

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

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Introduction

India being a heterogeneous country is a home to several cultures, religion, caste, category and race. Over the years, India has been on the world map for many reasons; one major reason being that the country is developing at a quick pace. With development come several changes and major changes in the country have taken place in the field of education. Education acts like a yardstick to measure a society's advancement. A broad, uniform pattern of the education system has been adopted in the country which includes ten years of primary and secondary schooling, two years of higher secondary schooling and eventually, the University education or higher education.

Education in the country has long been a topic of the many plans and policies. It is a commitment in the Constitution to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of fourteen years. In 1950's, at the time of framing the Constitution, the aim was to attain universalization of primary education, which is also mentioned in the Directive Principles of State Policies. Since then, significant efforts at the policy front have been taken place to ensure that the goal of universalization of primary education is met. The Government is constantly making efforts to ensure that all the necessary infrastructure and facilities are being provided to make sure that each child is in school and learning well. There is a historical perspective to even the system of schooling and education as a term has not evolved in a vacuum. The fact is not an unknown one that education is the key to development of a nation and thus, many efforts have been made to ensure that good quality education is made accessible to all the children of the nation. These efforts have been made at the central as well as the state level to ensure that the welfare programmes can be reached to a maximum number of people who can benefit out of them and take advantage of the efforts that the government is putting in for the educational development of the children. It was envisaged in Millennium Development Goals to achieve universal primary education by 2015; however, it was not fulfilled and disparities in education still remained. The revised Sustainable Development Goal number 4, ensures that the children complete primary and secondary education by the year 2030.

Despite varied efforts made by the central and the state government to promote enrolment in the primary education and ensure retention of students in schools till they complete fourteen years of age, the literacy rate in India according to 2011 census remains 74%. India has had her share of issues concerning education and it is necessary to understand the programmes and efforts of the government in the areas of primary education, their implementation and the impact those programmes and plans have had on the beneficiaries.

The present study is an attempt to understand the perspectives of teachers in government run primary schools and parents of children studying in the local government run primary schools regarding the various government plans and programmes for primary education. Teachers are the main implementers of the plans and programmes and parents are the indirect beneficiaries for whose children, the plans and programmes are designed. The chapter is an effort to gain a conceptual clarity to understand education as a term and historical development of education in the country to better understand the present scenario of primary education. It includes discussion of the concept of education, historical perspective to education in India and efforts made at the central and state governments towards reconstructing and revitalizing primary education. The chapter concludes with the research questions for the present study and conceptual clarity of the terms used under the study.

1.1 The Concept of Education

The term “Education” is a term that many people confuse with learning, but rarely do people know that education has a different meaning. In one way it appears to be as old as the human race with changes in its meaning and objectives in the due course of time. Education has a different connotation according to different people. For some it refers to formal schooling or life-long learning while some may perceive it to be training of people’s minds in a particular direction in order to bring about desirable changes. Clearly, education does not have one universally accepted definition and certainly carries various meanings with various functions.

1.2 Etymological Meaning of Education

The term “*Education*” has been derived from the Latin word “*Educare*” meaning “*to raise*” and “*to bring up*”. According to few others, the term has originated from another Latin term “*Educere*” which means “*to lead forth*” or “*to come out.*” The meaning of these terms derive that education seeks to bring out the best in each individual through developing the innate capacities of human beings.

Some educationists also believe that education has been derived from the Latin word “*Educatum*” which means the act of teaching or training. This means that education means providing a nourishing environment for the individual to foster and grow.

Education as defined by the *Dictionary of Education* states that education is “the aggregate of all the processes by which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior of practical values in the society in which he/she lives; the social processes by which people are subjected to the influence of selected and controlled environment (especially that of the school), so that they may obtain social competence and optimum individual development.” (Good C. , 1973)

Education encompasses deliberate efforts made to develop certain amount of knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits amongst individuals. This is the narrow concept of education, which is confined to a few specific, deliberate efforts towards individual development. In the broader sense, education is not limited to a classroom, it is considered as a lifelong process, where all the experiences, knowledge and wisdom are considered as education.

1.3 Modes of Education

Modes of education refer to the way in which education is disseminated or the process through which it takes place. It is a broad manner in which all the educational activities are carried out. Education has developed historically, earlier it was only confined to a very few number of the people who were regarded as privileged to have access to education. Over the years, education came to be regarded as a national goal and hence the outreach of it was increased manifold. Modes of education are divided into three broad categories – Informal, Formal and Non-formal.

Informal education: The kind of education earned by an individual from the sources, other than the ones that are purposely meant for imparting education, is called informal education. This generally includes learning that results from day to day activities, family or leisure is termed as informal education. It is usually not structured. Informal education is also termed as socialization and it generally begins from home.

Formal Education: the *Guru Shishya Parampara (teacher, pupil tradition)* in the ancient days is the oldest form of formal education in India. In this, the pupil was desired to stay in the teachers home called *Gurukul*. This was the first time that institutionalization of education began. The formal mode of education is often complemented with informal mode of education.

Non-formal Education: some modes of imparting education that do not conform to the requirements of formal education. This is a mix of formal and informal education so much so that it takes place informally in a formal environment.

1.4 Levels of Education in India

In India, the levels of education system are structured as follows:

- Pre-School/Anganwadi: This basically caters to the children between the age group of 18 months to 3 years.
- Kindergarten: this is usually divided into two parts: lower kindergarten (3-4 year olds) and upper kindergarten (4-5 year olds).
- Primary School: First to fifth standard (six-ten year olds).
- Middle School/Upper Primary School: Sixth to Eight standard (for eleven to fourteen year olds).
- Higher Secondary: Eleventh and twelfth standard (16-18 year olds).
- Undergraduate Stage: comprises of three to four years or sometimes five years, depending on the choice of course, also known as higher education. Onset is usually at eighteen years of age. They are also known as Bachelors Degree courses.

- **Post Graduate Stage:** Post graduate stage in India is between two to three years and is generally known as the Masters courses or Doctorate courses. While Masters courses have a duration of two years, Doctorate courses have a duration of three years or more. One can specialize in the preferred subject of one's choice.

In India, the progress from primary schools to secondary schools is low, specifically in the rural areas. The major reason for this drop out is the economic and social barriers to education, specifically for women. Due to a large number of drop outs, the primary education in India now caters to the children between six to fourteen years of age, i.e first grade to the eighth grade which initially was for children between six years to eleven years of age i.e .first to fifth grade. Hence for the current study, only primary education level catering to children between six to fourteen years of age has been considered.

1.5 Social Thoughts on Education

Education has been an important topic of interest to many philosophers, educationists and sociologists. The meaning of education and its manifestations has changed quite a lot over the period of time. There are a number of dimensions regarding discourse on education. Education has been a topic of interest since the time of Plato, who regarded education as an important transmitter of experiences, good habits and wisdom. He believed education to be a responsibility of the state. Plato justified equal access to education for both, men and women as they both have similar duties and qualities to follow in the state. (Cooper, 2001)

John Dewey, a 20th century philosopher regarded education as an instrument of progress and a continuous process of adjustment which starts at birth and continues for life. The centre of education according to him is the child, where the process of education should focus on cultivation of an environment where the child can grow. He emphasized on the need for '*experiential education*' where he stressed that school must take into consideration the experiences of the children. (Berding, 2006)

Tolstoy was the one who differentiated between education and literacy. While literacy is the ability to read and write, education means knowledge of social relationships and

surroundings. According to Tolstoy, in the process of education, the child undergoes a continuous process of development while applying his/her own cognitive skills which is guided by free will. (Yegorov, 1994)

In the context of Indian education, it is important to mention the thoughts of Gandhiji, Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda. As Tagore put it, education is not a means of livelihood alone, rather it is a process of personality development and self-improvement. Tagore supported a curriculum which includes equal emphasis on Indian philosophy and spiritualism as well as science and technology. Swami Vivekananda was a pioneer of mass education and believed that mass education can inculcate the spirit of nationalism amongst the children. He also believed in the fact that education helps to make people self-sufficient, participatory and active. Swami Vivekananda was also a strong believer in the education of women. He believed that women are not merely creatures to care for household duties, instead, they must be trained for self-defense, bravery and valour. (Aggarwal J. C., 1976)

Mahatma Gandhi. Like Leo Tolstoy distinguished between education and literacy and said that education helps to bring out the best in man. Gandhiji believed in the idea of basic education which is embedded in civilization, national culture and one which provides a basis for socio-economic development. He emphasized on a curriculum that is inclusive of science and technology, mathematics, moral values and basic crafts. (Kumar K. , 1993)

From a sociological perspective, Talcott Parsons views on education were more towards the functionalist view where he views school as related to modern economy. According to him, education performs a dual role of socializing as well as selection of individuals for the allocation of roles. Education ensures smooth operation of the social system. From a feminist perspective to education, Mary Wollstonecraft believed that women are neither the inferior class, nor do they suffer from lack of mind. It is just the lack of educational opportunities that make them look so. She envisioned a society where men and women work as equal classes. She was also a believer that education of women can ensure an educated generation in the future.

Over the period of time, the crux of education included the following; transmitter of culture, process of experiential learning, important pillar to strengthen society and a vehicle for social, economic and moral changes. Keeping these thoughts in mind, the

educational systems around the world have constructed and re-constructed themselves to meet specific objectives for the development of their people and nation at large.

1.6 Primary Education in various countries

The last few decades have seen drastic changes in the philosophy of primary education in various countries. What it is today is the culmination of rigorous plans and policies that have over the years tried to improve the primary education scenario in many countries. Over the years, the aims, purposes and values of primary education have started focusing on raising standards, citizenship education and multiculturalism taking into account the overall development of the child. (Sharp, 2008)

In England, primary education starts at 4-5 years of age and lasts upto 11 years. The major focus of primary education is on innovation in education with the emphasis on enjoyment, partnership with parents and child's individual needs. The major goal is to attain quality teaching and learning with ensuring enjoyment in the process.

In Scotland, primary education focus lies in increased levels of literacy and numeracy, focus on measures of achievement (examinations), increased self-discipline of pupils, enhanced school environments, inclusion, citizenship values and life skills education. The onset of primary education is 4-5 years and lasts upto 12 years.

The New Zealand system of primary education focuses on increased participation of children in education, equipping children with the 21st century skills, reduce systematic under-achievement, build strong sense of cultural identity, life-long learning and supporting tertiary education. The onset of elementary schooling is 5-6 years of age and lasts upto 12-13 years.

In Germany, primary education starts from 6 years of age upto 10-12 years of age. The focus of primary education lies in appreciating values and norms of co-existence, habits of individual work, responsible and civic attitude, basic problem solving skills and national integration.

The system of primary education in the Indian subcontinent has more or less the same objectives. According to the National Policy of Education, 1986, the aims of primary

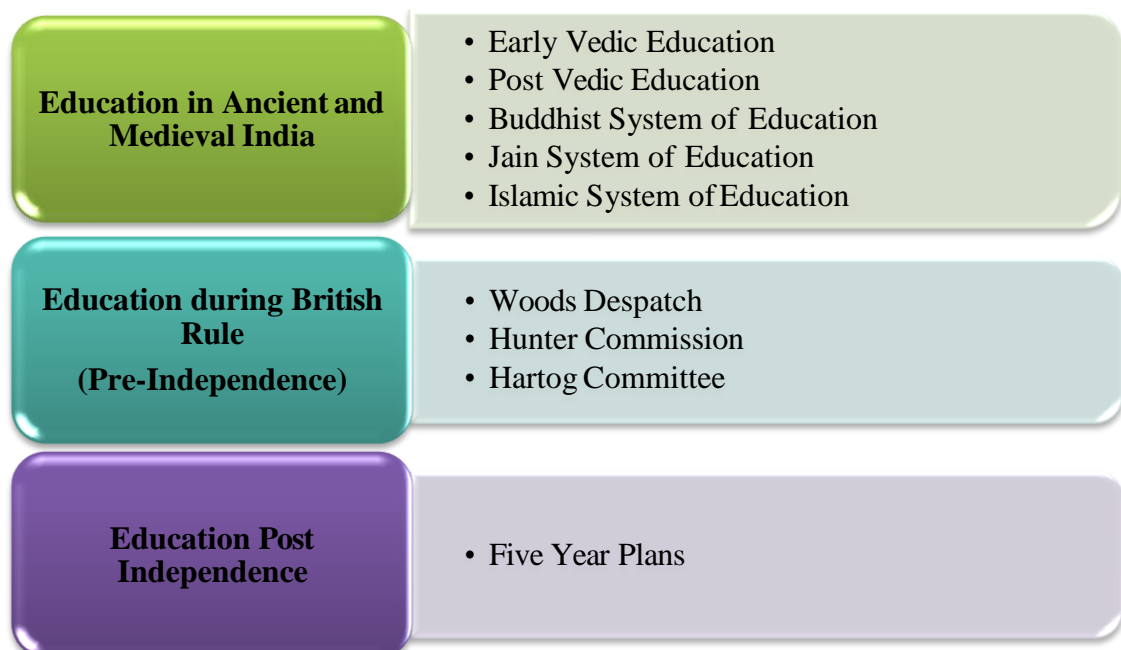
education include universal enrolment and retention of children upto the age of fourteen years, quality education, basic reading, writing and arithmetic, no retention of students, nationalism, human dignity and sanitary habits. The onset of primary education in India is 6 years and lasts upto 14 years. The reason why it is 14 years in India is because of the drop-out rate in the country at the secondary stages. To counter the problem, children belonging to 11-14 years of age were also included in the primary schooling system so that it is ensured that they are not devoid of education.

