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# UNIT 6 UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

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## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

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It is universally acknowledged fact that an educated and enlightened citizenry is an essential condition for the successful functioning of a democracy. Education, at least up to the elementary level, is considered essential for every individual in a democratic country. Primary education provides the necessary foundation for strengthening human resources because the quality and efficacy of human resources assume special significance for our personal, social and national development. The entire edifice of our national development is based on the availability and quality of primary education. It was with this objective that the framers of our constitution pledged to provide free and compulsory primary education to each and every child. After becoming independent, India, as a democratic welfare state, announced Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) and equal opportunity for all as its basic principles.

In this unit, you will learn about the concept of universalisation of primary education, strategies to achieve this goal and transition from UEE to EFA (Education For All). Further, school mapping, micro planning and the scheme of operation blackboard have also been discussed in detail as strategies to achieve UEE and EFA.

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## 6.2 OBJECTIVES

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After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- 1 describe the concept of universalisation of primary education in terms of access, provision, enrolment, attendance and achievement;
- 1 discuss the various strategies for achieving universalisation of primary education;
- 1 describe various policies and schemes like Education For All, school mapping, micro planning, scheme of Operation Blackboard etc; and
- 1 explain the various measures to reduce educational wastage and stagnation.

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## 6.3 UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) in India means making education upto class I-VIII available to all children in the age group 6-14. This constitutional directive has been interpreted as making primary education of five-year duration available to all children between the age group 6-11 years and three years of upper primary education for children aged 11-14 years. Universalisation of Elementary Education has always been a matter of great concern for policy planners even in pre-independence era. The need for Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) was recognised immediately after the independence of our country. The constitution of India set out an unambiguous goal for the children of the nation's children in the directive Principles of State Policy – “The state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years”. The nation was expected to achieve this target by 1959.

Primary education is essential to each individual as it provides skills to access opportunities in life which are crucial for viability in a society being increasingly influenced by the information revolution. Primary education (as Mahatma Gandhi favoured Basic Education) is a fundamental need of all individuals and is essential for their existence or survival with dignity. It is the right to such education that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights refers to Primary education (classes I-V) should be universal, that is, available free for all children within the age group of 6 - 11 years. Further, this concept assumes that education is the birth right of every child and opportunities for this education are to be provided by the state through formal and non-formal means of education. UEE signifies that education is free and available to all irrespective of where one resides, one's gender and caste. Primary education is also a crucial indicator of human development. It is primarily through UEE that our nation is seeking to realise the goals of Education For All.

In order to redeem this constitutional pledge, the country has traveled a long distance. Though India has made considerable strides in the direction of achieving the target of UPE/UEE through various schemes during the last five decades, the goal still remain only partially achieved and to a considerable extent elusive. Successive committees and commissions on education have emphasized the need for achieving Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE). The National Policy of Education in 1968, 1986 and also revised in 1992 reiterated the government's commitment towards Universalisation of Primary/Elementary Education. The policy envisages that free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality should be provided to all children up to the age of 14 years before the commencement of the 21st century.

There has been massive expansion of Elementary Education (EE) during the post-independence period; however, the goal of Universalisation of Primary and Elementary Education is yet to be fully achieved. Universal Primary Education (UPE) which incorporates universal access, enrolment, participation and learning attainment remains

an abiding national concern with us. The broad parameters of achieving UEE – access, enrolment, retention and attainment are discussed below:

### 6.3.1 Universal Provision

It means that school facilities should be provided to all children between the age group of 6-11 to achieve UPE and 6-14 for achieving UEE throughout the country. The school should be easily accessible i.e. it should preferably be within a walking distance of a child. We have fairly succeeded as far as this provision is concerned in respect of children in the age group of 6-11. The primary education system in India has expanded into one of the largest in the world. The number of primary schools increased from 2.10 lakhs in 1950-51 to 6.10 lakhs in 1997-98. The corresponding increase in upper primary schools is from 0.13 lakhs to 1.85 lakhs during the same period. These schools together with 2.7 lakhs non-formal education centres enrolled 150 million children. It should be remembered that during 1951, the number of school going children was 22.3 millions. Universal provision of education has been substantially achieved at the primary stage. At the primary stage 94 per cent of the country's rural population now have schooling facilities within one kilometre of their habitation. At the upper primary stage also, 83.93 percent of rural population have a school within three kilometres of their habitation.

### 6.3.2 Universal Enrolment

Provision of adequate schools of children in all areas is not the only input for solution to the problem. Since independence, there has been a substantial increase in enrolment at the elementary stage of education. In the year 1997-98, the estimated number of children enrolled is the primary stage was 1087.82 lakhs while at the upper primary stage it was 394.87 lakhs.

Gross enrolment ratio of children in the age group 6-11 increased from 42.6 percent in 1950-51 to 80.70 percent in 1997-98. Likewise, gross enrolment of 11-14 age group increased from 12.7 percent in 1950-51 to 58.50 percent in 1997-98. While the gross enrolment ratio (GER) at the primary stage in the country as a whole and in most of the states are near about 100 per cent, there are quite a few states where the ratio is considerably lower. These include Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir and Meghalaya. Most of these states have literacy rates lower than the national average. There is thus a strong regional dimension to UEE so far as its imbalances are concerned.

