to those of the KVs.
- v. Private schools need to be progressively brought into the ambit of the common track without sacrificing quality.
- vi. Only professional, whole-time teachers with equivalent qualifications and training be accepted in the Common School System, no para-teachers are acceptable in view of quality education.
- vii. Teacher student ratio should not be more than 1:40 and progressively reduced. In LKG and UKG, the ratio must even now be 1:25
- viii. It is necessary to clarify the position of private schools in the context of the Common School System and they have to be reminded that they have duties not only towards elites but towards society as a whole.
- ix. The task of providing good textbooks free of cost to every student is a crucial step in the progress towards a viable Common School System for the country.

## **Inclusive Education for all Children**

The concept of an inclusive society refers to equality and respect for the inherent dignity of all human beings. Inclusive society, therefore, is envisaged as a democratic society in which members actively participate in all aspects of society, regardless of their status and unique characteristics. Inclusive education, then, becomes an important step for building up such a society.

This means that schools have a duty to try to include children with disabilities in regular classes unless the nature and severity of disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be

achieved satisfactorily. The aim should be to prepare the school system, the student community and the parents at large, to accept unequivocally the position that all children, including children with special needs, needing special care, have to be placed in the hands of teachers professionally trained for that purpose and be together in a school. To make all schools fit for this however will take time and resources, but identified leading schools, private or government may be given special facilities and incentives for making inclusive education a success. The committee also recommends

- ***building capacity of teachers to function in an inclusive setting***
- ***making support services available in the form of technology (including ICT), teaching-learning materials and specialists.***
- ***Involving parents, family, and community at all stages of education.***

## **The Budgetary Constraints**

Finally, the Committee stresses that finding the necessary finances for the basic requirements of universal education up to the age of 16 (or even 18) years will not constitute any big macro-economic problem for India. As the Expert Committee (1999) had calculated, no more would be required for this than a modest rate of growth of the GDP (at over 5% per year) and an expected increase in the efficiency in tax collection raising India's tax collected-to-GDP ratio from the present around 16% to about 18% by 2007-08. But what would certainly be required is reallocation of funds mainly in the Central budget (for the State Governments have already strained their budgetary resources to the limit in this respect),

However, the State and the Central Governments have to take note that expenditure under the head of education is not necessarily the same thing as investment in education; and also that apart from classrooms, good textbooks and teaching aids, the main resource necessary for resurgence in education will always be the community of teachers.. The Committee recommends that in order to ensure that the relatively vast financial resources expected to be allocated for the above-mentioned purposes are properly utilized. An **independent national authority** be immediately put in place for monitoring the appropriations of the allocated budgetary resources on school education by the concerned governments at all levels.

# Report of CAGE Committee on Girls' Education and Common School System

## *I. Preface*

1.1 *The Government of India re-constituted the Central Advisory Board of Education (CAGE) vide resolution dated 6.7.2004. This re-constituted CAGE, during its meeting on 10 and 11.8.04 decided to set up CAGE committees on certain crucial issues. Accordingly, with the approval of the Minister of Human Resource Development, a committee on "Girls' Education and the Common School System" was set up under the Chairpersonship of Shri Tarun Gogoi, CM, Assam (see No.F.2-14/2004-PN-1 dated New Delhi, the 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2004 for the list of Members of the Committee in Annex 1). The Committee was given the following terms of reference:*

- (a) To examine existing schemes, incentives and special measures aimed at reducing gender disparity and increasing the participation and retention of girls, in all sectors of education.*
- (b) To make the provision in the NPE and POA regarding the Common School System, a reality.*
- (c) To examine ways of promoting inclusive education and the education of all children with disabilities/special needs.*

1.2 *A Draft Report was drawn up by a drafting sub-committee appointed by the Committee (see Annex 2 for the name of the members appointed) and was placed for the consideration of the Committee on 30.4.2005. Besides minutes of the two CAGE committee Meetings on Girls' Education and Common School System, the draft was based on papers submitted by individual Members of this Committee (see Annex 3), inputs received from the states, consultations with and inputs received from several public interest groups and individual experts (see list in Annex 4) and the study of the relevant Government of India policy documents and Supreme Court judgements (see References below). This report is, thus, prepared giving due consideration to the discussion held and observations made by the committee members on 30.4.05. The Tables presented here are for all India. The corresponding State Tables are also available, and can be given in additional Annexes.*

## **II. Introduction**

2.1 The Committee wishes to record at the outset briefly the background of the enactment of the Constitution (86<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Act 2002 which has, in a way, reopened the main issues for the National Education Policy and preceded the reconstitution of the CAGE by the present Government of India.

2.2 In 1993 the Supreme Court, in a landmark judgement on the Unnikrishnan vs State of Andhra Pradesh case, read Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy along with Article 21 of the Fundamental Rights. The Court decreed

that the right to education was to be construed as a fundamental right flowing from the Right to Life itself and Article 45 (defining the relevant age group as 0 to 14 years as it then existed) was to be seen only as providing the parameters within which the right to education was being defined (presumably for operational needs for the time being).

2.3 According to this judgement, the right to life that was to be protected by the State under the Constitution of India was the right to a life to be lived with human dignity, which implied that every child's right to life included a basic right to education. This, from the day of the judgement, became the law of the land as determined by the Supreme Court of India and should be seen as holding independently of the 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment unless and until it is struck down.

2.4 The GOI, in response to this as well as several other Supreme Court decisions, had constituted the Committee of State Education Ministers under the chairpersonship of the Union Minister of State for HRD (Education) Shri Muhi Ram Saikia in 1996. Following the unanimous recommendation of 1997 of the Saikia Committee the GOI began to take the necessary steps towards an Amendment of the Constitution that eventually led to the passage of the Constitution of India (86<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Act 2002.

2.5 The 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment has made education from 6-14 years of age a Fundamental Right of the children of India. However, in the view of this Committee, while the span of 6 to 14 years of age serves to define broadly the parameters of regular schooling at the elementary stage of education, the 1993 Supreme Court judgement stands on its own. This Judgement had defined the operational parameters of the right to education flowing from the right to life as "up to 14 years of age" and not "6-14 years of age". The decision to make education a Fundamental Right for 6-14 years has only partially fulfilled the requirement of the Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court of India.

**2.6 This Committee therefore recommends that alongside the 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment the Government of India bring in another Act to protect the fundamental right to life of the child in the form of the right to live in a civil society with full provision by the state of both primary health needs and early educational care for children up to 6 years.**

2.7 If this is not done, the rationale of the truncation of the child's life span into 0-6 (where the child appears not to have any Fundamental Right to life and education) and 6-14 (where the child is now accorded Rights to both life and education) will come into question.

### **III. Some Basic Guiding Principles before the Committee**

3.1 At the preliminary discussions of the CABE Committee on Girls' Education and the Common School System, it came out clearly that the three themes assigned to it for deliberation under the terms of reference viz., (a) "Girls'

**Education”, (b) “Common School System”, and (c) “Inclusive Education including Education for children with disabilities/special needs”** though different in scope, are in certain ways interrelated, because all the three themes are to be viewed by the Committee in the context of the parameters of the modern Indian state. These parameters are given by the **secular, democratic and federal** structure of the Indian polity as set down by the Constitution of India.

3.2 In more precise terms, the present Committee felt that the parameters referred to above should be construed as given by:

- (d) The Directive Principles in Part IV of the Constitution including Article 45 that stands modified by the 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment;
- (e) The Fundamental Rights in Part III, including the Right to equal treatment of all citizens irrespective of religion, caste, gender or habitation, the Fundamental Right to Education of children as under the 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the Right to Education of Minorities, the Right to (Protection of) Life, etc. and, consequently; and most importantly,
- (f) The law of the land as set down from time to time by the relevant decrees of the Supreme Court of India deciding or clarifying the precise Constitutional positions in respect of the rights of the Indian citizen concerning human life and dignity, to the extent these decrees apply to the rights to education
- (g) Provisions in the Child Rights Convention (CRC) and Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). India is a signatory to both these international Conventions. The Supreme Court Judgement on the Vishakha case has made it clear that in cases where there are no clear legal provisions in the country, international conventions shall hold. The rights mentioned above are some of the most important ones, but the list is only illustrative and not exhaustive.

3.3 The Committee also felt that these parameters should be deemed relevant for formulating education policies and/or programmes, by the State at all levels as defined in the Constitution of India : Government of India, State Governments and Union Territories and Municipal or (the different tiers of) Panchayati Raj authorities.

3.4 In view of the right to education and the right to equal or equitable treatment by the state of all citizens, irrespective of their gender, socio-cultural/economic background, the Committee felt that the right to education should be construed as the right to elementary education in **regular**

**schools<sup>1</sup>** at least up to 14 years of age regardless of class and at least up to Class VIII regardless of age. In view of the sections 3.2, 3.3 & 3.4 above, the Committee felt that the current practice of taking the sum total of students in the very different categories “All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, ‘Back-to-School’ camp” (on whom widely unequal levels of per capita state resources are being allocated on perceived grounds of economy) calls for careful reexamination for the purpose of measuring the nation’s progress towards universalisation of elementary education of good quality.

