

“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.....

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26**

“ The State shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.”

- **Constitution of India,
Directive Principles of State Policy, Article 45**

6 a. EDUCATION IN TAMILNADU

The Human Development Reports of UNDP, in recent years, have very clearly identified the intrinsic relationship between education and poverty. Education is the determining factor for many other social and economic indicators too. Education leads to many social benefits, including improvements in standards of hygiene, reduction in infant mortality rates, decline in population growth rates, increase in labour productivity, rise in civic consciousness, greater political empowerment and democratisation and an improved sense of national unity.

“In a district-level study in India, it was estimated that an increase in the female literacy rate from 22% (actual 1981 levels) to 75% reduced the predicted value of the under-5 mortality rate for children from 156 per 1000 (actual 1981 level) to 110 per 1000.”

- Dreze and Sen, 1995

Literacy

“Tamilnadu is an educationally better placed State with general literacy rate of 62.66% compared to the national average of 52.21%. It ranks third among major States with regard to general literacy and in female literacy rate.”

- Ninth Five Year Plan Tamilnadu : 1997-2002

Literacy rates in Tamilnadu			
Year	Males	Females	Total
1951	31.70%	10.10%	20.80%
1991	73.70%	51.30%	62.70%
1994	74.88%	52.29%	63.72%

The literacy rate of Tamilnadu (62.66%), in 1991, was higher than the national average (52.21%), ranking third in the country, behind Kerala (90%) and Maharashtra (65%). In 1994, It had reached to 63.72%, with a 74.88% male literacy rate and a 52.29% female literacy rate. And as per NSSO Survey 1998, literacy rate in Tamilnadu in 1997 was estimated at 70%, with an 80% male literacy and 60% female literacy.

Education is the determining factor for many other social and economic indicators too. Education leads to many social benefits

The growth of literacy has been very uneven over the decades in the State. And the vast variations of literacy rates across different sections of Tamil society make one to sit up and take notice!

Yet, in absolute terms, the number of illiterates in Tamilnadu has increased from 238 lakhs in 1951 to 253 lakhs in 1991, as vouched by the Govt of Tamilnadu, in its "Tamilnadu – An Economic Appraisal".

The growth of literacy has been very uneven over the decades in the State. The growth rate of literacy for the State was the highest in the 1950's (50.96%). It slowed down to 25.8% in the 1960's. The 1970's showed a relatively better performance, which has not been sustained in the 1980's and 1990's. Actually the near-stagnation in the 1990's has been a cause for much worry. The survey in 1994 reveals an insignificant increase in the rate of literacy. The total literacy increased by a mere 1.02% over the 4-year period.

Literacy Rate variations

While the Government takes pride in over-all literacy rates in the State, the vast variations of literacy rates across different sections of Tamil society make one to sit up and take notice!

General	62.66%
Males	73.75%
Females	51.33%
Urban	77.91%
Rural	54.59%
Urban women	86.06%
Rural women	41.84%
Dalits	39.47%
Dalit women	29.50%
Tribals	23.35%
Tribal women	16.94%

(Statistical Handbook of Tamilnadu 1998)

While dalit literacy rates (for both males and females) have lagged behind general rates, female dalit literacy rates are lower than 30% even in districts like Erode and Coimbatore, where the other development parameters are above average.

The district-wise inequalities too have been striking. In 1997, Dharmapuri had just a 46.50% literacy rate, compared to

the then State average of about 70%. While urban literacy rates for almost all districts tend to hover in a band between 70-80%, the rural literacy rate varies unduly from 43.32% in Dharmapuri to 80.76% in Kanyakumari.

The Tamilnadu Literacy Mission is supposed to operate under the 3 phases of “Total Literacy Campaign” (phase I), “Post-Literacy Campaign” (Phase II) and “Continuing Education Campaign” (Phase III). In 1999, Tamilnadu Government claimed that Phase III has been started in 9 districts (Kanyakumari, Trinaveli, Virudhunagar, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Madurai, Theni, Pudukottai and Vellore); that 5 districts are currently under Phase II and that Phase I was getting over in the districts of Chennai, Villupuram, Tiruvallur and Kancheepuram.

