CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of midnight hour, while the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.” These were the eloquent words uttered by our first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the eve of India’s Independence on August 15th 1947. The very tryst with destiny was realized 17 years later when the Kothari Commission for Education 1964-66 was set up wherein its opening sentence said, “The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms”.1

Independent India emerged from an age-old inertia along with a series of socio-economic and political problems. The problem of unemployment and underemployment allied with colossal poverty of the masses made India stand as one of the poorest countries in the world in spite of her vast and rich national resources.

Mass illiteracy connected with mass poverty worsened the situation. Being steeped into ignorance and peoples’ lack of participation in the developmental activities, created a strong surge of nationalism and extreme enthusiasm from the people which was highlighted in India proclaiming to herself a challenging Constitution which acclaims to be one of the most demanding written document. The Indian Constitutional commitment to provide by 1960 free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years was obviously far too ambitious but the very fact that education was regarded as one of the most potential instrument of social transformation and important means of national development was significant.

Various national policies on education were established in order to achieve the Constitutional Directive of Universalisation of Primary Education.
The Kothari Commission for Education 1964-66 identified three major programmes of (a) Internal transformation (b) Quantitative improvement (c) Expansion of educational facilities.2

The National Policy of Education 1968 aimed at national progress, common citizenship and national integration, and stress was laid on development of science and technology, and improvement of quality in education. The implementation of this policy resulted in all-round expansion of education in the country and a common system of (10+2+3) was adopted by most of the states.

The Magna Carta of Education (i.e.) NPE, 1986 was designed to usher in a National System of Education. It aimed at removing disparities and imbalances in various sectors of education. Besides, review committees were set up to follow-up and evaluate the programmes of the Commission. However, on account of various difficulties there has been a lacuna between the country’s aspirations and achievements and the constitutional directive of Universalisation of Primary or Elementary Education for All, still remains an unfinished task and unrealized dream.
Fifty six years after Independence, our achievement in the educational arena negatively stands, wherein India was considered the most illiterate country in the world by 2000 A.D and every third illiterate in the world is an Indian!

The fundamental purpose of education is the same at all times and in all places. The country is geographically divided into 28 states and 6 Union Territories, the decentralization powers has made the governing task an easy feature but the target laid for each State for achieving their various economic and political ends doesn’t seem encouraging due to various disadvantages posed in these places in form of over population, poverty, unemployment and underemployment, illiteracy, neglect of tribal areas and above all the concurrent financial burden upon Governments has become an all too familiar escape to route out of any real commitment.

At the outset educational responsibility was divided between the Central Government and the States. Initially when the Constitution was drafted, education was a State project. But after the 42nd amendment in the 1976, drastic changes in the Concurrent List made the Central and the State Governments equal partners in framing the educational policies.

The first separate department for education was created in 1910 to look after the education in India. But it was after India achieved its independence on 15th August 1947, a full-fledged Ministry of Education was established on 28th August 1947. The nomenclature and responsibilities of the education department has undergone some changes since independence. The present Department of Education is one of the four constituent departments of the Ministry of Human Resources and Development, which was created on the 26th September 1985.3

Education has been in prime focus throughout India’s development plans. Its importance can be gauged from the fact that it is included as a part of the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution, which states that, “the State shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years”. On 28th November 2002, this very directive was passed in the Lok Sabha, where education became a Fundamental Right.

Educational policy and progress are reviewed in the light of the goal of national development and priorities set from time to time. The National Policy on Education was formulated in 1982 and was later updated in 1992, where specific responsibilities for organizing, implementing and financing its proposals were assigned. The total budgetary expenditure on education by the education departments of the Centre and States has increased from Rs.644.6 millions in 1951-52 to Rs.300, 000 millions in 1995-96. There at present 130 plan schemes in the Department with a total Eighth Plan outlay of Rs.74,430 millions.

The state of political and economic affairs too is responsible for determining the educational policy. For example, in the second five year plan (1956-60) when heavy industries became the basic industries, the socialistic education was given and was put
emphasis on conversion of basic education, secondary and higher education. Also, when India saw the economic crises and the school attendance rate fell in 1960’s a big recommendation on the whole education was done, establishing the advisory committee including foreigners.

UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen years is the Constitutional commitment in India. Keeping in view the educational facilities available at the time of independence in 1947 in the country, the goal of universal enrolment was far too ambitious to achieve within a short span of ten years. Since then the country has made significant progress in all spheres of elementary education but the goal is still a distant dream and far out of sight. The Indian education system is perhaps the second largest in the world, which is catering to more than 190 million students of different socio-economic background. The total population of the country is about 978 million. Till 1960, the emphasis was on quantitative expansion of educational facilities, which later diverted to enrolment and retention. It is the quality of education that is at present in the focus in the entire programme relating to elementary education general, and primary education in particular.

Of the 1060 thousand habitations of the country in 1993-94, about 84 percent are accessing to primary schooling facilities within a distance of one kilometer as against 73 percent having access to upper primary schools within a distance of three kilometers. The country has more than 0.56 million primary schools of which 21 thousand are single teacher schools.  

Availability of schools does not guarantee the adequate infrastructure facilities. A large number of schools do not have minimum infrastructure facilities such as drinking water, toilet facility, school boundary, playground, buildings, teaching-learning aids, electricity etc. In addition, adequate number of instructional rooms and teachers are also not available in a good number of schools. Even if the teaching aids are available that need not guarantee that teachers are well equipped to utilize available teaching learning aids and equipments. The gross enrolment ratio at present is about 90 percent at the primary and 60 percent at the upper primary level that suggests that a large number of children of school age population be still out of school. Of those who are admitted in schools only about 65-70 percent are attending schools. This is also reflected in the high incidence of dropout, which is as high as 45-50 percent at the primary and 60 percent at the elementary level. It may also be of interest to note that the admission intake rate is also very high but about two third children of those who are admitted in grade 1 drop out from the system before they reach grade 3. This severely affects the educational system. The primary education system is efficient to the extent of only 60 percent and children are taking much more time than ideally required to become primary graduates.

A large number of projection exercises have been undertaken both at the State and National level, all to suggest that the goal of universal enrolment is not right in the sight in most of the states. However, a few states are in a position to attain the goal of universal
primary enrollment by the year 2007 but the same in case of the elementary education is not likely to be realized in the next ten years.

In delineating the broad contours of many review process, developments in the basic education during the Education for All (EFA) decade were kept in the main focus. However, it was felt in the Indian context, the natural time period for any such review was post to the launching of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986. It is not difficult to find rationale for this decision. In India’s not so smooth journey towards the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), the NPE stands out as significant landmark. The NPE has formulated after conducting a prolonged nationwide debate on the problems and issues confronting the education system in the country. Further along with the formulation of the policy a Programme of Action (POA) was adopted which clearly outlined the strategies and processes to be pursued for achieving UEE. A framework of partnership followed this between central and state governments on a massive scale through a number of centrally sponsored schemes.

As is well known, the 1990s saw the primary education scene opening up to external assistance on a fairly large scale. Possibly, as part of the commitments made by the international donor community at the Jomtien Conference, the country saw the emergence of a large multi-state programme for EFA under the banner of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). Alongside this, Rajasthan initiated a fairly large programme of EFA under the name of Lok Jumbish (LJ). In the changed scenario, primary education in India truly became a project of international scrutiny. The EFA projects have been in operation, gradually expanding to cover half the country, for last 6 to 8 years. These EFA initiatives, coupled with various centrally sponsored schemes, have undoubtedly made the 1990s the most intensive period of primary education development in India. Meanwhile the literacy scene also got galvanized with the mass literacy campaigns (or Total Literacy Campaigns-TLC) stretching across the length and breadth of the country through the National Literacy Mission (NLM).

Another development in the last decade that forms a part of the backdrop for this study is the Supreme court judgment which, interpreting the constitutional provisions, declared basic education as a fundamental right of every citizen, requiring the state to make necessary provision as a basic obligation. As mentioned earlier, a bill was passed in the Parliament to amend the Constitution to incorporate education up to the age 14 years as a fundamental right of every citizen. Simultaneously, at the international level, basic education found a prime place in the development discourse as a component of the Human Development Index (HDI) brought out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). These national and international developments have transformed the status of UEE from merely a public sector activity of the state to the legal obligation, societal responsibility, and moral commitment. The extent to which these have been operationalized will be reflected in this research work.
Universalisation of Primary Education—Factors of Hindrances and Disparities

With the advent of independence, more than five and half decades ago, India undertook the arduous task of building a system of education in tune with the goals and aspirations of its people. It was not easy to dismantle the legacies of the colonial system of education left behind by the British rulers, one perceived to be essentially elite oriented and suited to the interests of the ruling class. An immediate challenge was to establish a system of mass education, which was egalitarian in character. It is in this perspective that the Constitution states under Article 45 of the Directive Principles, about Universalisation of Primary Education.

