

Chapter VI

Conclusion and Suggestions

Literacy for girls has very far reaching implications both for society as well as the recipient girl. Literacy for girls is a crucial input for developing/preserving human resource development, which in the ultimate analysis is a national asset. As far the individual recipient girl, literacy/education equips her to enjoy the fruits of social justice, social culture and of social, political and economic rights.

Such are the lofty ideals of girls' literacy and in all right earnest steps have been taken by the Union and State governments to realize them in practice. And yet, the ground realities of achieving the goal of universalization of education differ from State to State and from various strata of society to society. Thus, there exists in India now a dichotomy of 'educationally forward States' and 'educationally backward States'.

The locate of the study was Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh - the two states recognised by the Planning Commission as the 'Educationally Forward' and 'Educationally Backward' respectively.

From each state one district was selected for the study - from Maharashtra, Pune and from Madhya Pradesh, Ratlam district were selected purposively. Maharashtra is educationally forward state and Pune is one of its progressive district with higher literacy rate. Madhya Pradesh is educationally backward state and the characteristics of Ratlam district are not different from the state.

(ii)

Madhya Pradesh has a population of 6.61 crores (1991). The percentages of rural and urban population are 76.79 % and 23.21 % respectively. The share of SC and ST population to total population is 14.55 % and 23.27 % respectively. The total literacy rate of the State is 43.45 % and for male the literacy rate is 57.43 %

and for female 28.39 %.The total literacy rate for SC is 37.41 % and for male the literacy rate is 57.43 % and for female 23.76 %. The total literacy rate for ST is 29.60 % and for male the literacy rate is 40.65 % and for female 18.19 %.

Madhya Pradesh has an agriculture dominated economy as about 76 per cent of its population depends on agriculture.

Educational Institutions in Madhya Pradesh are as follows : Primary Schools -81198, Middle Schools - 20076, High Schools - 3656 and Higher Secondary Schools - 3778. As far as teacher-pupil ratio in Madhya Pradesh is concerned, it is : Primary School -1:44, Middle School -1:35, High School - 1:32 and Higher Secondary School - 1:33. Percentage of girls enrolment in rural enrolment is as follows -Primary School -41 %, Middle School - 30 %, High School - 19 % and Higher Secondary School - 17 %. Percentage of girls enrolment in total enrolment is as follows -Primary School -42 %, Middle School - 36 %, High School - 31 % and Higher Secondary School - 31 %.

After 73rd Amendment Act, Madhya Pradesh became the first state which enacted new panchayat raj system in the state and formed PRIs. After formation of PRIs, state government gave several powers and duties to PRIs and education was one of such areas. Elementary education was transferred to the Panchayats under this revolution of powers. As such in rural areas all schools from Pre-primary to Higher Secondary Schools are now managed and operated through panchayats. The main functions of Panchayats are -management of schools, operation of schools, construction and extension of school buildings, to make available teaching aids for school, control over operation of non-formal education system, appointment of Shikshakarmies and implementation of promotion schemes.

Village Education Committee (VEC) is also one of the significant aspects of community participation in education. Every village has a VEC. The VECs are formed instead of School Development Committees. The VECs are empowered to ensure the presence of teachers, operation, control and inspection of schools, enrolment campaigns, ensure the enrolment of each school going age child in school and control the tendency of dropout.

Various schemes related to Elementary Education

(A) *Centrally Sponsored Schemes* - 1. Non-formal Education, 2. Professional Education, 3. Operation Black Board, 4. Mid day Meals, 5. Minorities Welfare 6. Class Project.

(B) *State Sponsored Schemes* - 1. Free Books, 2. Book bank Scheme, 3. Coordination between Primary Schools and Anganwadies, 4. Uniform to Girl Child, 5. Shishu Shiksha Scheme, 6. Health Check-up for school children,

7. Student Security Insurance Scheme, 8. Education Guarantee Scheme, 9. Alternative School Scheme.

Rajiv Gandhi Prathmik Shiksha Mission - The specific tasks undertaken by the Mission to achieve its objectives are : community mobilisation, opening new schools, construction of educational buildings, upgrading schooling amenities, developing approved teaching-learning materials, teacher training, strengthening academic support systems and strengthening the information base for primary education. These tasks were mediated through the District Primary Education Programme which enabled the Mission to mobilise over US \$250 million of external assistance as grant to the State to be deployed in its 34 educationally backward districts.

