# UNIT 2 : PRIMARY EDUCATION

## UNIT STRUCTURE


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## 2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to –

- define the concept of primary education;
- state the objectives of primary education;
- explain the curriculum of primary education;
- identify the problems related to primary education;
- discuss about the universalisation of primary education; and
- explain about the RTE Act, 2009.

## 2.2 INTRODUCTION

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE), is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted on August 4, 2009, which describes the modalities of the importance of free and compulsory education (primary education) for children between 6 and 14 in India under Article 21a of the Indian Constitution. India became one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child when

the Act came into force on 1 April, 2010. Primary or elementary education is a very important and decisive stage of country's educational ladder. This unit introduces you to learn about the concept and objectives of primary education. You will also learn about the curriculum of primary education, problems related to primary education and universalisation of primary education. We will also discuss about the RTE Act, 2009.

## 2.3 CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVES OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education is the first stage of formal education. It starts at the age of 6 years of the child. Hence, the education which is provided to the child in the age range between 6 and 14 years, especially in India, is called primary education.

Article 45 of the Indian Constitution declared that free, compulsory and universal primary education should be provided to all children in the age range of 6 to 14 years. (Education from classes I to VIII).

**Objectives of Primary Education**

The main objectives of primary education are as follows:

- **Physical development**: One of the important aims of primary education is the physical development of the child. Therefore, the primary school should provide games and sports, physical exercises etc. to the child for their physical well being.
- **Mental development**: The aim of primary education is also to give the knowledge of 3R's i.e. Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, and also to develop the mental power of the child i.e. intelligence, reasoning, imagination, language development, and memory etc.
- **Formation of good habits:** Formation of good habits i.e. cleanliness, punctuality, respect to seniors, cooperation, love and affection to juniors, discipline, truthfulness, kind heartedness etc. for developing good health and standard of living is also another important aim of education.
- **Social development:** Yet another important aim of primary education is to develop the social qualities of the child so that the child can

adjust in different situations of the society.

- **Moral and spiritual development:** Development of moral and spiritual qualities of the child is also an important aim of primary education. To achieve this aim, curriculum of primary education should include topics like storytelling, life history of great philosophers etc.
- **Development of creativity:** Another important aim of primary education is to develop the inner qualities and creative power of the child.
- **Emotional development:** Emotional development of the child is also an important aim of primary education so that the child can control his/her emotions at different moments of life.
- **Preparation for secondary level:** Preparing the child for secondary level of education is also one of the important aims of primary education.
- **Increase of the rate of literacy:** To achieve the goal of education for all is one of the important aims of primary education which gives importance on providing the 3 R's i.e. Reading, Writing and Arithmetic.
- **Providing primary knowledge about maintenance of health:** To provide primary knowledge about maintenance of health is also one of the important aims of primary education.
- **Awakening of the feeling of patriotism:** One of the important aims of primary education is to develop the feeling of patriotism in the child.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q. 1:** Mention one important aim of primary education.

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## 2.4 CURRICULUM OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Curriculum is one of the important aspects of education system. It helps to achieve the goals of education. The curriculum of primary education

should be based on such principles which help to achieve the aims of primary education. It should include the following contents in the subjects:

- To achieve the goal of physical development, subjects like games, sports, physical exercise etc. should be included.
- For mental development of the child subjects like mathematics for intellectual development and reasoning capacity development should be included.
- For the development of social qualities of the child group activities, morning assembly, social service, educational excursion, drama etc. should be introduced at school.
- The curriculum for primary education should also include storytelling, life history of great educators etc. for developing moral values of the child.
- For developing creativity of the child, contents like drawing, clay work, paper cutting etc. should be included in the curriculum.

Moreover, importance should be given on the following principles in the curriculum of primary level:

- Language abilities of listening, speaking, reading, writing, thinking and communication skills.
- Mathematical abilities to develop a logical mind which will help in performing mathematical operations and apply them in everyday life.
- Formation of scientific attitude which will help to develop the spirit of enquiry, problem solving and good attitude towards the development of science and technology.
- Understanding of both natural and social environment, and their interactive processes, the environmental problems and the measures to solve the problems.
- Respect for national symbols, developing the knowledge of national and emotional integration.
- Proper understanding of the basic knowledge of health and health related issues.