In the last decade of the 20th century, we were threatened with the prospect that India may have to contend with more that 50 percent of all the world’s illiterates at the dawn of the twenty-first century. If current trends continue we will find more children of school-going age outside the school, on the streets or working places sweating as child labourers than in classrooms. The country has to continue its relentless struggle, to eradicate illiteracy and ensure that every child will benefit from the provision of basic education without exception of caste, creed, language, religion or any other social, economic or regional consideration.

At the present juncture, not only in India but worldwide, attention is focused on the question, “Can India achieve the goal of Universalisation of Primary education at least by the turn of the 21st century?” It is evident that the routine path adopted by us during the last five and half decades cannot take us anywhere closer to the goal in the near future. The task involved is of alarming proportions and demands radical solutions implemented with commitment, consistency and with trust in human capability.

It should be recognized that the country has made significant strides in the task of expanding primary education facilities for all. But it not only a question of opening more number of schools but it is multi-faceted endeavour wherein quantitative expansion has to take place in such a manner that quality and quantity move together in symbiosis, strengthening the linkage between education and labour market, bridging the gap between work and knowledge and reducing the disparities in the spread of education so as to make its benefits available to all regions and sections of the population.

In 1951 the literacy rate was about 16% with approximately 2,10,000 primary schools. As of the 1991 census, the literacy rate has risen to 52 percent and the official statistics show that the number of primary schools have nearly tripled. The number of teachers has more than tripled, along with impressive strides in student enrollment. In addition to these facilities for formal school education, there are more than 300,000 Non-Formal Education Centres (NFEC) functioning in different parts of the country to supplement efforts made through the formal primary schools.

With such phenomenal expansion, one would expect that every child in the country would benefit from a minimum level of education promised in the Constitution. But, unfortunately reality is contrary to this expectation. The fact that, as stated in the National
Literacy Mission statistics, there about 100 million illiterates just in the age group of 15-35, and that India is in the process of launching mass campaigns for eradication of illiteracy on war-footing bears testimony to the failure of its primary school system to deliver the goods in effective and efficient manner. But it is not merely the question of inefficient delivery of the system. Rather the more disturbing feature of the system is its iniquitous outreach and performance. While certain States and regions have been able to achieve near universal literacy and development of primary education, others are in such an unconceivably poor state that unless some drastic interventions are made, it may take several more decades before achieving some satisfaction.

Another area in which significant disparity is pointed out in terms of educational development is between urban and rural regions. It is generally believed that urban areas are well provided with educational facilities and development of primary education need not be a major concern for urban education planners. From one angle this seems to be true, as one finds a high concentration of educational facilities at all levels from primary to tertiary in urban areas. But it would be misleading to draw conclusions based only on the number of institutions. One has to go deeper into the question of inequities in the system and see whether the population in the urban areas have access to and are capable of benefiting from the primary education system.

It should be remembered that urban areas present wide disparities in terms of the socio-economic status of the population. Does the education system, notwithstanding these socio-economic disparities, serve in a like manner all sections of the population, rich or poor? This is particularly important with respect to primary education in the light of the Constitutional commitment made by the country. Therefore one has to specifically examine the status of basic education, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, made available to the poorer sections of the society living in the urban areas of the country.

UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN TAMIL NADU

In Tamil Nadu the vision to evolve flexible educational policy has been a task that has been taken up by the State Government with verve to achieve the goal of education for all which invariably fulfills the 55-year-old struggle to achieve Universalisation of Primary Education in the State. As per 1991 census, in Tamil Nadu, when the population recorded 5.59 crore, the literacy level was pretty sore. 1.80 crore people were illiterates, 64 percent among them being women, 65percent schedule caste and 79 percent schedule tribe.

