

Chapter III

Maharashtra : Background of Elementary Education

Maharashtra is in central India and is bounded north and east by Madhya Pradesh, south by Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Goa, west by the Indian ocean and north-west by Daman and Gujarat. The State has an area of 307,713 sq. km. Its population at the 1991 census was 78,937,187 (an increase of 25.73% since 1981). In 1960 the Bombay Reorganisation Act divided Bombay State between Gujarati and Marathi areas, the latter becoming the State of Maharashtra on 1st May 1960. The capital is Mumbai and the state has 33 districts.

Literacy rate in Maharashtra is 64.87% (men 76.56% and women 52.32%) which is much higher than the national literacy rate of 52.21%. Similarly, the rate of women's literacy in Maharashtra (52.32%) is much higher than the national women's literacy rate of 39.29%. In 1996-97, there were 41,005 primary schools with 11,685,598 pupils.

The overall annual growth rate in state income during the period 1960-61 to 1979-80 (roughly the period of Third, Fourth and Fifth Plans and intervening annual plans) was 3.57 per cent. During the Sixth plan it was 3.04 per cent and in the Seventh Plan the annual compound growth rate in the SDP was 7.81 percent (as against the target of 4.8%) while the per capita income increased by annual compound growth rate by 5.27 per cent. The performance of the economy during the eighth Five Year Plan period (based on estimates of SDP for 4 years) is better than that of the Seventh Plan period. The overall annual compound growth rate during the Eighth Plan period was 7.31 (as against the target of 5.51). Thus the performance of the economy has exceeded the targeted progress considerably.

Not only the growth rates of the economy are high but in absolute terms also the per capita income of Maharashtra is much higher than the per capita income at the All-India level. For the year 1995-96, the per capita state income of Maharashtra

at current prices was Rs. 15,244 as against the per capita National income at Rs. 9,321. It is anticipated that primary education development in Maharashtra will depend on the State Domestic Product at constant prices which would indicate the overall growth in the economy. The state of the economy in Maharashtra will permit the State to not only quantitatively expand primary education but also make qualitative inputs as compared to Madhya Pradesh. However, as of now, the States finances are under severe constraints and the implementation of the Ninth Five Year Plan as regards primary education is restricted.

The Eighth Plan's approach to development was : (1) to promote economic growth by encouraging market forces and private investments; and (2) to expand the role of the centre and states in the areas relating to the social sector. More specifically, the focus on the social sector is delineated in the Foreword to the Eighth Plan which emphasises Human development in all its facets. The Plan accords priority to the generation of adequate employment opportunities to achieve near-full employment by the turn of the century, building up of people's institutions like Panchayati raj, control of population growth, universalisation of elementary education, eradication of illiteracy, provision of safe drinking water and primary health facilities for all, growth and diversification of agriculture to achieve self-sufficiency in foodgrains and generate surpluses for exports.

A nation has to be prepared for a particular kind of economy. The harsh reality is that a society's progress in all walks of life, ranging from art and culture to the economic health of the country, is also determined by its social development which is both the cause and effect of economic growth. The social sector growth is measured by indicators, such as, birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate, life expectancy and literacy rate. India lags behind many poor countries in general educational standards and achievement, and also in health and health improvement. This has been stressed by Dreze and Sen who make out an urgent plea for social reform. Sen has pointed out the danger of India chasing GNP targets without addressing the basic problems of illiteracy, undernourishment, ill-health and social inequalities. India's track record in human development is dismal, according to the 1995 UNDP Report. The Report for the first time focused on the status of women and the gender bias in the models of development. In a world of pervasive discrimination, the Report argues, that 'human development, if not engendered, is endangered.' India's rank is 134 out of the 174 countries for which the human development index was prepared. Despite its track record, India is left with no choice but to open up its economy. Participation in a borderless world economy is illogical with a largely illiterate, ill-fed and unhealthy workforce. Primary

education would have to be universalised under the social safety net.

Historical Background of Primary Education Development

The Maharashtra State Government right from its formation on 1st May, 1960 committed itself to planned development of primary education. The planning process in the country started in the year 1951 with the First Five Year Plan. Maharashtra joined this process of socio-economic development through planning from the Third Five Year Plan onwards. A survey of the Five Year Plans facilitates the understanding of the evolution of primary education in the rural areas. Pune District (erstwhile Poona District) is well advanced in educational field and facilities for Primary Education are available in Pune City and in the District. During the First Five Year Plan, among the schemes designed to assist the growth of primary education in the state, an important place was occupied by the scheme relating to the introduction of compulsory primary education on an organised basis.

The position of primary education in the Pune District was as follows:

Year	1946-47	1947-48	1951-52	1952-53
No. of Schools	1,208	1,330	1,375	1,380
(a) Public	706	725	804	813
(b) Private	502	605	571	567
No. of Pupils	1,11,046	1,42,942	1,97,281	1,98,997
No. of Teachers	3,281	3,751	4,891	4,950

Thus, during the years 1946-47 to 1952-53 the number of schools increased by 172 admitting 87,951 additional students. Grants spent in the District are as follows:

Year	Amount (Rs.)
1951-52	35,09,000
1952-53	37,81,000
1953-54	40,30,000

The programme of educational development envisaged under the Second Five Year Plan resulted in the Scheme of Compulsory Primary Education being introduced in this District in the year 1947 when 298 villages with a population of over 1,000 according to the 1941 census were covered. The scheme was further

extended in 1954 to 84 villages having a population of over 1,000 according to the 1951 Census and later extended to 357 villages with a population of 500 to 999 and 682 villages with a population of less than 500. Thus, in this District Compulsory Primary Education had been introduced in all the villages except some 75 villages which had a very small population, by 1951 - 1952. Hence, during the First Five Year Plan (1951-52 to 1955-56) the number of primary schools managed by the District School Board (Since 1961-62 taken over by the Zilla Parishads) in Pune District increased from 688 to 1,195. The number of pupils in the age group 6 to 11 years in these schools increased from 1,12,389 to 11,49,328.

An educational survey was carried out in 1957 for the evaluation of the facilities for primary education in the Pune District and also for facilitating the planned expansion of educational infrastructure for the primary stage.

The Third Five Year Plan, provided for the essential needs of free universal and compulsory education in primary stage of standards of I to IV. It tried to correct the imbalances in the growth of primary education in the different regions of the State, especially Vidharba and Marathwada as compared to Western Maharashtra which includes Pune, through increased allocations and pointing out the need to harness the resources of local authorities and voluntary agencies. In Western Maharashtra, compulsion for the age group 7-11 was introduced in 1948-49 in villages with a population of 1000 and above according to the 1941 census. By the end of Second Five Year Plan, except for about 580 stray villages which were very small, schooling facilities existed in all villages of Western Maharashtra, whereas in Vidharbha (Nagpur Division) and Marathwada (Aurangabad Division) compulsion was introduced in 1965-66. The Plan made a provision of Rs. 385 lakhs for the development of primary schools in the State at the rate of 2 per cent per year. There was an increase in the number of students enrolled in primary schools by about 14.40 lakhs during this period.

	1960-61	1965-66
I. Number of Schools		
(a) Primary	25,418	29,728
(b) Middle	9,446	13,043
II. Number of Students (lakhs)		
(a) Primary	38.49	53.04
(b) Middle	7.48	12.51
III. Percentage of enrolment		
(a) Primary (Age group 6-11)	74.20	90.19
(b) Middle (Age group 11-14)	29.40	39.89

The scheme to supply free textbooks to students in the first and second standard of primary schools was initiated in 1963-64. The scheme of free milk supply to pupils of primary schools, designed to improve their health, continued in the Third Plan and was extended to 239 schools in the scarcity areas also. The scheme of merit scholarships to primary students being implemented in Western Maharashtra was extended to Aurangabad Division where 134 students benefited from it. The Government spent Rs. 10,000 on these concessions.

Although there was a quantitative expansion in primary education during the first three plan periods of 1951 to 1966, the programme suffered from certain deficiencies such as, shortage of trained teachers, equipment and buildings, slow progress of girls' education and large wastage in education. The Fourth Five Year Plan provided not only for a quantitative expansion of primary education but also aimed at qualitative improvement in the system, methods and facilities of education.

The main objectives of the Fourth Plan were :

1. to transform the present educational system so as to relate it more intimately to the life, needs and aspirations of the people;
2. to improve the standards substantially and keep them continually rising;
3. to discover and develop talent in various fields, and
4. to increase facilities at all stages and in all sectors for creating greater equality of opportunities.

To attract more children to schools and to prevent absenteeism and dropouts, particularly girls leaving schools, a new scheme of mid-day meals in primary schools was introduced in Maharashtra in 1968-69. To improve attendance of girls in schools in scheduled areas the plan provided for free supply of text books, slates,

uniforms, etc. Similarly to attract women teachers in backward and rural areas for improving attendance of girls in primary schools the Plan proposed the construction of 500 quarters at the place of employment.

The programme of revision and upgradation of curricula and text books, and the programme of training of teachers to enable them to modernise their knowledge and improve their professional competence was launched. State level institutions such as, the State Institute of Education, Education Bureau of Government Examinations etc. were also strengthened.

At the end of 1968-69 i.e. at the end of three years of Annual Plans, there were 44,058 primary schools in the State and enrolment and number of teachers in these schools was 60.45 lakhs and 1.75 lakh respectively. On 15 July, 1972, the number of primary schools was 46,013 and the enrolment and number of teachers was 68.47 lakhs and 1.91 lakh respectively. There were only 1300 villages without schooling facility in the State, most of which were having a population below 300 and situated in inaccessible and difficult areas.

The position of population in the age group 6-11 at the end of 1968-69 and that expected at the end of 1973-74 was as follows :

Percentage of population covered

Region	1968-69		1973-74	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1. Western Maharashtra	112.3	81.8	107.8	84.2
2. Marathwada	93.2	41.9	95.6	44.7
3. Vidharba	95.1	66.8	98.5	68.1
4. State	105.3	71.8	103.7	74.0

During the period of the Fourth Plan the proportion of girls to total enrolment in standards I-V increased slightly from 40.1% to 40.4% and the proportion of women teachers to total teachers in Primary schools increased from 23.1% to 27.5%. To promote girls education in scheduled areas a scheme of giving them free slates and stationery was implemented during the Fourth Plan. The amount spent was Rs. 4.00 lakhs on this scheme and a provision was made for Rs. 2.07 lakhs for the year 1973-74. The scheme covers scheduled areas in Thane, Nasik, Jalgaon, Dhulia, Nanded, Amravati, and Chandrapur.

During the Fourth Plan the Government took the decision of introducing subjectwise teaching in standards V-VII and sanctioned teachers at the rate of 1.3

per division of these standards. During the year 1970-71 a survey was conducted throughout the State to ascertain the requirements of teachers of different Zilla Parishads for the introduction of subjectwise teaching. A backlog of 16,654 teachers was revealed by this survey which has been reduced to only 2,500 to maintain the 40 : 1 pupil teacher ratio.

