

Accelerating Progress to 2015

India

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Global Education First Initiative

The UN Secretary-General's Global Initiative on Education



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Foreword by Gordon Brown © 2013

FOREWORD

Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Global Education

Thirteen years ago the international community came together and made a commitment, through the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All, to achieve universal education. While we have made significant progress by securing education for over 40 million more children, we have an unfinished agenda. There are still 61 million children that do not go to school and 250 million children who cannot read. The statistics for youth at the secondary level are even more shocking—especially for girls.

Now, fewer than 1,000 days from our deadline, the clock is ticking. And thanks to the leadership of the United Nations Secretary-General and his Global Education First Initiative, focusing on access, quality and global citizenship, the wheels of progress are in motion. By convening the global community to focus on the goal of quality, relevant and inclusive education for all children and youth, the Secretary-General is inspiring action in all corners of the globe. His initiative acknowledges that if we are to hold true to our commitment of ensuring every child in every marginalized slum or forgotten village has access to education, we must take action.

President Jim Kim of the World Bank is focused on solutions for our global challenges as evidenced by his path-breaking speech on April 2nd of this year on the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals and his commitment to abolish extreme poverty and work for shared prosperity. His leadership in convening the *Learning for All Ministerial* meetings represents an unprecedented turning point for global education.

Both the Secretary-General and President Kim are providing an opportunity for collective partnership between the international community and countries themselves to address the critical bottlenecks that are holding us back by creating a set of action plans with concrete outcomes. Their leadership has inspired the participation of ministers of finance and education from eight countries, representing nearly half of the world's out of school population, and leaders from partner governments, international institutions and civil society. Other countries will come before a set of meetings in September of this year.

In preparation for the ministerial meeting, we have commissioned reports on the eight participating countries so that our time together would be spent realizing the vision of the Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative and discussing what will be done. I am grateful to the Global Partnership for Education and the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution for their major contributions to this exercise and to the support of international development partners in every continent.

The proposals in this report represent a snapshot of the ongoing conversations within countries and with the international community. Considered a "living document," the working paper on India is an initial set of proposals to accelerate progress on education.

Based on the recommendations in this report and in collaboration with the respective government, international institutions and civil society during the *Learning for All Ministerial* meetings, we have an opportunity to change the course of history and deliver meaningful change to children across the globe.

When you read this report you will see glossy pages, graphs, charts and statistics. While the data is critical, I implore you to take a moment to think about the stories that the statistics represent. They represent the young girl, rising-up against the cultural norm of early marriage in hopes of realizing her dreams. They represent the young boy, struggling to realize his potential, studying under a tree. They represent a child with disabilities, with all of the talents and aspirations to be a world leader. They represent the hopes and dreams that are the right of every human being.

Past generations have developed only some of the potential of some of our children. We can be the first generation to realize all of the potential of all of the world's young people through education. I hope that the ideas brought together through global consultations and synthesized in this report can guide our discussions in realizing the vision of the Secretary-General and the leadership of President Kim aimed at creating a world in school and learning by 2015. ✎

ACRONYMS

ASER	Annual Survey of Education Report
BEO	Block Education Officer
BRC	Block Resource Center
CCE	Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation
CRC	Cluster Resource Center
CSR	corporate social responsibility
CTET	Central Teacher Eligibility Test
DEO	District Education Officer
DIET	District Institutes of Education and Training
DISE	District Information System for Education
EFA	Education for All
INR	Indian Rupee
KGBV	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
MDM	Midday Meal Scheme
NAS	National Assessment Survey
NCERT	National Council for Education Research and Training
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NCLP	National Child Labour Project
NCTE	National Council for Teacher Education
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NPEGEL	National Programme for the Education of Girls at the Elementary Level
OOSC	out-of-school children
RTE	Right To Free and Compulsory Education
SC	Scheduled Castes
SCERT	State Council Education Research and Training
ST	Scheduled Tribes
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

India made tremendous progress in elementary education after the formulation of the National Policy of Education in 1986 and the Jomtien Declaration in 1990. The Education for All (EFA) initiatives, notably the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) launched in 2001, resulted in a steep increase in enrollment and a narrowing of gender and social equity gaps at the primary level. The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2009 further strengthened the resolve of the government to make universal elementary education a reality for all children. As a result, India has gone from 79 percent of primary-school-age children in school in 1999 to 93 percent in 2010. With a population of 1.2 billion, India's progress on access to education has made an important impact on global trends.

A major accomplishment of the past 10 years has been the increase in accessibility to schools. Nationally, there is an average of 3.54 schools per 10 square kilometers and the student-classroom ratio is on average 30:1 for primary schools.¹ The effort to bring new teachers into the workforce has also been critical, and the impact is that India's student/teacher ratio is now 1:30, although there is significant variation by state and district.

India has demonstrated a consistent commitment to improving the quality of elementary education, with long-term education sector plans backed up with substantial financial commitments. The Right to Education Act 2009 laid the constitutional reforms needed to address equity and improve quality in elementary universal education for all. The progress made by India has been significant.

The 12th Five-Year Plan's policy framework has also laid out an ambitious road map to improve teacher education and accountability and proposes to improve many other aspects of education delivery. The consequences of the launch of the National Teacher Education Mission and reforms to align SSA within the apex institution the Right to Education Authority at the federal government level is far-reaching. These reforms were aimed at creating the required institutional reforms to address the quality of teaching and learning. The Government of India has also shown much confidence by adopting National Assessment Surveys and joining international standardized assessments to measure schooling quality and learning outcomes.

In order for India to lay the foundation for the next set of UN Millennium Development Goals, efforts to improve learning are critical, as recognized by the government in the 12th Five-Year Plan (2012–17), given that many children are not meeting grade-level learning expectations. It is important to effectively implement the policy framework to promote good-quality education in classrooms by introducing teacher education and school curriculum reform. The implementation of reforms should promote a shift from rote learning to teaching that generates curiosity and encourages children to explore knowledge.

High-stakes exams should be replaced with continuous, comprehensive evaluation. The curriculum review, which was called for in the National Curriculum Framework of 2005, had been implemented in 14 states as of March 2011, leaving room for further work to reexamine the process and the support states may need (Ministry of Human Resource Development 2012b).

The Government of India has worked to improve teacher attendance, although absenteeism for personal reasons, assignments for nonprofessional duties, and in-service training still cut into teachers' time on task (All India Primary Teachers' Federation 2008). Much still remains to be done. India has introduced a licensure system to standardize and improve teacher quality. However, there is scope for improvement in preservice education in India, as shown by low pass rates (as low as 1 percent) among aspiring teachers taking the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) (*Times of India* 2013).

Another remaining challenge for India is to enroll all marginalized out-of-school children (OOSC) and to keep them in school. India's progress has been remarkable as the number and percentage of OOSC has come down since 2000 in line within the permissible limits of the Millennium Development goals. However, the Government of India still estimates that 3.1 million were out of school in 2012. Enrollment is a key challenge overall; out of all OOSC, 76 percent are never enrolled in school.² Work to target this issue includes a range of strategies, such as: the promotion of inclusive schools and inclusive classrooms, bridge programs for marginalized groups and the provision of 25 percent of seats for children from underprivileged communities in private schools. Efforts to strengthen teacher support in districts and blocks with high concentrations of underprivileged and educationally challenged communities has also aimed at improving quality of education, improving school retention, and reducing school dropout rates.

The challenges facing children with disabilities are acute; out of all OOSC, 34 percent are estimated to have disabilities with 48 percent of those having mental disabilities (Indian Market Research Bureau 2011). There have been significant improvements in physical access to schools, including that over half of primary schools have handicap-accessible ramps, although many schools still require retrofitting for physically children with physical disabilities. Shortages of trained special educators and insufficient teacher capacity to work with these children will continue to inhibit enrollment, although there are provisions in the 12th Five-Year Plan for schools to gain small allocations to put toward teacher training and capacity if and when children enroll.

Great progress has been made on gender parity due to universal access efforts, as well as targeted efforts to reach girls through SSA, including Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV; i.e., the national program to provide educational facilities for girls belonging to Scheduled Castes, or SCs; Scheduled Tribes, STs; and Muslim communities) schools and the National Programme for the Education of Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL), as well as state-level initiatives. Related to these efforts, the Gender Parity Index for primary rose from .84 in 1999 to .99 in 2010.