**Suggestions of Patel Committee for Curriculum of Primary Education:**

"Ten Year School Curriculum Review Committee" was constituted

under the chairmanship of Dr.Ishwar Bhai Patel in 1977 which was also known as Patel Committee. This committee recommended the following suggestions for the curriculum of primary education**:**

For the lower primary level (class: I to V), the Committee expressed the following views:

- The curriculum should have the elements of realism and flexibility.
- There should not be any rigid time-table at the lower primary level.
- The duration of study can be 2.5 to 3 hours.
- The academic session should be determined as per the local needs. Students should not be given any homework.
- Self- study should be provided in the school itself in the form of supervised study.
- Only one book should be specified for classes I and II, that of language.
- In classes III, IV and V, there can be three books; on language, mathematics and environmental study.
- The need for teacher guides and teaching aids should be emphasized.

For the upper primary level (class: VI to VIII), the Committee expressed the following views:

- The time-table should be formal.
- There should be the provision of self-study in lieu of homework.
- Efforts should be made towards reducing the number of textbooks, reducing the number of pages in them, and to make the language of books easy and comprehensible.

NCERT prepared the National Curriculum Framework which was published in 1985. It gives importance to the following points in the curriculum:

- Equity
- National identity
- Scientific temper
- Art and creativity
- Explosion of information and technology to cope with.
- Interface between work and education
- Value education and socio-cultural factors, such as environment,

resources and pollution

- Centrality of the learner
- Professional role of the school
- Focus on learning



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q. 2:** Who was the chairman of the "Ten Year School Curriculum Review Committee"?

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## 2.5 UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Article 45 of the Indian Constitution declares that State should provide free, compulsory and universal primary education to all children in the age range between 6 and 14 years within 10 years, i.e. after implementation of the Indian Constitution on 26th January 1950.

Kothari Commission (1964-66) has suggested the following aspects for universalisation of primary education:

- **Universalisation of Provision:** Universalisation of provision means equalisation of primary education among the child irrespective of caste, colour, creed, sex, religion etc. by establishing primary schools at the distance of 1 K.M. in every village, large or small. Primary schools should be located nearby the homes of children.
- **Universalisation of Enrolment:** Universalisation of enrolment in primary school means providing the opportunity to admit all the children in the age range between 6 and 14 years in primary school. The child should be motivated to take admission in the primary school.
- **Universalisation of Retention:** Universalisation of retention means to give the opportunity for the child to be retained in primary school up to the completion of primary education. This can help to decrease the drop-out rate in primary school.

For universalisation of primary education, importance should also be given on the following measures:

- Education for girls
- Provision of education in tribal areas
- Removal of regional imbalance

**Aims and Objectives of Universalisation of Primary Education**

The main aims and objectives of Universalisation of Primary Education are as follows:

- To improve the mental power of the child
- To help the child in the formation of good habits
- To arrange some games, sports and exercises for sound physical development
- To provide qualitative primary education
- To develop the social qualities of the child
- To provide the knowledge of basic health
- To provide the knowledge of national integration
- To take the provision for eradication of illiteracy from society
- To provide the knowledge of democratic outlook to the child
- To provide the knowledge of 3R's

## 2.6 PROBLEMS RELATED TO UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

The problems related to universalisation of primary education are as follows:

- **Wastage and Stagnation:**

  Wastage and stagnation are major problems of primary education. Wastage means leaving a course mid way without completing it. The student, thus, loses money, labour, time etc. On the other hand, stagnation means failure to succeed from one class to another.

- **Economic Problems:**

  Some parents are so poor that they cannot provide facilities of school fee, books, dress and other expenditures. They cannot even provide food to their children. Most of such children help their parents as earning sources, resulting in the increase of the dropout rate.

- **Problem of funds:**

  One of the important problems of primary education is the lack of

funds for the development of primary education. So lack of funds has impacted the growth of compulsory primary education in India.

- **Problem of unattractive school buildings:**

  The primary schools are not attractive. So students are not interested to come to the schools. National Policy of Education, 2020 also envisages that physical resources such as laboratories, sports equipments and library books are not available across schools.

- **Problem of Improper Teaching System:**

  The atmosphere of teaching system of primary education is not suitable for the child. The curriculum is unsuitable, the techniques and methods of teaching are not based on psychological principles. The teachers are also not properly trained.

- **Problem of Dearth of Teachers:**

  The problem related to the dearth of teachers is one of the serious problems of primary education. Moreover, the teachers are not properly trained. They fail to attract the child for the learning process. On the other hand, many primary schools are single-teacher schools. A single teacher is not able to teach five classes of primary school. Thus, lack of teachers has also created problems in primary education.