Literacy Campaign in Chennai: A case Study

- Success rate of the total literacy campaign in Chennai has not been very encouraging as it veers around a mere 60%. The primary reasons attributed to this are migration and difficulties that cropped up in the administrative set up during the functioning of the first phase, in which a population of 3.12 lakh illiterates were targeted... While the first phase was completed in March, even six months after it, the second phase remained a non-starter, because the go-ahead has not been received from the Centre.... So is the case with 3 other districts of Villupuram, Kancheepuram and Thiruvallur. (Hindu 8 September 1999)
- Admitting that the Post Literacy Campaign did not really take off last time at Chennai, Arivoli officials said that the present exercise was a ‘mopping up’ exercise, to polish the skills of neo-literates and semi-literates. A sum of Rs 1 crore has been sanctioned for the one-year project which hopes to ‘mop up’ at least 1.5 lakh learners in the PLC. Around 4200 volunteers and 30 NGOs, trained by the Corporation, were involved in the literary campaign in different parts of the city. (Hindu 22 April 2000)

Right to Education

Despite the platitudinous rhetoric in the last 50 years, the unwelcome fact is that the State has begun to retreat from its commitment to universal education

“Despite the platitudinous rhetoric in the last 50 years, the unwelcome fact is that the State has begun to retreat from its commitment to, and involvement in, universal education”

- Ms. Jayanthi Natarajan, M.P.

Article 45 of the Indian Constitution had clearly said, “The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education until they complete the age of 14 years”

The Supreme Court, in its judgement in the Mohini Jain and Unnikrishnan cases, held that education upto 14 years is a Fundamental Right, under Article 21, read with Article 45 of the Constitution. The right continues to be cynically denied both at the Central and State levels.

The Tamilnadu Compulsory Elementary Education Act, 1994, has been so defectively conceived that it still awaits President’s assent. The Act conveniently omitted the word “free education” in the text and had no guarantee for quality education either. There has been no effort to remove the anomalies in the Act (even in its 1995 amended version), in the line of universal free primary education. The Act needs to be seriously amended and passed.

There have been also attempts from some Government circles to restrict the right to education only till standard V. This is surely against both the Constitutional spirit and the Supreme court judgement.

There has to be a clearly articulated right to education of all children till Standard X at least.

The Tamilnadu Compulsory Elementary Education Act needs to be amended to provide compulsory, quality and free education to upto 10th standard.

A new section needs to be introduced to prohibit employers from utilizing child labour, below the age of 16. A punitive clause should also be incorporated to deter violators.

The Tamilnadu Compulsory Education Act 1994 was very defectively conceived. The Act conveniently omitted the term “free education”! There has been no effort to remove the anomalies of the Act

Primary Education

“While India has a highly developed—if overextended—higher education sector (sending nearly 6 times as many people to the universities as China does, compared to with its population), it remains one of the most backward countries in the world in terms of elementary education”

- Dreze & Sen, 1995

It's true, primary schooling in Tamilnadu has experienced an unprecedented expansion, in terms of enrolment, number of schools and teachers.

	1950-51	1996-97
Enrolment	30,88,000	102,36,000
Schools	25,268	30,619
Teachers	88,331	1,15,561

(Ninth Five Year Plan Tamilnadu : 1997-2002)

And, in 1999-2000, as per the Policy Note 2000, the number of schools had further increased to 31,052 and the number of teachers to 1,20,449.

Accessibility

Accessibility to the school is one of the important factors that can help towards achieving universalisation of education. The policy of the State is that every habitation with a population of 300 and above should have a primary school within a distance of 1 km.

As per the 1995-96 Policy Note of the Education Department, 87.8% of the habitations in Tamilnadu and 96.8% of their population were covered by primary education.

“Based on the Sixth All India Educational Survey, it is estimated that schools have to be opened in Tamilnadu in 700 hamlets which do not have such facility within a kilometre.

- Policy Note on Education 1999-2000, GOTN

“In order to fulfill this objective the government opened 312 and 400 elementary schools in the year 1998-99 and 1999-2000 respectively. After ascertaining the status of the remaining few hamlets not covered so far, schools will be provided wherever necessary”

- Policy Note on Education 2000-2001, GOTN

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Enrolment

Gross enrolment figures are of little use for policy making and for identifying real problem areas . Policy makers need to be more sensitive to other criteria such as net enrolment rates and the number of school age children in an area who are actually out of school

“... More or less all school going age children are enrolled in the first standard. The percentage of enrolment in schools in Tamilnadu is 95.46. Among girls 96.28% are permitted in first standard in primary schools. 84.65% among Adi Dravidars are admitted in schools. Enrolment in schools is at a fairly satisfactory level”

- Policy Note on Education 1999-2000, GOTN

But, as accepted universally by now, gross enrolment figures are of little use, for policy making and for identifying really problem areas. The policy makers need to be more sensitive to other criteria such as net enrolment rates and the number of school age children in an area who are actually out of school.