The position of posts of teachers sanctioned to various Zilla Parishads under the State and Central Plan during the IV Plan is as follows :

Year	Number
1969-70	3,540
1970-71	5,080
1971-72	7,830
1972-73	6,592

Thus, 24042 posts of teachers had been created during the fourth plan to meet the demands of enrolment increase and subjectwise teaching in primary schools. To supervise the working of the schools and for academic guidance of teacher 136 posts of A.D.E.Is had been created. During the Fourth Plan post of Head Master in the scale of Rs. 145-250 was sanctioned for the primary schools having an enrolment of at least 200.

The Plan under lined the fact that the quality of education imparted in standards V-VII in a primary school was inferior to that imparted in the same standards in secondary schools due to lack of supervision, lack of subject teachers, and non-availability of equipment, library and laboratory facilities etc. To improve the quality of their education, scheme of attaching standards V-VII in primary schools to secondary schools was initiated in the Fourth Plan and continued during the Fifth Plan. 1600 such classes were attached to secondary schools in 1972-73. About 9,600 such classes were attached to secondary schools upto the end of 1979-80 and during 1980-81, 144 classes of Standard VII were proposed to be attached for which an outlay of Rs. 155.52 lakhs was proposed in the Sixth Plan.

For the first time in the country Maharashtra State published a Policy Statement of Educational Reconstruction in February ,1970. The Statement announced a programme of long-term perspective planning for educational reconstruction linked with social and national goals. It suggested the transformation of the educational system so as to make it relevant to the needs and aspirations of the people through appropriate development of all stages of education, through equality of educational opportunity, through qualitative development of education, through co-ordination of educational planning with the planning of other sectors of development, and

through the reorganization of teacher education, educational administration and the passage of suitable legislation.

Since the Constitutional Directive to Universalise Elementary Education by 1960 could not become a reality, the Fifth Plan envisaged facilities of education to 100 % children in the age group 6-11 and 60% children in the age group 11-14 (including 50% on full-time basis and 25% on part-time basis.) The Planning Commission had included this programme in its 'National Programme of Minimum Needs' and made available a Central assistance of Rs. 33.83 crores.

During the period of the Fifth Plan, a Sub-Plan for the Educational Development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes had been prepared, as 12% of the population in the State belongs to the S.C. and S.T. Although data related to their enrolment or percentage coverage of their population in schools was not available, the hard reality was that they were lagging behind in educational development. In the hilly and inaccessible regions the population is sparser and therefore educational facilities do not exist there. Many children especially, girls, are not sent to schools due to social backwardness and poor economic conditions of the parents. Therefore, this programme of universalisation of Primary Education was given priority number one to provide educational facilities in the hilly and backward regions. Besides this, the following four special schemes were floated for promoting education for the SC/ST children : Besides this, for special schemes were floated by the Government for promoting primary education for S.C. and S.T.

Scheme	Total Outlay (crores)	Outlay to be spent on S.C. & S.T. (crores)
1. Book grants to girls (I-V) in Rural Areas	1.97	0.24
2. Uniforms to Girls (I-V) of S.C. & S.T.	2.76	2.76
3. Ashram Schools	1.40	1.40
4. Production of books in local tribal dialects	0.05	0.05
Total	6.18	4.45

The total outlay of the Minimum Needs Programme for the entire Nation was Rs. 80.09 crores. The outlay of the sub-plan for S.C. and S.T. totalling Rs. 4.45 crores, is 5.5% of the total.

The Sixth Five Year Plan, pointed out the critical role of education in the

process of economic development and how it was the principal means for creating human capital of trained, competent man-power for implementing the process of development. Its approach is to ensure essential minimum education to all children upto the age of 14 years within the next ten years, particularly giving attention to school drop-outs and to those groups which are in danger of being left behind because of their special circumstances, through appropriate programmes designed to promote 'learning while earning'. The Plan approved an outlay of Rs. 2,12.44 lakhs for elementary education for the year 1980-81.

Elementary education forms part of the minimum needs programme. At the end of 1978-79 there were about 49,374 primary schools in the State with an enrolment of 80.75 lakhs students and the teaching staff of approximately 2.22 lakhs teachers. During 1979-80, 503 new primary schools were started bringing the total of primary schools in the State to 49877.

The position regarding enrolment in primary schools is as follows :

Item	Unit	Position at the end of 1979-80
I. Class I-V (age group 6-11)		
(a) Boys	lakhs	46.71
	(percentage)	124.20
(b) Girls	lakhs	34.99
	(percentage)	96.90
(c) Total	lakhs	81.70
	(percentage)	110.80
II. Class VI-VIII (age group 11-14)		
(a) Boys	lakhs	13.16
	(percentage)	59.09
(b) Girls	lakhs	07.27
	(percentage)	33.80
(c) Total	lakh	20.43
	(percentage)	46.70

During the Sixth Plan Period a primary school was opened in every village in the State having a population of about 200 and above. Thus during the Sixth Plan 1300 schools, in addition to the existing 49,374 primary schools were to be provided in school-less villages. The Sixth plan spent Rs. 27,12.00 lakhs for primary education.

A provision of Rs. 141.85 lakhs had been provided for the non-formal education programme in the Sixth Plan. An outlay of Rs. 445.12 lakhs was made for the Book Bank Scheme during the Plan. During the year 1979-80 about 82,000 students benefited from the scheme of supplying free uniforms and writing material. An outlay of Rs. 118.90 lakhs was made for the above scheme.

A scheme for the construction of quarters for primary teachers posted in tribal / forest areas, who find it difficult to find residential accommodation in rural areas, was taken up. Under this programme a grant of Rs. 10,000 per quarter was paid to the Zilla Parishads. An outlay of Rs. 40 lakhs was provided in the Sixth Plan for construction of about 400 quarters.

To improve the quality of teaching in Primary and secondary schools a scheme of school complexes was introduced in 1968-69 and about 25 school complexes were started in the Fourth Plan. In 1979-80 the school complexes increased to 408 and in 1980-81, 72 new complexes were started. During, the Sixth Plan the proposal was for 270 complexes with an outlay of Rs.28.40 lakhs.

The Seventh Five Year Plan's objective was to universalise primary education in the 14 year age group children, to reduce dropout rate especially amongst girls. During the Plan period, the Dr. V. M. Dandekar Committee was appointed to study the problems and lacuna in primary, middle and higher education. The Seventh Plan programmes related to teachers and school classrooms were in keeping with the recommendations of this fact finding committee. The expenditure incurred during the Seventh Plan was Rs. 7864.40 lakhs and during the year 1990-91 it was Rs. 610.68 lakhs. At the end of the plan, the enrolment percentage for the age group 6 to 10 was 122.90 per cent and the percentage of children between the age group 11 to 14 was 80.50 per cent. The objective of opening a new primary school with a population of 200 within the radius of 1.5 K.M. was achieved during the Seventh Plan.

The position of Enrolment During Seventh Plan Period and for the Annual Plan 1990-91 was :

Enrolment in Classes	Seventh Plan 1985-90	Annual Plan 1990-91
I to V	10,090	10,370
VI to VIII	3,821	3,992
Total	13,911	14,362

1. During the Plan, 1468 villages were covered and 2133 teachers were appointed for which an amount of Rs. 367.41 lakhs was spent.
2. Under the Operation Blackboard Scheme, 3560 single teacher schools were

opened and after 30th September, 1986 were upgraded under the State Plan for which an amount of Rs. 1441.04 lakhs was spent.

3. 165 Balwadis were opened during the VIIth Plan for which an amount of Rs. 8.13 lakhs was spent.
4. 720 part time classes were started for which an amount of Rs. 15.73 lakhs was spent.
5. Under the special facilities to SC / ST students in the Primary Schools Scheme, 5.86 lakhs students were provided with uniforms and writing material for which an expenditure of Rs. 298.89 lakhs was incurred.
6. Under the Book Bank Scheme, 41.03 lakhs students were supplied with books for which Rs. 292.63 lakhs were spent.
7. Grants were given to District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) for constructing 14,471 class rooms during the VIIth Plan for which Rs. 776.20 lakhs were spent.

The thrust areas identified for the Eighth Plan (1992-97) were :

1. to accelerate the tempo of universalisation of Primary Education Programme, especially in the Tribal Sub-Plan area, hilly / inaccessible areas and other backward areas;
2. to reduce the drop out rates of the students at Primary Education level by launching special campaigns of motivation for weaker sections of the society;
3. to create congenial atmosphere in the rural and backward areas by involving local village bodies in the process of elementary education programme;
4. to educate the economically weaker sections of the society about the importance of elementary education for their children with the assistance of teacher organisations, voluntary organisations, volunteers from Government and Non-Government institutions like Rotary Clubs and Lion Clubs. This was done to help create awareness among illiterates, and
5. to encourage the weaker section families to send their children for primary education by taking ameliorative measures for their economic upliftment.

The 1987 Educational survey had pointed out that there were 1150 schoolless villages which had no schooling facilities within the radius of 1.5 km. and which had population of 200. During 1990-91, 286 primary schools were opened in schoolless villages for which Rs. 83.29 lakhs were spent. 2588 teachers were appointed during 1990-91 for which Rs. 362.51 lakhs were allocated. Under the scheme of Operation Blackboard, single teacher schools started after 30th September were to be upgraded into two teachers by the state Government from its funds. During 1990-91, 383 schools were upgraded for which Rs. 73.37 lakhs were allocated. For effective implementation of universal primary education, it was found necessary to open a Balwadi in the campus of each primary school. In 1990-

91, 1088 Balwadis were established.

Eighth Plan and Primary Education

The new policy of universalisation of primary education was given priority in the Eighth Plan and a sum of Rs. 404.48 crores was spent on Primary education. The enrolment of children belonging to 6-14 age group was 84% by the end of the Plan.

During the Eighth Plan, special emphasis was on the implementation of the National Policy on Education and certain important schemes were given priority which continues even in the Ninth Five Year Plan. According to the new revised policy of the Government, a primary school would be opened with 100 population and where no schooling facility existed within a radius of 1 K.M. in hilly and inaccessible areas. During the Eighth Plan an expenditure of Rs.91.27 lakhs was incurred under this scheme.

To achieve the target of Universalisation of Primary Education by the year 2000, primary schools for the children of sugarcane cutting workers were started to cover all the children belonging to the age group 6-14 years. The temporary workers and sugarcane cutting workers move along with their families from their place of residence to the sugar factories during September-April every year which causes weak in the education of the children. To deal with the frequent breaks in the education of the children of these workers it was decided to open 25 schools near the sugar factories. The sugar factories will provide classrooms and the schools will be managed by the Zilla Parishads. For this, training will be imparted to the teachers and the Block Education Officers. Allocation for the Annual Plan 1998-99 is Rs. 11.14 lakhs and for the Annual Plan 1999-2000 is Rs. 20.10 lakhs.