Despite important gains in gender parity, girls, especially those from marginalized groups such as SCs and STs, still face challenges to their education. Education statistics alone are not a sufficient indicator of the challenges that a girl may face in pursuing education, or of the potential of education to promote girls'

rights. Many girls face a risk of sexual and physical abuse as well as social pressures, especially related to child marriage, and this impedes their continued education. Despite India's efforts to prevent child marriage, in India, 43 percent of women age 20 to 24 were married before the age of 18 (UNICEF 2011). Where girls are from marginalized groups, the pressure they face is exacerbated, and this is evident in elementary school dropout rates (60.6 percent for ST girls, compared with 55.2 percent for ST boys). Dropout rates and gender disparity increase significantly in upper primary school.³

India has taken strong measures to eradicate child labor, including recent efforts to strengthen the pertinent policy framework. The issue persists among the 2 percent of children estimated to be in child labor, and especially among the children who are not accounted for at school or in the workforce and are likely to be engaged in domestic labor. When examining the number of children categorized as child laborers and the number of children enrolled in school, there is a gap of 11.4 percent for girls and 3.8 percent for boys. The children unaccounted for in these statistics are referred to as "nowhere" children. Although their whereabouts are undocumented, many may be in homes, performing domestic labor for their own or for others' families (Planning Commission 2011, paragraph 22.36). The economic conditions affecting these children and their caretakers are a primary driver of this trend, although the 12th Five-Year Plan also calls for greater interdepartmental coordination to ensure that the education system reaches these children.

Suggestions on Education Quality and Reaching and Retaining OOSC

This paper builds on the policy framework of the 12th Five-Year Plan to offer key areas for prioritization in terms of policy implementation, or where existing programs can be enhanced to further target marginalized groups. Suggestions are offered to achieve the following goals related to education quality: improve accountability and teacher management, strengthen teacher education practices for better school support, improve governance for quality, reform teacher education, accelerate curriculum review with a focus on critical thinking and empowerment, build the capacity of community-level structures, and improve the evidence and data for policymaking.

Given the substantial progress that India has made, reaching the remaining geographically dispersed OOSC requires a highly targeted approach. To this end, this paper suggests the importance of continuing to build on gains in disaggregated data analysis to include information on learning levels and on school attendance for various categories of underprivileged communities' children. Illustrative proposals are offered to improve SC/ST girls' retention and the enrollment of nowhere children and children with disabilities through targeted stipends. The piloting of these targeted approaches can effectively leverage the highly developed institutional infrastructure and government commitment already in place in India.

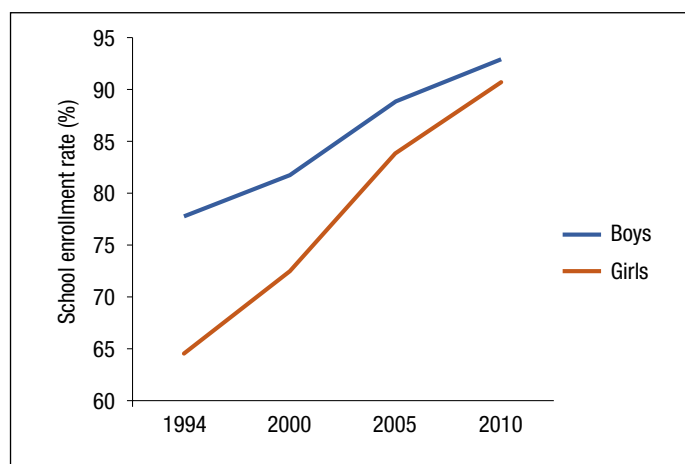
Addressing India's challenges in increasing quality as well as access will require continuing increases in funding for basic education. India receives relatively little aid from international sources, so this is essentially a question of budgetary priorities at the federal and state levels. However, India's development partners can play an important role in providing support for scaling up innovative programs to increase both quality and access.

I. How Far is the Country from the 2015 Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All Goals of Universal Access to Good-Quality Primary Education?

India has made tremendous progress on enrollment.⁴ The Jomtien Declaration was followed up in India with a number of basic education projects and programs in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan. In 1994, the Government of India launched the District Primary Education Programme covering the states of Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal Gujarat, West Bengal, and Odisha. After the Dakar Declaration in 2000, the Government of India formulated a National Plan of Action for EFA, which was finalized in 2002. This was reviewed in 2005–06, and strategies were reformulated for the 11th Five-Year Plan in 2007 and 12th Five-Year Plan in 2011.⁵ The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 came into effect in 2010.⁶ This legislation has generated a great deal of momentum within the government and in civil society—all states and union territories of India have incorporated the act into the state legislative framework and adopted the norms prepared by the Government of India.

As a result of the efforts described above, according to UNESCO, the net enrollment rate has gone from 79 percent of primary-school-age children in school and a Gender Parity Index of .84 in 1999 to 93 percent enrollment and a Gender Parity Index of .99 in 2010.⁷ Figure 1 below shows the dramatic increase in enrollment from 1994 to 2010.

FIGURE 1. TRENDS IN SCHOOL ENROLLMENT RATES AMONG 6–13 YEARS BY GENDER



Source: Analysis of National Sample Survey used by World Bank, forthcoming 2013

Progress has also been made among marginalized groups. District Information System for Education (DISE) data for 2009 onward show that the percentage enrollment of SC, ST, and Muslim children corresponds to their percentage share in the population. In 2009, the proportion of SC enrolled was 20 percent, while their share in the population was 16 percent; among ST, 11 percent were enrolled while the population share was 8 percent; and among Muslims, the proportion in the population and in enrollment was 13 percent (Planning Commission 2011, “Elementary Education Working Group Report”). The percentage of Muslim girls enrolled (to total Muslim children enrolled) went up from 48.6 percent in 2007–08 to 49.8 percent in 2011–12.⁸

1.1 Out-of-School Children

The number of OOSC has declined steadily since 2001,⁹ when the Census estimated that 32 million children of ages 6–14 years were out of school (Planning Commission 2011, “Working Group on Elementary Education”). According to the recent government child census, the number of OOSC in 2012–13 is 3.1 million. Nationally, India has brought down the proportion of OOSC to less than 5 percent.¹⁰ However, there are states where the percentage of OOSC is higher. Although the following data are from 2009, they show a significant number of OOSC in the following states: Arunachal Pradesh (10.6 percent), Bihar (7.2 percent), Orissa (7.0 percent), Rajasthan (8.4 percent), and Uttar Pradesh (7.6 percent). The absolute numbers of OOSC in 2009 are high in several large, low-income states; in Bihar, there are 1.37 million; in Rajasthan, 1.01 million; and in Uttar Pradesh, 2.76 million.¹¹ The government is working with the UN system to get a more up-to-date assessment; the report is likely to be released shortly. Table 1 below shows the number of OOSC girls, SC, ST, and Muslim children out of school, as well as the percentage decrease in OOSC for each of these groups between 2005 and 2009.

TABLE 1. OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Category	2005 6–13 Years	2009 6–13 Years	% OOSC 2005	% OOSC 2009	% Decrease
All	13,459,734	8,150,619	6.9	4.2	39.4
Total Girls	6,687,228	4,038,592	7.9	4.6	39.6
SC	3,104,866	2,308,837	8.1	5.9	25.6
ST	1,656,978	1,069,300	9.5	5.2	35.5
Muslim	2,253,252	1,875,744	10.0	7.7	16.8

Sources: SSA, Government of India, AWP&B, 2012–13, “Planning Commission Working Group on Elementary Education,” 2011, table 11.

Survival and retention rates are improving, with significant variation across states. An analysis of DISE data shows that the apparent survival rate (i.e., the ratio of grade 1 to grade 5 enrollment) was 73 percent in 2006–07 and rose to 86.05 percent in 2011–12, although it is significantly lower in certain states, including Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur, and West Bengal.¹² The retention rate up to class 5 improved from 59.3 percent in 2000–01 to 75.9 in 2011–12, with significant interstate variations.

Following efforts made under SSA, dropout rates have improved, particularly for girls, although rates for SC and ST and especially SC/ST girls continue to be higher than average. The dropout rate for the

primary cycle (grades 1–5) has decreased from 38 percent (boys, 36.7; girls, 39.6) in 1999 to 28.9 percent 2009/10 (boys, 30.25; girls, 27.25).¹³ As can be observed in table 2, the dropout rate is significantly higher at upper levels of elementary school; and in these years, girls are significantly more likely to drop out.

TABLE 2. DROPOUT RATES, 2001–02 AND 2009–10

Dropout rates, 2001–02 (SES 2007, Government of India) and 2009–10 (SSE 2011, Government of India)						
	2001–02	2009–10	2001–2	2009–10	2001–02	2009–10
	All categories		SC Students		ST Students	
Primary, 1–5						
Boys	38.4	30.3	43.7	32.67	51	35.2
Girls	39.9	27.3	47.1	25.31	54.1	33.7
Total	39	28.9	45.2	29.33	52.3	34.5
Elementary, 1–8						
Boys	50.3	40.6	58.6	50.6	67.3	55.2
Girls	57.7	44.4	63.6	52	72.7	60.6
Total	53.7	42.4	60.7	51.3	69.5	57.8

Source: SES, 2007; SSE, 2011

Note: Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development. 2007. Select Educational Statistics. Tables 7.1 to 7.3 and Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development. 2011. Statistics of School Education. Tables series G 1 to 3.

