

Chapter I – INTRODUCTION

I. The Situation of Elementary Education in India

1. Since Independence, India has made impressive progress in terms of growth of educational institutions at different levels, physical access to schooling for children, and diversification of educational programmes. Today, 18 crore children are taught by almost 57 lakh teachers in more than 12 lakh primary and upper primary schools across the length and breadth of the country.
2. With schematic interventions from the erstwhile Operation Blackboard, Bihar Education Project, Lok Jumbish, District Primary Education Programme, and the Government's current flagship programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), over 98% of our children are estimated to have access to primary schooling within one kilometer of their habitation, and almost 92% to an upper primary school within three kilometers of their habitation. Gross enrolment ratios have increased significantly across all social categories, drop out rates at primary level have declined, and transition from primary to upper primary stage has improved. Decentralised academic support structures have been established in the form of District Institutes for Education and Training (DIETs) in 571 districts, and Resource Centres in 6746 blocks and 70388 clusters in the country. Over 12 crore children participate in the Mid Day Meal programme, the world's largest school feeding programme, which impacts not only enrollment of children, but also their regular attendance in school and participation in the learning process.
3. This notable spatial spread and physical access has, however, by and large not been supported by satisfactory curricular interventions, including teaching learning materials, training designs, assessment systems and classroom practices, or even suitable infrastructure. *“Our Constitution fathers did not intend that we just set up hovels, put students there, give untrained teachers, give them bad textbooks, no playgrounds and say, we have complied with Article 45 and primary education is expanding...They meant that **real** education should be given to our children between the ages of 6 and 14”¹*. Physical expansion has also not adequately addressed the problem of social access. An alarming 46 per cent children, largely girls and SC/ST children drop out before completing the elementary stage of education. The country's expectations in respect of overall coverage, equitable distribution and quality of education have largely not been fulfilled.
4. The education system does not function in isolation from the society of which it is a part. Our social system is stratified into manifold layers based on class, caste, gender, and religion. Unequal social, economic and power equations, which persist, deeply influence children's access to education and their participation in the learning process. This is evident in the disparities in education access and attainment between different social and economic

¹ Shri MC Chagla, Education Minister, 1964

groups. Thus, girls belonging to SC, ST and Muslim minority communities, and children with disabilities, especially those from poor families, are educationally most vulnerable.

5. Even as the education system seeks to reach out to every child by widening access and providing school infrastructure and teachers, the issue of quality presents daunting challenges. Indian education system is known for its inequitable character – there are high fee charging schools catering to the rich and privileged and ordinary government schools with extremely insufficient facilities to which the masses of people living in rural area and urban slums send their children. There is a range of government and private schools between these extremes. Time has come to make a decisive intervention to change this situation so that all children irrespective of their religion, caste, class, gender and location get an education of comparable quality.

II. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009

6. In August 2009, Parliament passed the historic Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009. The new law must be seen from the perspective of children. It provides a justiciable legal framework that entitles all children between the ages of 6-14 years to an education of reasonable quality, based on principles of equity and non-discrimination. It provides for children's right to free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education. More importantly, it provides for the child's right to education that is free from fear, stress and anxiety. There are several provisions in the Act, including for example, provisions prohibiting corporal punishment, detention and expulsion which need to be fore-fronted to ensure that we move towards a system that, as the National Policy on Education states, provides '*a warm, welcoming and encouraging approach for children to learn*' (NPE, 1986/92). The most important aspect, however, is to ensure that the teaching-learning process is free from stress and anxiety (Sec. 29), with obvious implications for curricular reform. Testing and school grading systems need to be reviewed to motivate children to deepen and widen their learning. The RTE Act also lays down the responsibilities of teachers. Teacher accountability systems would need to ensure that children are learning and that their right to learning in an environment that is free from stress and anxiety is not violated.
7. The RTE Act provides for:
 - (i) The right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school.
 - (ii) It clarifies that 'compulsory education' means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group. 'Free' means that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education.

- (iii) It makes provisions for a non-admitted child to be admitted to an age appropriate class.
- (iv) It specifies the duties and responsibilities of appropriate Governments, local authority and parents in providing free and compulsory education, and sharing of financial and other responsibilities between the Central and State Governments.
- (v) It lays down the norms and standards relating to, *inter alia*, Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTRs), buildings and infrastructure, school working days, teacher working hours.
- (vi) It provides for rational deployment of teachers by ensuring that the specified pupil teacher ratio is maintained for each school, rather than just as an average for the State or District or Block, thus ensuring that there is practically no urban-rural imbalance in teacher postings. It also prohibits deployment of teachers for non-educational work, other than decennial census, elections to local authority, state legislatures and parliament, and disaster relief.
- (vii) It provides for appointment of appropriately trained teachers, i.e. teachers with the requisite training and academic qualifications.
- (viii) For children in 6-14 age group it prohibits (i) physical punishment and mental harassment, (ii) screening procedures for admission, (iii) capitation fees, (iv) private tuition by teachers, (v) running of schools without recognition,
- (ix) It provides for the following penalties:
 - a. For charging capitation fee: fine upto 10 times the capitation fee charged;
 - b. For resorting to screening during admission: Rs 25,000 for first contravention; Rs 50,000 for each subsequent contravention; and
 - c. For running a school without recognition: fine upto Rs one lakh, and in case of continuing contravention Rs 10,000 for each day during which the contravention continues.
- (x) It provides for development of curriculum in consonance with the values enshrined in the Constitution, and which would ensure the all round development of the child, building on the child's knowledge, potentiality and talent and making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety through a system of child friendly and child centred learning.
- (xi) It provides for protection and monitoring of the child's right to free and compulsory education and redressal of grievances by the National and

State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights, which shall have the powers of a civil court.

8. The Act contains several provisions that require to be put in place in order to ensure its proper implementation, including, *inter alia*, systems for age appropriate enrolment, mechanisms for school and habitation mapping, recruitment and re-deployment of teachers to ensure that the pupil teacher ratio is maintained in every school, enhancing the quality of the entire teacher workforce to a common national standard and training of ‘untrained’ teachers, reviewing the content and process of curriculum, undertaking ongoing and continuous evaluation, establishing school management committees and ensuring management and supervision of schools with community support.

III. RTE-SSA Committee

9. Currently, SSA is implemented as one of India’s flagship programmes for universalizing elementary education. Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in elementary education, and enhancement in learning levels of children. SSA provides for a variety of interventions, including, *inter alia*, opening of new schools and alternate schooling facilities, construction of schools and additional classrooms, toilets and drinking water, provisioning for teachers, periodic teacher training and academic resource support, textbooks and support for learning achievement.
10. The RTE Act has important implications for the overall approach and implementation strategies of SSA, and it is necessary to harmonize the SSA vision, strategies and norms with the RTE mandate. In this context the Department of School Education and Literacy set up a Committee under the Chairpersonship of Shri Anil Bordia, former Education Secretary, Government of India, to suggest follow up action on SSA vis-à-vis the RTE Act. A copy of the Government Order No. F.2-50/2009-EE.3 dated 3rd September, 2009 constituting the Committee and its Terms of Reference is at Annex 1. During initial meetings of the committee it was conveyed on behalf of the Ministry of HRD that the committee may not strictly confine itself to the terms of reference and should as well make recommendations regarding implementation of RTE Act 2009.
11. The Committee held seven meetings between September 2009 and January 2010, during which it had interaction with State Secretaries of Education, educationists, representatives of teachers’ unions, voluntary organisations and civil society organisations who are in close touch with field realities, and representatives of persons working with children with special needs. Consultation with representatives of teachers’ unions and civil society organisations provided important insights, *inter alia*, for bringing out-of-school children from disadvantaged sections into age appropriate class, care and support in mainstream schools for children with special needs, education for girls, importance of forging partnerships with voluntary agencies and civil society organisations for developing capacities of school management committees (SMCs) to formulate school development plans, realigning teacher

education and training systems to build learning on children's experiences and pre-knowledge. Additionally, interaction with State Secretaries of Education provided valuable inputs on issues relating to the nature of central assistance, implementation structure for SSA and RTE, and fund transfer mechanism for SSA and RTE. A list of persons who participated in the consultations is attached at Annex II.

IV. Governing principles

12. Keeping in view the mandate of the RTE Act, particularly the need to provide to all children of the country education of equitable quality, in the preparation of this report, the committee has been guided by the following principles:
- (i) *Holistic view of education*, as interpreted in National Curriculum Framework 2005 with implications for a systemic revamp of the entire content and process of education with significant implications for curriculum, teacher education, educational planning and management.
 - (ii) *Equity*, to mean not only equal opportunity, but also creation of conditions in which the disadvantaged sections of the society – children of SC, ST, Muslim minority, landless agricultural workers and children with special needs, etc. – can avail of the opportunity.
 - (iii) *Access*, not to be confined to ensuring that a school becomes accessible to all children within specified distance but implies an understanding of the educational needs and predicament of the traditionally excluded categories – the SC, ST and others sections of the most disadvantaged groups, the Muslim minority, girls in general, and children with special needs. This interpretation of access has been viewed by the Committee as an indispensable stipulation of the Act.
 - (iv) *Gender concern*, implying not only an effort to enable girls to keep pace with boys but to view education in the perspective spelt out in the National Policy on Education 1986 /92; i.e. a decisive intervention to bring about a basic change in the status of women.
 - (v) *Centrality of teacher*, to motivate them to innovate and create a culture in the classroom, and beyond the classroom, that might produce an inclusive environment for children, specially for girls from oppress and marginalized backgrounds.
 - (vi) *Moral compulsion* is imposed through the RTE Act on parents, teachers, educational administrators and other stakeholders. Rather than shifting emphasis on punitive processes, the Committee has abided by this general tenor of the Act.
 - (vii) *Convergent and integrated system of educational management* is pre-requisite for implementation of the RTE law. All states must move in that direction as speedily as feasible.

- (viii) *Adherence to RTE stipulations* – even where it seemed difficult to adhere to the timeframe laid down in the RTE Law, the Committee worked to find practical solutions for adherence to the Act’s stipulations.

Chapter II – SCHOOL ACCESS

I Neighbourhood and Access

The context

1. Universal access to schooling requires schooling facilities within reasonable reach of all children. If schools are not located in or near the habitations where children reside, they are unlikely to enrol in schools or continue schooling, even if they are formally enrolled in such schools. RTE Act provides that children are entitled to access elementary schools within “defined area or limits of neighbourhood”.
2. Social access to schooling is as important as physical access. In a country with tremendous diversity in terms of language, caste, socio economic status, etc., it is important to ensure that the school recognizes these differences. If the language of instruction in a school in a tribal area is the State language, from class I itself, then the child is likely to find the school environment alienating. If teachers in the school have not been sensitized to actively dispel traditional perceptions regarding gender or caste roles, they are unlikely to take measures which would help girl students and children from marginalised communities to pursue education which is equitable and free of anxiety. The teachers’ own patterns of communication with children, the seating arrangements in the classroom, allocation of work between children, can serve to reinforce (or dispel) societal perceptions about the ‘proper’ role and place of girls and SC/ST and minority community students. Government schools have a high proportion of first generation school goers and children from marginalised communities. Teachers need to be sensitive to the fact that the home environments of many of these children do not facilitate homework or revision of school work. If these ‘lapses’ by the child are punished or the school does not help such children cope with studies, the child is likely to feel discouraged and drop out of formal schooling. The curriculum and textbooks also need to be intrinsically connected with the child’s life outside the school, and need to reinforce the child’s pride in her language, society and way of life, at the same time affording opportunities for learning about the wider world. Thus, ensuring access to schooling is a wider challenge and is not confined merely to opening schools in or near the habitations where children reside.
3. Universal access requires schools of equitable quality. It is important to ensure that the accident of birth in a particular religion, class, caste or gender does not define one’s life chances for all times to come. Elementary schooling has a big role to play in ensuring comparable opportunities to all children. However, all schools are not the same in terms of their physical infrastructure or in the quality of teaching. There are differences between rural and urban schools; public and private schools and even within public and private schools. Clearly, all children do not have the same learning opportunities. In fact, quality of schools is poorer for children, especially girls from SC and ST categories and minority communities. The State has to ensure that all children have access to quality schooling and this will mean investing more in upgrading the quality of schools for such children in particular. Specific provisions will have to be

made in teacher training, both pre service and in service, for enabling teachers to promote classroom practices that are inclusive, so that social access can be ensured.

II. Operationalising ‘access’

Existing SSA provisions for access

4. SSA provides for opening of new primary and upper primary schools as per State norms, to ensure that all children have access to primary school within one kilometer of their habitation and to an upper primary school, within three kilometers of the habitation.
5. Centres under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) are intended to provide access to formal schooling, through a regular curriculum and textbooks, to children in habitations that do not qualify for a regular school due to existing state norms for opening schools. Often, EGS centres are sanctioned in remote habitations with few children, with the expectation that the State will alter its norms for opening schools and upgrade these EGS centres to regular schools within 2 years.
6. Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) centres are intended for children in difficult circumstances, with no regular schooling experience or whose schooling has been disrupted (street children, children from migrant families, children with special needs, children who have never enrolled or dropped out of schooling). AIE centres prepare them to attend formal schools within a short period of 9 months to a year. These centres transact a specially tailored curriculum and pedagogic practices that seek to impart the required age/grade specific knowledge and skills, so that the child is ready to enrol in a regular school and continue her studies there.
7. Girls from SC/ST and minority communities and from families below poverty line, face greater challenges in continuing education after the primary stage. Residential schools for such girls are provided at the upper primary level under SSA. These schools are opened in educationally backward blocks, with low levels of female literacy.

III. Need for revision of SSA provisions in light of RTE.

8. Section 6 of the RTE Act, 2009 provides that the appropriate Government and the local authority shall establish within such area or limits of neighbourhood, as may be prescribed, a school, where it is not so established, within a period of three years from the commencement of the Act. Further, all States/UTs will need to formulate rules that specify the limits within which a child would be able to access an elementary school. A school within a walking distance of one kilometer from the neighbourhood of a primary level child and within three kilometers of the neighbourhood of an upper primary level child, as per current SSA norms, appears to be reasonable. However, it is necessary to accommodate the special needs of children living in very small hamlets (such as in desert areas or tribal areas that are remote) by providing free

transportation to school, residential facilities etc., in relaxation of the norms. Further, there are children belonging to special and vulnerable groups such as children without adult protection, without stable habitations etc., who would also need special provisions such as residential schools, to access schooling. There are children in internal strife/conflict situations in several parts of the country, where school access is hampered severely. In several states affected by left wing extremism, use of schools by security personnel for stay seems to be linked to the destruction of school buildings, and this practice needs to be discontinued.

9. Section 2(n) of the RTE Act defines a school as a “recognized school imparting elementary education”. In addition, the Schedule under Section 19 lays down the norms and standards for a school. This means that all children are entitled to elementary schooling in regular schools that meet the norms and standards specified in the Schedule under Section 19. The implication is that all EGS centres currently running under SSA, numbering about 26,000 in 2009-10, will need to be upgraded to regular primary schools within three years or closed down. No grants can be provided for EGS centres under SSA or any State schemes, after three years of the commencement of the Act. Since all EGS schools have to be upgraded to regular primary schools in a time bound manner, the 10 States where they continue to operate should be urged to effect this up gradation at the earliest. Similarly, AIE centres of various kinds (residential or non residential) that have hitherto been funded under SSA, will have to be recast to function as facilities for ‘special training’ as required under section 4 of the RTE Act, for children in regular elementary schools.
10. All States will also need to have an explicit policy for opening schools. At present eight States /UTs (Assam, Chandigarh UT, Daman & Diu, Delhi, Goa, Kerala, Manipur and West Bengal) do not have such a policy. Further, nine States (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Goa, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Orissa), where the terminal grade of upper primary school is grade VII, will need to integrate class VIII with elementary education. Class V will need to be similarly integrated with primary school, in those States which follow a four year primary education cycle. This is required in view of the RTE Act.
11. States would also have to revisit their existing policy regarding opening of schools, as these cannot be based on distance and/or population norms alone. This policy would specifically need to address the requirements of those not living in stable habitations, as generally understood, but living in otherwise different and difficult circumstances (remote locations with low population density; migrants etc).

IV. Mapping neighbourhoods and schools

12. States /UTs would need to arrive at a clear picture of current availability of schools within defined area or limits of neighbourhoods. This will require mapping of neighbourhoods/ habitations and linking them to specific schools. It is possible that a neighbourhood may be linked to more than one school. Similarly, a school may be linked to more than one neighbourhood. This

exercise can help identify existing gaps, where new schools would have to be opened.

13. However, school mapping would need to go beyond spatial planning and preparation of distance matrices for school location. Provision of schooling facilities at appropriate locations is an essential prerequisite to universal elementary education. But mere provision is insufficient to ensure that all children attend school and participate in the learning process. The school may be there, but children may not attend; they may drop out after a few months; or may be absent too many days and cannot cope with the learning load. School mapping exercises will have to incorporate social mapping and should be undertaken with community involvement, to ensure that all children who cannot access school for social, cultural and economic reasons, are enabled to do so. School and social mapping is a powerful means of mobilising the community to ensure that all children attend schools and complete elementary education. A school map will help determine the changes necessary in schools, and build a dynamic vision of the education services, including infrastructure, teachers, and equipment, required so that all children, irrespective of their caste, religion or gender, are provided education of reasonable quality.
14. School mapping would include the following steps: (i) environment building in the village, (ii) formation of a village education committee, (iii) training of members of the village committee, (iv) preparation of a rough map of the village, (v) conduct of a household survey, (vi) preparation of a final map indicating different households, the number of children in each household and their participation status in school, (vii) preparation of a village/ school education register, (viii) presentation of the map and analysis to the people, (ix) preparation of a proposal for improved education facilities in the village.

Chapter III – AGE APPROPRIATE ENROLMENT THROUGH SPECIAL TRAINING

I. Introduction

1. This chapter addresses issues emerging from provisions in the RTE Act that specifically refer to the enrolment of out-of school children into age-appropriate classes and the requirement to provide special trainings that will enable this to take place². This particular provision also has important implications pertaining to other sections of the Act, notably those related issues of quality, curriculum and classroom practices, teachers and teacher training, responsibilities of state government and local authorities and school management committees and the role of civil society. Implementing this provision will be challenging, in terms of scale, time frame and complexity of the task. However, it also provides an opportunity to consolidate and mainstream several years of innovative work that has been done by Government and NGO programmes.

II. Identification of Children for Special Training

2. One of the first steps that must be undertaken is an authentic identification of the out-of school children that must be enrolled. For this the state government, local authority and school management committee (SMC) along with teachers etc will have to undertake a community level school mapping exercise. This mapping exercise should be done in a participatory manner and should track each child that is presently out of school. This would include those who have never been enrolled, have dropped out of school or has his or her name on the school rolls but is not attending regularly. At the time of school mapping, the school records should be crosschecked with the data being provided by the family and community members. Building on this a planning exercise should be undertaken to get the identified children enrolled leading to the preparation of school development plans. An orientation input to local authority and SMC should be considered to enable them to effectively undertake these crucial processes. Field based suitable NGOs should be drawn in to assist this process.

²² In Chapter II, Section IV “Where a child above 6 years of age has not been admitted in any school or though admitted could not complete his or her Elementary Education, then, he or she shall be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age”

“Provided that where a child is directly admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age, then, he or she shall, in order to be at par with others, have a right to receive special training, in such manner and within such time limits as may be prescribed”,

“Provided further that a child so admitted to Elementary Education shall be entitled to free education till completion of Elementary Education even after fourteen years”

There are some other relevant provisions, in Sections 8 and 9 of the Act. Section 8 (e) provides that the appropriate Government/Local Authority shall –

“Provide special training facility specified in Section 4”.

Section 9 (g) lays down that every Local Authority shall –

“Provide special training facility specified in Section 4”

III. Designing special training

A. Understanding the context and needs

3. A majority of out-of-school children belong to disadvantaged communities – schedule caste, schedule tribes, Muslims, migrants, children with special needs, urban poor, working children, children in other difficult circumstances (e.g., those living in difficult terrain, displaced families, areas affected by civil strife, etc). Girls comprise a bulk of out-of-school children. The ways in which children from these communities, and girls within each of these groups, experience disadvantage are not homogenous. There are wide ranging differences in the situation of these groups across states, regions etc. These specificities have to be taken cognizance of when developing strategies, curriculum, etc.
4. Retention and completion of the elementary school cycle are also critical areas of concern. It is well recognized that once children are ‘mainstreamed’ they face a variety of ‘coping’ problems. Some of these are related to curricular issues, others are due to social factors, including various discriminatory practices prevalent within the school system. A child entering the school has to catch up and then keep pace. The pressure emanating from this situation could lead to generating ‘fears’ of different kinds that impede learning.
5. The procedure indicated in the Act is rather innovative and there are few examples of schools taking responsibility for organization of “bridge courses” for lateral entry of older children in age appropriate classes. Indeed, “bridge courses” are a part of SSA and some NGOs have a good record of running these courses. All the same, it would be necessary for local authority to organize special training through harnessing of resources and institutional capabilities.

B. Strategies for age-appropriate enrolment

6. To operationalise the provisions of age-appropriate enrolment the following steps and processes could be delineated:
 - (i) A formal enrolment process to ensure that the child’s name is entered in the school records.
 - (ii) Imparting of special training to enable the child to be at par with other children. One component of the special training will be to induct children into the age-specific class.
 - (iii) Actual admission of the child in age appropriate class and his /her participation in all class activities. A flexible and realistic view should be taken regarding age appropriateness and after special training the actual admission should be in the class in which he /she would be able to be at par with other children, even if that class is different from the one to which he /she was admitted in the first place.

- (iv) Provision should be made for special support to the child once inducted, so that the child can integrate with the class academically, socially and emotionally.
- (v) At the end of the duration of special training for a particular child, the suitability of placing the child in a class may be reviewed. For example, if a 10 year old child was admitted to class IV, and received 2 years of Special Training till age 12, an assessment may be made as to whether the child could cope better in class V or VI in the formal school, and the child appropriately placed.

C. Duration of special training

- 7. The duration of the special training will be between 3 months to 2 years (extendable to 3). Some flexibility in time frame should be considered as the situation may demand. Indeed, there may be several cases where a flexible approach would be appropriate. For example, if a child aged 7 is admitted in class II, the special training for that child may last 2 months (or even less if the quality of training is good and it is provided in a residential course).

D. Bridging programmes - building on lessons from existing experiences

- 8. The strategies adopted should build on the strengths and lessons from previous experiences of SSA and other government programmes (like Mahila Samakhya), and several NGO interventions. SSA, has run both residential and non-residential bridge courses. As mentioned in SSA review reports and consultations, the residential bridge courses have been found to be effective. Some SSA programmes have provided for a basket of flexible options, which has proven to be useful. Residential bridge courses have, generally speaking, proven to be effective as they have enabled the creation of intensive teaching-learning environments that have made accelerated learning possible. Residential facilities have also been effective for preventing dropout amongst girls (especially in upper primary classes) as well as for children in difficult circumstances (e.g. migrants). Tracking of children once they have been mainstreamed has been a weak area and would require special attention in the new scenario.

Other lessons from previous experiences

- 9. Some of the positive dimensions of successful initiatives are: relevant and contextualized content and pedagogy; focus of interventions not just on teaching of the 3Rs but on processes of building confidence, self-esteem, communication abilities, etc. This aspect of confidence building is particularly important to enable children from disadvantaged groups to integrate within the system. Besides, excellent outcomes have occurred in cases of integrated learning modules that transcend traditional subject boundaries and look at issues holistically, with gender and other social issues being integrated with the modules; inclusion of creative expression - art, music, theatre, etc.

10. As preparation for implementation of the RTE Act SSA should consider undertaking the following:
 - (i) A comprehensive review of existing bridge courses and learning enhancement programmes (government and NGO) leading to identification of effective practices and suggestions for institutionalising, benchmarking of levels for different bridge courses, suggestions for upscaling and integration of NGO interventions.
 - (ii) Setting up of a working group of persons and institutions with relevant experience to develop guidelines for a curriculum framework, evaluation mechanisms to enable transition, and exemplar material for bridge courses.