“There is however still an urgent need for 100% enrolment and retention of boys and girls in remote rural pockets and particularly among SC/STs population and backward and most backward classes”

- Ninth Five Year Plan Tamilnadu : 1997-2002

Of late, Tamilnadu Govt has expressed concern about the diminishing trend of admissions in Government schools. This year, even one month after the starting of the academic year, hardly 25% of children had been admitted. In urban areas, there are many private schools, where middle class children get admitted in a big way. Yet, even in terms of number to be enrolled in the year, admissions in Govt schools have been very minimal. Same is the case in Govt-aided schools too!...Govt circles are shocked that this situation – hardly 25% to 28% being admitted in Govt schools – has been in vogue for the last few years. For example, last year only 27000 additional children were enrolled in schools. (Thinamalar, 11 June 2000)

Enroling of children in schools is getting sluggish, in spite of all efforts by the government. Last year, for example, 49000 children got enrolled in Kancheepuram district, though no one is sure as to how many of them completed std I. This year, 20 days after the reopening of schools, enrolment had not crossed even 43000. Govt circles claim that enrolment in Govt schools is low because of the mushrooming of private schools, but this hardly explains the full truth.

According to Balakrishnan, convener, School Children Enrolment Movement, the main reason is the lack of quality of education, which hardly motivates the parents. Lack of proper facilities like toilets, drinking water, safe buildings etc are other reasons that keep students, especially girls, away.

Hence it is important to hand over government schools to the panchayats, to ensure greater supervision and participation.

District Primary Education Project (DPEP)

DPEP programme was visualized as a special quality programme towards education for all. The grants from the Central and State Govts are in a 85:15 ratio.

Tamilnadu Government introduced the DPEP in 1994, with financial assistance from the World Bank and a total outlay of Rs 125.80 crores, in the 4 districts of Dharmapuri, Villupuram, Cuddalore and Thiruvannamalai, where female literacy is below the national average. Girls get special focus under this programme. The period of implementation is 1994-2000.

In 1997-98, the Phase II programme was started in 3 districts viz., Pudukkottai, Ramanathapuram and Perambalur. The period of implementation is 1997-2002.

DPEP is likely to be extended to 7 more districts in Tamilnadu under the Sarva Shiksha Abhigyan programme to be launched by the Central government. The scheme would be operational from the next financial year, extending to the districts of Salem, Erode, Dindigul, Sivaganga, Virudhunagar, Namakkal and Theni....Mid-project evaluation of DPEP in Tamilnadu has shown promising results, especially in the areas of improving quality of education and reducing the dropout rate, according to Mr.R.S.Pandey, Joint Secretary (DPEP)... The rate of growth, in terms of literacy, in Tamilnadu was slightly higher than the national average of 6% in all DPEP districts. (Hindu 8 October 1999)

The main reason for the sluggishness in net school enrolment is the lack of quality of education, which hardly motivates the parents or students

It is important to hand over government schools to the panchayats to ensure greater supervision and participation

DPEP has been accused of “indulging in brainwashing young minds” and saffronising education. Government needs to look into this dimension seriously

DPEP, funded by the World Bank, is based on World Bank's view that the responsibility of providing basic education in the developing countries should be gradually shifted to local bodies and communities giving them the freedom to impart the same through formal or non-formal channels created to suit the conditions of local communities. This is part of the World Bank's global strategy to promote the idea of downsizing the governments and enlarging of areas of non-governmental initiatives and market operations.

Meanwhile, the All India Save Education Committee has called for a total shelving of the DPEP programme. Accusing the programme as “indulging in brainwashing young minds” and saffronising education in the name of “indianisation, nationalization and spiritualization”, the Committee held that DPEP, which started out to overhaul primary education in the country, had turned out to be a major failure. The Tamilnadu Government surely needs to look into this dimension of DPEP and make the findings of the study available to the public.

Primary Education & Local Governments

Till 1981, powers to start new primary schools, to appoint and transfer teachers, maintain school buildings etc. were vested in the respective panchayat union. But in 1981, the Tamilnadu Government (G.O. No. 857 dated 23.5.1981) transformed all the teachers under the various panchayat and union bodies as State Govt employees. And in 1986, a separate Directorate of Primary Education was set up to take care of all policy matters and programmes with regard to primary education in the State.