The expansion of Primary Schools has resulted in the appointment of primary teachers in the Zilla Parishad Schools. Under this scheme, one teacher is to be appointed for primary schools (Standard I to IV) having an enrolment of 40. If the enrolment is between 41 to 80, two teachers are to be sanctioned. If the enrolment is between 81 to 120 and average attendance is 60, three teachers are provided. In Standard V to VII, teachers are appointed at the rate of 1.5 per division. Thus during the Eighth Plan, 7217 posts of teachers were created for which an expenditure of Rs. 8563.76 lakhs was incurred. The outlay for 1998-99, is Rs.2405.92 lakhs and for the Annual Plan 1999-2000 is Rs. 2285.72 lakhs for 4238 posts.

Evolution of Schemes/Programmes

Basic Education

To promote development of primary education on the basic pattern on a mass scale, a scheme for introduction of craft teaching in primary schools was introduced in 1947-48. It aimed at providing facilities for training primary teachers in crafts and teaching of crafts in schools. To implement this policy short-term training courses in crafts were organised. The crafts introduced were spinning leading to weaving, kitchen gardening leading to agriculture, card-board modelling leading to wood work etc.

The position of craft education in Pune District is as follows:

	1946-47	1947-48	1951-52	1952-53
No. of craft schools	—	25	185	185
No. of teachers trained	58	58	508	508

In 1955-56, there were 210 craft schools in this District - 161 with spinning as a main craft, 27 with agriculture and 22 with card board modelling.

The policy of progressively converting primary schools into basic schools continued in the Third Five Year Plan. The Plan made a provision for converting 150 full grade schools and 240 lower primary schools into basic schools with agriculture as the basic craft. Later this scheme was shelved due to non-availability of land.

The Third Plan pointed out that one of the major difficulties in the conversion of schools into basic was the paucity of trained basic teachers. Out of the 1,07,344 primary teachers, 66,444 teachers were trained by the end of March 1960. Since the annual turnover of the existing 173 training institutions in the State was 8,850 the Plan had provided for 60 more training institutions to raise the turnover to 15,150 thus providing about 52,000 more trained teachers by the end of the plan against the estimated requirement of 59,900 to be trained. The provision made for the teacher training programmes in the Plan was Rs. 175.22 Lakhs.

Training of Primary Teachers

The expansion of the facilities for Primary education resulted in the urgent need for an increased number of trained primary teachers. In Pune District, there were 4909 teachers at the end of 1955-56 of whom 2785 teachers were trained. This high percentage of trained teachers even at that time was due to the existence of 9 training colleges in this District - 5 for men and 4 for women which provided training facilities for 1,100 teacher trainees. The Government's policy of remodelling

the training institutions along basic education lines resulted in these 9 training colleges introducing craft training - agriculture in two colleges, cardboard modelling in two colleges and spinning and weaving in five colleges. To improve the quality of training in the Training Colleges, following important changes had been introduced :

- (i) The rate of grants to non-Government Primary Training Colleges was increased from 50 percent to 66.2/3 percent from June 1955.
- (ii) Rate of tuition fee grants for school board teachers and backward class students in non-Government Colleges was increased from Rs. 60 to Rs. 72 per annum per student from June 1955.
- (iii) Revised syllabus in primary training colleges comprising separate courses of two years duration for P.S.Cs. and S.S.Cs. was introduced in 1956.
- (iv) Eighty percent seats in non-Government institutions were reserved for School Board deputed teachers from 1955-56.

Eleven training institutes were started in the State during the Third Plan to facilitate the training of teachers. This resulted in the rise of percentage of trained teachers from 62.26 to 79.80.

From June 1966, only trained primary teachers with S.S.C., D.Ed. were recruited in Maharashtra, exception being made in the case of women teachers and teachers belonging to Backward Classes.

During the Fourth Plan, there were 130 Colleges of Education in the State, teaching 3 year D.Ed. course. The annual output of these colleges was about 10,000 which exceeded the annual demand and hence a large number of D.Ed. candidates remained unemployed. Thus, it was decided to convert some of these colleges into in-service training institutions. This process began in 1972-73, and the object was to cover 13,000 candidates per annum.

During the Fourth Plan, the percentage of trained primary teachers had gone up from 83.5% to 87.6%. Teachers appointed before January 1969, were extended a stipend of Rs. 60-00 and a loan of Rs. 30-00 per month during the period of training. Teachers deputed after January 1969 were, however, paid only interest free loan of Rs. 75 per month.

New Institutes for Better Education

To ensure qualitative development of primary education the State Government established the following institutions during the III Plan period:

1. A State Institute of Education was established at Poona in June 1964 to study

the problems arising out of the rapid growth of primary education and suggest improvements to deal with them.

2. State Institute of English was established in Bombay in October 1965 to provide training to teachers in Training Colleges and Assistant Deputy Educational Inspectors [referred to as Extension Officers (education)] in the methods of teaching of English in primary schools. Twenty-three lecturers received training in primary training institutes.
3. An Evaluation Unit was created in 1963 to conduct research and evaluation of aims and objects of education, methods of teaching and systems of examination for suggesting improvements.
4. A Bureau of Government Examinations was set up to conduct all examinations held at Government level.

Schemes for Teachers

A pension scheme was introduced similar to the scheme for Government servants, for primary teachers from April 1962. This included family pension to the family members of the teachers.

National Teachers Welfare Fund was created by the Government in 1962. Funds were collected on the Teachers' Day celebrations every year on the 5th of September. Over Rs. 12 lakhs were collected for the Fund by the end of 1965-66. Financial assistance to the extent of Rs. 1.37 lakhs was extended to the needy teachers or the dependents of deceased teachers.

A Council has been constituted on the lines of Whitley Council to deal with the grievances of the teachers. The Council has representatives of the Government and Teachers.

The Government has also initiated State Awards to primary school teachers for excellent service similar to the Government of India Awards. During 1961 to 1966, 38 primary teachers received the Awards. Vedic scholars are also honoured by the State Government under this scheme.

Concessions like exemption from payment of fees by the wards of Government servants, employees of the Zilla Parishad etc. having income less than Rs. 1,800 were continued during the Third Plan. State Government spent Rs. 12.25 crores on the scheme and about 20 lakh students were benefited.

Primary teachers posted in tribal / forest areas find it difficult to get residential accommodation. A scheme of construction of quarters for primary teachers was, therefore taken up. Under the Sixth Plan, an outlay of Rs 40 lakhs was made to the Zilla Parishads for the construction of 400 quarters at the rate of Rs. 10,000 per

quarter.

Since May 1992, Primary teachers working in the adivasi areas were paid an incentive allowance. However, since 14th August 1997, the allowance was stopped because the teacher does not stay at the place of work. The Junnar Taluka Primary Teachers Union in December 1999 has demanded that the allowance be restored because they are obliged to stay in Junnar for their children's education and that transportation facility is almost non-existent.

School Buildings and Equipment

The expansion of compulsory primary education necessitated the construction of new school buildings or the expansion of the existing ones to meet the increasing influx of new students. In rural areas, the work of constructing school buildings was entrusted to the District School Building Committee which was granted funds by the Government. It was, not, however possible to chalk out a programme of constructing school buildings as it was dependent on the receipt of 1/4th the contribution from the villagers benefiting from the scheme. During the period of the First Plan, 62 school buildings were constructed by the District School Building Committee.

	Owned	Rented	Free	Total
1951-52	226	393	470	1,089
1952-53	299	378	825	1,502

The nature of financial assistance for construction of schools was modified from 1962-63. The Zilla Parishads were to get grant-in-aid instead of loans for construction of school buildings. The financial assistance provided during the Third Plan period was Rs. 95 lakhs. This means that a large part of the accommodation required for the proposed expansion (37,000 classrooms) in the Third Plan was have to be found in rented premises.

Due to the rapid expansion of the schooling facilities, the problem of accommodation continued during the Fourth Plan also. To deal with the problem grants amounting to Rs.138 lakhs had been paid to the Zilla Parishads. A provision of Rs. 40 lakhs was also made during 1973-74. The ceiling rate per classroom had been raised from Rs. 3000 to Rs. 4000.

The main problem faced by the primary schools in the State relates to accommodation. At present, a number of schools are held in the premises of temples, chawadis, dharmashalas or in hired premises. It was estimated that about

45,500 classrooms will have to be constructed if all the primary schools were to be provided with separate school buildings. During the Sixth plan, the State Government continued to grant 60% of the actual expenditure or Rs. 4,000 per room, whichever was less, to Zilla Parishads. In tribal areas, the grant was Rs. 8,000 or 80% of the actual cost, whichever was less. During 1979-80 about 458 school rooms were constructed. During the Sixth Plan an outlay of Rs. 292.80 lakhs had been made for the construction of about 2,100 class-rooms for 534 schools which were without accommodation and attention was given to preparing low-cost designs and type plans for the construction of classrooms.

Keeping in view the implementation of new education policy in the State since 1988-89, the construction of two room units and or single room unit of primary school buildings were proposed under the Operation Blackboard Programme. The estimated cost of a single room measuring 16' x 20' is Rs. 90,000 in Non - Tribal Sub - Plan and Rs. 1,00,000 in Tribal Sub- Plan area. Besides this, as per the pattern of Nirmiti Kendra, Pune, the estimated cost of a classroom measuring 16' x 20' plus 20' x 8' Verandah is Rs. 65,000 which has to be approved by the Government. Under this programme 60% of the total expenditure is provided under the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana and the remaining amount i.e. 40% would be provided by the Education Department. During the Eighth Plan 1992-97, an expenditure of Rs. 7134.52 had been incurred. The outlay for the Annual Plan 1998-99 was Rs. 2052.47 lakhs and for the Annual Plan 1999-2000, Rs. 1607.55 lakhs.

The Operation Black Board Programme provides for educational equipment to primary schools. Educational equipment have been provided to 1268 primary schools at the rate of Rs. 7,215 per school. During the Eighth Plan, under the scheme Rs. 104.72 lakhs were spent. Since 1995-96, equipment has been provided at the rate of Rs. 10000. The outlay for the Annual Plan 1998-99 was Rs. 52.09 lakhs.

The Government also raised the contingency grant to 4% of salary instead of the Rs. 500 per school opened before 30th September, 1986. In the Annual Plan 1999- 2000 an outlay of Rs. 32.12 lakhs is provided.

During the eighth plan, Rs. 2114.96 lakhs were spent for the scheme providing a pair of school uniforms and writing material to the students belonging to SC /ST. An expenditure of Rs. 5311.95 lakhs was incurred for the scheme of attendance allowance to girls of SC /ST, Vimukta Jatis / Nomadic Tribes and economically weaker sections of the society.

To increase the quality of primary education the Maharashtra Government has since 1994-95, established Central Primary Schools for implementation of the

programme of Generalisation of primary education. The Eighth Plan spent Rs. 5781.93 lakhs on this scheme.