1.7 Historical Perspective to Education system in India

To understand the current landscape of the Indian education system in the light of the plans and programmes, it is of vital importance to understand the system of Education in India from a historical perspective. The system of education in India has been divided into three broad phases:

- a. Education in Ancient and Medieval India
- b. Education during the British Rule (Pre-independence)
- c. Education post-independence

Figure 1: Historical Perspective to Education in India



It becomes imperative to study the education system from a historical perspective as the contemporary system is an amalgamation of many innovations and practices borrowed from each of these eras.

a. Education in Ancient and Medieval India

The period falling roughly between 1500 B.C. to 1800 A.D is said to be the period of ancient and medieval India. This was the time when religious dominance took over all the other things and education was largely influenced by the dominance of different religions prevailing in India at that point of time. The period is further divided into early vedic and post vedic periods. The post vedic period saw dominance of the pertaining religions at that point of time which had their own contribution towards primary education.

- Early Vedic Education

The *Vedic* period falls broadly between 5000 B.C and 1000 B.C. This form of education was found to be the simplest of all and it focused on education for survival, which is the first step towards civilization. Education was based on the oral tradition alone and was developed and practiced in this mode for centuries. The priests would often, through constant repetition pass them on to their sons/nephews/wards for they were to continue the traditions. The oral transmission of verses within the priestly homes marks the beginning of ancient Indian education. The home was the centre of education for centuries. Over the years, definite stages of education were evolved, each with its own admission rituals, specific objectives, subjects of study and code of conduct for teachers and students.

The purpose of this system of education was to help the learner attain self-actualization as Vedic philosophy believed in the ultimate oneness of universal values maintaining no distinctions between the values of the society and those of the individuals. Religious literature was the only literature available at that point of time, thus, it was accepted as the only source of true knowledge study of religious literature became an end in itself. Another important objective was to train the learners to be teachers. Education for lay students did not enter into the scheme of education for a very long period while education for different kinds of priests became more and more specialized. Primary education during the Vedic era did not emphasize on writing, grammar nor accounting as commercial activities were simple and not formalized.

Then came the age of *Vidhyarambha*, which was the actual stage of primary learning. The basic aim was to delink the primary stage of learning from the earlier undifferentiated system of education. This was the stage where primary education was imparted in the learner through a designated *guru* to whom and to whose house the child was entrusted. This was when the formal writing, grammar and arithmetic were introduced along with reading out verses from the Veda. Individual teachers started their own schools and decisions concerning it, like methods of teaching, curriculum, discipline and evaluation of students, were taken solely by the Guru without any external influence.

- **Post Vedic Education**

Post- Vedic Education (1000 B.C. – 2000 B.C) reflected the changes in the religious practices and thoughts which evolved over the years. Unlike Vedic education which laid emphasis on religious aspects, post vedic education emphasized on non-religious aspects too. The primary objective of education in this era included self-reliance, self-control, formation of character and individual development of knowledge of social and civil life along with physical development and preservation of culture. The major aim was to follow theory with practical, thus making education more applicable to life outside educational institutions. Self discipline was insisted without the use of corporal punishment. This period also had a believed that education for women was not essential as they are to be limited to household duties alone. (Aggarwal J. , 1993)

- **Buddhist System of Education**

The Buddhist system of education emerged as a reaction to the Hindu system of education to counter class divide in educational access. The emphasis of this system of education was on five major principles viz. *simplicity of living, renunciation of worldly life, humanity, equality and kindness*. The main aim of this system of education was to preach the teachings of Lord Buddha according to the five principles as stated. The Buddhist Monks were the sole decision makers of education right from admission of the child, maintenance of discipline and whether the learner was eligible for admission in the higher order or not. (Saiyidain, 1966)

The minimum age of entering into schooling was eight years and the maximum age was twelve years. Rote learning, followed by oral evaluation was the general practice.

Subjects like astronomy, law, literature, music, administration, arts and history were added. Buddhist system did not allow entry of girls into the education system; it was only after quite a period of time that they were allowed. Girls were denied admission beyond a particular stage; restrictions with regard to higher education were still faced. The literacy rate of women however, was higher among the Buddhists as compared to other communities. (Keay, 1980)

- Jain system of Education

The Jain system of education was propounded by Lord Rikhabhadev and Lord Mahavira, which largely reflected their religious practices and principles. Similar to Buddhist education, Jain system of education also focused on training the learners to become good religious teachers later in their lives. The curriculum of the Jain system of education was intended to explain and inculcate the different concepts preached by the founders. This system of education focused on scientific reasoning and building a scientific temper. It has been recorded that several Jain ascetics started *Pathshalas* or Primary Schools where the instruction was in vernacular languages. The Jain monasteries in Kerala provided mass education on a systematic basis and this was one of a kind system for imparting education on a wide scale level. (Nigam & Sharma, 1966)

- Islamic system of Education

Islamic rule marks the advent of medieval period in the Indian history which extended over seven centuries. Muhammed Ghori (1174-1206) is said to have brought the Islamic concept of education to India. Religious education was very important for the followers of Islam. The objective of Islamic education was to disseminate knowledge of the Islamic religion, literature, its philosophy and history. Prophet Muhammed (P.B.U.H), who believed that salvation was not possible without knowledge, attached great importance to the acquisition of knowledge. There was a need to evolve and practice a moral code based on the social customs and legal conditions, framed in accordance with the traditions and principles of the religion. *Maktabas* were places where primary education was imparted. The onset of education for a child was four years, four months and four days. The curriculum was confined to *Ayats* or verses of the Holy Quran which were to be memorized. Around age seven, the learners were taught the Holy Quran and were given instructions in religious precepts and usages. In

addition to the learning of the Quran, the students were exposed to the teachings of Muhammed, fundamental doctrines of Islam and Islamic laws and history. the teachings of Muhammed, fundamental doctrines of Islam and Islamic laws and history. Subjects also covered aspects like Grammar, Geography, Politics, Economics, Astrology, Agriculture and Medicine. Some historians pointed out that there were similarities in the subjects taught in the Universities of Europe of the Middle Ages, which basically means that education system in the Islamic rule travelled all the way from Europe to India and some differences were identified amongst the other systems of education in India (Keay, 1980). Access to education in these systems was open for all, except the very poor students who were often excluded.

This system of education shows slight similarities with the Brahmanical system of education where the basic education started with reading the basic religious literature and progressed to reading and understanding of the complex religious literature in the later stages of life. Like Brahmanical education, girls were restricted in Islamic system of education too. The practice of *purdah* imposed on Muslim women curtailed their right to education. While they had access to primary education in *Maktabas*, admission to *Madrassas* or secondary admission was not allowed or easily available. Prince and Princesses were exposed to a higher level of education which included subjects related to law and administration, so most of the women in the royal families were educated.

The Khilji Dynasty (1290-1320) education got a great deal of encouragement and lots of libraries were established during this period. By this time, Delhi had become a great centre of education. Other cities that got recognition for education were Firozabad and Badayun under Tughlak Dynasty (1325-1413). A number of small Muhammedan states which had separated from Delhi encouraged education and established institutions of education for the common people (Keay, 1980). During Akbars reign, there was a lot of reorganization of educational system by ensuring that each learner has the capability of earning a living after completion of education and thus, this was the time when practical learning was introduced along with theoretical learning. Even the vernaculars who were denied education earlier, were encouraged to study during Akbar's reign. This was also the time when State supported education was encouraged where State took the onus of taking care of educational affairs of the people. There was no state coordinating agency however, to monitor the progress. By

the end of the Mughal era, the educational institutions collapsed due to lack of maintenance.

By the beginning of the 19th century the percentage of literacy amongst women went down further. The decline in literacy after the 11th century A.D. was so rapid that the beginning of the 19th century hardly one woman in hundred could read (Altekar, 1934). The data was suggestive that by the beginning of 19th century, about 99 percent of the women population was illiterate.

b. Education during British rule (Pre-independence)

The period after 1700's to early 1800's is known as the pre-colonial period as this was the time when the Mughals co-existed with the British. This was also the time when indigenous education flourished in the country. During this time there were also village primary schools that catered to sons of shop-keepers, artisans and peasants which were vernacular in medium and not too religious in nature. Though education was still not formalized, there were no printed books and slates and chalks were used. The student teacher ratio was 15-35 to 1, which meant that there was individualized attention towards each pupil. This was the time when neither the admission, nor the location was upto the mark but what was great about the system was that it being an indigenous one, the adaptability to the local environment was remarkable. This indigenous system of education lasted for quite a period of time.

The vested interest of the British behind providing education to the people was to train them to join the British administration. Hence, the medium of instruction in the educational institutions provided by the British was English and it was mostly provided to the people belonging to the elite class. English schools became very popular from 1817 onwards now education became "genuine" in order to provide for a better understanding between the British administration and the people. From 1818 onwards, for the purpose of promoting education of girls, missionary activities through the setting up of schools and orphan homes for them began. By the year 1854, there were about 7,000 girls in these mission schools. However, with the power of East India Company shifting to the Crown in England, the government started paying attention towards primary education. The early aim of the British was to create a class of people who would work for the British administration as hiring Indian labour was far cheaper. Another aim of theirs was to westernize the Indian population so as to

make them civilized and help them get rid of their superstitious practices. (Ghosh S. C., History of Education in Modern India 1757-1986, 1995)

State intervention in Education

The first state intervention in education started in the year 1813 where the Government of England gave a grant of one lakh rupees for the sake of education. Sir Elphinstone was the then Governor General who took utmost interest in the indigenous system of education and worked to make it a good system of mass education. Due to his efforts, Bombay Native Education Society (BNES) to spread native education to the masses was set up. It started District Primary Schools for teaching subjects like History and Geography, Astronomy, Philosophy, Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry. There were 115 such schools in 1840. The Society in its report submitted in 1825-26 stated that English need not be the main language of instruction in schools, as vernacular languages serve as a great medium of instruction. This encouraged more schools to open up in the vernacular languages. After 1813, another landmark was the acceptance of English as a medium of instruction in schools.

The year 1846, detailed statistics were collected from the North-West Province regarding the quantity and quality of vernacular education. The then Governor General of those Provinces, James Thomason, proposed that vernacular schools should be there in every village, but since this was not accepted, he suggested that a model school be set up in every *tehsil* with regular monitoring by the *Zilla* inspectors. This was when the supervision of educational institutions began.

In 1849, the first school for girls was opened in Calcutta under the leadership of Bethune, who was the president of the council of education under Governor General Dalhousie. Thomas Munro was also supportive of the fact that education for the girls must be promoted as it can help bring down social evils. Bethune suggested that education for girls should be made a public affair as a matter of policy, only then will the female education be supervised and supported. Thus, this is how policies for female education in India began.

The next milestone was Charles Wood's Despatch of 1854. The Despatch Commission was set up with the following aim:

1. To impart western knowledge, information about the western culture to the Indians.
2. To educate the natives of India so that a class of public servants could be created.
3. To promote intellectual development and also raise the moral character of the young generation.
4. To develop practical and vocational skills of the Indians people so that more and more articles could be produced and also to create a good market for consumption of those goods.

The Despatch suggested that there was no need to abolish the local language education and that it should be improved upon and rendered useful. The nature of education was to be the “improved arts, sciences and literature of Europe.” (Ghosh S. C., History of Education in Modern India 1757-1986, 1995)

The **Wood’s Despatch** was a historical document and is said to be the “**Magna Carta**” or the great charter of the liberties in education because of certain merits that it offered to the Education system in India:

1. The importance of a well-planned education system was realized.
2. It recommended the creation of a Department of Public Instruction and appointed a Director to monitor the affairs and submit an annual report regarding the implementation of the activities in schools.
3. It was recommended that the establishment of both government and indigenous schools should be done to promote mass education.
4. The Despatch encouraged vocational education and also training for the teachers in order to deliver quality in education.
5. It also recommended teaching of English and Indian regional languages as well as classical languages like Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit.

Due to the Wood’s Despatch, the number of primary schools in India shot up from 16,473 to 82,916 and the number of children studying in these schools went up three times from 6,07,320 to 20,61,541 (Ghosh S. C., History of Education in Modern India

1757-1986, 1995). This was a remarkable milestone in the history of Indian education as now education was easily accessible to many children around the country.

