

## The holy grail: India's quest for universal elementary education

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### Abstrak

This book chronicles India's quest for universal elementary education (UEE) with focus on the period after 1986, a period during which India made spectacular strides progressing from a country which accounted for a third to one with a minuscule 0.3 per cent of the out-of-school children in the world. This was also the period in which following the Jomtien Conference on Education for All and the acute macroeconomic crisis of early 1990s India mobilized funding on an unprecedented scale from development agencies like the World Bank, European Community, DFID, and UNICEF. For the first time, this book comprehensively narrates against the backdrop of national and global ideational, economic, political, and educational developments the dynamics of the engagement with development agencies, and all developments, policies, and programmes which contributed to spectacular strides. The distinctiveness of the book lies in the fact that for the first time for a book on education, and unusual even for books on policy and development cooperation the book illuminates the inner workings of governments and development agencies, the political and administrative processes and policy conflicts that were crucial in conceptualizing and implementing the policies and programmes, the complex web of interactions between the central government, state governments, and development agencies, and the innovative manner in which external funds were mobilized with the Indian government exercising leadership in its relationship with agencies, and without compromising its right country to autonomously and self-reliantly plan and implement programmes. All in all, the book provides information and many insights few, even experts, possess, and should be of interest to not only to educationists, and educational administrators but also to scholars and practitioners of development cooperation and policymaking in general.