Children with disabilities make up a significant proportion of the population of OOSC. An Indian Market Research Bureau study in 2009 found that 34.2 percent of OOSC were children with disabilities (988,359 children). Although there had been a reduction in OOSC in the prior years since 2005, this progress had not had an impact on the number of OOSC with disabilities as of 2009. Of children with disabilities out of school, 48 percent had mental disabilities and 37 had speech disabilities.¹⁴ A recent NCERT study reports that enrollment of girls with disabilities has fallen in all but one state over the past few years, and found that in Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, the enrollment of disabled girls has been consistently under 40 percent (*Indian Express* 2013).

2.2 Quality and Learning

Education at the elementary level involves developing the ability to read and write with comprehension and understand and apply mathematical concepts appropriate to the grade in which the child is studying. Education also involves developing a positive self-image, displaying active learning and self-learning, and having the ability to be self-confident. However, most assessments of “quality” are limited to assessing grade-appropriate skills in language, mathematics, and environmental science at the primary level, with science and social science replacing environmental science at the upper primary level. Recognizing the multifaceted nature of learning, the National Curriculum Framework of 2005 recommended Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) at the school and classroom levels, in place of high-stakes, end-of-year examinations. CCE is still being rolled out, and it is too early to assess its effectiveness or identify good practice.

Survey results produce varied findings on the state of learning in India, although there is a consensus that many children do not meet grade-level expectations. Learning is a critical issue that the 12th Five-Year Plan seeks to address. This issue is in part related to the large number of children who have recently entered the educational system due to the successes of access-related policies.

The National Assessment Survey (NAS), conducted by the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT), finds that learning levels are increasing slightly over time.¹⁵ Comparison of findings from the second and third rounds (2005–09, compared with 2010–11) showed an overall marginal increase in the learning levels of students across different subjects (see table 3). The third round of achievements (2010–11) showed slightly higher mean scores in language and math among class 5 students from urban areas compared with rural areas and only a marginal difference between boys and girls.¹⁶ Table 3 below shows the percentage of students learning at grade level according to NAS scores in rounds I and II.

TABLE 3. COMPARISON OF ROUND I AND II OF NAS

Class 3 Subject	Category	Round-I 2001–04	Round-II 2005–09
Language	SC	60.42	67.01
	ST	64.65	67.12
	OBC	62.55	68.09
	Overall	63.12	67.84
Maths	SC	54.60	60.02
	ST	59.43	60.14
	OBC	57.15	62.37
	Overall	58.25	61.89

Subject Class 5	Category	Round-I	Round-II
Language	SC	57.10	59.83
	ST	58.19	57.22
	OBC	—	60.56
	Overall	58.87	60.31
Maths	SC	44.97	48.02
	ST	44.12	45.79
	OBC	—	49.10
	Overall	46.51	48.46
EVS	SC	48.53	51.64
	ST	49.52	50.79
	OBC	—	52.76
	Overall	50.30	52.19

Source: Presentation made by NCERT, 2011

The Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER) tests the ability of children of different ages to negotiate reading at the grade 2 level and mathematics tests and finds that learning levels are decreasing. The most recent ASER report indicates that fewer than half (47 percent) of children in class 5 could read a class 2 text. The trend over the years is not encouraging. In 2008, the proportion of children in class 3 who could read a class 1 text was under 50 percent. In 2012, ASER reports that this has dipped to nearly 30 percent and that the proportion of children who can recognize numbers up to 100 has dropped from 70 percent to nearly 50 percent (Pratham 2012).

India has made tremendous progress on the teacher front. There are close to 6.7 million teachers in elementary schools of India, of whom 4.3 million are in government schools (64.1 percent).¹⁷ The sheer scale of expansion of the teaching force in elementary schools has been staggering—in 1990–91 there were 2.68 million government school teachers (primary and upper primary), this went up to 4.3 million in 2011 (Ministry of Human Resource Development 2012a). As per the norms of SSA, 50 percent of teachers recruited must be women; as a result, the proportion of women teachers in 2011–12 was 46.3 percent. This enormous teacher recruitment has meant that, despite the large increases in student numbers, the mean pupil/teacher ratio in government primary schools has fallen; it is now 30:1, down from 43:1 in 2000–01. There are, however, regional differences; 35 percent of districts and 40 percent of all elementary schools in the country have a pupil/teacher ratio above 1:30.¹⁸

Despite the rapid expansion, 83.4 percent of teachers in government schools are professionally qualified regular teachers (as per the norms of the National Council for Teacher Education, or NCTE).¹⁹ The expansion in the teaching force was made possible in the early years of SSA because many states appointed contract teachers on a fixed salary (earlier referred to as para-teachers). The proportion of professionally qualified contract teachers in government schools is 60.2 percent.²⁰

The SSA program has provided in-service training to all teachers; and in 2011–12, 47 percent of government school teachers received training.²¹ This may have, to an extent, helped strengthen the professional capabilities of teachers, especially those who have not had any preservice teacher training. Given the huge demand for teachers, the states of Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, and so on have taken exemptions from NCTE norms to appoint teachers without professional qualification. Therefore, it is estimated that the proportion of teachers who need in-service professional training is likely to increase in the coming years.

2. Key Challenges and Bottlenecks

2.1 Education Quality

There are a number of key challenges related to improvements in quality, enrollment for OOSC, and the retention of vulnerable groups. The Indian government is working to address these challenges, although there is scope for increased efforts in order to promote positive learning outcomes and universal access to primary education.

The quality of learning is a top priority under the 12th Five-Year Plan. The challenge is to bring a systemwide focus on learning outcomes and on teaching processes (including time on task). Several factors are currently creating bottlenecks for effective classroom learning—including issues related to teacher attendance, teacher training, and curriculum review. Student attendance must also be addressed (De et al. 2011).

The Government of India has worked to reduce teacher absenteeism, and the overall trend appears to be declining.²² However, there is scope to further reduce absenteeism by promoting accountability and oversight and addressing two critical factors: (1) the practice of deputizing teachers for nonteaching tasks, and (2) in-service training demands on teaching time. A study conducted in 2008 showed that overall, 21 percent of teachers were not present in schools due to personal reasons (9.1 percent), in-service training (9.2 percent), and engagement in nonprofessional work assigned to them by their authorities (2.7 percent) (All-India Primary Teachers' Federation 2008). An SSA study in 2009 similarly found that about 83 percent of teachers were present on the day the schools were visited, but only 72 percent were teaching (Educational Consultants India Limited 2009b).

The different forms of absenteeism require different policy solutions. For personal absenteeism, accountability and teacher motivation are important factors.²³ Absenteeism is also exacerbated by the practice of teachers being deputized to nonteacher tasks, including monitoring of the mid-day meal and other activities, including those not related to education.²⁴ Addressing this practice requires the enforcement of the existing policy prevalent in many states against the deployment of teachers from elementary schools for nonteaching assignments. The number of teachers found to be undergoing in-service training is a significant proportion of the total number. The inconsistent availability of teachers in school affects children's motivation and attendance along with overall quality. These trends exacerbate the existing shortage of teachers, particularly in poorer districts, which is due in part to teachers' reluctance to be transferred to poor areas.

Additionally, teachers who are in classrooms need further support to ensure that the time they spend on task in schools is optimally effective in improving learning outcomes. Yet the quality of teacher training presents an important challenge for the quality of education, as shown by the high failure rate of aspiring teachers who take preservice training courses. In 2012, the Central Board of Secondary Education conducted a CTET for those who had completed a course of preservice teacher training. Potential teachers were expected to score at least 60 percent on the test (Central Board of Secondary Education 2012). Only 1 percent were cleared by a CTET in 2012 (*Times of India* 2013). These results show scope to improve several aspects that contribute to teacher quality: (1) motivation to become a teacher, such that higher-quality aspirants enter the system; (2) the quality of education provided to aspiring teachers; (3) the effectiveness of teacher educators; and (4) the enforcement of regulatory mechanisms related to teacher-training colleges. The structures that support teacher education also can be improved: Vacancies in State Councils of Education Research and Training (SCERTs) and District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) can be filled. Vacancies are around 50 percent in most SCERTs.²⁵

In 2005, the National Curriculum Review Framework (NCF) was formulated after nationwide consultations. As of March 2011, 14 states have renewed their curriculum and seven states have completed revision of their textbooks (Ministry of Human Resource Development 2012b). The NCF addresses issues related to pedagogy and content and proposes five guiding principles for curriculum development: (1) connecting knowledge to life outside the school; (2) ensuring that learning shifts away from rote methods; (3) enriching the curriculum so that it goes beyond textbooks; (4) making examinations more flexible and integrating them with classroom life; and (5) nurturing an overriding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of the country (NCERT 2005). The remaining states now need to conduct curriculum reviews to come into adherence with this policy and to promote quality in the classroom. States will require technical resource support and guidance in order to successfully undertake this process of curriculum renewal to align it with the requirements of NCF 2005 and the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (RTE). Slow progress in this respect points to the need for concerted action.

