

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Education is the most important tool for social, economic and political transformation and a key instrument for building an equitable society. A well-educated population, equipped with the relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills is essential for economic and social development in the twenty-first century. Education also acts as an integrative force in society, imparting values that foster social cohesion and national identity¹. Before 1976, education was the exclusive responsibility of the States. The Constitutional Amendment of 1976 included education in the Concurrent List. While the role and responsibility of the States in education remained largely unchanged, the Union Government accepted a larger responsibility of reinforcing the national and integrated character of education, maintaining quality and standards including those of the teaching profession at all levels, and the study and monitoring of the educational requirements of the country.

1.1.2 With the formulation of National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, India initiated a wide range of programmes for achieving the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). These efforts were intensified in the 1980s and 1990s through several schematic and programme interventions, such as Operation Black Board (OBB), Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP), Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP), Bihar Education Project (BEP), U.P. Basic Education Project (UPBEP), Mahila Samakhya (MS), Lok Jumbish Project (LJP), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) – the flagship Centrally Sponsored Scheme in partnership with State Governments for UEE across the country. This was further strengthened with the passage of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 which gave a legal mandate to provide free and compulsory elementary education to every child in the age group of 6-14 years. States and UTs were supported in the implementation of the RTE Act, 2009 through the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of SSA. The norms of the Scheme were aligned with the provisions of the Act with effect from September, 2010.

1.1.3 A successful programme of UEE is the precondition for taking the first reliable step towards Universal Secondary Education. The NPE emphasised improving equitable access to secondary education and the enrolment of girls, SCs and STs, particularly in science, commerce and vocational streams (Para 5.13 of the NPE, 1986). The NPE and the Programme of Action (POA), 1992 while recognising secondary education as a critical instrument for social change, called for its planned expansion. The NPE, (as modified in 1992) specifically laid emphasis again on *increasing access to secondary education with particular focus on participation of girls, SCs and STs; increased autonomy of Boards of Secondary Education to enhance their ability to improve quality; introduction of ICT in school curriculum for coping with globalisation; renewed emphasis on work ethos and values of a humane and composite culture in the curricula; and vocationalisation through specialised institutions or through the refashioning of secondary education to meet the manpower requirements of the growing Indian economy* (Para 5.13 to 5.15). The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) scheme initiated in 2009, demonstrated the government's

¹India, Planning Commission, Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) Volume-III, p. 48

ambition for a secondary education system that can support India's growth and development. In the year 2013-14, four other Centrally-sponsored Schemes for secondary education viz., ICT in Schools, Girls' Hostel, Vocationalisation of Secondary and Senior Secondary Education and Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) were subsumed under RMSA. This was done to provide for convergence based implementation of different programmes for secondary education with inclusion of aided schools for quality related interventions and Senior Secondary segment for certain components.

1.1.4 The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Restructuring and Reorganization of Teacher Education (CSSTE) was initiated in 1987 pursuant to the formulation of the NPE, 1986. The NPE stated that improvement in the status and professional competence of teachers is the corner stone of educational reconstruction and envisaged teacher education as a continuous process with pre-service and in-service training being its inseparable components. District Institute of Teacher Education (DIETs), Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs), and Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs) were, therefore, established. Thus, the CSSTE Scheme aimed to provide infrastructural and institutional support to Government Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

1.1.5 It is, therefore, evident that the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of SSA, RMSA and TE were the three major school education development programmes of the Ministry of Human Resource development (MHRD), Government of India being implemented in partnership with State/UTs. The common objectives of all the Schemes are to enhance access through the expansion of quality school education; to promote equity through the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and weaker sections, and to improve the quality of education for all. While the SSA covered the elementary level (grades I-VIII) and was the vehicle for implementation of the RTE Act, 2009, the RMSA covered grades IX-X (IX-XII for certain components). CSSTE provided for teachers' education through an institutional setup for both pre-service and in-service training across classes I-X. Further, with the role of SCERT as an academic authority u/s 29(1) of the RTE Act, the focus was on strengthening of SCERTs and DIETs. With the persistent efforts of the Central and the State Governments, these schemes have significantly addressed several major gaps in the school education system and have significantly contributed towards laying a strong foundation for an equitable quality school education system in the country. However, the major challenge is provision of quality education. The focus of the Central Government is now on encouraging States to take steps for improvement in quality of education.