With the reinstatement of the local bodies, the State Government has the responsibility of organisationally and structurally transferring the administration of schools back to local bodies

Now with the reinstatement of the local bodies, the State Government has the responsibility of organizationally and structurally transferring the administration of over 35000 institutions (primary and middle schools), employing about 1.7 lakh teachers, back to the local bodies.

Tamilnadu Primary Schools Improvement Campaign has demanded that the responsibility of running primary schools should be vested in panchayats. The Campaign claimed that 2 out of 3 students who drop out, do so not because of poverty but due to lack of quality education.

Dropouts

More than enrolment rates, it is the dropout rates that are a real expression of the nature and quality of education that takes place.

DROPOUT RATES IN TAMILNADU

Year	Sex	Upto P.	Upto M.	Upto H.	Upto H.S.
91-92	boys	17.11	37.48	64.45	83.92
	girls	21.16	46.50	71.93	86.07
	total	19.31	41.67	67.94	84.90
99-00	boys	12.93	36.03	57.97	83.43
	girls	16.07	34.74	57.85	80.92
	total	14.41	35.43	57.92	82.27

(Policy Note on Education 2000-2001, GOTN)

In 2000-2001, the Department of School Education estimated the dropout rate at the primary level as 14.41% and claimed a steady progress since mid 1980's.

But as can be seen from the above tables, dropout rates at the higher levels are still alarmingly high. In 1998-99, 35.23% of those who entered middle schools, 58.01% of those who entered high schools and 81.49% of those who entered higher secondary schools dropped out!

And, overall, as per UNICEF calculations, the proportion of school dropouts remains high and has increased from 19.3% in 1991 to 21.9% in 1997.

And inter-district calculations too have been disturbing. It is to be noted that in a district like Dharmapuri, the drop out rate for children of 6-14 years is as high as 38.20%.

“Still sizeable population of children in the age group 6-14 is outside the schools, either not enrolled at all or enrolled but dropped out before completing V/VIII standard. Though the dropout rates are declining, the position on the whole is still alarming. Apart from statistical figures, often subject to errors of observation and documentation, quality, dedication and value systems of the educational terrain calls for the urgent attention”

- Ninth Five Year Plan Tamilnadu: 1997-2002

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Given the policy of no retention in schools, the data on repetition rates requires serious analysis and attention.

This is precisely because repetition is closely related to quality of education

Repetition Rates

Studies under DPEP have revealed that the internal efficiency of our school system is strongly influenced not only by the dropout rates but also by the high level of repetition rates. For the DPEP districts in 1996-97, this rate has been assessed at 10.13%. The 6th Educational Survey data shows that the proportion of repeaters for the primary stage is 14.31% with alarming levels of 15.92% repeaters in class I and 13.44% in class II.

Given the policy of no detention in schools, this data requires serious analysis and attention. This is precisely because repetition is closely related to quality of education.

Teacher Student Ratio

Year	Primary	Middle	High	Hr.Sec
93-94	49	51	43	37
94-95	50	52	44	38
95-96	50	50	44	39
96-97	40	40	44	39
97-98	40	40	45	40
98-99	38	36	43	36
99-'00	35	40	38	35

(Policy Notes on Education 1999-2000, 2000-2001)

Of late, this has become a highly politicized question in Tamilnadu.

In 1964, Tamilnadu Government had promulgated a government order fixing a 1:20 teacher: student ratio.

But in 1993-94, the then government reduced the budget allocation to education and changed the ratio from 1:20 to 1:50. Under pressure from various quarters, the new ratio was not put into practice, but instead, the Govt played the trick of reducing the number of teachers, by not filling up posts left vacant by retirements. The total number of teachers came down to 1,76,081 in 1993-94 from 1,87,107 in 1992-93. Again, due to pressures, the vacant seats were filled in 1995, so that the number of teachers rose to 1,79,573 in 1995-96.

In 1997, the new Government passed a government order, fixing the ratio at 1:40. Teachers' organizations have taken up struggle, demanding the reduction in the ratio back to the earlier 1:20. Even as late as September 2000, the Tamilnadu Elementary Education Teachers Joint Action Committee claimed that despite 1,98,404 sanctioned teachers posts in elementary and middle schools in the State, which has been budgeted for, the actual number was only 1.62 lakh teachers.

Here too, State level aggregate statistics hide much inter-district variations. The 6th All India Educational Survey revealed that the ratio varied from 55 in Dharmapuri to 25 in Nilgiris. The DPEP findings have also shown that the ratio varied from 54 in Pudukkottai to 29 in Dindigul.