In order to hasten the literacy level and to promote ‘education for all’, it is necessary for the Government to formulate certain constructive schemes fore-viewing the multi-dimensional problems of illiteracy the state is in. It is interesting to note that 10 lakh children attain the school going age every year and a considerable number of children drop out from school due various reasons. There is backlog of 180 lakh of illiterate adults.
In the present Government the concerned department has taken steps

- To provide schools in those hamlets where there are no schools so that accessibility will increase
- Improvement in the infrastructure and environment of the schools and making learning an enjoyable experience in order to reduce dropout rates
- Impart value-based education to provide a foundation for the socio-economic development of the State

The above goals of the Government have been the area of interest and the main necessity of the state. To promote elementary education and to get to the goal of 'education for all' the Government has formulated various schemes and is implementing them effectively to promote education. Elementary education plays a vital role in the development of the Nation and the Constitution of India entrusts with each State to provide compulsory and free elementary education for all children up to age of 14 years. But to implement this important commitment there are bottlenecks.

The State has taken up the hard task for the provision of school buildings, classrooms, vacancies for teachers and learning and teaching aids. The policy of the Government is to provide elementary schools in all hamlets having a population of more than 300 people within a radius of one kilometer. In pursuance of the above objective the Government opened 312 and 400 elementary schools in the year 1998-99 and 1999-2000 respectively. The Government proposes to cover rest of the hamlets not covered so far and schools will be provided wherever necessary.

The enrollment percentage in Tamil Nadu is near complete. In Std I the percentage of enrollment for girls is 94.43 percent and for boys it is 98.50 percent. The policy of the government is to identify and assess non-enrolled children and to find appropriate solutions.

At present the dropout rate is 14.41 percent whereas children completing up to Std V has been assessed as 44 per cent. The policy also insists on continuous up gradation of present standard of elementary education by way of improvement of the method of teaching, appointment of teachers and imparting suitable orientation training to the teachers for enhancing the skills of the students.

The government in order to improve the welfare of the students of primary and middle schools has implemented few schemes to provide facilities such as appointment of teachers in accordance to strength of the students in primary schools, with some single teacher schools to appoint two teachers in primary schools from 1998-99 onwards and the expenditure incurred by the government is 25.31 crores. This scheme continued during the academic year 2000-01 and books were distributed beginning of the academic year itself.
Funds under the Rural Development Scheme was assessed and be used to provide building facilities for 920 primary schools and for 1988 primary schools recognized as one and buildings standing with no classrooms and other facilities.

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) is one such scheme implemented in certain districts in Tamil Nadu and Rs.300/- has been allotted per year for purchase of stationery item for every panchayat union school with three or less number of teachers and Rs.500/- for other schools from the year 1996-97 and from 1998-99 municipal schools have been included for this benefit. Rs.150 lakhs has been provided for this purpose.9

DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DPEP)

Background about launching of DPEP
The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of DPEP was launched in 1994 as a major initiative to revitalize the primary education system and to achieve the objective of Universalisation of Primary Education.

DPEP adopts a holistic approach to universalize access, retention and improve learning achievement and to reduce disparities among social groups. Adopting an ‘area-specific approach’ with district as the unit of planning, the key strategies of the programme have been to retain the contextuality and sensitivity to local conditions and ensuring full participation of the community. It also seeks to strengthen the capacity of the national, state and district institutions and organizations for planning, management and professional support in the field of primary education.

Additionality factor of DPEP
DPEP is based on the principle of ‘additionality’ and is structured to fill in the existing gaps by providing inputs over and above the provisions made under Central and State Sector schemes for primary education. State Governments are required to atleast maintain expenditure in real terms at base year level.

Programme Objectives
DPEP supports replicable, sustainable and cost efficient programme development and implementation in order to:

- Reduce differences in enrollment, dropout and learning achievement between gender and social groups to less than 5%
- Reduce overall primary dropout rates for all students to less than 10%
- Raise average achievement levels by at least 25% over measured baseline levels by ensuring achievement of basic literacy and numeracy competencies and minimum 40% achievement levels in other competencies by all primary school children
- Provide access for all children to primary schooling or its equivalent non-formal education
**District Selection Criteria**
Educationally backward districts with female literacy below the national average and districts where total literacy campaigns have been successful, leading to enhanced demand for elementary education were selected.

**Funding of the Project:**
DPEP is externally aided project. The Government of India meets 85 percent of the project cost and the concerned State government shares the remaining 15 percent. The government of India share is resourced through external assistance. At present external assistance of about Rs.6938.00 crores comprising Rs.5137.00 crores as credit from World Bank and Rs.1801.00 crores as grant from European Commission, DFID, UNICEF, Netherlands has been tied up for DPEP.

