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SCHOOL DROPOUT PREVENTION PILOT PROGRAM

INVENTORY OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS RELATED TO DROPOUTS IN INDIA



Contract No. EDH-I-00-05-00029-00
Task Order AID-OAA-TO-10-00010

July 22, 2011

This document was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Creative Associates International.

**Inventory of Policies and Programs
Related to Dropouts
in India**

Submitted to:

**United States Agency for International Development
Washington, DC**

Submitted by:

**Creative Associates International, Inc.
Washington, DC**

July 22, 2011

This report was made possible by the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of Creative Associates International and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

DEC Submission Requirements

a.	USAID Award Number	Contract No. EDH-I-00-05-00029-00 Task Order AID-OAA-TO-10-00010
b.	USAID Objective Title	Investing in People (IIP)
c.	USAID Project Title	USAID Asia and Middle East Regional School Dropout Prevention Pilot (SDPP) Program
d.	USAID Program Area and Program Element	Education (program area 3.2) Basic Education (program element 3.2.1)
e.	Descriptive Title	Inventory of Policies and Programs Related to Dropouts in India
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h.	Sponsoring USAID Operating Unit and COTR	AME/ME/TS Rebecca Adams, COTR
i.	Date of Publication	July 22, 2011
j.	Language of Document	English

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Acronyms

ADEPTS	Advancement of Education Performance Through Teacher Support
AIE	Alternative and Innovative Education Program
AME	Asia and Middle East Bureau
BPL	Basic Poverty Levels
CFS	Child-Friendly School
CFSI	Child-Friendly School Initiative
CINI	Child In Need Institute
COTR	Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (USAID)
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
EBEP	Expanded Basic Education Program
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EFA	Education for All
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
ILO	International Labor Organization
KGBV	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
LGP	Learning Guarantee Program
MDM	Mid-Day Meal Scheme
MOE	Ministry of Education
MV	M. Venkatarangaiya Foundation
NIOS	National Institute for Open Schooling
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
NCLP	National Child Labor Project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPEGEL	National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level
OBC	Other Backward Castes
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children

PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
QUEST	Quality Education and Skills Training
RMSA	Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
RTE	Right to Education – The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
SC/ST	Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes
SDPP	School Dropout Prevention Pilot
SMC	School Management Committee
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

Each of the four countries involved in the USAID-funded *School Dropout Prevention Pilot (SDPP)* program – Cambodia, India, Tajikistan, and Timor Leste – has set policies for the education of its children, some more extensive than others. Each has local and international non-government organizations (NGOs) assisting in the provision of education services, though the number of such groups varies from a few in Tajikistan to well over 50 in Cambodia. SDPP is tasked with implementation of a project in each country to reduce the dropout rate, and in each case the intervention must fit within the policy context and supplement, but not duplicate, current efforts. This report focuses on the policies and programs related to dropout in India.

To create an inventory of policies and programs, SDPP implementing partner Quality Education and Skills Training (QUEST) completed a matrix to describe about 40 topics that have proved relevant to school dropout rates, describing the content of the relevant documents and programs, their target group, and the ground reality of the implementation of the policy or program and its reported effect on dropout. In general, these topics cover the legal context of education (e.g., requirements for free and compulsory education, services for at-risk children and girls, school calendar and class sizes), the school facilities (e.g., accessibility and female-friendly), teacher recruitment, training, and behavior in the classroom (e.g., special recruitment of minorities or women, use of mother tongue), support services offered at the school in addition to basic education (e.g., bridge courses, health services, or meals), and cultural practices that may lead to dropout (e.g., early marriage). Following a presentation India's policies and programs is a set of options for interventions that SDPP might use within the country, given the established educational context. It should be noted that the viability of these preliminary suggestions will be informed by the findings of the SDPP in-country situational analysis and discussions with the ministries of education and other key stakeholders.

India also has an extensive and elaborate set of education policies designed to offer the highest quality of education to all children. Through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which is Government of India's flagship and centrally-sponsored program in partnership with State Government, it works to ensure that all policies and programs are in place and functioning. It shows particular concern in its outreach and bridge programs to bring out-of-school children back to school, and in its requirements for child-friendly classrooms that are gender-sensitive and inclusive. SDPP may:

- Assess the impact of the government policies of automatic promotion, the assignment of entering children to a class according to their age rather than degree of learning, inclusion of children with disabilities, gender-sensitivity, use of the mother tongue, and in-service teacher training.

I. Introduction

In order to make informed decisions about programs that may reduce the dropout rate in a country, it is important to fully understand the policy context of education within the country and the set of programs currently operating. Interventions need to fit within existing policies, rather than contravene them, they must not unwisely duplicate existing programs, and they must have evidence of success in similar contexts. The literature review¹ on dropout programs conducted under the *School Dropout Prevention Pilot* (SDPP) program provided a number of suggestions of potential approaches to address the problem of dropout. This inventory of existing policies and programs, completed under the same contract, serves as the next required step in the path of building successful dropout prevention programs in India.

This inventory is divided into three sections. Within each of these sections, we initially describe the *existing policies and programs* in India, addressing more than 40 topics or areas that may affect student dropout. Then we translate the policies and programs into suggested *options for SDPP interventions* to address the specific policy context and existing programs. It should be noted that the viability of these preliminary suggestions will be informed by the findings of the SDPP in-country situational analysis and discussions with the MOE and other key stakeholders.

An initial list of 42 policy topics was presented to in-country SDPP staff to research; edits reduced the number to 41; and staff in India each added one topic unique to India. All topics were chosen because they have been shown to encourage parents to send their children to school (e.g., removing all fees for public schooling, forbidding child labor), support teachers in their provision of a quality education program (e.g., teacher code of conduct, use of mother tongue in the classroom), or help children stay in school (e.g., female-friendly facilities, provision of health care within schools). For the purposes of reporting and analysis, these topics have been grouped into five areas:

- (1) *Legal context of education.* This area specifies the education laws of the country and its rules of implementation, addressing both the ideas of free and compulsory education and the group of actions that, while unintentional, often exclude certain children from access (e.g., the cost of required uniforms or school supplies, entrance or leaving exams, gender policies, lack of services for at-risk children or those with disabilities, a school calendar out of synchrony with the agricultural season). In many cases, the laws state a philosophy or an approach to education, but inquiry into whether the law is fully implemented shows that it is more a goal than a current reality. An important issue to consider is whether the existing philosophy and curriculum provides a range of options in terms of what students are able to study, such as options for alternative or vocational education programs.
- (2) *School facilities.* Topics in this area include the provision of accessible and female-friendly facilities and dormitories or hostels. This is the “hardware” of education, the data on buildings that may or may not attract and hold children’s attention.

¹ *School Dropout Prevention Pilot Program Review of the Literature*, Creative Associates International, 2011.

- (3) *Teacher recruitment, training, and behavior in the classroom.* This area focuses on the process of delivery of education services within the classroom, beginning with each country's set of qualifications for teaching staff and the training they are offered and continuing with key aspects of their behavior in class: Do they use the children's mother tongue for instruction? Are they "child-friendly" in their teaching practices? How do they contend with misbehavior?
- (4) *School support services.* In addition to classroom teaching, many schools offer support services that can make a difference to a child attending or not. This area comprises such services as bridge courses for overage children, a noontime meal, health care, or life skills classes or clubs.
- (5) *Cultural practices.* This final area shows key cultural practices that may affect a child's continuance in school, such as the age children marry, the response to pregnancy, and any rites of passage that children must go through.