V. Delivering Special Training Programmes

11. Recognizing the scale and time-bound nature of the task, innovative and flexible delivery strategies and curriculum design will have to be designed to enable children to enter the class at an appropriate juncture based on a system of continuous evaluation.
12. The special training programmes should be provided within the school premises or through classes organized at a safe residential facility. In the latter case, coordination and reporting mechanisms between the residential facility and the school will need to be put in place. Running the course within the school premises has the advantage of introducing the children to the school environment and enabling the possibility of their participation in other school programmes.
13. NGOs have rich experience of running bridge courses. A much larger number of them can be asked to venture into this programme. Local Authorities should prepare a list of suitable NGOs and, where there is a choice, allocate geographical areas to them to take responsibility for running bridge courses of such duration as may be necessary. Smooth funding procedures and arrangements of coordination with schools and SMCs will have to be worked out. This will also necessitate building of genuine partnership between NGOs and Local Authorities and school managements.
14. For older girls an option (in the case of residential facilities) would be to consider extending KGBV scheme (where operational) to act as a hub for providing bridge courses for the two-year period.
15. Hostel facilities for some school within the cluster (esp. in high migration areas) could be considered for the RBCs.

VI. Support and learning enhancement programmes

16. Support/enhancement programmes will be additional programmes to enable children once inducted to integrate within a particular class. These are being envisaged as 'extra' inputs after induction (other than what the teacher will be

able to do within the classroom). These will be conducted within the school premises as an essential follow-up activity.

17. SSA has reportedly undertaken various school enrichment programmes. SSA's remedial teaching, coaching interventions should be reviewed and re-cast to synchronize with the new context.
18. Many NGOs have expertise in conducting a range of support/supplementary programmes with school children. Partnerships with appropriate NGOs, conducted in collaboration with the designated authorities and the school can be considered.

VII. Teachers and Teacher Training

19. This undoubtedly is a big challenge. Moreover, implementing this provision may result in unleashing of the creative potential of teachers, as plans will not only have to be made at the school and class level but in many cases different individual learning programmes will require to be planned, making the role of the teacher critical.
20. As the special training provision will be operational for a limited period and given the fact that this will coincide with massive teacher recruitment it could be considered that a special/designated group of teachers undertake the task of providing special training programmes. These teachers could be hired specifically for this task. Qualification for their recruitment could be lowered to graduation.
21. All teachers undertaking this task would be expected to undergo a special training to equip them to shoulder this responsibility. For this a teachers training programme would have to be developed. SSA should facilitate a consultative process for developing the framework for this training programme with the inclusion of persons and institutions that have had experience of delivering such programmes. A module dealing with age-appropriate enrolment, cross cutting with gender and other social issues needs to be developed and used in the in-service programmes.
22. The integration of out-of-school children in age-appropriate classes will significantly alter the nature of the classroom space. Teachers should be enabled as a regular part of their work to be inclusive and be able to deal with children with different abilities and learning at different pace. The teachers training programme itself should include this aspect, so that all teachers have a basic competence.

VIII. Resource Support

23. Responsibility has been entrusted to various stakeholders, including SMC, local authority etc. to implement and monitor this provision. Capacity building strategies being planned for these bodies should, therefore, include this aspect, especially to ensure its inclusion in the School Development Plans.

24. In general the role and capacities of CRCs and BRCs, needs improvement and any modifications should consider this aspect as well. Developing specialisation to deal with special trainings within CRCs, BRCs should also be considered (basic training for all staff and specialization for some).
25. Selected NGO/institutions with expertise could be identified to play a resource support role as well as to strengthen capacities of CRCs, BRCs.
26. Given the challenging and time-bound nature for implementing this provision of the Act, SSA should provide support towards.
 - (i) Developing curriculum framework and materials for bridge courses;
 - (ii) Developing training package for teachers and other capacity building requirements; and
 - (iii) Supporting state governments in designing and developing appropriate strategies.

Chapter IV – GENDER AND GIRLS’ EDUCATION

1. Context

1. The National Policy on Education and the POA (1986/92) brought the issue of gender and girls education centre stage. More, importantly it linked education of women and girls to their empowerment. NPE states that education should be a transformative force, build women’s self-confidence, improve their position in society and challenge inequalities. It states: *Education shall be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The national education system will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women (NPE 1986)*. This vision remains the overarching framework for programme and policy development.
2. The RTE in different sections makes reference to gender and girls education both explicitly and implicitly. Some of the relevant provisions are- no discrimination against children from ‘disadvantaged groups and `weaker sections’ on any grounds (including gender); inclusion of women in school monitoring committees; provision of good quality education that includes equity issues, curriculum development in conformity with constitutional stipulations, training, enrolment in age appropriated classes (which will largely apply to girls, especially from disadvantaged communities).
3. Bridging the gender and social gap is one of the four goals of SSA. The programme has undertaken several measures to improve girls’ access to schooling and retention and more recently on addressing issues of quality and equity. Some of the important measures have been--the formulation and implementation of two targeted schemes (NPEGEL and KGBV), improving the school infrastructure and providing support (e.g. free textbooks, uniforms etc.) to girls especially from disadvantaged communities, appointment of female teachers, training of teachers on gender issues and assigning gender focal points. Being one of the goals of SSA there has been regular monitoring and reporting on the progress being made on gender and girls education. However, despite a good deal of progress, addressing gender gaps continues to be an unfinished agenda. Some of the important areas that require attention are mentioned below.
4. This chapter addresses issues pertaining gender and girls education. It focuses on identifying some key issues and strategies that will enable the realization of RTE, especially with regard to what steps SSA can take.

II. Key Issues and Focus Areas

A Conceptual issues

5. In order to address gender and equity issues with regard to RTE, the system must develop a strong conceptual understanding on these issues. Some of these (also highlighted in NCF 2005) are:

6. Gender has become an accepted category in policy and programme formulation. However, for the large part it continues to be understood in limited ways. It is largely seen as a biological category (concerning only girls and women); as a stand-alone category (not related to other issues or other forms of discrimination); and in terms of provision of opportunities so that girls can 'catch up' with boys and 'close the gap'. Thus achieving gender parity has been an overarching concern of the education system. While this is of critical importance and has led to some impressive improvements in girls enrolment, retention and transition rates, it has also led to gender being understood primarily in quantitative terms. With regard to SSA, given that it is in an advanced phase of its operation, gender and social disadvantage must become integral to concerns of quality and equity. Gender as a crosscutting issue should be viewed as an integral and visible part of the quality agenda.
7. Girls are not a homogenous or singular category and gender does not operate in isolation but in conjunction with other social categories resulting in girls' having to experience multiple forms of disadvantage. The dimensions of location (rural-urban), caste, class, religion, ethnicity, disabilities etc. intersect with gender to create a complex reality. Curriculum, textbooks, pedagogic practices, need to capture the entire web of social and economic relations that determine an individual's location in the social reality and shapes her lived experiences. Developing such an understanding is necessary if improving classroom practices, curriculum, training and strategies for reaching the remaining out-of-school children is to be achieved. Data on gender should be further disaggregated by other axes of disadvantage must be presented, analysed and used for planning purposes.
8. While there have been improvements and innovations in the area of gender and girls education, many interventions like gender training remain largely sporadic and continue to be seen as 'add-ons'. With RTE coming into effect, the thrust should now be to mainstream good practices and processes within the education system. In other words, serious efforts have to be made to make gender a systemic issue.
9. Efforts pertaining to gender have focused mainly on females. As a result, several women have been empowered and a space has been made to raise gender concerns and develop a better understanding of the structural and social barriers to girls' education. However, if the long-term objective is to transform unequal gender relations and bring about systemic change, then it would be equally important to build on these gains and include boys and men more significantly in this process. Thus the strategy to addressing gender concerns should be two-pronged – a specific targeted approach of reaching and empowering women and girls should continue; strategies should be evolved to make to men stakeholders in the process.

B Access & Retention

10. While there have been significant improvements in the enrolment and retention figures of girls, girls especially from disadvantaged communities continue to form the bulk the out-of school children. Retention should be

considered an equity issue, as SC, ST, Muslim girls, are the most vulnerable and likely to dropout. It goes without saying that parents of children from such communities do not have `deep pockets' and any adversity could compel girls from such communities to leave the system that they had difficulty entering in the first place. The overt and tacit forms of discrimination that are embedded in the school environment (classrooms and beyond) make the schooling a difficult experience.

11. With regard to access and retention the focus should be on older girls, where the need is the greatest. Support measures that address economic, academic and social dimensions that lead to dropout would need to be planned as a cohesive intervention. At present the approach is fragmented. Measures could include transport, escorts, counseling, helping them negotiate domestic work burdens, community support mechanisms, and academic support depending on the nature of the problem. Moreover, as adolescence is a crucial and complex stage of life where young people discover issues related to sexuality and develop a sense of self, innovative measures to bolster girls' self-esteem and confidence (in addition to imparting the regular curricula content) must be included. While some activities are conducted as part of the NPEGEL Scheme (where operational) some thought can be given reformulating some of the existing provisions of the innovations grant within SSA so that it can be used more effectively and cohesively to support such efforts across the programme (where NPEGEL is not operational). Attention also needs to be paid to addressing the particular needs of girls from other disadvantaged groups or living in difficult circumstances (street children, migrant children, girls in conflict situations). The localized context must be analysed and strategies developed for them. Girls in such situations are particularly vulnerable and face several security concerns.
12. The mapping exercise envisaged (a task that has been assigned to the local authorities in the RTE) would be critical to accurately identify out-of school children. As large proportion of such children are likely to be girls belonging to disadvantaged communities, this will require that the persons undertaking the task be adequately sensitized. The exercise should also be used to pinpoint the realities and challenges faced by girls and their families and reasons for not attending school. Actually bringing such girls into the school system will require community support and monitoring. The support of NGOs and women's groups should be elicited.

C Quality and equity

13. Issues of quality and equity are inextricably linked. Within SSA quality concerns have only recently been highlighted and the approach to quality improvements have so far mostly been piecemeal. In the context of implementing RTE a holistic approach would have to be undertaken whereby the curriculum, textbooks, teaching-learning materials, the use of space in the classroom, infrastructure, assessment and teacher trainings are looked at holistically and mutually reinforce each other. Each of these the issues would need to be informed by a gender perspective.

14. In order to implement the gender and equity dimensions of RTE the following issues would require early attention.

15. *Training and academic support*

(i) Since the clear aim under the RTE ACt is to have a gender sensitive, non-discriminatory classroom that is free of corporal punishment and mental harassment there is a need to bring about substantial improvements in quality, design and curriculum of teacher training. Gender and social inclusion concerns as an integral part of pre-service, in-service and induction trainings by all providers should form a core aspect of the curriculum of DIETS and other institutions of teacher education. Gender should also be integral to the subject-specific content. This way it would be an issue for all teachers to take this aspect seriously. In-service training programmes are in place in all States, but their quality remains a matter of concern. For this a review of the modules developed by the states should be undertaken. There should be a move away from conducting short-term gender orientation programmes. Mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of the trainings in improvement of classroom processes and improvements in learning in various subjects, as also in the changes in the behaviour of the teacher in the classroom should be put in place.

(ii) In order actually to take what one has learnt during a training into the classroom requires on going support and monitoring. Block Resource Centres (BRC) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRC) are playing this role in SSA. However, the quality of support provided by these institutions remains weak. In the context of gender and social equity the suggestions for the kind of capacity building mentioned above would apply for BRCs and CRCs as well. The support of experienced organisations can be sought.

(iii) The SSA provision of having 50% female teachers has been effective in bringing large numbers of women into the education system. The focus of gender interventions is predominantly on the child. The needs and issues confronted by female teachers are not given due recognition. Supporting female teachers to overcome security concerns or dealing with other forms of male bias, including harassment should be considered. Forming forums or support groups of female teachers could be considered. In this regard female teachers have proved an effective instrumentality.

16. *Curriculum and classroom practices*

(i) NCF 2005 provides a framework for revising the syllabi, text books, teacher training and assessment, especially in relation to classroom experience of Children with Special Needs, those belonging to SC, ST and minorities, and girls in all social categories. Efforts should be made by all states to undertake reform processes based on the NCF framework.

- (ii) While it is important to analyse the content and gender ideologies informing textbooks, it is equally important to see how these gender ideologies operate at the level of everyday classroom practices (referred to as the 'hidden curriculum'). Some crucial aspects of the 'hidden curriculum' in schools would be: Classroom arrangements (who sits where), differential task assignment (reinforcing that girls undertake the 'reproductive' or domestic tasks (sweeping cleaning); extra-curricular activities and types of play etc., subject choice (often girls are actively discouraged to take science subjects and the default option is home science), language used by teachers and peers in the school environment etc. Again many of these aspects would intersect with other social categories like caste. It is therefore important to make explicit different aspects of the hidden curriculum and then undertake sensitization measures to work on these issues. Sensitisation may not be enough and classroom practices would need to be monitored and for this protocols and grievance redressal mechanisms established at the school and other levels. Bringing about change in these realms is extremely difficult as they are based on deeply entrenched beliefs and attitudes and therefore need to be worked on a sustained basis.
- (iii) With regard to special training to support age appropriate enrolment, appropriate curriculum would have to be developed. As a majority of the children that would be availing this would be girls, especially from marginalized communities, the pedagogy used should be gender sensitive and flexible. The mainstreamed girls would require continued support to keep pace with other children and to hold their own in the face of subtle discrimination.. Within SSA, the provision of Learning Enhancement Programmes should be transformed into the special training provision and eventually become part of the regular teaching process of a multigrade classroom. At present such programmes mostly address literacy, numeracy and science improvement. Besides the academic components enough emphasis should be placed on empowering girls entering the system especially at an older age. Thus the kind of interventions mentioned in the retention section above should become an integral part of any learning enhancement/special training programme.
- (iv) Non-government and other organisations and individuals with relevant experience should be facilitated to play the role of resource organisations for mainstreaming gender issues and for developing appropriate curricula, teaching learning materials, gender informed pedagogies and teacher training for NPEGEL and KGBV and training of BRC, CRC etc, In order to put into practice the integrated quality improvement framework, where gender and equity form an integral part strong resource support would be needed by the states.

D Monitoring of gender issues

17. Issues of gender and social exclusion require careful monitoring. Monitoring and accountability mechanisms will have to be evolved at different levels. Some of the steps that can be taken are:
18. In order to ensure gender representation in SMCs the Act stipulates that 50% of the parents in these communities will be women. However, for these women to function effectively and for them to be able to address and monitor gender issues and to include them in school development plans, the capacity building inputs being provided to them should include a strong element of gender sensitisation. Raising issues of discrimination in a community context where social and gender hierarchies operate at many levels is a difficult task and persons entrusted to do so will have to be empowered and supported in this process. Similar training programmes can be thought of for PRIs. The support of NGOs and programmes like Mahila Samakhya that have demonstrated how this can be done should be actively sought.
19. Social audits should also report on the practices inside the school and classrooms regarding and gender based discrimination should become an integral part of social audit processes. In this regard the functioning of private schools should not be left out.

III. Special Schemes for Girls – Suggestions for Improvement

20. Within the ambit of SSA two special schemes –KGBV and NPEGEL have been effective in building an environment for girls’ education. The targeted approach of these programmes has been particularly useful in reaching out to girls from marginalized communities. Below are some suggestion for further improving these schemes so that they contribute significantly to meeting the needs and challenges of RTE.

A KGBV

21. The importance of the KGBV Scheme in addressing the educational needs of girls from marginalized communities has been highlighted in various reviews. Given the importance of the scheme the following could be considered:
 - (i) Norms and guidelines of KGBV – financial, physical and other members, including design, be revisited and revised appropriately.
 - (ii) KGBVs run by MS and NGOs are particularly successful as they augment resources to bring in empowerment-oriented content. The scheme should make adequate provisions to enable such interventions on a wider and sustained basis.
 - (iii) Strengthening of the role of the National Resource Group (NRG) and other experts and organizations with expertise in various aspects of girls education in providing academic and other support to KGBV

- (iv) There are reports that persons responsible for admission to KGBVs are so keen to have full enrolment that they seldom keep in view the categories of girls for whom these institutions have been established. Work needs to be done in this regard.
- (v) Development of an appropriate curriculum framework, teaching-learning material, teacher training programmes and monitoring and assessment mechanisms keeping in mind the contexts, and age of the learners and the residential nature of the scheme be taken up urgently by the appropriate authorities with the involvement of experienced organizations, especially with a strong gender orientation.

B NPEGEL

- 22. The NPEGEL by ensuring targeted resources over a number of years has contributed to the progress in the area of girls' education. Various reviews have identified some of the concerns related to the scheme as being uneven quality; fragmented approach where activities are picked up from the indicative list and do not form a cohesive strategy; overlap of activities with other components of the scheme such as the AIE component; local planning not strong enough; activities/strategies related to gender have remained an add - on and not mainstreamed; no review of quality of modules etc. being produced; insufficient impact of the gender training programmes on making classroom practices more gender sensitive; impact of the model cluster school is not certain; etc.
- 23. The scheme could be revised to address some of the problems mentioned above and to bring it in line with the provisions of the RTE. Some of the areas where modifications can be considered are as follows:
 - (i) Scope: In order to respond to new realities could include blocks with high migration.
 - (ii) Some modifications can be thought of in the planning process. In keeping with the RTE school development plans can be amalgamated at the cluster and then block. The existing school based structures, along with the local authorities could be involved in the planning process.
 - (iii) In order to lessen fragmentation, the plans should, along with the strategies and outcomes, also mention the rationale for taking up a particular activity and mention what problem it hopes to address. At present the programme has a little bit of everything and therefore the impact gets dissipated.
 - (iv) The programmes being planned could be more focused on developing the 'special training' component mentioned in the RTE as well as short camps aimed at empowering girls through building their self-confidence, self-esteem etc. Such programmes could focus on developing leadership skills of these girls. The content and pedagogy of such interventions could be developed with the support of organisations

with experience in this area. The focus of the empowerment related special programmes could aim at supporting older girls.

- (v) The component of training of the representatives from community structures and school level forums on gender and social equity issues could be strengthened.

III. Mahila Samakhya

24. Mahila Samakhya (MS) programme was started nearly 20 years ago and has been recognized as an effective strategy for creating circumstances for girls' education and empowerment. The critical thing in this programme is that its agenda and priorities are set by women's groups, called Mahila Sanghas, themselves. At the time when this programme was started questions were raised whether it would in fact contribute to girls' education. Over the years Mahila Sanghas and their federations have themselves give a place of importance to girls' education. They play an active role in working towards removal of barriers to the participation of girls in education. They do this through a four-pronged strategy:

- (i) By running preparatory non-formal centres, such as Jagjagi Kendras in Bihar);
- (ii) By working towards change in popular perception about the status of girls in family as well as in the community – rather than mere housewives to active citizens and workers, no different from males. This in turn motivates parents to send their daughters to schools;
- (iii) By actively working for enrolment and retention of children in schools, especially never-enrolled and dropout girls. In some districts where Mahila Samakhya is being implemented, they have built widespread awareness resulting in a veritable movement for improvement of girls' education.
- (iv) By running of Mahila Shikshan Vihars where adolescent girls receive elementary education and go through processes for empowerment.

25. Simultaneously the Mahila Sanghas ensure that the education system is sensitive to the needs and interests of girls - through monitoring and ensuring accountability in village schools, addressing teacher absenteeism, MDM implementation and quality, etc. Mahila Samakhya has demonstrated the possibilities and practicable ways of creating and using gender-sensitive curriculum, classroom pedagogy, teacher training and life-skills. Sangha women are often members of village level committees, and play an important role in SSA implementation and monitoring.

26. This spirit of MS and the overall tenor of the RTE provide enormous scope for synergic outputs. Special mention in this regard should be made of the fact that occasionally one hears of MS being expected to subserve the goals of SSA. This would not be in accordance with the stipulation of 1986 Education

Policy. MS should continue to jealously adhere to its non-negotiable principles, including the stipulation which gives to them space for making their own decisions regarding programme priorities and implementation strategies. Secondly, Mahila Shikshan Vihars have demonstrated ability to run bridge courses and to develop necessary curricula and teaching-learning arrangements. They could make an important contribution in conducting programmes for children who get admitted to age appropriate classes but require preparatory courses to keep pace with other students. And thirdly, the Committee strongly feels that MHRD should take steps to extend implementation of MS to the states which are left out at present.

Chapter V: INCLUSION OF CHILDREN FROM MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

I. Exclusion in the Context of RTE Act

1. Government policy in the last decade, especially through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, has made inclusion an important part of its agenda. However, the strategies adopted have largely been limited to providing “incentives” to attract children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The many forms that exclusion takes and the different ways in which it manifests in different parts of the country have not been sufficiently addressed, making exclusion, perhaps, the most important problem in terms of access to education.
2. The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 has defined children belonging to disadvantaged group and children belonging to weaker sections as follows:

Disadvantaged Groups are defined as those that belong to “*the SC, ST, socially and educationally backward class or such other group having disadvantage owing to social, cultural, economical, geographical, linguistic, gender, or such other factor as may be specified by the appropriate Government by notification.*”

Weaker Sections are defined as those “*belonging to such parent or guardian whose annual income is lower than the minimum specified by the appropriate Government by notification.*”

3. Further, the Act charges the appropriate government and every local authority to “*ensure that the child belonging to weaker sections and the child belonging to disadvantaged group are not discriminated against and prevented from pursuing and completing elementary education on any grounds.*”
4. In stating thus the Act opens up the whole sphere of circumstances which come in the way of a child’s enrolment in school and his /her completion of the elementary stage. This necessitates an attempt at listing of categories of children who might be covered under section 2 (d) and (e) and spelling out of possible strategies to prevent explicit and implicit discrimination in pursuing and completing elementary education.
5. The success of the strategies adopted will depend crucially on an understanding that much of exclusion arises from deeply entrenched hierarchical structures that have historically determined roots. The transformative social and political change that is envisaged in the Act necessitates a multiplicity of efforts from all sections of society to ensure its successful implementation. While inclusion has been part of the rhetoric of all policies and programmes. However, the immediacy imposed by the Act, calls for a more radical approach to the issue of marginalization and discrimination than so far adopted.

6. In the first place, it calls for close collaboration between different government departments especially Ministries /Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, Tribal Affairs, Minority Affairs, Women and Child and Labour, to name a few, as they all have important roles to play with respect to different disadvantaged groups. Bringing about a synergy in their efforts will be an important aspect of the task ahead.
7. For the Education Department, it will be important to begin by developing a better understanding of the nature and context of the situations faced by children from each of the disadvantaged communities in negotiating the education system, as marginalization is experienced in varied ways by each of them. In particular the differences across locations will make it necessary to take a disaggregated and context-specific approach in dealing with issues of marginalization and discrimination.
8. Further, the issue of gender that cuts across the categories of disadvantaged groups as well as weaker sections will also require separate and renewed efforts. While several strategies are in place to bring girls into schools, tackling the heterogeneity of situations faced by girls will require new and innovative approaches to ensure the continued participation of girls in the education system (see chapter on Gender and Girls' Education).

II. Exclusion of Dalit Children

9. The following are some of the documented experiences of exclusion faced by Dalit children. For the successful implementation of the RTE, these will have to be systematically addressed.

10 Exclusion of Dalit children by teachers:

- (i) Segregated seating arrangements in the classroom, with Dalit children made to sit separately or outside the classroom.
- (ii) Undue harshness in reprimanding Dalit children. For instance, in scolding children for coming late to school, in resolving fights between children, condoning name-calling by upper caste children, etc.
- (iii) Not giving time and attention to Dalit children in the classroom, such as not checking their homework or class work, not answering their queries – even rebuking them for asking questions in class.
- (iv) Excluding Dalit children from public functions in the school. These include non-participation in the morning assembly or other public events such as on Republic Day or Independence Day.
- (v) Making derogatory remarks about Dalit children – their supposed lack of cleanliness and inability to keep up with academic work.

