

Free education

Investment in primary education is considered to be very productive in a poor and developing country like ours. Development experts, educationists and such others agree on it. Because, investments in primary education sector go to substantially enhance the production and earning capabilities of the people, which have immense beneficial impact on the economy and the society as a whole. Primary education also can act as a catalytic agent for modernisation of a backward society and economy. For, it not only helps increase the individual efficiency of a person but also brings in changes in his mental make-up and make him more conscious about life itself and its surroundings. This vital sector of our national life, however, did not receive the desired attention and resource mobilisation till very recent times. It is thus a welcome move that along with free primary education the government has arranged to distribute books and dresses to the primary level free of cost.

According to a report all students of class I and II and 50 per cent of class III of the country's primary schools will be given books without any charges from the government. The authorities will also make free distribution of 24 lakh sets of school dresses to 12 lakh boys and girls of class II. Besides with aid from the UNICEF the government plans to provide other essential amenities like black board, chalk pencil and khata to the primary schools and the students free of cost. May be all these will involve quite an expenditure on the part of the government but considering our socio-economic circumstances, it will have a tremendous impact for the better. The immediate benefit which the free distribution of books and dresses will give is that it will attract more students at the primary level schools in the rural areas where majority of the population live.

Though with the nationalisation of primary education the government and other registered primary schools do not charge any tuition fees still the other educational expenditures like books, khata, paper, pencil and even a plain dress, are quite high for most of the parents to meet easily. And no doubt one of the chief reasons for over fifty percent of our eligible primary school goers not attending schools at all, is economic. For the guardians the government's new move will come as a relief and they would appreciate further expansion of such programmes covering all the classes at the primary level.