

The National Policy on Education 1986- Programme of Action 1992

CED code - R N00.33

2. EDUCATION OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES AND OTHER BACKWARD SECTIONS

1. PRESENT SITUATION

2.1.1 According to 1981 census, the population of Scheduled Castes (SCs) was 10.6 crores and that of Scheduled Tribes (STs) 5.4 crores accounting for 15.75% and 7.8 % respectively of the country's population. The corresponding figures of 1991 census are not yet available.

2.1.2 According to 1981 census, the literacy rates of SC and ST population were 21.38% and 16.40% respectively as against 41.22% of non-SC/ST population. The literacy rates of women for these categories were 10.93, 8.04 and 29.43 percent respectively. The corresponding figures of 1991 census are not yet available. The proportion of enrolment of SC/ST children continues to be much less than their population proportion except in the case of primary education where the enrolment ratios are comparable to the general enrolment. But this is possibly due to the higher proportion of over-age children amongst these categories.

2.1.3 The drop-out rate among SC/ST students continues to be very high at all levels of education. The drop-out rates for the year 1987-88 amongst SC, ST and general population are given below:-

Drop-out Rates (1987-88)			
Classes	SC	ST	General
I-V	51.60	65.21	46.97
I-VIII	68.81	80.01	62.29
I-X	81.98	87.62	75.30

2.1.4 The NPE, 1986 was unambiguous about removal of disparities and attainment of equalisation of educational opportunities for SCs, STs and other Backward Sections, specially for girls. The POA detailed a number of strategies aimed at accelerating their rate of enrolment and retention. The NPERC as well as the JRC have reiterated the need for concerted efforts for bringing about equality of educational opportunity and achievement for SCs, STs and other backward sections of the society. However, despite the policy imperatives, the implementation of the various schemes has not been commensurate with the goals set up for each scheme.

2.1.5 A number of Centrally Sponsored Schemes are being continued in the 8th Five Year Plan (1992-97) for SCs, STs and other backward sections. These are (i) Post-matric scholarships; (ii) Grant-in-aid to voluntary organisations; (iii) Pre-matric scholarships for children of those engaged in Hin-clean occupations; (iv) Book banks; (v) Boys' and Girls' Hostels; (vi) Coaching and allied schemes. In addition to these, two schemes in the central sector have also

been approved, viz., (i) special educational development programme for girls belonging to SCs of very low literacy levels, and (ii) educational complex in low literacy pockets for development of women's literacy in tribal areas. These programmes are in addition to the special thrust given to the weaker sections in the general programmes for educational development like opening of schools, running of Non-Formal Education (NFE) centres and adult education centres, schemes of Operation Blackboard, upgradation of merit of SC/ST students, reservation in educational institutions, etc.

2. ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

2.2.1 Taking into account the experience gained in the implementation of NPE, 1986 and POA, the following strategies are proposed:

(a) Access and Enrolment

2.2.2 In order to ensure universal access and enrolment of SC children in rural areas, henceforth, in opening primary and upper primary schools priority would be given to the needs of SC habitations and hamlets. As far as possible pre-primary section will be an integral part of such schools.

2.2.3 Every Scheduled Tribe habitation will be provided with a primary school or other suitable institution before the end of the 8th Five Year Plan in order to ensure universal enrolment and participation.

2.2.4. In tribal areas educational plan will be implemented in an integrated manner. Pre-school education (through Balwadis), Non-Formal Education, elementary education and adult education will be organically linked and integrated to ensure achievement of total literacy of the entire population. This integrated Educational Complex will be responsible for total education within its area serving all children in the age-group 3-14 and adults in the age-group 15 and above.

2.2.5 For SC children access and enrolment will be assured primarily in the formal school. Where SC children are not able to attend the formal school provision for non-formal and distance education centres will be made to ensure universal access and enrolment.

2.2.6 It will be the responsibility of the teachers to organise drives at the beginning of every academic session to enrol all school-age children specially girls belonging to SCs, STs and other backward sections. For this purpose active assistance of voluntary agencies and local communities shall be taken. Traditional and folk media can be very effective in reaching parents and children in remote areas to motivate them.