Gender disparities are conspicuous in regard to enrolment and retention. Girls' enrolment has grown at the primary stage from 5.4 million in 1950-51 to 47.4 million in 1997-98 and that at the upper primary stage from 0.5 million to 15.87 million. The rate of growth of enrolment of girls has been higher than that of boys. But disparities still persist as girls still account for only 43.2 percent of total enrolment at the primary stage and 39.0 per cent at the upper primary stage. The enrolment of SCs and STs has increased considerably at the primary stage.

Hence, access to primary schooling varies across states, within states and by gender and social class.

### 6.3.3 Universalisation of Retention

By universalisation of retention we mean that once a child joins a primary school(s), s/he should remain there till the completion of primary schooling. If the child leaves the school in between, the idea of universalisation stands defeated. Mere enrolment of children is not enough. They should attend the school regularly and complete their primary/elementary schooling. You must have observed that many children who enroll themselves in the schooling system, gradually drop out from the system during the first two years.

The problem gets more complicated as the drop-out rates though declining, continue to be high. Nearly half the children who enter class I drop-out before reaching class VIII. Regional disparities also abound in the context of dropouts. The drop-out rates of girls at the primary as well as the upper Primary stage are much higher than those of boys. Girls' dropout at the primary stage is 41.34 percent as compared to 38.23 percent for boys. The total drop-out rate is nearly 40 percent and 54 percent at the primary and elementary level respectively. Unfortunately, 60 per cent of all the first admission leave the primary school before completing it. It gives birth to problem of wastage. Mere enrolment of children is not enough. These children need to be retained and enabled to complete the full cycle of primary education.

### 6.3.4 Universalisation of Achievement

India has achieved a great deal so far as providing a primary school for most settlements is concerned. In some states, the primary education system has higher intake capacity than children enrolled at the primary level. The quality of education system is best judged by the learning achievement of the students. With significant gains in enrolment in primary classes, the challenges lies in improving the quality of primary education for higher retention and better performance of students. The level of academic achievement of primary students, as indicated by the baseline surveys carried out under District-Primary Education Project (DPEP) even in educationally advanced states like Kerala and Maharashtra is quite low. Further available evidence, however shows that primary level learning achievement is low varies according to background of the child and also varies across schools. These findings indicate that children who reach the final year of primary school often have mastered less than half the curriculum. Similar results were formed in two studies of learning achievement in 1,700 randomly sampled schools in 43 low literacy districts in 8 DPEP states. Differences in learning achievement among states and districts are large and vary by gender, caste and area. Many children do not obtain basic reading and numeracy skills. This often causes them to dropout early.

To increase the level of learner attainment our country took Initiative in 1991 and laid down minimum levels of learning (MLLs) to be achieved at the primary stage. The first phase of this programme was implemented through various agencies. Curriculum revision, rewriting of text-books to make them competency-based, enhancing their pedagogical value, training of teachers in class room processes are the major activities undertaken in this regard. The state government have introduced MLLs in most of their primary schools including schools run by local bodies and private groups. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) has adopted MLLs as a major strategy for improvement of quality of primary education. Non- formal education programme is also adopting MLLs wherever appropriate.

Hence, our country looks forward to attaining universalisation of achievement or attainment by all children who enroll themselves for primary education.

#### Check Your Progress

**Notes:** a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. Describe the meaning of Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE) and its need for India in about 50 Words.

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2. Explain why retention is essential to OPE in about 30 words.

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## 6.4 STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

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In order to achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education by the 2000 AD, following key strategies had been worked out in consultation with states and union territories:

1. Overcoming the problem of school dropouts and laying emphasis on retention and achievement rather than on mere enrolment;
2. Strengthening the alternatives to schooling, particularly, non-formal education system for working children, girls and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised sections of society;
3. Shifting focuses from educationally backward states to educationally backward districts;
4. Adopting disaggregated approach with a focus on preparation of district-specific and population-specific educational plans;
5. Providing universal access to schooling facilities particularly to girls, disaggregated groups, and out of school children;
6. Introducing Minimum Levels of Learning for enhancement of learner achievement; Microplanning would provide the framework of universal access and universal participation while MLLs would be the strategy for universal achievement;
7. Improving school effectiveness, teacher competence, training and motivation;
8. Decentralisation of planning and management through Panchayat Raj institutions, Village Education Committees and laying stress on participative process;
9. Convergence of different schemes of elementary education and related services such as early childhood care and education and school health and nutrition programmes;

Considering the magnitude and complexity of the problem of UEE/UPE, meticulously formulated strategies have been adopted in the form of various schemes and measures. Some of these are briefly described below:

- i) Unattractive school environment, unsatisfactory conditions of building and insufficiency of instructional materials act as major demotivating factors for greater enrolment and retention in primary schools. This led to a drive called Operation Blackboard (OB) for substantial improvement in infrastructural facilities at the primary stage. Details of Operation Blackboard have been discussed under Section 7.6 of this Unit;
- ii) A large systematic programme of Non-formal Education (NFE), which is an integral component of the strategies for achieving UEF has been taken up to cover children who cannot attend formal school due to their socio-economic compulsions. Girls, working children, dropouts, and those belonging to SC, ST and deprived sections of the society stand to benefit from this programme. NFE has enough flexibility to provide education at the door steps to enable them to learn at their own pace and convenience. Currently 740 voluntary agencies are implementing NFE programme in 25 states and UTs;