- (vi) Denying Dalit children the use of school facilities, including water source. Keeping water segregated even preventing Dalit children from using the school taps or containers used to store drinking water.
- (vii) Asking Dalit children to do menial tasks in school, including cleaning the school premises and even the toilets.

11. Exclusion of Dalit children by peer groups

- (i) Calling Dalit children by derogatory caste names.
- (ii) Not including Dalit children in games and play activities in the classroom or in break time when children go out to play; Dalit children often return to their own neighbourhoods to play with non-enrolled Dalit children.
- (iii) Not sitting with Dalit children in the classroom.

12. Exclusion of Dalit children by the system

- (i) Incentives schemes and scholarships meant for Dalit children not being properly administered.
- (ii) Lack of acknowledgement of Dalit role models, such as Ambedkar, in the curriculum.
- (iii) Lack of sensitization of teachers in teacher education and trainings.
- (iv) Insufficient recruitment of Dalit teachers.

13. Based on the above known practices of discrimination the following recommendations are made for Inclusion of Dalit Children:

- (i) Establishing norms of behaviour within the school for teachers and students.
- (ii) Timely detection of the forms of discrimination practiced in a particular context by either teachers or students. This is not an easy task as many forms of discrimination have become part of accepted behavior and go unnoticed and unchallenged by the majority. Finding ways of listening to children's voices would be crucial to this exercise.
- (iii) Setting up a system of reporting on discriminatory practices at the school level would be a place to start. Complaint boxes that are regularly dealt with at SMC meetings is a suggested intervention.
- (iv) Timely redressal of instances of discrimination at the level of the school or local authority. Delays in taking action can lead to discouragement on the part of the parents and teachers.

- (v) Establishing norms for classroom interactions such as seating patterns that ensure that children are not segregated on the basis of caste, community or gender. The Nalli-Kalli model of multilevel learning pioneered in Karnataka is worth revisiting and adopting as it allows children to sit in groups based on levels of learning. This not only breaks social barriers it also allows for a rotation and thus intermingling as children move in and out of the learning circles.
 - (vi) Extra curricular activities, such as sports, music and drama with sensitivity towards participation of Dalit children, could help in breaking caste stereotype.
 - (vii) Recognizing the agency of teachers. The teacher is a key figure in the school and can help to either perpetuate or obliterate discriminatory practices. But her role in this process has been largely neglected so far. Through proper training, setting norms of teacher behaviour, strict monitoring and supervision and taking exemplary action where norms of behaviour are flouted would help enhance school inclusivity.
 - (viii) Special effort must be made to fill the posts reserved for SC and their placement in areas with dalit concentration.
 - (ix) Encouraging formation of, and recognizing, separate associations of SC teachers and expecting them to address issue relating to their service condition as well as the treatment meted out to dalit children in schools.
14. As mentioned above, problems of exclusion take on highly local and context specific forms. The above is a general list of issues that have emerged form the studies conducted so far. There is, however, a dire need for more systematic and robust situation analysis in different areas in order to capture fully the extent and forms of exclusion.

III. Exclusion of Scheduled Tribe Children:

15. Children belonging to tribal families face some of the exclusionary practices mentioned above for Dalit children and, additionally difficulties mentioned below:
- (i) Derogatory references to their communities, names, and cultural practices.
 - (ii) Exclusion from classroom processes and school activities.
 - (iii) Lack of understanding of their diverse background. Primary focus is often on integrating into mainstream cultural and educational norms often resulting in de-valuing of tribal culture and heritage.
 - (iv) Children from such backgrounds tend to feel inferior and often drop out or those that persist do so at the cost of losing their own sense of identity and cultural background.

- (v) Stereo-typing of tribal culture in syllabi and textbooks.
 - (vi) Lack of recognition of tribal system of knowledge, role models etc.,
16. In addition, tribal children face some problems peculiar to their situation. Tribal populations tend to be concentrated in remote, hilly or forested areas with dispersed populations where even physical access to schools is difficult. If there are schools and teachers, the teachers are unlikely to share the students' social and cultural background or to speak the students' language, leading to a sense of alienation among the children.
 17. However, the biggest problem faced by tribal children is that of language. Analysis of the educational indicators shows that majority of tribal children who drop out of the primary school is due to the difference in the school and home language. Teaching materials and textbooks tend to be in a language the students do not understand; content of books and syllabi ignore the students' own knowledge and experience and focus only on the dominant language and culture. Not understanding the standard school language and therefore the courses content, the children are unable to cope with their course and end up repeating grades and eventually dropping out.
 18. While instruction in the mother tongue is widely recognized as beneficial to language competencies in the first language, achievement in other subject areas, and second language learning, there is no explicit obligation on the states on institute mother tongue education. The "three language formula" that has been the cornerstone of the language policy in India has not been uniformly implemented across the country. In some states such as Jharkhand, Orissa and Chhattisgarh, which are linguistically diverse, the problem is compounded by the multiplicity of linguistic backgrounds represented in a single classroom.
 19. Providing multilingual education is not a simple task. Education in the medium of a tribal language in initial years is challenged by a host of problems such as:
 - (i) the language may not have a script;
 - (ii) the language may not even be generally recognized as constituting a legitimate language;
 - (iii) there may be a shortage of educational materials in the language;
 - (iv) there may be a lack of appropriately trained teachers;
 - (v) there may be resistance to schooling in the mother tongue by students, parents and teachers.
 - (vi) If there are several mother tongues represented in one class, it compounds the problem even further

20. Nevertheless, consensus among informed circles is that mother tongue is the best medium of instruction and it is now amply demonstrated that inclusion of tribal children hinges crucially on the language issue. With the RTE adding a dimension or immediacy to their inclusion, it is time that this issue is taken on rather than ignored due to the complexities involved. For this support will be needed from all quarters interested in a pluralistic social order that will ensure enhanced participation of the tribals. For a start the Central Institute of Hindi and Indian languages, Mysore, could strengthen its efforts at preparation of teaching /learning material in tribal languages. Besides the Tribal Welfare and Education Departments, responsible for implementation, will need to communicate with each other and interact with NGO's and scholars who could support the processes. The states (such as Orissa) that have shown some initiative in this regard will also need to be supported.
21. The Tribal Development Departments have tried to address this problem by establishing residential or "Ashram" schools for tribal children, but there is a need not just for many more residential schools but also for improved quality in these schools. With the notification of the RTE, Ashram schools would also come under its purview and have to follow the prescribed norms and standards. Collaboration with the Education Department on residential schools for tribal dominated areas would perhaps be required to enable a strengthened and consolidated approach to this problem, including recruitment of teachers of similar social and cultural backgrounds and provision of curricula and textbooks that are not alienating for tribal children.
22. The NCF 2005 has made a serious attempt at meeting the learning needs of persons belonging to tribal communities. We recommend that those recommendations be adopted by all state governments and UT Administrations.
23. Some specific recommendations for inclusion of tribal children are made below:
 - (i) Teaching in the local language by recruiting teachers who can speak tribal languages.
 - (ii) Development of educational material in local languages using resources available within the community.
 - (iii) Establishing regional/ state resource centres in tribal dominated states for providing training, academic and other technical support for development of pedagogic tools and education materials catering to multi-lingual situations.
 - (iv) Training of teachers in multilingual education.
 - (v) Sensitization of teachers to tribal cultures and practices.
 - (vi) Incorporation of local knowledge in the curriculum and textbooks.

- (vii) Creating spaces for cultural mingling within schools so as to recognize tribal cultures and practices and obliterate feelings of inferiority and alienation among tribal children.
- (viii) Involvement of community members in school activities to reduce social distance between the school and the community.

IV. Children of most under-privileged groups

24. In our country there are hierarchies among the poor. There are groups which are not only the most deprived and exploited, but also quite neglected. These persons deserve a special priority. Appropriate governments and local authorities will have to make careful survey to identify persons of this category. At this stage, the following seem to us to deserve special treatment.

- (i) Child labour, particularly bonded child labour and domestic workers;
- (ii) Children in ecologically deprived area where they are required to fetch fuel, water, fodder and do other household chores;
- (iii) Children in very poor slum communities and uprooted urban habitations;
- (iv) Children of families of scavengers;
- (v) Children of itinerant or seasonal labour who have mobile and transient lifestyle like construction workers, road workers and workers on large construction sites;
- (vi) Children of landless agriculture labour;
- (vii) Nomadic communities and pastoralists;
- (viii) Forests dwellers and tribals in remote areas and children residing in remote desert hamlets.

25. Children of these families and others who are in circumstances of extreme deprivation will need exceptional arrangements. The most appropriate learning situation for them would, no doubt, be well appointed hostels and residential schools. The committee was of the view that absolutely highest priority should be given to the children of these most needy families.

V. Children in areas affected by civil strife

26. This is a new area that is leading to marginalization of large numbers of children from educational processes. It is important to not only recognize this as an alarmingly significant problem but also to start taking concrete steps to ameliorate the situation as early as possible. Valuable time has already been lost by several lakhs of children, with a whole generation lost to conflict in many areas.

27. Conflagration is becoming so widespread, and so little attention is being given to children and their education that the situation calls for urgent head. At this stage all we can recommend are some measures to insulate children from the impact of such conflicts
- (i) Laws must be enacted that prohibit the use of schools and other educational facilities for housing police or military or para-military forces.
 - (ii) Making schools safe zones by providing adequate security to enable children to come to school and continue with their education undisturbed.
 - (iii) If security cannot be provided then making alternate arrangements for all affected children to enable them to continue their education without a break. These arrangements could include providing residential schooling facilities to children from the affected areas.
 - (iv) Organizing special negotiation with leaders in these areas to ensure that schools are allowed to function uninterrupted.

VI. Exclusion of Muslim Children

28. There is enough evidence that educationally Muslims are an extremely disadvantaged community. There is need to draw them into educational and social mainstream through necessary measures, including that concerned State Governments be advised to notify them as disadvantaged groups under section 2(d) of the Act.
29. Not only is there no comprehensive policy for the education of Muslim children, there are no specific programmes for increasing participation from this large and important minority group. Barring a few scholarships offered by the Minority Affairs Department, no special incentives exist for children from these backgrounds, unlike the other marginalized groups such as the SC and the ST. In fact very little documented evidence about the specific constraints and barriers faced by children from Muslim communities is available as very little research has been done in this area. From the scattered bits of evidence that does exist it can be said that in addition to the general issues of discrimination and harassment faced by children from other disadvantaged and excluded groups, children from Muslim families face some of the following constraints as well:
- (i) Discouragement in school enrolment
 - (ii) Hostile, threatening school and classroom environments
 - (iii) Cultural and religious domination of the majority community

- (iv) Early withdrawal of male children to enable them to apprentice with artisans, mechanics etc. after because parents believe that other employment may not come their way
- (v) Early withdrawal of female children to enable them to find grooms more educated than themselves
- (vi) Demand for Urdu, at least as a second language
- (vii) Lack of Muslim teachers

A. Madarssa Education

30. While discussing education of Muslim children the question of madrassas is usually at the forefront. Two points are worth keeping in mind while exploring strategies for their inclusion:

- (i) Demand for madarssa education is not as high as often assumed and in most cases is not seen as a substitute for mainstream education by Muslim families. As sense of loosing their identity and feeling threatened by the dominant community has led to a demand for some religious education, but this must not be mistaken for a shift in demand away from a secular education. Incorporating elements of religious history in the mainstream curriculum, offering Urdu as a language, and other such measures would go a long way in keeping Muslim children in mainstream schools.
- (ii) Under RTE, madrassas have not been excluded from the purview of the Act implying that all norms and standards mentioned in the Act would apply to madrassas as well. The only exception relates to the norms governing SMCs, where these institutions have been allowed to follow their own norms. There is an important opportunity here to include a secular curriculum into the ambit of madarssa education over above their religious syllabi, which may continue to be taught.

31. Both these measures could contribute to building confidence in the minority community and lead to the reduction of marginalization of Muslim children from the education process.

32. Recommendations for Inclusion of Muslim Children

- (i) Systematic research on specific constraints faced by Muslim children in different areas. Muslims are a heterogeneous community and exhibit wide differences in social and cultural practices in different states. A more thorough understanding of these issues will help formulate better interventions for inclusion of Muslim children into the education process.
- (ii) Option of teaching Urdu as a second language.

- (iii) Recruitment of more Muslim teachers, especially in Muslim dominated areas.
 - (iv) Sensitization of all teachers on issues of cultural and religious diversity especially in relation to Muslims.
 - (v) Incorporation of practices, such as
 - a. Celebration of Muslim festivals in schools;
 - b. Creation of spaces for religious expression including prayer areas;
 - c. Sensitive handling of Muslim children during Ramazan when they may be fasting;
 - d. Encouraging discussion of Muslim cultural and religious practices in the school or classroom with the help of community members.
33. A large part of exclusion results from social distance caused by lack of knowledge and understanding about minority communities. Finding spaces to break these information barriers would go a long way in reducing the hostilities and insecurities that exist on both sides.

VIII. Strategies for dealing with Reservation in Private Schools:

34. One of the strategies for dealing with marginalization of disadvantaged communities within the Act is to provide for 25% reservation in private and unaided schools. This provision has generated a lot of debate and discussion amongst educationists as well the public at large. While those in favour of private provision of education see this as a potential spoiler of quality within private schools, many proponents of the reservation see it as a sort of “prize” now available to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Within this discourse on universalization of quality education it is important to disabuse both these perspectives, and state the intent of this provision in terms of the true spirit of the Act.
35. As with several other provisions in the Act, such as special training for age appropriate education within the school premises, or children with special needs being included in mainstream schools, or maintenance of basic standards across all schools, the dominant thinking reflected in the Act is of inclusive quality education for all children in all schools, i.e. irrespective of the school a child attends. There is an explicit recognition of the fact that schools in general – be they owned and controlled by government or the private schools – need to be governed by basic norms of quality and the principles enshrined in the Constitution including those of equality, inclusiveness and diversity. Since, the cost implications of private school education prohibit children from certain backgrounds from accessing them, these schools tend to be “exclusive” and less diverse in the representation of

children that study in them. The idea behind the 25% admission for children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections in private schools is to seek to redress this imbalance. It is also to ensure that the guarantee of free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school does not completely exclude those children in the neighbourhood who cannot “afford” to go to the neighbourhood school. Hence the principle of universality that is inclusive, to the extent possible, of all the diversity that exists among children is the real purpose of the reservation. And it is with keeping this principle in mind that every effort must be made to ensure that its provision is adhered to in letter and spirit.

36. In other words, ensuring that the 25% reservation represents a diversity of backgrounds from amongst the disadvantaged groups will be important. For instance, it should not result in only boys or only children from a particular caste group from being admitted under this provision. Exclusion of Muslim minority children in particular will have to be carefully monitored. Ideally the reservation should follow a pattern of proportionate representation from the disadvantaged and weaker sections of the neighbourhood in question. It should reflect a healthy gender balance.
37. While the Act mandates a random selection of children from those that apply to these schools, it will be important to ensure that children from diverse backgrounds, and gender, apply so that a random selection can be representative of the population. If not, efforts to follow a method of stratified random selection may need to be considered in the interest of maintaining diversity.
38. In either case, ensuring that this provision is implemented will require careful and regular monitoring. Stringent Transparency Rules that make it mandatory for the private schools to disclose their lists of children taken in this category can be a start in this direction.
39. Regular social audits that report on the practices inside the school and classrooms regarding the included children will also help in monitoring the continued and active participation of these children in the private schools. All interventions regarding discrimination mentioned above will have to apply to private school as well.

Chapter VI – CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

I. Approach and Coverage

1. The SSA scheme covers *all* children in 6-14 years age group. The SSA Framework of Implementation explicitly states: “*SSA will ensure that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided education in an appropriate environment. SSA will adopt ‘zero rejection’ policy so that no child is left out of the education system*”.
2. The RTE Act 2009, in section 3(1) entitles *all* children in the 6-14 years age group to a right to free and compulsory elementary education in a neighborhood school.

II. Coverage of Children with disabilities within the RTE Act.

3. Children with disabilities have not been explicitly included as a category in section 2(d) of the RTE Act, which otherwise lists children belonging to disadvantaged groups. However, the same section also allows the appropriate government to specify, by notification, any other group of children who are disadvantaged as a result of any other factor. Thus, appropriate governments can issue a notification in section 2(d) of the RTE Act to include children with disabilities, within the category of ‘children belonging to disadvantaged groups’.
4. Section 3(2) of the Act qualifies that only a child suffering from disability as defined under clause (i) of section (2) of the PWD Act, 1996 shall have a right to pursue free and compulsory elementary education in accordance with provisions of chapter V of the said Act. The PWD Act, 1996 excludes children suffering from certain disabilities such as cerebral palsy, autism and learning disabilities like dyslexia, disprasia etc. Further, chapter V of the PWD Act 1996 permits a multi option model for education of CWSN, which includes ‘special schools’ etc.
5. Section 3(2) of the RTE Act is not in sync with section 3(1), in as much as it excludes children with certain disabilities from the ambit of the Act. This internal contradiction within the RTE Act needs to be addressed.

III. Identification of Children with Disabilities

6. As per the most recently published (DISE) data, the proportion of children with disabilities enrolled to total enrolment is only 0.84%. The total number of identified children with disabilities to total population of all children in the age group 6-14 at 1.48% is also very low (as per 2001 Census). SSA has provision for collection of data regarding children with disabilities through household surveys, assessment camps etc. There is an urgent need to streamline the process of identification through the above as well as DISE. This must be accompanied by training of the surveyors, enumerators and other government functionaries at different levels. A study by MHRD has revealed that 40% of

all out-of-school children are children with special needs. Therefore early identification must be given due importance.

IV. Educational Placement

7. An inclusive space for education of *all* children should be made available and appropriate strategies need to be followed. The SSA Framework provides that *'as far as possible every child with special needs should be placed in regular schools, with needed support services'*. Under SSA, a wide range of options for educational services have been given, including for example, open school, non-formal and alternative schooling, distance education, special schools and home-based education. This range of options and strategies should be reviewed in the context of the RTE Act, which entitles all children to elementary education in regular schools that meet the norms and standards specified in the Schedule to the Act.
8. Children with disabilities need to be facilitated to acquire certain skills that will enable them to access elementary education as envisaged in the Act. For instance, they may need mobility training, training in Braille, sign language, tactile sign-language, postural training, etc. Thus, 'school preparedness' of children with disabilities must be ensured by providing 'special training' as envisaged under section 4 of the RTE Act. This training may be residential, non residential or even home based, as per their specific requirements.
9. The existing non formal and alternate schooling (including home based education) options for children with disabilities can be recast as 'special training'. This means that (a) all children with special needs who are not enrolled in schools or have dropped out, will first be enrolled in a neighbourhood school in an age appropriate grade, (b) they will be entitled to 'special training' through regular teachers or teachers specifically appointed for the purpose. In the case of CWSN, the state may appoint a person with degree/diploma in special education as a resource teacher, who will impart special training to children with special needs. The resource teacher may be posted at the block or cluster level and can operate in an itinerant mode, covering a group of schools where children with special needs are enrolled. The reason for appointing the resource teacher for a group of schools rather than in every school is because the number of children with special needs in any single school would be quite small, as children with special needs comprise only about 2% of the 6-14 years population, and because there may be several schools in which no children with special needs are enrolled. Moreover, in the near future qualified special needs teachers would not be available. The training can be residential (including home based, depending on the nature and degree of disability and kind of support required) or non residential. The duration of the training can be from three months to two years. After completion of special training, children with special needs will continue regular classes in the age appropriate grade in which they have been enrolled. They will continue to receive special attention even after completion of 'special training' for their successful academic and emotional integration in the class. 'Special schools' will have to become inclusive schools (neighbourhood schools). They will continue to function as resource centres

for special inputs to regular and resource teachers, for teaching of children with special needs. The nature of this resource support can cover aspects like teacher training, development of appropriate syllabi and textbooks for children with special needs, development of individualized education plans and assessment methods, appropriate TLMs etc. Special schools would simultaneously need to work towards becoming inclusive neighbourhood schools.

10. The strategies developed for other disadvantaged children, e.g. child labour, should be extended to children with disabilities with specific reference to age appropriate placement, where the child with intellectual disabilities may not be 'at par' with others. Similar norms relevant to transfer certificates of disadvantaged groups such as migrant children must apply to children with disabilities moving from special schools to general schools. These transfer certificates need to be signed by the DEO/ BEO on request of the principal of the special school / parent of the child with disability.

V. Support Services

11. A continuum of support services are required for enabling children with disabilities to access and be retained in schools. These include transportation from home to school, reform of physical infrastructure to ensure development of schools as inclusive spaces for education of all children. New locations of school sites must be chosen with care using an inclusive lens to create barrier-free environments and accessible buildings must incorporate not only ramps, but accessible classrooms, toilets, playgrounds, laboratories etc. Children with disabilities must also be provided access to appropriate therapy, such as, speech therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy by using inclusive approaches such as use of the play equipment for physical therapy in the PE Class or occupational therapy through art and craft class.

VI. Curriculum Adaptation

12. For inclusive teaching it is vital that adaptation of the curriculum is carried out to meet individual needs of children with disabilities. Differentiation in lesson design is key to meeting this challenge. Differentiation means systematically varying the learning content, and more importantly the teaching learning process to match the unique learning profile of individual students. Specifically, content requires multiple representations of materials to be used processes require multiple means for student engagement. Sign-language needs to be viewed as another 'language', rather than a Special Education issue.

VII. Teacher Training

13. Investment in teacher training is key to success of education of children with disabilities. Both pre-service and in-service training need to given special attention to building capacity of teachers for addressing the needs of children with disabilities. While NCTE deals with general education courses which have an optional paper on special education, Rehabilitation Council of India

(RCI) runs special education courses which focus on specific disabilities and do not equip the special educator in general education curriculum and pedagogy, etc. At present there are 40,000 registered professionals in the entire country, and the lack of specialized personnel can only be met if general education courses are reformed and it is ensured that all teachers are able to address diversity in the classroom. Thus all papers in the B.Ed curriculum must have an inclusive approach and should address diversity. For general in-service teachers, NCTE should design credit system based training to teach children with disabilities, so that general educators can become 'specialized teachers' over time. At the same time, all special educators should undergo 'general education' B.Ed training through multiple methods such as distance learning, so that they are all equipped to work with mainstream schools. NCTE/NCERT should design/develop interactive distance learning modules on Inclusive Education [for teachers in general schools] and on General Education [for Special Educators]. Training of personnel, especially block resource persons, cluster resource persons and teachers is critical for the success of the RTE Act. The NCTE Framework for Teacher Education must implement pre-service training from an inclusion perspective and addressing diverse needs should be part of every paper - philosophy of education, curriculum etc. Working groups constituted by NCTE must have members with experience of implementing inclusive education.

14. SCERT and DIET faculties also need to take on 'specialization modules' for inclusive education of children with special needs. NCTE implementation framework should be reviewed using an Inclusive Education perspective and the working groups need to develop master's level inclusive course. Review of SSA 20-day module of training of in-service teachers is another critical area that needs urgent attention and this training needs to include appropriate content and processes for teaching and in-class integration of children with disabilities.

VIII. Planning & Management

15. The National Advisory Council, and State Advisory Councils envisaged under the RTE Act must include disability experts to provide guidance, technical and academic support. The NCPCR as well as SCPCRs should also include a disability expert to deal with issues of children with disabilities.
16. It is vital to constitute resource groups at state and district levels to undertake effective planning and management to address educational needs of children with disabilities, which would include local NGOs. Serious consideration should be given to inter ministerial/ departmental convergence (e.g. MSJE, Road & Transport, Water and Sanitation etc).
17. In order to provide decentralized resource support, all cluster resource centers should be provided a trained special educator who will function as an Inclusive Education Resource Teacher. This Inclusive Education Resource Teacher will be equipped to train other teachers in the cluster through ongoing training.

