

Draft

# Faster, Sustainable and More Inclusive Growth

An Approach to the 12th Five Year Plan



सत्यमेव जयते

Planning Commission

August 2011

percent. Regardless, a larger allocation of resources will definitely be needed in the Twelfth Plan to achieve the objective. We should aim to increase total health expenditure as percentage of GDP to 2.5 per cent by the end of Twelfth Plan.

1.27 It must be emphasised that financial resources are not the only constraint. Shortage of health professionals at all levels has become a serious impediment to achieving an expansion in the public provision of health services. There has been inadequate attention to improving our education and training capacities in this area. There are also problems of accountability of personnel even when these are recruited. These lacunae will take time to rectify, but the Twelfth Plan must give a special emphasis to solve this problem.

## Education

1.28 The Eleventh Plan had articulated the need for expanding educational facilities and improving quality of education, as key instruments for achieving faster and inclusive growth. There has been notable success in expanding capacity but the challenge of raising quality still persists.

1.29 There has been improvement in the extension of primary education, both in regard to enrolment and in reduction of dropout rates. The Right to Education (RTE) Act, which became operational in 2009, has laid a solid foundation on which we need to build. A major achievement is that most children are now in school. The ASER 2010 report shows that for the age group 6–14 years in all of rural India, the percentage of children who are not enrolled in school has dropped from 6.6 per cent in 2005 to 3.5 per cent in 2010. The proportion of girls in the age group 11–14 years who were out of school has also declined from 11.2 per cent in 2005 to 5.9 per cent in 2010. However, the absolute numbers of children who are out of school remains large. While this needs to be reduced, it is not unreasonable to state that access is now more or less universalised. We now confront the greater challenge of improving the quality of school education. This means extensive and improved teacher training, upgrading curriculum and enforcing of accountability in teachers' attendance. As increasing number of children finish elementary school, there will be need to expand capacity in secondary and higher secondary schools. Envisaging universalisation of secondary education by 2017 should be a priority in the Twelfth Plan.

1.30 The Eleventh Plan had outlined a three fold strategy of expansion, equity and excellence for higher education. The Central Government introduced a programme of creating new Central Universities and other institutions of higher learning in the Eleventh Plan. This effort has begun, but it will have to be continued into the Twelfth Plan period to reach its full potential. Revitalisation of the State Universities and Colleges is also critical. These universities suffer from

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## Education & Skill Development

10.1 Education is the single most important instrument for social and economic transformation. A well educated population, adequately equipped with knowledge and skill is not only essential to support economic growth but is also a precondition for growth to be inclusive since it is only the educated and skilled person who can stand to benefit most from the employment opportunities which growth will provide.

10.2 The Twelfth Plan must pick up the challenge of ensuring that all children including differently-abled children are able to enjoy equal access to education and educational institutions. A concerted effort is needed to strengthen the system at all levels: elementary education, secondary and higher secondary education and higher education. In parallel, vocational education and skill development efforts need to be strengthened.

### Universal Elementary Education (UEE)

10.3 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) since its inception in 2001/2002 as the main vehicle for providing elementary education to all children in the 6-14 years age-group has made considerable progress in universalization of elementary education (UEE). However, with the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 having come into effect from April 2010, it is now a fundamental right of all children to demand eight years of quality elementary education. Effective enforcement of this right requires that the mandate under the RTE is aligned with the vision, strategies and norms of the SSA. To achieve UEE in a planned and time bound manner, a much higher level of funding and also better targeting of uncovered and under-covered population will be necessary. Isolated habitations, educationally backward blocks and districts shall require special attention. Flexible approach and concerted efforts are needed to reach out to the Out of School Children (OoSC) including children with special needs and street children. Bridging the social and gender gaps in enrolment with regard to SC, STs and minority girls would receive special attention. Given the fact that several States face serious limitations of funds in implementation of the RTE, innovative ways would have to be found to address resource constraints.

10.4 Despite improvements in access and retention, the learning outcomes for a majority of children continue to be an area of serious concern. Several studies suggest that nearly half the children in Grade 5 are unable to read a Grade 2 text. Concerted efforts are required to ensure that a minimum set of cognitive skills are acquired by all children during eight years of elementary education. Thus, quality issues and determinants thereof such as ensuring availability of trained teachers, good curriculum and innovative pedagogy that impact upon learning outcomes of the children must be addressed on priority basis. Quality as mandated under the RTE shall have to be realised in tangible terms, failing which it will be difficult to wean students away from private tuitions that are prohibited under the RTE. Teacher absenteeism and lack of accountability has to be addressed by greater community involvement in management and ownership of schools. We have to find ways to incentivise the States for community involvement in school management so that management control shifts to the local community. Decentralized recruitment of qualified teachers would ensure their accountability to local authorities since the local community is best placed to exert pressure for superior quality outcomes.

10.5 The effort to expand educational access is severely constrained by the lack of suitably-qualified, appropriately-trained human resources in adequate numbers. There are half a million vacancies of teachers in the country and another half a million teachers are required to meet the RTE norms on pupil-teacher ratio. Besides 0.6 million teachers in the public school system are untrained. Pre-service and in-service training of teachers has to be mounted on a mission mode during the Twelfth Plan for which information and communication technologies could be effectively leveraged. Apart from expansion, the regulatory framework for teacher education and training requires complete overhaul. There is acute shortage of high quality teachers. We must build effective organic linkages of teacher education with higher education to bring school teachers closer to sources of knowledge generation. Efforts in this direction would also focus on research in curricular and pedagogic practices and address the paucity of teacher educators. The content and pedagogy of teacher education should be aligned with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for Teacher Education adopted in 2009, which *inter alia*, recommends for a shift to a four-year integrated degree programme of teacher education. Teacher training institutions should be rated so as to improve their quality and testing services may be instituted to assess and grade competency and proficiency of teachers. All this could form part of a National Mission on Teacher Education within the framework of RTE Act.

10.6 In the Twelfth Plan, possibilities will have to be explored for involving private sector more meaningfully to achieve the objective of expansion and quality improvement. Recognising the importance of private schools, the RTE Act mandates that all schools, whether they receive