- iii) National Programme of Nutritional support to primary education (i.e. mid-day meals) is intended to boost enrolment, attendance and retention in primary schools and also to provide nutritional support to children. The scheme covers the children studying in primary classes in schools run by the government, local bodies and also government aided schools throughout the country. Total beneficiaries are estimated to be around 9.75 crores in nearly 6.88 lakh primary schools in the country during the Eighth Plan period;
- iv) District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) is a centrally-sponsored programme providing special thrust to achieve universalisation of Primary Education (UPE). The programme takes a holistic view of the development of primary education and seeks to operationalise the strategy of UPE through District-specific planning with emphasis on decentralised management, participatory process, empowerment and composite building at all levels. The programme mainly aims at providing access to primary education to all children, reducing dropout rates to less than 10 percent, increasing level of achievement of primary students by at least 25 percent, reducing the gap among gender and social groups to less than 5 percent and catering to the needs of special target group take tribals, SCs, women and other marginalised sections.
- v) The programme components include construction of class-room, and new schools opening of non-formal attractive schooling centres, appointment of new teachers getting lip Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres, teacher training, development of teaching-learning materials, special interventions for education of girls, SCs/STs etc. The component of integrated education to children with disability and a distance education component for improving teacher training have also been included in the programme. The programme was initially launched in 1994 in 42 districts in 7 states; it has now been extended to 192 districts in 15 states. To enhance the quality of Elementary Education the centrally-sponsored scheme of restructuring and reorganisation of teacher education was taken up in 1987 to create viable institutional infrastructures for training and continuous upgradation of knowledge, competence and pedagogical skills of elementary school teachers in the country. 448 DIETs, 76 CTEs and 34 IASEs have been established till the end of January, 1999.
- vi) Some area-specific externally aided projects in the field of primary education are also being implemented. Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) aims at universalisation and qualitative improvement to primary education in remote and socio- economically backward villages of Rajasthan with focus on girls. Mobilisation and participation of the community to improve primary schools is an important feature of these projects.
- vii) Some additional new initiatives have also been taken by the government to universalise primary education. The wider public debate is going on the proposal to make the right to free and compulsory Elementary Education a fundamental right. In order to built up public opinion and mobilise social support, a national programme of media publicity and advocacy for universalisation of elementary education is launched during the Ninth Five Year Plan. It is envisaged that the programme would facilitate social mobilisation and environment building for operationalising the proposal to make elementary education a fundamental right.
- viii) Learning outcomes of basic education are laid down at a realistic, relevant and functional level. These outcomes define the minimum levels of learning common to both schools and the equivalent NPE programme. The endeavour is to monitor learning acheivement to direct more resources where levels of learning are lower and to consciously accelerate the pace of development in the needy areas, in order to reduce disparities, equalise standards and provide inputs for quality improvement as reflected by the performance of the system.

These are the major steps taken for achieving OPE/UEE. Let us now discuss the concept of Education For All and other schemes like School Mapping, Micro Planning, Operational Blackboard etc.

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## 6.5 EDUCATION FOR ALL (EFA)

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After independence the provision of UEE has been accorded the highest priority in the programme of educational development and the nation has been making all efforts to realise the target of UEE through universal enrolment, universal attendance and universal retention. The central and state governments and various international bodies are attempting to enroll all children in the age group 6-14 and inadequately literate from amongst the adults. It is however unfortunate that even after 55 years of independence, the constitutional obligation has not been realised and the target of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) remains unattained so far. UEE or UPE has been adopted as a national goal and Education For All (EFA) has been regarded as the international goal for promoting national well being, individual excellence and successful democratisation. UEE has led to the formulation of the project 'Education For All'. The world conference on Education For All (Jomtein, 1990) adopted a resolution to strive for achieving Education For All by the year 2000. As a sequel to this, the Delhi summit conference recommended measures for effective realisation of EFA by 2000 AD.

### 6.5.1 Meaning, Nature and Scope of EFA

Efforts towards UEE led to the formulation of the project 'Education For All'. The target of Education For All was to be achieved by 2000 AD. Education For All envisions quality schools, which can not only hold students for completion of courses provided, but also enable them to achieve Minimum Levels of Learning. During 1990, steps were taken for fixing the targets of MLLs.

Besides expanding and supporting Elementary Education, all efforts need to be made for promoting meaningful and effective Adult Education. The year 1990 was declared as the International Literacy Year by the UNO. Adult Education Programme are being implemented for the last five decades. National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) was set up and it fixed the target of educating 10 million adults in the age group 15-35. Some other programmes like, 'Each one teach one' and 'Total Literacy Campaign' have gained momentum throughout the country. With a view to supplementing efforts of the formal education system and adult education programmes, Non Formal Education (NFE) has been implemented for providing education to children and school drop-outs who are not able to attend formal schools due to many difficulties.

'Education For All' is an outcome of the combined meeting of the Tenth Regional Consultation Meeting of APEID and Regional Experts Meeting on Universalisation and Renewal of Primary Education and Eradication of illiteracy in Asia and Pacific countries held in Bangkok from 20<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1986. The programme, 'Asia Pacific Programme of Education For All (APPEAL)' focussed on three major areas: (i) Eradication of illiteracy (EOI), (ii) Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE) and (iii) Continuing Education (CE). This programme aimed at covering (a) all illiterates in adult population and (b) enrolment and retention of all primary school age children especially the disadvantaged and girls who have remained out of the reach of all efforts to enroll them in schools.

### 6.5.2 Goals of EFA in India

Against the background of the demographic profile and the complex ground realities of the India scene, the goals of Education For All (EFA) in India are as under:

1. Expansion of early childhood care and development activities especially for the poor, the disadvantaged and the disabled children, through a multi-pronged effort involving families, communities and appropriate institutions.

2. Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), is viewed as a composite programme of :
  - 1 Access to elementary education for all children up to 14 years of age;
  - 1 Universal participation till they complete the elementary stage through formal or non-formal education programmes; and
  - 1 Universal achievement at least of minimum levels of learning .
3. Drastic reduction in illiteracy, particularly in the 15-35 age group
4. Provision of opportunities to maintain, use and upgrade education and provision of facilities for development of skills of all persons who are functionally literate and of those who have received primary education through formal and non-formal channels;
5. Creation of necessary structures and setting in motion of processes which could empower women and make education an instrument of woman's equality; and
6. Improving the content and process of education to relate it better to the environment people's culture and with their living and working conditions.

In this regard, some international and national efforts have been initiated to achieve 'Education For All'. The CAPE programme was implemented on massive scale through out the country. One of the most notable action plans for improving primary education was the UNICEF-assisted Project-II which was known as Primary Education Curriculum Renewal Project and which was worked out intensively with 3,000 primary schools covering all states and union territories. A variety of instructional material was developed and produced for improving the quality and relevance of primary education under this project. Preschool Education Project was implemented as a School Readiness Programme in the rural and tribal areas for promoting the cause of UEE. ICDS programme was provided as a support service for Universalisation of Primary Education. ECCE has thus been used as a strategy for realising EFA. Girls / women education, Education of the SC, ST and other backward classes, Education of the Disabled have occupied frontline position in achieving EFA. Further, open school and open learning can very efficiently contribute to the realisation of UEE and EFA.

Education For All is an international goal as well as global commitment which is a matter of major significance. Our country has the onerous responsibility of generating adequate awareness about the need and importance of education and developing necessary infrastructural facilities for provision of education within the easy reach of all individuals. The management of the education system should be geared to meet the emerging needs of various groups of learners –normal and handicapped, general as well as SC, ST and backward in rural and urban, remote and accessible areas.

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## **6.6 SCHEME OF OPERATION BLACKBOARD (OB)**

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As you already know, the National Policy on Education–1986 and Programme of Action recommended a number of schemes for quantitative and qualitative improvement of primary education, unattractive school environment, unsatisfactory condition of buildings and inadequate instructional material acted as major demotivating factors for enrolment and retention of children in primary school. These called for a drive viz; 'Operation Blackboard' for substantial improvement of infrastructural facilities at the primary stage. In pursuance of the NPE 1986, the scheme of Operation Blackboard (OB) was launched in 1987-88 with the aim of improving the human and physical resources available in the primary schools of the country as on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1986. Operation Blackboard (OB) is the name of this centrally-sponsored scheme under which every existing primary school in



the country has been or is being provided with minimum essential facilities required for their effective functioning. The scheme consists of mainly three components;

- i) Provision of an additional teacher to single teacher primary schools;
- ii) Providing at least two classrooms in each primary school; and
- iii) Providing teaching-learning equipment to all primary schools brought under the scheme. During the Eighth Plan, the scheme was revised in 1993-94 and expanded to provide third classroom and third teacher to primary schools where enrolment exceeds 100 and was extended to cover upper primary schools as well.

The scheme was intended to improve school environment, enhance retention and learning achievement of children by providing minimum essential facilities in all primary schools. Thus, the scheme seeks to bring about both quantitative and qualitative improvement in primary education.

The implementation of the scheme was revised by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India in 1991-92. The modification of scheme as given in the Programme of Action (1992) has the following sub-schemes; .

- i) Continuation of on-going OB scheme to cover all the primary schools, especially those SC/ST areas;
- ii) Expanding the scope of OB to provide three teachers and three class rooms to primary schools, wherever enrolment warrants them; and
- iii) Expanding the scope of OB to upper primary schools.

Besides the above, flexibility has been allowed in the supply of essential items of teaching-learning materials to the primary schools by different states and UTs. Some items e.g.— teacher's equipment maps, educational charts, reference books, children's books (at least 200), blackboard, chalk and duster, mats and furniture for students and teachers and games materials have been made mandatory and have to be supplied to each schools. For the list of essential teaching-learning materials like teacher's material's classroom teaching materials, play materials, game equipment, primary science kit, mini tool kit, mathematics kit, books for library, classroom equipment and music instrument, the states and UTs have been given the freedom to select and supply only those that are suitable for their specific needs.

The Operation Blackboard (OB) scheme has unique features that recommended well-defined steps for the improvement of facilities in primary schools aiming at making it a pleasant place for children and encouraging teachers to adopt child-centered, activity-based teaching-learning strategies. Some of its significant features are under:

1. It defines the concrete facilities that are essential for any school to function effectively, in terms of building, teacher and teaching-learning material.
2. The items identified as minimum aids for teacher-learning process take care of the requirements of the teachers and pupils for self-learning as well as teaching of various concepts in different subject areas included in the scheme of studies at primary stage.

Norms and specification of each supply item have also been laid down in order to maintain the quality of each item. Thus, the scheme provides opportunities not only for equal access to education but also for creating conditions for equal participation and attainment of comparable levels by all children.

The physical targets for the Eighth Plan were achieved within remarkably short time. The scheme has achieved the target of 5.23 lakhs regarding the provision of teaching-

learning equipment to primary schools, and 1.49 lakhs sanction of additional teachers against the target of 1.53 lakhs, 1.82 lakhs classroom were added against the target of 2.63 lakh classroom. The scheme has been expanded to cover upper primary schools as well during the Eighth Plan. In addition to this, 4,000 teachers have been appointed by State Government under OB (MHRP, 1998). 100% central assistance is provided for appointment of an additional teacher in single teacher schools. The scheme is implemented through state government.