18. School Management Committees (SMC) should be trained and sensitized on needs and strengths of children with disabilities and a training module for the same should be finalized. SMCs should ensure that school development plans include the full participation of children with disabilities. SMCs must have as a member, a parent or inclusion enabler.

IX. Parental Training and Community Mobilisation

19. Parents and community members need to be sensitized on how to support children with disabilities. Inclusive education resource teachers at cluster level may assist in mobilizing community volunteers for spreading awareness. These volunteers can be perceived as ‘inclusion enablers’ and would work as local agents for change. Development of IEC material to generate awareness must be an integral part of the RTE implementation.

Chapter VII – PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

I. Introduction

1. Pre-school or Early Childhood Education (ECE) has, in recent years, been receiving a great deal of attention in research and policy circles. In our country also, this deficiency has received attention of educational thinkers and planners. The reasons being a) a growing consensus among educationists that this stage of a child's education is crucial to future levels of learning; b) the neglect of pre-school education component in ICDS centres; and c) gradual decline of schemes of other than ICDS for pre-school child development.
2. While article 45 of the Constitution stipulates universal education to all children upto the age of 14 years, the division between Departments of Education and Women and Children has imposed a line between the age groups 0-6 years and 6-14 years. Unfortunately, the only programme of significance for pre-school education instituted by government is the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) that has for various reasons focused on the nutrition and health aspects of children to the neglect of pre-school education. For its part Ministry of Human Resource Development has made its position clear in relevant documents.
3. Government's resolve to give importance to pre-primary education can be traced back to the various reports and policy pronouncements after Independence. This was a major concern behind establishment of the Central Social Welfare Board (1958). The Education Commission (1964-66) underscored the importance of early child development as a strategy of child development per se, as well as an important input for enrolment and retention of children in primary schools. The committee on early child development headed by Ms. Mina Swaminathan (1972-73), while laying emphasis on pre-primary education called for an integrated approach to child development. The National Policy on Education and Programme of Action (1986-92) had a distinct section /chapter on Early Childhood Care & Education. The Policy stipulates a "high priority" to ECCE "both as a feeder and a strengthening factor for primary education". POA called for universalization of ICDS by the year 2000 and widening the scope of anganwadis to include crèches. It also laid emphasis on participation of parents and improved training of anganwadi workers.

II. Right to Education and the Pre-school Component

4. The Right to Education Act, 2009 confines the right to education to the age group 6-14 years, keeping pre-school education outside its ambit. This has understandably led to some consternation among educationists as they see pre-school education as a necessary building block to a child's transition to primary school. They argue that all evidence supports the need for a sound pre-school education programme for all children. A child that does not undergo a programme of early childhood learning, it is argued, particularly if he /she belongs to first-learner family, has difficulty in learning at the primary level and may end up being either a slow learner or even dropping out of the

system early on. The high rates of drop-out witnessed in the first two years are cited as evidence of this lack of “school readiness” among children. In other words, if a child is to be enabled to attend and successfully complete the entire cycle of elementary education, as promised by the Act, she must be able to access a pre-school education programme of reasonable quality.

5. Section 11 of the RTE Act makes a provision for being engaged with pre-school education. It states:

“With a view to prepare children above the age of three years for elementary education and to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years, the appropriate Government may make necessary arrangement for providing free pre-school education for such children”.

6. This allows for the necessary space within the ambit of the RTE Act to enable a greater degree of involvement in the pre-school segment of education. Indeed, universalization of pre-primary education should be treated as a pre-requisite for achieving the goals of the RTE Act.

III. Recommendations for pre-school education

7. The Supreme Court has ordered in Writ Petition no. 196 of 2001, People’s Union of Civil Liberties v/s. Union of India and Others, that the benefits of the scheme of ICDS (and some other benefits available to children) shall be legal entitlements. This interim order has been cited by the Working Group on Children Under Six constituted at the request of the Planning Commission. We find ourselves in agreement with the recommendations of this Working Group as published in Economic and Political Weekly, December 29, 2007 and recommend that they should also be treated as a part of the strategy for implementation of RTE Act.

8. Recommendations of the Working Group are of far-reaching importance for future of early child development. In one of the significant sections it states:

“The care of young children cannot be left to the family alone – it is also a social responsibility. Social intervention is required, both in the form of enabling parents to take better care of their children at home, and in the form of direct provision of health, nutrition, pre-school education PSE and related services. Interventions for children under six years or ECCD must broadly address at least three dimensions: child health, child development and education and child nutrition. These must necessarily be provided simultaneously in the same system of care”.

9. Some of the important recommendations of this Working Group, which need to be fully implemented during are as follows:

- (i) **Rights Approach:** This framework recognizes that childcare, health-care, nutrition, and PSE development are basic rights of all Indian children.

- (ii) Age-specific Interventions: Attention has to be paid to the varying requirements of different age group (specifically, zero to six months, six months to three years, and three to six years), and to the need for corresponding interventions.
 - (iii) Convergence: Effective strategies for children under six require active “convergence” between core programmes, especially ICDS, the NRHM and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
 - (iv) Decentralization: A decentralized approach is required, fostering participatory planning, community ownership, responsiveness to local circumstances, and the involvement of panchayati raj institutions.
 - (v) Community Action: Various forms of community action need to be promoted. These include monitoring and supporting the local anganwadi, selection and evaluation of anganwadi workers, participatory planning, use of untied grants, etc.
 - (vi) Capacity-Building: Major investment in capacity-building and training are required at all levels, all the more so as ECCD is poorly understood. Programmes of such scale and complexity as ICDS cannot succeed without extensive investments in improving management skills and practices.
 - (vii) Universalization with Quality: “Universalization with quality” should be the overarching goal for ICDS in the Eleventh Plan. This would include raising the number of anganwadis to a minimum of 14 lakh (with priority to disadvantaged groups), extending all ICDS services to all children under six and all eligible women, and improving the quality of services.
 - (viii) Pre-school Education: For children aged three to six years, pre-school education should be the primary focus of ICDS activities. Aside from adoption of the two-worker model, this requires appropriate training, infrastructure, equipment, supervision and support.
10. Government of India (Ministry of Women and Child Development) has issued an order on 30 December 2008 accepting some of the recommendations of the Working Group.
 11. The idea of universalization of ICDS has been accepted and the number of AWCs increased to 14 lakhs. Moreover, it has been laid-down that an anganwadi centre can be established for a minimum population of 400 for general areas and 300 for tribal, riverine, desert, hilly and other difficult areas.
 12. The Committee agrees that the principal strategy for providing pre-primary education should be the anganwadi centre. However, the Committee would like to recommend that the whole issue should be looked at in a

comprehensive and holistic manner as recommended by the Working Group for the 11th Five Year Plan.

13. In addition the Committee would like to recommend the following:
- (i) In addition to the anganwadis, the scheme of balwadis should be reinstated, particularly for the hilly and desert areas where it may not be possible to abide by the requirement of minimum population.
 - (ii) The appropriate government should take the responsibility of tracking all children in the 3-6 years age group and ensure that they are enlisted in the neighbourhood anganwadi or other pre-school facility.
 - (iii) For areas where there are no anganwadi or balwadi centres, every effort should be made to provide free pre-school education in the neighbourhood school itself.
 - (iv) The neighbourhood school should ensure that all children at the age of 6 years enrolled at either the Anganwadi Centre or in other pre-school centres are enrolled in class 1.
 - (v) The Block Resource Centre or other appropriate authority should provide training for all the “teachers” involved in providing pre-school education in the Anganwadi Centre or pre-school.
 - (vi) Children with disabilities should be identified in the pre-school /Anganwadi Centre and an appropriate education plan for such children made under the supervision of the school headmaster and the BRC /CRC.

Chapter VIII – CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION

I. Content and Process of Learning in RTE Act

1. RTE Act mentions eight factors which should be taken into consideration by the designated academic authority to lay down the curriculum and the evaluation procedure. These eight factors are: conformity with Constitutional values; all-round development of the child; building-up the child's knowledge, potentiality and talent; development of physical and mental abilities to the fullest extent; learning through activities, discovery and exploration in a child friendly and child-centred manner; the child's mother tongue serving 'as far as practicable' as the medium of instruction; making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety and helping the child to express views freely; and comprehensive and continuous evaluation of the child's understanding of knowledge and the ability to apply it. These factors can be deemed to provide a fairly comprehensive coverage of the indicators of a child-centred curricular policy for the elementary stage of education. Some of these factors have been a part of the various guidelines prepared under Central and State-level programmes launched over more than two decades since the formulation of the National Policy of Education, 1986.

II. Quality Concerns

2. Concern for improving the quality of education has been growing increasingly stronger. But the gap between expectation and actual performance in terms of children's learning, especially in the case of those disadvantaged by physical and social circumstances, continues to remain. It is not as if no efforts are being made to address the critical issue of quality. If anything, under SSA most states have rolled out a variety of interventions, from pilot programmes within the Learning Enhancement Programme (LEP) to teacher training, material development, specific subject-oriented programmes, etc. However, the outcomes are not commensurate with the effort or the investments involved, largely for the following reasons:
3. The education system follows a disjointed approach to curriculum formulation, viewing its core components of syllabus formulation, textbook development, teacher training, learner assessment and classroom management as discrete and isolated interventions, rather than inter-related and integral. For example, the groups/agencies designing LEP material are not likely to have interacted with groups/agencies preparing textbooks or teacher training designs or learner assessment. Different groups/agencies involved in designing LEP material or textbooks or training designs may not have developed a common shared understanding of how children learn, leading to gaps, lack of cohesion and an addition to the burden of learning.
4. Secondly, there is a tendency for the system, while formulating curriculum, to ignore the ground realities of children. For example, that the child may speak a different language at home, that the child may be a first generation school goer, or that girls perform domestic chores. Lack of understanding of these ground realities and unity of thought among different agencies responsible for

the core curricular components is often obvious in the plethora of material prepared by different agencies.

5. Thirdly, the education system has adopted a subject based approach to the organisation of curriculum, focusing on areas which readily lend themselves to being formulated as 'subjects'. Areas which do not lend themselves to being organised in textbooks, for example visual and performing arts or work education are relegated to 'extra' or 'co-curricular' activities. Consequently, subject areas tend to become water tight compartments with fragmented knowledge, rather than being inter-connected. Any 'new' concern or problem, such as environmental awareness or disaster management, is addressed piecemeal or as an add-on, without incorporating it cohesively in the curriculum.
6. Fourthly, there is an emphasis on reproduction of information that is rote learnt, rather than 'constructing knowledge' from experience, which is the natural process for a child's development and learning.
7. Fifthly, work on the core components of curriculum is not accompanied by improvement in the enabling components, including inter alia teacher recruitment and deployment systems, re-orientation of educational administrators, BRC and CRC faculty.

III. Systemic obstacles

A Designing age appropriate syllabi

8. Despite the consensus on conceptualization of a child centred curricular policy, execution has posed numerous difficulties. Some of these difficulties arise out of the inadequacy of professional capacity at different levels while others have their roots in systemic conditions. In the first category, we can include the capacity to design an age-appropriate syllabus on the basis of a curriculum framework and the capacity to prepare textbooks and other material which fulfill the requirements of the syllabus. Typically, syllabus designing is perceived as a mechanical exercise of jotting down the topics and sub-topics usually in a workshop in which people feel free to pile up ideas. How these topics are to be selected and formulated so that continuity can be maintained across grades and overlaps can be avoided across subjects have not received sufficient attention. Nor has there been sufficient input made by development psychologists in the drafting of the syllabus for different subject areas. The paucity of psychological inputs has had another major implication, namely that the syllabus has failed to include any indication of the experiences that children should have when a topic is being dealt with. The current NCERT syllabus for Classes I to VIII, prepared under NCF-2005, is in consonance with the formulations of the RTE Act, and marks a major step forward toward an experiential syllabus design. It was based on the following principles which need to be included in all State curricular interventions:

- (i) Resonance of the values enshrined in the Constitution of India

- (ii) Sensitivity to gender, caste and class parity, peace, health and needs of children with disabilities
- (iii) Infusion of environment related knowledge and work related attitude in all subjects and at all levels
- (iv) Linkages between school knowledge in different subjects and children's everyday experiences
- (v) Appropriateness of topics and themes for relevant stages of children's development and continuity from one level to the next
- (vi) Inter-disciplinary and thematic linkages between topics listed for different school subjects, which fall under discrete disciplinary areas
- (vii) Nurturing aesthetic sensibility and values by integrating the arts and India's heritage of crafts in every aspect of the curriculum

B Textbooks

9. The textbooks from class I-VIII prepared by NCERT under this syllabus NCF-2005 are a paradigm shift in addressing the concerns expressed by the NCF-2005 and mandated by the RTE Act. Many States have adopted the NCERT textbooks, but in the transition from SSA to full scale implementation of RTE, it is imperative that States prepare textbooks in tune with the NCF-2005 constructivist approach that reflect the socio-cultural and geographical diversity, prevalent in the State. National agencies like the NCERT would therefore have to play a major role in enhancing the capacity of State agencies to undertake this task. State Governments shall have to put into place institutional mechanisms whereby different agencies charged with the responsibility of curriculum development, syllabi, textbook writing, textbook production and teacher training work together in order to fulfill the mandatory requirements of the RTE Act in relation to content and process. It may also be desirable for the State Governments to review such agencies in order that they may be re-structured in the light of the tasks outlined by the RTE Act.

C Teacher education and support

10. Systemic conditions are affected by the quality of training with which teachers are inducted into the system and the support given to them on a sustained basis to maintain their motivation and academic capacity. The implementation of RTE Act greatly depends on significant improvements in pre-service training for the elementary stage. A major systemic obstacle to overcome in this context is the continuing practice in all States of breaking-up the elementary stage into primary and upper-primary for the purpose of teacher training and for deciding teacher's emoluments. For example, the B.El.Ed. programme of the University of Delhi, prepares teachers for the entire elementary stage. In many States the upper primary stage is regarded as a part of secondary education and those with B.Ed. are appointed for the upper primary and high school classes. If we examine salary, we find that the scale of a Trained

Graduate Teacher (TGT) is given only to teachers who teach classes above Class VI. Holistic development of the children requires a sensitive handling of children's transition from the primary to the upper primary stage. Major reform is required in the teacher training sector to prepare teachers capable of fulfilling the RTE vision in this context. This requires a complete revision of the pre-service and in-service training of teachers at the elementary stage, and moving towards creating an elementary school cadre.

D Concept of school

11. In addition to reforms in teacher training, improvement in the physical infrastructure of schools and standards of maintenance are necessary for overcoming the obstacles that the earlier attempts to make child-centred education possible in our system have faced. The concept of a school building as being more than an aggregate of rooms needs to be evolved. An architecturally sound concept must cover the diversity of terrains and climates, and it should include a space for play, gardening and storage of essential teaching aids. Building as a learning aid experimented with in SSA provides a basis on which infrastructure under RTE Act could be designed.

E Teaching aids

12. One of the great systemic weaknesses which now needs to be overcome consists of the difficulties experienced in the supply or procurement of teaching aids (necessary for hands-on experience) and play material and the accessible storage of such material. This applies to children's books and other library resources. The norms and standards of the RTE Act make the availability of teaching aids and libraries mandatory. State Governments shall have to properly plan for this.

IV. Empowering the Child

13. The curricular vision of RTE Act marks a major step in legal history by stating that children should be free of fear, trauma and anxiety. This clause of the Act prohibits the use of any pedagogic or disciplinary measures by the teachers or the head teacher which might be described as corporal punishment or negative experiences capable of causing mental anxiety or trauma. It will be a major challenge for teacher training to implement this aspect of the RTE Act, considering that cruelty to children is a very common aspect of classroom life at present. However, it is extremely important to remember at this point that even though the visible perpetration of cruelty takes place at the hands of the teacher, the cause of this cruelty often lies deeper in the systemic conditions under which teachers function. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the system has been indifferent to the compulsive force of circumstances under the teacher is expected to look after children and to teach them. Neither the administrators nor supervisory authorities seem to care about the classroom ecology which evolves around a teacher who is, in most cases, poorly motivated and even more poorly trained to look after a large number of children, many of whom belong to socio-cultural backgrounds about which the teacher has little knowledge and special sensitivity. Apart from the general

lack of awareness about the emotional needs of children, a major challenge lies in enabling teachers to overcome the prejudices and negative attitudes they share with the wider society towards girls in particular, and children of marginalized communities, in general. The problems arising out of such prejudices are further compounded when the curriculum enforces a syllabus which offers no room for individual variability in cognitive styles, aptitude and interests. A comprehensive policy and strategy, and teacher orientation mechanisms will need to be evolved if we wish to involve the teacher in taking the system forward towards a classroom environment in which fear of failure or punishment are not used as means of disciplining the child.

V. Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation

14. The term ‘Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation’ (CCE) essentially means that evaluation should be treated as an integral part of teaching rather than as an event which follows the completion of teaching. The prevailing examination system treats evaluation as a means of judging and passing a verdict. Such a practice is incompatible with the concept of child-centred education. Moreover, with the formulation of RTE, evaluation in any form, including examination, cannot be treated as a basis for stopping a child from progressing to the next Class. In the prevailing system, examination is used for eliminating children who are found to be weak on the basis of their poor marks. Once declared ‘fail’, they either repeat grade (i.e. stagnate) or leave the school altogether. Compelling a child to repeat a class by studying the same syllabus for one whole year is a form of wastage of resources on which many educational planners, including the late J.P. Naik, have elaborately commented. Sufficient evidence exists to show that a child who is asked to repeat the same Class does not necessarily develop any new capacities for negotiating the syllabus of that class and in most cases such children feel discouraged and defeated. Parents of such children also tend to view them as being fit for failure, thereby reinforcing the perception which the school has already used for declaring the child ‘fail’ on the basis of a three-hour test.

A Comprehensive evaluation

15. Modern educational theory has battled with such obsolete practices for a long-time. Its message is simple and clear: namely that children’s learning and development cannot be viewed in terms of a rigidly defined class-structure structure, nor it can be fitted into an annual cycle of evaluation and promotion. The RTE Act represents the legal approval of modern educational thinking when the Act prohibits stagnation and requires that a child can join the school at any point in the year. The vision underlying the RTE Act is further clarified by the prohibition imposed on Board examination at the end of the elementary stage or before it. This vision is completely consistent with NCF which also recommends that there should be no Board examination at any point in elementary education. Taking this larger picture into account we can infer that CCE has been included in RTE as a means of overcoming and going beyond the rigidities and harshness of the prevailing conventional examination and testing system in elementary classes. To be more precise ‘Continuous Evaluation’ means that the teacher’s work should be continuously guided by

the child's response and participation in classroom activities. In other words, evaluation should be seen as a process whereby the teacher learns about the child in order to be able to teach better, and 'Continuous Evaluation' becomes a strategy of assessment which is a part and parcel of teaching itself.

B Continuous evaluation

16. The term 'Comprehensive' implies the capacity to view the child from a holistic perspective, rather than merely in terms of a learner of different school subjects. A comprehensive evaluation strategy would imply that aspects such as the child's health, personality, behaviour and attitude are also perceived in the context of development and growth. Conventionally these aspects are either neglected in our education system or as we now see in private schools, dealt with by using an arbitrarily devised grading system which conveys the impression that the teacher has judged the child according to a norm. It is the duty of the teacher to make every possible effort, through interaction and engagement, to observe and understand the child's own nature. It is also important that the teacher does not judge the child's nature. Rather, what is required is that the teacher notices the inherent potential of the child as a learner in the context of his or her nature. Such a view will help the teacher to devise appropriate methods by which the best potential inherent in the child's abilities can be drawn out and put to use. 'Comprehensive Evaluation', therefore, does not mean that each and every aspect of the child's behaviour, personality and attitude should be either measured or graded. Instead, it is expected that the teacher will first understand in a dynamic manner the different aspects of a child's evolving nature and then formulate his or her comments based on observations. Training for careful observation and record-keeping will have to be organised and executed in a careful and academically sound manner to enable teachers to fulfil the expectation of the RTE Act. For guiding teachers to observe a child's behaviour and attitudes, a new initiative will have to be taken for developing relevant material which can serve as a basis for training programmes.
17. Teachers will have to be properly trained so as to put into place an effective CCE system and arrangements and support will have to be provided so that a Cumulative Pupil Record from class I – VIII is prepared and maintained. Appropriate formats, arrangements for maintaining child wise records and regular sharing of these records, particularly with the parents shall have to be put into place. The five-part 'Source Book of Assessment in the Primary Classes' prepared by the NCERT provides good Resource Material for the States to prepare for this very important mandate of the RTE Act.

Chapter IX – TEACHERS AND TEACHER TRAINING

A. Teachers

I. RTE provisions

1. Systemic conditions are greatly influenced by the quality of training with which teachers are inducted into the system, and the support given to them on a sustained basis to maintain their motivation and academic capacity. Although professional teacher education programmes have existed in the country for over a century, their basic features in terms of theoretical premises, content and substance, experiences offered and modalities of transaction have by and large remained unchanged.
2. The RTE Act attaches immense significance to the role of teachers in reforming elementary education. Section 23 highlights the need for making available professionally trained teachers for the school system; however it also recognises that some States may not have the capacity for professional training of teachers in the numbers required and provides that the Central Government may relax the requirement of professional training for a period not exceeding five years, within which period all teachers would need to acquire the prescribed qualifications. Section 24 specifies the academic duties of teachers, including *inter alia* timely completion of curriculum, providing additional support to children, where required, and maintaining contact with the parents of children. Section 26 lays down that the prescribed pupil teacher ratio shall be maintained for each school.
3. The enforcement of RTE Act will ensure that more and more children from diverse backgrounds enter the elementary education system. The teacher education challenge therefore will be to work towards a heterogeneous and democratic classroom, in which all children participate in the learning process as equal partners. Teacher education programmes will need to prepare teachers to address socio-cultural diversity and handle inclusive classrooms.

II. Teacher Availability

4. The status of teacher availability across states needs to be analyzed in the context of the RTE provisions. Data on teachers working in elementary education is available from two sources i.e. SES and DISE; both sources have limitations since they do not provide stage wise break-up of teachers in composite schools. SES provides data on teachers by institutions, but not by stages of education. DISE gives data on teachers working in institutions categorized as primary, primary with upper primary, upper primary with high school, etc, but DISE also reports teachers as *predominantly* teaching at primary and upper primary section, and may therefore report an over-estimation of teachers at either of the two stages. The Committee has relied on SES 2005-06 data, also used by NUEPA to estimate the number of additional teachers required to meet the RTE provisions, and estimates that in the year 2007-08 there were 50.02 lakh teachers in the country.

III. Teacher vacancies

5. It is estimated that presently there are 5.23 lakh teacher posts vacant in the States, with large inter-state variations. Uttar Pradesh has 1.65 lakh teacher positions vacant, followed by West Bengal with 52,764 vacancies, Bihar with 51,074, Orissa with 37,901, Chhattisgarh with 34,985 and Rajasthan with 29,356 posts vacant.
6. There are also large intra-state variations, especially between rural and urban schools, in the deployment of teachers. Considering that Section 25 of the RTE Act mandates every school to maintain PTR norms specified in the Schedule within six months of its commencement, every State Government will need to urgently initiate preparatory action to (i) review its existing recruitment and deployment policy and guidelines, to remove imbalances in teacher deployment, (ii) ascertain the exact number of posts to be estimated on the basis of school-wise requirement..

IV. Redeployment of teachers

7. In some states there is a burning problem of excess teachers in urban schools and serious shortages in rural areas, particularly in remote and difficult to reach villages. Efforts made to undertake redeployment are often thwarted due to interference from influential quarters or due to pressure of teachers' unions or due to lack of rationale and transparency in the exercise. It is well-known that enrolments have decreased in most urban areas due to parents' preference for private schools and also, to an extent, due to observance of small family norm. Actual requirement of additional teachers will go down if effective steps are taken towards rational redeployment. Central government should monitor the steps taken in this behalf by state governments and UT Administrations.