Despite the milestone, a foundation for complete western education was also laid down which more or less overpowered the indigenous system of education in India. As a result, Lord Ripon appointed the **Hunter Commission** under the chairmanship of Sir William Hunter in the year 1882 with a set of the following objectives:

1. To assess the position of primary education in India.
2. To enquire the position of the State institutions and their importance.
3. To evaluate the work of Missionaries in the field of education.
4. To enquire about the Government attitude towards private enterprise.

Accordingly, the Commission made several valuable recommendations for the development of primary education. The recommendations were divided into five domains namely;

- a. Policy
- b. Legislation and administration
- c. Encouragement of indigenous schools
- d. School administration
- e. Training of teachers
- f. Finance

The Hunter commission ironically felt that the Missionary efforts in the system of education need not be encouraged as they shifted the focus from practical education to the religious aspect of it. It felt that the indigenous schools stood the test of time and had proved their vitality; they should be improved and given a position in the state system of education. The Committee also recommended that the State should focus more on vernacular medium schools as the children learn the best through vernacular mediums. The Committee also advocated for the grant-in aid system for financing the schools and made progressive recommendations for the promotion of girls' education. As a consequence, primary education was entrusted with the State. At this time, towards the last two decades of the 19th century, only one male in ten and seven girls

in a thousand were literate. According to the Review of the State paper on Education in 1904, “four villages out of five are without a school, three boys out of five, grow up without education and only one girl in forty, attends school.” (Narullah & Naik, 1962) This shows that primary education did not really get a boost during this time. However, individual efforts of Royal Families like the Gaekwads of Baroda, Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad introduced compulsory primary education in one division in his State in the year 1893-94. Education was the foundation on which the Maharaja decided to build up his new social order. Baroda was the first territory in British India to have compulsory free primary education. This was introduced as an experimental measure in 1893 in a taluka of Amreli District, a region comparatively backward. The experiment was successful. Emboldened by this, he extended it to the entire State in 1906.

Owing to the educational mismanagement in the country apart from certain princely states, where education was taken over by royal families and individuals, a State Paper on Education was also released as a Resolution of the Governor-General in Council in March 1904, probably to assuage the feelings of the public, but the people were unhappy, especially Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Asutosh Mukhopadhyaya, because it envisaged increasing control by the Education Department of the State and the curtailment of private participation in the ownership and running of schools. One major thing to note about this State paper was that for the first time, anything like a policy was being framed by the Government and secondly, it reviewed critically, the educational development in the country over the years and expressed the need for qualitative improvement at all levels. (Ramachandran & Ramkumar, 2005)

Many of the defects in the education system that plague our system today were largely prevalent in those days as well, such as too much emphasis on examinations, rote learning, more theoretical than practical oriented learning, students not being encouraged to learn openly etc, besides students were not equipped for employment..

The educational policies by the British continued but were centered around making education as a subject of importance for the Central Government. The Indians felt that thus took away their autonomy. As a result, the National Education movement was launched in 1905 and participation of scholars like Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Gurudas Banerjee was seen. The movement started with a

boycott of Government controlled education and a Society for the Promotion of National Education was set up, where the subjects to be taught were to be in the vernacular medium, not negating the need for western education and foreign languages. The schools started by these Societies were solely run by Indians and included religious education, vocational training and modern Indian languages as well. (Narullah & Naik, 1962)

The next ten years saw the efforts to make primary education a compulsion. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who was persistent about compulsion of primary education in India went on to moving a Private Bill in the year 1911, to appeal for making primary education a compulsion and make it a law in the country. He felt that unless there is a compulsion, not many students would enter the primary system of education. However, this plea was not accepted until the year 2002 where education became a Fundamental Right. Though Gopal Krishna Gokhale's plea was rejected by the British Government on the hidden grounds that if the system of education is made a compulsion, the British would lose their interest of training the Indians to set foot in the British Administration, hence efforts to boost mass education (not compulsory education here) were made by increasing the amount of grants received by the Government were made during the next five years. (Ghosh S. C., The History of Education in Modern India 1757-2012, 1995)

In the year 1913, Government of India drew up another Resolution, to review the educational development since the year 1904. Critical points were raised suggesting remedial measures in primary, secondary and higher education. It critiqued that the quantitative advancement in primary education was very slow. Hence, it was envisaged that primary education should be started to teach only the three basic R's of education (**R**eading, **W**Riting and **A**Rithmetic) so that the back of illiteracy could be broken. It also expressed the need of proper training for the teachers and a better remuneration for them. Moral and religious education was also advocated.

However, after the resignation of Lord Curzon, this led to the demand of education being a subject matter of both the Central and the State Government (System of *Dyarchy*). This was finally accepted in the Government of India Act of 1919 (also known as Montford Reform). This may be said as the foundation of the present division of responsibilities relating to education under the Union and the State Government in the Constitution.

The next milestone, again in the form of a stock-taking and recommendations for remedial measures, was the Hartog Committee on Education (1929). It noted the considerable progress in education in all the three tiers- primary, secondary and higher education during the decade of 1917-27. The Report said “Education has come to be regarded generally, as a matter of prime national importance, an indispensable agency in the difficult task of “nation building” (Ghosh S. C., History of Education in Modern India 1757-1986, 1995). The Committee noted the poor progress and low quality of primary education and cited several reasons for this. Some of them included many drop-outs (referred to as wastage) probably due to ineffective teaching of unsuitable curricula and inadequate inspections, inaccessibility, poverty, conservatism. So the Committee advocated that instead of quantifying the numbers, the quality aspect should be taken care of in the primary schools.

The Hartog Committee was very much in support of women’s education and reducing the gap in male and female enrolment and retention. It also stressed upon drawing up and setting up of new curricula which would suit the needs of the women, having more women oriented administration and separate officer overlooking the education for women’s education. The Report was asked to throw light on the organization of education, at almost every point that organization needs reconsideration and strengthening and the relations of the bodies responsible for the organization of education need adjustment (Ghosh S. C., History of Education in Modern India 1757-1986, 1995). The Government of India Act of 1935, was the last constitution of British India and lasted until the year 1947. This Act ended the system of Dyarchy paving a way for a new system of governance called the Provincial Autonomy in the year 1937 in eleven provinces of British India. There was a Federal and Provincial division of responsibility of education.

This was also the time when the Gandhian philosophy of education came into the picture. Mahatma Gandhi had a different perspective to education where he believed that education had to be linked to social transformation and it is not merely seeking of knowledge and literacy and definitely not the prerogative of the elite class alone. (Gandhi, 1970). Gandhiji believed that education has to be according to the local needs rather than meeting the interest of the British Government. This gave the birth of “*Nai Talim*” or basic education which fosters independent thinking and self-sustaining attitude in the student. The scheme was placed in 1937, before a conference

of National workers at Wardha, where it was endorsed that the teachers can be paid from what would be earned from production. Dr. Zakir Hussain, eminent educationist, was appointed with nine other members to prepare a detailed syllabus for the same.

Dr. Zakir Hussain Committee, also known as the Wardha Report, emphasized complete development of the child to include character formation, a spirit of self-reliance and spiritualism among the students with democratic ideals. This scheme was immediately taken up for implementation in the year 1938 in the seven provinces with Congress ministries. However, the World War I in the year 1939 brought an end to Gandhi's educational experiment. But by 1943, Provincial Governments were asked to draw up plans for reconstruction which included educational development.

This led to the forming of the Sargent Committee, under the chairmanship of John Sargent, Educational Adviser to the Government of India. The Committee was asked to prepare a report on education. For the purpose, the government formed a Committee of Enquiry with 22 members, the report of which was submitted to the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in 1944. It is popularly known as 'Report by the Central Advisory Board of Education' which had a plan for educational reconstruction in India post world war. This was the last of efforts made by the British rulers to improve the education system in India.

The following were the recommendations of the Committee:

- Pre-primary education for children falling in the age group of 3 to 6 years
- Primary or basic education be made free and compulsory for all children between the ages 6—11 (junior basic) and 11—14 (senior basic)
- Provision for teacher trainings
- Provision of education for children who are physically and mentally challenged
- Physical education to be made compulsory
- Social and recreational education provisions to be made
- Department of Education to be created in each state and Centre as well
- Use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in school

c. Education Post-independence

The independent Government of India got the complete autonomy post the British reign to take decisions concerning primary education. Education could be moulded to suit the needs of the people. Access to basic education for all the people became a

major priority for the new formed Government of independent India. The eve of Indian independence largely presented a picture of an educational fabric that was filled with large gaps and inadequacies in terms of quantity and quality. The quantifiable defects were the low enrolment ratio, low percentage of literacy amongst adults, unequal development of education amongst classes etc. Independent India, therefore, had to make urgent attempts to reconstruct educational system in two ways:

- To expand the existing system of education sufficiently in order to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 to result in expansion
- To reduce some of the loopholes of the educational system and make it a worthy instrument of social and economic reconstruction

1.8 Plans and Policies for Primary Education post independence

The Constitution of India was adopted in the year 1950 and had emphasized on division of responsibilities between the Central and the State Governments. The five year plans implemented from 1951 onwards also had mentions about primary education, a summary of which is given below.

Table 1: Summary of Five Year Plans with emphasis on education

Sr. No	Five Year Plan	Emphasis on Primary Education
1.	First Five Year Plan (1951 - 52 to 1955 – 56)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reorganization of educational system - Expansion of facilities for women's education, specially for primary schools and provision of equal opportunities - Priority was given to teacher training and improving educational methods - Provision of educational facilities to about sixty percent of the population between age group of 6-11 years
2.	Second Five Year Plan (1956-57 to 1960 – 61)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expansion of elementary education - Emphasis on basic education
3.	Third Five Year Plan (1961 - 62 to 1965 – 66)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of facilities for children in primary education - Encouraging education of girls

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing disparities between education of boys and girls - Training of teachers
4.	Fourth Five Year Plan (1969 – 74)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement of Teacher Education - Increased efforts to involve people in educational activities and mobilization of public support
5.	Fifth Five Year Plan (1974 – 78)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equalizing educational opportunities for social justice - Quality improvement - Reorganizing curricula for professional and economic development
6.	Sixth Five Year Plan (1980 – 85)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universalization of primary education - Rural bias in implementation of educational programmes - Realization of education as a critical input rather than social service
7.	Seventh Five Year Plan (1985 – 86 to 1989 – 90)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primary education was given highest priority - Universalization of Primary education - Efforts to eradicate illiteracy amongst people in age group of 15-35 - Qualitative improvement in education at all stages
8.	Eight Five Year Plan (1992 – 93 to 1996 – 97)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of ICDS - National Policy on Education - Importance of community involvement in schooling was highlighted - Common school structure across the country(10+2+3) - Increasing primary schooling till 8th standard
9.	Ninth Five Year Plan (1997 – 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universal Primary Education - Involvement of local governments and public in the process of development
10.	Tenth Five Year Plan (2002 – 07)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction of gender gaps in literacy - Introduction of Prime Ministers 20 point programme with 9th point

		emphasizing on Education for all - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and MDM programme to reach the education for all target
11.	Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007 – 12)	- Empowerment through education - Reducing gender inequality
12.	Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012 – 17)	- Removal of gender and social gap in school enrolment

Over the years, primary education has been an important point of discussion in the developmental plans of the country. It is clear that education in India has been a subject to numerous plans and policies. India, being a welfare state requires Central and State assistance to ensure that each child is enrolled in school and completes the basic elementary education at least. The 42nd Amendment to the Constitution in the year 1976 brought education in the Concurrent List and made universalizing primary education a joint responsibility of the State as well as the Central Governments. In the year 2002, another significant step was taken by the Government by the 86th Constitutional Amendment which made education as fundamental right.

Four features have characterized Indian education system and still continue to characterize it, viz. incomplete enrolment, inequalities, poor quality, and ineffective school performance. While access to education has been largely met, systemic and structural deficiencies still remain a major hurdle in the proper functioning of schools. (Shiva Kumar & Rustagi, 2010)

Despite the fact that the levels of attainment of education are improving, inequalities still constitute a part of the schooling based on caste, class, religious groups and other marginalized sections of the society. Many states cannot fulfill the overall goal of educational attainment as they lag behind due to creation of disparities due to non-egalitarian social structures. Quality is still the most serious shortcoming which has plagued the government schooling system. While at the infrastructural front, the schools have most of the facilities; the quality of learning still remains an issue despite that. Elementary schools are supported by the state but are administered by local government units. The elementary curriculum includes the mother tongue, arithmetic, history, geography and science. Mostly the curriculum varies from state to state but it mostly includes aspects of health habits and physical fitness. The

curriculum also includes cultivation of moral values. Over the years the Government made persistent efforts to ensure that the objectives of primary education are met in the country and for that certain plans and policies for the development of elementary education in the country were made.