**Check Your Progress**

**Notes:** a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

3. List the strategies for achieving Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE).

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4. List the objectives of EFA.

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5. What are the main components of OB.

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## 6.7 SCHOOL MAPPING AND MICRO PLANNING

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In the broadcast sense, micro planning of education, of which school mapping is the principal element, means planning of education at regional district and school level to achieve universalisation of primary education. The National Policy of Education and Programme of Action have emphasized school mapping as technique of micro level planning of expansion and rationalisation of educational facilities particularly at elementary level of education.

As discussed earlier, it is noticed over a period of time that certain areas are better endowed with school facilities than other areas. The criteria to pen new schools need to be carefully listed and adhered to, so that schools located in certain villages do not deprive any locality in terms of access to education. "How to decide about the villages where schools are to be opened?" is the major issue addressed by the school mapping exercise.

### 6.7.1 School Mapping: Concept

Let us discuss the concept of school mapping and how it facilitates greater access to education. The process of location planning in education is known as 'school mapping'. School mapping is an essential planning tool to overcome possibilities of regional inequalities in the provision of education facilities. This help us to identify the most appropriate location of school or its alternative(s) so that maximum number of children can be benefited from the same investment.

The major objective of school mapping is to create equality of educational opportunities by leveling up of the existing disparities in the distribution of educational facilities in order to:

- i) Achieve equality of opportunity; and
- ii) Improve efficiency in the use of resources.

Thus, school mapping has the double function of securing greater equality of educational opportunities and at the same time using the existing facilities is an effort to optimise the advantages from the limited material and manpower resources.

### 6.7.2 Scope of School Mapping

School Mapping as a technique is useful to plan all levels of education. However, it is more widely used for planning of facilities at the primary level of education. To achieve education for all, school mapping is not confined to locating formal school only, location of alternatives to formal schools is very much a part of the school mapping exercise.

The process of school mapping covers the following specific areas for expansion and improvement of facilities.

- a) Rationalisation of existing facilities by
  - i) shifting, closure or amalgamation of institutions;
  - ii) optimum utilisation of teaching and non-teaching staff;
  - iii) optimum utilisation of buildings, equipment, furniture etc;
- b) Provision of new or additional facilities by
  - i) opening of new institutions or upgrading of existing ones .
  - ii) providing additional teaching or non-teaching staff
  - iii) Providing new or additional buildings, furniture and equipment in an institution etc.

### 6.7.3 Factors to be Considered in School Mapping

A number of factors need to be taken into consideration in undertaking the exercise of school mapping on a regular basis. The following factors are essential pre-requisites for school mapping:

- a) Demographic factors i.e., growth of population and of school age population in particular, its geographic distribution, age and sex composition, migration etc. which affect the potential demand for educational facilities;
- b) Educational factors i.e. the number of pupils per class and their division into small groups for certain activities, normal length of time for which premises should be used and the possibility of introducing double shifts;
- c) Geographic factors i.e. ways and means for the pupils to get to the school in terms of geographical topography, road, lane and water ways; and
- d) Economic factors i.e. minimum and maximum size of the schools / classes and sections and their financial applications.

### 6.7.4 Methodological Stages in School Mapping

The methodology of school mapping envisages specification of norms, diagnoses of the existing educational facilities, projection of future population, deciding the location of schools, estimation of facilities required in all the educational institutions and estimation of financial resources required.

- i) The first step in school mapping is to select a unit for the exercise. It helps in identifying the most ideal locations to open schools and; cluster of villages or even a block can be an ideal unit for school mapping activities,

- ii) The second step involved is to diagnose or assess the educational development in the selected area by examining the present status of education in an area or region, strength and weaknesses of the system and geographical distribution of educational facilities. The role of important indicators like illiteracy rate, enrolment ratios, retention rates and dropout rates, teachers position, are required as essential pre-requisite for school mapping. Comprehensive survey of infrastructural facilities and other facilities like blackboard, water, toilet, electricity, playground etc. are useful to prepare school specification plan.
- iii) The next step in school mapping exercise is to assess the number of children to be enrolled. This estimate is to be made on the basis of catchment area of a school and projected school age-specification population. Enrichment projections are essential to decide the opening up new schools, upgradation of existing schools and requirement of the number of teachers.
- iv) The next step followed in school mapping is the specification of norms, standard and catchments area. Opening of new schools or their alternatives is based on the norms regarding population and potential number of children to be enrolled in a given locality. Locations which have a population of 300 and above in plain area and 250 or above in remote or tribal area is to be considered as the prescribed norm to open new schools. Similarly, the norms prescribed two teachers in all primary schools. The other important norms to decide the location of schools is the maximum permissible distance a child has to travel from home to school. This norm is the basis of defining the catchment area of a school. The catchment area of a school is the geographical area served by a school. The existing norm in India is to provide primary schools within walking distance i.e. 1 km of habitation. The distance matrix method needs to be adopted to serve children in remote or sparsely populated areas.

As part of the school mapping exercise, one may have to assess the requirement of facilities in schools. Based on the population growth and potential growth in enrolment, the proposal will indicate the number of schools to be opened, locations where they are to be opened, facilities to be provided in the existing and new schools etc.

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## 6.8 MICRO PLANNING

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Conceptually “micro planning” may be defined as planning at the level of the lowest spatial unit or planning of education at regional, district, school level. In the Indian context, micro level planning can mean planning carried out at the habitation level. While selecting a unit for micro planning, one has to consider the availability of educational facilities like a school or non-formal education centre.