The Government of Maharashtra had also decided to establish the District Primary Board in 1994-95. This Board would control and guide the Zilla Parishad and other local bodies in matters related to primary education. A District Advisory Committee for every District and Taluka level was established, for which in the Eighth Plan, 1992-97, Rs. 38.04 lakhs were spent.

The Scheme of Book Banks

The scheme of book banks has been started for primary schools since, because of poverty, students belonging to the backward classes face difficulty in buying the required text books. During the eighth Plan period an expenditure of Rs. 1525.79 lakhs was incurred. It was decided (1996-97) to provide free textbooks to all the students studying in Standard I to IV of Zilla Parishad primary school of the 103 blocks where the female literacy rate was below the national average. The outlay for Annual Plan 1998-99 is Rs. 386.73 lakhs and for Annual Plan 1999-2000 is Rs. 486.64 lakhs.

Pre-primary

During the Second Plan it was emphasised that pre-primary education plays an important role in preparing the minds of young boys and girls for community life and an aptitude for learning. There were 22 pre-primary schools in Pune District, of which 20 were situated in Pune city only. The Hingane Street Shikshan Sauntha at Karvenagar conducts a pre-primary teachers training college. These pre-primary schools were assisted by the Government through a grants-in-aid programme. Thus, it is amply clear that the pre-primary schooling phenomenon was an urban reality.

The Fourth Plan emphasised qualitative improvement in primary education facilities. To promote this, the need for expanding the facilities for pre-school education was increasingly felt in rural areas since they created interest in schools at the pre-school stage. Such schools exist mainly in the urban areas and therefore to popularise the programme in rural areas a provision was made for grants-in-aid to 500 pre-primary schools in selected villages of fairly large population.

During the Sixth Five Year Plan a programme to start about 250 Balwadies every year through the Plan was proposed. An outlay of Rs. 35 lakhs was proposed for this programme.

To achieve the objective of universalisation of primary education, it was necessary that children in the age group of 3-5 years should attend classes regularly

and to achieve this purpose Balwadies were to be established on the campus of each Zilla Parishad school.

During the Eighth Plan objectives of this scheme were spelt out as

1. Children should be acquainted with school environment.
2. To inculcate good and healthy habits among children.
3. To develop the senses through the play-way method.
4. To reduce the drop out rate in the primary school.

In the Eighth Plan an expenditure of Rs. 1723.67 lakhs was incurred for starting 5000 new Balwadis and for maintaining old Balwadis. The outlay for the Annual Plan 1998-99 is Rs. 117.82 lakhs and for the Annual Plan 1999-2000 is Rs. 52.97 lakhs.

Vikaswadi

Acute poverty conditions do not allow the tribals to take interest in the education of their children. The scheme of Vikaswadies had been started to attract the tribal children to the schools. It has provision for Creche for the age group 1-3, Balwadi for age group 4-6 and a Primary school for the 6+ age group. The creche had been attached to the Vikaswadi to relieve the elder children especially, the girls, in the age group 6-11 from their responsibility of looking after the younger children in the family and enrolling themselves in the primary school. The younger children were to be admitted in the Balwadis or creches depending on their age group. In 1979-80, 21 such Vikaswadies had been started which were to be continued in the Sixth Plan. An outlay of Rs. 3.15 lakhs had been proposed for this programme.

The Organisational Structure

For administrative purposes Pune district is divided into 4 sub - divisions of Haveli, Junnar, Baramati and Pune. The present research project is a pilot study of impact assessment of government schemes for the elementary education of girls' in the rural areas and hence comes under the jurisdiction of the Zilla Parishad. The inception of Panchayati Raj in the State of Maharashtra in 1961 - 62 opened a new era in the field of primary education, as the functions of administration of primary education and inspection were transferred from the District School Boards to the newly created Zilla Parishads. According to the Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis Act, 1961, inspections, supervision and administration of all the Primary Schools in the District have been entrusted to the Zilla Parishad.

Administrative Machinery

In Maharashtra, primary education in the rural areas is entirely the responsibility of the Zilla Parishads. Control over the educational administration of the Zilla Parishads is exercised by the government through inspections by the Deputy Director of Education. Schemes for qualitative improvement are also prepared by the Directorate of Education and sent to the Zilla Parishads for implementation.

The Director of Education is the Head of the Education Department and is responsible for the implementation of the various educational programmes at the Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary and Higher Education levels. The functions of the Director of Education can be categorised under three heads : Administration, Academic and Evaluation. He manages the various Programmes of school education within the changing context of the new policies formulated by the Government. He finalises new plan proposals and innovative educational programmes with the help of academic and technical advice so far as their feasibility and effective methods and procedures for their implementation are concerned. He also discharges the academic responsibility of continuous evaluation of these educational programmes, with necessary feedback, to ascertain whether these programmes required revision or modification. The Director of Education is the main implementing authority for the Education policy designed to meet the changing needs of the community in the state of Maharashtra.

In the discharge of his administrative functions, the Director is assisted by Joint Director of Education, State Project Controller, Deputy Directors of Education, Accounts Officer, Senior Statistical Officer, Administrative Officer and O and M Officer, etc. The Joint Directors and the Deputy Directors assist the Director of Education in Academic and administrative matters. The Assistant Director (Accounts) assists the Director in the function of maintaining the accounts of the department. The Education Directorate has also a separate statistical wing headed by a senior statistical officer (class I) for collection and compilation of statistics related to educational activities.

The National Policy on Education with its emphasis on the universalization of Elementary Education is coordinated by the Director of Education through Government, Semi - Government and voluntary agencies in the State. Educational programmes at the Primary level are managed by the local self - government and private bodies. However, the general supervision related to direction, control and guidance is the responsibility of the Director of Education. At the State level, the Secretary (Primary Education) is responsible for handling/implementing primary education policy in consultation with the Minister for School Education. He along

with his colleagues in the Directorate takes policy decisions related to the primary education. The policy guidelines are laid down by the Union level Education Department.

The functions of the Director as head of the Department are as follows :

1. to advise the State Government generally in educational matters;
2. to administer educational institutions established or maintained by the state;
3. to establish new educational institutions when found necessary;
4. to utilise the funds provided by the Government for educational purposes;
5. to supervise and control educational institutions managed by voluntary organisations, local bodies etc.;
6. to give technical advice to local authorities for effective implementation of the education schemes transferred to them;
7. to prepare Five year and Annual Plan for General Education and implement it;
8. to advise the District Planning and Development Councils for more funding to the District level schemes, and
9. to conduct research and development activities for the improvement of educational administration, teachers' training, etc.

Educational administration is carried out at three levels : State level, Regional level and the District level. There are seven regions, including Pune, which are headed by the Deputy Director of Education. The Regional Deputy Director of Education is assisted by an Assistant Director, Science consultant and Deputy Educational Inspector in academic matters and by an Accounts officer (class II) for financial management. Generally four districts are included in each region, except Aurangabad, Kolhapur, Nagpur and Greater Bombay regions.

The Regional Deputy Director of Education is mainly responsible for supervising the work of the District Education Officer and Government Institutions for primary education. He functions as the executive representative of the Director of Education and is responsible for coordinating the primary educational activities in his region.

The Maharashtra Pattern of Panchayati Raj

Based on the recommendations of the Naik Committee, Maharashtra adopted the Panchayati Raj pattern which deviated from the model laid down by the Balwantrai Mehta Study Team by making the district body, the Zilla Parishad, a strong executive body at the district level rather than the block level body.

Accordingly, the Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayats Act was enacted which created two tiers - Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti. The Village Panchayats were already working under the Bombay Village Panchayats Act, 1958. Though the Naik Committee recommended a three-tier structure, consisting of the Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and Village Panchayat, it gave Zilla Parishads, and not the Panchayat Samiti, the central place; recommended direct, instead of indirect, elections at the district level (since then this has been amended and any voter can contest for membership to the Panchayat Samiti) ; did not give legislators ex-officio status on the district level body; and kept the District Collector outside the Panchayati Raj system. It also sought to place the district officials responsible for development under the control of the Zilla Parishad. In actual practice a dual control operates wherein the District Education Officer, like other development officers is directly under the control of the Chief Executive Officer and also his education cadre officers in the Education Directorate of the State Government. The Act has also given powers to the State Government to provide support and direction and exercise suitable supervision and control over to the working of the Panchayati Raj. One of the principal features of the Panchayati Raj in Maharashtra has been the separation of the executive function from the deliberative function. The policy - making function has been entrusted to the elected representatives of the people. One-third of the elected seats at all the three levels of the Panchayati Raj are reserved for women who can give a push to the education of the girl. Similarly, elected seats are reserved for the S.C. and S.T. as per legal provisions.

To provide democratic direction and necessary supervision and support to the planning and execution of various types of civic services and development schemes and works approved by the Zilla Parishad, a Standing Committee and nine Subject Committees- one of which is the Education Committee, as provided statutory have been set up by the Zilla Parishad. The Vice-President of the Zilla Parishad is automatically the Chairman of the Education Committee. Eight other councillors of the Zilla Parishad are members of the Education Committee. The secretary to the Education Committee is the District Education Officer (Primary Education Department). The Committee meets every month and policy decisions related to primary education development in the district are taken.

Each Community Development Block has a Panchayat Samiti. The Chairman of the Samiti is vested with both financial and administrative powers under the Act. The administrative powers comprise conducting and regulating meetings of the Samiti, exercising supervision and control over the work of the Block Development Officer and other officers and employees of the Panchayat Samiti. His financial

powers relate to the sanctioning of certain development schemes financed from the Block Grants and also accepting tenders or contracts related to development schemes of costs laying etc. within the legally prescribed limits. The Deputy Chairmen presides over the meetings of the Samiti in the absence of the Chairman and also performs duties delegated to him by the Chairman under prescribed rules. He is also responsible for inspection of work in progress or any institution financed by, or under the jurisdiction of the Zilla Parishad and situated within the Samiti area and sends his report to the Chairman who has similar powers.

The Panchayat Samiti has the primary responsibility, given the limits of the funds at its disposal, for the promotion and management of primary education and social education as mentioned in the Schedule II of the Act. The Samiti prepares the primary education development plan for the Block and submits it to the Zilla Parishad for incorporation into the Zilla Parishads District Education Plan for the rural areas. It is responsible for preparing, executing, supervising and administering primary education development programme to be financed from the Block Grants given to it by the State Government through the Zilla Parishad. The Zilla Parishad has no control over the Block Grants. With respect to the primary education schemes financed through the Block Grants the Samiti has to conform with the instructions of the State Government.

The Samiti has also to execute, maintain, supervise and administer education development schemes entrusted to it by the Zilla Parishad, besides any other function delegated to it by or on behalf of the Zilla Parishad. It can recommend for consideration of the Zilla Parishad any work or development scheme which should be undertaken by the latter in the Block or an increase in an existing tax and fee within the Block. The Samiti is to keep the Zilla Parishad informed of its activities and conform with the instructions of the Zilla Parishad

The Block Development Officer (BDO) is the Chief Executive Officer of the Samiti and is appointed by the State Government. Normally, he is drawn from the State Government's newly created Maharashtra Development Service which is analogous to the State's Civil Service. He acts as an ex-officio Secretary of the Samiti and attends its meetings, provides any information needed by members and maintains Samiti's records. He is generally responsible to the Chairman of the Samiti for his official decisions and actions, though administratively he is under the control of the Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad.