Following the main body of the report is Appendix A, which contains the full explanatory charts of policies and programs in India and describes the resource documents, target group(s), comments on implementation, and the reported effects of the policies and programs on dropout rates. In most cases, formal evaluations of the effectiveness of various policies and programs in relation to dropout were not available. Instead, SDPP country staff met with MOE officials, funding or implementing agency representatives, and local education specialists to obtain their informed impressions of the effect on dropout.

II. Policies and Programs

A. Legal Context of Education

Table 1 shows the policy context in India with regard to compulsory and free education. The first five rows speak to the issue of the “compulsory” nature of education by describing whether Indian law makes education a child’s right, requires schooling, prohibits child labor (which is likely to keep children out of school), holds schools accountable for meeting state-imposed standards, and ensures that children attend. India has accepted the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), including the right to education, and has made elementary education (grades 1 through 8) compulsory. In 2010, it updated the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Framework of Implementation* which specifies how the nation’s laws shall be implemented and authorizes the SSA to oversee the implementation. India prohibits child labor for those under 14, with the exception of children working in family businesses. Education authorities must inquire into parental complaints about schooling and are legally required to ensure the admission, attendance and completion of children within their jurisdiction, but they do not engage the equivalent of “truant officers” to check that children enroll and remain in school through the required years.

Table 1: India’s Policies on Compulsory and Free Education

Policy Topic	India
1. Children’s rights	Accepts the Convention on the Rights of the Child
2. Compulsory education	Requires elementary education (grades 1-8)
3. Child labor laws	Prohibits employment of children under 14 (except in family businesses)
4. School accountability	Inquiries into parental complaints
5. Tracking/follow-up of absent students	Says authorities must ensure admission, attendance and completion of grades 1-8
6. School tuition and/or fees	Prohibits fees for elementary schools, and allows fees in secondary schools for extracurricular programs, examinations, and cultural events
7. Tuition subsidies/scholarships	Offers cash incentives for secondary school girls, poor children and minorities. Provision of scholarships funded under the state plan of SSA (limited to certain classes and is state subject)
8. Uniform requirements	Provides two uniforms to girls, poor children and minorities in elementary school. Provision of uniforms funded under the state plan of SSA
9. Provision of school supplies, textbooks, etc.	May defray expenses for books and supplies for girls, poor and minorities

Rows 6 to 9 in Table 11 show information regarding the costs of schooling, including the right to or prohibition from charging fees, the offering of scholarships to offset the costs for needy families, the requirement of uniforms and the provision of books and supplies. India prohibits fees for elementary school, but allows secondary school fees for extracurricular programs, examinations, and cultural events. To offset such costs, it authorizes the SSA to provide scholarships to girls, children belonging to scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST), other backward castes (OBC), and educationally backward minorities, and other meritorious or needy

students; this is funded under the state component. India allows its states to decide if uniforms are required, and where they are, authorizes SSA to provide two sets of uniforms to all girls, children from SC, ST, and those below the poverty line. SSA may also defray expenses such as textbooks for girls and socially disadvantaged students.

Tables 2 through 4 continue the review of the legal context of education in India by displaying a list of factors that are known to impede children’s *access* to and *retention* in school. Such factors include the country’s policies and practices regarding the following:

- *Examinations*, which may be required for children to enter a grade or new school cycle or graduate from grade to grade or cycle to cycle;
- *Promotion*, where schools may have a quota of children required to pass or a policy of automatically promoting children;
- *Gender*, which may encourage girls to enter and continue their education or form barriers for them;
- Services to *at-risk children* and those with disabilities, who may be excluded because of caste, tribe, language or physical/mental problem;
- *School calendar*, which may or may not adapt to the agricultural or fishing schedule of families;
- *Class size*, which may be so large that some children are “lost” in the crowd;
- *Age limits* for school cycles, so children may “age out” of a school, even though they have not completed the required work;
- *School distance from habitation*, which may be so long that parents do not feel it is safe or appropriate for children to make the trip;
- Provision of *transportation*, so that those relatively far from the school can easily make the trip; and
- *Transfer* requirements, which can facilitate a child whose family moves from place to place.

Table 2: India’s Policies on Examinations and Promotion

Policy Topic	India
10. School entrance exams	None
11. Promotion quota	None
12. Automatic promotion	Elementary school children are automatically promoted
13. Age limits for school cycles	None; overage children are to be admitted to a class appropriate for their age and provided supports to catch up
14. School leaving exams	None in elementary school; Board exams at the end of class 10

With regard to examinations and promotion requirements, as shown in Table 2, India strongly encourages children to stay in school. It prohibits entrance examinations, requires that all elementary school children be automatically promoted, and has no age limits for school cycles. If a school-age child enters school late, that child must be admitted to the appropriate class for his/her grade and be provided with assistance to catch up academically. India prohibits school

leaving examinations at the end of elementary school, but does have Board exams at the end of class 10.

Table 3 summarizes information on policies for equal access to and retention in school, regardless of gender, at-risk status (e.g., orphans, minorities), family income, or presence of disabilities. India is working toward equal access for all groups, with a stated policy of having 50 percent female teachers in elementary schools, and a number of programs provide (a) special assistance to areas of the country where female literacy is low, (b) non-formal education centers and bridge programs to encourage girls and other at-risk children to come to school, (c) upper primary residential schools where girls from disadvantaged groups might have difficulty attending an existing school regularly, and (d) cash, uniforms, and school books and materials to those in need.

Table 3: India’s Policies and Programs to Support Girls and At-Risk Students

Policy Topic	India
15. Gender-related policies	Requires 50% women teachers in elementary school; offers special assistance where female literacy is low; has non-formal education centers, programs to enroll and retain girls, and bridge programs; sets up residential schools at upper primary for girls; provides cash, uniforms, and supplies to at-risk secondary girls
16. Support for at-risk students	Requires inclusive education for at-risk children and those with disabilities; offers special assistance to at-risk students through non-formal education centers, bridge programs, and scholarships that may also include uniforms, books and supplies

Three particular examples of extensive programs for girls, administered by the SSA, include the National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) and the Mahila Samakhya (i.e., Women’s Groups) programs. NPEGEL aims to develop and promote facilities to provide access and facilitate retention of girls and ensure greater participation of women and girls in education, improve the quality of education, and empower girls. KGBV is a scheme for setting up residential schools at the upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minority communities. The scheme is being implemented in educationally backward blocks of the country where the female rural literacy is below the national average and the gender gap in literacy is above the national:

1. To provide women and adolescent girls with the necessary support structure and an informal learning environment to create opportunities for education;
2. To create an environment where women can seek knowledge and information and be empowered to play a positive role in their own development and the development of society;
3. To set in motion circumstances for greater participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education programs;
4. To create an environment in which education can serve the objectives of women’s equality; and

5. To enable women's groups to actively assist and monitor education activities in the villages.

Table 4 summarizes India's positions on other issues that have been associated in the literature with access and retention. The first is that of school calendar. Since many children are needed by their families to participate in agriculture or fishing, which have seasonal variations in the need for extra help, many may be absent for weeks during a school term. One result of their absence may be falling behind in their course work, leading to a need to repeat the grade. In response to this issue, India has instituted a policy allowing local authorities to adjust the school schedule to allow the largest possible number of children to attend every day the school is open.