A single significant expression of an innovative paradigm evolved by the Mission was the *Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS)*. The EGS was a pioneering initiative in the country acknowledging the child's right to primary education and to guarantee it. EGS perceived this guarantee as immediate action for creating opportunities of education rather than as a legal decree because it saw the responsibility for providing education as a collaboration between government and people. Under the scheme, whenever there is a demand from a tribal area from 25 children for facility to learn (40 for non-tribal areas) and if there was no school within 1 kilometre, the government guarantees to provide a trained teacher, known as the Guruji, within 90 days.

On 20.8.98 the mission completed the task of universalising access to primary schooling in the State. In 4 years, it has expanded access in 30,274 habitations. Out of this 10,985 have been by DPEP in 34 districts in 4 years time and 19,289 through the EGS in one and half years in the entire State. Whereas the formal system provided 80,000 primary schools in 50 years, the Rajiv Gandhi Prathmik Shiksha Mission provided 30,274 primary schools in 4 years thus indicating a dramatic acceleration in the rate of growth of school services possible through a Mission process. Since these 30,274 facilities are dominantly in the remote, deprived habitations, it also shows the targeting of school services towards the most needy groups.

(iii)

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.

The programme of educational development was envisaged under the Second Five Year Plan. 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.

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.

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 of 6-11 and 60% children in the age group of 11-14. During the period of the Fifth Plan, a Sub-Plan for the Educational Development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was prepared, as 12% of the population in the State belongs to the S.C. and S.T.

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 manpower for implementing the process of development. Its approach was 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 were in danger of being left behind because of their special circumstances. During the Sixth Plan Period a primary school was opened in every village in the State having a population of about 200 and above.

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. 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 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.

In Maharashtra, primary education in the rural areas is entirely the responsibility of the Zilla Parishads. Based on the recommendations of the Naik Committee, Maharashtra adopted the Panchayati Raj pattern which deviated from the model laid down by the Balwant Rai 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.

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.

Schemes and Programme - 1. Primary Education Schemes, 2. Non-Formal Education, 3. Construction of School Buildings, 4. Schemes for Students Belonging to scheduled castes, Scheduled Tribes, Nomadic Tribes and Vimukta Jatis, 5. Book Bank, 6. Attendance Allowance for the Girl students, 7. Shaleya Poshan Aahar Yojana (national Programme of Nutritional Support), 8. Scholarships,

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.

(iv)

In Madhya Pradesh - 50 teachers; 100 parents; 50 panchayat raj representatives and 30 educated villagers were surveyed. The main findings are as follows -

Teacher -

- (i) Teachers are divided in three categories- 48.00% Shikshakarmies; 46.00% Assistant Teachers and 6.00% Head Masters.

- (ii) 74.00 % teachers are male and rest 26.00 % are female.
- (iii) 70.00 % teachers are educated upto graduate and above.
- (iv) 40.00 % teachers are trained.
- (v) All the teachers are of the view that they do survey of school going age children in the villages.
- (vi) 60.00 % teachers are of the view that the children are enrolled according to survey list.
- (vii) Reasons of girl child absenteeism are mainly - household activities/care of siblings (76.00 %), they remain busy with works related to agriculture and labour (62.00 %), lack of attention from parents/lack of self interest (14.00%)
- (viii) Reasons of non-enrolment of girl child are mainly - lack of awareness among parents/illiteracy of parents (60.00 %), low socio-economic status which leads to labour work (20.00 %), household activities keep them away (18.00 %).
- (ix) Reasons for dropout of girl child are - involvement in labour and agriculture work keeps them occupied (56.00%), works related to household activities/ care of sibling (42.00%), engagement/marriage (24.00 %), repeated failure in one class (16.00 %), eve teasing keeps them away (10.00 %).
- (x) The level of interest shown by parents for girl child education is moderate (70.00 %)
- (xi) 90.00 % teachers have approached the parents of those children who are often absent or dropped out.
- (xii) The government schemes related to elementary education known to teachers are - Scholarship (76.00 %), Mid day meal scheme (48.00%) , Book bank scheme (32.00%), School Uniform (26.00%), Free education (8.00%), Don't know about any scheme (20.00%).
- (xiii) 74.00 % teachers perceive the schemes to be useful/beneficial.
- (xiv) Reasons of low educational status in Madhya Pradesh given by the teachers are : lack of education among parents (44.00 %), education level at grassroots is not upto the mark/ lack of facilities (26.00%), conservative attitude of parents (22.00%), involvement in agriculture (18.00%), child marriage (4.00%).
- (xv) The suggestive measures for the betterment of the girl child education are - parents, specially women should be made aware (30.00%), female teachers should be appointed (20.00%), schools upto middle and above should be opened in villages (20.00%), schools should be fully equipped (20.00%), involvement of teachers in extra educational activities should be minimised (16.00%), there should be separate schools for girls (12.00%), education