V. Elementary School Teachers

8. Recruitment of teachers who are untrained, or trained but whose pay and service conditions are substantially lower than the regular teachers has become a matter of great concern and discussion in the recent past. Low salary and insecurity of tenure are disincentives for talented persons to join the teaching profession. In Government schools in 2007-08, 14.10% of teachers were trained or untrained contractual teachers, their numbers being as high as 49.44% in Jharkhand, 36.89% in Uttar Pradesh, 34.44% in Jammu & Kashmir and 28.82% in Orissa.
9. Section 23(3) of the RTE Act provides that the salary and service conditions of teachers would be as prescribed by the appropriate Government. Given the anomalies that the system of contractual teachers creates in the teaching profession, and thereby on quality of teaching, States would be well advised to prescribe uniform salary and service conditions for teachers, as also take steps to create an environment for (a) attracting talented persons to the teaching

profession³; (b) improving recruitment policies; and (c) exploring possibilities for improving career advancement for teachers. The Committee feels that a consensus should be reached with state governments to ensure uniform service conditions for all teachers within a state. This would go a long way to enhance the dignity of teaching profession.

VI. Requirement of Additional Teachers

10. Estimates prepared by NUEPA and MHRD show that implementation of the RTE Act would require the appointment of 5.1 lakh additional teachers over and above the existing vacancies of 5.23 lakh. However, this estimate may undergo a change once the States undertake the redeployment process and calculate the exact requirement of additional teachers for each school.

VII. Teacher Qualifications

11. Section 23(1) of the RTE Act provides that the Central Government shall notify an academic authority which will lay down the minimum qualification for a person to be appointed as a teacher in elementary school. This provision has far reaching implications for teacher recruitment in the years to come. Presently, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has powers to lay down guidelines, by way of Regulations, for minimum qualifications of persons to be appointed as teachers in schools. According to the NCTE Regulations the minimum qualification for primary level (Classes I to V) is senior secondary and a two year Diploma in Education (D. Ed) or four year Bachelors in Elementary Education (B.El.Ed), while for upper primary level (classes VI to VIII), NCTE Regulations provide for one year Bachelors in Education (B.Ed), in addition to D.Ed. or B.El.Ed.
12. All State Governments have, however, not been strictly following the NCTE Regulations; in some states Cadre and Recruitment Rules for Teachers prescribe qualifications which are lower than the NCTE norms. For example, West Bengal prescribes Class X, rather than Class XII, as the entry qualification for a primary school teacher. Several States have also resorted to large scale appointment of persons without requisite professional qualification on contract basis; increase in their numbers in recent years has become a cause for serious concern. The appointment of teachers with lower entry and professional qualifications has directly impacted the quality of teaching in schools. It is estimated that currently there are 5.48 lakh untrained teachers at the primary level and 2.25 lakh untrained teachers at the upper primary level in the country.

³ With regard to attracting the best talent in the teaching profession, international comparisons show interesting results. In South Korea, the top 5% of the student cohort become teachers, with a starting salary of 141% of the per capita GDP. In respect of Finland and Singapore, these figures are top 10% and top 30% respectively with starting salary of 95% of per capita GDP. Apart from good starting compensation, other factors that contribute to attracting persons to the teaching profession are (i) opportunities to work collaboratively, rather than in isolation; (ii) physical infrastructure, such as accommodation, conducive classroom conditions; (iii) system of rewards and incentives for good performers; (iv) social status in the local community, (v) and involvement in key decision making processes.

13. The provision of section 23(1) would ensure a national level teacher qualification norm, which would be applicable to all elementary schools in the country. State Governments would be under obligation to recruit only those persons as teachers who possess the prescribed qualification, subject to the relaxation granted by the Central Government under section 23(2). Further, all aided and unaided schools would also have to adhere to the provisions of sections 23(1) and 23(2).

VIII. Review of teacher qualifications

14. The law requires the Central Government to authorize an academic authority to lay down the minimum qualification norms. Since NCTE is a statutory body of the Central Government with specialized function relating to teacher education and which already has powers to lay down such qualifications, the Central Government may notify NCTE as the academic authority for the purposes of section 23 (1).
15. However, teacher education qualifications should be prescribed only after rigorous review of the existing curriculum framework for teacher education, and the compatibility of the courses of study, syllabi and teaching learning processes prevalent in the different States in the country with the National Curriculum Framework 2005 formulated by the NCERT. The review would need to address the fact that primary school teachers are expected to teach language, mathematics and environmental studies, often in multi-grade, multi-level and multi-lingual situations. It would also need to factor in the need for transacting abstract concepts at upper primary stage, and to prepare subject teachers for such transaction of the curriculum. In particular, this review would need to ensure that education is seen, not merely as transmission of information reproduced from textbooks, but enables teachers to understand the nature of the child, adult-child relationship and its dynamics within the classroom.

IX. Teacher Shortages

16. One of the major problems confronting the States with large teacher vacancies is the inadequate number of teacher education institutions (and their annual intake capacity) vis-à-vis the annual demand for teachers. This is particularly true for States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and Chhattisgarh. The imbalance in respect of these States is evident from the following Table.

State	Annual intake for D. Ed.	Annual intake for B. Ed.	Annual intake for M. Ed.	Existing teacher vacancy
Bihar	1,850	5,610	75	51,074
Jharkhand	1,310	4,850	25	18,314
Orissa	3,240	1,348	153	37,901
Chhattisgarh	1,920	8,880	400	34,985

16. The problem is compounded by the inadequate availability of teacher educators, particularly in the States of Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa. In view of the specific provision of section 25 of the RTE Act, there is an urgent need to find credible solutions to teacher shortages in these States. In the medium to long run, State Governments will have to enhance the capacity to prepare teachers, both by increasing the annual intake in the present institutions and by increasing the number of teacher education institutions. For this, the Central Government should provide adequate resource support to the State Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education, which may require appropriate revision. For ensuring adequate supply of teacher educators, the Central Government/NCTE, in consultation with State Governments, could consider (a) inviting applicants from other States by advertising vacant posts in national dailies for wider publicity; (b) relaxing the retirement age; (c) hiring retired persons with requisite qualification; and (d) making the qualification more flexible to allow a wider set of persons to work as teacher educators. This could be considered as a special drive for a few years till adequate capacity is developed.
18. In the short run, however, the high deficit states will have no option but to recruit a large percentage from amongst persons not having professional qualification. However, to ensure quality it is suggested that (a) only persons with at least senior secondary academic qualifications are considered; (b) selection be made through a transparent examination system; (c) institutions be identified/developed which can enable such persons to acquire the minimum qualification through distance mode. Care must also be taken that the distance mode course is of high quality and there is periodic monitoring of the progress of the training programme, both in respect of the institution imparting the programme and of the teachers undergoing the training.

X. Teacher Recruitment

19. Recruitment policies need to be improved, especially in view of the requirement of maintaining the PTR in all schools within six months of the commencement of the RTE Act. State Governments could consider establishing a fast track Empowered Committee to undertake the process of recruitment of teachers under a transparent process. Further, taking forward the spirit of decentralized decision-making and important responsibilities assigned to local authorities under the RTE Act (section 9), it is important that local authorities be made the appointing authorities for school teachers. This would also improve accountability of teachers and facilitate closer supervision and monitoring of their performance.

XI. Teacher motivation and conduct

20. A system of education can be only as good as its teachers. Indeed, it is said that a nation's future depends on the motivation and professional conduct of teachers.
21. In the first place, it is necessary to eliminate teachers' grievances. The RTE Act already has provisions which have been welcomed by teachers – for

example, it stipulates reasonable school infrastructure would be provided, that there would be an acceptable proportion between teachers and pupils, a well-framed curriculum and teaching-learning materials would be available, responsibility for learner evaluation is squarely to be shouldered by them and apart from a few nationally important tasks teachers would not be burdened by duties other than their professional work. There remains the problem of non-transparent and arbitrary postings and transfers. The Committee strongly recommends that each state government /UT Administration enact legislation, at least prepare enforceable rules, in this regard. These laws /rules should ensure rational and transparent system of postings and transfers. It should also be kept in mind that women teachers have demanding domestic responsibilities and their special circumstances should be given due consideration. We also recommend that appropriate career advancement opportunities and scope for enhancement of academic and professional qualifications should be available to teachers.

22. The RTE Act also has high expectations from teachers. These include their full involvement with the functioning of SMC, and accountability towards the “local authority” regarding rights of children. The Act also bans all corporal punishment and provides for non-detention and age appropriate admission to all children, with scope for conduct of bridge courses to enable the child to follow the demands of curriculum. Being aware of the widespread criticism of our elementary education system, the Act invokes a moral response from the teaching profession – a response which would enable the country to turn the corner in this crucial area of human development. No more would the country tolerate aberrations like willful absence from duty or appointment of substitute teachers or other kinds of deleterious behaviour. While insisting that teachers should be able to safeguard their dignity and their rights as members of an esteemed profession, the Committee recommends that there should be no compromise with aberrant behaviour of teachers.

B. Teacher Preparation and Teacher Training

I. Pre-service Teacher Education

23. The availability of institutional capacity for teacher preparation varies across States and can be categorized according to the availability of such institutions vis-à-vis teacher demand and percentage of untrained teachers.

Category A: Sufficient teacher education capacity

24. States such as Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand can be grouped as Category A with low percentage of untrained teachers and sufficient capacity (to prepare teachers) vis-à-vis the demand for teachers. Table below gives the details in respect of these States.

State	Untrained teachers	% of untrained teachers	Annual D.Ed. Capacity	Annual B.Ed. capacity	Teacher requirement (Vacancies +RTE)
Andhra	37,379	10.79	13,502	66,521	31,030
Delhi	610	0.08	2,113	7,497	9,523
Gujarat	1,007	0.05	31,839	39,935	31,058
Haryana	2,173	2.69	19,020	58,410	32,715
Himachal	2,598	5.23	2,948	12,095	6,255
Karnataka	0	0	56,678	44,567	9,539
Kerala	1,147	0.07	10,417	24,950	0
MP	22,290	7.84	14,960	50,500	25,973
Maharashtra	1,526	0.03	72,373	60,620	19,462
Punjab	936	1.32	4,000	27,025	27,880
Rajasthan	19,283	7.44	23,470	88,550	29,356
Tamil Nadu	1,417	0.06	65,588	73,034	7,133
Uttarakhand	4,177	8.96	450	7,180	3,481

25. The strategy in respect of these States should be straightforward as they do not have to build additional capacity in the near future, either for preparing more trained teachers or for training the untrained teachers. These States need to concentrate on the following issues:
- (i) Expediting the process of filling up teacher vacancies, ensuring that only trained persons are recruited as teachers; instituting a transparent system of recruitment through appropriate modifications /changes in the existing recruitment Rules.
 - (ii) Filling up of vacant posts of teacher educators in DIETs, preferably by creating a separate cadre of teacher educators;
 - (iii) Making financial commitments for filling posts of teachers and teacher educators and ensuring that salaries given to the teachers with similar professional qualifications, responsibility and experience are treated at par in terms of pay and other service conditions.
 - (iv) Initiating a process of teacher education curriculum renewal through (i) redesigning the course content/curriculum of the teacher education course; (ii) preparing resource material for the student-teachers and teacher educators; (iii) improving the functioning of DIETs; (iv) undertaking capacity building of teacher educators, through faculty development programmes, exposure visits, developing institutional arrangements with Education Departments of Universities and with RIEs, etc.
 - (v) Monitoring the quality in self-financed teacher education institutions and to create an environment which compels these institutions to improve quality.

- (vi) Re-designing distance education courses, if necessary, for untrained teachers.

Category B: Grossly inadequate teacher education capacity

26. Category B would comprise States with high percentage of untrained teachers and low teacher preparation capacity vis-à-vis the teacher demand. Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal fall in this category, as evident from the following Table:

State	Untrained teachers	of untrained Teachers	Annual D.Ed Capacity	Annual B.Ed capacity	Teacher requirement (Vacancies +RTE)
Assam	1,18,169	55.13	295	260	4,992
Bihar	1,47,665	45.05	1,850	5,610	3,23,233
Chhattisgarh	40,463	31.32	1,920	8,880	34,985
J & K	29,294	43.34			9,462
Jharkhand	43,683	32.16	1,310	4,850	98,424
Orissa	17,921	9.02	3,240	1,348	37,901
UP	1,23,205	25.87	17,400	81,140	3,15,175
W. Bengal	86,028	32.15	2385	9892	1,49,470

27. These States need to be dealt with in a focused manner, requiring various types and levels of intervention, large financial outlays, strong support from the Central Government and distinct strategies for short, medium and long term.

Filling up teacher vacancies in the short term

28. In view of the low existing teacher education capacity and the necessity of filling up posts in a time bound manner, most of these States may have to fill up vacant posts, in the short term, (in the next 6 months) from amongst persons who may not have the prescribed *professional* qualification. However, while filling up the posts, State Governments need to ensure that (a) information regarding filling up of posts is given wider publicity, so that eligible persons from other States can apply and are considered; (b) preference is given to persons with prescribed professional qualification; (c) recruitment process is transparent; (d) minimum academic qualification of senior secondary (for primary) and Graduate (for subject teachers in upper primary) are laid down, so that they only have to acquire the professional qualification after recruitment. State Governments will need to amend recruitment rules and commit greater financial resources for the appointment of teachers.

Building additional capacity for preparing teachers

29. In the medium and long term, all these State Governments will have to build capacity, either directly or indirectly, for preparing more teachers. State Governments would need to adopt a multi-pronged strategy:

- (i) Operationalising DIETs which, though sanctioned, are not functioning either due to delay in civil works or lack of teacher educators, as in the case of Bihar and Jharkhand;
 - (ii) Identifying DIETs and other state-run Teacher Education Institutions which have the capability to increase annual intake of trainers... with additional investment in infrastructure and recruitment of teacher educators;
 - (iii) Examining the scope of establishing more elementary teacher training institutions in the next one year. For instance, in Uttar Pradesh the restriction of having only one DIET per district under the central Teacher Education Scheme has hindered the expansion of elementary teacher training institutions with government support. Large teacher requirements may necessitate establishment of more than one institution in certain district;
30. The Central Government will have to play a supportive role in enabling the State Governments to build and expand the capacity for teacher preparation. The Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education would need to be revised providing, inter alia, for (a) greater financial support to the State Governments for establishment of teacher training institutions; (b) allowing larger states like Uttar Pradesh to establish more than one DIET in districts having high teacher requirement; (c) providing greater financial support for improvement of infrastructure and other facilities in the existing DIETs;

Training of untrained teachers

31. One of the biggest challenges confronting these States is training for the large number of untrained teachers. The problem becomes accentuated because most additional teachers who will be recruited would be from amongst persons who do not possess the prescribed professional qualification. These teachers, because of the sheer numbers, cannot be trained in the traditional face-to-face mode, without loss of teaching time in schools. The only viable alternative is enable these teachers to acquire the professional qualification through the distance mode.
32. Several State Governments have initiated training of untrained teachers through IGNOU's open distance programme. However, the Central Government will have to play a strong supportive role to facilitate State Governments accomplish this task in a time bound manner. The Teacher Education Scheme of the Central Government may be revised to specifically provide financial assistance to State Governments for training of untrained teachers. Simultaneously, State Governments will need to prepare/redesign their training strategies, by coordinating with the State Open Universities /IGNOU for preparation of high quality modules and resource material for the training programme. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), with its wide reach, could also be identified for conducting the training programmes for primary school teachers. Necessary approvals from NCTE would obviously have to be obtained for conducting the programmes. In fact,

experience from the ongoing programmes in Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand indicate that NCTE has to play a more proactive role in monitoring the quality of the programme.

Category C: Addressing special situation in the NE States

33. The States of the North-Eastern Region (other than Assam) form Category C. In these States, the problem is essentially of large percentage of untrained teachers and inadequate training capacity, both for preparing trained teachers and for training the untrained teachers. However, they do not have the problem of large teacher vacancies. Nonetheless, these are States with difficult geographical terrain, language complexities and situations of civil strife, and therefore need to be considered with necessary accommodation..

State	Untrained teachers	% of untrained teachers	Annual D.Ed Capacity	Annual B.Ed capacity	Annual M.Ed capacity	Teacher requirement (Vacancies +RTE)
Arunachal Pradesh	9,914	71.21	295	260	0	0
Manipur	7,543	50.24	400	780	50	0
Meghalaya	21,483	68.43	524	400	0	0
Mizoram	3,258	25.79	320	320	0	0
Nagaland	9,680	75.70	210	280	0	0
Sikkim	3,783	54.36	90	200	25	0
Tripura	17,242	58.01	480	550	20	3,161

34. The strategy in respect of these States could include the following:

Expansion of capacity to prepare teachers:

35. A major problem in capacity expansion in these States can be traced to the NCTE Regulations on land area and building size. Given the difficult geographical terrain, the State Governments find it difficult to meet the NCTE infrastructural norms, both for establishing new institutions or for expanding capacity in existing ones. NCTE could consider relaxing the infrastructural norms for institutions of the NE States. The second major problem is the lack of adequate facilities for preparing teacher educators. The combined capacity for M.Ed intake in these seven States is only 95. Clearly, this constitutes a major stumbling block in capacity expansion. While it may not be prudent to relax the minimum qualifications for teacher educators, some other solutions need to be found. These would include (a) relaxing the retirement age; (b) hiring retired persons with requisite qualification; and (c) making the qualification more flexible to allow a wider set of persons to work as teacher educators. In the medium term these States will have to expand the capacity of preparing teacher educators.

Financial support by the Central Government:

36. Capacity expansion in these States would require enough financial support from the Centre. The revised Scheme on Teacher Education should have a special component for the NE Region, both in terms of flexibility in the norms of Central assistance, as also in the quantum of assistance for particular components. Possibilities of convergence with other Departments, such as DONER and the North Eastern Council could also be explored for providing greater financial assistance.

Recruitment policy on teachers:

37. In several NE States recruitment policy does not take into account the need to recruit trained persons as teachers. While this is now changing, for instance in Mizoram, all the NE States will need to undertake necessary changes in the recruitment policy so as to give preference to trained persons. In fact, some of the NE States have Class X pass persons as school teachers which makes the matter more complicated and time consuming as these teachers need to acquire both the academic qualification and the professional qualification in order to meet the provisions of the RTE Act.

Training of untrained teachers:

38. In developing strategies for training untrained teachers most NE States have mainly relied on the 6-month CPE course developed by IGNOU. Discussions with the State Governments have highlighted two major problems in the effectiveness and coverage of the course. Firstly, programme design, curriculum and resource material is excessively theoretical with little practical application, and trainees experience difficulties in completing the course. IGNOU should, in consultation with a University of NE Region (such as NEHU) or the SCERTs of that Region revisit the curriculum, syllabus and resource material. Secondly, the present NCTE norms regarding location and facilities of the study centres restrict the number of such centres, creating difficulties for trainees from remote and hilly areas in attending these contact sessions. This aspect also needs to be re-visited. In case of Manipur and few other States which send their untrained teachers for the face-to-face Diploma course in the DIETs, the problem is of teacher absenteeism, which makes it difficult to allow a large number of untrained teachers to undertake the Diploma course.

II. In-Service Training of teachers

39. For in-service training, the country has a large network of teacher training institutions (TTIs), which provide annual in-service training to school teachers. The spread of these TTIs is both vertical and horizontal.
40. At the National Level, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), along with its 6 Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs) prepares a host of training modules and undertakes specific programmes for training of teachers and teacher educators. Institutional support is also

provided by the National University on Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA). At the state level, the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) prepare modules for teacher training and conduct specialised courses for teacher educators and school teachers. The Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Institutes for Advanced Study in Education (IASEs) provide in-service training to secondary school teachers and teacher educators. At the district level, in-service training is provided by the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs). The Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) form the lowest rung of institutions in the vertical hierarchy for providing in-service training to school teachers.

41. Financial support for in-service training is provided by the Central Government through the SSA and the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education. Under the SSA, 20 days' in-service training is provided to school teachers, 60 days training for untrained teachers and 30 days orientation for freshly trained recruits.

III. Restructuring BRCS and CRCs

42. The NCERT in its Report of August 2009 on Comprehensive Evaluation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education has underscored the need to restructure the existing BRCs and CRCs to revamp the present system of in-service training of untrained teachers. The Report states that *“Block and Cluster Resource Centers were established during DPEP in some selected districts after which these centres were expanded across the country as part of the SSA programme, for improving the quality of elementary education. Thus, the staff duties and responsibilities are presently based on the SSA Framework of Implementation and its objectives. But due to successful implementation of SSA programme the enrolment at secondary stage has increased. Besides this, universalisation of secondary education is also under active consideration. Keeping this in view, there is an urgent need to change the role and functions of BRCs and convert these into Block level Institutions of Teacher Education (BITEs).”* While the proposal to convert BRCs into BITEs would require further consideration, strengthening and streamlining the roles and functions of BRCs need special attention. An important requirement is that BRCs and CRCs work in close coordination with the office of the District Education Officers and BEOs, instead of functioning as project structures isolated from the mainstream administration.
43. BRCs, with a revamped administrative and academic structure and improved infrastructure, will have to focus on three major roles:
 - (i) Conducting in-service training for elementary school teachers and supporting CRCs in their school improvement functions will continue to be the major role of the BRCs. However, in this function they would be encouraged to collaborate with NGOs functioning in the Block and also utilize the services of qualified resource persons outside the education department.

- (ii) Academic monitoring and supervision of at least 8-10 schools (depending on the numbers of clusters / schools and their geographical spread) by each BRC staff member, within one month on a regular basis. Based on this interaction, members of the BRC would organize a monthly meeting at the cluster level for planning of training, improving teaching-learning processes and providing guidance to CRC coordinators / staff.
 - (iii) Each BRC would function as a repository of resources and services easily accessible to all teachers in the Block. This would include library services, provision of ICT, Science kit, Math kit, resource material in different curricular areas including preschool and those for dealing with special needs etc. to the teachers. Special equipment, reading materials, educational aids, remedial teaching, curricular adaptation, and other services like health check-ups, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy could also be provided.
44. Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) should, as far as possible, be located in a well equipped school campus, with each Centre catering to 15-20 elementary schools. Presently all CRCs have one coordinator. Clusters with a larger number of schools or those located in hard to reach areas may be provided additional staff. This is important to ensure that cluster resource persons regularly visit schools and provide academic support to the teachers. The cluster staff due to their location will be in closer contact with schools and teachers. Where necessary additional staff should be sanctioned in CRCs. Thus, their involvement should focus on:
- (i) Providing quality academic onsite support and guidance at the classroom level.
 - (ii) Appraising the habitation level educational plan in consultation with schools, SMCs and BRC staff.
 - (iii) Studying the problems and issues related to quality through continuous interaction with teachers, community members and children.
 - (iv) Promoting and ensuring a healthy, safe and secure school environment in each school in their cluster.
 - (v) Ensuring that the special training programmes are properly designed and implemented in the cluster for out of school children and securing their admission to age appropriate classes.
 - (vi) Visiting and holding meetings / discussions with members of the SMCs and other local bodies for school improvement.
 - (vii) Implementation of various quality initiatives and learning enhancement programmes in their schools in partnership with the community and teaching staff.

- (viii) Ensuring the enrolment and regular full time attendance of all children in their area conducting monthly meetings for all school teachers in their respective cluster of schools.