1.2 Towards Samagra Shiksha – An Integrated Scheme for School Education

1.2.1 The Government has, till now, tried to adopt an integrated approach in the implementation of the various Centrally Sponsored Schemes. However, overtime, parallel institutional arrangements at national, state, district and sub-district levels with little convergence with mainstream school education administration have been created for the planning and management of these Schemes. This may have led to a duplication of efforts and personnel towards implementing similar interventions and achieving similar objectives. Independent evaluations of the Schemes have suggested increased convergence and integration between the Schemes through a single school education development programme covering grades I-X/XII. This would help in instilling allocative efficiency and optimal utilization of budgetary and human resources. Many States have already

strived to attain convergence between the two Schemes by making one State Project Director (SPD) in-charge of the implementation of SSA and RMSA. Recognising the potential gains from convergence, an advisory dated 16th November, 2017 on integrating the administrative structures at various levels created for SSA and RMSA in the States to achieve productive synergies, better co-ordination and economies of administrative costs was sent to all States and UTs. The creation of a single administrative structure would also assist in developing a school sector-wide strategy stressing on improvement in quality of education.

1.2.2 Given the shift in the approach to development of school education from input-based to outcome based central sector interventions as envisaged in the document entitled, India: Three-Year Action Agenda, 2017/18 to 2019/20 (NITI Aayog, 2017)², a ‘paradigm shift’ is envisaged in the approach to central sector spending on school education. The Union Budget, 2018-19, has proposed to treat school education holistically without segmentation from pre-school to Class 12. An overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class 12 has been, therefore, prepared with the broader goal of improving school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes. This sector-wide development programme/scheme would also help harmonise the implementation mechanisms and transaction costs at all levels, particularly in using state, district and sub-district level systems and resources, besides envisaging one comprehensive strategic plan for development of school education at the district level. The shift in the focus is from project objectives to improving systems level performance and schooling outcomes which will be the emphasis of the combined Scheme along-with incentivizing States towards improving quality of education.

1.2.3 The Samagra Shiksha – An Integrated Scheme on School Education envisages the ‘school’ as a continuum from pre-school³, primary, upper primary, secondary to Senior Secondary levels. The vision of the Scheme is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education from pre-school to senior secondary stage in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for Education⁴.

*The **Goal SDG-4.1** states that “By 2030, ensure that all boys and girls complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes”.*

*Further the **SDG 4.5** states that “By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of Education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations”.*

² Available at <http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/coop/IndiaActionPlan.pdf>

³Pre-schools referred to by all nomenclatures such as Balwadi, pre-nursery, nursery, preschool, preparatory, pre-primary, LKG, UKG, pre-nurseries, play centres, crèches, BalVatikas etc.

⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>

1.2.4 **The major objectives of the Scheme** are provision of quality education and enhancing learning outcomes of students; Bridging Social and Gender Gaps in School Education; Ensuring equity and inclusion at all levels of school education; Ensuring minimum standards in schooling provisions; Promoting Vocationalisation of education; Support States in implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009; and Strengthening and up-gradation of State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs)/State Institutes of Education (SIE) and DIET as a nodal agencies for teacher training. **The main outcomes of the Scheme** are envisaged as Universal Access, Equity and Quality, promoting Vocationalisation of Education and strengthening of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

1.2.5 The Scheme will be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme by the Department through a single State Implementation Society (SIS) at the State/UT level. At the National level, there would be a Governing Council (GC) headed by Minister of Human Resource Development and a Project Approval Board (PAB) headed by Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy. The GC will be empowered to modify financial and programmatic norms and approve the detailed guidelines for implementation within the overall Framework of the scheme. Such modifications will include innovations and interventions to improve the quality of school education. The Department will be assisted by a Technical Support Group (TSG) at Educational Consultants of India Limited (EdCIL) to provide technical support in functional areas pertaining to access, equity and quality education by merging the TSGs of the Schemes of SSA, RMSA and TE. States would be expected to bring a single Plan for the entire school education sector.

1.2.6 The fund sharing pattern for the scheme between Centre and States is at present in the ratio of 90:10 for the 8 North-Eastern States viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura and 3 Himalayan States viz. Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and 60:40 for all other States and Union Territories with Legislature. It is 100% centrally sponsored for Union Territories without Legislature. This is in accordance with the recommendations of the Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on Rationalization of Centrally Sponsored Schemes received in October, 2015⁵.