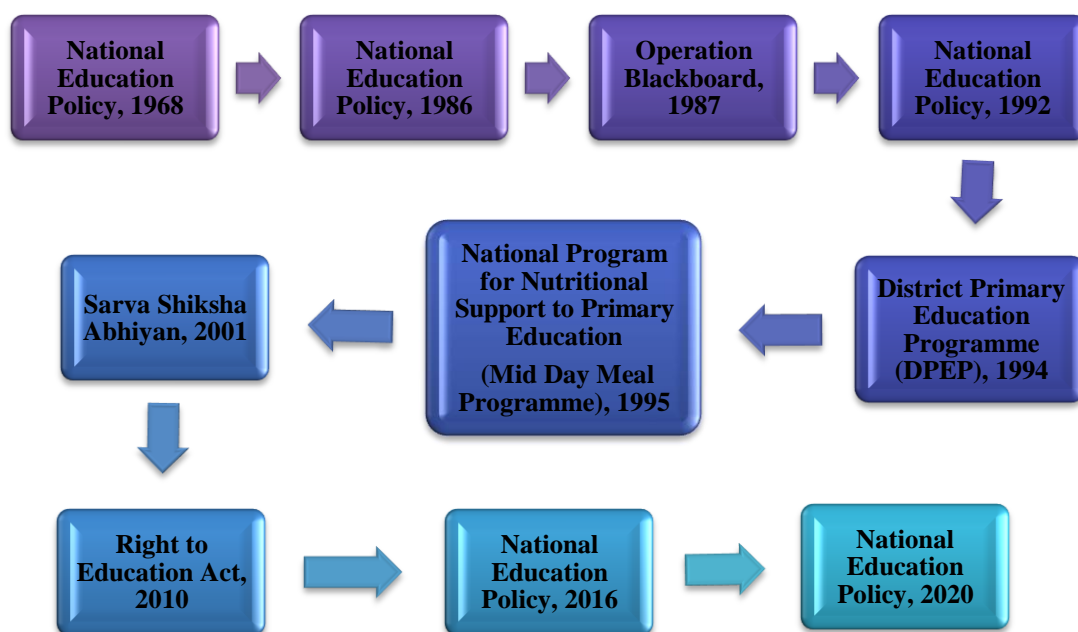
The year 1950 marked the adoption of the Indian Constitution which laid down among other things, the division of responsibilities and duties relating to education between the Central and State Governments. Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution states that “The state shall endeavor to provide free and compulsory Education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.”

Post-independence, there was a high demand that priority should be given to the objective of universal elementary education in the national development plans and it should be reached through a phased and short-range programme. The Seventh and the Eighth Schedules of the Constitution are of special importance. The Seventh Schedule speaks of division of responsibilities regarding education amongst the Centre and State Government. The Eighth Schedule lists out the languages recognized by the Constitution as a medium of instruction. National Education Policies over the years have played a crucial role in identifying the key areas for educational improvements at the primary level and significant changes were seen after several plans and policies that were adopted. The historical perspective of the plans and policies is discussed further in the chapter.

The Centre and the State governments now work in collaboration for the preparation of educational plans. The expansion of elementary education entered the five Year Plans and funds were allocated to achieve this goal. Among significant other developments, by far the most important was the adoption of basic education as the national pattern at the elementary stage. (Aggarwal D. D., History and Development of Elementary Education in India, 2002)

The period after 1980's saw emergence of number of plans and programmes for primary education where revitalization and reconstruction of elementary education was seen as an important agenda for development. The following were the major efforts made to improve enrolment, retention and quality of education at the primary stage of schooling in the country.

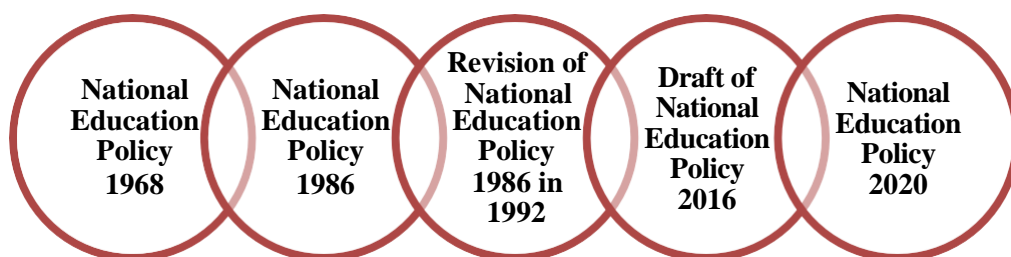
Figure 2: Plans and Policies for Primary Education post Independence



National Policies on Education

The National Policy on Education was formulated by the Government of India in order to promote primary education in the country. The policy document is a vast one which covers education right from primary stage till the college level. Various programmes were included in these policies viz. free and compulsory education, development and protection of all Indian Languages, identification of gifted children, equality of educational opportunities, science education and research, work experience through National Service Scheme, reform in examination system, part time and correspondence education curriculum, expansion of literacy and adult education and sports etc.

There have been three National Education Policies so far post independence with revisions being made:



- **National Education Policy 1968**

This was the first policy on education in independent India which was formulated on the recommendation of the Kothari Commission in the year 1964 – 1966. The policy sought for radical restructuring of the education system and for equalizing educational opportunities so as to achieve national integration and economic development. The policy envisaged that free and compulsory education for the children upto the age of fourteen years must be fulfilled. It also called for large scale teacher trainings. The policy laid emphasis on education of girls and called for intensive efforts to develop education amongst the backward classes.

- **National Education Policy 1986**

The National Education Policy 1986 was announced in early 1985. The emphasis of this policy was on removal of disparities and equalization of educational opportunities, especially for women, people from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities. The policy called for provision of incentives and scholarships to families to motivate them to come to school regularly. A Programme of Action Report (POA) on the National Education Policy of 1986 found that despite the attempts to provide access, a large number of areas were still without primary schools (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1986). Keeping in mind the things to be done, various programmes were launched under this policy, like reorganization and restructuring teacher education and Operation Blackboard, in order to improve the status of primary schools.

Re-organization and Re-structuring of Teacher Education: To ensure that trained manpower is created, efforts to upgrade the teachers skills and competence, as envisaged in the National Education Policy of 1986, District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETS's) were set up upon the policy recommendation. The aim of these institutes was to ensure quality pre-service and in-service training to the teachers of elementary education. A Programme for Mass Orientation of School Teachers (PMOST) was launched which brought all the teachers working at the elementary level under a short term training programme in order to implement the objectives of the education policy of 1986.

- **Operation Blackboard (1987)**

Operation Blackboard was launched in the year 1987 after pursuance of the Programme of Action (POA) report of the National Education Policy of 1986. This programme focused more on provision of infrastructure for teaching and learning and increasing the number of teachers in the existing schools. It was emphasized that atleast fifty percent of the teachers appointed would constitute women so as to increase the enrolment of girls and ensuring their retention. It was also ensured that the schools must have a proper room for classroom which can stand all weather conditions and separate toilets for boys and girls in the campus. It was also envisaged that more teaching and learning materials like blackboards, toys and equipment for learning be procured so as to enhance the teaching and learning requirements of both the teachers and the students.

- **Revision of National Education Policy 1986 in 1992**

The National Education Policy 1986 was revised in the year 1992 This revision laid down the minimum levels of learning which emerged from the basic concern that all children must be given access to education irrespective of caste, location, sex or creed. This was a strategy to combine equity with quality if education (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1992). To make sure that the minimum levels of learning were established in all schools, the following steps were undertaken:

- The then existing levels of learning achievement were assessed
- Time frame regarding when the minimum levels of learning would be achieved
- Competency based teaching
- Continuous and comprehensive evaluation
- Provision of physical facilities, trainings for teachers, monitoring and evaluation in order to improve the acquisition of the minimum levels of learning

- **District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), 1994**

To ensure that efforts are made at all levels; the District Primary Education Programme was launched in the year 1994 as a centrally sponsored scheme to revitalize primary education. An area specific approach was adopted with district as the unit around which planning of educational programmes was sought. It was kept in

mind that local conditions had to be catered to and community participation ensured. DPEP sought to strengthen the capacity of district institutions for planning, management and support in primary education. The DPEP was made to fill up the structural gaps which were left over and above the efforts made by the Central and State governments. The main thrust areas of DPEP were:

- a. Planning at the District Level
- b. Participation of community members and decentralized management
- c. Emphasis on education of girls, people from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
- d. Improving effectiveness of teaching and learning through teacher trainings and improved teaching and learning materials.

The DPEP made certain impact in increasing the enrolment rate, reduction in stagnation and drop-out rates and improvement in the classroom learning. An evaluation conducted by National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) identified that the phase I of DPEP in the year 1993-94 to 1996-97 had achieved desirable results in states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Assam and Haryana, where the increase in enrolment was from 3.7 percent to 16.8 percent. Furthermore, another national trend analysis conducted in 42 districts by NIEPA showed an additional enrolment of children (13.5 lakh) in the years 1995-96 and 1997-98.

- National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid Day Meal Scheme), 1995

The National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education was launched on 15th August 1995 by Government of India. The history of this program can be traced back to the year 1925 in the erstwhile Madras Presidency, now Chennai where food to the children was provided to children coming from poor households. Food, in the forms of snacks was provided to the children in the schools of rural areas with an intention to ensure that the child does not go hungry and concentrates in the studies. The scheme was initially adopted in 1962-63 by the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, K. Kamaraj, in Chennai, which was later extended to all the districts of Tamil Nadu.

The scheme was initially implemented in 2, 408 blocks in the country in order to provide food to children belonging to first grade. In the year 1997-98, the scheme was further implemented throughout the country where cooked mid day meal was provided to all children in classes I to V. In November 2001, the Supreme Court Order made it mandatory for all the states to implement the noon meal program in the government schools. In October 2007, the scheme was extended to students of classes sixth to eighth also and the name National Programme of Mid Day Meals in schools replaced the old name of National Program for Nutritional Support to Primary Education.

The objective of this program apart from providing food to the children enrolled in the primary education was also to provide employment to local people in the communities. A decentralized model was proposed in the scheme where the meals are cooked locally by the local community members, thus providing them with jobs and minimization of waste due to local cuisine being served. It also called for inclusion of parents and teachers for the monitoring of the programme in the schools. A number of evaluation studies were conducted across the country in many states to identify whether the scheme was benefitting the children or not. The scheme has attracted quite a number of children from the disadvantaged sections of the society like Dalits, girls from various communities and other backward class populations. It has helped in increasing regularity, helped in attaining the nutritional requirements of the children and also has had socialization benefits for the children as well as women from the local communities (Dreze & Goyal, 2003). Several studies have shown that this programme has had positive impact on enrolment of the children from the disadvantaged communities (Dreze & Kingdon, 2001), has increased attendance and also improved the nutritional status of the children. (Afridi, 2010)

- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 2000- 2001

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a flagship programme of the Government of India, the roots of which lie in the DPEP in 1993-94. The SSA was implemented in the year 2001 with an aim to achieve universal primary education. An important feature of this programme was to attempt to provide learning opportunities to children in order to improve their human capabilities with the help of community owned quality education. The major aim of this programme was to provide useful education to the

children in the age group of 6 – 14 by the year 2010. The following were the objectives of SSA:

- Provide access of regular primary and upper primary schools to children in the age group of 6-14 years by 2003
- All children to complete primary schooling (I to V grade) by 2003
- All children completing eight years of elementary schooling by 2010
- Emphasis on primary education with satisfactory quality with a major focus on education for life
- Bridge social and gender gaps in primary schooling by 2007 and elementary education by 2010
- Universal retention in schools by 2010

The interventions under SSA include opening up of new schools across the country along with alternate schooling facilities with proper infrastructure for teaching and learning, provision of pre-service and in-service teacher trainings and resource support. To strengthen the interventions, various sub-missions were launched under the SSA banner like “Padhe Bharat, Badhe Bharat”, “Sub-mission on Teacher Training”, “Sub mission on social mobilization” which focused on community participation in schooling and “Sub mission on teacher training.”

- Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009

The eighty sixth amendment act of the Constitution had Article 21 A inserted in the Constitution of India which stated provision of free and compulsory education to the children between six to fourteen years of age as a fundamental right, meaning that every child has the right to have access to full time primary education of satisfactory quality in a formal school which are established as per the norms and standards (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2009). The RTE Act was enforced on April 1 2010. Some of the important provisions under the RTE Act 2009, as per the mandate include:

a. Free and Compulsory Education

- Under this provision the education for children from I-VIII standard is free and compulsory where the school does not charge capitation fees or any other expense for schooling from the children.