Table 4: India's Policies and Programs on Other Access/Retention Issues

Policy Topic	India
17. School calendar	Has policy for local authorities to adjust school timings to the convenience of children
18. Class size	Requires a pupil-teacher ratio of about 40:1 (differs by grade)
19. Access/ distance to school	Requires elementary schools within 1K of every habitation, secondary within 5K and higher secondary within 7-10K
20. Transportation	Provides transport for elementary school children with disabilities and those in remote rural locations or distant urban locations, and for rural secondary girls and socially disadvantaged children; covered and funded under the state specific plan.
21. School transfer	Permits transfer for completion of elementary education or when a family moves

India is very responsive to all of the remaining issues on Table 4 which may inhibit a child's ability to attend school. Since children in large classrooms can be ignored and fall behind, without the teacher even being aware there is a problem, India limits class size to approximately 40; where the number of children in a grade is large, its requirements include a head teacher. Every school must have at least two teachers. In classes 6 to 8, at least one teacher is required per class for science and mathematics, social studies, and languages; where enrollment exceeds 100, a full-time head teacher and part-time instructors must be employed for art education, health and physical education, and work education. In secondary schools, the pupil-teacher ratio should be 40:1.

Traveling a far distance to school can be discouraging to children, and parents may view distances as unsafe for their children (especially girls) to cover each day. India has responded by setting strict limits on the distance a school can be from children's habitation, requiring an elementary school to be within one kilometer of each habitation, a secondary school within 5 kilometers and higher secondary within 7-10 kilometers from every habitation. Some states have transportation policies to assist children with disabilities and those in areas far from schools to cover the distance to school each day. In addition, several states require that girls and socially disadvantaged children admitted to class 9 in a rural areas be given a bicycle (or a wheelchair, if required) for transportation or provided with a pass for public transportation.

The final issue in this section is that of transfer policies. In some countries, it is only possible to transfer at the beginning of the school year or a term, so that children whose family changes location may have to wait up to a year to re-enter school after the move. India generously gives children the right to seek transfer to any school for completion of his/her studies.

B. School Facilities

Table 5 discusses two major policies with regard to facilities. As the table reads, India is committed to accessible and child-friendly facilities for all children in need. All levels of schools must meet stringent infrastructure standards with separate toilets for boys and girls, barrier-free access for children with disabilities, safe and adequate drinking water, a kitchen for the preparation of a mid-day meal, a playground and boundary walls. In areas where it is difficult for children to get to school – and to ensure girls, disadvantaged students, and those with disabilities can attend – it authorizes the building of dormitories for upper primary and secondary students.

Table 5: India’s Policies and Programs Concerning Facilities

Policy Topic	India
22. Accessible and female-friendly facilities	Requires all schools to meet minimum infrastructure standards, including separate toilets for boys and girls, barrier-free access, safe and adequate drinking water, a kitchen for preparation of mid-day meals, playground and boundary wall
23. Dorms/hostel for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorizes residential facilities in (a) sparsely populated or hilly and forested areas with difficult terrain, (b) densely populated urban areas where it is difficult to get land for schools, or (c) urban areas where there are a number of deprived children who require lodging • Provides such facilities for upper primary and secondary school girls and students belonging to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward castes and minority communities

C. Teacher Recruitment, Training, and Behavior in the Classroom

Getting children into school is essential to education, and keeping them in their classroom depends upon governmental policies like those discussed above, the practices of teachers, and the contents of the curriculum. India is working hard to recruit a sufficient number of teachers to ensure their regulations on class size are met (see Table 6). In addition to qualified teachers, the country currently allows the recruitment of community members as “parateachers” who do not fully meet the required teacher qualifications but can assist in meeting the demand for basic education. The government, through SSA, has authorized in-service training, especially for those not fully qualified, and has set a requirement of five days per year of training for education staff at the secondary level to keep them fully up-to-date in their fields and in pedagogy. There is no document available that discusses the degree to which these training requirements are being followed.

Table 6: India’s Policies and Programs for Teacher Recruitment and Training

Policy Topic	India
24. Teacher recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports States to recruit an adequate number of qualified teachers • Limits teacher vacancies to 10% in each school • Allows the recruitment of parateachers for formal and alternative schools to meet the demand for basic education
25. Teacher professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorizes in-service training to improve teacher performance in the classroom • Provides up to 10-days in-service training each year for all elementary school teachers. • Requires 5 days of in-service training a year for secondary and higher secondary teachers, principals and vice principals. • Provides for 30 day induction training for newly recruited trained teachers in order to orient them to their roles and responsibilities, the expectations of the SSA program and specific state/district priorities in quality education.

India has a significant number of policies to ensure that elementary school classrooms are child-friendly (Table 7). Its teacher code of conduct prohibits the use of physical punishment or mental harassment and bans teachers from earning extra money through private tuition, a practice which can mean students are required to pay fees to the teacher. Its child-friendly schools policy has set standards for teaching, which include learning through activities, discovery and exploration; use of the child’s mother tongue; use of assessments that measure a child’s understanding and ability to use information rather than memorization; and involvement of families. At this time, there is no completed evaluation to measure the degree to which these policies are implemented or the success of these policies and programs in changing teacher behaviors.

Table 7: India’s Policies and Programs on Teacher Behavior in the Classroom

Policy Topic	India
26. Teacher code of conduct	Prohibits elementary school teachers from using physical punishment and mental harassment and engaging in private tuition
27. Bullying/ harassment prevention	Forbids mental harassment by elementary school teachers
28. Corporal punishment	Bans physical punishment by elementary school teachers
29. Child-friendly schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets standards for elementary school teaching, including learning through activities, discovery and exploration, use of the child’s mother tongue, free of fear and trauma • Through UNICEF and Azim Premji Foundation, supports the Child-Friendly School Initiative to ensure a child-friendly environment and involve families and communities • Through Azim Premji and other NGOs, the Learning Guarantee Program moves teachers from rote learning tests to assessments of understanding and application of knowledge, builds accountability for child learning outcomes, provides feedback to schools and rewards outstanding school performance
30. Language of instruction	As far as practicable, primary school teachers should instruct in the child’s mother tongue

With regard to the curriculum in schools, there are no special requirements for the curriculum in regular schools that might affect dropout rates (see Table 8). There is, however, a distance learning option for students to access vocational courses through the National Institute for Open Schooling.

Table 8: India’s Policies and Programs on Curriculum

Policy Topic	India
31. Primary and secondary school curriculum	No special policies for dropouts
32. Vocational education professional development	Offers vocational courses at pre-secondary, secondary, senior secondary and post-senior secondary levels through distance learning by the National Institute for Open Schooling

D. School Support Services

Table 9 summarizes the additional services offered by schools or community institutions that may be of assistance to students and keep them in school. Specifically, in addition to the vocational program discussed above, India has a number of remedial or bridge programs for children at risk of dropping out:

- The Education Guarantee Scheme, under the SSA, ensures the availability of centers or schools to young children in remote areas where there are fewer children than justifies a regular elementary school;
- The Alternative and Innovative Education Program (AIE), also under the SSA, offers interventions for very deprived children (e.g., street children, migrating children, and working children) to bring them back to school; these may be residential, if needed;
- Special programs for students transitioning from elementary to secondary school; and
- Programs for out-of-school children from 15 to 18 years of age to bring them back into the formal education system.