**Present Coverage:**
Since its initiation in November 1994, when DPEP covered 42 Districts in 7 States, its reach has spread to 271 districts in 18 states (including bifurcated districts and creation of 3 new states) namely, Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. Besides three districts of Gujarat covered under DPEP are fully funded by the State Government.

**RATIONALE OF THE PRESENT STUDY**
In the last fifty-five years efforts have been taken to research and analyze the possibilities of getting to the goal of Universalisation of Primary Education. However, introduction of various schemes and projects and their successful functioning left a lot of loopholes that needed to be filled and rectified.

Though, extensive work was pioneered in this field, this research work exclusively focuses to evaluate and check the efficacy of the District Primary Education Programme in achieving Universalisation of Primary Education in Dharmapuri district, Tamil Nadu. It is one of the most commendable programme that has shown progress in this field.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**
This research being a Descriptive and Analytical study, aims to study the primary education policy of Tamil Nadu, policy formulation in the State and its adoption of some schemes and programmes to achieve the major Constitutional Directive of Universalisation of Primary Education and Education for all.

Tamil Nadu is a State that is surging forward in the educational arena. Universalisation of Primary Education has been foremost in the Governmental agenda ever since the need for Education for All was realized as one of the major prerequisites for the overall development of the State.
All the programmes and schemes introduced to achieve Universalisation of Primary Education turned out to be supplementary plans in a more goal oriented governmental agenda.

Tamil Nadu has always been in the forefront in the field of education. The State was first to impart free education to children. However the present situation prevailing in the State with regard to primary education is that:

- 95% of the children in the School-going age are enrolled in the primary schools
- The Government passed an Act in 1997 for imparting compulsory 'Education for All' which has come into force in the 1998-99
- Provision of schools for every hamlet in the State by the year 2000 is yet to be achieved
- The District Primary Education Programme with the assistance of the World Bank is implemented in 7 of the 30 districts in the State

District Primary Education Programme, a centrally sponsored scheme, was launched in 1994, as a major initiative to revitalize the primary education system and to achieve the objective of Universalisation of Primary Education.

District Primary Education Programme adopts a holistic approach to universalize access, retention and improve learning achievement and to reduce disparities among social groups. Adopting an 'area specific approach' with district as a unit of planning, the key strategies of the programme have been to retain the contextuality and the sensitivity to local conditions and ensuring the full participation of the community. It also seeks to strengthen the capacity of the national, state and district institutions and organizations for planning, management and professional support in the field of primary education. Dharmapuri, one of the seven districts where the DPEP was implemented. This district in Tamil Nadu was chosen, to study the effectiveness of the above programme to achieve Universalisation of Primary Education.

The education policy of Tamil Nadu, the steps taken by the Government to reduce the illiteracy level in the State with the adoption and implementation of various projects and schemes are questions to ponder on and whether they are a workable reality to realize the 56 year dream of Universalisation.

The major objectives of this research are to enunciate India's educational policy since Independence and Tamil Nadu's primary education policy.

Secondly, to study the implementation of the District Primary Education Programme in India and in Tamil Nadu to achieve Universalisation of Primary Education.

District Primary Education Programme in Dharmapuri district, its launch, implementation and achievement and the present status of this programme in the district based on the survey report is the third objective of the study.
The fourth objective of the study, is the continuation of the DPEP programme which has taken the reins to achieve UPE.- the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme- in the country.

Lastly, to state the importance of primary education and the factors that hinders the achievement of the aspired Universalisation of Primary Education.

STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The present study is set to test the hypothesis that has been a topic of discussion and research ever since independence arising doubts and demanding clarification for a prospective future of the country indicating India’s intention to provide universal free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14, a goal that has so far remained elusive. 

This study focuses to test the following hypotheses:

H.1 Tamil Nadu will achieve Universalisation of Primary Education as promised by the present Government (2001-2005), with the effective functioning of the government programmes implemented for this purpose i.e the District Primary Education Programme and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan- Education For All.

H.2 DPEP will lead to increase in enrollment of students due to the accessibility of schools and improved and effective method of teaching.

H.3 In DPEP districts the functioning of the human agencies viz. the teachers, head teachers, parents and educational officers will be very effective.

H.4 DPEP will lead to reduction in the dropout rate and increase in the retention and completion rate of the students.