The need for micro planning has emerged from the extreme complexity of planning tasks at national level and the great difficulty of implementing the field objectives defined at the central level. To a certain extent the failure of many planning exercises to reduce disparities between regions, urban and rural areas, various groups etc; and to make education more relevant to the needs of local society and development, necessitates micro planning.

The deficiencies of central i.e. national planning have often been attributed to: (i) insufficient knowledge of the situation prevailing in various regions or zones (ii) insufficient importance attached to the manner in which plan could be implemented in the field (iii) and lack of participation have emphasized the need for micro planning and school mapping as indispensable to decentralised planning of education.

The objectives of micro level planning are as under:

- i) To mobilise the local community to prepare village level plans;
- ii) To provide a support system to the schools and teachers so that school education become more functional; and
- iii) ensure that all eligible children from the locality attend the school.

The major objective of the micro planning exercise does not concern allocation of resources, but it is instead concerned with better and efficient use of resources which are already allocated to a particular locality, area or school. Micro planning is a continuous process and it unfolds itself in the process of implementation and operationalising a plan. The object and subject of micro planning are the local people.

Micro planning embraces the following questions within its ambit : How to make schools community-based? How to ensure accountability of the school to the community? A generalised model of micro planning will not serve its purpose as it aims at serving local people and it is geared to situational specificities. Each locality may have some characteristics which may make micro planning exercise different: across localities. The local bodies and Village Education Committees (VECs) play an important role in facilitating micro planning activities.

### 6.8.1 Steps for Micro Planning

The following are the essential steps that lead to and facilitate micro planning:

- i) Understanding the village and identifying the problems faced by the village regarding information strategies;
- ii) Preparation of village map; the facilities available in the village may be plotted in a map to enable one to virtually observe the village and available facilities within village;
- iii) Identification of non-enrolled and dropout children; the information collected through household surveys becomes a part of micro planning. Household surveys provide details about the children to be enrolled and retained in the school and about from the school;
- iv) Preparation of Village Education Register based on the household surveys; one can develop a village education register to record information regarding students not attending the school;
- v) Assessment of facilities in the school;
- vi) Preparation of a village education plan; once the community inputs and the school inputs are identified, then it is possible to prepare a village education plan focusing on the specific educational problems faced at the household level and at the school level. Preparation of such plans and monitoring of activities thus identified in a village plan make micro planning exercise an effective tool in making the best use of the resources available at the local level.

One of the major questions in micro planning is “Who will initiate a micro planning exercise?” Unfortunately, there cannot be a single answer to this question. The pattern may vary from one locality to another. Cooperation from the elected representatives of the local bodies, functionaries of educational department and people at large are an essential condition for the success of micro-planning activities. Therefore, organisational micro level can become a regular feature only when it is locally based depending on the people from the same locality.

### 6.8.2 School Mapping and Micro Planning

School mapping and micro planning are indeed complementary exercises. However, they are not the same because —

- i) School mapping deals with optimum allocation of resources whereas micro planning deals with optimum utilisation of resources;
- ii) School mapping essentially deals with creation of educational facilities, on the other hand micro planning focuses on issues pertaining to processes and outcomes at local level;

- iii) School mapping essentially estimates the extent of financial resources required to provide educational facilities; micro planning on the other hand focuses more on non-financial resources to ensure the development of local level capacities;
- iv) Schooling mapping is not an exercise to be repeated every year whereas micro planning is a continuous process to be repeated every year; and
- v) School mapping is a less participatory exercise than micro planning as micro planning involves larger level participation.

Micro planning is village-based while school mapping is block-or mandai-based; it may even provide for a cluster of villages.

It is important to note that school mapping requires a more specialised training a selected group of people while micro planning requires orientation of a large number of villagers.

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## 6.9 STEPS TO REDUCE EDUCATIONAL WASTAGE AND STAGNATION

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An attempt has been made in this section to discuss the problems of educational wastage (dropouts) and stagnation which is quite alarming at the primary stage and in the context of the universalisation of primary education. Every year various enrolment drives are conducted and most of the out-of-school children are enrolled but very many of them dropout of school because of various reasons. Many children continue their schooling in a disinterested manner without satisfactory achievement and progress. Wastage occurs when a child leaves school without completing the primary or elementary stage and forgets whatever s/he learnt at school. This results in wastage of their time and energy as well as wastage of national resource utilised by them. You will be interested to learn that the drop-out rate has been decreasing year after year. It was 65% in 1960-61 for primary level education; it rank to 36% in 1994-95 and then plummeted 40% in 1997-98. Even the dropout rate of girls has substantially decreased from 70% in the year 1960-61 to 41% in 1997-98. The dropout rate of girls is much higher than that of boys and upper primary stages. Gender disparities are very conspicuous among SC and ST also. Rural dropout rates are much higher than the national averages. Only 35% of children who enroll in grade-I join and study in grade-VIII. Stagnation has a very demoralising effect on pupils and parents. The non-detention policy of promoting all learners to the next higher grade irrespective of performance and achievement has tackled the issue of stagnation but in a superficial manner only. Attendance however is a major problem. Many a time, the child enrolls in the school but does not attend classes regularly; hence he has to repeat the class. This leads to wastage because the time and energy spent by him and resources used by him have been wasted.