**3.5** In addition the Committee recognizes the importance of the basic question regarding the sustainability of the present Indian practice of restricting the definition of the “child” to 0 to 16 years of age. India actively supported and has been a signatory to the declaration of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child using the definition of the “child” as up to 18 years of age. This is already the accepted definition in most other countries and used in the laws relating to Child Labour, Juvenile delinquency, Citizenship and other related legislation. The Committee also recognizes that extending the definition to 18 years of age for determining the normal exit point of high school education always had wide support of educationists in this country as elsewhere for a long time. **The Committee therefore recommends that CAGE and other competent bodies should take up this matter so that the apparent contradiction in Indian practice may be resolved.**

**The three themes of “Girls’ Education”, “The Common School System” and “Inclusive Education for children with disabilities/special needs” are taken up in the remaining parts of the report.**

#### **IV. Girls’ education**

##### **4.1 Education for gender equality and Empowerment**

###### **4.1.1 The National and Global Contexts**

4.1.1.1 Within the larger frame of equity, the Indian Constitution guarantees equal treatment to women in all respects. The framers of the Constitution specifically included and sought to achieve gender equality in education as well. The Report ‘Towards Equality, 1975, presents succinct view of the status of

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<sup>1</sup> This delineation of regular school has become important in view of recent developments wherein school has come to connote several different and not always comparable formulations such as NFE, EGS, alternative schools, learning centres etc, where substandard education is provided by para-teachers who are class XII or X pass (class VIII if the teacher is a woman). Further, the back-to-school camps and bridge courses introduced in SSA, introduced as strategies to bring out-of-school children in schools, need to be objectively evaluated, as the field reports indicate that these often fail to achieve this. The Committee felt the need to recommend a regular, formal school for all children, as the basic minimum for realising the right to education, quality and equality of educational opportunity-all three principles being cornerstones of the Constitution.

women and girls and strategies for their empowerment. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986 and the Programme of Action POA, 1992) have articulated this commitment to education for women's equality as 'a vital component of the overall strategy of securing equity and social justice in education'. NPE'86 commits "Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well conceived edge in favour of women. The National System of Education will play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision makers and administrators, and the involvement of educational institutions. This will be an act of faith and social engineering....The policy of non-discrimination will be pursued vigorously to eliminate sex stereo-typing..."

4.1.1.2 The last two decades have also witnessed growing international focus on promoting girls' education and achieving gender equality in education. The International Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995 prepared The Beijing Plan of Action (1995) which outlined 12 critical areas including women's access to education, vocational training, science and technology and non-discriminatory education and training. The World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, to the declaration of which India was a party, noted that gender discrimination continued to permeate education systems and articulated the challenges in the form of inclusion in the goals that were set for the coming decade. The Forum committed itself to the six global goals which were to act as framework for national and international actions and monitoring in education. Two of these goals, goal II and V, explicitly referred to gender and girls education issues. These are:

- Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory education of good quality;
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement of education of good quality;

4.1.1.3 In September 2000 the world's leaders adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to stronger global efforts to reduce poverty, improve health and promote peace, human rights and environmental sustainability. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that emerged from the Declaration specifically referred to promoting gender equality and empowering women. It was articulated in the shape of Goal 3, which primarily emphasized education. The target set in consonance to goal 3 is:

- To eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015.

#### 4.1.2 Continued Disparities

4.1.2.1 Despite the increased focus on policy documents in national and international circles, the gender disparities in education participation continue to be unacceptably high at every level. Most remarkably, girls constitute about two-thirds of the nearly 40 million out of school children in the 6-14 years age group in India. **It is not that no improvement has been registered, but the pace of change has been slow at all stages of education** (Tables I and 2).

Table 1: Percentage of Girls Enrolment to Total Enrolment by Stages

Year	Primary	Middle	Sec/Hr. Sec / Intermediate	Higher Education
1950-51	28.1	16.1	13.3	10.0
1960-61	32.6	23.9	20.5	16.0
1970-71	37.4	29.3	25.0	20.0
1980-81	38.6	32.9	29.6	26.7
1990-91	41.5	36.7	32.9	33.3
2000-01	43.7	40.9	38.6	39.4
upto 30.9.02**	46.8	43.9	41.4 <sup>1</sup> , 41.6 <sup>2</sup>	-

Source: Selected Educational Statistics (different years), MHRD, GOI

\*\* 7<sup>th</sup> All India Educational Survey, NCERT, <sup>1</sup> For Sec., <sup>2</sup> For Higher Sec.

Table 2: Education in India: Selected Indicators by Gender

Indicators	1981	1991	2001
Literacy Rate (Male)	53.48	64.13	75.85
Literacy Rate (Female)	28.47	39.29	54.16
Literacy Rate (Total)	41.44	52.21	65.38
<b>Gender Parity Index (GPI) Literacy</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>0.71</b>
GER (Boys) Primary Level	95.8	113.95	105.29
GER (Girls) Primary Level	64.1	85.47	80.06
GER (Total) Primary Level	80.5	100.10	96.30
<b>Gender Parity Index (GPI) Primary</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.82</b>
GER (Boys) Upper Primary Level	54.3	76.56	67.77
GER (Girls) Upper Primary Level	28.6	46.98	52.09
GER (Total) Upper Primary Level	25.4	62.14	60.20
<b>GPI Upper Primary Level</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>0.77</b>
GER (Boys) Secondary & High Sec. Level	34.2	33.89	38.23
GER (Girls) Secondary & High Sec. Level	15.4	10.27	27.74
GER (Total) Secondary & High Sec. Level	25.4	19.28	33.26
<b>GPI Secondary &amp; High Sec. Level</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>0.73</b>
Drop Out (Boys) Primary Level	56.2	40.1	38.4
Drop Out (Girls) Primary Level	62.5	46.0	39.9

Drop Out (Total) Primary Level	58.7	42.6	39.0
Drop Out (Boys) Upper Primary Level	68.0	59.1	52.9
Drop Out (Girls) Upper Primary Level	79.4	65.1	56.9
Drop Out (Total) Upper Primary Level	72.4	60.9	54.6

GER: Gross Enrolment Ratio; GPI: Gender Parity Index

**Source:** Selected Educational Statistics (different years), MHRD, GOI; Selected Educational Statistics, 2001-02

### **4.1.3 Gender Parity and Equity in Education**

4.1.3.1 It is well recognised that gender differences in educational participation have their roots in basic gender disadvantages in inheritance and other laws and persisting discriminatory social attitudes. Illustrative of these is pernicious practices such as dowry, female foeticide and infanticide, unabating instances of violence against women and girl children. Gender differentiation pervades all walks of life and would be encountered in home and society and in political decision-making within the democratic process itself. More specifically, it is reflected in the distribution of care work, household responsibilities and the decision-making powers at home; and in the discrimination seen in parental attention and choices, the role stereotyping for girls in school and in the general socialization process. While on the one hand girls' education is rightly projected in policy-making (and universally accepted in general terms as a key empowering process of bringing about positive changes in society, on the other hand, in specific situations, both the *socio-cultural* and the *physical* environments continue to create barriers to girls' education. Social malpractices, such as child marriage, while hardly affect the education of boys, they have a prominent adverse effect on the girls' education.

4.1.3.2 While changing the socio-cultural environment might be a relatively slow process, making the physical environment user-friendly for the girl student need not be. The latter can be made the main target in all action plans. Educational systems and processes are not necessarily geared at present to targeting the achievable physical changes. Failures on this front often reinforce the status quo, making it more difficult to break the vicious circle in social attitudes to the question of achieving gender equality in access and outcomes in education. The impact of related developmental policies such as liberalisation have also adversely impacted women leading to feminization of poverty<sup>2</sup>

4.1.3.3 Since gender parity is defined as a quantifiable concept it has been more amenable to target setting, especially since 1990s with the advent of donor-driven projects. We have to remember that a rush to meet national and international targets often means focusing on gender parity at the specified level

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<sup>2</sup> Utsa Patnaik (2001) Defining an agenda for poverty alleviation. Though not documented yet on the educational arena, a preliminary glance at District Reports put out by NIEPA 2004 shows that it is girls who are being drawn into the sub-standard schooling of EGS and this can be viewed as feminization of non-formal education.

only, which cannot be the only objective to focus on. In this context, it is important to distinguish the challenges of achieving gender parity and equity in education in a sharper fashion. Gender *parity* refers to equality in terms of schooling participation and completion rates at given levels. The main target of Gender *equity* however is a much broader concept referring to the absence of inequality in all forms including entitlements, opportunities, achievements, experiences and acceptance. While the law ensures equality in entitlements, access to provisions ensures justice in the distribution of opportunities and the classroom processes including relationships determine the equality of experiences.

4.1.3.4 What is clear is that gender equality within education is not limited to legal or formal equality in the access to educational facilities. A perusal of the policies and programmatic formulations indicate that the issue of equality within education in terms of approaches, entitlement, opportunities and processes has not received adequate attention.

#### **4.1.4 Gender Inequality within Education**

A number of practices within education reinforce gender-differentiated practices and promote inequality. Some such examples are being outlined here.

##### **4.1.4.1 Approach**

4.1.4.1.1 Instrumentalist approach i.e. girls' education for fertility control, better health care, decreased expenses on health care and decreased infant mortality rate etc. needs to be vehemently opposed. Gender stereotyping has to be removed from all spheres of education and co-curricular areas.