IV. Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education

- 45. NCTE has prepared a draft National Curriculum Framework of Teacher Education. This framework has been prepared in the background of the NCF, 2005 which necessitated an altered framework on Teacher Education which would be consistent with the changed approach towards school curriculum recommended in the NCF, 2005.
- 46. While articulating the vision of teacher education, the draft framework has some important dimensions of the new approach to teacher education, as under.
 - (i) Reflective practice to be the central aim of teacher education;
 - (ii) Teacher-trainees should be provided opportunities for self-learning, reflection, assimilation and articulation of new ideas;
 - (iii) Developing capacities for self-directed learning and ability to think, be critical and to work in groups.
 - (iv) Providing opportunities to teacher-trainees to observe and engage with children, communicate with and relate to children.
- 47. The Framework has highlighted the focus, specific objectives, broad areas of study in terms of theoretical and practical learning, and curricular transaction and assessment strategies for the various initial teacher education programmes. The draft also outlines the basic issues that should guide formulation of all programmes of these courses. The Framework has made several recommendations on the approach and methodology of in-service teacher training programmes and has also outlined a strategy for implementation of the Framework.

V. Reforming existing Teacher Education Institutions

- 48. Pre-service teacher education programmes are provided by 571 District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) as also by 7567 self financing institutions across the country. The proliferation of self-financing institutions in certain States has raised serious doubts about the teaching and training capacity available in these institutions and quality of courses transacted by them. While a large number of persons are provided degree/diploma in teacher education, their aptitude for teaching learning and subject knowledge ability is often of dubious quality.
- 49. There is undoubtedly need to create a strong monitoring mechanism coupled with a mechanism whereby all institutions are subjected to a transparent accreditation process for quality assurance by which services and operations of

an educational institution offering teacher education are evaluated by an external body to determine if applicable standards are met. The accreditation process would encompass curricular aspects, teaching-learning and evaluation systems, research and extension, infrastructure and learning resources, student support and progression, governance and leadership, and innovative practices

50. Finally, Government may consider instituting State Level Eligibility Test (SLET) for persons with professional qualification (like D.Ed or B.Ed) which could be made an essential qualification for becoming a teacher. The SLET could be designed by an independent group of experts and if conducted in a transparent manner would (a) ensure that persons with an aptitude for teaching are eligible; and (b) create an environment which would compel teacher education institutions to improve their quality.

Chapter X – ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN OPERATIONALISING RTE

1. The importance of the role of civil society organisations with relevant and demonstrated experience at different levels and locations, in translating RTE from a legal framework on paper to a vibrant movement on the ground, cannot be overstated. This becomes even more critical in the face of the scale of the task and the myriad challenges that are envisaged in ensuring the proper implementation of the Act.

A. Nature of Civil Society Engagement

2. Civil society organisations have had a long history of involvement in the education sector to which they have significantly contributed in variety of ways. There are also several examples of effective partnership and collaboration between government and civil society. However, the relationship between civil society and the State is complex and partnerships have not always been smooth sailing. Over the years the space for NGO/civil society intervention has increasingly got limited to taking on implementation of particular projects. Partnerships have tended to be short-term and ad hoc rather than holistic and on-going engagement.
3. For RTE to be effectively implemented, the space for genuine long-term partnerships based on mutual respect must be evolved. Critical to ensuring this would be to legitimise and institutionalize the different roles of NGOs within the institutional and other mechanisms that will be put in place. In other words the engagement of civil society needs to be systemic and not project driven. Partnerships should be comprehensive with scope for NGOs to take overall responsibility for ensuring implementation of the Act.
4. SSA should review the nature of its engagement with NGOs and initiate a process of dialogue to open up new areas of collaboration in keeping with the parameters of the Act. Areas where partnerships have worked well should be continued taking into cognizance the new realities thrown up by the Act and the fresh areas of partnership explored. An example, of the former would be the running of bridge courses, which in many states have been considered an area of successful partnership. The schemes for voluntary organisations can be modified appropriately to reflect the new realities that the RTE will open.
5. NGOs would also have to re-think their roles in the light of RTE. NGO interventions like the running of alternative schools, programmes for out-of school children, NFE centres would need to be recast. For instance, the Act specifies that the responsibility of providing special trainings (for age-appropriate enrolment) would rest with the school/local authorities. NGOs, CBOs, etc working in this area would now necessarily have to work in close collaboration with these institutions and within the framework of RTE.
6. For the effective implementation of RTE, efforts should be made to bring in grassroots organisations with proven experience to monitor implementation of the Act. Over the last couple of decades we have witnessed a process of

grassroots institution building. Mahila samooths, sangathans, SHGs, Mahila Samakhya federations, youth groups, groups working for people's rights, etc. have been formed and some of these have developed substantial capacities and have empowered members. It would be useful to mobilize the support of these grassroots formations.

7. The role of the local authority has been clearly outlined in the Act. Expectations from the local authorities are considerable and challenging. Long- term partnerships between NGOs and PRIs would therefore be required to enable local authorities to meet these challenges. Organisations working with PRIs since the passing of the 73rd and 74th Amendments, who may not necessarily have experience of working in the education should also be brought in.
8. While advocating for the inclusion of a broad spectrum of organisations care must be taken to ensure that organisations that uphold the spirit of the Act, adhere to constitutional values and are committed to a relation of partnership with government system are enabled to get involved. Thus a proper screening criteria and process must be put in place.

B. Potential areas of partnership

9. While it is agreed that the role of civil society needs to be holistic, there are some areas, where NGOs and other civil society organisations could play a substantial role. These are:

I. Mobilization & awareness building

10. Often one notices widespread cynicism towards a new government initiative. People can be heard voicing a feeling that the RTE Act would have the same fate as several other laws enacted to bring about reform. Therefore, it is a matter of greatest importance that conviction is built among media, intelligentsia and the masses that not only is government totally committed to ensure implementation of this law, teachers and general public would not any more tolerate the status quo in education and that through collective effort of all concerned we shall bring about a real change. A massive mobilization would be required to build awareness around the Act and to enable the community to monitor and demand accountability. Building a vibrant campaign to generate a momentum and a broad-based awareness of the provisions of the Act would be crucial contribution of civil society organisations. Mobilisation and awareness building cannot be considered as a one-time activity and will have to be sustained. Thus civil society organisations would have to take this up as a challenge. Lessons from the nation-wide upsurge created during the National Literacy Mission can also be drawn upon to develop the campaign.

II. Resource support

11. Effective implementation of the Act will require expertise at different levels from the local to the national and from a range of organisations, depending on

their areas of expertise. Areas where resource support and capacity building can be provided by civil society organisations are:

III. Training of School Management Committees (SMC)

12. This would be an important area of NGO involvement. The Act clearly outlines the functions to be performed by SMC. Some of these functions, for example, development of school development plans, would require significant investments in capacity building. Past experience has shown that mere setting up of committees, does not ensure their meaningful participation in programmes. Moreover, although provision is made in membership of these committees for inclusion of women and persons from disadvantaged communities, in reality, they are excluded from decision-making processes. Therefore the role of civil society organizations would be critical in making the SMC an effective democratic space. It needs to be highlighted that the nature of such interventions cannot be one-time training but must necessarily be a long-term involvement. Besides capacity building of SMC, on-going support of the PRI (local authority) is also essential.

IV. Training of personnel of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)

13. PRIs will have to play a crucial role in provision of facilities mentioned in the act. They are also the first level to be addressed by persons aggrieved about denial of right to education as written in the Act. The election process for PRIs is such that most elected persons change in every election. Therefore, training of PRI personnel will be a challenging task. A large number of NGOs and CBOs have experience in the training of PR personnel. District authorities will have to prepare a comprehensive plan for training and refraining of these personnel. It would be advisable to assign appropriate responsibility to NGOs /CBOs wherever suitable ones are available.

V. Specialised support (also discussed in relevant chapters)

14. Some NGOs have expertise in specific areas, which should be drawn upon. Some of these are:
 - (i) Children with special needs
 - (ii) Involvement in design of infrastructure, including school buildings
 - (iii) Publication of books and journals to enhance reading ability
 - (iv) Gender training

VI. Ensuring equity, quality and non-discrimination

15. The Act outlines critical issues related to quality, equity and the need to ensure that the educational space is discrimination free. Thus NGOs and civil society organisations could have a crucial role to play not just in reporting violations

but also building a perspective on gender and social inclusion issues and ensuring that these become integral cross-cutting concerns informing different aspects – for example, training, curriculum and classroom transactions, performance of SMC, etc. With regard to SSA, the 10th Joint Review Mission report has also pointed to the fact that this dimension of SSA needs strengthening; therefore SSA could consider prioritising and revamping this aspect.

VII. Development of curriculum and pedagogy

16. Some civil society organisations have developed an expertise after years of innovation, experimentation and validation at the ground level, in several core areas outlined in the Act. Involvement of groups and organisations with such experience should be facilitated to provide inputs in the following areas:
 - (i) Curriculum development, particularly of bridge courses, which would be important in implementing the provision of age appropriate enrolment,
 - (ii) Development of teacher training strategies
 - (iii) Design of evaluation mechanisms (CCE)
 - (iv) Research.

VIII. Area based responsibility

17. It is essential that accomplishability of the provisions of RTE Act and the Rules framed thereunder is demonstrated in practically all parts of the country in the shortest possible time. State governments and local authorities would, no doubt, attempt to make a concerted effort in selected areas – that would serve as pilots to motivate and impel others. NGOs can serve as an effective agency to initiate this step and to sustain it till full impact of the Act is realized. This could be in a block, a panchayat area or other defined geographical area carved out in an ad hoc manner. In this area we envisage a partnership-based action which could include the following alternatives.
 - (i) The NGO builds awareness among teachers and parents – the former being motivated to function as envisaged in the Act and the latter insisting that the rights of their children are honoured by all concerned.
 - (ii) Responsibility for infrastructure development and teacher provision remaining with relevant government agency /local authority, but NGOs taking responsibility for all other components, such as surveying the existing infrastructure, teacher, performance, ensuring enrolment of all children; constitution, training and functioning of SMCs; prevention of harassment of teachers and enabling them to properly discharge their duties; insistence on gender sensitivity in all activities and transactions in schools; providing assistance in

recognizing infringement of RTE and to lodge grievances and pursue them till they are redressed.

- (iii) An NGO being provided necessary wherewithal to take responsibility for full implementation of RTE Act. In this case (as was done in the Lok Jumbish Project in Rajasthan) all resources required to meet the infrastructural needs, funds for appointment of teachers (to be done in the same manner as in government) and for conduct of good quality education are provided to the NGO on the basis of a proper project proposal. In this case a joint committee of representatives of the NGO, government, PRIs, teachers' unions, parents, etc. would guide and improvise the implementation.

IX. Monitoring and watchdog role

- 18. A crucial area for civil society intervention would be in playing a watchdog role to ensure that the rights of children are protected. The NCPCR and SCPCR have been entrusted with this role but given the scale of coverage, human resource availability, and enormity of the task, NCPCR /SCPCRs will be enabled to fulfill their role only with active involvement of civil society organisations, particularly those working at the grassroots level. In order to ensure that this task is undertaken effectively the role of civil society needs to be institutionally and systemically envisioned. Some of the possibilities could include-
 - (i) Providing accreditation to civil society organisations that would work for systematic mechanism for grievance redressal.
 - (ii) NCPCR and SCPCRs would be well advised to establish an effective network of civil society organizations and facilitate/enable such organizations to undertake social audits, public hearings, etc.
 - (iii) Civil society should be included in any institutional mechanism being planned at the state as well as the district levels. The implementation of NREG Act provides a good precedent, where state level commissioners have been appointed to monitor the implementation of that Act. In several instances, commissioners are active civil society members who have undertaken several initiatives to ensure that awareness is built around the Act and to articulate grievances.
 - (iv) The Act envisages the establishment of National and State Advisory Committees where the active participation of civil society representatives can be brought in.

C. Concluding remark

- 19. During the next two years SSA can play a critical role in catalyzing the role of civil society involvement in implementing RTE. As a start the schemes for involvement of voluntary agencies should be re-cast, to ensure that the needs thrown up by the passing of the Act are addressed. As this will be a crucial

period of re-orientation and identification of new challenges and areas of work, flexibility and space should be created within the scheme to enable the development of innovations and in-depth work in specific areas. This would be possible only if the schemes provide for long-term engagement of NGOs /CBOs.

Chapter XI – INFRASTRUCTURE

I. Context

1. Section 19 of the RTE Act states that “No school shall be established or recognised under section 18, unless it fulfils the norms and standards specified in the schedule.” Minimum required school infrastructure has been defined for the first time in the RTE Act, such as an all weather building consisting of at least one classroom for every teacher and an office-cum-store-cum HM room, separate toilets for boys and girls, safe and adequate drinking water facilities for all children, barrier free access, boundary wall or green fencing, kitchen for cooking MDM, a library, playground etc. It implies that all schools should be composite schools, i.e., they should have all these facilities within three years of the coming into force of the RTE Act. All new schools that are constructed after the three year period would need to provide all facilities upfront, as graded augmentation of school infrastructure to meet the RTE requirements, will not be permissible under the Act. Recognition of existing schools that do not meet the infrastructure requirements within the specified period will be withdrawn. New schools will not be recognised and permitted to function until they provide at least the infrastructure specified in the schedule to the Act.
2. Existing pool of school infrastructure is of variable quality. DISE data (2007-08) states that 5.12 of all government schools do not have school buildings. 13.78 government elementary schools in rural areas do not have drinking water facilities and 54.57 do not have separate toilets. Only 33 of schools have electricity. Also, schools generally do not have appropriate barrier free features. The ramps, even if available, are often too steep and do not allow easy access for children with special needs (CWSN) It is clear that upgradation of school infrastructure will be an important task to be accomplished within three years of the commencement of the Act.

II. Provisions for physical school infrastructure

A. Existing SSA provisions

3. SSA provides buildings (with toilets, drinking water facilities, kitchen for MDM) for new primary and upper primary schools sanctioned under the Scheme. It also provides a classroom for every teacher or for every grade/class whichever is lower, in primary and upper primary schools with the provision that there would be two class rooms with a veranda to every primary school, with at least two teachers. It also provides for a room for the head-master in upper primary schools/sections. Facilities for drinking water and toilets in schools existing prior to SSA are provided only to urban schools that are not covered under the National Drinking Water Mission and Total Sanitation Campaign of the Ministry of Rural Development, GOI.

B. Need for revision of SSA provisions in light of RTE Act.

4. SSA civil works norms would need to be revised to ensure creation of school infrastructure at par with RTE requirements. A clear detailing of essential physical infrastructure in school buildings would help States in preparing appropriate proposals. SSA norms, at present, do not explicitly spell out the minimum required infrastructure in schools. The revised norms would have to provide for a classroom for every teacher and an office cum store cum HM room in primary schools. It would be advisable for MHRD to examine whether SSA can now support augmentation of infrastructure in schools that were opened by the State Governments prior to SSA or outside the Scheme of SSA. Many of these schools have infrastructure facilities lower than what is envisaged under SSA.

C. Gaps in school infrastructure

5. NUEPA has estimated the following gaps in school physical infrastructure in public schools, that will need to be plugged within a three year period from the commencement of the Act:
 - Construction of additional classrooms
 - Upgradation of semi pukka and kuccha Schools
 - Construction of store cum head-teacher rooms
 - Provision of toilets for girls.
 - Provision of drinking water
 - 7.78 lakh classrooms
 - 33,405 semi pukka and 26,981 kuccha schools
 - 9.43 lakh rooms for head teachers
 - 8 lakh schools
 - 3.00 lakhs schools

III. Bringing government school infrastructure at par with RTE requirements-challenges and way forward

A. Construction of ‘composite’ school buildings

6. Schools in rural areas, constructed prior to SSA, are often deficient in some of the basic facilities. The existing school buildings, constructed prior to SSA, have over the years been funded from different schemes such as employment guarantee schemes, MP or MLA local area development funds, etc. Prior to RTE, there was no clear specification of what elements every school building must necessarily have. Even if specifications did exist, there was no statutory requirement for ensuring that a building must have all facilities, before it could start functioning as a school. This resulted in a situation where a few classrooms with a veranda were constructed initially, and a school became functional with such rudimentary infrastructure. Other facilities such as toilets and drinking water, electrification, a secure boundary wall, kitchen shed for MDM, were added on a piecemeal basis, whenever funds from different schemes became available. In the absence of a proper layout plan for subsequent augmentation of school infrastructure, these efforts resulted in ad hoc and haphazard positioning of various facilities within the school premises.

B. School infrastructure surveys and formulation of State wise perspective plans

7. All States/UTs have to work towards ensuring that public schools meet the infrastructure requirements specified in the schedule to the Act. Augmentation of existing school infrastructure would require, *inter alia*, a survey of existing facilities in every public school. This is necessary for a clear identification of school wise gaps in infrastructure. This can be accomplished by preparing a checklist that also serves as a self declaration form by every public school, about its current level of infrastructure and additional works to be sanctioned for filling up the gaps, so that the statutory requirement can be met. These self declaration forms can be hosted on the website of the state education departments, for transparency and accountability. The state must actively work towards dispelling the perception that since its own schools do not require recognition from the appropriate public authority under the RTE Act, they can continue to function without fulfilling the basic minimum infrastructure specified in the Act. In fact, States may prepare a 5 year perspective plan indicating specific timelines, funding sources, construction agencies etc., for infrastructure augmentation in all public schools, at least up to the requirements in the RTE Act.

C. Creating/accessing technical capacity for large scale school infrastructure creation and quality assurance.

8. For meeting the infrastructure requirements of existing and new schools, within the specified timelines, sufficient numbers of technically qualified staff will need to be put in place. The existing agencies and systems for school infrastructure creation/augmentation are different in different States. Some States have a strong civil works team under ongoing schemes like SSA, with a sufficient number of technically qualified staff on deputation or contract. The situation is different in other States where all school infrastructure related civil works are undertaken by the existing works departments of the State Government. Such States will need to evolve systems for communicating the specific requirements of school buildings to these works departments. IT shall have to be ensured that these agencies develop ability to prepare child friendly designs for classrooms and other facilities, outdoor and indoor spaces as learning resources, safety and hazard resistant features and barrier free access, etc. States may consider examining their existing organizational structure for school infrastructure creation (from the state to block level), sanctioned staff at each level and vacant positions. This will lead to an assessment whether the sanctioned staff strength and the existing system for execution of works is adequate in view of the State's infrastructure gaps, requirements for monitoring and oversight, quality assurance and above all, infusion of new learning and ideas about design innovations, whole school planning and building schools that are child friendly.

D. Ensuring barrier free access in schools

9. The RTE Act requires barrier free access to schools. Barrier free access could mean, at one level, access without any natural/physical barriers. For e.g., a

river/nallah in full spate during rains may pose a barrier to school access if the school is located on the other side of the river, and not in the habitation in which the children reside. The State will have to make appropriate provisions to ensure access to schooling to such children either by opening a school in the habitation or providing escort and safe transportation facilities to the school, or by any other means. However, barrier free access also implies that the design of the school building should be such that all children, including children with disabilities, should be able to move in all areas of the school and use all its facilities. The existing resource pool in the country on 'Access audits of school buildings' and 'Universal design' can be catalogued and shared with all States/UTs, to enable them to move forward quickly on this agenda. A third meaning of barrier free access could also be an inclusive school environment that welcomes all children, irrespective of their differences, and is prepared to tailor its teaching learning practices to meet their requirements. This requires sensitization and training of teachers and education administrators.

IV. Incorporation of child friendly elements in school buildings

10. The quality of the school building and the design of its indoor and outdoor spaces plays an important role in shaping the child's perception of the attractiveness of the school as a learning and play space. Therefore, whether the child is motivated to enrol and thereafter continue to attend school on a regular basis, also depends on the quality of school buildings
11. Schools are built for children. School building designs should, therefore, respond to the needs of children. Different facilities in the school should be built to the scale of the children, such as drinking water taps and urinals, children's chalk boards, display and storage spaces in the classrooms, playgrounds and other outdoor and indoor spaces in the school premises.

V. Creating a shelf of school building designs

12. The diversity of terrain and climates in different parts of the country and even within states, requires the development of school building designs that can respond to its particular features. The Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), which enunciates the energy efficiency aspects of building designs, has been developed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power, GOI. These guidelines can be examined by States, to build schools that are well lit, well ventilated and climatically comfortable. Attention to simple aspects like appropriate orientation of the building, proper shading strategies, landscaping to modify the microclimate, using energy efficient electrical fixtures, use of renewable energy sources (eg. solar cookers for preparing MDM) can create schools that are environment friendly, besides being child friendly.
13. The National Building Code of India 2005, developed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) provides guidelines for regulating building construction activities across the country. It serves as a model code for adoption by all agencies involved in building construction works, be they Public Works

Departments, other government construction departments, local bodies or private construction agencies. The Code mainly contains administrative regulations, development control rules and general building requirements; fire safety requirements; stipulations regarding materials, structural design and construction (including safety); etc. The code should serve as a reference for all States and UTs, for design and construction of school infrastructure.

14. The RTE Act guarantees a child's right to free and compulsory education. However, no child can be compelled to receive education in an unsafe and insecure environment. All States UTs must ensure that old, weak and structurally unsafe school buildings are appropriately repaired or reconstructed. Also, structural safety features(against natural hazards such as earthquakes) should be built into the designs of new school buildings and retrofitting of existing buildings should be done, in schools that are located in high risk seismic zones of the country. A total of 229 districts fall in the earthquake zones IV and V in India. The various IS codes for earthquake resistant design and construction and the safety features incorporated in the National Building Code,2005 should inform the construction of school buildings that are safe.

VI. Ensuring drinking water and sanitation facilities in rural schools

15. The Schedule to the RTE Act specifies the minimum facilities that shall be provided in all elementary schools, including, drinking water and toilet facilities.
16. While all new schools opened under SSA are being sanctioned composite buildings with drinking water and sanitation facilities, all pre existing schools (prior to SSA) need to be provided drinking water facilities, in a time bound manner, with convergence of resources of state governments and other relevant schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development Department of Drinking Water Supply). It is possible that several schools that are considered 'covered' at present with regard to availability of toilets, may be found to be deficient in terms of actual requirement of toilet units, as per the number of enrolled children in the schools. Availability of the required number of functioning toilet units should also be assessed and provided in all elementary schools.

V. Capacity building of School Management Committees for systematic creation of school infrastructure.

17. A School Management Committee will be constituted for all except unaided schools, as per section 21 of the RTE Act. This SMC will be required to prepare a school development plan [section 21(2) (b)] that will form the basis for grants to be made to the school [section 22(2)]. SMCs would require training in areas such as systematic development of school infrastructure so that it meets RTE requirements within three years of commencement of the Act as well as a plan for maintenance of school infrastructure. Since the school development plans will form the basis for release of funds to schools, it is important that capacities of SMCs are in a time bound manner.

VII. Implications of RTE infrastructure requirements

A. For private schools

18. Existing private schools that do not meet the RTE infrastructure requirements would have to upgrade their infrastructure within 3 years of the commencement of the Act. If they fail to do so, their recognition will be withdrawn and they cannot continue to function after this period. All new private schools that are established after the commencement of the Act, will have to provide, at the outset, the minimum infrastructure as specified in the Act.

B. For government and local body schools

19. Government and local body schools do not require recognition. This cannot be interpreted to mean that such schools are under no compulsion to upgrade facilities within the timeframe stipulated in the Act. Government itself cannot keep its schools operational with poor infrastructure, while it requires all private schools to upgrade, at least upto the levels specified under the Act.

Chapter XII – GOVERNANCE

1. In every state of our country there are age-old systems for administration of elementary education. Over the years, SSA has superimposed on these systems a management structure which has more or less satisfactorily met the needs of this project. In most states the extant administrative system and the one created for implementation of SSA have endured side by side. The RTE Act has created a circumstance in which the existing two-dimensional system must be reviewed and, while causing no detriment to the ongoing SSA project, within the shortest possible time a system should be created which would adequately respond to the demands of the new law. The Committee undertook consultation with state government representatives, persons from NGOs and academics and has come to the conclusion that we should use this opportunity to bring about a major revamp in the system of school administration. In the following pages of this chapter we make proposals for integration of educational administration at different levels, measures to which would bring about improvement in functioning of schools and safeguard the child's right to an education of satisfactory quality.