The evaluation of the AIE program suggests that, because of its services, dropouts have returned to school, but no specific percentages of children are reported. The other programs do not have evaluations of the degree of their coverage or their impact.

Table 9: India’s Policies and Programs on School Support Services

Policy Topic	India
33. Remedial tutoring/bridge programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers the Education Guarantee Scheme, under SSA, to establish centers or schools in remote areas • Implements an Alternative and Innovative Education Program under SSA to serve the needs of out-of-school children and bring them back to school
34. Provision of meals	Funds the National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education to deliver a free mid-day meal to school children
35. Health care for students	Provides children with services such as de-worming and micro-nutrient supplements, health cards and referral services under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) funded under the state specific plan
36. Life skills workshops/classes	Offers secondary and higher secondary students the YUVA (“Youth”) School Life Skills Program to build critical thinking, social and negotiating skills, and promote health in Delhi government schools
37. Extracurricular activities	None
38. Community participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandates that all schools have School Management Committees (SMC) with 50% women and proportionate representation to disadvantaged groups and low-income families • Has sponsored the Lok Jumbish program in Rajasthan to train Village Education Committees to become actively involved in school matters • Implemented the Shiksha Karmi project, which has organized community mobilization activities and helped Village Education Committees to promote community involvement • Offers the Janshala Program to sustain community participation in school management, improve teachers’ use of child-centered learning, and enhance the attendance of children, mainly girls, in school
39. Early childhood care	Offers an early childhood program for children ages 3 to 6 in uncovered areas, develops materials, and promotes transitions to schools

Other support services for students include mid-day meals for elementary age children, health services for all students such as de-worming and micro-nutrient supplements, the provision of health cards and referral services, and life skills workshops for secondary and higher secondary students. In addition, schools are expected to organize SMCs with representation from parents in all cultural and income groups to aid in education management and assure that education services are of sufficient quality. Special programs, like Lok Jumbish, Shiksha Karmi, and the Janshala Program aid in the building of Village Education Committees to mobilize the community around education issues and promote involvement in their schools.

Alone among these services, the mid-day meal scheme has been reviewed in that each State must report on it. In general, these reports demonstrate that the scheme is functioning well in the provision of meals but do not incorporate statistics relevant to dropout. One report from Rajasthan states that class wise retention (classes 1 to 5) increased by 13% to 15% with the meal scheme in place, but an extensive study of the program across India suggests that increases in

enrollment, attendance, and retention are not due to the meal scheme but to SSA and the resulting increase in awareness of communities of the importance of education.

E. Cultural Practices

Though not a part of ministry rules for education, some cultural practices may affect a child's access to school and ability to stay in school (see Table 10). Such practices include the traditional age of marriage, traditional rites of passage that may interfere with a school schedule, and expectations if a girl falls pregnant. India has set the legal age for marriage at 18 for females and 21 for males, but certain castes and ethnic groups, especially in rural areas, tend to marry their children at younger ages. Similarly, there is no law regarding pregnant girls attending school or returning once the child is born, but girls generally do not return to school.

Table 10: India's Cultural Practices

Policy Topic	India
40. Age of marriage	Makes 18 the legal age of marriage for females and 21 for males, but certain castes and ethnic groups, especially in rural areas, tend to marry their children early
41. Pregnancy	Has no law regarding pregnant girls or mothers returning to school; generally girls prefer not to return
42. Rites of passage	None

III. Options for SDPP Interventions

In reviewing the policy and program context in India, it becomes clear that the government is actively working to establish good policy, and the SSA is pushing to accomplish all government aims. However, there is a lack of evaluation of these efforts, which leaves questions about the reality on the ground. Where there have been assessments (e.g., of the mid-day meal scheme and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya to establish residential schools for girls in disadvantaged groups), the country-wide results suggest that the programs are operating as they are supposed to, but not necessarily having the effect of lowering the dropout rate.

In designing an SDPP intervention for evaluation, it does not make sense for staff to “inspect” schools to see if specific requirements are met (e.g., that children have textbooks, schools have separate toilets for boys and girls, classes meet the class size requirements, and children living far from the school have been given bicycles). But it may be possible for SDPP to assist the ministry in evaluating key SSA programs to assess their implementation and relationship to student dropout. The following policies may benefit from such an evaluation:

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- *Automatic promotion:* Has the policy of promoting all children in elementary school led to children staying in school? Has it also reduced teachers’ commitment to child learning and the quality of their instruction?
- *Assignment of new children to a class by age:* Has the policy of placing children in a class according to their age rather than their skill level – and providing them with additional help to catch up – led to these children staying in school? As much as anything, this is an evaluation of the bridge courses designed to bring the children into school and the supplemental courses they are offered once in a regular classroom.
- *Inclusion:* Are children with disabilities, those of low caste and high risk staying in school?
- *Gender-sensitivity:* Does the behavior of teachers in classrooms show the appropriate gender-sensitivity? Where gender sensitivity is high, are girls staying in school more than in places where it is low?
- *In-service training:* Are the authorized in-service courses occurring and are teachers attending? Is this training increasing student interest in their classes and in staying in school?
- *Use of the mother tongue:* How is the mother tongue used in lower primary classrooms? Is it phased out appropriately as children age? Is it affecting the rate of student dropout?

To begin any of these assessments, it is critical to have the approval and encouragement of ministry officials. They may have priorities for topic areas and requirements for cooperation with their staff, and they may not support efforts made by non-government bodies to evaluate their programs. In that case, entering into dialogue with them (and with SSA staff) is the best way to define a solid SDPP intervention.

Appendix A: Country Charts of Policies and Programs for India

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
LEGAL CONTEXT OF EDUCATION				
1. Children's rights	The Government of India ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 12 November 1992 and reviewed national and state laws to bring them in line with the provisions of the Convention.	Children under 18 years		
2. Compulsory education	RTE Act, Section 3(1) specifies the right of children to free and compulsory primary education in a neighborhood school; and Section 13(1) prohibits screening procedures for admission of children.	Children from 6-14 years	Screening procedures would be likely to exclude some children who did not meet screening criteria.	
	The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Framework of Implementation (SSA), 2010 , ² focuses on the provision of primary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life and works to bridge all gender and social category gaps.	Children from 6-14 years		
	The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) calls for universalisation of secondary education, but does not make it compulsory.	Children from 15-18 years		
3. Child labor laws	Child Labor (Prohibition and regulation) Act, 1986; National Child Labor Policy, 1987; National Child Labor Project (NCLP) Scheme: The law states that employment of	Children under 14	To make sure children under 14 are not working but attending school, the MV Foundation runs residential bridge courses to prepare dropouts, out-of-school children and erstwhile working	As many as 92% of children taken out of work reported that they have not yet joined any school to

² Ministry of Human Resource Development. (December 16, 2010). *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Framework of Implementation*. Available at http://www.cips.org.in/public-sector-systems-government-innovations/documents/articles/draft_ssa_framework.pdf, accessed 5/6/2011.

