



## Rajbhawan Uttarakhand-Information Wing

### Press Note

#### Dehradun 28 March, 2011:

The Governor of Uttarakhand Smt. Margaret Alva has said that even though the educational scenario in the State as put forward by the Uttarakhand Annual Status of Education Report–2010 paints a satisfactory picture on the whole, but there is a considerable scope for qualitative improvement in it.

Speaking as Chief Guest after releasing the 'Uttarakhand Annual Status of Education Report–2010' at Raj Bhawan auditorium here today, the Governor said that the key findings presented in the Report in terms of the different parameters are "revealing and generally encouraging". The report has been prepared by the Pratham Education Foundation, Delhi.

Among other things, the Governor took note of the facts mentioned in the report that there are 98.3% children in the 6-14 years age group in schools in Uttarakhand. Of these, 68% are in government schools and 29% in private schools. Moreover, the percentage of out-of-school girls is declining and stands at 9.7% only. Language learning levels are, however, declining i.e., only 65.8% children in standard five could read two level text books. In addition, paid tuition figures are declining but 84.3% of schools surveyed did not fulfill the pupil-teacher ratio, prescribed under RTE norms. Multigrade seating seems to be the norm.

"It is also disturbing to note that 47.7% schools do not have girl's toilets and 22.1% schools have no provision for drinking water. But it is most gratifying to note that 95.1% schools surveyed provided mid day meals to their students", she said. The Governor said that the mid-day meals has been successful in increasing enrolment, attendance and retention of students in primary school in Uttarakhand and the state has achieved an impressive coverage of the schools in this programme.

Highlighting some of the present day concerns on school education, the Governor said that despite the strong constitutional backing for the provision of primary education and its expansion over time, the system is characterised not only by low achievements, but also by large unevenness in achievements. "Huge gaps remain between rural and urban areas; and the probability of getting any education at all, depends on gender, caste and income. Women, Scheduled Castes and Tribes and the poor are faced with formidable barriers when it comes to basic education", she said.

On the occasion, the Governor said that the country had made great strides in educating its population of more than a billion people, by way of enrolment of children in schools, efforts at improving the quality of education and its outreach. "And yet the issue of critical concern is the low quality of its content. Even in educationally advanced States, an unacceptably low proportion of children who complete all grades of primary school have functional literacy. The quality of teaching that is imparted is insufficient to master basic literacy and numeric skills. Then there are instances where children can read their basic texts fluently, without an understanding or comprehension of the text. The large percentage of children especially girls who drop out before completing primary schooling, is compounded by teacher apathy, teacher absenteeism, very low pupil-teacher ratios, and inadequate teacher training", she said.

The Governor said that apart from socio-economic determinants, the educational infrastructure and the management and governance of the educational system in the country are far from efficient or sufficient. Among other factors, she mentioned long distances between school and habitations, inadequate teacher-pupil ratios, and weak teacher motivation and teaching incentives.

She said that the idea of attaching Anganwadis to primary schools was mooted with the objective of encouraging girls (who otherwise are kept at home to attend to siblings) to attend school. Where implemented enrolment of girls has shown an increase and drop out rates have decreased. "The RTE aims at bringing children on a common denominator of education by providing for admission of children from weaker sections into recognized private schools. The measure is being resisted by the privileged sections on various grounds which tend to ignore their social responsibility", she said.

On the occasion, the Governor also praised the efforts of the Pratham organization in providing quality education to the underprivileged children through a range of interventions. She expressed the hope that the Status of Education Report will help bring all of these issues to the centre of the educational debate and search for a durable consensus that would translate itself into mass mobilization and action.

Those who were present on the occasion include Additional Secretary to the Governor Shri Arun K. Dhaundiyal, Shri Brij Kaul, Ms. Rukmini Banerji and Ms. Purnima Rangrajan from Pratham organisation, and large number of facilitators and volunteers who helped in conducting the survey for the report, among others.