- The child is not subjected to any screening procedure to take admission in any government municipal school across the country.
- The children under this Act are entitled to free books, reading and writing material and school uniform, free of cost.
- The concept of lateral entry for schooling is present where, under any circumstances if the child discontinues education, that child shall be admitted to the class which is appropriate to his age. Bridge training to ensure that the child learns what was left is given to bring the child at par with the other children in the class.
- In case the child is not provided any such facility in the schools, the child is liable to take a transfer to any government or government-aided school.

b. Duties of the Government, Local Authority and Community

- Since Education forms a part of the Concurrent List, subject to implementation of the State as well as the Central Government, RTE is implemented through partial funding of the State as well as the Central Government.
- The local government, municipal corporation or an equivalent body in urban areas or the Panchayati Raj Institutions at the grass root level have to provide-
 - A primary school within one kilometer walking distance for children upto class fifth and within three kilometers for children upto class eighth.
 - Depending upon the population of the children, more than one school must be provided to avoid over-crowding in the schools.
 - Free transportation for children must be provided to the children from home to school and back, if the distance of the school is far from the distance as prescribed. Schools within the prescribed distances are termed as “neighborhood schools”.
 - The local authorities have to undertake a school mapping and publicize the same for ease of access for the community members.
 - Private schools which do not seek any government grants to function are required to enroll twenty five percent of the children belonging to the weaker sections of the society and give free education and facilities to them, the expenditure of which can be claimed from the government if the

per child expenditure does not over shoot the amount which a government school spends to educate the children.

- The curriculum is the responsibility of the Central Government along with developing and enforcing standards for teacher training and provision of technical support to the State Governments.
- The State Government is responsible for prescribing the curriculum and courses for the elementary education.
- Provide necessary infrastructure and teaching learning material.
- Ensure admission of the children and their completion of primary education whilst maintaining records of the children upto the age of fourteen years.
- Ensure no discrimination against the marginalized and weak children and at the same time provide special training facility for the children who have never had any formal schooling in the past or have not completed their elementary education.
- Teacher training formulates an important aspect of the State Government.
- The State also has to ensure that no new school is started without obtaining a recognition certificate from a designated authority.

c. School Management Committees

- Each school under RTE Act has to set up a School Management Committee (SMC) at the school level.
- Seventy five percent of the committee members must be amongst the parents and guardians of the children of the school.
- The remaining twenty five percent of the members, one third would be inclusive of the elected representatives of the local authority, one third to be constituted by the teachers of the school and one third would be inclusive of the local educationists or the children of the school.
- The mandate also emphasizes that fifty percent of the SMC members must be women.
- The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson have to be elected by the SMC from amongst the parent members while the Head or the senior most teacher shall be the Member-Convener of the SMC.

- The major activity of the SMC would be to oversee the working of the school, make the school development plan and monitor the government grant utilization. The grants sanctioned are reflective of the school development plan prepared by the SMC.
- The SMC has to meet once a month and ensure that the community members are communicated about the developments of the school and at the same time protect the rights of the children in school.

d. School Facilities and Rules

- The Act mandates that there must be one teacher for every thirty students for classes I to V and one teacher for every thirty five students for class VI to VIII.
- A full time Head teacher is to be appointed at the school having more than hundred students.
- The school must have the following infrastructure:
 - A classroom for every teacher, which sustains all the seasons
 - An office/store/Head Teachers room
 - Separate toilets for girls and boys with water facilities
 - Clean and safe drinking water facilities
 - Kitchen and shed for preparing Mid Day Meals for the schools where the meals are cooked in schools
 - Playground
 - Fencing around the school premises
 - A library
 - Teaching and learning and sports equipment
 - Ramps for the children who are differently abled

The RTE Act is an important step towards improving the accessibility to secondary and higher education of the children. Specific provisions are mentioned for the education of children from the disadvantaged groups such as child laborers, children who are differently abled or with special needs. The Act is inclusive of the needs of the children who have a disadvantage owing to their cultural, social, geographical, economic, gender or linguistic factors. The Act has been expectant of issues of the

school like drop out of children, quality of education and availability of trained teachers and has made several provisions to meet the requirements.

- **Draft of National Education Policy 2016**

After the formulation of the National Policies on Education 1968, 1986 and revision in 1992, a lot of changes have taken place through the introduction of various plans and programmes to meet the policy objectives. Over the period of time, education has not been limited to the classrooms alone and thus, it becomes imperative to change the system so that the generation can meet the new age challenges especially in the fields of science and technology. The draft of NEP 2016 envisaged a credible system of education which was inclusive in nature and one which provided a life-long learning opportunity. For this, one of the salient features of the policy included renewal of curriculum and learning outcomes in school education where the no detention policy was limited to classes I to V only, owing to the fact that it was hampering the academic achievement of the children. The policy also highlighted that issues of social justice and harmony and legal measures must be undertaken in the curriculum so as to avoid social discrimination. Emphasis was also laid on use of ICT in education and efforts towards teacher management and development.

- **National Education Policy 2020**

The Draft of the National Education Policy 2019, submitted under the Chairmanship of Dr. Kasturirangan was formulated into the National Education Policy of 2020. The new education policy is based on the premise that India has a country, since independence has been occupied with issues related to access to schooling and equity and has not been able to cater to the need of quality education. It highlights that the implementation of the previous education policies has remained incomplete. The policy document states that an attitudinal change needs to be brought in so that implementation can take place effectively; moreover, a paradigm shift in the mindsets and attitudes is necessary to implement the policy. The policy document stresses on three major reformations viz. Decentralization of Education, Teacher Training and Increasing Community Participation in implementation.

With regard to decentralization of education, the policy document envisages that integration of pre-school learning with elementary schooling is of utmost importance where it is necessary to identify how the child learns rather than what the child learns.

The emphasis was laid on pedagogy. To improve pedagogy, the policy also envisaged that the administrative workload of the teachers is reduced and proper training be provided so that they can focus on teaching alone. Also, this is the only policy that has clearly spelt out the need for active participation of the community members for effective implementation of school activities. The policy states that awareness generation regarding the government efforts towards primary education amongst the community members is quite necessary to garner support of the community in the schooling. (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2019)

All in all, a lot has been done at the planning and policy front for ensuring that the primary education system is revitalized and India as a country has come far in ensuring that her children are in schools. Despite the efforts, there still remain certain glitches due to which the aim of universalization of primary education has not been attained yet.

1.9 Overview of literacy rate in India post Independence

Table 2: Literacy Rate in India: Census 1951 – 2011

Year	Persons	Males	Females	Gap in Literacy Rate
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.3	40.4	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	64.83	75.26	53.67	21.59
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68

Source: Census of India Report 2011 – State of Literacy

The SDG 4 is envisaged with an aim to ensure that all children, girls and boys complete primary and secondary schooling by the year 2030, which initially was to be achieved by 2015 when the SDG's were known as Millenium Development Gosls.

Despite efforts made by the government, the progress of universalization of education is slow. The above table provides an overview of the literacy rate in the country over the years post independence. It is reflective that the rate of literacy has only improved so far owing to the efforts made at the both the levels of the Government in the areas of primary education. The census report over the years shows that despite the increase in literacy levels of both, males and females, the rate of increase in literacy of females

was still slower as compared to females. Moreover, the efforts of the government have ensured that the gender gap in literacy grows thinner by each year, it has yet not become obsolete. While girls are enrolled in the schooling system, they rarely complete primary education stage due to which the gender gap in literacy remains. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has had a major impact on enrolment of children post 2003, resulting a decrease in the gender based literacy ratio. Prior to this, the years 1961-2001 saw quite a gap in the literacy rate of male and female children.

1.10 Initiatives undertaken in Gujarat to improve status of Primary Education

Existence of the state of Gujarat came after the partition between Maharashtra and Gujarat on May 1st 1960. Gujarat has been at the development front since quite a few years. With the development infrastructure, opening of schools and with the advent of various programmes for primary school children, there has been a massive social mobilization due to which the school enrolments have risen significantly. Districts like Kheda, Surat, Panchmahals and Ahmedabad were under the British rule around the year 1820's and came under the Bombay Presidency. Post independence, the literacy rate in Gujarat in the first census of India in the year 1951, was merely 21.82% (Census of India, 1951) and thus attention was drawn towards understanding the social picture before planning for educational needs. Serious efforts to increase the literacy rates in the state were made and centrally sponsored schemes like Operation Blackboard, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid Day meal programmes were implemented in the state to cater to the educational needs of the children. Despite the efforts, the female education in the state was low which concerned the state government. As per the Seventh Educational survey, there was only 58 percent of enrolment of girls which further reduced to 38.79 percent during the Eighth Educational survey. While enrolment of girls at the primary level was not a question, it was a big question in the secondary stage of schooling. (Visaria L. , 2014)

The Census of 2011 has shown an upward increase in the literacy rate which is 79.31 percent. Comparatively, the literacy rate as per Census of 2001 stood at 69.14 percent. Over the decade, a ten percent increase has been recorded. To increase the literacy levels in the State, the efforts of the State Government, apart from the Central Government's efforts have been visible in ensuring that each child is in school and learning well. Just like all the other states, Government of Gujarat also adopted

various centrally sponsored schemes which included Operation Blackboard, RTE, Mid Day Meal which were largely incentive based schemes. Apart from these, a lot of emphasis in Gujarat schools was given to sports activities, completion of primary education and enrolment of girls (Aggarwal D. D., History and Development of Elementary Education in India, 2002). Despite the efforts, the literacy rate for the females is increasing, but slowly and thus the Government of Gujarat made significant efforts to ensure that the gender gap in enrolment is reduced and it is ensured that each child in the state is enrolled in the schools. Several initiatives have been undertaken in the state to ensure equity and equality of access to primary education. The focus of primary education in Gujarat is largely on improvement in primary education, inclusion under elementary education, initiatives for gender equity and initiatives for quality.

Figure 3: Initiatives undertaken at State level to improve status of Primary Education

1. Initiatives for improvements in primary education	2. Inclusion under Elementary Education	3. Initiatives for Gender Equity	4. Initiatives for improvement in quality of education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shala Praveshotsav • Kanya Kelavani Rathayatra • GIS School Mapping- "Know your Neighbourhood School" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration Monitoring System for Out of School Children • Special Training Programme (STP) • Seasonal Hostels • Children with Special Needs (CSWN) • Mid Day Meal and Tithibhojan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kanya Kelavani Nidhi- • Vidyadeep • Vidya Laxmi Bond Scheme • Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyaya 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gunotsav • PRAGNA (Activity Based Learning) • BaLa (Building as Learning Aid) • Distance Education Program • Computer Aided Learning (CAL)

1. Initiatives for improvements in primary education: in order to meet the goal of universal primary education and its completion by 2030, Government of Gujarat has undertaken several initiatives to ensure that each child in the school is enrolled in school. in order to meet the target, the following initiatives were introduced:

- Kanya Kelavani Yojna , 1998 – 1999

The Government of Gujarat launched this programme in 1998-1999 to ensure that primary education is progressive and dynamic. Kanya Kelavani Mahotsav is one of the many efforts of the State Government which aims to improve overall enrolment of girl children in the schools. To ensure this, the State Education Department came up with the Kanya Kelavani Rath Yatras to go village to village where the literacy rates were low and motivate parents to enroll their girl children in schools. The Government later thought of making it into a mass movement in order to achieve better female literacy ratio. (Education Department, Government of Gujarat, 2019)

In the year 2004, Kanya Kelavani Mahotsav became a big event and is held in every village of Gujarat. This massive Enrolment drive is celebrated with a lot of festive spirit and zest where the children are dressed for the occasion and gathered before arriving at the school. The rally is accompanied by teachers, members of the School Management Committee members, officials from the District and villagers. Under the Yatra, each year for a period of three days in the month of June, when the admissions kick off are earmarked for the visits by the Chief Minister of the State accompanied by other Ministers, Principal Secretaries and Class I officers where they visit villages to create awareness about education, specifically about the education of girl children and thereby improve the enrolment and retention in schools.

These officials visit atleast five villages each day which makes each official visit atleast fifteen villages in a period of three days. The basic idea is to encourage dialogue between the officials and the village people in order to positively reinforce the parents to enroll their children and take part in the celebrations that are held for enrolment of the children in the primary schools.

The objectives of the Kanya Kelavani Yojna are as follows:

- i. To reduce out of school children and create awareness among masses on the importance of education
- ii. Help girl children to continue education and encourage those who which to go for higher education

Scholarships under the domain of Chief Minister Kanya Kelavani Nidhi fund were created in the year of 2005-06 to endorse education for girls in the state. A minimum

of thousand rupees is deposited in the bank account of the girl child at the time of enrolment.

Under this campaign, the larger focus is on the behavioral change of the community members around the state as a result of which the Government officials personally are to participate in the pre-assigned territories in order to ensure maximum participation of the community members. This has become a mandatory exercise in the calendar of the Government.

The famous slogan for this campaign is “*Pahela Vidyadaan Pachhi Kanyadaan*” (Education first, Marriage later) is publicized on a large scale.