4.1.4.1.2 We need to bring into focus the issue of approach to education whenever the issue of girls' education is addressed. Are we perceiving the education for girls and boys with the same approach? National Policy of Education, 1986 states "The growth of our population needs to be brought down significantly over the coming decades. The largest single factor that could help achieve this is the spread of literacy and education among women" (1.13, pg 4). A number of national and international documents, such as those from UNESCO, World Bank etc. ignore the holistic approach to education and relate girls'/ women's education with fertility control, decreased infant/ child mortality rate, better family care and nutrition, and decreased expenses on health care etc. If these were important issues to be tackled through education why not these be among aims of education for all students.

4.1.4.1.3 Looking education through a gender bias lens reiterates the age old beliefs of women being responsible and instrumental for child and family welfare, thus playing an indirect, invisible, passive role in the economy and national development. Such perceptions have a bearing on the level and type of education offered to girls which even today is largely gender stereotyped. Our

perceptions regarding the objectives of education, when they are projected differently in the context of the girl child, get reflected in what we offer her on the fronts of entitlements, opportunities and acceptance. The emphasis remains on literacy and non –formal education (which is often sub- standard), the greatest attention of efforts and incentives on enrolment( at the most on retention) rather than ensuring girls’ performance and meaningful participation in education through incentives and support systems .

4.1.4.1.4 Gender stereo-typing in education and other fields, this committee feels, is a reflection of this basic bias in the society which the education itself is expected to help remove. Therefore, the education system should not encourage what may appear at first sight to an advantage to the girls but actually proves to be a stumbling block for their progress towards gender equality. If the girls are to play an active role in national development their education cannot be allowed to be padded by soft options at any stage. Further, it has to be ensured and supported beyond the elementary level.

#### **4.1.4.2 Provision of Schooling for Girls**

4.1.4.2.1 While on one hand the many practices in education are not in line with the stand on gender equality, a number of decisions are taken in its name. The opening of single-sex schools at upper primary and secondary stage is one such example. The states where gender disparities are sharp and the spread of education among girls very low (Bihar, UP), follow the policy of having single-sex schools, especially at upper-primary and secondary levels. The opening of single-sex schools is at times opposed on the ground that it perpetuates gender inequality. What is forgotten in this argument is that the entire education system and the practices followed within schools are so much ‘pro-status-quo’ and differentiate negatively against girls in so many ways that it is immaterial whether the schools are single-sex or coeducational. **If single sex schools widen the opportunity for a section of girls to attend schools, it needs to be promoted as short term strategy with a focus on empowerment issues within education so that the next generation does not demand separate schools for their girls.**

4.1.4.2.2 Although mere provision of schools for girls would not ensure girls participation in schools till security and meaningful educational experience is made possible for girls, provision of schooling for girls has to be made if girls are to be educated. The number of boys schools far outnumbers co-educational or girls’ schools, especially at middle school level. The impact is geometric for girls when we take into account that for every 5 primary schools there is only 1 middle school, and for every 9 primary schools there is only 1 high school. Even States like Maharashtra define elementary school as upto Class VII till today, 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment notwithstanding.<sup>3</sup> The few provisions for schooling for girls at middle

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<sup>3</sup> District Report Cards, NIEPA, 2004

levels in rural areas also do not take into account the 'social distance' dalit girls experience in schools.

#### **4.1.4.3 Subject Choice:**

4.1.4.3.1 The discrimination in subject choice available to girls is common. In many cases, though it does not figure on the surface, it is very much in practice. This can be explained with the help of an example from Uttar Pradesh. With adoption of 10+2+3 system and a unified curricular approach, the state adopted a new scheme of studies in 1998. Under this scheme, all students are supposed to successfully complete in seven subjects. These include five subjects with no or little choice: Science, Social Science, Hindi, one more Indian Language, and Mathematics. While Mathematics is compulsory for boys, it is not so for girls. The girls have a choice of opting for Home Science in place of Mathematics. The state offers two types of courses in Mathematics, one is known as Mathematics and the other as Elementary Mathematics. While boys have a choice between Mathematics and Elementary Mathematics, girls have an additional option available in Home Science. This practice not only goes against the very philosophy of undifferentiated curriculum, it also strengthens the existing stereotypes that girls are not capable of doing well in Mathematics.

4.1.4.3.2 What makes the situation worse is that majority of single sex girls' schools in rural areas do not offer the choice of Mathematics at all, the only available options being Elementary Mathematics and Home Science - in many cases the only available choice being Home Science. In case of two additional subjects where students have wider choices available, the single sex girls' schools usually offer limited options of such 'womanly' subjects as sewing, cooking, etc. The scheme provides for a number of options including 'non-womanly' courses such as commerce, agriculture, accountancy, etc. but most of these are not offered in majority of girls' schools and they are forced to opt for whatever is available.

4.1.4.3.3 The rationale for having the choice of Elementary Mathematics and Home Science, and other 'womanly' optional subjects stems from the need to respond to 'demand'. The very presence of this option of Home Science in place of Mathematics for girls reflects the existing notions of masculinity and femininity and stems from mainly the societal expectations from women of playing the conventional feminine role.

4.1.4.3.4 It should be realised that the school also has a reformatory role to play, create 'demand' for more rewarding subjects and not only passively respond to demand. Instead of playing this leadership role the school itself often strengthens the demand for stereotyped courses. The 'practical' problem of not finding enough teachers for Mathematics and other such subjects to teach in girls' schools is often cited as a reason for not offering the course. It is naturally often not considered a viable proposition to have a teacher if only a few students

are opting for the subject. Thus the choice of opting for 'non-womanly' subjects remains only notional in most of the single sex girls' schools.

4.1.4.3.5 What is not often realized is that unless more students including girls are encouraged to opt for those subjects the shortage of teachers is going to continue. The fact that these practices have been retained in the latest curriculum changes reflects the lack of a guiding vision based on notions of gender equality to guide policy planning. These practices perpetuate the gender disadvantage and school system becomes an agent of reinforcement rather than of change in the process.

**Table 3: Percentage of Girls Enrolment in different courses at Higher Education**

Level	% of girls enrolment to total enrolment	
	2000-01	2001-02
Ph.D/D.Sc/D.Phill	35.23	36.33
M.A.	36.58	39.87
M.Sc	44.46	45.25
M.Com	37.71	33.50
B.A./B.A. (hons)	38.11	44.23
B.Sc/B.SC (hons)	37.47	38.47
B.Com/B.com (hons)	35.45	39.00
B.E. /B.Sc (Engg)/ B.Arch	22.30	24.85
M.B.B.S.	40.55	40.62
B.Ed/B.T	-	43.47
Polytechnic Institutes	20.26	19.43
Teacher Training Schools	51.19	51.13
Technical Institutions, Arts & Crafts Schools	14.23	15.45
Others	-	36.82

Source: Selected Educational Statistics (different years), MHRD, GOI

4.1.4.3.6 The unequal representation of girls in technical education is apparent from Table 3. What is not apparent from Table 3 is that even within the technical courses, women are discouraged to opt for 'masculine' ones such as fitting, electronics, etc. The POA (1992) noted the issue of non-availability of Mathematics and science teachers in girls' schools and emphasizes the need to change the situation. However, there rarely exists any monitoring mechanism to ensure actions on these policy directions.

#### **4.1.5 Under cover of 'relevance'**

4.1.5.1 A number of courses and subjects are now being promoted in the name of relevance. For instance, there is a growing emphasis on inclusion of topics such as reproductive health, safe motherhood, etc. Although it is true that these are important for growing girls to know, what is not realised is that it is equally important for boys to understand the kind of care women need at the time of pregnancy and child birth, or the basics of parenting. If such courses were introduced for both boys and girls (not only notionally by saying it is available for both but making it compulsory for both) it would also help break the established notion that care and parenting are only the mothers' responsibilities.

4.1.4.5.2 The reinforcement of this gender divide can be seen even in the choice of vocational courses. It is common for girls to be offered courses on food processing, beautician and so on under a number of so-called development projects. There is no harm in any of these courses per se, provided these form part of the larger choices and are combined with inputs on rights education and empowerment. If girls are exposed to their basic rights, have necessary skills to secure those rights, then they would also be capable of making an informed choice.

#### **4.1.6 Classroom Practices:**

4.1.6.1 The continued gender biases and reinforcements of gender stereotypes in classrooms and schools in the shape of work division (girls to clean the rooms and school premises, take charge of decoration, serving etc.; boys to be in charge of sports, and so on), teachers' comments (girls' should not laugh loudly, girls should remember that ultimately they have to take care of the house and so on) is a cause of great concern. The National Curriculum Framework makes an elaborate analysis of such stereotypes.

#### **4.1.7 Education not geared to empowerment and change in existing social/ gender relations:**

4.1.7.1 One of the basic gaps in our approach to education is that the aims of education are not defined. Although it is understood that education is a process of liberation and transformation, these are not articulated as aims and as reference points for monitoring. Equity also figures in policy documents but it rarely finds a place as a curricular goal. In the absence of this articulation, the education processes reinforce the existing gender and social relations rather than questioning those.