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	children below 14 is illegal, except in family owned enterprises. In pursuance of National Child Labor Policy, the NCLP Scheme was started in 1988 to rehabilitate child labor. The Scheme seeks to adopt a sequential approach with a focus on rehabilitation of children working in hazardous occupations and processes. Under the Scheme, after a survey of children engaged in hazardous occupations and processes has been conducted, children are to be withdrawn from these occupations and processes and put into special schools in order to enable them to eventually be mainstreamed into the formal schooling system.		children for entry into the formal school system in the class appropriate to their age. This has proved to be a very successful strategy in easing the transition of working children into the educational system and has been adopted by the Andhra Pradesh government as well as by NGOs such as Pratham, CINI-Asha, Lok Jumbish & many others.	pursue study, though most of them said that they would love to go to school and study like other children. ³
4. School accountability	RTE Act, Sections 31 and 32: The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights ... shall inquire into complaints relating to any child's right to free and compulsory education and take necessary steps for the protection of these rights. Any person having any grievance relating to the right of a child under this Act may make a written complaint to the local authority having jurisdiction. The local authority shall decide the matter within a period of 3 months after affording a reasonable opportunity of being heard to the parties concerned.	Primary schools		
5. Tracking/	RTE Act, Sections 8 and 9: The central	Children		

³ People's Council for Social Welfare. (No date provided). *Research Report on Status of Child Labour after Implementation of New Legislation banning child labours in all commercial activities*. Available at <http://pcswindia.org/reports/child%20labour.pdf>.

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
follow-up on absent students	government and local authorities must ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of primary education for all children ages 6 to 14.	from 6-14 years		
6. School tuition and/or fees	RTE, Section 3(2): No child shall be obligated to pay any kind of fee or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing primary education. Section 13(1): No school or person shall, while admitting a child, collect any capitation fee. Section 28: No teacher shall engage in private tuition.	Children from 6-14 years	Teachers engaging in private tuition usually charge for this tutoring, which is now prohibited.	
	Secondary schools charge a small fee for extracurricular programs, examinations, and cultural events. As discussed below, subsidization is available for students in need.	Secondary school students		
7. Tuition subsidies/scholarships	Under RMSA, 2.1.3 , there shall be cash incentives for girls and children belonging to SC/ST/Other Backward Castes (OBC)/ educationally backward minorities to attend secondary school, and scholarships will be provided to meritorious/needy students.	Secondary school students		
	Centrally sponsored national means-cum-merit scholarship scheme: scholarships will be provided to regular students in class 9 in government, local body and government-aided schools. The scholarships will be paid from class 9 to class 12 for a maximum period of four years.	Secondary school students	Under this proposed scheme, 100,000 scholarships will be awarded to gifted or meritorious students from low-income families.	
8. Uniform requirements	SSA will provide two sets of uniforms to all girls, children from Scheduled Castes (SC),	Primary school	The purpose of school uniforms is to inspire a sense of belonging and ownership for the	

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	Scheduled Tribes (ST), and those below the poverty line (BPL) wherever State governments have incorporated provision of school uniforms as a child entitlement and are not already providing uniforms from the State budgets.	students	children using a school's services. It is not to instill a sense of regimented, homogenized order. Thus, it is suggested by SSA that the decisions on design of uniforms and procurement are local rather than centralized.	
	Under RMSA, 2.1.3, 6.1, and 6.2 , girls and socially disadvantaged students shall receive free uniforms.	Secondary school students		
9. Provision of school supplies, textbooks, other learning materials	SSA may defray expenses such as textbooks, unless these are already being provided under any other scheme of State governments. This is encouraged for all girls, SC and ST children.	Children from 6-14 years		
	Under RMSA, 2.1.3, 6.1, and 6.2 , girls and socially disadvantaged students shall receive free books.	Secondary school students		
10. School entrance exams	RTE, Section 13(1) : No school or person shall, while admitting a child, ... subject the child ... to any screening procedure. Section 30(1) : No child shall be required to pass any Board examination until completion of primary school.	Children from 6-14 years		
	The RMSA , in its goal of universalization of secondary education, implies no entrance exam, though the document is not explicit on this issue.	Children entering class 9		
11. Promotion quota				
12. Automatic promotion	The RTA Act, Section 16 : No child admitted in a school shall be held back in any class or	Children from 6-14		

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	expelled from school until the completion of primary education.	years		
	The SSA program follows this policy of automatic promotion to encourage children to continue their education to at least Grade 8, whilst minimizing repetition and dropout.	Children from 6-14 years	The no detention policy has consequences (Aggarwal, 2001; Azim Premji Foundation, 2004; Majumdar, 2006; Ramachandran et al, 2004; Thomas, 2001). ⁴ Children may get pushed from one grade to another irrespective of their mastery of content. Of particular concern is the inability to master reading skills, which places the child at increasing disadvantage as he/she moves up to higher classes since the transmission of curriculum is heavily dependent on the printed word (Bhattacharjea, 2007). ⁵ This policy may also have adverse consequences for teachers as they might become complacent knowing that all children will be promoted, regardless of their teaching.	Children who fall far behind, especially in reading skills, may well drop out of school.
13. Age limits for school cycles	RTE Act, Section 4: Where a child above six years of age has not been admitted in any school or, though admitted, could not complete his or her primary education, then he or she	Primary school children		

⁴ Aggarwal, Yash. (2001). *Quality Concerns in Primary Education in India – Where is the Problem?* New Delhi: National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration. <http://www.dise.in/Downloads/Reports&Studies/Quality%20Concerns%20in%20Primary%20Education.pdf>; Azim Premji Foundation. (2004). *Status of Learning Achievements in India: A Review of Empirical Research*. Available at www.azimpremjifoundation.org, accessed 11 May, 2011; Majumdar, Manabi. (2006). Primary Education: Debating Quality and Quantity. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41 (9), 785-88; Ramachandran, Vimala and ERU Research Team. (2004). *Snakes and Ladders: Factors Influencing Successful Primary School Completion for Children in Poverty Contexts, South Asia Human Development Sector Report #6*. New Delhi: World Bank; Thomas, Joseph. (2001). Dynamics of Educational Deprivation: A Case Study of Selected Backward Villages in Kerala, in A. Vaidyanathan & P.R. Gopinathan Nair (Eds.), *Elementary Education in Rural India: A Grassroots View*, pp. 166-216. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

⁵ Bhattacharjea, Suman. (2007). In School But Not Reading, in *ASER Discussion Series: Learning to Read*. Mumbai: Pratham Resource Centre. Available at <http://www.dise.in/Downloads/Use%20of%20Dise%20Data/Krishna%20Narayan.pdf>, accessed 4/28/2011.

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	shall be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age. Upon admission, this child shall have a right to receive special training and shall be entitled to free education until he or she has completed primary school, even if the child is older than 14.			
14. School leaving exams	RTE, Section 30(1): No child shall be required to pass any Board examination until completion of primary school.	Children from 6-14 years		
	The RMSA, 5.9 , suggests adoption of continuous assessment through building student portfolios of work, a reduction in the use of short-answer questions, and the development of a National Evaluation organization to create nation-wide tests for comparability of performance.	Secondary school students	Board examinations are currently required at the end of class 10.	
15. Gender-related policies	Under SSA , 50% women teachers are to be recruited to support gender and social inclusion.	Female teachers		
	The National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) , a part of SSA, aims to (a) develop and promote facilities to provide access and to facilitate retention of girls and to ensure greater participation of women and girls in the field of education, (b) improve the quality of education through various interventions and stress upon the relevance and quality of girls' education for their empowerment.	Disadvantaged girls from class 1 to class 8	NPEGEL provides support in educationally backward blocks where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average of 46% and the gender gap is greater than the national average of 22%; in other blocks with at least 5% SC/ST population and where SC/ST female literacy is below 10%; and also in selected urban slums. Evaluations have shown it to be of uneven quality, a fragmented approach, with weak local planning, and an "add-on."	This program has been quite popular and is perceived as an intervention to improve attendance.
	The Mahila Samakhya program, under SSA, was started nearly 20 years ago to: (a) provide	Poor women	Mahila Samakhya has adopted an innovative approach that emphasizes process rather than the	