- **Social Problems:**

  Social problems like caste differences, narrow religious beliefs, conservatism, illiteracy, communalism, nepotism and jealousy have also created problems in primary education.

- **Administrative Causes:**

  The defective educational policy of the states has created problems in primary education. Lack of proper supervision by the supervisors of district primary schools and orthodox attitude towards providing fund from central governments are other problems in primary education.

- **Low enrolment of girls at Primary School:**

  The main causes that are related to low enrolment of girls at primary school are as follows:

  - **Economic backwardness of the rural community:** Due to

poverty most of the parents in rural areas are not interested to send their girls to school, instead engaging them in domestic chores.

- Lack of proper social attitude towards girls' education
- Lack of proper educational facilities in rural areas
- Lack of women teachers
- Low enrolment among the backward sections of the society

According to U- DISE 2016-17 data, nearly 28% of India's public primary schools and 14.8% of India's upper primary schools have less than 30 students. The average number of students per grade in elementary schooling system (primary and upper primary, i.e., Grades 1- 8) is about 14, with a minimum proportion having below 6. According to this report, there are 1,19,303 single-teacher schools, the majority of them (94,028) being primary school serving Grades I to V. Therefore, major steps should be taken to solve these problems.



**ACTIVITY 2.1**

Search some research articles online on problems of primary education in Assam and go through the identified articles. After that you observe the condition of primary schools of your locality and try to compare your local problems with your reviewed problems. Make a report on it in 500 words.

### 2.6.1 Suggestive measures for solution of the problems

The following suggestions should be taken to solve the problems of primary education:

- Free distribution of mid-day meal and other equipments like books and dresses should be given to the poor and needy children.
- The government should evolve an effective policy for primary education.
- Adequate teachers should be appointed in primary education

to solve the single-teacher school problem.

- To raise the standard of teaching only trained teachers should be appointed in primary schools. Therefore, the number of training schools for primary teachers should be increased.
- Supervisor for primary schools should be appointed for regular supervision.
- Women teachers should be appointed for primary schools.
- Adult education programme should be taken in rural areas for illiterate parents.
- Good and attractive school buildings should be built.
- The curriculum should be reformed and it should be meaningful and relevant to the environment. Work experience should be a part of the curriculum.
- Part time education should be given to drop out students.
- Teaching method should be made interesting.
- Steps should be taken to remove social evils such as early marriage.
- For popularising education among the backward sections of the community, the following suggestions should be taken into account:
  - Provision of hostel and extension of Ashram schools
  - Provision of suitable school accommodation
  - Provision of audio-visual aids
  - Economic incentives to parents
  - Opening of non-formal centres
  - Flexibility of school hours
  - Create primary education facilities

National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 suggested to establish **School Complexes,** consisting of one secondary school together with all other schools offering lower grades in its neighbourhood including Anganwadis, in a radius of five to ten kilometers. This suggestion was first made by the Education Commission (1964–66) but was left unimplemented. This Policy strongly endorses the

idea of the school complex/cluster, wherever possible. The aim of the school complex/cluster will be greater resource efficiency and more effective functioning, coordination, leadership, governance, and management of schools in the cluster. According to NEP, 2020 the aim of school complex will be to:

- build vibrant communities of teachers, school leaders, and other supporting staff;
- better integrate education across all school levels, from early childhood education to Grade 12, as well as vocational and adult education;
- share key material resources such as libraries, science laboratories and equipments, computer labs, sports facilities and equipments, as well as human resources such as social workers, counsellors, and specialised subject teachers – including teachers for music, art, languages, and physical education – across schools in the complex; and
- develop a critical mass of teachers, students, supporting staff, as well as equipments, infrastructure, etc. – resulting in greater resource efficiency and more effective functioning, coordination, leadership, governance, and management of schools in the schooling system.
- NEP, 2020 suggests that the three distinct roles of governance and regulation namely, the provision or operation of education, the regulation of the education system, and policymaking will be conducted by separate independent bodies so that there will not be any conflict of interest and concentration of power. Specifically:
  - (i) The educational operations and service provision for the public schooling system of the whole state will be handled by the Directorate of School Education (DSE). It will work independently to implement policies regarding educational operations and provision.
  - (ii) An effective quality self-regulation or accreditation system

will be instituted for all stages of education including pre-school education - private, public, and philanthropic - to ensure compliance with essential quality standards. To ensure that all schools follow certain minimal professional and quality standards, States/UTs will set up an independent, State-wide, body called the State School Standards Authority (SSSA). The SSSA will establish a minimal set of standards based on basic parameters (namely, safety, security, basic infrastructure, number of teachers across subjects and grades, financial probity, and sound processes of governance), which shall be followed by all schools. The framework for these parameters will be created by the SCERT in consultation with various stakeholders, especially teachers and schools.