## **4.2 Strategies Adopted for girls' education**

4.2.1 Although the issue of promoting girls' education has received attention in almost all major documents, the positions on gender equality and women's empowerment have not been as unambiguous and overt till the early 1980s. However, the commitment was expressed clearly after the adoption of New Education Policy in 1986 and the Programme of Action in 1992. These policy statements have also found expression in the shape of programmes and practices to some extent. Special focus has been given to the issue of girls' education within larger programmes of education such as DPEP and its predecessors (APPEP, Lok Jumbish, BEP, UPBEP).

4.2.2 The major strategies that relate with the issues of girls' education, gender and women's empowerment are as below :

### **4.2.2.1 Incentive schemes**

4.2.2.1.1 One of the most direct interventions is in the shape of incentives. The union as well as state governments have adopted various kinds of incentive schemes with an aim to compensate direct costs to some extent. Some of these are meant for all students (midday meal), some for those who are identified as educationally deprived (dalits, adivasis and girls – such as free textbooks under DPEP and SSA, free uniforms in many states), some are meant only for girls (attendance scholarship for girls in certain states) and some only for girls belonging to educationally deprived social groups (free uniforms for dalit, adivasi girls in some states). The coverage varies from one state to the other and in many states only a small percentage of target groups actually get covered.

4.2.2.1.2 The Balika Samridhi Yojana was a centrally sponsored Scheme that involved starting a post office account for every girl child, which however ran aground due to operational difficulties.

4.2.2.1.3 Apart from these centrally sponsored efforts, States have also evolved several strategies for promoting girls' education. Some of these have been in effect for decades, while others are of recent origin. For instance, education for girls is free at all levels including higher education in Himachal Pradesh. Some states, like Delhi, Gujarat, offer free education for girls upto class XII. In Delhi, girls are also provided free transportation to reach schools. Almost all States have scholarship schemes for girls and stipends for girls from SC/ST Categories. Recently, Andhra Pradesh has announced Rs 1 lakh for every girl child who is the only child of her parents. Gujarat has initiated a Girls' fund by which every girl child is given a bond for Rs. 5,000 upon birth. Karnataka has evolved an innovative non-monetary strategy - provision of escorts for girls from homes to schools and back, to provide a sense of security to the girls. While education department supports some of the incentives some are supported and

managed by social welfare department. However, unlike Bangladesh, the scholarships have rarely been linked to social practices (such as early marriage) impacting girls' education.

**4.2.2.1.4 The Committee feels that incentives offered for promotion of girls' education need to be revisited and the measures taken need to be of such nature, force and magnitude that they are able to overcome the obstacles posed by factors such as poverty, domestic/ sibling responsibilities, girl child labour, low preference to girls' education, preference to marriage over education of the girl child, etc.**

**4.2.2.2 Expansion of primary schools within habitations and provision of single sex girls' formal and alternative schools in certain states.**

4.2.2.2.1 One of the major rationales behind the strategy of providing primary schooling facilities within the habitation has been to enable girls to attend schools regularly. Since security is cited as a major reason for not sending girls to schools located at a distance, the presence of schools within habitation is expected to encourage them to attend schools.

4.2.2.2.2 Under DPEP, some states opened single sex alternative schools for girls, especially in Muslim concentrated areas. But these were not regular schools, and the quality of education in these schools is a matter of concern. Within the ambit of SSA, a new scheme Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) has been started under the tenth plan. It supports opening of residential single-sex girls' schools in educationally backward blocks. Educationally backward blocks are defined as those having lower than national average female literacy rates and higher than national average gender disparity in per cent points. Here again, the coverage is going to be limited.

**4.2.2.2.3 The Committee , even at the cost of being repetitive, once again feels the need to emphasise that the constitutional commitment is to provide Education of a Comparable Quality to All, hence, there is no alternative acceptable to regular schooling of good quality to all the girls.**

**4.2.2.3 Bringing ICDS centres (anganwadi) and schools closer**

4.2.2.3.1 The responsibility of sibling care is considered one of the major reasons for low-enrolment and high drop out rate of girls. Under DPEP, efforts were made in certain states (again very limited in spread even within these states) to shift the ICDS centres close to schools and extend the working hours to match with the school's working hours. The objective was to free older girls from sibling care to enable them to attend schools. |

**4.2.2.3.2 In view of the problem of sibling care being so widespread amongst poverty groups, it is recommended that a comprehensive strategy be put in place to develop a network of childcare facilities, which may include:**

a) Urgent revision of current creche schemes, attention to norms, budgets and schematic patterns; b) Converting Anganwadis into Anganwadi cum crèches to suite time of working mother, with appropriate budgets and the required human resources; c) Space allocation in urban slums for child care centers; d) Creches at worksites/ working places

4.2.2.3.3 The operationalization of the above strategy will require capacity building of local women, mahila mandals and SHGs to set up and manage crèches and resource allocations to PRIs to support childcare.

**4.2.2.3.4 It is further recommended that Pre-school education becomes part of elementary education and be provided at all primary schools with appropriately trained teachers so that all children receive the preparation for formal school entry which will enable them to participate on equal footing and go a long way in helping girls to move forward with confidence. ECCE universally available will provide the girl child the healthcare, nutrition and stimulation necessary for developing the capacity to participate meaningfully in the process of education and develop into a confident, productive and empowered individual.**

**4.2.2.4 Gender sensitization :**

4.2.2.4.1 Gender sensitization as a component of training of teachers and other educational personnel was another strategy started under DPEP. It became almost an essential component of almost all training programmes under DPEP. This, however, did not lead to any significant change in the classroom processes as there was hardly any emphasis on social practices and secondary position of women in the society, which is at the root of gender inequality in education. The new National Curriculum Framework (2005) recommends gender sensitivity with special reference to the awareness among boys regarding the problems faced by girls in present day society and schools.

**4.2.2.5 Community mobilization and campaigns:**

4.2.2.5.1 Based on the successful experiences of the role of campaign in adult literacy programmes, community mobilization was adopted as a major strategy under DPEP and other similar projects especially for bringing girls to schools. The activities such as bal-mela, prabhat pheri, street play, ma- beti mela, etc. were adopted under this in most states. The 'Meena' campaign, developed by UNICEF, was adopted as a major part of this strategy in many states. However, the focus of the campaigns remained limited to creating an environment for sending girls to schools and again the deeper issues of

impacting the prevalent gender disadvantage in the society was not really addressed.

**4.2.2.5.2** The Committee feels that greater effort in gender sensitization should be made. It emphasizes that the sensitization strategies will succeed only if genuine mobilization based on participative involvement of teachers along with their effective interaction with the community and parents is patiently, but consistently, pursued over a long time.

**4.2.2.5.3** It is also necessary that the targets to achieve should not be spelt out only in terms of enrolment and retention of girl students, but also in terms of their relative achievement and performance at all levels and in all subjects.

#### **4.2.2.6 Gender Depiction in Curricula and Textbooks:**

4.2.2.6.1 The textbook review exercises initiated mainly under DPEP included the aspects of gender audit of content and illustrations. However, the initiative rarely went into deeper aspects and remained primarily a mechanical exercise by removing illustrations showing women performing only ‘feminine’ jobs and so on.

**4.2.2.6.2** A fundamental issue is that of gender depiction in the curricula and content, which themselves become critical areas of inquiry and concern, particularly in the very constitution of knowledge itself. The approach to gender needs to be such that it develops girls’ capabilities to claim their rights and enable boys and girls to critique relations of power that are central to gender.

#### **4.2.2.7 Creation of separate toilet facilities for girls:**

4.2.2.7.1 This is considered crucial ,however, even now, the coverage is extremely limited. At the same time, the facility is also needed for women teachers.

#### **4.2.2.8 Mahila Samakhya (MS):**

4.2.2.8.1 The MS is the only national level programme focusing on women empowerment and is operational in selected districts in a large number of states. This is the only programme, apart from Women’s Development Programme (WDP) in Rajasthan, which drew its conceptual bases from feminist theories and emphasised the relational aspects of gender in society. The programme was later linked to education of girls as it emerged as a key area for women’ empowerment. In many states, DPEP and MS worked in collaboration, with the MS helping in community awareness; sensitization and mobilization related

activities. MS also organised 'residential camps' and 'bridge courses' for adolescent girls. These strategies were successful in bringing back the over-age and drop out girls to formal schools to some extent. However, this is also appropriate to mention here that MS remained marginal through out the nineties. For every 100 rupees allocated for elementary education in the Union budget it hardly received 25 paise.

#### **4.2.2.9 Conversion of boys' schools into co-educational :**

4.2.2.9.1 This is a powerful strategy for empowerment of girls by providing girls such experiences by which they can learn with boys on equal terms. The University Education Commission (1948-49) recommended that amenities of life should be provided for girls in Colleges originally planned for men, to which women must be admitted in increasing numbers and standards of courtesy and social responsibility on the part of men must be emphasised. The Committee of the National Commission for Women's Education in 1963 had also recommended "to give attention to the education of girls at all stages and in all sectors as an integral part of the general programmes for the expansion and improvement of education<sup>4</sup> among its strategies.