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	<p>women and adolescent girls with the necessary support structure and an informal learning environment to create opportunities for education; (b) create an environment where women can seek knowledge and information and be empowered to play a positive role in their own development and the development of society; (c) set in motion circumstances for greater participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education programs, (d) create an environment in which education can serve the objectives of women's equality; and (e) enable Mahila Sanghas (women's groups) to actively assist and monitor educational activities in the villages.</p>		<p>mere fulfillment of targets. Education is understood not merely as acquiring basic literacy skills but as a process of learning to question, critically analyzing issues and problems and seeking solutions. Their strategy has four parts: (a) run non-formal education centers; (b) change popular perceptions of the status of girls in the family, (c) actively work to enroll girls and retain them; and (d) run "bridge schools" for adolescents. They also monitor local schools.</p>	
	<p>The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) program, under SSA, aims to ensure access and quality education to girls in disadvantaged groups by setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minority communities.</p>	<p>Primary school girls and SC, ST, OBC and minorities in difficult areas</p>	<p>KGBV is being implemented in educationally backward blocks of the country where the female rural literacy is below the national average and the gender gap in literacy is above the national average.</p>	<p>The national evaluation report⁶ says that the states do not collate information on drop out. During field visits almost all the teams reported that girls had dropped out, though the proportion of dropouts is not high.</p>
	<p>RMSA, 2.1.3, 6.1.5, 6.1.6, and 6.1.10.2, hostels/residential schools, cash incentives, uniforms, books, and separate toilets shall be provided to girls.</p>	<p>Secondary school girls</p>		

⁶ Ministry of Human Resource Development. (9 February 2008). *National Evaluation II, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalaya*,. Available at <http://ssa.nic.in/research-studies/KGBV%20-%20NPEGEL%20Evaluation%20Report%20Feb%2008.zip/view>, accessed 5/2/2011.

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
16. Support for at-risk students and those with disabilities	RTE Act, Section 3(2): A child suffering from disability shall have the right to pursue free and compulsory primary education...; Sections 8(c) and 9(c): The appropriate government shall ensure that children from low-income families and those belonging to disadvantaged groups are not discriminated against and prevented from pursuing and completing primary education on any grounds.	Primary school children		
	Under RMSA, 2.1.3, 6.1.5, 6.1.6, 6.1.10.2 and 6.3 , inclusive education will be the hallmark of all activities. Hostels/residential schools, cash incentives, uniforms, books, and separate toilets shall be provided to children at risk, and efforts will be made to provide all necessary facilities for differently abled children in all schools.	Secondary school students		
17. School calendar	The National Policy on Education 1986/92 states that “school timings should be adjusted to the convenience of children.”	Public schools		
	SSA affirms that the school calendar is a “matter of social access” and that local authorities should consider flexible academic cycles and school timings to accommodate the requirements for children’s chores.	Public schools		
18. Class size/student: teacher ratio	RTE Act, Section 25 and the Schedule: Within six months from the date of commencement of this Act, the appropriate government and the local authority shall ensure that the Pupil-Teacher ratio, as specified in the Schedule, is maintained in each school.	Primary schools	The schedule specifies, for Classes I-V, that up to 60 children will have 2 teachers; 61 to 90 children, 3; 91 to 120, 4; 121-200, 5; above 150, 5+ a head teacher; above 200, ratio shall not exceed 40. For Classes VI-VIII, at least 1 teacher per class for (a) science and mathematics, (b)	

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
			social studies, and (c) languages; at least 1 teacher for every 35 children; where enrollment exceeds 100, a full-time head teacher and part-time instructors for art education, health and physical education, and work education.	
	The SSA Program will provide for primary and upper primary school teachers to ensure that there is no single teacher school. Overall, the effort will be to meet the required pupil teacher ratio.	Primary schools	The SSA has been revised to meet the requirements of the RTE Act, making provisions for teachers in accordance with the requirements for pupil teacher ratio.	
	Under RMSA, 4.6 , the pupil:teacher ratio for secondary schools should be 30:1.	Secondary schools		
19. Access/distance to school	The SSA will assure that there is a school or alternative schooling facility within 1 kilometer of every habitation.	Children from 6-14 years		
	The RMSA, 1.3 , assures that secondary schools will be within 5 kilometers and higher secondary schools within 7 -10 kilometers of habitation.	Children from 15-18 years		
20. Transportation	To ensure access for all children, the SSA follows the Central RTE Rules, which provide for transportation of children with disabilities and those in remote habitations with sparse populations or in urban areas where availability of land is a problem and schools are therefore far from children's homes. This is covered under state specific plan.	Primary school students		
	The RMSA, 6.1.6 and 6.2.8 , requires that a girl or socially disadvantaged child admitted to class 9 in a rural area be given a bicycle/ wheelchair or that state transportation or a pass	Secondary school students		

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	be made available.			
21. School transfer guidelines	RTE Act, Section 5 (1) and 5(2): Where in a school, there is no provision for completion of primary education; a child shall have a right to seek transfer to any other school ... for completing his or her primary education. Where a child is required to move from one school to another, either within a State or outside, for any reasons whatsoever, such child shall have a right to seek transfer to any other school ... for completing his or her primary education.	Primary schools		
	These transfer stipulations hold also for secondary schools.	Secondary schools		
SCHOOL FACILITIES				
22. Accessible and female-friendly facilities	RTE Act, Section 19 and the Schedule: All schools must meet minimum infrastructure standards.	Primary schools	These standards include separate toilets for boys and girls, barrier-free access, safe and adequate drinking water, a kitchen for preparation of mid-day meals, playground, and boundary wall.	
	The RMSA, 2.1.3, 6.1-6.3 , continues the requirements for secondary school.	Secondary schools		
23. Dorms/ hostels for students	Under SSA , residential facilities may be set up in (a) sparsely populated or hilly and densely forested areas with difficult geographical terrains, (b) densely populated urban areas where it is difficult to get land for establishing schools, or (c) urban areas where there are a number of deprived children who also require lodging facilities.. KGBV authorizes residential schools for upper primary girls and those from SC, ST, OBC and minority	Primary schools		

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	communities.			
	The RMSA, 2.1.3, 6.1 and 6.2 , assures residential facilities for girls and students belonging to SC, ST, OBC and minority communities.	Secondary schools		
TEACHER RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, AND BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM				
24. Teacher recruitment	Recruitment of teachers. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 requires the provision of quality education to all children, which includes the provision of qualified teachers and limited pupil teacher ratios (40:1). Under SSA, states will be supported in recruiting an adequate number of qualified teachers in the new schools sanctioned under the program as well as additional qualified teachers to meet the requirements of the specified pupil: teacher ratios. No school shall have more than a 10% vacancy rate. Rational redeployment of teachers is expected.	Primary school teachers	The RTE Act went into effect April 1, 2010. The revision of its framework for implementation, the SSA, has been drafted and is presented in this document.	
	Recruitment of parateachers. In the meantime, parateachers (contract teachers) are recruited, usually by the community, at less than the regular teacher pay scale, for formal as well as alternative schools, to meet the demand for basic education within the limited financial resources available, in the shortest possible	Primary school teachers	There are three reasons to recruit parateachers: (1) to provide education to children in small hamlets in remote and tribal areas which do not qualify for formal primary schools within the state government norms; (2) to ensure a minimum of two teachers in regular government schools; and (3) to address a high pupil teacher	The Shiksha Karmi project ⁷ significantly improved enrolment, attendance and retention rates in Rajasthan. Similarly, the Amartya Sen's Pratichi Trust ⁸ found

⁷ Ramachandran, V. & Sethi, H. (2000). *Rajasthan Shiksha Karmi Project: An Overall Appraisal*. Desk Study commissioned by SIDA, Embassy of Sweden, New Delhi.