2.2 Enrolling and Retaining OOSC

Factors of marginalization often overlap, creating multiple barriers to education and learning. The intermeshing of gender, geographical location, uneven development, poverty, and social disadvantages makes some groups of children far more vulnerable than others. While overall issues of access, infrastructure, functionality, quality, and attitudes affect all children, given the prevailing social inequalities and hierarchies, these factors affect poor children especially those from SC, ST, and Muslim communities, and among them girls, much more than they affect the more privileged sections of society.²⁶ Other categories of children who are particularly susceptible to exclusion include children from landless, agricultural wage-earning families; children from communities residing in tribal, hilly, desert, and remote habitations; the children of new migrants and seasonal migrants into cities; the children of families displaced due to natural as well as human-made disasters; and the children of sex workers, people affected with HIV/AIDS, and single women (widows, deserted/separated women, unwed mothers). Studies done under the aegis of SSA show the persistence of caste-, community-, and gender-based discrimination leading to differentiated treatment

of children in the classroom.²⁷ First-generation learners face particular challenges, including that once they are in school, they may not have the same level of support in their homes to support their learning.

Several overarching challenges relate to disadvantaged groups—including the need for greater data disaggregation. DISE data, and the extent to which they are disaggregated to shed light on various marginalized groups—have improved in coverage and quality. However, these data are not yet disaggregated based on attendance and learning, two factors that are important to understand in the context of inequitable access to quality education. Further disaggregating data can make an important contribution to making these groups more visible at the national and state levels.

Economic advantages affect the quality of learning. Children with advantages are freer to pay for enrollment in private schools if the quality of local government schools is poor, and elite private schools in particular can be of better quality. Advantaged children are also more likely to be able to supplement teaching with private tutoring.²⁸ Boys represent the majority of children in private school and have easier access to family resources for tuition, additional books, and educational material.²⁹

2.3 Challenges Related to the Education of Children with Disabilities

Although the Government of India has made progress both in access to schools for children with disabilities and in the policy framework, much remains to be done. There is an almost unanimous consensus, including among those in the Government of India, that provisions for children with disabilities are clearly insufficient. As stated in a 12th Plan working group, “Neither the school system nor other institutional mechanisms are equipped or geared to address needs of children with mental disabilities” (Planning Commission 2011, “Working Group Report”). Challenges for children with disabilities range from the physical and institutional to those related to social stigma. Other barriers include a lack of adequate numbers of special educators available to all schools, teacher capacity to work with children’s mental disabilities, facilities for home schooling for severely children with disabilities, and cultural norms related to children with disabilities. The Government of India has made impressive progress in terms of providing an appropriate infrastructure for children with disabilities and 53.3 percent of primary schools in 2011–12 had a handicap-accessible ramp. Still, many schools still need to be retrofitted to be accessible to those with disabilities.³⁰ In addition to ramps, children in a recent NCERT study reported that they need adapted toilets and playgrounds, indoor sports rooms and better seating facilities (*Indian Express* 2013).

An important barrier to education for children with disabilities is convincing families and children to enroll. Once children are in schools, the 12th Five-Year Plan’s framework allows for some funding to flow to schools to better provide resources for students. For each child enrolled, Rs. 3,000 (\$55) can be transferred to the school; and from, this Rs. 1,000 can be spent on special needs educators, in addition to financial provisions of Rs. 20,000 per child per annum for residential special training and Rs. 6,000 per child per annum for nonresidential training. A total of 2.9 million children with disabilities are currently incorporated in the national education system. Under RTE, children with special needs are entitled to core essential support to be decided on a case-by-base basis, potentially including materials, assistive devices as needed, and transportation support (Planning Commission 2011). These provisions

must be must be matched by adequate teacher training and provision of special educators. A recent study showed that 99 percent of enrolled children with disabilities like being in school, yet 57 percent of teachers were not trained to understand their special needs (*Indian Express* 2013).

2.4 Challenges for Girls from Vulnerable Groups

Although the dropout rate is a concern in general, this rate is particularly high for girls from SCs, STs, and Muslim communities. While the national trend with respect to dropping out is moving in a positive direction, according to the Planning Commission of the Government of India, disadvantaged groups are worse off, with the dropout rates for SCs and STs being higher than the national average. This is particularly true in certain states—including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand. The Planning Commission states that, while there has been a decline in the percentage of OOSC across gender and social categories, Muslim, SC, and ST children need greater and focused attention (Planning Commission 2011, paragraphs 21.6, 21.7, 21.8).

Dropout rates are significantly higher in upper primary schools and are a result of both push and pull factors. Pull factors include poverty, health, the loss of a parent, domestic abuse, and social or political factors. For girls, this list includes pressures to marry and household duties, and the eldest girl child is most vulnerable (Ramachandran et al. 2004). Both boys and girls may face physical or sexual abuse, both of which are fundamental violations of safety and influence both school attendance and concentration.³¹ Push factors include high pupil/teacher ratios, frequent teacher absence, corporal punishment and humiliation, and safety concerns (Educational Consultants India Limited 2012). Despite India's progress on this in preventing child marriage, nearly half (43 percent) of women age 20 to 24 years are married before the age of 18 (UNICEF 2011). And for girls from marginalized groups, the pressure they face is exacerbated, as shown in elementary school dropout rates (60.1 percent for ST girls, compared with 55.2 percent for ST boys; Ministry of Human Resource Development 2011, tables series G 1–3).

In response to gender issues and issues affecting SC/ST girls in particular, the Government of India has taken a variety of measures, and the result has been a great improvement in gender disparity. The retention of girls has improved relative to boys, and national and independent surveys do not show any differences in learning between boys and girls as a whole. Specific government programs—including the KGBV schools for girls in rural areas, and provisions under SSA—reduce the cost of school attendance for girls. Many states have additional scholarship programs for girls, and the quota for female teachers has improved gender equality in the teaching force.

SSA has also worked to address gender issues in teacher training, the classroom environment, curriculums and textbooks, and by encouraging women to participate in school management committees. All the Government of India's efforts in this regard are critical, given that the content and process of education influences the attitudes and biases of teachers and students and has the potential to build the self-esteem and confidence of students.

Even as gender parity improves in education and as the government takes concerted action to improve conditions for women and girls, the situation for many girls in India remains untenable, as shown by the

prevalence of child marriage and the national sex ratio—indicators that social practices and discrimination limit girls’ freedom. The challenge in education goes beyond ensuring access. What remains is to create curricular materials that fully address the range of issues affecting women and other socially disadvantaged groups, and to provide support to states to ensure that this is done everywhere as a way to protect and promote girls and disadvantaged groups. A further challenge is to ensure that such materials are adapted to children’s environments in the particular contexts where they live, given the diversity of India.

2.5 Challenges in Getting Children Out of Work and into School

National data from 2010–11 show that 2 percent of children in India are engaged in child labor. Although a small percentage, the Government of India works to eradicate any child labor, including through recent proposed amendments to strengthen the Child Labor Law. The prevalence of child labor is declining; the National Sample Survey Organization estimated that there were 9 million child workers in India in 2005, and they declined to about 5 million by 2010 (Inter Press Service News Agency 2013). However, as pointed out in the 12th Five-Year Plan, child labor is still a problem.

A particular challenge to eradicating child labor relates to children in domestic or undocumented labor. National surveys that examine the total number of children, the number of children enrolled in school, and the number of children documented in child labor show a gap of 11.4 percent for girls and 3.8 percent for boys. These “nowhere” children are thought to be in homes, performing domestic labor for their own or for others’ families (Planning Commission 2011, paragraph 22.36).

The economic conditions affecting the children and their caretakers are a primary driver of this trend, especially for families that migrate to find work. The 12th Five-Year Plan also calls for increased interdepartmental coordination to ensure that the education system reaches these children in a holistic manner (Planning Commission 2011, paragraph 22.36). The lack of information on these children and the factors keeping them out of school are also barriers to effective policy and programming. More data and more research will support a better understanding of the status of nowhere children, and of the 2 percent of children in child labor.