H.5 DPEP will lead to increased learning achievement of the students.

The reality against the myth

The urgency to enable the country to achieve the Universalisation of Primary Education, the factors that cater to reach this long standing and most awaited reality that can lead India through the 21st century with its head held high.

Having failed to achieve Universalisation of basic education in 56 years despite several statements of intentions, our stand now is questionable. To find whether the target of achieving Universalisation by 2005 another usual milepost to postpone or whether there is some meaning to it is what provides us the confidence that Universalisation shall indeed be achieved. The Total Literacy Campaign has indicated that, given the will and the right choice of strategy, the goals of education can be achieved. In the literacy districts, the enrollment in primary education has shown a sharp rise. Several centrally sponsored schemes and the integrated scheme of the District Primary Education
Programme complementing the State efforts of expansion and running the system with a positive quality improvement inputs and effective interventions in primary education.

The atmosphere has changed in favor of
- Universalisation of basic education
- The upward thrust of the people significant Central initiative
- Investment in primary education
- Legal backup
- International participation in primary education

The grounds covered during the last decade, in enhancing enrollment effecting retention and improving the performance of the students provides the newfound confidence that universal basic education shall indeed be realised soon. Only time will tell whether it can be achieved by 2005. This research exclusively deals with the State of Tamil Nadu’s endeavor towards the above-mentioned goal.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is a descriptive and analytical research. Progress towards Education For All is at a critical juncture in India. This is a country of paradoxes. India has emerged as a global player in the information and communications technology revolution - yet it is a home to millions of illiterates and out of school children. In recent years, the country has begun to unlock its tremendous potential to achieve economic progress and to liberate its people from the misery of poverty. The political and economic leaders understand the critical role of basic education in this effort and have taken significant steps to make it a reality for all. However, putting the country on course to achieve the goals of Education For All presupposes a realistic assessment of the current situation not only in quantitative terms but also in the analysis of trends, of causes and effects and of previous policies. This is precisely what the researcher has attempted, to state the previous policies and the Government’s attempt to achieve the Constitutional Directive. The study focuses on the State of Tamil Nadu, its primary educational policy and its implications to draw a parallel in achieving Universalisation of Primary Education through implementing one of the widely adopted programme of District Primary Education Programme. This research has been mainly taken up to very explicitly study the effectiveness of DPEP in the district of Dharmapuri in Tamil Nadu, in achieving UPE.

The sampling unit chosen is the district of Dharmapuri, which is the Phase I district of DPEP and the type of universe was selected from the six blocks of the district. The source list or the sampling frame contains the head-teachers, teachers, parents and students. The size of sample chosen satisfies the criteria of efficiency, representativeness, reliability and flexibility, as the sampling procedure adopted for this research is simple random sampling. This study had a total of 972 respondents.

Primary data was collected by administering the questionnaire method. The questionnaire was structured wherein the questions were definite, concrete and pre-determined. The questions were both close and open ended.
Secondary data was collected from DPEP office in Chennai, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration-Delhi, Legislative Assembly Library- Tamil Nadu Secretariat and several other books, journals, magazines and newspapers related to this study.

This research sample was designed to study the following parameters of DPEP
- Accessibility and retention of students
- Learning achievement of students
- Efficiency of the human agencies (i.e) head teachers, teachers, parents
- Further reforms, aims and targets involved in the programme.

In the 1990s, although India made a good progress in adult literacy and saw a tremendous expansion of educational facilities and school enrolment, the journey is far from over. The state of Tamil Nadu today stands in the forefront in the literacy lists but achieving the goals of Education For All in India by 2010, as proposed in its recent policy documents, will not be an easy task. The challenge is one of both scale and complexity. The core problem of Education For All in India is one of equity. Some parts of the country have galloped towards the goals but others continue to make only slow progress. Some sections of the population have benefited from the education system and now form part of the global elite, but many more remain on the fringes of society with no schooling at all. Bridging this educational gap is even more urgent in our fast expanding digital world.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present research responds to the need for assessing the educational development at the school level in conjunction and intertwined with satisfying the constitutional directive. With a view to making such a descriptive study, it is imperative that the analysis should be rooted in a valid normative macro-structure of literature available, on the one hand and in the differentiated specificities at the grassroots' level on the other. The literature reviewed forms the essence to recognize the researcher's endeavour to develop a system of theoretical constructs so that one does not sink in a sea of empirical findings. The literature has provided a meaningful perspective, and an analytical work needs to come to terms with the grassroots. This is particularly true to the educational sphere where the micro-specificity of the learning ambience is as important as the universality of macro objectives. While one is gazing at the stars, the feet must be firmly on the ground.