(iii) Academic matters, including academic standards and curricula in the State will be led by the SCERT (with close consultation and collaboration with the NCERT), which will be reinvigorated as an institution. The SCERT will develop a School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework (SQAAF) through wide consultations with all stakeholders. The SCERT will also lead a "change management process" for the reinvigoration of CRCs, BRCs, and DIETs which must change the capacity and work culture of these institutions in 3 years, developing them into vibrant institutions of excellence.

**Achieving UEE with reference to Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA)**

As a follow up to the NPE- 1986, a number of programmes were initiated in India with a view to achieving UEE. Some of those programmes are such as Operation Blackboard (OBB), the Skiksha Karmi Project (SKP), the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP), the Bihar Education Project (BEP), the UP Basic Education Project (UPBEP), Mahila Samakhya (MS), the Lok Jumbish Project

(LJP), DIET and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). The latest is Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan *(which is now being merged with Samagra Shiksha)*, a centrally sponsored scheme implemented in partnership with state governments for the UEE across the country.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is one of the most important programmes for free and compulsory primary education. SSA scheme was prepared in 1999 and it was executed in the year 2001. The main motto is to achieve universalisation of primary education.

The programme seeks to open new schools in those habitations which do not have schooling facilities and strengthen existing school infrastructure through provision of additional classrooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance grant and school improvement grant. Existing schools with inadequate teacher strength are provided with additional teachers while the capacity of existing teachers is being strengthened by extensive training, grants for developing teaching learning materials and strengthening of a academic support structure at group, block and district levels. SSA looks to provide quality elementary education including life skills. SSA has a special focus on Girls Education and Children with Special Needs (CWSN). It also seeks to provide computer education to bridge the digital divide.

**Objectives of SSA**

The objective of SSA is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. Another goal is to bridge social, regional and gender gaps with the active participation of the community in the management of schools. The main goals of SSA are:

- Enrolment of all children in schools, Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) centres, alternate schools and 'back-to-school' camps by 2003
- Retention of all children till upper primary stage by 2007
- Bridging of gender and social category gaps in enrolment, retention and learning at elementary education level by 2010

- Ensuring significant enhancement in the learning achievement levels of children at the primary and upper primary stage by 2010

To achieve these objectives, strategies have been framed that include active involvement of local community groups and institution capacity building for setting up of block level resources centres. These centres inform district elementary education plans.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q. 3:** What do you mean by Primary Education?

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**Q. 4:** Write any one aspect of Universalisation of Primary Education?

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**Q. 5:** What is the full form of SSA and when was it developed?

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**Q. 6:** Write one problem of UEE?

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## 2.7 RTE ACT, 2009

The Right to Education Act 2009, also known as the RTE Act 2009, was enacted by the Parliament of India on 4 August 2009 and came into effect on 1 April, 2010. This Act describes about the modalities of the importance of free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 in India under Article 21 (a) of the Indian Constitution.

In the earlier Unit (i.e. Unit-1), RTI Act, 2009 was discussed in detail. Now we are going to discuss the implementation of RTE ACT, 2009. Monitoring is one of the crucial aspects of the RTE Act. The Central Government has – via notification dated 29 March 2010 – constituted the National Advisory Council (NAC) under the RTE Act, 2009 (PIB 2010). The

RTE Act provides for mechanisms for monitoring its implementation, including the following:

- The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCRs) has been empowered to protect and monitor the rights of children under the Act. Apart from the NCPCR, the State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) have to also monitor the child's right to education.
- In states where the SCPCR is not constituted, the state government may constitute an authority to perform the functions of the SCPCR under the Act;
- Any person with any grievance relating to the rights of the child under the Act can make a written complaint to the local authority, which shall decide the matter within a period of three months; and
- The School Management Committee (SMC) constituted under the Act is empowered to monitor the working of the school.

As per the RTE Act, 2009, every school other than an unaided private school shall constitute an SMC, which will perform various functions for school development. At least three fourths of the members of SMCs shall be parents and guardians of children belonging to disadvantaged groups and weaker sections, and 50 per cent of the members shall be women.