I. Harmonisation of the Departmental and SSA Structures at the National Level

2. The SSA is governed at the centre by a General Body chaired by the Prime Minister, an Executive Committee and a Project Approval Board. In the states, it is implemented through separately registered societies with staff deputed from the state government. A Governing Body and an Executive Committee functions in every state too. A State Project Director oversees the SSA at the state level, which is a new project post; an addition to the already existing Director/Commissioner of Education. The RTE Act envisages a National Advisory Council at the centre and State Advisory Councils, to advice on the implementation of the Act. As for monitoring, the Act designates the NCPCR and the SCPCRs to ensure that the rights of children are not violated. There is no such modality under the SSA. Instead, the SSA has a Joint Review Mechanism that reviews the progress of the project every six months. The developmental partners of SSA, namely the World Bank, the DFID and the European Commission, are a part of this JRM exercise. There is of course no mention of such development partners in the Act. Quite clearly therefore, the review and monitoring systems of SSA and RTE are quite different.
3. It is clear that the project-based nature of the SSA is not conducive for the implementation of the RTE, particularly the dual and parallel modes it seems to create in the state education. RTE would require the entire education department to be geared in a unified manner to take up the task on a long term basis. This would require the unification of the existing SSA structures with the regular education department.
4. In due course it might seem necessary to wind up the SSA altogether and implement the RTE under a new governance structure which is compatible with the rights framework and with the management provisions of the Act. However, since the SSA has been running for nearly a decade, it might cause a considerable amount of confusion in the field if it were to be wound up all of a sudden. Complete integration of SSA and Elementary Education Department structures may take 5 years. However, actual convergence should commence now and dichotomous and overlapping structures, wherever they exist and are adversely affecting the programme, should be eliminated. It is, therefore,

prudent to suggest a transitional strategy whereby a modified SSA remains the modality to be replaced by a new scheme compatible with the provisions of the Act from the middle of the 12th plan period. Till then it would be the vehicle for implementation of the RTE Act.

5. The NAC/SACs under the Act could coexist with the GB/EC structure of the SSA till they take over the full advisory role by end of the 11th Plan. Similarly, as the NCPCR/SCPCR gradually takes over the monitoring role, and it becomes clear what the future role of the development partners shall be beyond the 11th plan period, the JRM could continue even when the Act gets notified. In the meantime, the precise nature of review and monitoring beyond the 11th Plan could be worked out in a manner that fulfils the provisions of the Act.
6. The particular feature of SSA that seems to be desirable to be retained is the fund transfer mechanism from the centre to the states. This might require retaining the state societies, but in a manner that they are in tune with the management provisions of the Act, rather than as transitory bodies in the project mode of SSA. The committee invited officials from other ministries to learn how the devolution of central funds was done in key schemes like the NREGS, PMGSY etc. From these experiences it seems likely that a fund mechanism that bypasses the treasury route is feasible. As regards, the funds that are allocated directly by the Finance Commission to a state, those might have to take the treasury route. It should, however, be possible for the state governments to transfer these funds to the state societies for use as envisaged by the Finance Commission.
7. The RTE Act has tasks and impacts that are not necessarily confined to the MHRD or the state education departments. For example, the compulsion that every child must be in school presupposes that all child labour shall be banned; hence the labour department would need to work out how to align its policies with the Act. “Local Authorities” would mostly be the panchayats requiring the panchayat departments to get appropriately involved in ensuring that the “local authorities” can discharge their functions. NCPCR/SCPCRs are hosted by the Women and Child Development Departments; there is need for close cooperation between them and the MHRD/State departments of education. With its immense stress on inclusive education, particularly the disadvantaged groups and the disabled children, the departments of social empowerment would need to be a partner in implementation since they are directly involved with these issues. Similarly in many states, the tribal departments also run schools that would be covered by the Act – they would be required to comply with its provisions. It will be necessary for NAC/SACs to set up groups or standing committees to work with these departments and other relevant agencies.

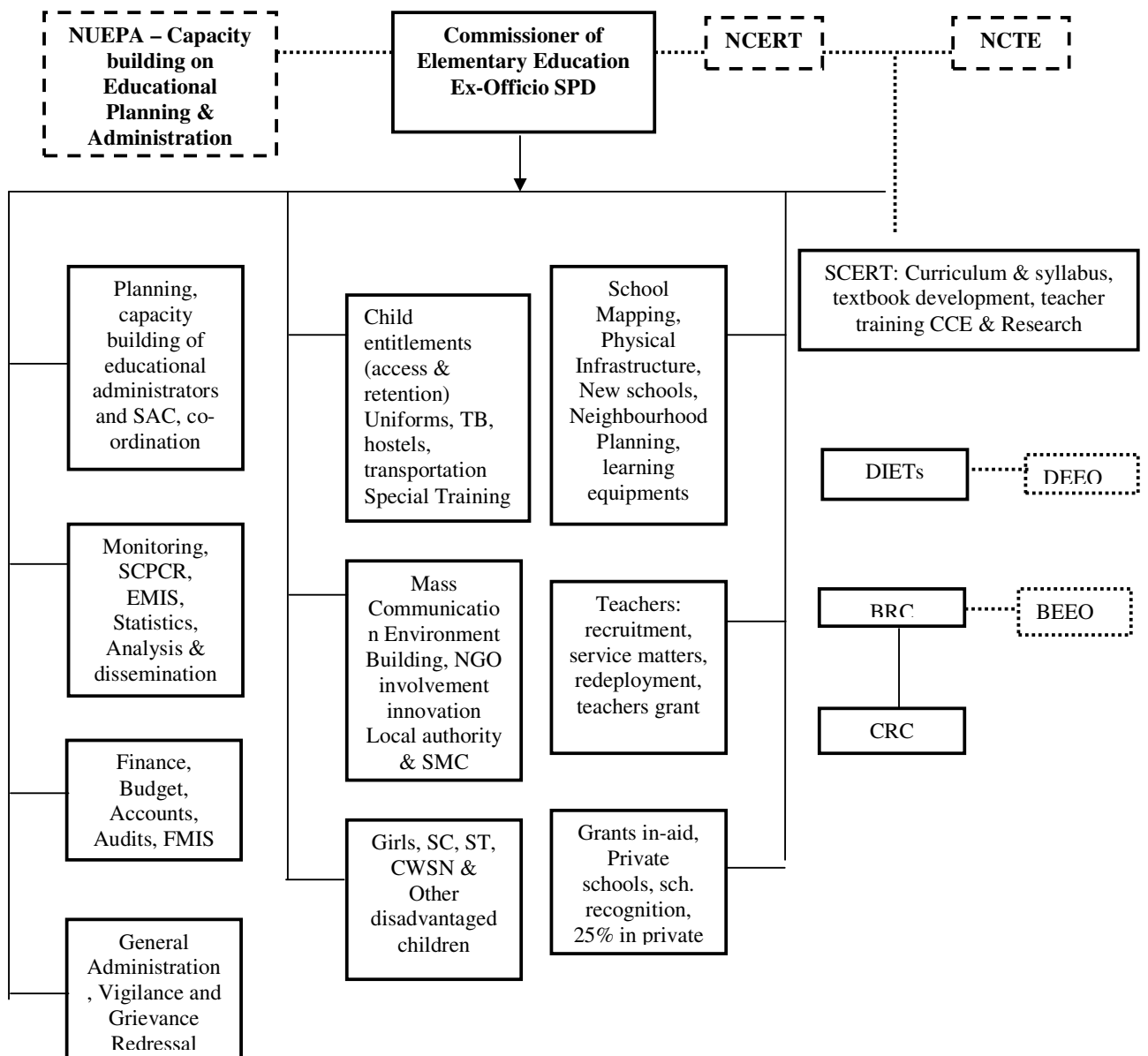
II. The State Level Structure

8. The Committee gave much attention to the structure that may be devised at the state level which would enable state governments to pay due attention to the strategies and programme components of SSA and, at the same time, make effective beginning with implementation of RTE Act. It was felt that for that purpose it would be necessary to initiate measures for integration of the two

systems – the SSA project management and the directorate of elementary education. The characteristics of the new integrated management system at the state level would include:

- (i) continuance of practically all the components of the office of SPD;
- (ii) its being able to serve as the secretariat to the society which, inter alia, would continue to channelise funds from the central and state governments (including the transfers made on the recommendation of the Finance Commission);
- (iii) having the ability to discharge responsibilities envisaged under the RTE Act;
- (iv) dispensing with problems created by multiplicity of departments/sub-departments (such as SPD, Director of Primary Education, Director of SCERT, etc) and lack of unified leadership; and
- (v) having an inbuilt ability to coordinate and provide the required proficiency.

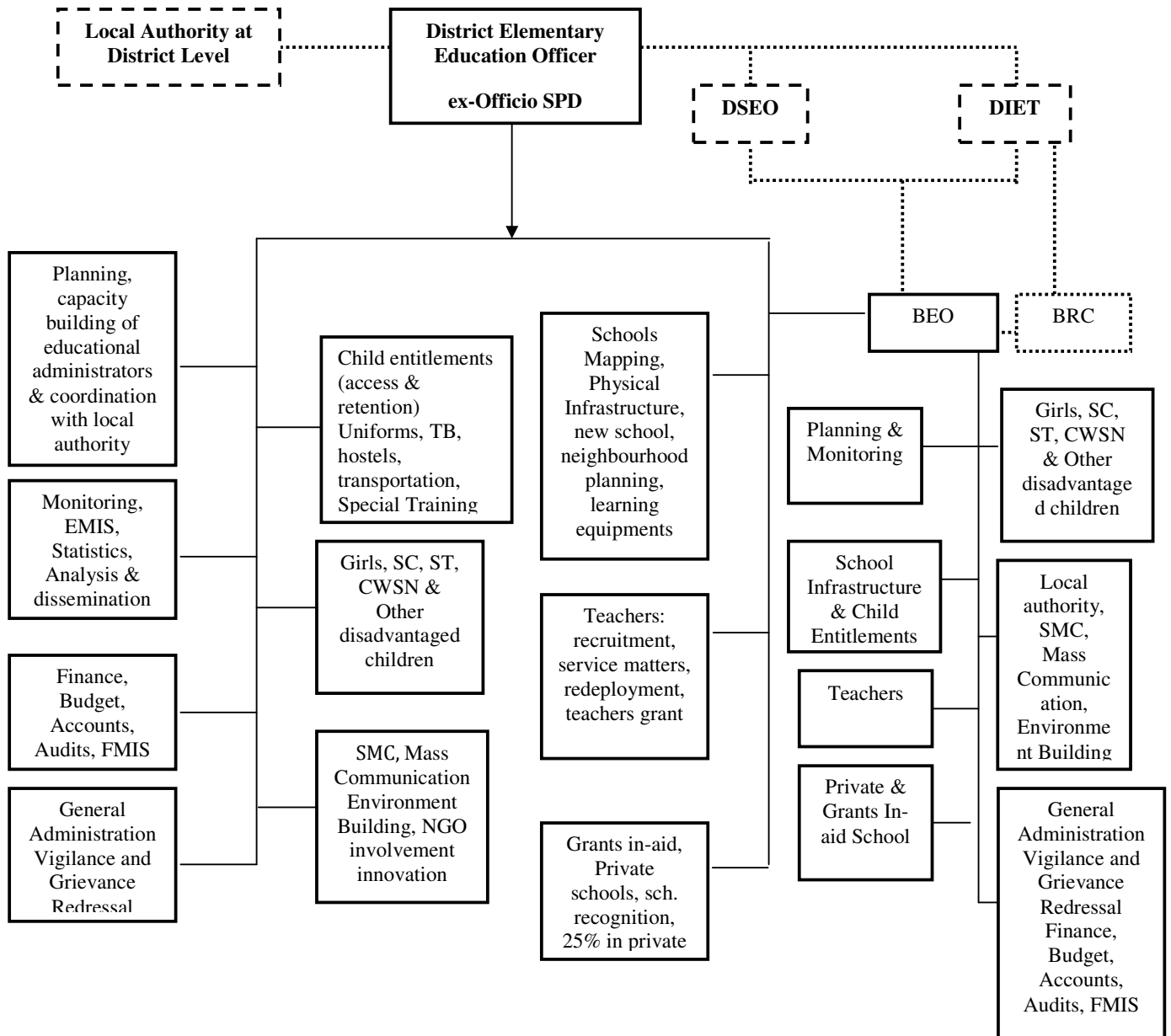
State Level Integrated Structure for SSA and RTE¹



III. The District Level Structure

9. In the new amalgamated system it is only logical that the District Education Officers should fully combine the functions of DEO as well as DPC. There would then be no need for the position of Additional DPC. DEO would have, more or less, all the units that we have envisaged at the state level. He/she would liaise with DIET and in cooperation with that Institute oversee the functioning of BRCs and CRCs. Each of the 6-8 unit heads in the set up of DEO would function in matrix mode, which implies that each unit head would have responsibility for one or more subject areas as well as over one or more blocks (BEO as well as BRC/CRC).

District level integrated structure



IV. Local Authority

9. Responsibility for implementation of the RTE Act has been vested in “appropriate government” (mainly state governments and UT Administrations) and the local authority. These functions are spelt out in section 8 and 9. In addition the local authority is to consider and redress the grievances relating to the right of the child as stated in section 32.
10. Local authority is defined under Section 2(h) as follows:

“local authority” means a Municipal Corporation or Municipal Council or Zila Parishad or Nagar Panchayat or Panchayat, by whatever name called, and includes such other authority or body having administrative control over the school or empowered by or under any law for the time being in force to function as a local authority in any city, town or village;
11. This definition indicates that municipal bodies and panchayats are local authority; and in addition (a) a body having administrative control over schools of the area; and (b) a body set up under state/UT law or by an order issued by it would also be included as “local authority”. This implies that in all areas, at the minimum, the elected local body as well as the local administrative apparatus shall comprise the local authority. The only scope for state/UT specific variation may consist of any committee or council or some such body set up by a state government/UT Administration – which too would come within the definition of local authority. The state governments/UT Administrations have, generally speaking, elucidated the inter se relationship among these bodies. However, where this has not been clarified the state governments/UT Administrations could do so now.

V. School Supervision

12. During the last few decades school supervision has grievously suffered due to insufficiency of staff and administrative neglect. The effort made under SSA, through establishment of BRCs and CRCs, improved matters but the overall situation has remained essentially unchanged. As a result, functioning of schools has deteriorated and quality of the teaching-learning process has shown no improvement. Improvement of quality of education is a pre-requisite of successful implementation of the RTE Act.
13. We envisage periodic inspection/supervision of schools to observe the infrastructure and facilities and the administrative aspects. In addition, a proper system of academic and curricular support has to be developed to serve the purpose of continuing professional upgradation of teachers and to see that school syllabi and learner evaluation system are operationalised as expected.
14. Each block education officer should have a contingent of Assistant EEOs (with whatever designation) who should be expected to undertake at least two visits to every school each year. Among other things they should look at the record required to be maintained by teachers/headmasters, condition of school building and infrastructure and seating arrangement for students. They should be asked to pay particular attention to availability of potable drinking water,

usability of toilets, kitchen where MDM is cooked and whether the school has well-maintained boundary wall.

15. Each BRC has specialist staff of 5-7. Besides, there are a number of CRCs, perhaps one for 15 villages. Between the staff of these two resource centres it should be possible for one person to visit each school once every two months, every month if the circumstances so allow. The purpose of these visits would be to provide curricular support to teachers – particularly progress with syllabus, the manner in which use is being made of textbooks and other materials, assess and support teachers develop teaching-learning material and the manner in which continuous and comprehensive evaluation is being put into effect. In addition, BRCs ought to conduct workshops with subject teachers of upper primary classes and they as well as CRCs should organize trainings expected of them.
16. The staff from the office of BEO as well as from BRCs and CRCs should ordinarily not be expected to prepare inspection/visit reports. Rather, they should record their main observations in a register that may be maintained in each school. HMs/teachers should take action on the visit note. In addition, computer should be available in the office of BEO, and in BRCs and CRCs so that important observations (particularly points on which administrative action is to be taken) are shared through internet.

VI. Monitoring Information, Quality and Children's Rights

17. One of the problems with our elementary education system is that the school is required to furnish information to different authorities rather frequently. Teachers can be heard to say that they are unable to discharge their classroom responsibility because of the time they have to spend on sending reports. It would be advisable to develop a minimum essential reporting system which should provide for submission of information only once in a month. Besides, each school should be expected to make a report about its work in each meeting of the SMC and Gram Sabha.
18. The matter regarding monitoring of quality has not been systematically addressed in our country. However, there are examples of attempts having been made to go into this matter through official and non-government agencies. PROBE I and II have shown that some aspects of quality can be systematically studied and attention of concerned people drawn to them. Since the purpose behind the RTE Act is not only to ensure access to school and completion of elementary stage by all children but also to ensure that an education of reasonable quality is provided to them, it would be necessary to create mechanisms for monitoring of quality in a systematic manner. This monitoring should relate to physical facilities as well as curricular issues. NCERT and NUEPA should devise a methodology for periodic systemic analysis of quality to show how we are moving forward.
19. Monitoring of children's right to education is an equally important and complex issue. This responsibility has been given at the first level to local authorities and then to SCPCR and NCPCR. In our country rights of children have been negated due to neglect of parents and connivance or dereliction of official agencies. Only where voice has been raised or recourse taken to

judicial remedy have things improved. Deliberate effort should, therefore, be made by PRIs, NGOs and SCPCRs/NCPCR to encourage aggrieved persons and people committed to human rights and to child rights to articulate the problems faced by children. Moreover, there are hard areas of child abuse which would require radical remedies. These areas include child labour, bonded children, children being subjected to early marriage and numerous other forms of violence towards, and abuse of, children. One of the first measures must consist of amendment to child labour law to ban child labour and for Labour Ministry and State Labour Departments to take an unrelenting stand on this issue. It would also be necessary to involve the district magistrates and police authorities to take prompt and adequate action. The committee is of the view that proper implementation of the RTE Act should result in a distinct improvement in the status of children in our country.

20. SSA is now focussing on quality since it has now become clear that the goal of retention throughout 8 years of elementary education cannot be achieved without ensuring the quality of education children receive at school. From the point of view of governance, quality should be viewed as a major dimension of monitoring. However, there are several aspects of quality which require careful reflection and articulation if they are to be treated as aspects of monitoring. First comes the aspect of accountability which is related to teacher commitment and performance. A number of mechanisms have been put in place for improving teacher performance. Some of these mechanisms focus on the quality of teacher training and on teacher attendance. If we examine this matter from the perspective of children, we can notice a serious and complex mix of problems which emanate from the term 'performance'. A common and growing tendency is to define teacher performance in terms of children's achievement level. Schools results and the scores in large-scale achievement tests are treated as a reflection of teacher performance. RTE proposes to use CCE as a means to ensure teacher performance. Already, these measures have created a considerable pressure on the teacher, and this pressure transfers itself directly to the child.
21. At this point, we need to notice certain invisible aspects of the problem. There has been a general tendency in the system to load the syllabus of early classes with topics which were earlier introduced in secondary and higher secondary classes. This tendency has been particularly strong in mathematics and science, but it is also fairly perceptible in the social sciences. The report of the Yash Pal Committee, *Learning Without Burden* (1993) had analysed the problem of curriculum load in terms of an erroneous concept of knowledge. NCF-2005 and the NCERT syllabi based on it have made an attempt to redress this problem to a certain extent, but the tendency persists and takes different forms. In several states, syllabus revision at the primary stage has not been particularly radical, and a lot of age-inappropriate material continues to be taught during the primary classes. The fear that deletion of complex concepts in the early classes will result in dilution of standards has prevented many States from taking necessary measures. In many schools, additional and unauthorized textbooks are used. When teachers are faced with topics which children cannot negotiate at a particular age-level, they make children learn by rote and reproduce the right answer in tests and examinations. When children fail to learn by rote, they are corporally punished or scolded. Poor marks or grades encourage parents to hire a private tutor. RTE has outlawed private

tuition as far as government teachers are concerned. The tendency to send children for private tuition is likely to get exacerbated when the pressure to perform increases on both teachers and children.

22. In the public mind, quality of a school is associated with examination results and test scores of children. The rise of private schooling has greatly strengthened the perception that quality of education is reflected in the high scores achieved by children. Certain large-scale surveys of children's achievement have also reinforced this perception by comparing the test scores of children going to private schools with those of children going to government schools. Such surveys have distracted public attention away from the strategies and methods used by private schools to ensure the high scores of their children. Some of these methods are incompatible with the RTE's child-centred perspective and the norms provided under it.
23. Under these circumstances the task of monitoring the progress of RTE assumes a highly complex character. RTE has formally assigned the responsibility for monitoring to NCPCR. The guidelines for performance of this responsibility need to be spelt out in a manner that accommodates and does justice to the complexity discussed above.
24. At present NCPCR does not have an academic wing which might have the expertise to examine the nature of children's educational rights in terms of the different factors which affect the fulfillment of this right. In fact, barring the Members of Commission and its higher administrative functionaries, nearly all staff of NCPCR is of a contractual nature at the national level. In the States where a Commission has been established, availability of staff and academic expertise is no different. Monitoring of the implementation of RTE, would require a highly pro-active organization which is able to reach- out to children in every nook and corner of the country. Given the size of the country, a vibrant system is required to respond to the complaints made by children and others. It is also important to distinguish the term 'child' in order to appreciate the vast difference in the socio-economic and cultural experiences that children bring to school. It is a well known fact that girls, children belonging to the SC and ST categories and minorities routinely face adverse or discriminatory experiences at school. Already a recommendation has been made to SSA by the 10th JRM that sustained research needs to be carried out in order to map the scale of such practices and to create adequate capacity in the system to alter the situation. While these reform measures unfold, it is necessary that the nodal agency responsible for monitoring the progress of RTE is given adequate resources to address all forms of negative practices which affect children's learning.
25. Under the present circumstances, there is a risk that monitoring strategies and mechanisms may adversely affect the protection of children's educational rights unless these mechanisms are sensitive to the ground realities and the spirit of RTE. For example, PTR in many states and regions is far from ideal at present. A high PTR often leads to chaotic and stressful conditions in the classroom which some times translate into mental harassment or corporal punishment. In such cases, if a complaint is handled in a conventional manner, and a teacher is suspended for further inquiry, such a step would further exacerbate the PTR. Similarly, certain states have started grading

teachers and schools according to the examination results attained by children. Such a practice is also likely to lead to increase the differential between children from different social backgrounds when teachers are branded for children's results without adequate attention being paid to the effort required and the nature of the challenge a teacher might be fixing.

26. Since the implementation of RTE depends crucially on teachers, it is recommended that substantial exposure to the provision of the RTE act should be included in in-service training. Such a step will facilitate the process of monitoring at the local level by encouraging both teachers and the authorities placed above them to appreciate the importance of positive and reformist measures and the risk involved in taking a punitive approach, except in extreme cases where all dimensions of a violation have been analysed from a systemic perspective, covering the different dimensions (e.g. the quality of syllabus and textbooks, and PTR) discussed earlier. It is also recommended that frequent testing is avoided and CCE is understood in its true spirit (which has been explained elsewhere in this report).

VII. School Management Committee (SMC)

27. The RTE Act gives immense importance to SMCs being the decentralized structure, and one in which the parents will have a preponderance. Essential provisions regarding constitution and functions of SMCs have been given in section 21 and 22. These have been elaborated in the draft Rules prepared for consideration and adoption by state governments/UT Administrations with such modifications as they may consider appropriate. In addition to those provisions there is need to lay emphasis on the following issues:
 - (i) The state Governments/UT Administration will have to communicate messages to 'local authority' to ensure that SMCs are enabled to function in an effective manner. This is important because SDMCs envisaged under SSA did not function very effectively in some of the states.
 - (ii) Relating school grants to School Development Plans will also require discrete and sensitive handling. Administrative authorities are accustomed to schematic budgets and highly patterned grant making. Under section 22 provision has been made for demand coming in bottom-up fashion. New conventions will have to be thought of.
 - (iii) At very few places would the members of SMCs have the capability to play the role envisaged of them. They would be able to follow the expected procedures and discharge their responsibilities if proper training is provided to the office bearers and members of SMCs. This would not be a one-time training - at least two times each year. Apart from "local authority" it would be wise to ensure participation of NGOs to plan and organize the training programmes.