The phenomenon of dropping out or leaving school before the completion of the appropriate grade and stage is generally known as wastage in education and failure or detention in a particular class is known as stagnation. In one sense stagnation or failure also causes education wastage but only indirectly. This also happens because of poor quality of education which is imparted to students; this implied that the inputs provided to the school system being fully utilised. Going by the spirit of Article 45 of the Constitution, any child withdrawn from or failing in a class before the age of 11 years or class-V, would constitute a case of wastage. Therefore, universalisation of education is to emphasize not only enrolment of all children but their retention upto the age of 11 years. Wastage is a relative term related to the aims and objectives of education.

General economic conditions of Indian families and excessive involvement of children in domestic work or duties very often lead to wastage. Cultural stereotypes, occupational status, parental indifferences, social taboos and poor educational inputs collectively contribute to wastage. Wastage is largely due to improper and unattractive school environment, teaching-learning process, heavy curriculum and lack of meaningful education research and its poor application. Teachers are not trained to meet the challenges of teaching young children, teaching multiple grades, or teaching in small rural schools. Text books often are too difficult for students and sometime even for teachers. Rural schools

are often in a state of poor repair, lack water supply, and sanitary facilities and have an average floor space per pupil well below norms.

At this stage, one would like to ask why are children out of school? Why do some fail to enroll in the first place and why do many of those who do enroll fail to complete the primary school stage? What measures can we take to reduce wastage and stagnation at the primary stage? There could be many answers to each of these questions. Some of the governmental initiatives and measures to achieve universalisation of primary education have already been discussed.

Improving the quality of schooling and to increase the demand for it are the most important inputs for retaining children at school. The following inputs provide us the possibility of the long awaited breakthrough in this area:

- i) Enforcing compulsory education could reduce the number of dropouts. Drop-out rates have declined during recent years. Yet almost half the girls and one-third of the boys do not complete primary education. A particular cause for concern is the fact that more than half of the students who dropout do so in grades 1 and 2, well before they can be expected to have learned much of the curriculum (Mehta, 1995). The dropout rate in early grades is especially high in states with very high overall dropout ratio is viz; Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and West Bengal. Education is compulsory in most states, and in 1993 the Supreme Court of India, “ensured free and compulsory education to all children upto the age 14 as a fundamental right. District and community education committees under panchayat raj legislation could help us achieve compulsory schooling.
- ii) Automatic promotion, although questionable on pedagogical grounds, is one way of reducing stagnation. Policies regarding promotion vary considerably across states. Some states (such as Maharashtra, Karnataka) follow no detention i.e. automatic promotion policy throughout the primary grades, while others follow a policy of detention upto grade-2 (Haryana) or grade-3 (Uttar Pradesh). Primary level dropout rates are therefore lower in states that have automatic promotion at least during the earlier grades.
- iii) Examining the reason for dropping out among children age 6-14 years, NCAER (1994) found that 68% of boys and 56% of girls reported dropping out because of financial economic reasons. Data from the National Sample Survey show that among children over 6 years of age who never enrolled, 50% of boys and 33% of girls did not enroll as a result of economic factors. Economic compensation to attend school may make difference in the desired direction. Although several measures and incentives have been tried in the form of free uniform, free books, scholarship, no compensation was paid to the family for children’s earning. Paying such could increase sharply the cost of primary education of our country.
- iv) The primary school curriculum should be made more meaningful and relevant for learner. It should be based on environment and life of the children. In most states of India, the curriculum is limited to text books. The responsibility of curriculum development in primary education is of the state, although the NCERT provides model materials that can be adapted at the state and the district levels. Initiatives have recently been taken to match the curricular load of primary education with children’s developmental capabilities through minimum levels of learning (MLL). MLLs have been formulated for language, mathematics and environmental studies for Grades I-V. Yet, in order to reduce drop-out, primary curriculum in particular needs to be contextualised and made responsive to local specifics and needs of the children. Appropriate initiative needs to be taken for this purpose to make curriculum more relevant and attractive to all children through a variety of teaching contexts.
- v) In view of considerable variation across states and school, however, it is necessary that the set of interventions should be identified locally in order to meet the needs of

children and local communities in specific schools. The measures can be cost effective than across the board uniform measures that do not take into account and cater to local specifics and community needs.