For meaningful policy decisions, the district-level teacher student ratios have to be further disaggregated to the panchayat union level, because the actual unit for appointment of primary school teachers is the panchayat union

Another related issue that needs serious and urgent attention is the problem of small multi-grade schools, where the enrolment is below 50, and often five classes are taught by one or two teachers. A breakup of primary schools according to enrolment size reveals that in 1997, 18.55% primary schools in Tamilnadu had strengths of less than 50.

“A large number of primary schools are still single teacher schools and many elementary schools are still managing with 4 or 5 teachers for 8 standards”

- HRF Consultation, 2000

The Policy Note 1997-98 did admit that 20544 posts of Secondary Grade teachers were vacant in the Panchayat Union Schools, for more than four to five years. Such a big a number of vacant posts and the period of long vacancy do affect the quality of education. As per the 2000-2001 Policy Note on Education, 2237 vacancies had been filled in 1999-2000.

For meaningful policy decisions, the district-level teacher student ratios have to be further disaggregated to the panchayat union level, because the actual unit for appointment of primary school teachers is the panchayat union

Quality of Education

From the estimates made for primary education, only 40% of students in Tamilnadu have gained the desired skills

“There should be legal guarantee for free and quality education. The Yashpal Committee Report’s recommendations to improve the quality of education such as lessening the burden of children, learning in a happy atmosphere, etc. should be implemented.”

- Tamilnadu Peoples’ Manifesto, 1996

The time has indeed come for Tamilnadu to shift its attention from general rates of literacy rates, gross enrolment rates etc to more serious concerns like the quality of education that the system provides and the underlying malaise affecting our educational system today!

“Among the students continuing upto fifth standard, there is no firm statistics as to how many attain the desired skills. From the estimate made for the primary education only 40% of students have gained the skills”

- Policy Note on Education 1998-99, GOTN

The mid-term assessment in the DPEP districts provides some data about levels of mathematics and language achievement in these educationally most backward districts of the State. In class IV testing, the performance of the districts in language varied from 43% in Tiruvannamalai to 59.7% in Cuddalore, while in Mathematics, the highest performance was villupuram at 50.98%.

Learning standards

*“National Council and Research and Training carried out a baseline assessment study in 46 low literacy districts across eight States, including **Tamilnadu**. The objective of this survey was to assess learning achievements of students approaching the end of the primary school cycle.*

Among Class V students, the maximum student achievement in any of the States was 20 out of 40 in word meaning (implying a maximum of 50 %), and 17 out of 44 in reading comprehension (implying a maximum score of 39 %).

*In reading comprehension, no district in Madhya Pradesh and **Tamilnadu** achieved an average score of even 40%.”*

- The Progress of Indian States 1995, UNICEF

Standard of Education offered in Tamilnadu urgently needs reforms. The poor teacher-pupil ratio, the poor teaching skills of the teachers, the large number of vacant posts at primary schools could be some of the reasons for the low standard of education.

Vocational Education

“In the field of Vocational Education, meant to provide employable skills at higher secondary level, after a good start, the initial enthusiasm has reached a plateau.... 15.38% of students of 11th and 12th stds are studying in vocational stream, as against the Government of India target for coverage at 25% in vocational stream.

Apart from the number, the quality and career orientation require a fresh look, and enhanced endeavour in both Government and private schools, which shall provide for multi skill oriented education to enable students to enter alternative employment avenues depending on supply and demand for skills in emerging market economy”

- Ninth Five Year Plan Tamilnadu: 1997-2002

In reading comprehension, no district in Tamilnadu achieved an average score of even 40%

Only 15.38% of students of 11th and 12th stds in Tamilnadu are studying in vocational stream, as against the Govt of India target for coverage at 25% in vocational stream

“The lack of linkages between education, motivation for research and advanced studies and skills for employment has resulted in Tamilnadu having 23.40 lakh educated unemployed. This is a serious constraint. Education is generating more job seekers than job creators, more traditional learning than learning with experience and skill required by the society which finances their study”

- Ninth Five Year Plan Tamilnadu: 1997-2002

Privatization of Education

The uncontrolled growth of thousands of nursery schools with their craze for English medium education has made mockery of any meaningful educational policy by the government

Over the last 15 years, there has been a strongly perceptible trend towards a govt. policy of encouraging and fostering privatization of education at different levels. Statistics regarding private schools are hard to come by, since there are thousands of unrecognized schools operating all over the State. Even going by Govt statistics, while the number of Govt High schools rose merely from 1685 to 2000, during 1985-2000, unaided schools had jumped from 5 to 104. Again over the same period, matriculation schools had skyrocketed from a mere 144 in 1984-85 to 1641 in 1999-2000 (Rf. Policy Note on Education 2000-2001). And the uncontrolled growth of thousands of nursery schools with their craze for English medium education has made mockery of any meaningful educational policy by the Government.

