

OBSERVATIONS OF THE 10TH JRM

The 10th JRM has made the following observations:

1. At the primary stage of education SSA has made considerable progress towards all four goals, and is close to achieving its access and enrolment goal (Goal 1). However, SSA's Quality goal (Goal 4) should be seen as an integral aspect of the goals of universal access (Goal 1), retention (Goal 2) and bridging of gender and social category gaps (Goal 3).
2. At upper primary stage, the immediate challenge lies in the States of UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, where historical legacies have impeded progress towards elementary education. In J&K and NER states, children face larger challenges arising out of social and political circumstances, and there is need for special focus on these States.
3. The Mission has recognised SSA's work for the urban deprived. But given the relentless migration from rural areas to the four Metros it has recommended special strategies and interventions in these areas.
4. The Mission has welcomed SSA's effort to reach out to children through EGS/AIE centres, and the attempt to upgrade EGS to formal schools. However, it has noted that the more flexible models for EGS/AIE need not be viewed as merely transitional; there is much for the formal school system to learn from the flexible and progressive pedagogies in EGS/AIE centres, and these could be built into the formal school system.
5. It has also noted the progress in the enrolment of girls, the closure of the gender and social category gap in enrolment and retention. It has lauded the functioning of the KGBV and NPEGEL schemes and the exemplary contribution of Mahila Samakhya to the functioning of KGBV and NPEGEL. However, the Mission has pointed out that discrimination against marginalised groups (Girls, SC, ST, CWSN) should be dealt with systemically and in all aspects, for example classroom practices, teacher behaviour, peer relations, rather than only through schemes such as KGBV and NPEGEL.
6. The Mission has appreciated progress towards systemic transparency through the system of School Report Cards and DISE, but has recommended that the triangulation of enrolment and retention data should become a routine process, in order to make the data plausible and usable.
7. In the context of Goal 4, namely quality, the Mission has recommended that curricular and syllabus reform should be perceived as areas of major intervention. The States need to translate the NCF-2005 principles and perspectives into syllabi, textbooks, teacher training and assessment systems, especially in relation to girls, SC, ST, minority and children with special needs. The Mission has drawn attention to the continued use of conventional public examination system at the end of the primary and upper primary stage

in some states, and has recommended that States need to be trained in newer methods of assessment and continuous evaluation.

8. While appreciating progress in the construction of school buildings, additional classrooms, toilets, etc. the Mission has drawn attention to the quality of design (rooms, open spaces, material), from the perspective of pedagogy and child friendliness. It has suggested that design briefs should capture seating arrangements, storage and display arrangements, learning elements, climatic comfort, provision for expansion; such design briefs should be prepared in consultation with stakeholders.
9. The Mission reviewed the progress in the recruitment and deployment of teachers, and the improvement in the PTR in many districts. It has however pointed to systemic problems in the context of pre-service teacher education, including limited capacity of DIETs, and the poor quality of the private teacher education institutions. In in-service teacher training the Mission has pointed to the need for significant reform and has suggested that there is need to put in place systemic mechanisms to bring about professional accountability among teachers.
10. The Mission has noted that SSA would need to respond to the situation arising out of the approval of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill. In addition, there is need to ensure institutionalization of SSA gains and processes, and ensure linkages with RMSA in the secondary sector.