TABLE 4. CHILD WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

Area	NSSO 1993–93, 2004–05 AND 2009–10								
	1993–94			2004–05			2009–10		
	Boys	Girls	Children	Boys	Girls	Children	Boys	Girls	Children
Rural	6.8	7.8	7.3	3.5	3.7	3.6	2	2.4	2.2
Urban	3.5	2.7	3.1	2.6	1.9	2.3	0.7	1.5	1.1
Combined	6.2	6	6.2	3.3	3.3	3.3	1.7	2.2	2

Note: NSSO = National Sample Survey Organization. Age group not specified in 12th Five-Year Plan Document, presumably it is 6–14 years
Source: Twelfth Five-Year Plan, Volume 2, Government of India

3. Key Solutions and Interventions for Acceleration

3.1 Policy Initiatives

The following interrelated policy level initiatives have created the necessary framework for more focused work on the challenges highlighted above.

- In 2001 the Government of India designed SSA as the main vehicle to achieve Education for All.
- In 2004 the Government of India introduced an Education Cess, being a 2 percent surcharge levied on all direct and indirect taxes to augment domestic resources for elementary education in India.
- The Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Scheme provides nutritious food to children in school. It has played a very important role in enhancing enrollment and reducing dropouts in elementary education. In 2010–11 the MDM program reached out to 104.6 million children, including 28.6 million children in upper primary classes (Planning Commission 2011, “Working Group on Elementary Education,” 172–80). The total expenditures on the MDM program went up from INR 31,863.3 million in 2005–06 to INR 91,245.2 million in 2010–11.
- RTE provides the policy and institutional framework to ensure that all schools—government and private—conform to basic norms. RTE legally requires the states to provide free education to children age 6 to 14 and reserves 25 percent of private primary school places for disadvantaged children. The entitlement is a critical asset for achieving greater and social equity in education. The government and civil society organizations closely monitor the implementation of RTE, and a yearly status report is prepared. This act has changed the landscape of elementary education (UNESCO 2010, 2012).

3.2 Suggestions for Improvements in Quality and in Enrolling and Retaining OOSC

Many of the ideas presented below have been considered by the government and also discussed in the Joint Review Missions of SSA. It is appropriate to acknowledge that the Government of India has consistently demonstrated coherent social policy to ensure that all children receive a good-quality education. The various proposals are not “original ideas” but are an effort to underscore the need to accelerate effective and widespread implementation of these ideas, with a sense of urgency. Many of the following suggestions build on the 12th Five-Year Plan.

3.3 An Enabling Environment

Governance issues cut across all subsystems of the larger education system. The fundamental issue is to ensure that schools function effectively, teachers reach schools regularly and on time, teachers teach for the required time, and schools function for the stipulated number of days. Only then will children get the opportunity to learn. Effective school functioning is at the heart of learning. The following recommendations restate and prioritize provisions that are in the 12th Five-Year Plan, or in some cases build further on the 12th Plan to promote good-quality in education for all, especially the most marginalized.

Improve accountability and teacher management

- Increase the supply of teachers in educationally disadvantaged districts of India by providing a special stipend for teachers on the condition of serving in the area.
- Explore the possibilities to improve teacher attendance through concerted efforts, such as creating accountability for school district administrators to oversee teacher attendance and time on task. Enforce regulations to ensure that teachers are not deployed for nonteaching purposes.
- Rationalize teachers' participation in in-service training to levels that minimally affect teaching time without compromising professional development opportunities.
- Provide schools with funding for a dedicated person to supervise mid-day meal cooking and feeding so that teachers are not tasked for supervision.
- Increasingly create systems for student absenteeism to be recorded, explained, and followed up on by school authorities to build a culture of regularity in school attendance over time.
 - Set a standard definition of absenteeism.
 - Ensure that schools contact the family and report a child's absence with an explanation.
 - Track student absenteeism on a state and national information grid.

Strengthen teacher education systems

- Invest in building a dedicated cadre of professional teacher educators.
 - Require that teacher educators are qualified per NCTE norms and are accorded parity in the pay scales of the University Grants Commission for the academic positions per the recommendations of the 12th Five-Year Plan.
 - Provide continuing professional development opportunities for teachers based on evidence of teacher knowledge.
 - Vacant positions in SCERT and DIETs should be filled in a time-bound manner as a matter of priority per the recommendations of the 12th Five-Year Plan's Working Group on Teacher Education.

- Nurture school district level educational leadership, including professional development opportunities for DEOs and BEOs and teacher educators.
- To address the deficits of technical organizations able to support states, revive the practice of providing long-term institutional funding to nonprofit organizations that can support state governments in offering technical resources.

Improve governance for quality

- Make Block Resource Centers (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centers (CRCs) directly accountable to teachers' educational leadership in each state and district.
- BRCs and CRCs should work directly under the supervision of DIETs and SCERTs.
- BRCs and CRCs should be repositioned and given more autonomy to effectively facilitate continuous support to teachers in the classroom.
- Equip Block Education Officers (BEO) and District Education Officers (DEO) to perform their oversight role with an understanding of classroom processes and the nature of support that is required.
- Align the responsibilities of DEOs, BEOs, DIETs and school principals to improve the quality of instruction in classrooms.
- As is already occurring in most states, maintain SSA only as a financing and oversight agency, and use the Department of Elementary Education and State Council for Educational Research and Training as the sole implementing agency.
- Hold DEOs and BEOs accountable on teaching quality, learning outcomes, and drive for results.

Reform teacher education

- Reform the teacher education curriculum to meet the recommendations of the NCTE.
- Build strategies for teachers to support all children in early grade reading.
- Ensure that teachers are trained in learning methods that are attuned to the needs of first-generation learners.
- Ensure that teachers are trained for multigrade classrooms.
- Ensure that all teachers receive training on how to build an inclusive culture in schools for all students, with special emphasis on incorporating children with disabilities.

Accelerate curriculum review with a critical thinking and empowerment lens

- Accelerate the revision of curricula and textbooks as per NCF 2005 in all states.

- Focus SSA curriculum review on content and process of education. This should include a focus on the need to prepare girls and boys to recognize their rights and to be empowered in the face of harmful social practices that affect their education and life opportunities, including child labor, child marriage, and sexual and physical abuse.
- Ensure that curriculum and teacher training promote critical thinking and empowerment, the curiosity of the child toward learning, and positive gender and social roles.

Build the capacity of community-level structures

- Build the capacity of community-level structures like the Panchayat Education Committee, School Management Committees, and Parent-Teacher Associations so they can effectively use their autonomy to address school-specific issues.
- Strengthen community structures' capacity to monitor effective school functioning.
- Build awareness of community-level structures' critical role in combating stigma and prejudice, especially related to gender, social factors, and disability.

Build evidence and data for policymaking

- Ensure that data at the national and state levels are disaggregated. Data being collected on OOSC through DISE and sample surveys can be further disaggregated by location, community, income level, migration status, gender, and disability so that stakeholders and government partners can zero in on areas and groups that merit focused attention.
- Build more child-friendly and teacher-friendly formative and summative assessment capacities, as required under RTE, including provisions for children with different levels of ability.

3.4 Enrolling Children with Disabilities

Reduce barriers for children with mental and physical disabilities: In view of the evidence that there are close to a million OOSC who have some form of disability (988,359, according to Educational Consultants India Limited & SRI-IMRB 2009); the government could consider a time-bound program to reach out to children with special needs. To this end, the following concrete ideas could be explored:

- *Accessibility:* Ensure 100 percent access for children with physical disabilities. Progress has been made to make schools handicap accessible. In the 2009–10 school year DISE reported that 45.9 percent of schools had a ramp and 49.7 percent in 2010–11. In 2012, 53.3 percent of schools had ramps. These efforts should be continued and accelerated.
- *Special educators:* The government, through SSA, should invest more on the special education of teachers in the ongoing in-service teacher education programs to motivate and enhance the skills of teachers and school leaders, reorient them, and provide them with academic on-site support and hands on training. This should be done in addition to training and providing a pool of special educators as resource persons who can work in a cluster of schools.

- *Stipend to encourage enrollment:* In addition to the existing framework and financing provided for under the 12th Five-Year Plan, a scholarship or stipend program to enroll children with disabilities in school (or to commence home-based education, where appropriate) may be needed to reach the approximately 1 million children with disabilities who remain out of school despite the provisions already in the 12th Plan. Local education officers could be authorized to use a modest stipend or scholarship to enroll children who are otherwise out of school, or in the case of children with disabilities that are too severe for proper care in schools, to encourage appropriate home care arrangements in line with SSA. A pilot program could begin by targeting 100,000 children. Despite the cost of the stipend, a well-targeted program may be the most efficient way to bring these children into the school framework where provisions are already laid out by law, given that children are geographically dispersed. This program may also serve to combat stigmas through a strong message that the government is committed to bringing all children into the education system. This should be complemented with an evaluation effort to determine if the stipend is effective in convincing children and families to enter the school system.