Public Expenditure on Education

Kothari Commission had already suggested increasing public expenditure on education to 6% of GDP.

Recently, an Expert Committee on Expenditure on Education, in July 1999, has recommended the same - that at least 6% of GDP be spent by the government on education in the public sector and that the target be reached latest by 2007.

The Committee has further said that States which are investing less than 10% of their Plan budget on education should raise it to 15%, while those States which are spending more than 10% of their plan budget should enhance it to 20%.

It also felt that States which are spending less than 50% of their educational revenue expenditure on primary education should raise it to 50% at the earliest and move forward to 60% over the next five year plan period.

Finally the Committee has demanded that State Govts should spend not less than 20% of their total budget on education.

The Tamilnadu State Government has been claiming that vast amounts are being allocated on education, as seen by the following statements.

“Outlay for education in 2000-20001 in Demand No.17 is Rs 4648.95 crore, an increase of Rs. 504.94 crore against last year’s outlay. This works out to 21.56% of the State’s total budget in Revenue account.... Allocation to school education is Rs 3,834.39 crores, of which Rs 239.17 crores is for Plan schemes. This accounts for 17.78% of the total expenditure in Revenue account. This is a clear indication of the affirmation of the commitment towards achieving the goal of education for all”

- Policy Note on Education 2000-2001, GOTN

“During the period 1987-88 to 1995-96, the State has both increased the budgetary allocation for education and changed the pattern of allocation. Primary education alone accounted for a lion’s share of Rs. 670 crores (46%) out of the annual average expenditure of Rs. 1446 crores, followed by secondary education Rs.490 crores (34%). It shows that primary education had received the attention that it richly deserved in budgetary allocation.”

- Tamilnadu - An Economic Appraisal 1994-95

The Human Development in South Asia Report 1998 calculated that the educational outlay of Tamilnadu fell from an already low level of 4.1% of NSDP in 1992-1994 to even further down to 3.8% in 1995-96

UNICEF comes up with still reduced figures (when calculated as % of NSDP from GDP) for 1998

But recent trends in the State Govt's approach to education, especially on matters of budget allocations, have been quite disturbing. Whereas 30 years ago nearly 36% of the budget was earmarked for education, the allocation has steadily declined to less than 18%. The long term trends are indeed far from encouraging. And, in terms of universally accepted standards, national and international, the picture surely raises serious questions!

Studies done on average growth rates of public expenditure on education in real terms are very revealing. While Tamilnadu showed growth rates of 9.0% in 1980-85 and 12.5% in 1985-1990, the growth rate had fallen substantially over the 1990-1995 period.

In terms of policy perspectives, **allocation as percentage of S NDP** is a more crucial indicator. The Expert Committee on Expenditure in Education, in its report to the Central Govt in 1999, has strongly recommended that at least 6% of GDP should be spent on education in the public sector and has demanded that the target be reached by 2007 at the latest.

UNICEF calculates that public expenditure on education in Tamilnadu fell from 11.5% of GDP in 1990 to 5.5% in 1998.

The Human Development in South Asia Report 1998 calculated that the educational outlay of Tamilnadu fell from an already low level of 4.1% of NSDP in 1992-94 to even further down to 3.8% in 1995-96.

The **allocation to primary education** is another crucial policy instrument to be followed.

In Tamilnadu, the share of primary education to the general education budget is 49.80%, and all through the 1980's and 1990's, this has been the level.

A point to be emphasized is that in the present composition of primary education expenditures, nearly 97.1% goes towards salary and wages and only 2.9% towards other development expenditures. Further, most of the increased allocations are more due to the effects of pay commission increasing staff expenditures.

Studies all over the world have shown that accelerated economic and social development has been possible only in countries that have managed to correct such imbalances so that at least 10-15% of expenditure is spent on inputs that go to raise the quality.

As percentage of SNDP, the expenditure on primary education in the State works out, for 1995-96, to be merely 1.9%.

Studies have shown that an effort to bring about universalisation of primary education would demand this to be raised to about 3.0-3.5%.

As percentage of SNDP, the expenditure on primary education in the State works out, for 1995-96, to merely 1.9%. Universalisation of primary education would demand that this be raised to about 3.0-3.5%

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