should be made compulsory (12.00%), more schemes should be operated (10.00%), social evils like child marriage etc. should be strictly prohibited (10.00%).

Parents -

- (i) 74.00 % parents are engaged in agriculture and 18.00% are labourer.
- (ii) 34.00 % parents are illiterate, 32.00 % are educated up to primary level, 17.00 % are just literate, 12.00 % are educated up to middle and rest 5.00 % are educated up to higher secondary.
- (iii) 82.00 % respondents (husband/wife) are illiterate, 6.00 % are just literate, 9.00 % are educated up to primary and rest 3.00 % are educated up to higher secondary. The majority is of illiterates, it is due to 91.00 per cent respondents are male and therefore the present educational status is mainly of females.
- (iv) 71.00 % respondents have family size between 5 and 7.
- (v) The reasons for not sending the girl child to school are - they are involved in household work/care of sibling (11.00%), involvement in agriculture and labour work (8.00%), tradition does not allow girl child to go out (3.00%), engagement/marriage (2.00%).
- (vi) The opinions of parents about girl child education are - girls should be educated to understand their routine work only (28.00%), girls should be educated as much as possible (25.00%), girls should be educated so that they may become self dependent (17.00%), education should be given upto primary level only (12.00%), girls should not be educated (8.00%), girls should be educated upto the availability of school in the village (4.00%).
- (vii) The government schemes for elementary education known to parents are - Mid day meal scheme (51.00 %), Scholarship (27.00 %), Free books (11.00 %), Free education (7.00 %), School uniform (6.00 %), Don't know about any scheme (41.00 %).
- (viii) The reasons of low educational status in Madhya Pradesh given by parents are - agriculture class is very large and it involves children in agriculture (19.00 %), child marriage/conservative society (16.00 %), labour and poor class is big in number (14.00 %), level of awareness among parents is low/illiteracy is high (14.00 %), insincerely of teachers (5.00 %), inadequate facilities in villages (4.00 %), 30.00 % parents are not in a position to give the reasons for low educational status.
- (ix) The suggestive measures for the betterment of girl child education given by the parents are : parents and villagers should be made aware (14.00%), schools upto middle and above should be opened in villages (13.00%), more schemes should be implemented (12.00%), separate girls schools should be opened (7.00%), female teachers should be appointed (3.00%), special efforts should be made by Gram Panchayat/Sarpanch

(3.00%), social taboos should be removed (2.00%), education should be made compulsory (2.00%) 48.00 per cent respondents are not in a position to give any suggestion.