As an executive head of the Samiti administration he with the help of the Block Education Officer assists the Samiti in the formulation of primary education development proposals to be submitted to the Zilla Parishad. He is responsible for

ensuring the implementation of the Samiti approved primary education development works and schemes as well as the maintenance of the completed ones. He is also responsible for the implementation of schemes and works entrusted by the Zilla Parishad or the State Government to the Samiti. The BDO is assisted by the Block Education Officer (class II) who is in charge of primary education department responsible for the management of primary schools, building primary school buildings and their maintenance, sports grounds for primary schools and sports equipment. There are ten Extension Officers (class III) for education, of which eight posts are filled. They channelise part of their work through the Sarpanchas and the Village Level Workers-cum-Panchayat Secretaries.

The Gram Panchayat is composed of 7 to 15 members, depending upon the size of its population. The members are directly elected on the basis of adult franchise. One-third of the seats are reserved for women and there is reservation of seats for SC/ST in proportion to their population. The Sarpanch (Chairman) is elected by the members and is responsible for ensuring that the Panchayat functions in accordance with the provisions in the Bombay Village Panchayat Act, 1958, decisions of the Panchayat, and any directives of the Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and the State Government. Views expressed in the Gram Sabha (Village Assembly) have to be considered by the Panchayat and the Sarpanch. The sarpanch is assisted by a Secretary-cum-Village Level Worker (VLW) appointed by the Zilla Parishad. He carries out both administrative and developmental functions. The Panchayat is responsible for the maintenance and construction of primary schools.

At the village level, Village Education Committees have been established as bridges between the schools and the society. The objective of establishing these committees was to get the cooperation of influential and educated villagers in the implementation of the various Government schemes for primary education, to raise resources for maintaining schools, to participate in the socio-cultural activities of the school, to supervise the attendance of the students and teachers, to make available educational material and help the sale of crafts prepared by students, to maintain the school property through repairs and helping the students to gain from their knowledge and experience.

In keeping with the 'National Education Policy 1986', it was decided to educate all pupils in the age-group 6-14 upto the year 2000. To raise the quality of the primary education the Maharashtra Government in 1994-95 decided to establish Central Primary Schools. A Central Primary School has been established for 10 primary schools. The trained graduate teacher of the primary school will be the head of the Central Primary School which is supposed to distribute educational

material and give guidance to improve the quality of the primary schools.

The school grant is in the joint name of the Chairman of the Village Education Committee and the Headmaster as a member of the Committee. The Committee decides which educational items are to be purchased. The Government has supplied a list of 127 items for education which includes electricity, Kumar magazines etc.

Inspection Machinery

The Government of Maharashtra had created in 1981 Flying Inspection Squads for each District for the smooth and regular running of primary schools. The inspection machinery was strengthened during the Sixth Plan to deal with complaints about irregular attendance of primary teachers and also their improper behaviour. The Deputy Director of Education (Primary) of the Zilla Parishad is responsible for the fixing of inspections of primary schools. He undertakes surprise visits to schools to ensure smooth and effective working of the school and to deal with the problem of absenteeism among primary teachers. The Zilla Parishad is authorised to create the post of an Inspecting Officer - A.D.E.I. (Extension Officer) for every 200 Primary Teachers of 40 Schools in the District. In the Tribal areas one inspecting officer is sanctioned for every 15 to 20 schools. The Extension Officers, (Education) besides their inspection work of Primary Schools, have to carry out various administrative and academic functions for the developmental programmes entrusted to them by the Zilla Parishads and have to conduct enquires also. In the Junnar Taluka there are 10 posts of Extension Officers of which eight are filled. Below the Extension Officer is the Kendrapramukh, followed by the Taluka master and then by the Headmaster.

Primary Education at the district level is in the independent charge of a class - I Education Officer of the Zilla Parishad. The Maharashtra Government has also created the post of a Block Education Officer at the block level (Tehsil level). There are 298 blocks in the state. The Block Education Officer in the Maharashtra Education Service cadre belongs to class II and is responsible for exercising supervision and control through inspections of the primary schools. However, due to the dual control system, at the block level the administrative head is the Block Development officer. For educational matters the Block Education Officer is the decision- making authority.

In order to train the Officers of the Education Department, the Maharashtra State established a Maharashtra Education Administrative and Planning Institute at Aurangabad in 1994 - 1995. The main function of this Institute is to conduct

training programmes for officers from the Block level to the Mantralaya level. The Institute is headed by a Director of the Director.

The Government Examinations Bureau conducts various types of examinations i.e. Diploma Certificate Courses, such as, D.Ed., G. C. G./G. C. D. Certificates etc. The Bureau also conducts competitive examinations for the grant of various scholarships at various levels of school education. It has also been entrusted the work of conducting entrance examinations for primary school teachers. To ensure the smooth conducting of various competitive examinations within stipulated time limits, the government has created this autonomous body headed by a Director (Exam) along with some other posts.

The Bureau has a Commissioner having the status of a Joint Director and is assisted by three class - I Deputy Commissioners and two Assistant Commissioners.

Training of Teachers

The State government has also emphasised the importance of research and training and has set up the Maharashtra State Council of Education Research and Training Institute in 1984. This Institute is responsible for the effective supervision of various educational programmes and activities and training for qualitative improvement in primary education. Research in the academic field has been utilised for this purpose. The Institute acts as an umbrella institution for the various State Level Educational Institutions created for adopting new methods in pre-service and in-service Vocational Guidance, Audio-Visual Education, Training in English language, Training in Science and other areas of Education. The State Institute of Educational Technology has also been brought under it.

It organises 15 districtwise training programmes every year for Balwadi teachers to strengthen elementary education by inculcating interest in the young minds in education.

It has started the scheme of 'Geet Manch' which has 15 selected songs to be taught in the district courses to attain the goal of National Integration.

The Council conducts studies and action research in different problems of primary education referred to it by the Government. It brings out a research Bulletin on educational research, research reports and articles on modern educational technology etc. It organises workshops for primary teachers on Action Research Methodology for conducting scientific studies of various educational problems.

It also revises the curriculum for primary education. Competency based curriculum was prepared in 1995 for the subjects of language, Mathematics,

Environmental Science and has been progressively implemented in standards I to V. This was followed by elimination of annual examination system and introduction of a competency-based education system by the Government to avoid suicide cases, failures and dropouts. The Institute had also developed tools for continuous and comprehensive evaluation. Presently, the government has reintroduced the examination system by working competency based testing. Continuous evaluation of the student and offering remedial measures to improve the competency of the student would require a more favourable teacher-student ratio than the present one of 1:60/70.

A Statewide Massive And Rigorous Training for Primary Teachers (SMART - P.T.) was carried out by the Institute in competency based syllabus. Training was provided to 1,68,290 primary teachers (Standards I and II) during the year 1997-98. Similar training was provided to about 1,70,000 teachers teaching Standards III and IV in 1998-99.

Pursuing the New Education Policy the government decided to establish 14 District Institutes of Education and Training in June 1995. At the state level is the Maharashtra State Education Institute.

A Population Education Cell was established in 1981. Jeevan Shikshan - a Marathi magazine is published and about 60,000 copies are distributed per month to the Central Primary Schools.

The State Institute of Science Education, Nagpur was established in 1968 to promote improvements in the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics through supervision and guidance and by organising orientation courses and workshops at the State, Regional and District levels.

The State Board of Teacher Education with 77 training colleges, having 108 divisions, arrange in-service training programmes of 23 days duration for primary teachers. The District Education Officers (Primary) depute primary teachers from within the district for the in service training.

Schemes and Programmes

1. Primary Education Schemes

The programme of Universalization of Primary Education requires that the facilities for Primary Education should be available within walking distance of 1.5 km. from the residence of the students. To implement this policy, grants are being paid to the Zilla Parishads for making available the required facilities of Primary Education within the area of 1.5 km. on the basis of to the Fifth Educational Survey of villages and habitations having a population of 200 and above.

The Zilla Parishads manage Primary Education in the rural areas and in the areas of Non-authorized Municipalities. Out of 59299 Primary Schools in the State, 49647 Primary Schools are managed by Zilla Parishads. In Western Maharashtra, Primary Education is administered as per the provisions laid down in the Bombay Primary Education Act, 1947. In the areas of the non-authorized Municipalities, Primary Education is administered by the Zilla Parishads for which the non-authorized Municipalities are required to pay their contribution. The Zilla Parishads are paid grants for Primary Education on 100 per cent basis; the grants include the pay, allowances and contingencies etc. paid to the Primary School Teachers. Pension and other retirement benefits have been extended to Primary Teachers since 1 April 1961.

Although, Primary Education is the responsibility of the Zilla Parishads, some voluntary agencies are also running private primary schools and they are paid grants-in-aid through the Zilla Parishads since 1980-81. The payment of salaries to the teaching and non-teaching staff through Co-operative Banks has been introduced. However this study does not cover approved private Primary Schools since they do not exist in the villages selected.

Since the Government's policy is to promote universal education for all by the year 2000 to children belonging to the age group 6-14 years upto VIII standard it has started Primary Schools for the children of sugarcane cutting workers. In Maharashtra, the total number of families employed by the sugar industry is about 5 lakhs. They migrate from approximately 25 Tehsils to the sugar factories during a particular season covering the period October to May. This seasonal migration results in the disruption of the education of the children of temporary and sugarcane cutting workers. Hence seasonal schools have been opened in the vicinity of the sugar factories. The study does not cover these schools since they do not exist in the Junnar taluka.

The Government of Maharashtra decided (1987) that free education to girls be given from standard I to XII throughout the State in approved, aided and un-aided schools

2. Non - Formal Education

A primary school has been opened in each revenue village except in a few which are sparsely populated and have a meagre population. Many children in the rural areas cannot attend full time schools because of their poverty and household work resulting in high dropout rate. Therefore the government started the scheme of part-time classes for such cases during the Fifth Five Year Plan for non-formal

education. The idea of non-formal education was given by the Central Advisory Board of Education. The board had pointed out that the traditional system of education will not achieve the goal of universal education for the age group 6 - 14 years. The argument was that the system of elementary education, with its single point of entry and subsequent promotions year after year, is very costly and so the Board had recommended the scheme of Non - Formal Education to be implemented by the Zilla Parishads. Under this scheme a part - time teacher conducts classes for children in the age-group 9-14 at a time convenient to them either in the morning or in the evening. The teacher is paid an honorarium of Rs. 100=00 per month and the children attending these classes are provided free text books, stationery, etc. The syllabus of standards I to IV is taught in these classes and the students are expected to complete the syllabus within two years.