⁸ Rana, K., Rafique, A., & Sengupta, A. (2002). *The Pratichi Education Report I*. New Delhi: TLM Books and Pratichi Trust.

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	time. The Shiksha Karmi project was the first to make popular the concept of parateachers, working in Rajasthan. Now, a variety of similar projects are going on in different states.		ratio.	that in West Bengal, alternative schools taught by parateachers had higher child attendance rates, lower teacher absenteeism rates, and higher parental satisfaction levels with teachers, than regular schools.
25. Teacher professional development	RTE Act, Section 23 sets minimum teacher qualifications and requires that all teachers hired in the future meet such qualifications. Teachers hired before September 3, 2001 need not meet the qualifications. All teachers hired since that date have 5 years to meet the qualifications.	Primary school teachers	SSA will support the training of untrained teachers.	
	Advancement of Educational Performance through Teacher Support (ADEPTS) aims to Improve teacher performance in the classroom and improve the capacity of training institutions to help teachers improve.	Primary school teachers	ADEPTS is designed to encompass and build upon on-going classroom activities, sharpen their focus in achieving specific outcomes, and improve their effectiveness. It is expected that the outcomes of recurrent in-service teacher training under SSA will be teachers meeting performance benchmarks. This would require that all those providing in-service training themselves attain benchmarks as trainers. ADEPTS specifies these clearly.	
	The RMSA, 4.6 , a scheme for the universalisation of access to and improvement of quality at the secondary and higher secondary stage, calls for 5 days of in-service training for all secondary teachers, principals	Secondary school teachers		

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	and vice principals each year.			
26. Teacher code of conduct	RTE Act, Section 17(1) and 28: Teachers are prohibited from using physical punishment and mental harassment or engaging in private tuition.	Primary school teachers		
27. Bullying/harassment prevention	RTE Act, Section 17(1): No child shall be subjected to physical punishment or mental harassment.	Primary schools		
28. Corporal punishment	RTE Act, Section 17(1): No child shall be subjected to physical punishment or mental harassment.	Primary schools		
29. Child-friendly schools	RTE Act, Section 25 and the Schedule set clear pupil teacher ratios, and requirements for facilities to ensure children's comfort in all weather, barrier-free access, a playground, security, and play material, games and sports equipment. Section 29(2) sets standards for teaching, including learning through activities, discovery and exploration, use of the child's mother tongue, making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety and helping the child express views freely.	Primary schools		
	The Child-Friendly School Initiative (CFSI) of the Government of Karnataka, UNICEF and Azim Premji Foundation has multiple aims: (a) to get children excited about enrolling in and attending school; (b) to address all children irrespective of gender and socio-economic status; (c) to ensure cleanliness of the school and its surroundings; (d) to create a school /	Children from 6-14 years	CFSI is an experiment to demonstrate a process of providing quality education in a sustained and child-friendly manner in partnership with all stakeholders by building capacity and accountability in the system.	

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	classroom culture that is conducive to a child's learning; (e) to encourage the active involvement of children, families and communities in the child's learning and in school management; (f) to facilitate the holistic development of the child including habits, attitudes, values and life skills; and (g) to ensure successful completion of school at least up to class 5.			
	The Learning Guarantee Program (LGP) of NGOs including Azim Premji Foundation has several objectives: (a) reform in the assessment of children's learning outcomes by moving from traditional rote learning tests to assessments of understanding, analysis and application of knowledge;(b) reform in teaching learning practices and in teacher training, through reform in assessment processes;(c) building of accountability among schools, teachers and education functionaries for the learning outcomes of every child in school;(d) provision of a platform for such focus through voluntary school participation and visible recognition for performing schools and their communities; and (e) provision of detailed feedback and analysis to schools on their performance , encouragement to seek	Children from 6-14 years	LGP has involved significant communication about the program to schools, community members and education functionaries; the development of new evaluation tools; extensive training of independent evaluators to evaluate schools and children on learning outcomes (both written and oral); and lengthy discussions to evolve plans and strategies to take cognizance of the assessment results and implement interventions to enhance the quality of education for all children.	School community networking emerged as a critical factor in ensuring the attendance of children and providing necessary facilities to promote their active participation. ⁹

⁹ Azim Premji Foundation. (No date provided). *Learning Guarantee Programme: A Learning Journey: 2002 – 2005*. Available at <http://www.azimpremjifoundation.org/downloads/LGPconcept.pdf>, accessed 5/2/2011.

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	academic support, and encouragement of education functionaries to evolve or introduce relevant interventions and actions that will transform classroom practices.			
30. Language of instruction	RTE Act, Section 29(2f): The academic authority, while laying down the curriculum ... shall take into consideration the following: medium of instruction shall, as far as practicable, be in the child's mother tongue.	Primary schools		
31. Curriculum				
32. Vocational education or school-to-work	The National Institute for Open Schooling (NIOS) offers vocational courses at pre-secondary, secondary, senior secondary and post-senior secondary levels. These courses are functional, useful in daily life, and set the pathway to the world of work and to further studies. Most courses have an entrepreneurship component to give students information and confidence about jobs and business opportunities.	SC/STs, women, rural people, semi-literate, disabled and disadvantaged, unemployed youths over 14 yrs	NIOS imparts vocational education through distance learning using a media mix of self-instructional print materials, audio, video and CDROM supported by personal contacts and practical training sessions. These are further supplemented by radio broadcasts and TV programs.	
SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICES				
33. Remedial tutoring/ Bridge courses	The Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) under the SSA ensures the availability of EGS schools/centers in remote areas with at least 15-25 children between 6 and 14 years of age. In exceptional cases, schools can be opened in	Children from 6-15 years	The EGS brings education to remote areas that have heretofore been without a school. They may have begun by establishing a "center," which must be upgraded to a full primary school within 2 years of passage of the RTE Act.	

