

The Hindu  
13 Nov. 2006

## SSA: kids benefit from private partnership

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**NEW DELHI:** For all its reservations about public-private partnership (PPP) in education, the Union Human Resource Development Ministry cannot help beaming at the manner in which the private sector has been drawn into contributing to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

However, HRD Ministry officials - while flaunting the private partnership the SSA has attracted right down to the block level in computer-aided learning - are quick to add that this is an area where PPP can

work because the private sector has far greater expertise.

"Lending a helping hand to the Government in developing educational software is not the same thing as opting for the voucher system to allow the State to withdraw from its responsibility to set up schools as is being advocated by Planning Commission by way of PPP in education."

Over 52 lakh children in 27,289 schools across the country have benefited from private partnership in the SSA.

And, the private entities involved

include the Azim Premji Foundation, Microsoft Corporation, Intel, IBM, CISCO, the NIIT, the Aptech Ltd., besides institutions such as the MP Rajya Shiksha Kendra (Bhopal) and Bhoj University.

The Government sets the curriculum and the private entities take care of developing the software, loading it on to the system, training teachers or getting the children to work on the interactive programmes. While some are involved at every stage, others chip in at those stages where they have the necessary expertise.

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