3. Construction of School Buildings

The Zilla Parishads are paid grants for construction of school buildings , additional classrooms, and also for repairs and maintenance of primary school buildings This practice was started in the year 1978-79. In the absence of adequate accommodation, the schools are located either in rented buildings or in the presence of temples, chavadies, etc. Since 1989-90, the Government is extending grants to D.R.D.A. from its Jawahar Rojgar Yojana for construction of Primary School Buildings. 60 percent of the expense is borne through the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana and 40 per cent by the Education Department. Right upto 1990-91, the share of the Education Department in construction was 20 percent. The condition of the Primary School buildings is not satisfactory. Since the cost of construction has been increasing, it has been difficult to undertake new constructions. The Government has approved a plan giving the size of the school room as 16' X 20' with a varanda of 8' X 20'.

To ensure adequate number of trained teachers in primary schools, training facilities for D.Ed Course have been provided in government and non-government Junior Colleges of Education in the State. Several in-service training Programmes are also organised for the improvement of the quality of primary teachers in the field of education. Non-government Junior Colleges of Education are paid grants-in-aid. To ensure regular payment, the payment of salaries to the teaching and non-teaching staff is made through the Co-operative Banks.

To raise the percentage of enrolment, average attendance and improvement in the quality of education in the primary schools in the rural areas, an incentive in the form of a cash award of Rs. 100=00 each to the teachers of two selected single

teacher primary schools and Rs. 500=00 each to the two selected multi-teacher primary schools in each district has been introduced.

To promote girl's enrolment in Primary schools incentives in the form of cash awards of Rs. 100=00 and a certificate is being given to the Primary School Teachers and Extension Officers in the State.

4. Schemes for Students Belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Nomadic Tribes and Vimukta Jatis

The attendance and enrolment of students, specially that of girls belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Nomadic Tribes and Vimukta Jatis, is very low and not satisfactory. The scheme of supply of free uniforms and writing material to the students of studying in Standards I to IV of Zilla Parishad schools was introduced in 1978-79 to reduce the drop out rate amongst them.. Under this scheme two sets of uniforms and writing material are supplied to eligible students. The writing material, such as, slates, pencils, exercise books etc. is supplied to eligible students and the expenditure on this is fixed at Rs. 10=00 per pupil and Rs. 70=00 per uniform. The Government has made the special provision to provide free text books to all students of Class I to IV for schools under the 103 blocks which have low percentage of women's literacy as compared to the national rate of women's literacy.

A stipend of Rs. 40 for boys and Rs. 50 for girls belonging to the tribal community is being given for those studying in standards V to VII as an additional incentive to reduce their drop out rate.

5. Book Bank

A significant section of the population in rural, tribal and hilly areas of Junnar taluka lives below subsistence level. Since they cannot provide their school going children with the necessary text books the dropout rate in such areas is very high at the various stages of school education. With a view to helping such students Book Bank scheme was started in 1976-77 and supplies were made of sets of text books to the students belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Vimukta Jatis, Nomadic Tribes and other deprived sections of the community in the Primary Schools run by Zilla Parishads. The textbooks are to be returned at the end of each academic year and are replaced at the end of three years. However, students of standard I and II are not expected to return the books which get replaced every year. If the eligible students exceed 25 per cent of total enrolment, the Zilla Parishad is expected to provide textbooks purchased from the Text Book Bureau from its

own resources. This scheme was introduced for standards I to IV in the year 1976-77 for the first time. In the year 1977-78, it was extended to standard V to VII and the following year to standard VIII. The book bank scheme is now being operated for all standards upto the Secondary stage.

Minimum educational requirements are being provided to the Primary Schools under the 'Operation Black Board' as required by the new education policy. This centrally sponsored scheme came into existence in 1988-1989. The scheme provides for the conversion of all single teacher schools into two teacher schools. Besides providing for educational equipment, Libraries for students and teachers have also been established in schools. A contingency grant of Rs. 500=00 is being sanctioned to all schools for replenishing the material supplied under this scheme since 1994-1995. This contingency grant has now been raised to 4% of the salary grant.

To promote effective understanding of latest developments in subjects through practical and experiments by primary school students dwelling in rural and remote areas, the medium of television has been introduced in 4000 Primary Schools managed by the Zilla Parishads in Maharashtra. A grant of Rs. 5.20 crores has been sanctioned for providing colour television to the schools.

6. Attendance Allowance for the Girl Students

The scheme of Attendance Allowance to girls studying in Primary Schools was started in January 1992 to reduce the rate of dropout of the girl students. Under this scheme Rs. 1=00 per day is paid to the parents of the girls studying in standards I to standard IV for 220 working days in a year. It covers all Scheduled Tribe girls and girls belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Nomadic Tribes residing in or outside the Tribal Sub - Plan Area and whose parents are below poverty line.

7. Shaleya Poshan Aahar Yojana (National Programme of Nutritional Support)

The Government of India launched (1995-96) a National Programme of Nutritional Support to students studying in the Primary schools. The programme is designed to achieve the goal of universalisation of Primary Education by increasing student enrolment and attendance, and by reducing the incidence of dropouts in Primary Education. The programme is being implemented in Maharashtra in stages in different blocks covering the standards I to V. During 1996-97 it covered mostly the girl students to raise female literacy rate. In 1997-98, the number of beneficiaries in Pune district was 487497 and the quantity of rice distributed for the programme was 146249.1 quintals. At the State level, the number of beneficiaries was 83,85,

065 and the rice distributed was 25,155,195 quintals. Presently, the scheme is being implemented in Pune district only because it fulfils the condition of 80 per cent attendance.

Under the NPNS scheme, foodgrains (Rice) equivalent to three kilograms per student studying in standards I to V per month, are distributed to all the students whose attendance is a minimum of 80 per cent in the school. The scheme envisages the availability of 100 grams of cooked food every day to the eligible students in the school itself, once the infrastructure (comprising kitchen, utensils etc.) has been created.

In Maharashtra the scheme was started in 1995 - 96. During 1996 - 97, it was implemented in the rural areas covering 200 blocks in 27 districts. In 1997 - 98 the scheme was extended to 100 blocks and two more districts and the benefit was given to the students in schools of urban areas including students in private schools on 100 per cent basis. In 1998 - 99, the scheme covered the newly created nine blocks and partly aided private primary schools in all the 309 blocks. To implement the scheme the Government of India provides rice free of cost and the reimbursement of transportation charges at Rs. 50 per quintal. However, as of now due to the resource crunch the scheme covers only the girl student.

8. Scholarships

The bright and deserving students in the rural areas are awarded scholarships by the State government through the Zilla Parishads. The award is on the basis of the result of middle school scholarship competitive examination conducted by the Bureau of Maharashtra State. Scholarship is awarded in standard V and renewed every year, subject to satisfactory progress. The rate of scholarship from standard V to VII is Rs. 50=00 per month since 2 August, 1995. Ten sets of scholarships are given for each district for meritorious students of Senior Primary School.

Open Merit Scholarship is granted to the students in Senior Primary Schools on the basis of the results of a competitive examination conducted every year by the Bureau of Maharashtra State Examination, Pune. Since 30 March, 1994, the revised rate of scholarship is Rs. 25=00 for the standards V to VII. Scholarships cover a period of 10 months in one academic year and continuous for three years. A definite number of scholarships are allotted to Poona district for rural areas and are increased periodically to cover more number of students.

Action Plan for Universalization of Primary Education

The Maharashtra Government has prepared a plan of action for 'Universalisation of Primary Education and Literacy Programme'. Under this action

plan, which is being implemented since 1994-95, a contingency grant of 3 per cent (now raised to 4 per cent of the salary grant) is sanctioned for the provision of physical and educational facilities to the Primary Schools managed by the Zilla Parishads. Accordingly, the Contingency Grant is used for purchasing necessary teaching and learning materials to prepare the teaching aids and to repair and maintain the TLM and machines provided to Schools.

The Zilla Parishads are provided with grants for conversion of Single Teacher Schools into Two Teacher Schools under the Central scheme of 'Operation Blackboard' to deal with the problem of increase in enrolment at the Primary School stage. Since 30 January 1996, the norms for sanctioning the post of Primary Teachers is - one post of Primary Teacher for enrolment upto 15 and two posts of Primary Teachers to schools having enrolment of 16 to 80. Thus, Single Teacher Schools with an enrolment of more than 15 students have two positions of teachers to achieve the goal of Universalization of Primary Education.

With the expansion of the primary schooling facilities the Zilla Parishads have been granted additional posts of Primary Teachers. The norms for the creation of posts of Primary Teachers since 1996-97 are as follows : 1 : 3 Teachers for each class of standard V, VI and VII, if the average attendance is 20, 15, 15 respectively in non - Tribal areas and 15, 10, 10 in Tribal areas. If the average attendance in each class of standard V to VII is less than the above minimum prescribed, the number of teachers is decided on the basis of the number of students in all the 3 standards and is 2 Teachers for 40 students in Non - Tribal areas.

Integrated Child Development Services

The Union Ministry of Social Welfare, and since 1985, the Ministry of Human Resource Development at the Central level, has become the nodal Ministry for overall policy formulation and coordination in child welfare development. The Ministry has the Department of Women and Child Development headed by Director. One Additional Director is fully responsible only for the Integrated Child Development Services programme (ICDS). In Maharashtra, the Department of Women and Child Welfare (Mahila and Balkalyan Department) is responsible for implementing the centrally sponsored ICDS scheme.

The Fifth Plan ushered in a new era with a shift in focus from child welfare to child development and an emphasis on integration and coordination of services. The National Policy on Children adopted in 1974 provided the framework for the integrated approach to the development of services for children. The programme of Integrated Child Services (ICDS) with a package of services comprising

immunisation, health check-ups, referral, supplementary nutrition, pre-school education, and nutrition and health education, was launched in 33 blocks in the country on an experimental basis. A school health programme was also started. Maternal and child health services in rural areas were strengthened. The national programme of Basic Minimum Needs included some services which directly benefited children :

1. 100 per cent coverage of safe drinking water in urban and rural areas.
2. 100 per cent coverage of primary health service facilities in rural and urban areas.
3. Universalisation of primary education.
4. Extension of Mid-day Meal Programme in primary schools to all rural blocks and urban slums and disadvantaged sections.
5. Provision of connectivity to all unconnected villages and habitations.

The ICDS Programme, launched in 1975, aims at an integrated delivery of a package of health, nutrition and educational services to children below six years of age, pregnant women and nursing mothers. The objectives of the ICDS are : (a) To improve the nutritional and health status of all children in the age group 0-6 years; (b) To lay the foundations for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child; (c) To reduce the incidence of mortality, malnutrition and school dropouts; (d) To achieve coordination of policy formulation and policy implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development; and (e) To enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutrition needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education.

The ICDS involved considerable organisation and coordination at all levels. Therefore thirty-three experimental projects (18 normal, 11 tribal and 4 urban) were sanctioned in 1975-76.