- vi) Wastage can be substantially reduced at primary stage by narrowing down the gender gap. The gender gap in education is significantly larger for schedule caste and schedule tribes than for the population as a whole, and it is much wider in rural than in urban areas. The most significant gender gap is seen in retention, attendance and dropouts at the primary education level. Most of the available evidence points to household welfare as an important determinant of retention. A variety of strategies has been proposed in low literacy rural districts in order to reduce the gender gap in enrollment and dropout rates. In order to achieve targets, we need additional inputs e.g. awareness campaigns to educate the community about the importance of education in general and economic utility of girls education, provision of creches and early childhood education centres to relieve girls of the burden of looking after their siblings during school hours and providing direct incentives like fees, books, food, uniform and transport. These facilities can lower the cost of girls' education on the family. Opening of new and more schools for girls, non-formal education centres, establishing flexible school hours to allow girls to combine domestic work with schooling, providing more appealing-learning materials, constructing toilets in the school building for girls and appointing more female teachers can help us succeed sooner than expected in attaining universal primary education.
- vii) Evidence from surveys confirms that participation rates for school education are lower for children from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. What could explain the higher dropout rates among children of SCs and STs ? Household welfare is an important factor. The other factors which can contribute to achieve our goals are cultural gap and alienation between the family and the school, the language of instruction and quality of school environments. But some of the factors responsible for uneven gaps in education are more cultural than economic though economic factors too play a strong role. We need to formulate appropriate strategies for addressing these issues and these strategies may be different for students from the disadvantaged groups and those from the tribal groups. It is quite likely that what succeeds with one group may not work with another group. For scheduled tribes students, non-welfare based strategies need to emphasize greater accommodation of cultural differences, including language and greater local and community participation as part of school activities. For scheduled tribes students living in very small villages, the possibility of opening single room multigrade schools, needs to be considered. Recruitment of teachers from local community, who are well conversant with dialect and culture could also be considered. These teachers could be provided short-duration intensive teacher training programme. Local planning and implementation of educational activities that enables the participation of tribal people, encouraging parents to visit school especially during working hours and increasing community participation through village education committees and youth organisations can substantially reduce dropout rates for tribal children. Further school calendar can be adjusted to accommodate the temporary demand for higher manpower during the sowing and harvesting seasons; even religious festivals could be accommodated suitably by weaving educational activities around them. Supplementary instructional materials in tribal dialect using the script of the regional language and Devnagari could be developed, particularly for children in the beginning grades especially Grades I-III. Equity objectives receive high priority in our national policy, including education policy. Research based and targeted strategies for girls, scheduled castes and scheduled tribe children, their systematic implementation supported by proper monitoring can help reduce the gap in enrolment and retention.
- viii) Improving teacher's performance is the most important challenge for primary education in India to achieve the target of Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE) and to reduce its wastage and stagnation. Teachers are the principal instructional agents in schools and if their performance falls short of the expected



standards, attaining UPE can be jeopardised. There have been many deficiencies in teacher's education and these have continued for long. Many primary teachers are not upto the mark so far as teaching skills are concerned and many of them poorly motivated. Teachers are frequently absent from school especially in rural areas because of poor motivation or competing administrative demands on their time. These deficiencies need to be made good through systematic programmes.

**Check Your Progress**

**Notes:** a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

6. Describe the concept of 'School Mapping' and its main objectives (about 50 words).

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7. List the steps in 'Micro Planning'.

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**6.10 UNIT-END EXERCISES**

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1. List the major parameters of OPE and briefly describe their significance (about 50 words).
2. Briefly describe the nature and characteristics of NFE (about 60 words).
3. Explain the differences between UPE and EFA (about 50 words).
4. Describe in brief the impact of OB on UPE (about 50 words).
5. Differentiate between 'School Mapping' and 'Micro Planning'.
6. List strategies for increasing the retention of learners from SCs and STs for attaining UPE (about 80 words).
7. Give your views on 'Non-detention Policy'.

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**6.11 LET US SUM UP**

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Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE) is an essential part of and means to Universalisation of Elementary Education. Its four essential components are (a) Universalisation provision of school facilities for all children upto Grade I-IV or V; (b) Universal enrolment; (c) Universalisation of Retention and (d) Universalisation of Achievement i.e. better quality of primary education.

In view of the size and complexity of the task of UEE and UPE, various strategies including Operation Blackboard, Non-formal Education programme, National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, making education a fundamental right and emphasising learning outcomes have been worked upon. Education For All (EFA) has now emerged as an international goal and it includes adult population also. Thus EFA goes beyond and includes both UEE and UPE. India has also opted for EFA. The goals of EFA are comprehensive and include expansion and improvement of education including NFE facilities.

School Mapping is the process of location planning of schools educational inequalities at various level alongwith improving the efficiency of resource utilisation. Micro-planning is the process of planning at the level of smallest i.e. lowest spatial unit. It is usually done at

the village level. This promotes greater participation of local community by providing need-based and local community-specific education.

- 1 Compulsory schooling, automatic promotion, economic compensation to families who send their earning children to school, formulating more relevant and appealing curricula, decentralised planning, reducing gender gap and improvement of teacher performance along with greater participation in school of children from socially disadvantaged and educationally backward sections of society can reduce wastage and stagnation and help us attain UPE.

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## 6.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

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## ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Universalisation of primary education stands for availability of free and compulsory primary education (I-V) of quality to all children in the age group 6-11 years. Right to education comes under human rights and is also an indicator of national growth. Education is essential as it provides skills to access opportunities in life and survival with dignity.
2. Retention is important for every child to complete the full circle of primary education. In India a large percentage of enrolled children dropout of the schools. This problem is greater in the case of girl students. Special efforts are being made in this direction to improve the situation.
3. Universal access, enrolment retention and improving achievement.
4. i) expansion of early childhood care as development  
ii) universalisation of Elementary Education

- iii) reduction in illiteracy (15-35 years age group)
  - iv) provision of opportunities/facilities to maintain, use and upgrade and skills of people through formal and non-formal channels
  - v) empowering women through education
  - vi) improving the quality of education and relate it to their lives
  - i) provision of an additional teacher to single teacher primary schools
  - ii) provision of at least two classrooms in primary schools
  - ii) providing teaching-learning equipment to all primary schools under the scheme.
6. 'School mapping' is the process of location planning in education. This is done to
- i) achieve equality of opportunity and
  - ii) improve efficiency in the use of resources.
7. Micro planning is concerned with better and efficient use of resources allocated.
- i) understanding knowledge of situation prevalent in targeted area
  - ii) preparation of area map, facilities available
  - iii) household surveys to identify non-enrolled and dropout children
  - iv) preparation of Area Education Register based on survey
  - v) assessment of facilities available in the school
  - vi) preparation of Area Education plan focusing on educational problems faced at school and household level

