

States Marching Ahead

The World Education Forum met in Dakar in April 2000 to review the progress made to achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA). The Framework for Action adopted in Dakar identified the following six goals of EFA:

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Ensuring that by 2015, all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

Improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Recognising the importance of elementary education, the Government of India has been working with state governments for achieving the goals of universalisation of elementary education (UEE) through major initiatives like the *Sarva Shiksho Abhiyan*, the national programme to implement the fundamental right to free and compulsory elementary education, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Teacher Education Programme, the adult literacy and continuing education programmes of National Literacy Mission, and the special programmes for promotion of early childhood care and education. Acknowledging the fact that a major part of planned action in India takes place in individual states, which may not get fully represented in national plans and perspectives, the following national goals, corresponding to the six Dakar goals have been drawn up.

Integrated Child Development Services scheme being universalized -early childhood care and education an important component of the scheme (Dakar Goal 1)

Sarva Shiksho Abhiyan (Movement for Education for All) launched with the aim of providing eight years of quality education to all children in the age group 6-14 by 2010 (Goal 2 and 6)

A comprehensive plan for adolescents, especially girls, in the Tenth Five Year Plan (goal 3)

National Literacy Mission to provide functional literacy to all illiterate adults in the age group 15-35, and achieve sustainable threshold level of 75 per cent literacy by 2007 (Goals 3 and 4)

Special schemes targeted at girls, apart from focus on girls in general

schemes, and removal of all disparities, including gender, in primary (Class I-IV) by 2007 and elementary (I-VIII) level by 2010 (Goal 5).

Right from the time of adoption of Dakar Framework for Action and its plea for formulation of National Plan of Action to achieve the goals adopted in the Dakar Forum, Government of India has been pursuing the States to formulate their Plan of Action for achieving the EFA Goals, as re-set in the *Sarva Shiksho Abhiyan*, and endorsed for the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07). In what follows are the accounts of the EFA initiatives, perspectives and plans of some States, as presented in the National Seminar on EFA, held on 6-7 September, 2003, presented here in an abridged form, with a brief resume of their salient facets provided in the Introduction.