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	remote habitations in hilly areas for 10 children.			
	The Alternative and Innovative Education Program (AIE) under SSA: Alternative education interventions are designed for specific categories of very deprived children (e.g., child labor, street children, migrating children, working children, children living in difficult circumstances and older children in the 9+ age group, especially adolescent girls).	Children from 6-15 years	A sizeable number of out-of-school children live near a school but either have not enrolled or dropped out before completing their schooling. To bring such children back to school; school camps and bridge strategies have been implemented. These can be residential or non-residential, depending upon the needs of children.	In Andhra Pradesh the percent of out-of-school children decreased from 5.9% to 4.1% due to these interventions. ¹⁰
	The RMSA, 6.4 , promises bridge courses and/or alternative education programmes for students transitioning from primary to secondary school (from class 8 to 9) and to bring out-of-school children back into the formal education system.	Children 15-18 years old		
34. Provision of meals	The National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education , commonly known as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDM), was launched on the 15th August, 1995 on a nationwide scale by the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. It involves provision of lunch free of cost to school children on all school days. The key objectives of the program	Primary school students in government (and government-aided) schools, centers run		According to the Phase III report of SIERT regarding Rajasthan (quoted in Kaushal, 2008), class wise retention (I-V) increased by almost 13%-15% from 2003-07. ¹¹ The author attributes this increase to mid-day meals. However, an extensive study of the

¹⁰ Ministry of Human Resource Development. (no date provided). *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Alternative and Innovative Education*. Available at <http://ssa.ap.nic.in/Alternative%20schooling.pdf>, accessed 5/5/2011.

¹¹ Kaushal, Savita. (2008). *A Study of Best Practices in the Implementation of Mid-Day-Meal Programme in Rajasthan*. Available at <http://www.educationforallinindia.com/mid-day-meal.html>, accessed 4/29/2011.

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	are: protecting children from classroom hunger, increasing school enrolment and attendance, improved socialization among children belonging to all castes, addressing malnutrition, and social empowerment through provision of employment to women.	under the Education Guarantee Scheme, and Alternative & Innovating Education		meal program across India suggests that increases in enrolment, attendance, and retention are not due to the MDM scheme but to SSA and its resulting increase in awareness of the importance of education. ¹²
35. Health care for students	Programs under the National Rural Health Mission include school health programs such as de-worming and micro-nutrient supplementation, with special attention to vulnerable groups, especially girls approaching adolescence. It is covered under state specific plan.	School children	Referral services and health cards under NRHM are being provided to children. NRHM extends intensive and extensive health services to schools.	
36. Life skills workshops/ classes	The State Council of Education and Training, Delhi, has opened the YUVA School Life Skills Programme , which uses a combination of life skills to address emerging issues that have an impact on society. Such skills will help build students' thinking, social and negotiating skills, learning capacities, personality, effective relationships and promote their health. It is a state specific initiative for Delhi school students	Secondary and higher secondary students		
37. Extracurr-				

¹² Planning Commission, Government of India. (2010). *Performance Evaluation of Cooked Mid-Day Meal*. Available at http://education.nic.in/Elementary/mdm/data/peo_cmdm0106.pdf, accessed 4/29/2011.

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
icular activities				
38. Community participation	The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments provide for decentralization of governmental activities and facilitate transfer of power and participation of the local self-government institutions in education. Local persons are expected to participate in education management and in assuring that basic education services are of satisfactory quality.	Primary schools, local bodies, parents, teachers	These amendments resulted in the formation of Village Education Committees with the objective of enhancing education in their locality. They try to ensure that no child is left out of school and those who did not complete their education attend adult education centers.	
	The RTE Act, Section 21 states that all primary schools shall have SMC, consisting of the school representatives of the local authority, parents or guardians of children admitted to the school and teachers, where at least ¾ of members are parents/guardians and there is proportionate representation given to parents/guardians of children in disadvantaged groups or from low-income families. Fifty percent of members shall be women. SMCs must monitor the working of the school, prepare a school development plan and apply for grants to implement the plan, and monitor the utilization of the grants received.	Primary schools, parents, teachers, students	It has been established that major impediments to universal access, enrolment, retention and quality of education are the ignorance of the community and their non-involvement in the entire process. Empowered and professionally equipped SMCs are crucial for anchoring community awareness and participation efforts.	
	To ensure effective implementation of the RTE, SSA aims to bring grassroots organizations with proven experience in to monitor implementation.	Primary schools, parents, teachers, students	The potential areas of partnership include social mapping; social audit; mobilization and awareness building; resource support; training of SMCs; training of people on their rights; specialized support such as design of new buildings, gender training, publication of books and journals, and working with children with special needs; ensuring equity, quality and non-	

Policy or Program Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
			discrimination; and development of curriculum and pedagogy.	
	The Lok Jumbish program in Rajasthan forms and trains Village Education Committees, which become actively involved in school matters.	Primary schools, parents, teachers, students	Lok Jumbish has had a positive effect on the empowerment of locally elected people, especially on female representatives at village level, who are often active members of the core teams or women's groups.	
	Community participation is also a part of the Shiksha Karmi (parateacher) project. The implementing agency, Sarva Shiksha Mission, organizes community mobilization activities to generate awareness in the community and ensure participation in the implementation of universal primary education. It helps communities form Village Education Committees in rural areas and Ward Education Committees in urban areas to promote community involvement in primary education and encourage village level planning. Committee roles include mobilizing resources for maintenance, repair and construction of school infrastructure and helping determine the school calendar and school timings.	Children from 6-14 years		
	The Janshala Program has three goals: (a) to enhance and sustain community participation in effective school management; (b) to improve the performance of teachers in the use of interactive child-centered and gender-sensitive methods of teaching, especially in multi-grade classrooms; and (c) to redress social constraints which affect the attendance and performance of	Children from 6-14 years	The approach of the program is to promote educational planning and management through existing structures at block level on the basis of village-based micro-planning. States are expected to build on indigenous talent and expertise and learn from the experience of existing national, state and internationally assisted programs of primary education. The	

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	children (mainly girls).		endeavor would be to achieve UEE in selected blocks through additional interventions, convergence and integration of education, health and allied sectors.	
	The RMSA, 7.1 and 8.3 , mandates that each secondary school have a School Management and Development Committee, headed by the principal, to improve school facilities. The committee includes education personnel, 2 parents, a member from a SC/ST, 1 from an educationally backward group, 1 from a women's group, and 1 from the educational development committee of each village to which the school caters. In addition, each school must have a PTA to address school/parent concerns.	Secondary schools		
CULTURAL PRACTICES				
39. Age of marriage	The legal age for marriage is 18 years for females and 21 years for males under The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 .	Students	Certain castes and ethnic groups, especially in rural India tend to marry their children early. But with greater awareness and exposure the trend is gradually declining.	
40. Pregnancy	There is no law regarding pregnant girls attending school or returning after giving birth.	Citizens	If a girl falls pregnant, she generally prefers not to go to school and drops out. She may enroll in an open or distance learning program.	
41. Rites of passage/ cultural rituals				
OTHER				
42. Early Childhood Care	The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has the following objectives: (a)	Children in the age-	ECCE serves to compensate for early childhood deprivations at home by providing an	Research studies conducted by the National

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	strengthening the pre-school component in the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) by need-based training of Anganwadi sevika and provision of additional personnel, learning material, etc.; (b) setting up Balwadis as pre-school centers in uncovered areas; generating awareness of the importance of early child development through advocacy programs; (c) organizing training programs for community leaders; (d) development of materials for ECCE-related activities; and (e) promoting convergence between the school system and ECCE arrangement	group of 3-6	appropriately stimulating environment for meeting children's education needs and ensuring they receive health services. ICDS is the largest ECCE program, at present, in the country.	Council for Educational Research and Training and other institutions in the country have demonstrated a significantly positive impact of early childhood programs on retention rates in primary grades. ¹³

¹³ Kaul, Venita & Sankar, Deepa. (2009). *Early Childhood Care and Education in India*. Available at <http://www.educationforallinindia.com/early-childhood-care-and-education-in-india.pdf>, accessed 4/25/2011

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