**4.2.2.9.2 The Committee took a serious note of the shortage of schools for girls, emphasizes regular schooling for all girls at all stages to be adopted as a policy and thus strongly recommends making provision of good quality schools for all girls which includes conversion of boys' schools to co-educational schools besides opening new co-educational schools.**

#### **4.2.2.10 Women teachers in schools :**

4.2.2.10.1 The 1986 policy mentioned the need for having a woman teacher in every primary school. The objective is to promote girls' education by raising the sense of security and providing a role model. Operation Blackboard promoted recruitment of women teachers and many states have adopted policies of reserving certain proportion of seats in pre-service teacher training courses and very few states in recruitment also. The SSA also stipulates that at least half of teachers to be recruited under the programme should be women. However, women still constitute only about one third of all teachers. Some important aspects are to create enabling conditions for women teachers to work in rural areas (transport facilities, residential provisions, safety etc.) or to promote secondary education in rural areas so that more teachers with the desired qualifications can be hired locally. However, neither of these two has received any attention. Recently, an All India level study conducted in the Department of

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<sup>4</sup> Education in India (1781-1850) p254, centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development. Chandigarh

Women's Studies, NCERT confirms the pathetic situation of women teachers working in rural areas, wherein hardly any steps have been taken to implement even the policy provisions already existing relating them, while some more provisions need to be made for enabling them to work effectively in rural areas.<sup>5</sup> Although this study concentrates on teachers of upper primary level, there is no reason to believe that the situation of other levels is different. It should be of interest to note here the findings of Pratichi Trust in West Bengal that Amartya Sen refers to in the *Pratichi Education Report* (2002):

*4.2.2.10.2 One of the observations that emerge very clearly from this investigation is the comparatively greater success of female teachers over male teachers. 83 percent of the parents of children in primary schools, in our sample across the three districts, agreed, "female teachers are more caring". In making policy reform this diagnosis of comparative success would have to be borne in mind.*

There is every reason to expect that Amartya Sen's finding would generally hold good for the other parts of India too.

**4.2.2.10.3 The Committee therefore, strongly believes that - in every educational institution there must be female teachers and female attendants without which it will be very difficult to attract girl students; women teacher is a must but she should be provided suitable conditions to work effectively, specially in rural areas her problems of transport/ accommodation, safety etc. have to be paid utmost attention, in this, the scheme of 'twin teachers' quarters' could be cited as one of the provisions.**

#### **4.2.2.11 Reaching the Unreached :**

4.2.2.11.1 There have been improvements in the status of girls' education , but the statistics reveals that in the last few years ,increments have been only marginal. This probably indicates that now some extra efforts are needed to reach those who are not yet in the fold of regular education. Important things to remember are that 'girls' is not one homogenous category, and effect of any socio- cultural or environmental factor- be it class, caste, community, social standing, natural calamity, war or lifestyle - is more prominent and different on girls than on boys. In this context pinpointed strategies have to be made to reach, besides the recognized special categories of rural,SC/ ST/ Minorities/Disabled, those who are not so well recognized as special category such as girl children of floating population, prisoners, AIDS victims, prostitutes, beggars etc.

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5. Agrawal Poonam and Nuna Anita (2004) Study on Women Teachers working in rural areas on problems confronting them. DWS, NCERT.

#### **4.2.2.12 Gender Budgeting :**

4.2.2.12.1 Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) or Gender Budgeting (GB) does not mean to keep a separate budget but to focus on the gender dimensions of the budget at various levels- national, state level and municipal etc. It involves examining the outcomes of budgetary allocations from gender perspective i.e. how these affect women and men. Australia started gender analysis of government budgets in 1993. It is usually seen as coupled to gender mainstreaming. Finance minister's budgetary proposals this year include statement on gender budgeting. Henceforth , all government departments will be required to present gender budgets.

### **4.3 Recommendations for Girls Education**

- (i) In every educational institution there must be female teachers and female attendants without which it will be very difficult to attract girl students; woman teacher is a must but she should be provided suitable conditions to work effectively, specially in rural areas her problems of transport/ accommodation, safety etc. have to be paid utmost attention, in this, the scheme of 'twin teachers' quarters' could be cited as one of the provisions.
- (ii) In every primary school at least there should be a childcare center because the girl child often has to look after the younger siblings and that is why she has to stay back at home. The terms of functioning of the childcare centers, however have to be carefully and appropriately spelt out in different contexts
- (iii) The Committee feels that greater effort in gender sensitization, especially among boys and male teachers, should be made. It accepts that the sensitization strategies will succeed only if genuine mobilization based on participative involvement of teachers along with their effective interaction with the community of parents is patiently pursued over a long time.
- (iv) It was felt that the targets to achieve should not be spelt out only in terms of enrolment and retention of girl students, but also in terms of their relative achievement and performance at all levels and in all subjects. In addition, it recommends that in every school where girls participate, the school must be extended at least up to class VIII.
- (iv) The Committee was of the view that the courses of study for girls must be the same at all levels and in all subjects and the concept of soft or 'womanly' subjects for girls contradicts the right to equal treatment for boys and girls.
- (v) However, the Committee feels that girls have the right to receive positive discrimination through affirmative action by the state in at least three areas.

First and foremost, the Committee feels girl students need to be given by the state special attention and support ensuring their physical security and comfort on the road to school, on the buses or other available transport, and within the school itself. While sensitizing the people and changing their mindsets can only be a slow and difficult social process, providing a safe environment of basic physical security and minimum physical comfort for the girl student cannot wait and must be ensured for her in the immediate future. Many of our educational targets may ultimately be found to hinge simply on this one factor.

Secondly, girl students should have regular and real schooling and not be accommodated somehow in part-time programmes or alternative systems in a multi-track approach. Girls deserve to have up to 50% of the seats reserved for them at the entry points of the regular schools. In addition there should be prospects of attractive scholarships for girls performing well. This over time would act as a deterrent factor against early marriage, assuming domestic responsibilities involving hard work (like fetching fuel wood, taking sibling care for long hours etc.) which are known to affect the participation rate of girls at schools.

Thirdly, the Committee approves of taking strong measures against the employment of all child labour. Employers who employ children should be booked under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 and in the case of out-of-school girl children in employment all labour should be regarded as potentially “hazardous”.

- vii. The Committee approves of taking stern measures against the employment of all child labour, but particularly in the case of girls. Employers who employ children should be booked under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 and in the case of girls the labour of out-of-school girl children in employment should be regarded as “hazardous”.

*Serious efforts are to be made to bring all out of school girls deprived of education due to child marriage, child labour, sibling / domestic responsibilities making ‘all involved’ responsible and taking action for failures*

- viii ECCE programme is to be implemented in all earnestness as supportive programme for girls’ education.
- ix In every primary school at least, there should be a childcare center because the girl child often has to look after the younger siblings and that is why she has to stay back at home. There is evidence that an estimated 60 % of all girls in the country are involved in sibling care which is a factor tending to hold them back from attending regular schools. The terms of functioning of the childcare centers, however have to be carefully and appropriately spelt out in different contexts

- x      **The education for girls up to age of 18 years should be made free and compulsory, while claiming ‘free’, it should be free in real sense that means there should be ‘no hidden costs’**
  
- xi     **Incentives offered for promotion of girls’ education need to be revisited and the measures taken need to be of such nature, force and magnitude that they are able to overcome the obstacles posed by factors such as poverty, domestic/ sibling responsibilities, girl child labour, low preference to girls’ education, preference to marriage over education of the girl child, etc.**

## **V. Common School System**

### **5.1**

The Education Commission (1964-66) had recommended a Common School System of Public Education (CSS) as the basis of building up the National System of Education with a view to “bring the different social classes and groups together and thus promote the emergence of an egalitarian and integrated society.” The Commission warned that “instead of doing so, education itself is tending to increase social segregation and to perpetuate and widen class distinctions.” It further noted that “this is bad not only for the children of the poor but also for the children of the rich and the privileged groups” since “by segregating their children, such privileged parents prevent them from sharing the life and experiences of the children of the poor and coming into contact with the realities of life. . . . . also render the education of their own children *anaemic and incomplete*. (emphasis ours)” The Commission contended that “if these evils are to be eliminated and the education system is to become a powerful instrument of national development in general, and social and national integration in particular, we must move towards the goal of a common school system of public education.”

5.2 The Education Commission (1964-66) had strongly endorsed the Common School System and visualized that “This system will include all schools conducted by government and local authorities and all recognized and aided private schools. It should be maintained at an adequate level of quality and efficiency so that no parent need to send his child to the institutions outside the system”. This has become part of India’s national education policy, and has apparently enjoyed support from the entire political spectrum since at least 1968.

5.3 As the Chairman of this Committee has observed, “Centuries ago, in his book, ***The Republic*** Plato observed that even in the smallest city, there are two cities – a city of the rich and a city of the poor. In my view, this applies to schools in the modern times”. The idea of a Common School System offered a valiant and workable scheme to negate the emerging phenomenon of Schools for the Rich and Schools for the Poor in modern India, the former heavily endowed,

“unaided” but usually very substantially enriched by the possession of prime land given by the state at throw-away prices, and the latter having to go without even the minimum facilities, sometimes without even a modest building and proper classrooms. The concept of the common school is briefly recapitulated below.