In great part, these suggestions can be implemented through SSA and provisions that are already in place, with attention to the pace and coverage of implementation. Additionally, working with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) partners through special programs would help to reach children with disabilities, given that these children are dispersed throughout the country and that a wide range of disabilities correspond to different needs.

3.5 Bringing Down Dropout Rates among Girls and Vulnerable Groups

- *Expanding educational offerings for vulnerable girls:* The KGBV program of the government specifically targets girls who have dropped out after primary school, especially in educationally disadvantaged blocks. It is a modestly sized program reaching out to 366,666 girls studying in 3,528 KGBVs (29 percent SC girls, 26 percent ST girls, 26 percent OBC girls, 9 percent Muslim girls, and 10 percent other communities of girls whose families are below the poverty line).³² There is a need for many more KGBVs or similar kind of residential schools for the most vulnerable girls living in disadvantaged areas. The 12th Five-Year Plan calls for an expansion of this program, and also for the extension of these schools through grade 10. Progress along these lines may be beneficial to girls, but prior to implementing major scaling, a cost-benefit analysis and evaluation will help to ensure that this method is the most appropriate for enrolling and retaining these girls in the education system. This study and further action should be prioritized.
- *Empowerment curricula that address gender and social issues:* Between 1994 and 2001, the District Primary Education Programme, the precursor to SSA, paid a good deal of attention to gender issues. Textbooks were reviewed and reformulated, gender issues were integrated into most training programs, and gender coordinators working at the district and state levels were trained and supported to provide continuous inputs. Equally, at the community level efforts were made to involve women and girls in mobilization to ensure enrollment and the regular attendance of girls. Mothers-teacher associations were encouraged and promoted. However, a recent review of gender and equity strategies adopted in SSA reveals that momentum has waned, and progress

toward closing the gender gap is measured using enrollment/retention/dropout statistics on the one hand and the rolling out of special programs for girls like KGBV and NPEGEL on the other hand.³³ Though a thorough review of textbooks from a gender perspective has just been resumed in SSA, it needs to turn the spotlight on the content and process of education.³⁴ This needs to be done across the board and not limit gender-specific interventions to programs like KGBV and NPEGEL. At that national level, efforts should be made to ensure that the NCF framework and the guidelines related to gender are reviewed with a view toward state curriculum development that seeks to empower all children to take on positive gender and social norms. Given education's fundamental role in developing and addressing social norms, the role of curriculum review and formulation in addressing social issues that limit girls' and other groups freedoms should not be downplayed. Ongoing plans for a national level workshop on this issue should be supported.

- *Stipends for girls' retention:* The 12th Five-Year Plan provides an incentive-based program for keeping girls in school. Disadvantaged girls from marginalized groups are eligible for a sum of Rs. 3,000 to be deposited in a bank account, which will amortize and can be withdrawn upon the completion of secondary education. This scheme takes into account the disadvantages that girls face and the pressure to marry. However, more can still be done. A review of similar programs in six different countries shows that this amount may not be enough to be a meaningful stipend for girls in the poorest quintile of households (Joshi 2013). The opportunity cost for girls and families increases as girls get older and stay in school. Therefore, this scheme can be topped up so that the stipend is commensurate with each additional year of school, starting with grade 8. Because there is no precise evidence in India as to the amount that is required to effectively curb drop out, this pilot should be accompanied by an evaluation of mixed methods design to understand the comparative impact of the Rs 3,000 stipend, taking into account an analysis of long-term cost implications. This can be piloted for 50,000 girls in KGBV schools or elsewhere in the first year. Several state governments (notably Rajasthan) have developed schemes to discourage early marriage; however, these schemes also require evaluation, along with further piloting.

3.6 Intensifying Efforts to Get Children Out of Work and into School

- *Expanding national efforts:* The National Child Labour Project (NCLP), which began with a modest number of only 12 districts, has been progressively extended to various parts of the country with the coverage of 271 districts in 21 states of the country. There have been demands from various states for expanding the coverage of NCLP to more districts and a stated need to expand the scheme in all the 600 districts in the country. Accelerating progress along these lines will help to address the many factors that drive this problem.
- *Stipends to encourage enrollment among vulnerable children:* Although the 12th Five-Year Plan already provides for children affected by child labor in a variety of ways, a stipend or scholarship could be explored as a way to help to enroll the children coming from households that are most severely economically deprived. Given resource constraints, such a program should focus on children who are engaged in labor and who are not enrolled in school (although a program could be expanded to include children at severe risk of dropping out of school due to potential

or actual child labor or are engaged in child labor after school hours or for a fixed duration in seasonal work such as cotton seed pollination). Special emphasis should be placed on targeting girls engaged in domestic labor or in other forms of labor that may go undocumented. Such a program could target 50,000 children in two states as a pilot in the first year with the potential to scale in other states. This would be most effective if it could be tied to areas where hostels are available for children who are targeted for the stipend, given that children may be migrating with their families to work. This should be complemented by an evaluation to determine if the stipend is sufficient and effective in bringing children into the school system as well as a study to better understand how to target and account for nowhere children.

- In case of budgetary constraints, priority may be given to states where there is dominance of child labor and from where the child laborers migrate to the recipient states, to be prioritized where hostels are available for these children. As discussed in the 12th Five-Year Plan's framework, the states may include Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and the like. Also, priority should be given to the states to which these children migrate in search of labor. The recipient states may include Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, and Delhi.³⁵

4. Financing and Implementation Requirements

4.1 The Education-Financing Story of India

India has made significant progress on the financing front since 1987, when the National Policy on Education was formulated. Government expenditures on education by all departments in current prices (indexed at the price for 1993–93 = 100) went up from INR 204.91 billion in 1990–91 to INR 824.86 billion in 2000–01. The share of elementary education to the total education budget also went up, from 46.27 percent in 1990–91 to 47.61 in 2000. There was a minimal fluctuation in central and state government allocations to primary education during this time. (Govinda and Bandopadhyay 2008).

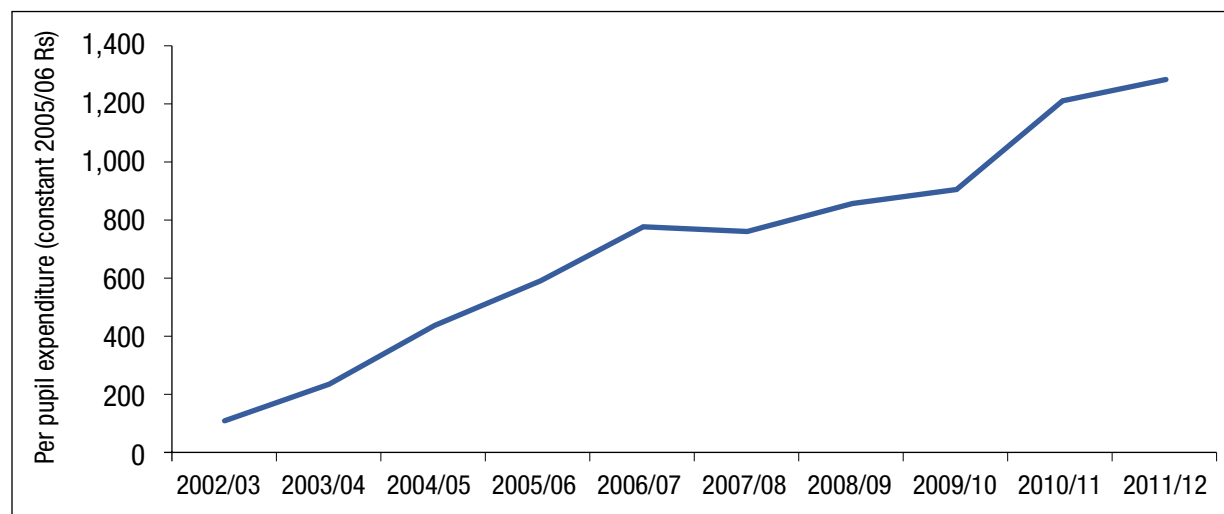
During this period, the Government of India introduced a number of centrally sponsored schemes to step up participation in elementary education.³⁶ The District Primary Education Project was the largest, covering 18 states and 271 districts in phase I and expanding to 80 districts in the same states and to 219 districts in the final phase.³⁷

In 2004, the Government of India's Finance Act of 2004 (popularly known as Education Cess) introduced a 2 percent surcharge on direct and indirect taxes, and since 2008, an additional 1 percent has been levied to create resources for the expansion and strengthening of secondary and higher education.³⁸ The Department of Elementary Education and Literacy in the Ministry of Human Resource Development receives the proceeds from the Cess and maintains them under a nonlapsable fund called the Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh (a fund created by the Government of India in 2004 to finance elementary education). This is used as a supplementary resource to finance the SSA and the Midday Meal Scheme (MDM), and is, in addition to other funds, allocated by the Government of India for education. The public expenditures on education as a percentage of GDP were 4.19 percent in 2000–01, 3.58 percent in 2005–06, and 3.3 percent in 2012 (World Bank n.d.). The share of elementary education in total education was 61 percent in 2005; and during the entire 10th Five-Year Plan (2002–07), the share of expenditures on elementary education to total plan expenditures in education rose to 77 percent.