After enacting the RTE Act, 2009, several states have issued notifications for:

- Banning capitation fees, corporal punishment, detention and expulsion, and private tuitions by school teachers;
- Specifying working days/ instructional hours;
- Constituting the SCPCR or Right to Education Protection Authority (REPA)

The Central Government has also taken several steps for implementation of the RTE Act. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) have been notified as academic authorities under Sections 23 (1) and 29 (1) of the RTE Act. The NCTE has formulated minimum qualifications for a person to be eligible for appointment as a teacher in school. The

National Advisory Council (NAC) has been constituted under Section 33(1) of the Act.

**The main challenges under the RTE Act. are as follows:**

- Bringing out-of-school children into the school
- Filling up the vacant posts of teachers
- Training facilities for untrained teachers
- Adherence by schools to the norms and standards specified in the Schedule of the RTE Act.

**Issues related to implementation of RTE Act**

- Lack of awareness about the Act at the Community level
- Lack of adequate trained teachers
- Lack of community involvement through SMCs and PTAs
- Lack of better planning, management, monitoring and evaluation of education system
- Lack of quality infrastructure including drinking water, toilets, playground, equipments and classrooms etc.
- Limited textbooks provided in the school
- Problems of applying 'no detention policy' and 'continuous and comprehensive evaluation'

**The following steps should be taken for implementation of RTE Act:**

- The states must take steps to employ more teachers to provide children with quality education.
- The Government should take the initiative to make all government schools well equipped.
- School management committee should play an active role to spread awareness about the Act at the community level so that people are encouraged to send their children to government schools.
- To eradicate the commercialisation of primary education, the Public Private Partnership (PPP) should be avoided.
- Adequate infrastructural facilities should be provided for primary education.
- To effectively implement the RTE Act, the HRD Ministry, Labour Ministry, Women and Child Development Ministry and the Panchayati Ministry have to work together towards a common goal.



## 2.8 LET US SUM UP

- Primary education is the first stage of formal education. It starts at the age of 6 years of the child and complete at the age of 14.
- There are three aspects of universalisation of primary education: Universalisation of provision, Universalisation of enrolment and Universalisation of retention.
- SSA scheme was prepared in 1999 and it was executed in the year 2001. The main motto is to achieve universalisation of primary education.
- The objective of SSA is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the age group between 6 to 14 years.
- The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE) is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted in the year of 2009 and came into effect on 1 April, 2010.
- School management committee should play an active role to spread awareness about the RTE Act at the community.



## 2.9 FURTHER READING

1) Dutta, A. & Sonowal, P. (2007). *Samasamayik Bharatiya Sikshar Samasyat Drstipat*. Golaghat : Saraswati Prakashan.
2) Handique Konwar, I. & Borah, S. (2015). *Contemporary Concerns and Issues in Secondary Education*. Golaghat : Saraswati Prakashan.
3) Kochhar, S.K. (2004). *Pivotal Issues in Indian education.* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
4) National Education Policy 2020, Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India.

5) Sharmah, S. (2012). *Problems and Issues in Indian Education.* New Delhi: Vikash publishing House Private Limited.



## 2.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans. to Q. No. 1:** One important aim of primary education is to develop the social qualities of the child so that the child can adjust in different situations of the society.

**Ans. to Q. No. 2:** "Ten Year School Curriculum Review Committee" was constituted under the chairmanship of Dr.Ishwar Bhai Patel.

**Ans. to Q. No. 3:** Primary education is the first stage of formal education. It starts at the age of 6 of a child and complete at the age of 14.

**Ans. to Q. No. 4:** One aspect of Universalisation of Primary Education is Universalisation of Provision.

**Ans. to Q. No. 5:** The full form of SSA is Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. It was developed in the year of 1999.

**Ans. to Q. No. 6:** Wastage and stagnation are major problems of primary education. Wastage means leaving a course mid way without completing it. The student, thus, loses money, labour, time etc. On the other hand, stagnation means failure to succeed from one class to another.



## 2.11 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

**A) Short Questions** (Answer each question in about 150 words)

**Q. 1:** Mention some objectives of Primary Education.

**Q. 2:** What do you mean by Universalisation of Elementary Education?

**Q. 3:** What do you mean by univeralisation of retention in UEE?

**Q. 4:** What are the problems of Universalisation of Elementary Education?

**B) Long Questions** (Answer each question in about 300- 500 words)

**Q. 1:** What are the main objectives of Primary Education? Discuss the problems of Primary Education.

**Q. 2:** What are the difficulties in implementing the RTE Act, 2009? Explain the measures to solve the problems.

**Q. 3:** Discuss about the Universalisation of Elementary Education in India.

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