**5.4 The Concept :“Common School System means the National System of Education that is founded on the principles and values enshrined in the Constitution and provides education of a comparable quality to all children In an equitable manner irrespective of their caste, creed, language, gender, economic or ethnic background, location or disability (physical or mental), and wherein all categories of schools – i.e. government, local body or private, aided or unaided, or otherwise – will be expected to (a) fulfill certain minimum infrastructural (including those relating to teachers and other staff), financial, curricular, pedagogic, linguistic and socio-cultural norms and (b) ensure free education to the children in a specified neighbourhood from an age group and/or up to a stage, as may be prescribed, while having adequate flexibility and academic freedom to explore, innovate and be creative and appropriately reflecting the geo-cultural and linguistic diversity of the country, within the broad policy guidelines .**

There are two widespread misconceptions about CSS, often promoted by its detractors, which we must deal with before going ahead. First, **CSS is misperceived as a uniform school system.** On the contrary, the Education Commission itself advocated that each institution should be “intimately involved with the local community . . . . . be regarded as an individuality and given academic freedom.” This guiding principle has assumed even greater significance in recent times in view of the expectation from each school or a cluster of schools to be able to respond to the local contexts and reflect the rich diversity across the country, as also advocated by NCF-2005. The rigidity of the present school system will be adequately challenged when flexibility, contextuality and plurality are accepted, among others, as the defining principles of CSS. Indeed, if the curricular vision of NCF-2005 becomes the basis of developing CSS, it should certainly be possible to conceive of a national system wherein “*no two schools shall be identical.*” Second, it is wrongly claimed that **CSS will not permit a privately managed school to retain its non-government and unaided (or aided) character.** Again, on the contrary, CSS implies that all schools – irrespective of the type of their management, sources of income or affiliating Boards of examinations – will participate and fulfill their responsibility as part of the National System of Education.

5.5 The Common School System, thus, refers to Universalization of Schooling wherein schools as educational institutions offer quality education to all students irrespective of class, caste, religion, sex or individual abilities. The underlying principle of Common School System is equality of entitlements

originating from the ideology of non-discrimination, that all children are entitled to equal opportunities to education in comparable environment using comparable resources including teachers with comparable qualifications and training. Further, that such education is within access of every child.

5.6 The 1986 policy, while advocating a National System of Education, resolved that “effective measures will be taken in the direction of the Common School System recommended in the 1968 policy.” The implementation of the policy on Common Schools, however, still remains only in a rudimentary state. Even as late as only a decade back from now the Government of India Expert Group on Cost of Elementary Education (1995) had found that the basic preparation and the necessary infrastructure for the implementation of the Common School policy were still not in place. The Expert Group therefore, considering the Constitutional position laid down by the various Judgements of the Supreme Court of India (1992, 1993), had argued that “though adoption of a common school approach as suggested by the Kothari Commission, may not be feasible even though most desirable, the Group was very conscious that in no way the facilities extended to the poor be less than what is provided to others. The Group worked on the presumption that those children who are still out of school belong to the poorest households where deprivation is all pervading and social opportunities available are very limited”. We are in no way in a perceptibly better position today.

5.7 It is important to take into account how deep-seated is upper-class prejudice in our society against the common school or the neighbourhood school concepts. When recently some state governments took the simple decision to enforce the admission of children from deprived families in private schools enjoying considerable government subsidies (mainly in the form of land at very low costs for their buildings); there was an uproar against the move. Some schools argued that mixing of the children coming from the deprived sections with the more fortunate ones would be harmful for the deprived children themselves, because they would tend to go astray trying to copy the lavish life styles of the children from the affluent families! The Committee feels that if this kind of argument continues, very soon there will be a clamour for setting up Common Schools with two classes instead of one at each level: a Class of the Rich and a Class of the Poor, to follow to its logical end the Assam Chief Minister’s telling and perceptive quotation from Plato! Notwithstanding this, the legal basis of education in this country is still that of a community school. It is based on 4 principles: philanthropy, public service, (that is why they are called public schools), not for profit, no commercialisation, and viewed as community service. Legally, in every sense the school is a public property. The Society or Charitable Trust can donate/contribute resources to the running of the school, but cannot take anything away from the school. In this connection the Committee wishes to draw attention to the following extract of the 165<sup>th</sup> Report (November 1998) of the Law Commission of India:

“The unaided institutions should be made aware that recognition, affiliation or permission to send their children to appear for the Government/Board examination also casts a corresponding social obligation upon them towards the society. The recognition/ affiliation/ permission aforesaid is meant to enable them to supplement the effort of the State and not to enable them to make money. Since they exist and function effectively because of such recognition/ affiliation/ permission granted by public authorities, they must and are bound to serve the public interest. For this reason, the unaided educational institutions must be made **to impart free education to 50% of the students** admitted to their institutions. This principle has already been applied to medical, engineering and other colleges imparting professional education and there is no reason why the schools imparting primary/ elementary education should not be placed under the same obligation (emphasis ours).” ( 6.6.2)

**5.7.1 (i)** This Committee recommends in the context of the Law Commission of India’s 1998 recommendation extracted above, that all educational institutions at all levels be reminded that one of the most formidable educational challenges before them always will be to find ways of instilling into the minds of their pupils a sense of greater pride in excellence achieved in their academic as well as non-academic performances at school, and make them learn also to honour such excellence in their fellow students irrespective of where they come from. Learning to do just this has been at the core of the value system of every civilized nation over centuries, perhaps more in India than in some other countries. In no way can we allow ourselves to abandon, on whatever pretext, this basic value in our schools, colleges and centres of higher learning.

**5.7.2 (ii)** The Committee feels that a community of dedicated, professional, whole-time teachers pledged to fairly longtime service could alone enthuse students - not only to acquire the necessary skills but also to broaden their minds through education. It is true that teachers themselves need to be taught; they need to acquire the skills first that they would impart to others and broaden their own minds before they can broaden the minds of the children they teach. It is also true that many of our teachers fail to live up to this ideal. But this has always been and still remains a greatly fulfilling and traditionally honoured venture for young people to undertake in all civilised societies. Part-time teaching or short-time teaching, except in certain very special circumstances and except in the case of some highly gifted or highly motivated individuals, can be no substitute for life-long service in this venture.

**5.7.2.1** It should be clear from the above that in pressing for accepting once again the central role of sustained, whole time and long-time service of the teacher in bringing about changes in the mindset of the student the Committee has not overlooked the findings of absolutely unimpeachable social observers recording the failings of many in the teaching community. Absenteeism, falling for the lure of private tuition in the place of giving time and attention to one’s

students at school and many other vices frequently come to light. Even more serious are not infrequent reports of serious attitudinal problems of the teacher in respect of handicapped children and children belonging to the deprived sections, particularly the dalit or the tribal families. In this connection we may again quote from Amartya Sen's Introduction to the *Pratichi Education Report* (2002):

**5.7.2.2** We encountered some disturbing evidence that primary school teachers often show much less regard for the interests of children from poorer and lower caste backgrounds. We observed much greater teacher absenteeism in schools with a majority of children from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (75 percent), compared with other schools (33 percent). Also, in some schools with children from "lowly" families, the teachers, on a regular basis, do not take classes on certain days of the week (in one case, "no classes on Saturdays and Mondays"), and sometimes the hours are arbitrarily reduced (in one case the teacher arrives at 11.30 am and leaves at 1.30 pm). There is clearly less fear of effective censure when the children come from a disadvantaged background. The teachers seem to see themselves, in many cases, as belonging to a different class altogether from the much poorer percents of many of their students.

**5.7.2.3** When we add to this the cases we encountered of the teachers' speaking, disparagingly about the habits (often eating habits) of the Scheduled Tribe families, there is an immensely disquieting picture that emerges. Further, in one school among the 18 we investigated, we were surprised to find that Scheduled Tribe students were made to sit separately from the others. Given the great stride that West Bengal has made in countering class divisions (through land reforms and panchayats); the persistence-indeed intensification-of class barriers in the schooling system must be a matter of particular shame. Again, I must note that we did also encounter many individual teachers who are strongly committed to reach across the class barriers, and who were also very aware that their high salaries in addition to their educational achievements already put them at a social distance from many – often most – of their students. But the overall picture of the oppressive role of class divisions in school education is quite appalling.

**5.7.2.4** Amartya Sen too, after having recorded the failings in the schools and many heartening successes in his critique of the **Shiksha Karmi Kendra** experiment of West Bengal thought it important to add:

**5.7.2.5** The reliance on SSKs should not reduce the recognition of the urgency of reforming and enhancing the main avenue of primary education, viz. primary schools.

**5.7.3 (iii)** The Committee feels that it is necessary to clarify the position of private schools in the context of the Common School approach that the Education Commission (1964-66) and other expert bodies since had advocated and to which the political parties and the people at large had remained committed at least since 1968 when not only the Union Cabinet but also the principal opposition parties in Parliament were invariably found supporting the main recommendations of the Education Commission (1964-88) Report.

5.7.3.1 It is clear that no educational institution charging fees from its students can be allowed to run for private profit. Apart from the explicit legal position in this respect as set down by a number of High Court decisions, public opinion in a civil society also does not approve of turning education into a private profit-making business. However, this does not mean that non-profit-making institutions cannot or should not be run on sound business principles, making them financially viable and healthy.

5.7.3.2 The Committee noticed that there were two obvious areas where the meaning of making private profit from a non-government (and hence patently private) educational institution seems to be somewhat blurred.