The benefits of Kanya Kelavani Yojna include:

- Intensive focus on Girl Child Education in Gujarat State
- Government bears the expenses of girls education in the state
- The scheme provides fund to foster women education
- This is to increase female participation in the field of education
- To reduce drop-out ratio among women

The Campaign in the year 2011 covered 32,772 primary schools in 18,000 villages, 151 municipalities and 8 Municipal Corporations during the 9th Kanya Kelavani Yatra which was held in two phases in rural and urban Gujarat.

The census of 2001 and 2011 shows comparatively, a rise of thirteen percent in the literacy level of girls and 29.77 percent decrease in the drop out ratio.

The Government under this initiative ensures recruitment of qualified and trained teachers for which Teacher Training Centres have been developed under Education Improvement programs where the teachers are provided with completion certificates provided through school development funds. The Distance Teacher Training is conducted by the Government through Satellite Technology where the Chief Minister of the State addresses the Teachers. The teachers get an opportunity to watch, listen and interact with various scholars and academicians.

- Shala Praveshotsav, 2003

As per the Good Practices and New Initiatives for Education in Gujarat report by Department of Education, Government of Gujarat, the Shala Praveshotsav Programme

of the “School Admission Festival” was started in the year 2003 by the Government of Gujarat under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, with an aim of hundred percent enrolments at the elementary level across the State. This programme follows the methodology of the Kanya Kelavani Yojna where the Government officials take part and give their contribution in the field of elementary education. The objectives of the programme are as follows:

- i. Hundred percent enrolment in the first standard
- ii. Hundred percent literacy to the children between age group of 6-14 years
- iii. Encouragement to education of girls
- iv. To obtain awareness and cooperation from the society for the Government schools
- v. To make education a responsibility of the society
- vi. To make school a place of learning with joy
- vii. To reduce the school drop-out ratio and ensure that the child is enrolled at the first standard completed education upto the primary level atleast, with utmost quality.

This programme too has become an annual initiative of the State Government which intends to develop world-class education system in order to produce professionals that have the capacity to compete with the world.

- GIS (Geo-Informatics System) School Mapping- “*Know Your Neighborhood School*”

In association with BISAG, GIS mapping has been carried out to identify and monitor the distance of schools from communities to make sure that there is access to schools in the neighborhood as per the RTE Act, 2009. This helped in identifying the communities where there was unavailability of schools within the walking distance and thus, this helped the government in opening up of local schools. With the help of this mapping, 21 primary schools were opened during the year 2013-14. This has also been beneficial to local officials for micro planning related to schooling. (Education Department, Government of Gujarat, 2019)

2. Efforts for Inclusion under Elementary Education

The following efforts have been made by the State government to ensure that each child in the state is in school and completes the basic elementary education by the age of fourteen.

- Migration Monitoring System for Out of School Children

Migration is a major problem in various districts of the state, specifically in the tribal areas where families migrate from one village/city to another. Due to this, the families move and along with them, the children also have to move with them, leaving them to abandon their schooling. This leads to many children dropping out of schools and thus being categorized as out-of-school children. To counter this, migration cards with unique pre-printed numbers for intra-state and inter-state migrant children have been developed by SSA Gujarat. A web based software has been developed which helps in tracking the movement of these children and identifying the nearest schools where the child can be enrolled and made to continue primary education.

- Special Training Programme (STP)

This training programme was started with an intention to identify out-of-school children, the ones who had enrolled, but dropped out due to several reasons. These OSC (Out of School Children) are considered for the Special Training Programme, where the children are tracked down and enrolled in the age appropriate class after which efforts to get them with the mainstream classes are made by the teachers. These STP's are overlooked by the School Management Committees (SMC's).

- Seasonal Hostels

Owing to the large number of people migrating for work to other villages and cities, the concept of seasonal hostels was introduced so that parents can migrate while the children can stay back and complete their schooling. A total of 602 seasonal hostels are there across the state which cater to the children whose parents migrate elsewhere for work. School boarding, lodging and other facilities are provided to the children.

- Children with Special Needs (CWSN)

The RTE Act calls for mainstreaming of children with special needs into regular schooling and keeping that in mind, the State officials make an effort to identify

children with special needs and enrol them in schools. Till now, 935 resource teachers, 172 care givers and 334 block resource people have been recruited to cater to their needs. Transport and escort facilities, special medical care facilities for certification, appliances distribution takes place under this initiative.

- Mid Day Meal Programme and Tithi Bhojan

While the scheme was implemented country wide in the year 1995, Gujarat was the second state to have started the Mid Day Meal Scheme in the year 1984. The scheme involves provision of hot cooked meals to the children, totally free of cost on all working days. The large objectives of the Mid Day Meal Scheme include the following:

- (i) Encourage poor children, belonging to disadvantaged sections, to attend school regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities.
- (ii) Improve the nutritional status of the children in classes I-VIII in Government local Body and Government aided schools and EGS (Education Guarantee Scheme) and AIE (Alternative and Innovative Education) centres.
- (iii) Provide nutritional support to children in drought-affected areas during summer vacation.

The Government schools largely undertake the cooking of the MDM in the premises of the school itself where the dry ration is provided to the schools through a proper channel according to the requirement of the children. In the year 2000, Akshaya Patra Foundation started the Mid Day Meal Programme by serving cooked Mid Day Meals to 1,500 children across five Government schools in Bengaluru. Initially, the efforts were not smooth, but over the year through Government and philanthropic donors, the programme is running successfully across various districts.

In the year 2001, the Supreme Court of India passed the Right to Food Act, mandating that the scheme of free meals be extended to all the Government schools across the country. Akshaya Patra works in partnership with Government of India and State Governments along with various corporate houses thus, built on a Public Private Partnership model, making it the world's largest Mid Day Meal programme. What makes Akshaya Patra different is the fact that it combines good management, smart

engineering, and innovative technology to deliver cooked, nutritious and hygienic school meals on a daily basis to the children.

The funding is a joint one, coming from the Central as well as the State Governments, with the menu differing in each State as per the local factors. Akshaya Patra works in the following areas of the country, viz. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Daman and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka, Odisha, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh. Rests of the schools have school kitchen facility where the meals are cooked with the help of hiring cooks and helpers under the Mid Day Meal Scheme.

In Gujarat, Akshaya Patra has centralized kitchens in the following six districts:

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Ahmedabad | 2. Bhavnagar | 3. Vadodara |
| 4. Surat | 5. Kalol | 6. Bhuj |

Other districts of Gujarat do not have the Akshaya Patra Foundation serving meals to the schools. The District Collector is responsible for the overall implementation of the Scheme at the District level along with the District Education Officers. The Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Panchayat also looks after the implementation of the MDM programme under the guidance of the District Collector. At the Block level, the Deputy District Education Officer is responsible for the implementation of the programme.

Under the nutritional support scheme of MDM programme, Government of Gujarat, with the help of community participation, in order to ensure a healthy child, initiated the “*Tithi Bhojan*” scheme as per the directive of the Central Government in October 2018. The major aim of this initiative was to ensure community participation in the MDM programme, relying on the traditional practice of feeding people on various occasions. Under this initiative, members of the community provide supplementary food to the school children, apart from the noon meals served in schools. It can either be a complete nutritious meal or can be supplements to the meals like namkeen, sweets, fruits and/or sprouts. Government of Gujarat was appreciated by the MHRD for the initiative and directed all the states and UT’s to follow suit. The MHRD directed the states and the UT’s to adopt the initiative with the same name or give a suitable local name to the scheme in order to encourage the implementation of the MDM scheme. Upon this, the concept was adopted by 11 states and UT’s viz.

Uttarakhand, Chandigarh, Daman and Diu under the name of Tithi Bhojan and “*Sampriti Bhojan*” in Assam, “*Priti Bhojan*” in Punjab and Andhra Pradesh, “*Anna Dhanam*” in Puducherry, and “*Beti ka Janamdin*” in Haryana. The basic aim of Tithi Bhojan was to garner community support and develop rapport with the local community members as well as inculcate a feeling of equity among the children of various communities.

Apart from “*Tithi Bhojan*” other initiatives under MDM by Government of Gujarat include “*Sukhadi Yojna*.” Sukhadi is a preparation of a combination of wheat, jaggery and oil. The aim of this initiative is to increase the intake of food grains for the children and thereby increase their calorie intake. This yojna is being implemented once a week in the schools of Gujarat. “*Dudh Sanjivani*” Yojna is another initiative under the MDM programme where 200 ml of milk which is flavored, is provided to the students in the schools for five days a week. This was started in the year 2014-15 in Surat and Tapi Districts of Gujarat which was later replicated in 12 other districts and 26 blocks in the year 2015-16. The additional initiatives were undertaken to ensure that all the essential nutrients are provided to the children. (Government of Gujarat, 2019)

Duties of the Public Authority under Mid Day Meal Programme

1. Provide support on effective implementation of the Scheme
2. Monitoring the scheme in terms of implementation, social and gender equity on a daily basis and provide community support
3. The public is also to ensure that the programme fosters social harmony and that no discrimination of any members from the SC/ST community happens.

The officers at the District level are to make necessary arrangements for seeking public participation and/or contribution and generating awareness of the scheme through print and radio advertisements as a part of an integrated media campaign.

At the school level, the School Management Committee (SMC) has to ensure community participation in the scheme.

There is a Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee at the Block, District, State and National level which seeks participation of the public in terms of seeking advice and guidance on the scheme.

Third party reviews are also invited for seeking their advice and inputs for improvisation of the programme.

At the local level representatives of Gram Panchayats/Gram Sabhas, members of Parent teacher Associations as well as Mother's Committees are to monitor the regularity, timeliness of giving the food, cleanliness in cooking of the meals, incase the food is cooked in schools, ensuring that the said menu is provided and at the same ensure that gender and social equity is maintained on a daily basis.

3 Initiatives for Gender Equity: To foster the participation of girls in schooling, both primary and secondary, variety of incentive based schemes were launched at the central level to ensure that girls participate in the schooling process. The following schemes are being implemented at the moment in the state:

- **Kanya Kelavani Nidhi**

The Kanya Kelavani Nidhi fund was created in the year 2005-06 to promote girl child education in the state. The funds are collected through donations and auction of gifts of the Honorable Chief Minister of the state is diverted to fund education of the girls in the state. The donations made under this scheme are free from tax.

- **Vidyadeep Scheme**

This scheme was started in the year 2001 in the memory of the students who died in the 2001 earthquake. The scheme was initiated to provide financial assistance to the families of the children who had succumbed to the earthquake. It also provides insurance to the students studying in primary, grant-in aid primary, ashram shalas, secondary and higher secondary schools of the state. The premium of the insurance is paid by the government and the family is paid the money upon the death of the child. The insurance amount is fifty thousand rupees per child. (Education Department-Government of Gujarat, 2014)

- **VidyaLaxmi Yojna**

This scheme is implemented at the village level in the villages where the literacy rate of females is less than 35%. Under this, rupees 2000 is provided to the girls enrolled in the first grade and given back to the girls after completion primary schooling, i.e

eighth standard. The scheme is also implemented in the urban areas where the girl child belongs to families living below the poverty line.

4 Initiatives for improving quality of education

- Gunotsav, 2009

Gunotsav, or “celebrating quality” is a programme to ensure quality in education started by the State Education Department of Gujarat in the month of November 2009. The primary aim of the programme is to evaluate the primary education scenario and grade the school teachers accordingly. Under this programme, primary education is seen as a grass-root sector and thus revolutionary experiments are made to transform the primary education. (Education Department, Government of Gujarat, 2019)

The focus in this programme shifted from quantity in primary education to quality wherein various enhancement programs have been initiated to improve learning milestones. The programme is defined as an accountability framework to ensure quality of teaching and learning which promotes scholastic as well as co-scholastic activities, use of resources in a sustainable and efficient manner and ensuring community participation.

Over the years, Gunotsav programme has helped in reducing two major issues in primary education viz. increasing school enrolment and tackling the drop-out ratio. The objectives of Gunotsav include the following:

- i. To bring awareness among teachers, students, administrators, communities & stakeholders for quality education.
- ii. To ensure the enhancement of reading, writing and numerical skills for all children studying in primary schools (Std 2 to 5).
- iii. To ensure the enhancement of subject knowledge for all children studying in upper primary sections (Std 6 to 8).
- iv. To assess quality based classroom teaching learning processes followed in schools.
- v. To address gaps in achieving learning outcomes and to acknowledge achievement.

- vi. To track the children based on learning outcome levels and identify focus areas for remedial action.
- vii. To build an environment of accountability - for an outcome oriented performance at all levels across scholastic, co-scholastic outcomes and stakeholder participation.

For the purpose of evaluation, all the government schools are asked to self- evaluate themselves on key parameters as underlined by the Government. The self- evaluation criteria include writing, reading and mathematical applications. For the purpose of evaluation, a team of Senior Government officers inclusive of IAS and IPS officers of all Departments are deployed to schools over a period of three days to assess the learning outcome of primary education in the state. In this exercise, one out of four government primary schools is covered. The selection of the schools for evaluation is done by the Government official at the last minute and is random.