The focal point for the delivery of the ICDS package is the anganwadi in every village. The anganwadi is managed by an anganwadi worker recruited locally and assisted by a helper. The work of the anganwadi workers is supervised by the mukhya sevikas. A Child Development Project Officer is directly in charge of each ICDS project. The BDO has the overall responsibility for the schemes in the block. The health infrastructure in the project area is strengthened by adding one medical officer, preferably a lady doctor with a diploma in child health, two lady health visitors and an auxiliary nurse midwife, and by increasing the number of primary health centres. The scheme places great emphasis on the involvement of voluntary agencies and community participation.

The training of the ICDS functionaries is crucial. The child development project

officers, mukhya sevikas and anganwadi workers are trained at selected institutions. Orientation training for the health staff is organised in selected medical institutions. Workshops for State level officers and regional workshops for project level officers are organised for the expeditious delivery of health services.

The Sixth plan saw the consolidation and expansion of the ICDS programme, with the sanction of 1037 projects.

A new focus has been given to education and literacy under the new education policy and the technology mission on literacy. The new policy of 1986 has emphasised full integration of child-care and pre-primary education both as a feeder and as a strengthening factor for primary education.

To implement the National Policy on Education (NPE) twenty three task forces were constituted in 1986 to prepare the 'Programme of Action' (POA). The POA provides for the actions to be taken so as to implement the directions of the NPE. The major thrust areas covered under the POA and relevant to the study are :

1. Early Childhood Care and Education Programme as a support service in the
2. Universalisation of Elementary Education, Non-Formal Education and Operation Blackboard.

The POA aimed at the upgradation, expansion and strengthening of the existing Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme which, *inter alia*, includes Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS); assistance to Early Childhood Centres (ECE), *Balwadis*, and day care centres; pre-primary schools; and maternal and child health services.

The ECCE was to carry out the role of a support service in the universalisation of elementary education as well as for human resource development, and was directed towards the most underprivileged groups, especially those who are still outside the mainstream of formal education, such as, the girl child. It would integrate child care and pre-primary education, both as a feeder and a strengthening factor for primary education. Recognising the holistic nature of child development, such as, nutrition, health and social, mental, physical, moral and emotional development, the ECCE was to be integrated with the ICDS programme, wherever possible.

According to the POA, every child should be assured access to the fulfilment of all basic needs. It had suggested that 70 per cent of the target groups (children 0-6 years) should be covered by all services by AD 2000, whereas health and nutrition services should be extended to all needy groups. ECCE facilities should be established in all tribal development blocks. Since the early childhood and education programmes are bound to expand, corresponding training facilities should be made available to all functionaries, and that these programmes should

be followed up with evaluation by independent agencies every five years, and be followed up with improvements in the quality of the services.

The Seventh plan continued the strategy of promoting early childhood survival and development mainly through the ICDS which continued to be the major integrated national programme. In 1991, the number of sanctioned ICDS projects was 2,594, of which 1,656 were in rural areas, 711 in tribal areas and 227 in urban slums. By the end of December, 1991, about 129 lakh children below 6 years of age and more than 27 lakh pregnant and nursing mothers were getting supplementary nutrition under ICDS. About 67 lakh children of 3-5 age group were getting pre-school education services.

During the Seventh and Annual Plans 1990-92, for pre-school educational development, in addition to the ICDS, 4,365 early childhood education centres were assisted through the grants-in-aid to voluntary organisations.

The Eighth Plan emphasised human development, and gave priority to the development of specific programmes and services directed at children. The World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in 1990 resulted in the preparation of A Plan of Action as a guideline of action for the Government. Child development programmes in the Plan will give high priority to preventive services, which are family and community based to combat effectively high infant and early childhood mortality and morbidity.

Children belonging to the poor and the underprivileged sections of the population would be covered by basic minimum child development services. The strategy was integration and convergence of services, better coordination among health, family planning, education, social welfare, nutrition, water supply sanitation programmes at all levels - centre, state, rural and urban. It would design area and beneficiary-specific schemes for child development utilising local resources and institutions. The capabilities of the families, especially of the mothers, to look after the basic health, nutritional and emotional needs of the children in the age group 0-6, would be enhanced through non-formal modes of learning. Social discrimination against the girl child would be effectively countered through a massive campaign, to ensure equal treatment and equal opportunities for their growth and development.

The national programme of ICDS is the basic strategy for child survival and early childhood development with special focus on areas predominantly inhabited by the tribal people, scheduled castes, drought - prone regions and urban slums. The programme aimed at quality improvement of services by removing the existing constraints in immunisation, delivery of supplementary nutrition and pre-school

inputs. Nutrition and health education of mothers and community participation in running the anganwadi was emphasised. The ICDS infrastructure at the village and supervisory level was to be used for early detection and identification of physical handicaps in children below six years of age and for the support to the family welfare programme. The programme was to be supported by the convergence of environmental sanitation, hygiene and safe drinking water supply.

The training of ICDS functionaries would have to be augmented. The Integrated Nutrition Education Scheme was launched in 1988 to equip grass-root level workers of different departments with basic knowledge of food, nutrition and health. 210 education camps/ orientation training courses were organised in the Seventh Plan for anganwadi workers, multipurpose workers, auxiliary nurse midwives (ANM), lady health visitors, health education and adult education instructors and gram sevikas. During 1990-91, 81 such courses were organised. However, the training courses are inadequate to cover a large proportion of the workers.

A system of decentralised monitoring and qualitative feedback to assess the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the ICDS would have to be developed. Paper work by the anganwadi worker (AWW) would have to be reduced to the minimum. The AWW and the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) will have to be trained to use the data generated from the records kept by the anganwadi worker to monitor both the inputs and the outputs.

The ICDS should act as an input for the strengthening of the elementary education programmes, especially the retention of children in the schools. This should be followed by the improvements in both, the physical facilities and the quality of learning. The non-formal education for children who for economic reasons cannot spend time in the regular primary schools would also have to be strengthened.

The Maharashtra Government is implementing the ICDS in 151 blocks all over the State - both rural and urban, and its focus is on nutrition to reduce infant and maternal mortality and morbidity and to improve the functional efficiency and productivity of the weaker sections of the society. The nutrition programme for school going children upto IV Standard provides ready to eat food packets called Paushtik Ahar or 150 ML of milk at places where primary dairy cooperative societies are accessible. In the Junnar block, milk is not being provided which was pointed out as a limitation of the nutrition programme. Nutritious food of a specified weight along with vitamin tablets is distributed to the beneficiaries. Presently, about 2.01 lakh beneficiaries are covered under this programme. This indicates the low coverage of the programme.

The Mahila and Balkalyan Department is also implementing a major School Feeding Programme which covered 1046969 beneficiaries during the VIII Plan in the State.

A major programme of direct nutrition intervention was the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) introduced in 1970-71. The supplementary nutrition feeding programme for children below 6 years of age was primarily targeted in the Seventh Plan at the ICDS project areas. In the Eighth and Ninth Plans the SNP continued to be implemented in the ICDS project areas for 300 days a year.

The outlay in the VIII Plan, actual expenditure for the years 1992-97, outlay Annual Plan 1997-98 and outlay for IXth Five Year Plan 1997-20002, with related targets with achievement for the ICDS Nutrition Programme are as follows :

Sector	Target VIIIth Five Year Plan 1992-97	VIIIth Plan Achievement Target	Annual Plan 1997-98	(Rs in lakhs)
				Target For IXth Plan 1997-2002
a) No. of Projects	50	125	23	80
b) No. of beneficiaries	50,00,000	2,03,800	4,85,875	13,52,000

Thus, in the rural areas, the Central Government has launched the Integrated Child Development Scheme, which is being implemented by the Department of Women and Child Development and has thus bypassed the Panchayati Raj institutions by taking over the function of pre-primary education and nutritional programme for pre-primary school going children. The role and potential of the Panchayati Raj institutions have not been taken seriously by the Central Government. The ICDS programme was launched to achieve integration and coordination of services for child development but resulted in the creation of a parallel scheme with its own bureaucracy and massive funding in rural areas. This duplication of institutions for the same goals of child welfare and development works at cross-purposes leading to the wastage of scarce resources. The UNICEF has also assisted the ICDS in a big way.

The feedback, on the impact of ICDS projects pointed out a faster decline in the incidence of infant and early childhood mortality. A better utilisation of vitamin "A", iron-folic acid, and immunisation services in the ICDS project areas as compared to the non-ICDS areas. The implementation of the programme was however, handicapped by the inadequacy in the cold chain for vaccine, irregular

supply of nutritional supplements, inappropriate food, low coverage of 'under-three year old', and weak coordination between the health, social welfare and women and child development departments at the field level. Nutrition and health education of mothers and the participation of the community was also inadequate.

People's participation in child welfare and child development is crucial. Programme related to nutrition haven't succeeded to the desired extent due to the apathy and lack of community participation. The programme is seen as something being done by the Government for the people and the people expecting it as their legitimate due. People perceive these as Governmental programmes, not of immediate relevance to them, specially since the benefits of preventive programmes don't have high visibility. Unless, the community is involved in the process of planning of these programmes right since their inception, it would be difficult to enlist their cooperation and participation. The focus will have to be on community involvement and participation of local voluntary organisations and the panchayati raj institutions.

The ICDS which follows a package-based approach is effective but should be expanded to cover more areas. The coverage of the programme has been very low. Children of the age group 0-1 cannot benefit from the nutrition provided at the anganwadies. A demand has been made for the supply of milk. Immunisation coverage to mothers and children is very small. ICDS takes care of only ante-natal care and that too inadequately and infant mortality which is linked to a large variety of factors, basic of which is health care, is not even touched by the ICDS. It is thus just touching the periphery of the acute problems of mortality amongst mothers and children. The programme, if it has to prove effective, however, it should be linked with the concerned departments (Health, Women and Child Development, etc.) of the State Government. Not only was effective coordination between the Central Government and the State Government necessary but also with the Panchayati Raj bodies, which were duplicating pre-primary education through Balwadis and having severe funding problems with it's nutritional programme for primary school- going children.

The Eighth Plan had pointed out that the absence of an effective machinery for coordination of policies and programmes implemented by the different departments for nutrition has been a grant handicap. It recommended the setting up of a high-powered Nutrition Council, at the National level, to facilitate the development of an integrated food and nutrition policy and its monitoring. It would be responsible for nutrition surveillance of the country's population, especially the vulnerable groups. At the State level too, a similar coordination body is necessary.

It was pointed out by the Block Education Officer that the anganwadi scheme of the ICDS was being implemented in the Junnar Block, especially in the Tribal tract. The purpose of this scheme was to create an interest and liking for school - for developing boldness in children and for joy by narrating stories.