6.3.2.1 First, what would be our stand in the case of a patently charitable institution like a school or college run by a missionary society with respect to its surplus of revenue (from tuition and other fees) over current costs of imparting education? Is it private profit being made for selfish ends? It clearly is not. Yet society may want to see that it is not made entirely arbitrarily. Even here we have to guard against infringing on a Fundamental Right such as the educational right of a declared minority (not necessarily a religious one). One should remember that if becoming a minority institution provides a comfortable safeguard, unscrupulous people might try to take that route to foil the purpose of the Common School system,

6.3.2.2 Secondly, a school run by any education society may genuinely want to generate surpluses to be ploughed back into development according to some long-term plan. Therefore, in that case also the activity cannot be called profit making. All the good schools all over the world do it for genuine educational development. Often the overheads like library and building facilities enjoyed by one generation of students come from the revenues raised from a previous generation. It cannot always be said that this or the other facility was provided by "exploiting" the students of a previous generation. and therefore should be discouraged. **But clearly there must be norms according to which development and other fees can be charged by a school and also its subsequent accountability.**

**5.6.4 (iv)** The Committee notices with concern that there are practically no transparent and enforceable norms for charging fees in private schools. Many private schools charge simply whatever they can get away with. It is also well

known that the private schools in general extract substantial unrecorded fees in cash, which, of course, is a fraudulent practice in which parents are coerced into conniving.

**5.6.5 (v)** The Committee is also concerned that even in the government or government-aided schools there is surprisingly not much difference in the level of arbitrariness (as seen by the parents) shown in the matter of fixing or raising of fees. Charged. This Committee feels that a positive move towards establishing and enforcing credible norms for school fees and removing existing iniquities or illegalities committed in this respect wherever they exist, would be taking a small but very concrete step in increasing the acceptability by the parents of a concrete movement towards the Common School System.

**5.6.6 (vi)** Finally, the Committee wishes to emphasize that making good quality education available to all students in all schools at affordable fees is a primary commitment of the Common School system. One important part of that commitment is to make available excellent textbooks at affordable prices to all students in the education sector and free of cost to all students in the elementary classes. Today a few thousand rupees have to be spent to buy the recommended books even in the Central schools. The following is a random example provided by Professor Nirmala Banerjee, former Member of the CIBE, from a quick study by at Sachetana in Kolkata. It was seen in an informal check with parents of school-going girl that, even in fully aided schools like two well known ones of Kolkata (names mentioned withheld here), parents complained that they had to pay an amount of Rs. 2000 or more, towards books and exercise books at the beginning of the year. In addition, the children had to buy their own sheets for writing exam answers. Though these figures have not been fully crosschecked, the total cost including that of uniforms, shoes, etc must come to a substantial amount. It was also seen that though parents in general were eager to give school education to their daughters, they often found it hard to find the money. If a choice had to be made between incurring the cost on a girl and a boy, the boy usually won. Moreover, if a girl failed exams in any class, parents were most unwilling to incur the same cost over again. Furthermore, a parent having to care for more than one child resents the fact that for one reason or other all the children invariably are made to get new textbooks and cannot use the ones they could get easily from their immediate elders as the prescribed list is changed for every class every year for no clear reason.

**5.6.6.1** Such complaints have also been heard from parents in Delhi and other parts of India. The Committee feels that this issue should be taken very seriously particularly for girl students. **The task of providing good textbooks free of cost to every student has to be regarded as another small but extremely crucial practical step in the progress towards a viable Common School System for the country.**

Further, the kind of paradigm shift NCF-2005 is advocating can become sustainable only when it is implemented in all categories of schools, including the privately managed unaided schools, in the whole of the country within a declared timeframe, though a properly phased programme will be necessary. Of course, this will require a major dialogue building political exercise (reminiscent of what took place at the time of seeking nation-wide acceptance of three-language formula in 1950s and early 1960s), keeping the federal structure of the country and concurrency of education in mind. The State cannot be a mere bystander in this process but is expected to assume a proactive role of leadership in transforming the system. Otherwise the State would become superfluous and the global market forces and the social structure together will determine the character of the school system.

The essential linkage between curricular reforms and systemic reforms must be appreciated, before it is too late. And such reforms would be feasible only within the framework of a Common School System. It is also necessary to assert that **no developed or developing country has ever achieved UEE or, for that matter, Universal Secondary Education, without a strong state-funded and state-regulated Common School System.** India is unlikely to be an exception to this historical and global experience, notwithstanding the ambition of the Indian State to become a 'superpower' by 2020!

#### **5.7 Other steps that are required to make the Common School System a reality are:**

1. Ensuring heterogeneity of social mix of children in all schools and recognising this to be essential for quality education for all children both of the rich and the poor
2. Pursuing the common school system as the key strategy that can prevent commercialism and exploitation of education
3. Ensuring that all children within 1 km of the schools, in the concept of neighbourhood schools are admitted into the schools irrespective caste, creed, colour, religion, gender, disability
4. State to invest in public schools system with standards, norms, building etc. make investment a prioritization with the same standards of KVs.
5. Training, accountability and discipline of all teachers to be the same, and of equitable quality, to ensure that effective teaching learning of equitable quality takes place. No para teachers
6. Common track of school system, no NFEs, SSA schools, KVs, NVS, all will be CSSchools-same norms, same training, same quality
7. Private schools to be progressively brought into the ambit of the common track
8. Computing and providing real cost of education so that a child may be provided free education and entitled to uniform, books and stationery, tuition fees, midday meal, recreation and health care within 1 km for primary schools.

9. All primary schools to be upgraded to elementary schools and over progressively over next 10 years be upgraded upto secondary stage. Nursery and Upper KG must be part of system of elementary education
10. Medium of instruction to be mother tongue, bi- or multi-lingual at primary level
11. Teacher to be adequately trained and facilitating measures for educating children with disabilities, Sensitisation and understanding of poverty issues, social objectives of the country, skills for educating children from poverty groups, skills in dealing with children with disabilities, equipment and teaching learning materials, accountability of all teachers towards the philosophy and commitment of equity
12. Teacher student ratio to be not more than 1:40 and progressively reduced. LKG and UKG must even now be 1:25
14. Plan and build new schools wherever needed
15. Aided schools to conform the CSS norms government to take over in the event of non-conformity
16. CSS to come under PRIs with due capacity building of PRIs and local communities on educational objectives; centralized world class guidelines and support from center for achievement
17. No land no grant no affiliation to CBSE for any school that is not fulfilling CSS norms upto class VIII and progressively upto class X.

## **5.8 Recommendations for Common School System**

- i. **Pursuing the common school system as the key strategy that can prevent commercialism and exploitation of education as making good quality education available to all students in all schools at affordable fees is a primary commitment of the Common School system.**
- ii. **Ensuring heterogeneity of the social mix of children in all schools and recognising this to be essential for quality education for all children both of the rich and the poor**
- iii. **The unaided private schools should reserve 25-30 % seats for meritorious but poor students. A percentage of fees from the elite students may be used to create a corpus fund for meeting the fees of above students.**
- iv. **State should invest in public schools system with standards, norms, building etc. with the same standards as that of Kendrya Vidyalaya.**
- v. **No multi- track system in education is acceptable. Private schools need to be progressively brought into the ambit of the common track**
- vi. **Only professional, whole-time teachers with equitable qualifications and training be accepted in the Common School System, no para-teachers are acceptable in view of quality education.**
- vii. **Teacher student ratio to be not more than 1:40 and progressively reduced. LKG and UKG must even now be 1:25**
- viii. **It is necessary to clarify the position of private schools in the context of the Common School System and they have to be reminded that they have duties not only towards elites but towards society as a whole.**

- viii. **The task of providing good textbooks free of cost to every student is a crucial step in the progress towards a viable Common School System for the country.**

## **VI. Inclusive Education for all Children**

6.1 The concept of an inclusive society refers to equality and respect for the inherent dignity of all human beings. Inclusive society, therefore, is envisaged as a democratic society in which members actively participate in all aspects of society, regardless of their status and unique characteristics. Inclusive education, then, becomes an important step for building up such a society.

6.2 Educationists in general have for a long time advocated for putting special children needing specialist care along with other children together in school environment as far as is physically possible. But there has been very little progress in this direction in the past decades. As one member has pointed out, it is shameful but true that the world's greatest living physicist Stephen Hawking, who was afflicted before he finished college with an incurable neuro-muscular disease, would almost certainly have been excluded from mainstream schooling in our present-day education system. This great genius has had to use many artificial means for achieving sheer verbal communication and computer-aided writing. In general, he has to carry on all his great work at Cambridge University where today he adorns the Chair that Newton had once occupied.. It would be not much consolation to think that he possibly would have been excluded in many other advanced education systems too in the western world. Without doubt our education system has not been made ready to face the challenge of inclusive education.

- (i) The Committee does not, however, intend to suggest that the ideal of inclusion is for the benefit of the physically handicapped geniuses only, however telling the system's failure and consequently, the society's loss may be in their cases.
- (ii) The Committee emphasizes that special needs may or may not arise from disabilities only. Other children without disabilities may also experience special needs at some point of time. All children, therefore, gain from the philosophy of Inclusive education. Given social acceptance and company children with disabilities can also flourish as well as the other children. Further, the experience of inclusive education invariably widens the world of ordinary children too, making them better human beings ready to take their places in a modern humane society.