Panchayat Raj Representatives -

- (i) 78.00 % panchayat raj representatives are male and rest 22.00 % are female.
- (ii) 52.00 % panchayat raj representatives are from the age group of 26 to 40 and 36.00 % are from the age group 41 to 55.
- (iii) 80.00 % panchayat raj representatives do agriculture, 10.00 % are labourers and rest 10.00 % are in business.
- (iv) 34.00 % panchayat raj representatives are illiterate. 34.00% are educated upto primary level, 18.00 % are educated upto middle level, 10.00 % are just literate and rest 4.00 % are educated upto higher secondary level.
- (v) The government schemes for elementary education known to panchayat raj representatives are - Mid day meal scheme (64.00%), Scholarship (44.00%), Free book distribution (20 %), Free uniform scheme (18.00%), Free education (2.00%), 32.00 % panchayat raj representatives are unaware of any scheme.
- (vi) The opinion of panchayat raj representatives about the level of awareness regarding the importance of education of girl child among villagers are - moderate (62.00%), low (22.00%), high (16.00%)
- (vii) 44.00 % panchayat raj representatives are of the view that women are aware about the education of girl child.
- (viii) 26.00 % panchayat raj representatives feel that they have a problem of information dissemination regarding government schemes, though 64.00 % don't have any such problem.
- (ix) All panchayat raj representatives are of the view that the girls dropping out of school in rural areas is critical.
- (x) The reasons of girl child absenteeism in panchayat raj representatives' opinion are - economic condition (88.00%), family ignorance (62.00%), nature of parent's work (56.00%), traditional social structure (40.00%).
- (xi) 70.00 % panchayat raj representatives are of the view that the facilities for elementary education are adequate.
- (xii) None of the teachers is settled in the villages. All the teachers come from nearby town and cities.
- (xiii) 88.00 % panchayat raj representatives are of the view that the teachers are regular and punctual in village school.
- (xiv) The reasons of low educational status of girl child in Madhya Pradesh given

by panchayat raj representatives are - involvement of children in labour work (32.00%), facilities of education are not adequate (26.00%), social taboos (26.00%), involvement in agriculture (12.00%), low level of awareness (12.00%), child marriage (8.00%). 16.00 per cent respondents don't know any reason.

- (xv) The measure to be taken for the betterment of girl education are - schools upto middle and above should be opened in villages (20.00%), more schemes should be introduced (20.00%), social taboo/child marriage should be strictly banned (16.00%), village school should be fully equipped (14.00%), parents, specially mothers, should be motivated (12.00%), female teachers should be appointed (10.00%), education should be made compulsory (8.00%). 16.00 per cent respondents have no suggestions.

Educated Villagers -

- (i) 63.33 % educated villagers are engaged in agriculture and 26.67 % have business.
- (ii) 40.00 % educated villagers are educated upto middle, 36.67 % are educated upto primary, 13.33 % are educated upto higher secondary.
- (iii) 83.33 % educated villagers feel that all school going age children go to school.
- (iv) The schemes related to elementary education known to educated villagers are - Mid day meal scheme (70%), Scholarship (50.00%), School uniform (23.33%), Book bank scheme (16.67%), Free education (13.33 %). 13.33 % educated villagers don't know about any scheme.
- (v) 63.33% educated villagers are of the view that the scheme are relevant and adequate.
- (vi) All educated villagers are of the view that girls dropping out of school in rural areas is critical.
- (vii) The reasons of girl child absenteeism given by educated villagers are - nature of parents work (70.00%), economic condition (60.00 %), family ignorance (23.33%), traditional social structure (23.33 %).
- (viii) The reasons of low educational status of girl child in Madhya Pradesh given by educated villagers are - status of education in villages is low (40.00%), low level of awareness and illiteracy among parents (20.00%), child marriage (16.67%), excess of social taboos (16.67 %), as agriculture is main occupation among villagers and they involve their children (13.33%), poor/labour class is more in number (13.33%).
- (ix) Measures to be taken for the betterment of girl education given by educated villagers are - separate girl schools should be opened (26.67%), female teachers should be appointed (20.00%), social evils/child marriage should be strictly prohibited (20.00%), parents, specially mothers, should be motivated (16.67%), schools upto middle and

above should be opened in villages (13.33%), more schemes should be implemented (13.33 %), village schools should be fully equipped (10.00%). 6.67 % educated villagers don't give any suggestion.