1.2.7 The major interventions, across all levels of school education, proposed under the scheme are: (i) Universal Access including Infrastructure Development and Retention; (ii) Gender and Equity; (iii) Inclusive Education; (iv) Quality; (v) Financial support for Teacher Salary; (vi) Digital initiatives; (vii) RTE Entitlements including uniforms, textbooks etc.;(viii) Pre-school Education; (ix) Vocational Education; (x) Sports and Physical Education; (xi) Strengthening of Teacher Education and Training; (xii) Monitoring; (xiii) Programme Management; and (xiv) National Component. It is proposed that preference in the interventions would be given to Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs), LWE affected districts, Special Focus Districts (SFDs), Border areas and the 115 Aspirational districts. The programmatic and financial norms under the Scheme are detailed at **Appendix**.

1.2.8 The main emphasis of the Scheme is on improving quality of school education by focussing on the two T's – Teacher and Technology. The strategy for all interventions under the Scheme

⁵ Available at <http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/Final%20Report%20of%20the%20Sub-Group%20submitter%20to%20PM.pdf>

would be to enhance the Learning Outcomes at all levels of schooling. The scheme proposes to give flexibility to the States and UTs to plan and prioritize their interventions within the scheme norms and the overall resource envelope available to them. Funds are proposed to be allocated based on an objective criteria based on enrolment of students, committed liabilities, learning outcomes and various performance indicators.

1.2.9 The Scheme will help improve the transition rates across the various levels of school education and aid in promoting universal access to children to complete school education. The integration of Teacher Education would facilitate effective convergence and linkages between different support structures in school education through interventions such as a unified training calendar, innovations in pedagogy, mentoring and monitoring, etc. This single Scheme will enable the SCERT to become the nodal agency for conduct and monitoring of all in-service training programmes to make it need-focused and dynamic. It would also enable reaping the benefits of technology and widening the access of good quality education across all States and UTs and across all sections of the Society.

1.3 RTE Roadmap under the integrated scheme

1.3.1 In a historic move, the Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. The RTE Act, 2009⁶, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, has become effective on 1st April 2010. This act provides a justiciable legal framework that entitles all children between the ages of 6-14 years free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education. Most importantly, it provides for children's right to an education that is free from fear, stress and anxiety.

1.3.2 The Integrated Scheme would support States and UTs in implementation of the RTE Act, 2009. The Scheme envisages providing an equitable and inclusive quality education which would be guided by the following principles⁷:

- (i) ***Holistic (SAMAGRA) view of education***, as interpreted in the National Curriculum Framework 2005, with implications for a systemic revamp of the entire content and process of education with significant implications for curriculum, teacher education, educational planning and management.
- (ii) ***Equity***, to mean not only equal opportunity, but also creation of conditions in which the disadvantaged sections of the society – children of SC, ST, Muslim minority, landless agricultural workers and children with special needs, etc. – can avail of the opportunity.
- (iii) ***Access***, not to be confined to ensuring that a school becomes accessible to all children within specified distance but implies an understanding of the educational needs and predicament of the traditionally excluded categories – the SC, ST and others sections of

⁶ http://mhrd.gov.in/rte_rules

⁷ The guiding principles are based on the report for which in September 2009, the Government had set up a Committee under the chairpersonship of Shri Anil Bordia, former Union Education Secretary, to suggest follow up action on SSA vis-à-vis the RTE Act. The Committee submitted a report in April 2010, entitled "Implementation of RTE Act and Resultant Revamp of SSA".

- the most disadvantaged groups, the Muslim minority, girls in general, and children with special needs.
- (iv) ***Gender concerns***, implying not only an effort to enable girls to keep pace with boys but to use education as a decisive intervention to bring about a basic change in the status of women.
 - (v) ***Centrality of teacher***, to motivate them to innovate and create a culture in the classroom, and beyond the classroom, that might produce an inclusive environment for children, especially for girls from oppressed and marginalised backgrounds.
 - (vi) ***Moral compulsion*** is imposed through the RTE Act on parents, teachers, educational administrators and other stakeholders, rather than shifting emphasis on punitive processes.
 - (vii) ***Convergent and integrated system of educational management*** is pre-requisite for implementation of the RTE law. All states must move in that direction as speedily as feasible.

The Framework for Implementation of the Scheme provides a broad outline of approaches and implementation strategies, within which the States can frame detailed guidelines keeping in view their specific social, economic, institutional contexts and legal commitments under the RTE Act, 2009.