During the 10th Five-Year Plan (2002–07), the total allocation for elementary education was INR 287.5 billion, while the expenditures at the end of the plan were considerably more at INR 454.62 billion—partly because the increased amount reflects resources collected through the Education Cess and increased allocations made for the mid-day meal. The approved outlay for the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007–12) jumped to INR 1253.8 billion—being a fourfold increase from the 10th Plan. The 12th Five-Year Plan's allocation for school education is estimated at INR 3430 billion—this includes INR 1927 billion for SSA and INR 901.55 billion for the mid-day meal. This is a more than twofold increase in allocation for SSA. While the increased outlays need to be corrected for inflation, the fact remains that allocations have been going up significantly (Government of India 2008; Planning Commission 2011, vol. 2, table 21.14).

Total spending through the flagship SSA program has increased to such an extent in the past 10 years that per-pupil spending has increased dramatically. In the years from 2002–03 to 2011–12, student enrollment in elementary education increased by 54.5 percent. However, per-pupil spending under SSA increased from INR 101 to 1,900, which represents a 10-fold increase in real terms (2005 prices). Moreover, given this increase in spending on government schools and given that the more disadvantaged populations tend to enroll in government schools, the SSA program’s spending has had a strong equity impact. In particular, for example, out-of-pocket expenditures for children attending government schools in the primary grades have gone down in real terms, while they have increased for children in private aided and, especially, in private unaided schools. Figure 2 below shows the increase in per pupil expenditure since 2002.

FIGURE 2. PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE (2005/06 CONSTANT PRICES)



Sources: Calculated from DISE various years; World Bank, forthcoming 2013

Equally significant is that the strategies adopted by the government to provide MDM to all children at the rate of INR 1,000 to 1,200 per child involved drawing upon the grain reserves of the government and making grain available for the MDM program. Equally, the unit costs for new school buildings were kept quite modest because SSA was able to leverage the involvement of the community and use local contracting. An important piece of the financing story has to do with government school teachers—at one level, teacher salaries went up in the decade of the 2000s; and as a result, regular teachers are among the best paid in the world. Conversely, the state governments appointed contract teachers at a substantially lower cost to bridge the financing gap in the 1990s and through the 2000s. However, since the financial situation has begun to improve, some state government have started regularizing the contract teachers in the light of the RTE Act of 2009, but there is still a large amount of money that will be needed to regularize all contract teachers.

4.2 Institutional Mechanisms

Since 1990, there were two major shifts in the education financing strategy of the Government of India. The first was determining the funding needs based on district-level planning. This mechanism was initially

adopted in the National Literacy Mission in 1990 and the District Primary Education Programme in 1994, and adopted by SSA in 2001. District need-based planning covers both the main SSA program as well as support for district and subdistrict institutions like the DIETs and BRCs and CRCs. The second shift was the creation of Autonomous Societies at the state level (SSA Society)—from where the funds received from the Government of India are managed. This mechanism has stood ground even after the expansion of the program to the whole country under SSA. The decentralized support mechanism was further enhanced with the devolution of responsibilities along with funding to Panchayati Raj Institutions (Local Self-Government Bodies) after the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution in 1992. For instance, the State Government in Kerala provides more than one-third of the state-level development budget to Panchayati Raj bodies as block grants, which includes education as an important component. BRCs and CRCs play a key role in academic support to schools and teachers, but their effectiveness has not been assessed in a comprehensive way, though anecdotal evidence suggests that they vary considerably.³⁹

The 1990s and the decade of 2000 were also significant because the Government of India, through SSA, transferred funds directly to school-level management bodies for the construction of school buildings, the repair and maintenance of schools, and for purchase of teaching-learning materials. This was started on a modest scale under the District Primary Education Programme in 1994 and was upscaled and universalized in SSA in 2001.

The last five years have also been quite innovative. Many state governments have signed agreements with NGOs and CSR bodies to support them on the ground through a number of initiatives—early grade reading program; strengthening DIET, BRC, and CRC; teacher training, pedagogy renewal; capacity building of school-level committees; managing KGBV schools for girls; managing Ashram Shala (residential schools for tribal children); and teacher training and leadership development of teachers and school headmasters / head teachers.

Most stakeholders in India—especially from the CSR institutions and NGOs (domestic and international)—believe that the challenge lies in furthering context-, situation-, and group-specific planning and implementation, effective monitoring, and ensuring that funds are allocated for a soft area like the disaggregated analysis of existing data (especially on OOSC), building the capabilities of community-level structures, community mobilization, gender review of textbooks, sensitization of teachers/parents on issues of gender, corporal punishment, inclusion and exclusion and ensuring a high-quality education to children with disabilities—especially those with mental disabilities. Real value addition in these areas can be possible through innovative and untied funds.

Addressing India's challenges in increasing quality as well as access will also require continuing increases in funding for basic education. India receives relatively little aid, so this is essentially a question of budgetary priorities at the federal and state levels. Budgetary allocations to the program have run somewhat ahead of expenditures, suggesting that the primary efforts should first be directed to utilizing available resources in more effective ways. The SSA program has the capacity to take up context- and group-specific programs, bring about governance reform, and strengthen administrative capabilities at all levels. However, India's development partners can play an important role in providing support for scaling up innovative programs to increase both quality and access.

ANNEX I: Detail on Illustrative Suggestions/Proposals for bringing OOSC into Schools

The following estimates provide further thinking on the suggestions offered in the text of the paper. These suggestions are provided in recognition of the robust policy framework of the 12th Five-Year Plan and the difficulty of reaching highly marginalized and vulnerable groups. The suggestions and the detail below provide concrete ways forward to address some of the identified challenges.

Proposal 1: Enroll 100,000 children with disabilities in a pilot stipend-based program.

Assuming that 100,000 children can be reached by officials offering incentives, and assuming an incentive of Rs. 55 per month (\$5) to enroll a child who was otherwise not in school, the total cost of this program would be \$5,000,000 in the first year. This should be complemented with efforts to better sensitize teachers and nonteaching staff, to provide additional support special needs educators to help the children who enroll in school, and to make all schools handicap accessible.

Proposal 2: Bring down dropout among 50,000 SC/ST girls in pilot year.

To reach 50,000 girls in the first year, and assuming an additional yearly incentive of Rs. 3,000, the cost of this program in its pilot phase would be approximately \$2.7 million. This benefit can be offered to the girls who are already receiving the initial Rs. 3,000 for their first year of enrollment. This pilot should be evaluated through a mixed methods evaluation to determine if the additional stipend is effective in comparison with the original Rs. 3,000 stipend and compared to a control group that receives no stipend.

Proposal 3: Enroll 100,000 children at risk of child labor in school.

This pilot can target 50,000 children in two states such as Bihar and Orissa. A stipend calculated to be equivalent to roughly half what an adult could typically earn at the minimum wage in an average sector and state could be stated at Rs. 1,320 or \$24 per month for the 10 months of the school year for 50,000 children, for a total cost of \$12 million per state.

This pilot program can best be implemented wherever hostels are also available for children. Given that money is not the only barrier to education that these children may face, the pilot should also be evaluated to learn if the stipend is effective in targeting highly vulnerable children and bringing them to school.