The evaluation under Gunotsav is conducted in two phases- the first phase begins at the end of the first quarter of the academic year, in the month of September which includes self-assessment by schools. The second phase includes assessment by the senior Government officials which covers twenty five percent of the total schools. The third step after the phases are over includes remedial/extra coaching programs in terms of diagnostic assessment. Based on the outcome of evaluation, the schools are subsequently required to undertake remedial measures to reduce the gap which was found through assessment.

The pre-assessment phase is the most tedious for the Government as a lot of planning goes into implementing the programme. Preparation of assessment booklets, mechanizing the web portal, selection of schools which is done in collaboration with the District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) along with usage of the software. The Government officials are given a list of schools from which random selection is done for the purpose of evaluation. A liaison officer from each cluster/District is appointed for facilitating the visits and the evaluation of the schools.

There are over one hundred parameters which cover academic proficiency, co-curricular activities, infrastructural availability and its optimum utilization etc. these parameters are jointly decided by the Research Associates from Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training (GCERT), members from State Resource Groups (SRG's) of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan under various subjects, DIET principals and

lecturers and various representatives from the Department of Primary Education. The test booklets are inclusive of questions from the text books that the children already study from. After the schools have received grades in the previous phase of Gunotsav, a strategy of planned action is designed to meet the educational needs of the schools based on their performance.

As per the data released by Government of Gujarat, Gunotsav has showed an increase in student performance as compared to the performance of the students in the previous years in the state. Through the efforts under Gunotsav, mainstreaming of 12.6 lac students in the year 2010, 5.6 lac students in 2012, was achieved through remedial classes (Education Department, Government of Gujarat, 2019). The Gunotsav assessment process was presented at the 12th Five Year Plan of Gujarat state and officers from various states viz. Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh took a visit to Gujarat and understand the process of Gunotsav in order to adopt the same in their states.

- PRAGNA (Activity Based Learning)

The PRAGNA, activity based learning is an effort to create a more holistic and learner centered way of working with the children. It provides the children with opportunities to learn through various activities at their own pace and experiences. It emphasizes on activity based learning in group. It provides the children with hands-on learning experiences. The evaluation, which is continuous and comprehensive, of the children in this system is through play only with the help of various methods like observation, picking various cards, selecting groups and doing activities. Phase III of PRAGNA in the year 2012 covered 5, 16, 885 students. (Education Department, Government of Gujarat, 2019)

- BaLa (Building as Learning Aid)

This initiative is to ensure that the school infrastructure is used for the learning of the children. It is ensured that the school infrastructure is designed in such a manner that it incorporates learning for children, a child friendly environment and special attention towards inclusiveness of children with special needs (CSWN). This is done through two types of interventions viz. developing the already existing spaces in order to create a variety of teaching and learning situations like painting numbers on staircases, painting tables on the school ground etc and by building elements in the

school premises like installing an abacus in the campus. This activity has covered 1965 schools in the state. (Education Department, Government of Gujarat, 2019)

- Distance Education Program

The Distance Education Program has been introduced and telecasted through BISAG for subjects like Mathematics, Science and Technology, English, other languages and social sciences. The schools have been facilitated with LED Television sets and internet connectivity and 312 lessons were telecasted for 104 days in the year 2013-14. (Education Department, Government of Gujarat, 2019)

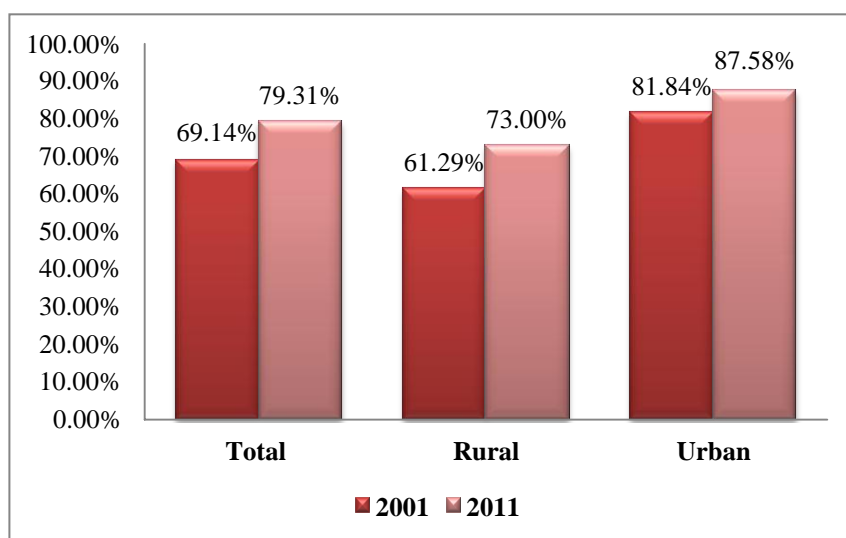
- Computer Aided Learning (CAL)

The Computer Aided Learning (CAL) programme was launched by the Government of Gujarat to make learning fun for all the children. The programme envisages effective use of computers as a medium of learning and to impact competencies of the children at the same time creating an alternative environment in the school. The objectives of the programme include amongst improving attendance of the children, increasing the level of retention and creating a joyful learning environment where the children can learn at their own pace. A 42 inch LCD TV with a dish antenna and a school coordinator has been made available in the schools for the purpose.

1.11 Current scenario of education in Gujarat

The previous sections of the chapter provide a detailed overview regarding the efforts made at the Central and the State Governments to revitalize and reconstruct primary education in the country.

Figure 4: Decadal Literacy Rate of Gujarat (2001-2011)



Source: Census of India Report-2011

The above figure shows comparative picture of the rate of literacy of Gujarat between census 2001 and census 2011. The graph shows that there has been a significant increase in the literacy rate over the decade in urban as well as rural areas of Gujarat. While the overall literacy rate in the year 2011 stands at 79.31%, there was a ten percent increase as compared to 2001. This can be attributed to the growing efforts of the government to ensure that the children are in school and are attending it regularly. Comparing rural and urban literacy statistics for the year 2011, a difference of fourteen percent in literacy has been recorded. Despite the efforts, there is a gap in the literacy rates between urban and rural areas. While the same programmes are being implemented in both the areas, there is a significant difference recorded. The reason for this difference can amount to better educational facilities in the urban areas as compared to rural areas where mostly, only government schools are available. Another possible reason for the same can be that the people in the urban areas are more socially awakened regarding education and its importance as compared to the people in the rural areas. The cases of females being denied educational opportunities are lesser compared to rural areas and lastly, migration of families from rural areas to

urban areas in search of work adds another reason for lower levels of literacy in the rural areas. (Agrawal, 2014)

Table 3: Literacy rate in various districts of Gujarat - 2011

Sr. No	District	Overall Literacy Rate	Female Literacy Rate
1.	Surat	85.53%	81.02%
2.	Anand	84.37%	77.76%
3.	Ahmedabad	85.31%	80.29%
4.	Gandhinagar	84.16%	77.37%
5.	Navsari	83.88%	79.30%
6.	Mehsana	83.61 %	76.12%
7.	Kheda	82.65%	74.67%
8.	Bharuch	81.51 %	76.79%
9.	Rajkot	80.96 %	75.26%
10.	Vadodara	78.92%	74.40%
11.	Valsad	78.55 %	74.96%
12.	Junagadh	75.80%	67.59%
13.	Sabarkantha	75.79%	65.29%
14.	Bhavnagar	75.52%	66.92%
15.	The Dangs	75.16%	68.75%
16.	Porbandar	75.16%	68.32%
17.	Amreli	74.25 %	66.97%
18.	Jamnagar	73.65 %	65.97%
19.	Narmada	72.31%	63.62%
20.	Patan	72.30 %	62.01%
21.	Surendranagar	72.13 %	62.20%
22.	Panchmahal	70.99%	59.95%
23.	Kachchh	70.59 %	61.62%
24.	Tapi	68.26 %	61.69%
25.	Banaskantha	65.32%	52.58%
26.	Dohad	58.52%	49.02%

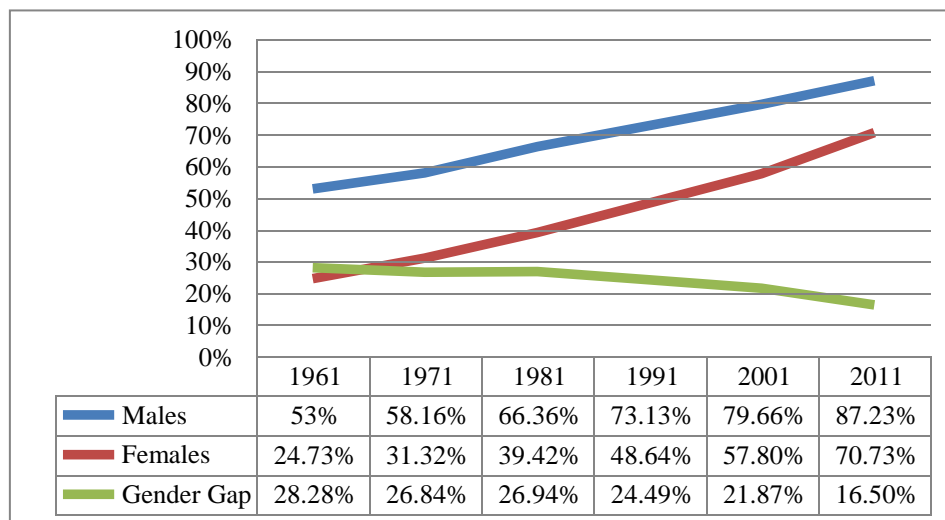
Source- Census of India Report- Gujarat 2011

The above table gives the literacy picture in various districts of Gujarat. As per Census of 2011, there were 26 Districts in Gujarat whose literacy rates have been given above. On 15th August 2013, seven new districts were created viz. Aravalli, Botad, Chhota Udepur, Devbhoomi Dwarka, Mahisagar, Morbi and Gir Somnath, whose literacy data has not been provided yet. Gujarat is doing fairly well in the areas of economic development, however at the educational development front, the table above is suggestive that a lot needs to be done. Except the five districts, viz. Ahmedabad, Surat, Anand, Gandhinagar and Navsari, the other districts have literacy rate below eighty percent. Looking at the female literacy rates, Dohad and Banaskantha have the least female literacy states amongst all the other districts of Gujarat. Still, looking at the overall picture, the literacy rates except for districts in Ahmedabad and Surat, are below eighty percent. It is important to understand the literacy rates of women in the districts as post-independence; a lot of emphasis has been made to ensure that females get equal opportunities and access to schooling to raise their status of literacy as well. Despite the efforts, the literacy of women has not gone beyond seventy five percent except in a few districts. There are many factors associated with low levels of literacy among women amongst which include household chores which make girl children ghost students in schools, the belief in many parents exists even today that educating a girl child is not of much importance. Many girls drop out of schools as they have to take care of their siblings and at times take part in employment activities to support their families. (Visaria L. , 2014)

Child labor is another major reason due to which children drop out of schools. Amongst all the other reasons, four major reasons were identified for drop outs amongst girls which included – economic factors, social factors, lack of adequate infrastructure and individual factors (Desai, 1999). While social and economic factors are quite significant factors that lead to girls dropping out of schools, individual factors like girls not wanting to sit with boys due to cultural upbringing is another major factor recorded. Another feature is the lack of teachers in the schools which leads to inefficiency in working of the schools. Often the teachers are burdened with work due to which their efficiency to teach is reduced. This results in the parents losing interest in sending their children to schools, thus leading to girls dropping out (Sharma M. , 2014). The districts selected for the current study have been highlighted

in yellow and the criteria for selection have been mentioned in the Methodology chapter.

Figure 5: Literacy Rate and Gender Gap in Literacy in Gujarat (1961-2011)



Source: Census of India Report-2011

With regard to the gender gap in literacy, the above graph indicates that there has been a decadal decrease in the gender gap in literacy. While the gender gap was close to stagnant in the years between 1971 to 1981, it has steadily decreased in the subsequent years but has not diminished completely. The period post 1991 saw efforts like Nutritional Support to primary education, various efforts through DPEP at the Central level and Kanya Kelavani, RTE, which were incentive based schemes in order to promote the level of education amongst the girls and boys alike. Despite the efforts, the gender gap in literacy still prevails. Gender disparity in literacy is not a concern only in India, but across the world as it seriously impacts the efforts made towards development. (Katiyar, 2016)

Gender disparity in India is a phenomena which is deeply rooted right from the stage of childhood, it starts early in the life of a female child and continues to grow as the child grows which takes the form of fewer or no schooling opportunities for the girl child compared to those for the boys. (Sharma, Singh, Doi, & Khan, 2015)

While efforts like Kanya Kelavani and Shala Praveshotsav being made at the state level, there somehow remains a loophole due to which the disparity doesn't seem to decrease.