VIII. Strengthening School Management

28. In the final analysis, school is the place where the provisions of the Act have to unfold and children receive their entitlements. For this questions that need

to be addressed on daily basis include: Does the school function regularly for the number of hours specified and the number of days in the year specified? Are the children taught the courses as per the prescribed curriculum? Are they evaluated periodically and feedback given to them and to their parents? Are children treated in a manner that corresponds to the various specifications made in the Act such as no physical punishment or mental harassment, equal treatment to all children without any discrimination? Do children needing special help receive appropriate support? These are not issues that can be monitored by outsiders. Nor can actions be prescribed commonly for all schools. Situations in each school have to be dealt with in a contextualized manner. It, in fact, requires strengthening the daily internal management of the school.

29. A pre-requisite for improvement of school management is to restore the pre-eminence of headmasters /principals. This would involve creation of new mechanisms for their selection and recodification of their powers and functions. It is also well recognized that a good head of institution is an effective safeguard regarding teachers' conduct. This matter should, therefore, receive attention on a priority basis.
30. While SSA has significantly focused on in-service training of teachers, not much attention has been paid to the management training needs of schools. RTE demands new skills and a broadened perspective among school managers for looking at school functioning from the point of view of children's rights which need to be protected every day in the school. It is, therefore, necessary to launch a major programme for orientation of all stakeholders in school management. The programme could initially be confined to head teachers and senior teachers of every elementary school including lower primary schools, in case of small schools with only 3 teachers or less it would be necessary to include all the teachers. The programme would include the following components. (a) Orientation to the various sections of the Act which directly relate to school functioning; (b) orientation to emotional aspects; (c) keeping up-to-date records of teachers and students participation in various activities; (d) dealing with children with special needs; and (e) academic and human resource management. In addition training in preparation of school development plans may also be imparted though the task is assigned to the SMC, it is essential that the school head teacher and senior teacher take interest and prepare the basic outlines of such Plans.

Chapter XIII – FINANCIAL MECHANISMS

I. RTE Provisions

1. The right of all children in the 6-14 age group to ‘free education’ means that no child (other than a child who has been admitted by his/her parents to school, which is not supported by the appropriate Government) shall be liable to pay any kind of fee, charges or expenses which prevents him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. Further, the term ‘compulsory education’ obliges the appropriate government to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education.
2. The RTE Act is categorical that the Central Government and the State Governments have concurrent responsibility for providing funds for carrying out the provisions of this Act. The sharing of financial responsibilities enunciated in Section 7 of the RTE Act are:
 - (i) *The Central Government and the State Government shall have concurrent responsibility for providing funds for carrying out the provisions of this Act.*
 - (ii) *The Central Government shall prepare the estimates of capital and recurring expenditure for the implementation of the provisions of the Act.*
 - (iii) *The Central Government shall provide to the State Government, as grants-in-aid of revenues, such percentage of expenditure referred to in sub-section (2) as it may determine, from time to time, in consultation with the State Governments.*
 - (iv) *The Central Government may make a request to the President to make a reference to the Finance Commission under sub-clause (d) of clause (3) of article 280 to examine the need for additional resources to be provided to any State Government so that the said State Government may provided its share of funds for carrying out the provisions of the Act.*
 - (v) *Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (4), the State Government shall, taking into consideration the sums provided by the Central Government to a State Government under sub-section (3) and its other resources, be responsible to provide funds for i*
 - (vi) *Implementation of the provisions of the Act.*
3. The responsibility of the Central Government includes preparing estimates of capital and recurring expenditure, determining the percentage of grant in aid to be provided to States in consultation with States, and making reference to the Finance Commission to examine the need for additional resources so that States can provide their share.

II. SSA provisions vis-à-vis RTE norms

4. SSA goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in elementary education, and achieving significant enhancement in learning levels of children. SSA provides for a variety of activities in order to achieve its overall goals, including *inter alia*:
- (i) Universal access through opening and construction new primary and upper primary schools in unserved areas, and opening centres under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) to enable hard-to-reach children mainstream into regular formal schools.
 - (ii) Universal retention through provisioning of teachers to achieve a pupil teacher ratio of 1:40 at the primary and 1:35 at the upper primary level, annual in-service teacher training, textbooks for children, support for adequate infrastructure through additional classrooms, toilets (separate for girls) and drinking water.
 - (iii) Bridging gender and social category gaps through programmes of gender and caste sensitization of teachers, opening residential facilities through Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) in educationally backward blocks, and implementing programmes under the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL), which include community mobilisation as well as intensive teacher training.
 - (iv) Improving quality of education through introduction of child friendly and child centred learning systems, and achievement testing of the child's understanding and learning.
5. A comparative statement of the SSA provisions vis-à-vis RTE norms is given in Appendix I. Some of the provisions mandated under RTE exist under SSA or certain other schemes of the Department of School Education and Literacy such as provisions under the Teacher Education and Mid Day Meal schemes. Certain other provisions of RTE, such as drinking water and toilets for existing schools are sourced from Centrally Sponsored Schemes of other departments. Provisions for uniforms, stationery, textbooks, transport are part of many State budgets and these will continue to be provided through State schemes. These provisions notwithstanding, additional resources would be required to meet certain provisions of the RTE Act, and SSA norms would require to be changed. These are tabulated below:

Sl. No.	RTE Provision	Additional requirements under SSA
1.	Any expenses which may prevent a child from pursuing and completing EE	SSA makes provisions for textbooks, workbooks and other essential teaching learning material for children at the rate of Rs 150 per child for primary stage and Rs 250 per child for the upper primary stage to the extent that these are not already provided by State Governments. In NPEGEL clusters, SSA provides that the savings from textbooks may

Sl. No.	RTE Provision	Additional requirements under SSA
		<p>be used for providing additional items such as stationary, slates, uniforms, escorts for girls, etc. In the case of children with special needs SSA provides a unit cost of Rs 1200 per child, which includes costs for all aspects, such as identification, provision of aids and appliances, engagement of resource teachers, etc. Provisions for mid day meal are made separately.</p> <p>There is need for the following additional provisions under SSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uniforms for all children, wherever these are not provided by the States. ▪ Transport facilities, where necessary, and provided that such facilities are not already provided by the States. ▪ Current unit costs under SSA for children with special needs to be enhanced
2.	School within the limits of the neighbourhood	<p>SSA provides for a school within one km of every habitation; it also provides for setting up new schools as per State norms and of EGS like schools in unserved habitations. SSA provides upper primary schools/sections based on the number of children completing primary education upto a ceiling of one upper primary school/section for every two primary schools.</p> <p>The current norms under SSA need to be changed to include schools within the limits of neighbourhood as prescribed by the State Government.</p> <p>Also there is need for providing residential schools, wherever school or transport cannot be provided due to geographical limitations,</p>
3.	Teachers	<p>The SSA norms provides for one teacher for every 40 children in primary and upper primary, provided further that there are at least two teachers in a primary school. At the upper primary level, SSA provides for one teacher for every class with subject specific teachers for Mathematics and Science.</p> <p>SSA teachers norms will need to be reviewed as per the provisions of the Schedule under section 19 of RTE Act.</p>

Sl. No.	RTE Provision	Additional requirements under SSA
4.	School buildings, classrooms, drinking water and toilets	<p>The SSA norms for civil works allow for construction of classrooms for every teacher or for every grade/class, whichever is lower. It also provides for a Head Teacher's room for the upper primary stage. In addition it provides for barrier free access, separate toilets for boys and girls, safe and adequate drinking water, boundary or fencing within a ceiling of 33 of the project cost. Drinking water and toilets in existing schools are provided in convergence with and as per TSC and DWM norms. The financial estimates prepared by NUEPA indicate that civil works requirement for RTE is within 33 ; therefore the current SSA norms will meet the RTE requirement.</p> <p>The SSA norm for office-cum-store-cum-head-teacher room at upper primary school needs to be modified to include office-cum-store-cum head-teacher room for primary schools.</p>
5.	Teaching Learning Equipment	<p>SSA provides for a one-time grant for teaching learning equipment for new primary and upper primary schools. It also provides that teaching learning equipment may be provided on a recurring basis from the annual School Grant.</p> <p>The implications of RTE Act are that all schools follow an eight year elementary education cycle (5+3). States that need to integrate class V and VIII with the primary and upper primary cycle respectively will need to be supported with one-time grant for teaching learning equipment.</p>
6.	Training facility for teachers	<p>SSA provides for the following training:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual inservice training of teachers for 20 days 2. Induction training for newly recruited teachers for 30 days 3. Training for untrained teachers (financial equivalent of 60 days provided) <p>Under RTE Act the training of teachers has the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training of about 7.6 lakh existing untrained teachers, who need to be professionally trained.

Sl. No.	RTE Provision	Additional requirements under SSA
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additionally about 10 lakh teachers will need to be inducted as per the PTR laid down in the RTE Act within a short period of time. Many of these new teachers will also require professional training. Combining the existing and new untrained teachers, we can estimate that around 10.6 lakh teachers will require professional training within a maximum period of five years from the date of notification of the Act. <p>The funding for annual in-service training as well as training of untrained teachers will need to be provided from SSA, with appropriate enhancement of unit costs and augmentation of training capacity at block and cluster level.</p>
7.	Constitution and capacity building of SMC to prepare and implement school development plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SSA provides for training of community leaders. However, the unit costs and duration of training are inadequate. The success of RTE is contingent on strong SMCs and Local Authorities. The unit costs under training of community leader should be enhanced, and the scope and duration of training expanded.
8.	Special Training of out of school children to admit them in age appropriate class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SSA provides for interventions under AIE centres for out-of-school children. The norms under AIE component should be converted to norms for Special Training under the RTE Act.
9.	Reimbursement by the State to Private schools for 25 children belonging to weaker sections & disadvantaged groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not provided by SSA; an additionality to be computed State by State.
10.	NCPCR/SCPCR to carry out their functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The current SSA norms for Research, Evaluation, Monitoring and Evaluation (REMS) may be revised to provide support for NCPCR/SCPCR, with appropriate enhancement in unit costs.
11.	NAC/SAC to carry out their functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As in para 8 above the norms for REMS under SSA may be explicitly phrased to include support for NAC/SAC
12.	Technical support and resources for promoting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current norms under SSA appear to be adequate.

Sl. No.	RTE Provision	Additional requirements under SSA
	innovations, research, planning & capacity building	
13.	Maintaining record of children of 6-14 age group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The States follow several systems for maintaining records, including a State MIS, DISE, system for SES, etc. There is need to move towards a unified system of collecting data and maintaining records. ▪ The norms and unit costs under REMS may be modified to specifically provide for maintaining record of children of the 6-14 age group.
14.	Development of curriculum and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funds to be provided to set up a national/state support system for curriculum, syllabus and evaluation systems.

III. AWP&B for SSA

6. Although the planning and appraisal of SSA's Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B) is fairly strong and robust, it is largely limited to the SSA schematic aspects. The AWP&B does factor in investments from relevant central schemes such as Teacher Education, Total Sanitation Campaign, Mid Day Meal and Drinking Water Mission, and also from State schemes, but this is largely for the purpose of avoiding duplication. The AWP&B does not give insight into holistic planning for elementary education. There is need for specific amendment to the SSA planning and appraisal process to factor in RTE requirements more holistically.
7. The integration that RTE demands would entail that the AWP&B of each district reflects all the investments made from different sources for elementary education. Thus the SSA Planning and Monitoring Manual should be amended and capacities of the State, local authority and SMCs built for holistic and convergent planning. At the National level there is a need to move towards a single Project Approval Board for RTE, which incorporates components of SSA, TE, MDM etc., as well as components of other Central and State schemes.

IV. SSA fund flow mechanism

8. The fund delivery system through the SSA Society, registered under the Societies Acts, has proved to be efficient and effective. This system requires the creation of a separate Bank Account of the SSA Society, to which the central and state shares are deposited. The State level fund is also released to the districts bank accounts, and from there to the specific village/school level Bank Accounts. In many States funds are electronically transferred, which has led to significant reduction in time delays, paper work, and has led to greater transparency. This system should be retained for the implementation of the

RTE in conformity with governance structure outlined in the Governance chapter in this report.

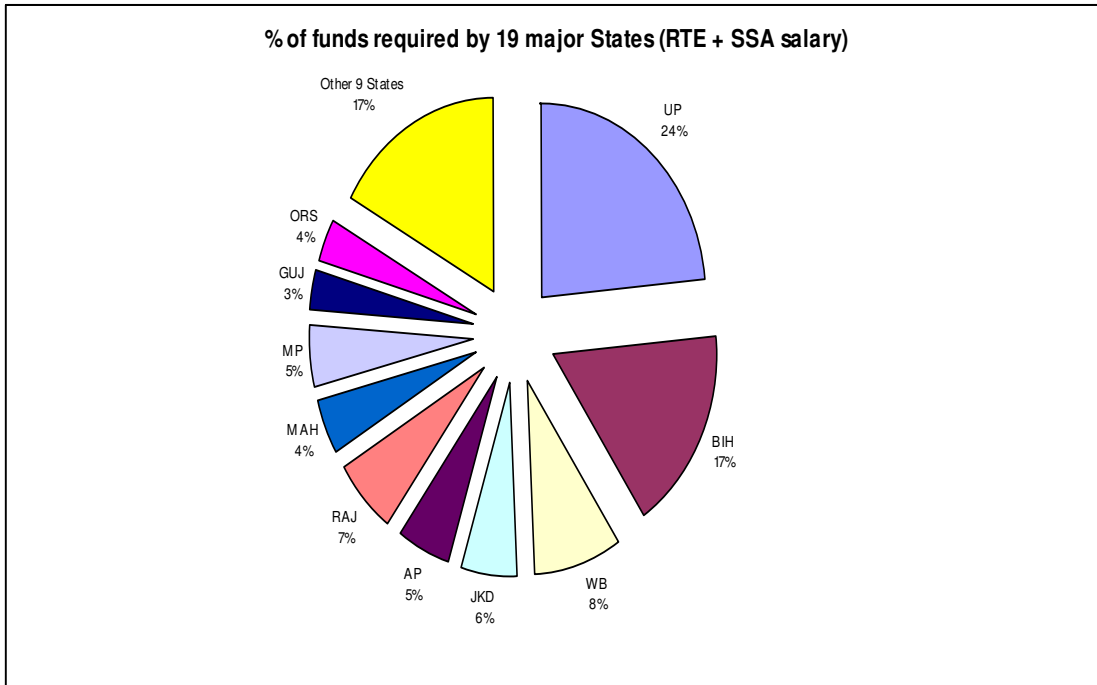
V. Financial Estimates:

9. The financial estimates for the implementation of RTE Act have been prepared by National University of Education, Planning and Administration (NUEPA) for a period of 5 years from 2010-11 to 2014-15. The financial estimates calculated at Rs 1,71,484 crore, cover child entitlements for free education; mainstreaming out-of-school children to regular schools; inclusive education for the children with special needs; induction of teachers in the teacher-pupil ratio 1:30 at primary and upper primary level; provision of professional development of teachers, including training for existing untrained teachers; classrooms for every teacher and provision of basic facilities in schools, including upgradation of existing school facilities. The component wise estimates are as follows:

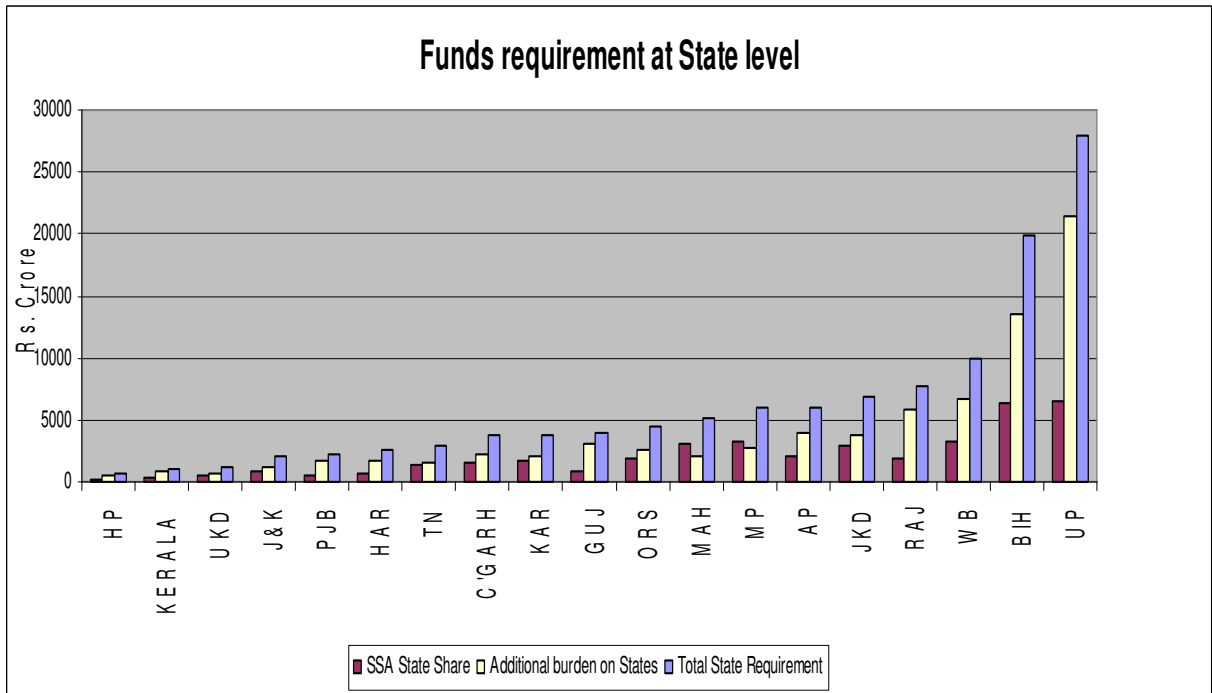
(Rs in crore)

Year	Civil Works	Teacher salary	School Facilities	Main streaming children	IE for disabled children	Child entitlements	Teacher devt.	Mgt cost	Total
2010-11	7945	10250	3615	3373	2076	6114	718	998	35088
2011-12	7945	10250	3615	3373	2057	6060	749	996	35045
2012-13	7945	10250	3615	3373	2047	6026	749	994	34998
2013-14	7945	10250	3615	3373	2036	5993	749	992	34953
2014-15	7945	10250	3615	0	2025	5960	749	856	31400
Total	39724	51248	18075	13492	10241	30152	3715	4836	171484

10. The State wise estimate on these parameters is at [Appendix II](#). It is evident that the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh will require the bulk of the funds, estimated at 76 under RTE and SSA



11. Further, the graph below indicates that the States will have to double their present State shares for implementation of RTE and committed salary of SSA. To cover the additional burden, the increase would range from 31 in case of Madhya Pradesh to 117 in the case of Bihar, 200 in the case of Uttar Pradesh, 210 in the case of Gujarat and 257 in the case of Punjab. Therefore, the State share requirements will be substantial, and it would be difficult for the States to meet their shares without additional central support.



VI. Financial Sharing Pattern under RTE_SSA: discussions with State Governments

12. All States have welcomed the provisions of the RTE Act endorsing the view that these would lead to significant systemic reform in elementary education. However, States have also expressed serious reservations on the continuation of the SSA funding pattern on the RTE requirements. States have suggested that the present Centre-State funding pattern under SSA, which is on a sliding scale, tapering to 50:50 ratio in the last year of the 11th Plan, should be revisited, and that the Central Government should bear the additional expenditure required for implementing the RTE Act. Several State Governments, including Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Assam, Rajasthan, Bihar, etc., have suggested 90 -100 central funding towards RTE. The State wise comments on fund sharing are in Appendix III.
13. The SSA fund sharing pattern on the sliding scale was approved in the context of the 11th Plan outlay of Rs 71,000 crore. Of the total outlay, Rs 36,870 crore has been provided in the first three years of the Plan. Unfortunately, the Central Plan outlays for SSA in the first three have been relatively low, and there has been no enhancement at all in the 2008-09 and 2009-10 allocations. Thus, 48 of the outlay remains for the last two years of the Plan, when the sharing ratio at 55:45 and 50:50 is less favourable to the States.
14. Applying the 50:50 fund sharing pattern will put severe strain on the State resources. The percentage increase in the State share would practically double from the 2008-09 level of Rs 8009 crore (65:35 ratio). Some of the educationally backward states would require huge annual State shares, such as Rs 5500 crore in the case of Uttar Pradesh, Rs 4000 crore in Bihar, Rs 2000 crore in West Bengal. Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra would each require to provide Rs 1500 crore annually.
15. Even at the 65:35, with current SSA outlays, as many as 14 States have defaulted on the SSA State shares. These are the States of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Orissa, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttarakhand, and A&N Islands. Given the existing backlog in State shares, it may not be feasible to expect States to provide funds for RTE on the SSA 50:50 ratio. The number of States that would not be able to provide their shares would only increase and the overall programme implementation would be severely affected.
16. In the context of RTE it is crucial to revisit the fund sharing pattern between the Centre and States. Considering that States have provided Rs 8009 crore (65:35) towards SSA state share, the Centre and State share towards RTE should be fixed in the 75:25 ratio, which would require States to provide approximately Rs 12,000 crore annually.

Year	Total	Committed SSA Liabilities	Total (RTE and SSA)	Central share At 75: 25	State share at 75: 25
2010-11	35088	12500	47588	35691	11897
2011-12	35045	12500	47545	35659	11886
2012-13	34998	12500	47498	35624	11875

2013-14	34953	12500	47453	35590	11863
2014-15	31400	12500	43900	32925	10975
Total	1,71,484	62,500	2,33,984	1,75,488	58,496

17. The State share in the 5th year will come down from the level of Rs 11,897 crore to Rs 10,975 crore. This is likely to further reduce in later years, as the non recurring expenditure on infrastructure, special training for out-of-school children, as also recurring expenditure on child entitlements owing to reverse demographic trends will come down. After 2015-16, capital expenditures will be low, and the Central Government may make reference to the 14th Finance Commission for providing resources to the States. The Central Government funds thereafter would be limited to incremental capital assets, monitoring, innovation, capacity building, research, technical support, development of curriculum and standard setting.

VII. Financial Monitoring and Supervision:

18. There is a need to spell out financial monitoring and supervision mechanism. SSA has a comprehensive Manual on Financial Management and Procurement, and currently, the financial monitoring includes:
- (i) Periodical reports on releases and utilization of funds including position on staff, capacity building measures and status on audit reports, utilization etc.
 - (ii) Quarterly review meetings with State Financial Controllers.
 - (iii) External Audit by Chartered Accountants selected from the panel of Chartered Accountants firms approved by C&AG
 - (iv) Internal Audit by States/UTs
 - (v) C&AG/AG's Audit including Performance Audit.
 - (vi) Concurrent Financial Review by Institute of Public Auditors of India (IPAI).
19. Although, the present financial monitoring under SSA is strong, there will be need for further strengthening, considering the significant enhancement in financial outlays expected for the enforcement of RTE. With greater decentralization, more and more funds will be spent at the level of SMC, and the accounting system at the sub district level will need further strengthening. At present there are no accounts staff at the block level. Staffing at this level should obviously be contingent on the work load and in the effort towards greater decentralization and intensive monitoring, Accountants at block level to maintain school accounts should be considered. Financial Monitoring and Control can be further strengthened by:
- (i) Provision of stronger accounts keeping mechanism at the local level.
 - (ii) Better training of the schools to keep the accounts.
 - (iii) Social Audits on fund utilization, data and outcomes.