6.3 NPE(1986) states- the objective should be to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped in the general community as equals , to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence. Wherever it is feasible, the education of children with motor handicaps and other mild handicaps will be common with that of others. After the World conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca in 1990s, **inclusion** became the magic word in the educational field. The Salamanca Statement adopted by representatives of 92 Governments, including India, and 25 International Organizations has, in fact, set the policy agenda for inclusive education on a global basis. The Statement reaffirms the right to education for all and recognises "the necessity and urgency of providing education for children & youth and adults with SEN within regular education system " (para 1 ). This principle of Inclusive education was reiterated at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2000).

6.4 Inclusive education refers to all learners, young people - with or without disabilities being able to learn together in ordinary pre-school provisions, schools and community educational settings with appropriate network of support services.

**6.5 This means that schools have a duty to try to include children with disabilities in regular classes unless the nature and severity of disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.**

6.6 Implementation of an inclusive system of education for all assumes greater significance of systemic reforms specially in the context of disability since in the core of their exclusion and marginalisation is inadequacy of the basic education system and processes that have failed to guarantee equal access and full participation In order to make inclusive education a reality, in addition to the provision of aids and appliances, a flexible, broad and balanced curriculum that can meet the needs of all children is a necessity. An inclusive curriculum recognizes the need of schools to be organized with the individual differences of students in mind and is flexible enough to enable all students to achieve their goals. Implementation of an inclusive curriculum would require a number of changes in present day teaching practices, curriculum content, evaluation procedures and available resources at the school level with out which the goal of providing quality education would remain elusive It is also important to mobilize support from parents, the community, and special schools.

## **6.7 Recommendations for Inclusive Education**

- *Make all schools inclusive by:*
  - *enforcing without exception the neighborhood school policy*

- *removing physical barriers*
  - *reviewing barriers created by admission procedures (screening, identification, parental interaction, selection and evaluation including private schools*
  - *building capacity of teachers to function in an inclusive setting*
  - *making the curriculum flexible and appropriate to accommodate the diversity of school children including those with disability in both cognitive & non cognitive areas*
  - *making support services available in the form of technology (including ICT),teaching-learning materials and specialists.*
  - *Involving parents, family, and community at all stages of education.*
  - *Gear all teacher education programmes (both pre-service and in-service) to develop pedagogical skills required in inclusive classroom*
  - *Mobilise special schools as resource centres for providing support to inclusive schools.*
- *The Committee is of the view that the aim should be to prepare the school system, the student community and the parents at large, to accept unequivocally the position that all children, including children with special needs, needing special care, have to be placed in the hands of teachers professionally trained for that purpose and be together in a school. To make all schools fit for this however will take time and resources, but identified leading schools, private or government, must examine, practise and show the way to inclusive education as far as they can or be ready to stand heavily censured by posterity.*
- *The Committee strongly feels that the pioneering schools and educational institutions must be given substantial funds for many special facilities needed both for the teacher and the taught, and many incentives for making inclusive education a really challenging and at the same time a rewarding exercise in the daily curricular and extra-curricular work to be devised for all children.*

## **VII. The Budgetary Constraints**

7.1 Finally, the Committee wishes to stress, what now perhaps can be taken as generally accepted, that finding the necessary finances for the basic requirements of universal education up to the age of 16 or even 18 years will not constitute any big macro-economic problem for India: As the Expert Committee (1999) had calculated, no more would be required for this than a modest rate of growth of the GDP (at over 5% per

year) and an expected increase in the efficiency in tax collection raising India's tax collected-to-GDP ratio from the present around 16% to about 18% by 1907-08 (which will still not be the highest in Asia and would not in any case be regarded as a great achievement for a resurgent economy like ours). But what would certainly be required is reallocation of funds mainly in the Central budget (for the State Governments have already strained their budgetary resources to the limit in this respect), drawing on the resources of particularly those Ministries that actually thrive on the growth of high quality manpower in the schools and institutions of higher learning in India. Only such reallocation can make the national commitment of taking the public expenditure on education gradually to six per cent of the GDP and above. No strong objections to such allocation need be expected from the main beneficiary Ministries so long as our education system is perceived by them to have been both modernized and made broad-based enough to maximize the probability of producing the highest quality manpower in the required fields and in required numbers. The Committee takes heart from the recent reiteration by the Prime Minister of India that budgetary constraints will not be allowed to stand in the way of India's educational resurgence.

7.2 However, budgetary allocations, as we well know, can be only a necessary condition but not a sufficient one. Both the State and the Central Governments have to take note of the near-truism that expenditure under the head of education is not necessarily the same thing as investment in education; and also that apart from classrooms, good textbooks and teaching aids, the main resource necessary for resurgence in education will always be the community of teachers.

7.3 Building up the necessarily large cadre of new teachers, inducting them into whole-time and life-time service as first-rate professionals, and providing them with the adequate and protective infrastructure needed for modern inclusive schools are the tasks have been left largely undone. Much greater emphasis has therefore to be placed on the two basic considerations connected with the tasks:

(a) always looking at the "real" aspect of investment in school education fixing attainable physical targets behind each budgetary allocation; and

(b) devising ways of generating gender sensitive human capital (mostly new teachers and researchers but also educational administrators), in the school sector as efficiently and as quickly as possible. They should also have the desired preparation for inclusive education.

7.4 The Committee recommends that in order to ensure the relatively vast financial resources expected to be allocated for the above-mentioned purposes are properly utilized, **an independent national authority** be immediately put in place for monitoring the appropriations of the allocated budgetary resources on school education by the concerned governments at all levels. keeping these two crucial considerations in mind.

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Supreme Court of India (1993), Judgement on Writ Petition of J.P.Unnikrishnan and others against the State of Andhra quoted in Judgements Today, Vol.1, No.22, Feb. New Delhi.

Supreme Court of India (1997), Judgement on Writ Petition of Vishaka and Others against State of Rajasthan and Others (No. 666-70 Of 1992).

Supreme Court of India (1997), Writ Petition (C No. 81/94 of Shri Satya Pal Anand Vs Union of India and Others. New Delhi, MHRD: (mimeo)

**List of the Material Received by the Committee**

**From the States**

**Assam**      Commissioner and Secretary, Education Department, Government of Assam, Guwahati

**Madhya Pradesh** . Additional Mission Director. Rajya Shiksha Kendra, Bhopal

**Gujarat.**      Additional State Project Director, SSA/DPEP Gujarat Council of Primary Education, Gandhinagar, Gujarat

**Chandigarh.** Director Public Instructions (S), Chandigarh Administration

**Karnataka**    Director of Public Instruction, Primary Education Bangalore

**Tripura.**      Director of School Education, Govt. of Tripura

**Letters ( made available through MHRD)**

1.      from Shri Salman Khurshid addressed to Hon'ble Shri Arjun Singh Ji
2.      from Prof. Anil Sadgopal addressed to Smt. Sonia Gandhi

**Material made available by the Members of the Committee**

1.      Shri Tarun Gogoi. Address of Hon'ble Chief Minister, Assam as Chairman of a Committee of CAGE on "Girls' Education and the Common School System" for the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2004 at New Delhi. And a press release dated 1.12.04.
2.      Shri Kanti Biswas. My Views dated 8.3.05.
3.      Prof. Anil Sadgopal. Common School System : Empowering the Government Schools. Published in Outlook, December 11, 2000 and Common School System. ( a mail sent on 16.6.05). Empowering the Government Schools (a mail sent on 16.6.05)., Selected Comments on Draft Report and Common School System (mails received on 27.6.05)
4.      Prof. Tapas Majumdar. The Report of the MHRD Expert Group on Financial Requirements for Making Elementary Education a Fundamental right (1999). Extracts from a Working by Tapas Majumdar and Girls' Education and

Education for Gender Equality in India. (note based on material submitted by Jyotsna Jha).

5. Dr. Kumud Sharma. Girls' Education and Common School System: A Note
6. Smt. Reva Nayyar. Some Thoughts on Girls Education and Common School System. Dated 11.3.05.
7. Mr. Sandeep Pandey. Girl Child Education and Common School System and Consultation with NGOs from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra dated 24.2.05. and Charter of Demands for Education of Girls. Bal Sansad, Lucknow dated 24.4.05.
8. Prof. Poonam Agrawal. Girls' Education and Common School System: Issues, CAGE Committee: Girls' Education and Common School System Strategic Issues, Objective of Education, Policy Interventions for Girl/Women Education.

#### **Others**

1. Public Study Group on CAGE Committee material submitted on Girls Education and Common School System (a bound copy) dated 29.11.05, inclusive education dated 8.12.05, Resolution submitted to Shri Tarun Gogoi dated 29.4.05.
2. Mobile Crèches Delhi. Material submitted to Prof. Tapas Majumdar, Chairperson drafting sub committee. Dated 31.3.05, Minutes of meeting with Prof. Tapas Majumdar dated 29.4.2005 and a note sent thereafter dated nil.
3. Nirmala Banerjee. Getting Girls to School (Points to note about the W. Bengal situation).
4. Bikash Das. Letter address to Shri Tarun Gogoi dated 20.8.04.
5. Centre for Development of India, Gramik Ashram Jhunjhuni. 'कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम और लड़कियों की शिक्षा का संदर्भ'. letter address to Director, NCERT dated 20.12.04.
6. बिहार माध्यमिक शिक्षक संघ. 'विमर्श हेतु विचारणीय प्रसंग'. letter address to Shri Tarun Gogoi, dated 9.4.05.

**(Material available from NCERT on request)**