It thus becomes imperative to identify that despite so many efforts both the central and the state level, why gaps as such prevail. While the government is making significant efforts, it is important to ensure whether the implementers and the beneficiaries are congruent to those efforts and whether they believe that these programmes are impacting primary education as per the goals envisaged under each programme or not. The present study will lay emphasis on the Central and State Government plans and programmes on primary education and the status of impact and implementation of the same through the perspectives of the different stakeholders.

1.12 Understanding different concepts used in the study

The research is an attempt to understand the current status of implementation of the selected government plans and programmes for primary education and the impact of the programmes as perceived by the stakeholders under the study. For a better understanding, the major terms used under the research have been defined as under:

Concept of Perspectives

Perspective is defined as the state of one's ideas, the facts known to one, etc., in having a meaningful interrelationship. It is also said to be a mental view or a prospect. It also means seeing things in a wholistic manner and depends largely on the environment, surrounding and upbringing of the individual.

The present study aims to identify the state of the current ideas and understanding of various stakeholders regarding the government plans and policies for primary school children. By perspectives, the researcher aims to identify the views/ responses of the different stakeholders regarding the programmes for UEE by the Government, in the light of their needs. Perspective here would also be defined as a particular way of considering something in the light of whether the programmes have helped in increasing the status of education in the community over the years or not.

Concept of Stakeholders

Stakeholder is a person or a group of persons who are affected or can affect an organizational structure and policies. Not all stakeholders are equal and the impact of organizational policies can have a negative or a positive impact on the stakeholders. Stakeholders in this study would be defined as the one/ones who are involved in and/or affected by a course of action. In the education sector, stakeholders refers to

the people who have invested for the success and welfare of the education of the children including administrators, parents, students, community members and the local government at large. Stakeholders can also represent local organizations, committees and institutions who have contributed to the overall development of the primary education system. In the word stakeholders, “Stake” means that the people associated with it have a responsibility towards or are affected by those responsibilities altogether, meaning, they have a personal, professional, civic or financial interest or concern.

For the present study the stakeholders would include the teachers in the Government run primary schools who implement the programmes and the parents of the children in primary schools who are indirect beneficiaries of the plans and programmes for primary school children.

Concept of Implementation

The word implementation has been defined in the Oxford dictionary as the act of putting into effect something that has been planned. Implementation in Social Work as per the encyclopaedia of Social Work includes (a) *model definition*(who should be engaged, how, and in what elements, activities, and phases of service delivery); (b) *theory bases(s)* supporting those elements and activities; (c) *target population characteristics* (behavioral, cultural, socioeconomic, and other factors that suggest a good match with the practice model); (d) *theory of change*(how those elements and activities create improved outcomes for the target population); and (e) *alternative models* (a rationale for why the service organization therefore rejects using other practice models).

Implementation in the present study refers to the practical aspect of the application of the plans and policies by the Government, Central and State, towards fulfilling the broad objective of universalization of primary education and retention of children at the primary level. The study aims to identify the current status of implementation of the plans and programmes and whether any problems are encountered in the same.

Concept of Impact

The Oxford dictionary meaning of impact is a marked effect or influence on something or someone. The Encyclopedia of Social Work defines impact as a process

of “identifying the future consequences of a current or proposed action ... related to individuals, organizations and social macro-systems.”

Over the years, the demand for primary education has substantially increased as a result of which many government plans and policies have been formulated and implemented in the country for meeting the broad objective of universalization and retention in the education system and education regarded as the fundamental right of individuals has impacted the people in a very positive manner.

Some programmes and policies have had a positive impact on the enrolment and retention of the children in the primary education system and have brought about tremendous changes in the system like the Mid Day Meal Programme and the RTE Act. (Afridi, 2010) (Dreze & Goyal, 2003) (Sahai, 2014) (Saxena R. R., 2000)

For the present study, the researcher aimed to identify the effect of the government plans and programmes for primary education on the education of the children, whether it has brought about any positive changes or not.

Concept of Government Plans and Programmes

Government Plans according to this study is defined as the exercise of political authority over the action, affairs of the people in order to meet certain needs and demands of the population at large. A plan is a detailed proposal of doing or achieving something. Similarly, a policy is a course of principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or an individual, in the case of the present study, the Government (Central and State at large).

Policy scientists Harold Lasswell and philosophers Abraham Kaplan define policy as a “project programme of goals”. (Friedrich, 1963)

Carl Fredrick says, “it is essential for policy concept that there is a goal, objective or purpose. Governments act in a purposeful and goal oriented fashion.” (Dye, 1998)

Public Policies, Plans and programmes are whatever governments choose to do in order to provide essential services to the people. Understanding the policy processes through public policy studies facilitates application of social science knowledge to solve practical problems. Post-independence, Government of India has made tremendous efforts and witnessed a host of admirable policy initiatives towards the universalization of primary education. With the advent of realization, Privatization

and Globalization, the Indian policy makers have changed the priorities in the educational policies over the years. The British system of Dyarchy (dual governance) is still practiced even today in terms of shared governance of Central and State. Education comes in the concurrent list and hence the decisions concerning education are the responsibility of the centre and the state.

Attempt has been made in the present study to lay emphasis on the Central and State Government plans and programmes for primary education and the status of implementation and impact of the same through the perspectives of the different stakeholders.

Figure 6: A cursory look at emphasis on Primary Education in different Era's

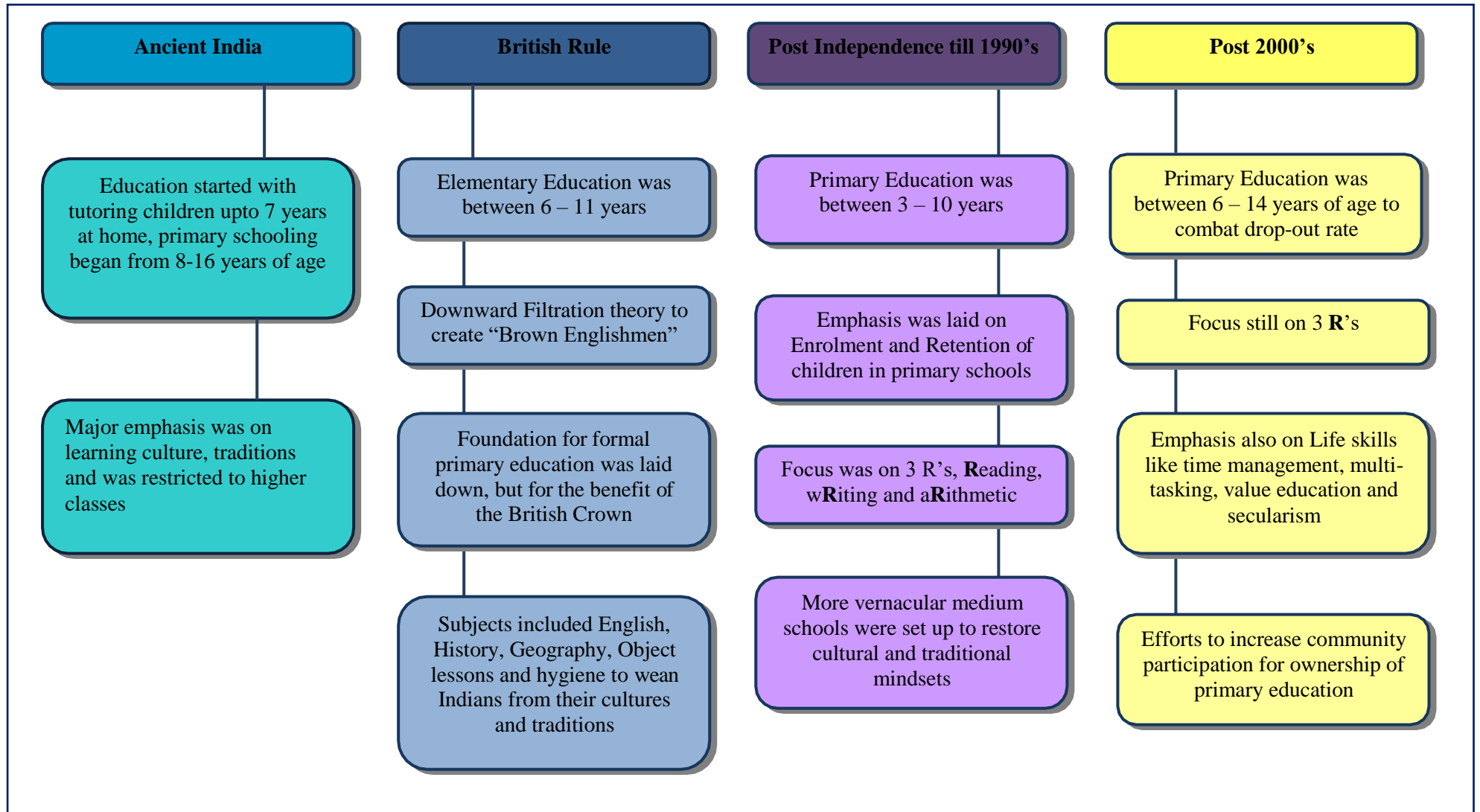


Figure 7: A cursory look at milestones in Plans and Programmes related to Primary School Children at the National Level

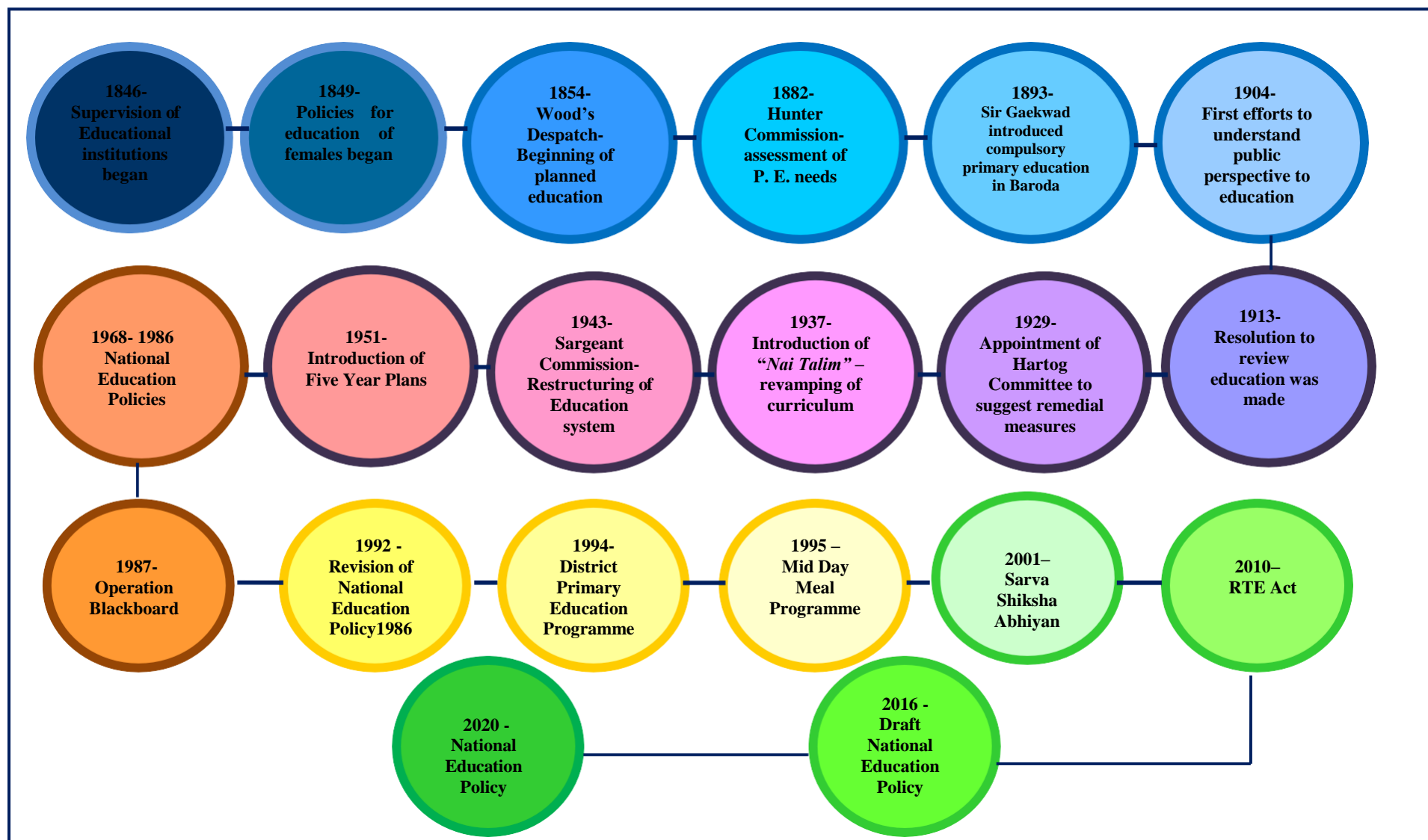


Figure 8: A cursory look at initiatives for Primary School Children at the State Level