During the field visit to the village Ghatghar of Junnar Taluka discussions were held with the Anganwadi worker who pointed out the children in the primary school and mentioned that they had been fed by her when below six years but now were not her responsibility. In the village the ICDS scheme had been reduced to just cooking meals for the children below six years of age and feeding them. The Primary Health Centre had been padlocked in such a manner that as if there was no chance of it ever being open and providing medical facilities. It had been closed for several years and was in a dilapidated condition. In fact, the anganwadi worker herself, seemed to be suffering from a skin disease which made her scratch herself repeatedly on the face.

The entire tract from Junnar to Naneghat, which is a tribal belt covering the villages of Hadsar, Ajnawale, Nimgiri, Ghatghar, etc. had inadequate access by road transport and lacked medical facilities. In this hilly and inaccessible adivasi region the incidence of Tuberculosis was high. In fact, the teachers, and even a boy approached the study team leader and pleaded for something being done on the health front and that primary education was not a problem issue. If a vehicle were provided to transport sick children to Junnar city for treatment, the teachers could go about their task of teaching without stress. Since the death of a tribal student due to lack of emergency medical attention would be a politically sensitive issue with questions being asked in the Assembly and would affect the teacher's career. This stress was taking its toll on the teachers, who themselves were falling sick, or staying in Junnar for their own children's education. The daily travel to the tribal village and back, given the low frequency of State transport was taking its toll on the quality of education. It was in this tribal belt that the parents felt that if the teachers stayed in the village itself it would create an educational atmosphere in the village and their children would be under the teacher's eye constantly.

Except for the nutrition programme, the ICDS has failed in areas of health checkups for children and pregnant and lactating mothers, health education to women between 15 and 45 years of age, or referral services etc. This tribal tract children are chronic sufferers of malnutrition, and coupled with the bad climate, it has added to childhood morbidity and mortality, poor performances and reduced capacity in school and work and stunted growth among others.

The ICDS scheme of anganwadies would have to be carefully coordinated

with the education and health schemes of the panchayati raj institutions. It needs to be emphasised that the directly implemented centrally sponsored national schemes like the ICDS, etc. and the related panchayati raj or State Government schemes should not be independent, parallel and competing systems but inter-dependent, complementary and mutually supportive channels for an integrated system for the universalisation of primary education

Implementation of Panchayati Raj

The L.N. Bongirwar Committee on Panchayati Raj Report, 1971, had concluded that the achievements of the Panchayati Raj bodies have been substantial, even spectacular, in setting up new primary schools.

A study of the impact of Panchayati Raj in Pune district in Maharashtra by K.B. Srivastava has pointed out that infrastructural facilities related to education have been substantially expanded and improved substantially by the direct initiatives or indirect assistance given under the Panchayati Raj System. A majority of the rural people are making increasing use of these facilities. The elected representatives are helping the rural poor who have access to the benefits of Government sponsored schemes. The statutory reservation of seats for the SCs / STs has enabled their representatives to participate more substantially in the decision-making process than before.

However, the study points out that under the Panchayati Raj system planning for the district has remained restricted in scope. The creation of an independent district planning agency - District Planning and Development Council in 1974 further restricted the scope of the Zilla Parishads. Primary education, with which PRIs are so closely concerned, is a state sector scheme implemented by the Zilla Parishads.

Though, there is harmony and understanding between elected representatives and the bureaucracy within the Panchayati Raj, quite often the former tend to pressurise the latter for petty matters - such as transfer of teachers, locating schools in certain places of their choice etc. The general feeling is that the teachers are highly politicised, perhaps because of their being more educated than others in the village.

Primary education has also been affected by party politics. Political parties and independent candidates have been participating, keenly in recent decades in the Panchayati Raj elections as well as in decision-making process and other activities of the Parishad. This process of politicisation of Panchayats has impacted the development of primary education in terms of where to locate schools, transfer of teachers, appointment of teachers and for using teachers for political

campaigning, etc.

Historically Western Maharashtra , under the British rule had been developed educationally. Several missionary schools and colleges had been established in this region. After Independence this British legacy and planned development of primary education in the successive plans resulted in the majority of villages having a population of above 200 being covered by primary education. Maharashtra has succeeded in quantitative expansion of primary education to almost all its regions. However, much needs to be done to provide quality education to children in the rural areas. Thus quality education has become the priority since the Fourth Plan. This would entail motivated trained teachers preferably residing in and around the school since the region under study is poorly connected by road transport, equipment such as furniture, blackboard etc. in good working condition, school buildings which are not leaking and creating health problems, and efficient and effective implementation of schemes designed to retain the girl child in the school. Residents from Hadsar village, Anjlawale etc. (the Junnar to Naneghat area) pointed out the total absence of health facilities and that they had to spend out of their own pocket for transportation to Junnar city to get medical care. Due to malnutrition several teachers and students fall sick regularly affecting the quality of education. The teachers, some of them posted from semi-urban areas having to spend large amounts on their health problems are permanently under stress which further adds to their ill-health. It was pointed out that transportation facility should be provided to reduce fatalities amongst the students living in hilly areas and the wilderness causing hardships. At Ghadghar, the Primary Health Centre was closed and was barricaded in such a manner that it seemed that it would never be opened. Incidentally this is the last stop for the state transport bus.

The teacher is the key person in improving the quality of primary education in the rural areas. His salary as of now is being paid by the Taluka Teacher (Taluka Master). Recently, the Zilla Parishad has decided to credit his salary to the Banks because the Taluka Teacher and Headmaster were making recoveries from his salary under different pretexts. The procedure followed for payment of salaries is that the Zilla Parishad deposits teachers salaries in the Taluka Master's Office. The concerned Headmaster collects the cheque for the teachers salaries of his school from the Taluka Master and encashes it from the Zilla Cooperative Bank. Later, once he reaches the village he begins the distribution of the salaries. This creates security risks of handling so much cash and transporting it around. Besides, the main complaint against the Taluka Master and the Headmaster is that they arbitrarily impose cuts in the salaries of the teachers leading to their financial and

other workload related exploitation. The reasons given for the cuts are that higher officials and Taluka office bearers during their visits have to be taken care of. Some of them are agents of the postal recurring deposit scheme and compulsorily make the teachers take out an account and make large contributions so that the Taluka master can earn his commission. At the level of the Headmaster the teacher is further exploited since he handles the salaries of the teachers. Further cuts are made during its distribution for opening postal savings accounts, officials and unofficial visits etc. The general feeling was that they have no access to the higher ups from the Zilla Parishads or the Education Directorate only, the Kendrapramukhs and Extension officers and the BEO.

For the regular inspection of schools, office bearers and officials from the Zilla Parishad and Taluka level visit the schools every year. This takes on the form of a major celebration and the contribution for the hospitality of the officials is collected from the teachers' salary in most schools. Cuts are also made regularly for various reasons in most schools since a number of years. Grievances regarding arbitrary cuts in the salaries of teachers were not entertained in the Zilla Parishad. On 22 November 1999 the Vice-President of the Zilla Parishad and Chairman of the Education Committee intervened and decided that since the month of December the teachers salaries will be deposited in the Banks and teachers are expected to open savings bank account.

The launching of Centrally sponsored development programmes, such as, the Integrated Child Development Services programme, which is basically a nutrition programme for children in the age group 0-6, but also manages pre-primary education, is a parallel programme in the rural areas. The simultaneous co-existence of such a central scheme has trivialised the role and potentiality of the Panchayati Raj institutions in the universalisation of primary education. Besides, duplicating a bureaucratic machinery the limited resources are being thinly spread in managing parallel schemes for the same objective. On the one hand the 73rd amendment to the Constitution has strengthened the Panchayati Raj institutions by supplementing its resources through central funds to be distributed by the Finance Commissions. On the other, the presence of central schemes, such as, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Early Childhood Centres (ECE), etc. have bypassed the Panchayati Raj institutions by taking over their functions. This institutional duplication for the achievement of similar and mutually interlinked objectives results in the spreading of available resources thinly, thereby, reducing the effectiveness of the schemes and programmes. The need for the coordination of interrelated

activities for child education and development implemented by the various departments at the central and state levels is self-evident. In the present context of Globalisation, which has simultaneously been followed by decentralisation in developing countries, Panchayati Raj institutions will have to be strengthened to promote literacy for the girl child - in fact human development in the rural areas.

The District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA) have further deprived the Panchayati Raj agencies of their functions of action planning and programme implementation. The DRDA's are responsible for the construction of the Primary School buildings, but the responsibility of maintenance of school buildings is with the Panchayati raj institutions. This has resulted in the neglect of the function of maintenance of school buildings which does not involve large sums of money and therefore is not a lucrative proposition. However, the special agencies, like the DRDAs, do not themselves implement schemes, but use the panchayat samitis to get the work done. But all the same the functions and the powers of the panchayati raj institutions do get reduced. The creation of the District Planning and Development Council in 1974 has further restricted the Panchayati Raj institutions scope for district education development planning. Presently, the Zilla Parishads only, implement the States's schemes for primary education. The process of feed back leading to revisions and modifications of existing schemes and initiation of new schemes does not seem to operate.

Recently in 1999, The chairperson of the P.B. Patil Committee for panchayati raj in Maharashtra, principal P.B. Patil pointed out that the panchayati raj implementation in Maharashtra was lagging behind the neighbouring states of Gujarat, Karnataka, West Bengal, etc. because the bureaucracy had usurped the authority of the elected representatives by taking out Government resolutions for the implementation of the new schemes. The powers given to the elected representatives by the Act were being narrowed down by the taking out of circulars by the bureaucracy.

The gram panchayats do not have gram sevaks to carry out the work of the panchayats. The financial position of the gram panchayats has deteriorated since the 1970, since they do not have any financial powers. The panchayati raj in Maharashtra has been supported financially by the centrally sponsored Jawahar Rojgar Yojana since 1989, but something needs to be done to make the gram panchayats financially viable. The Government is still sitting on the recommendations made by the first finance commission set up on 23rd April 1994.

The two day state and union territories education secretaries conference held in New Delhi, in November 1999, endorsed the proposal to bring a bill to amend

the Constitution of India to make elementary education a fundamental right of all children up to 14 years and a fundamental duty of parents and guardians of children in the age group. Although the Eighth Plan emphasised privatisation of the economy and the State's commitment to human development for which 100 per cent literacy is a precondition, the public investment in this sector is grossly inadequate. Primary education will have to be subsidised on a 100 per cent basis, for ensuring better quality of education, better targeting of beneficiary groups (instead of only caste as a criteria economic backwardness should be included as a criteria immediately), and at the same time creating additional assets, such as, rationalisation of training institutes for better performance of teachers. An inspection machinery, not for regimentation of the task of imparting of education but allowing for flexibility and time to turn the process of teaching into a joyful experience letting loose creativity to deal with all kinds of resource constraints. The Conference persuaded the central and State Government to increase public investment in education to 6 per cent of the GDP over the next five years. It emphasised decentralised planning, improved delivery system, enhanced people's participation and improved capacities of Panchayati Raj institutions to manage and supervise local schools which just about sums up the issue areas in this study.

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