(v)

In Maharashtra - 54 teachers; 100 parents; 50 panchayat raj representatives and 30 educated villagers were surveyed. The main findings are as follows -

Teacher -

- (i) 57.40 % teachers are male and rest 42.60 % are female.
- (ii) 59.20 % teachers are educated upto higher secondary and 31.50 % are graduate.
- (iii) 27.80 % teachers are trained.
- (iv) All the teachers are of the view that they do survey of school going age children in the villages.
- (v) 98.10 % teachers are of the view that the children are enrolled according to survey list.
- (vi) Reasons of girl child absenteeism are mainly - household activities/care of siblings (46.30 %), economic condition (20.40 %), insecurity (16.70 %), over age (14.80%).
- (vii) Reasons of non-enrolment of girl child are mainly - illiterate family (16.70 %), economic condition (5.80 %), insecurity/safety (1.90 %).
- (viii) Reasons for dropout of girl child are - child marriage (31.50%), illiterate society (9.30%), illness (7.40%).
- (ix) The level of interest shown by parents for girl child education is high (46.30%) and very high (20.40 %).
- (x) The government schemes related to elementary education known to teachers are - Rice distribution (100.00 %), Savitri Phule Dattak Yojana (98.10%), Upasthiti Bhatta (94.40%), Adivasi Attendance Allowance (92.60%).
- (xi) 87.00 % teachers perceive the schemes to be useful/beneficial.
- (xii) The suggestive measures for the betterment of the girl child education are - Toilet/water/parks facilities should be provided (61.10%), Science material should be made available (44.40%), Clerks and Peons should be appointed (9.30%), Student-teacher relation needs to be improved (9.30%).

Parents -

- (i) 33.00 % parents do agriculture, 23.00% are labourer and 29.00% are housewives.
- (ii) 33.00 % parents are illiterate, 12.00 % are educated up to primary level, 13.00 % are just literate, 26.00 % are educated up to middle, 4.00 % are educated up to higher secondary and rest 4.00% are graduate.
- (iii) 24.00 % respondents' husband/wife are illiterate, 4.00 % are just literate, 34.00 % are educated up to primary and rest 26.00 % are educated up to middle, 4.00% are educated upto higher secondary and rest 3.00% are graduate.
- (iv) 45.00 % respondents have family size between 5 and 7 and 44.00% have family size of upto 4.
- (v) 92.00 % parents are pointed out that all children have been enrolled or educated in primary school.
- (vi) Only 13.00 % parents say that their children are dropped out of primary school.
- (vii) The opinions of parents about girl child education are - get importance and social status (61.00%), they will become independent (25.00%), girls can bring up their children properly (23.00%).
- (viii) The government schemes for elementary education known to parents are - Free bus pass/ Concession in fees (52.00 %), Milk/rice distribution (45.00 %), Free books/ cloth distribution/Savitri bai Phule Dattak Yojana (3.00 %).

Panchayat Raj Representatives -

- (i) 74.00 % panchayat raj representatives are male and rest 26.00 % are female.
- (ii) 46.00 % panchayat raj representatives are from the age group of 26 to 40 and 30.00 % are from the age group 56 and above.
- (iii) 61.00 % panchayat raj representatives do agriculture, 18.00 % are housewives.
- (iv) 34.00 % panchayat raj representatives are educated upto middle, 32.00% are educated upto primary level, 24.00 % are educated upto higher secondary level, 6.00 % are graduate and rest 4.00 % are equally illiterate and just literate.
- (v) The government schemes for elementary education known to panchayat raj representatives are - Rice distribution (98.00%), Note book distribution (98.00%), Scholarship for girls (72.00 %), 2.00 % panchayat raj representatives are unaware of any scheme.
- (vi) The opinion of panchayat raj representatives about the level of awareness regarding the importance of education of girl child among villagers are - very high (80.00%), high (16.00%).
- (vii) 46.00% panchayat raj representatives pointed out that the teachers are settled in the villages.
- (viii) All the panchayat raj representatives are of the view that the teachers are

regular and punctual in village school.

- (ix) The measure to be taken for the betterment of girl education are - build new middle school/water tank/urinals (42.00%), milk etc. distribution (30.00%), compulsory village education committee for mobilising parents (10.00%). 22.00 per cent panchayat raj representatives don't have any suggestion.

Educated Villagers/Social worker/NGO workers -

- (i) 62.00% respondents do agriculture and 30.00 % are student/social worker.
- (ii) 36.00 % respondents are educated upto middle, 36.00 % are educated upto higher secondary, 20.00% are educated upto graduate and above, 6.00 % are educated upto primary.
- (iii) 98.00% respondents feel that all school going age children go to school.
- (iv) The schemes related to elementary education known to respondents are - School Uniform (50.00%), Books (38.00%), Free education (8.00%), Milk etc. distribution (4.00%), Free bus pass (1.90 %).
- (v) The reasons of high educational status of girl child in Maharashtra given by respondents are - educated and aware parents/Govt.. policy and programme in Maharashtra (84.00%), good quality teachers/personal attention (58.00%), girls are self motivated (12.00%).
- (vi) Measures to be taken for the betterment of girl education given by educated villagers are - teachers should give proper attention (68.00%), English should be introduced from primary level (32.00%), gram panchayat should give attention towards education (4.00%).