ENDNOTES

1. DISE data from 2012; Ministry of Human Resource Development and National University of Educational Planning and Administration (2012).
2. Government of India (2007, tables 7.1–7.3); Ministry of Human Resource Development (2011, tables series G 1–3).
3. Ministry of Human Resource Development (2011, tables series G 1–3).
4. At the outset, it is important to clarify that age 6–13 does not conform to “elementary” age groups in all states of India. The elementary cycle is 1–7 in a few states and 1–8 in most states. Equally, some states admit children before they turn 6 years old into class 1. The national data used in this paper for analysis need to be read in this context.
5. Ministry of Human Resource Development and National University of Educational Planning and Administration (2008).
6. “The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002, inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation, envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school, which satisfies certain essential norms and standards. The need to address inadequacies in retention, residual access, particularly of un-reached children, and the questions of quality are the most compelling reasons for the insertion of Article 21-A in the Constitution of India and the passage of the RTE Act, 2009 in the parliament.” Ministry of Human Resource Development (2009, paragraph 1.1.4, p. 142011).
7. UNESCO (2012, table 5). The ASER study of 2012 states that enrollment has been at or above 96 percent for the past four years.
8. DISE data from 2012; Ministry of Human Resource Development and National University of Educational Planning and Administration (2012).
9. Data on OOSC are collected by different agencies, and it is not always possible to triangulate. Equally, the definition used for “out of school” children has not yet been standardized across different surveys. There are three data sources: (1) The Ministry of Human Resource Development estimates OOSC on a yearly basis through conducting a detailed household child census. As per this data, at present (in the 2012–13 academic year) the OOSC among 6- to 14-year-olds are only around 3 million, well below the target of 5.1 million. (2) The Ministry of Human Resource Development commissioned a third-party/independent household surveys every few years to measure the number of OOSC. The first such survey (2005) estimated that the number of OOSC was around 13.4 million. In 2009, the second independent survey indicated that the number of OOSC had fallen further, to 8.1 million. The third independent household survey (2012–13) is still under way. (3) Independent National Sample Survey (NSS) data, carried out by the National Sample Survey Organization. While data from the latest NSS round (2011–12) are not available, the number of OOSC fell by 2.37 mil-

- lion annually between 2007–08 and 2009–10, and given past trends would indicate that the OOSC would fall to around 4 million by 2011–12—again exceeding project targets. In addition to these independent surveys, there are also estimates of children in school—as per ASER (Pratham) surveys, around 4.3 percent of rural 6- to 14-year-olds in India were out of school in 2008 while in 2012, this proportion has come down to 3.5 percent (data from the World Bank, 2013).
10. The sources for these data are SSA, Government of India, AWP&B, 2012–13; and Planning Commission 2011, “Working Group on Elementary Education,” table 11.
 11. The sources for these data are Educational Consultants India Limited and SRI-IMRB, 2009.
 12. DISE data from 2012; Ministry of Human Resource Development and National University of Educational Planning and Administration (2012).
 13. Ministry of Human Resource Development (2011, table G-1); Government of India 2007, tables 7.1–7.3); UNESCO (2012, table 7).
 14. Planning Commission (2011, vol. 3, 54–55, paragraphs 21.6, 21.7, 21.8).
 15. The NAS tests language and mathematics of class 3 students and language, mathematics, and environmental sciences (primary-level general science) in class 5 and at the end of elementary education. The first round of this survey was conducted between 2001 and 2004; the second round of survey was conducted during 2005–09; and the third round, using an internationally recognized methodology, was completed in 2010–11.
 16. Ministry of Human Resource Development and National University of Educational Planning and Administration (2012).
 17. The proportion of teachers who teach in government-aided schools was 8.06 percent in 2011–12 and 24.69 percent in private unaided schools. This is from DISE data for 2011–12.
 18. These are from DISE data for 2011–12; and Government of India (2007, table 8.2).
 19. There were a total of 87.41 percent in government-aided private schools and 71.17 percent in unaided private schools; these numbers are from DISE data for 2012; and Ministry of Human Resource Development and National University of Educational Planning and Administration (2012).
 20. Correspondingly, in government-aided private schools, it is 82.59 percent; and for unaided private schools, it is 64.73 percent. Data on teachers (regular and contract) are available from different sources; DISE has captured the number of teachers who do not have professional training, and the Government of India’s Selected Educational Statistics data do not have this information.
 21. The corresponding proportions in government-aided private schools are 39.15 percent, and in unaided private schools, 3.26 percent; these are DISE data from 2011–12.
 22. A 2005 World Bank study found the rate of absenteeism to be approximately 25 percent. In 2008, a study conducted by the All-India Primary Teachers’ Federation found the overall absenteeism rate to be 21 percent. Although these studies are not comparable, they point to a declining trend. Kremer et al. (2005); All-India Primary Teachers’ Federation (2008).
 23. NCERT (2005); Educational Consultants India Limited (2012); Educational Consultants India Limited (2010); Educational Consultants India Limited (2009a).
 24. A Supreme Court order was issued to this effect in 2007, although the practice continues in some areas. E.g., see *Times of India* (2009).
 25. Report on the Evaluation of SCERTs: cited in the GOI 12th Five Year Plan, p. 20.

26. A recent field-based evaluation of SSA revealed that a majority of OOSC in the sample households were (1) from SC and ST groups with 100 percent of OOSC in sample villages of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh being from SC and ST households; and (2) girls. Among the major reasons for being out of school was work at home. Equally significant is that attendance of girls from sample households was low because of sibling care and household work. The report found that “the presence of pre-primary component in schools affects the incidence of out of school children as girls are freed from the burden of looking after siblings. It was observed that in the selected villages in Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh with a large number of dropouts, there were no pre-primary sections attached to primary schools. On the other hand, 75% of the schools in Assam and all the schools in Chandigarh had primary schools with pre-primary sections and no dropouts and out of school children were reported in the selected villages in these states.” Data from the Government of India, Planning Commission, 2010.
27. NCERT (2005); Educational Consultants India Limited (2009a, 2010, 2012).
28. E.g., Nayodaya Vidhyala and Kendriya Vidhyalaya, “Model Schools, Special Residential Schools.”
29. Recent ASER (2012) reveals that proportion of boys in private schools is 57 percent and that 23.2 percent of children in government schools and 22.2 percent in private school attend schools with private tuitions.
30. DISE data from 2012; Ministry of Human Resource Development and National University of Educational Planning and Administration (2012).
31. A Study on Child Abuse conducted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, in 2007 in 13 states reported a high incidence of sexual and physical abuse of children, with 71 percent of girls facing one or more forms of neglect, 51 percent of children reporting one or more forms of sexual abuse, and 69 percent of children reporting physical abuse in one or more situations. Although these data are outdated and the government has made efforts since 2007 to address this issue, they still show that abuse is a factor that affects education. See Government of India, 12th Plan Working Group on Women’s Agency and Child’s Rights, http://planningcommission.gov.in/aboutus/committee/strgrp12/str_womagency_childrights.pdf.
32. An important component of SSA, which “provides residential upper primary schools for girls from SC, ST, OBC and Muslim communities, KGBV is a targeted intervention for dropout and overage girls who had discontinued education or were vulnerable to the same. It has fixed provision for the minimum reservation of 75 percent for girls from SC/ST/OBC and minority communities, and for girls who live below the poverty line. Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (2013).
33. These points are from Vimala Ramachandran, 2013, forthcoming.
34. Discussion with Educational Consultants India Limited, March 2013.
35. Working Group for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Group Likes Child Labour and Bonded and Migrant Labour in the 12th Five Year Plan, 2012–17, http://planningcommission.nic.in/aboutus/committee/wrkgrp12/wg_vulnerable_groups.pdf.
36. A range of special projects was introduced with external funds between 1987 and 1995: (1) the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project, with British ODA support in 1986 (in 1992–93, this was subsumed under DPEP); (2) the Rajasthan Shiksha Karmi Project, with SIDA support in 1987 (Swedish aid was withdrawn in 1998 after the nuclear tests); (3) the Mahila Samakhya (Education for

Women's Equality), which was launched in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh with assistance from the Netherlands in 1988–90; (4) the Bihar Education Project, with UNICEF support in 1990, later subsumed under DPEP; (5) the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project, with World Bank aid in 1991, later subsumed into DPEP; (6) the Rajasthan Lok Jumbish, with SIDA support in 1992 (Swedish aid was withdrawn in 1998, and the government is now in the process of negotiating support with the UK Department for International Development, or DFID); (7) the District Primary Education Project, with a World Bank loan and bilateral aid from DFID, EU, and other bilateral agencies in 1993–94; and (8) the Joint UN System primary education initiative in 1996–97. During the period 1992–97, external assistance in education contributed less than 5 percent of the total of Rs 9,201 crore (INR 92.01 billion) spent by the government (central and state) on elementary education. Of this, a major amount of Rs 450 crore (INR 4500 million) was in the form of loans from the World Bank. Vimala Ramachandran, *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 11, 1999.

37. The District Primary Education Programme was initiated as a part of the larger Social Safety Net Credit Adjustment Loan under the Structural Adjustment Programme of the World Bank to India in 1991. Taking off from the policy guidelines in NPE 1986 and drawing upon the experience of a range of primary education programs, the DPEP Guidelines of 1994 state that holistic planning and management is necessary to achieve universal primary education, and that it should incorporate a gender perspective in all aspects of the planning and implementation process. This information is from Vimala Ramachandran, 2003.
38. Government of India and National University of Educational Planning and Administration (2008).
39. Ibid.

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