(vi)

Having analysed the perception of respondents, it is clear that the girls literacy rate in Madhya Pradesh is low as compared to Maharashtra due to several reasons. To quote few of them - Madhya Pradesh has 37.82% SC and ST population where as Maharashtra has only 12.00% population of SC and ST. In Madhya Pradesh, the urban population is 23.21% where as in Maharashtra, urban population is 38.73%. Maharashtra has a long history of Panchayat Raj System and therefore community participation in education is witnessed since long whereas in Madhya Pradesh, the community participation in education is ensured only after 73rd Amendment Act. Maharashtra has achieved facility of primary schooling within 1.5 km. radius with 200 population during 7th plan.

The interpretation highlights that the level of information towards government schemes for elementary education in Madhya Pradesh is very limited. Therefore

there is an urgent need to provide all information regarding schemes to villagers and panchayat raj representatives so that maximum benefit may reach to needy persons.

Community participation is ensured after introduction of new panchayat raj but the exposure of rural society is less towards education. There should be effective information dissemination among VEC members and Panchayat Raj Representatives so that they understand their role and perform with fullest capacity.

Many of the schemes are not properly implemented like - Mid day meal scheme in Madhya Pradesh. From September 1997 the distribution of prepared food was stopped for non-tribal regions and now 3 kg food is distributed for every child every month hence the basic purpose of the scheme is diluted.

The problems associated with elementary education in rural areas are well known. Lack of interest of parents in educating children, village economy related factors like help of children during harvesting and looking after younger brothers/sisters by the school-going age child while parents are away on fields/work etc. are some of the reasons at home responsible for the problems related to enrolment etc. But there are some factors that emanate from school environment itself. Lack of basic requirements like adequate or proper sitting accommodation, absence of water hut in the school, missing urinals and toilets are some of such physical handicaps in the schools. Lack-lustre and uninspiring teaching methods of teachers, dearth of modern teaching aids and attention-engaging toys and programmes also add to the seriousness of the problem. Though under the Panchayat education system devices have been introduced to get over such problems, yet much remains to be done in this respect.

The problem has to be tackled at various level: at the level of school administration, at societal level and the level of Village Education Committee under the Panchayat System. Some steps have already been taken to increase intake of students and to check the problem of drop outs: arrangement of mid-day meals for school children, provision for scholarships, free books, book banks and free giving of school dresses to the needy students are some of such attractions for the children. However, something more than these attempts are still needed to improve admission and retention rate of students. The Panchayat Raj Act entrusts responsibility to Village Education Committee (VEC) to encourage parents to send all young boys and girls to join school and complete education at least upto fifth standard. However, much remains to be desired so far as the performance of VEC is concerned in this entrusted area. It is expected of the VEC members and the school teachers, that they go to the parents and urge/goad and inspire them to send their children

for joining the school; the message has to go to rural society the not a single boy/ girls should remain uneducated. With some honourable exceptions, few VECs have undertaken such an exercise. Secondly, as a part of teacher accountability, school teachers have to go to the homes of villagers from time to time to instruct them about the advantages of education, motivate them to send their children to school and discuss with them practical ways and means to solve the problems of drop outs. Then, teachers have to make their teaching modes/methods more attractive for children, add extra-curricular activities for them and undertake innovative activities for example, paintings on school environment, which can naturally attract and there by develop interest of the student in the school. School management , i.e. the VEC members, the Head Master with his team of teachers and some senior social leaders of the village can get together from time to time, think about methods of improving attendance, minimizing drop out etc., for example, by organizing school functions, inviting villagers to schools on such occasions or by organizing awareness generating rallies of villagers, students etc. where appropriate slogans/ placards are raised/displayed to motivate them for universal primary education of village children.