The experience of the last five and a half decades of planning has shown that the educational development in India is neither homogenous in regional nor neutral to social formations. It has a strong bias in favour of economically developed areas with strong infrastructural support and against backward regions of the country. In spite of planned efforts spread over the past years, regional disparities continue to be glaring.

One of the main factors that has made Universalisation of Primary Education in India a far achieving dream continues to the regional disparity factor in educational development
that has not attracted adequate attention of the researchers. From this particular factor branches out other indicators that constantly keeps the progress in the educational arena on the back seat. However various efforts from the government of the country, leaders, educationists, policy makers and researchers have molded our education system to cater to achieving the prime goal of our Constitution.

The implications are obvious. Education will have to come to terms with realities at the grass root level as unfold them over a valuable exercise of decentralized micro level planning which is acquiring important dimension in the country.

In view of the national commitment to the elimination of illiteracy in the country, this research mainly pertains to the educational development in India from the time of independence to the present day and focuses on the governmental project of the District Primary Education Programme in Tamil Nadu, in achieving Universalisation Of Primary Education.

The literature reviewed for this study is comprehensive in line with the research work and is a response to the need for a chronological data that form the basis for future research work in this area.

Kothari Commission Report by V.C.Shukla and B.C.Rai, enunciates the problems of educational reconstruction of India. It covers all the aspects of educational system.

Theory of Education (Sociological answer Philosophical Bases of Education) by Prof. B.C.Rai, is based upon the questions and answers about education and aims of education in India. This book gives a wide picture about the state's role in education, philosophy of education and theory of education. It is a comprehensive work that makes for a good reading and information.

Introduction to economics of education by S.Natarajan presents a comprehensive view of the theoretical framework of economics of education in educational planning and finance. The book is an effort to bring to light the analytical methods adopted by the economists to study the costs and benefits of and returns on public spending on education.

Trends and Issues in Indian Education by Sanjay K.Swain deals with the modern trends and issues in education, which will bring awareness and understanding of the students in the field of education.

Elementary Education in India- Myth, Reality, Alternative by John Kurien analysis aspects of the contradiction between the reaffirmed myths of free and compulsory education and reality of Indian elementary education. The author concludes with presenting recent perspective and research on education and development in the third world. (The writer is Director, Centre for Learning Resources, Pune).

Kamaraj Attchi by A.Gopannan speaks about the golden era of Kamaraj from 1954-63, this book highlights the immense interest and perseverance of kamaraj who proved his
skill for administration in various departments. He pioneered so many just causes and succeeded in the same. Kamaraj’s political life was very popularly quoted as ‘From Virudhupatti to Janthan Manthar’ as compared to Lincoln’s life history “From Log Cabin to White House”. Kamaraj period was lauded by most of the leading politicians and well wishers. He had a very revolutionist view about education at it is very aptly revealed in this work.

Education 2000 AD by K.P. Aravaanan, is a book on how society that gives priority to education stands foremost in the race of development. Those developing like India, Africa and other South Eastern countries need to give more importance to education for furthering their interest in making their country achieve the target of a developed nation.

Thamizhatham Kalvi Varalaaru by K. Palanivelu, speaks about the different language, culture dominating over one’s country naturally overshadows the country’s original cultural, tradition and other aspects of socio-economic and political life. To overcome all the suppression and to catch up with self-identity and to create one’s own history practically takes a long and strenuous process. The author brings forth the history of Tamilians in pursuit of saving their nation.

Vasanthi Devi’s Approach- a mixture of her idealistic notions with realism has made this book on Thamizhagathil Kalvi where Vasanthi Devi is in conversation with Sundara Ramaswamy. It is a very simple and informative work. According to her, education is a part and parcel of the society; there is absolutely no value for education if it is not enjoyed when opportunities are given.

Payirehi Mozhiyum, Uyarneedhi Manra Thierpum by V. Krishnamurthy gives a detail report about the high court judgment that was passed on 20-4-2000, against making Tamil language or the mother tongue of the child the main medium of instruction in Tamil Nadu.

The book Kalvi meaning education has a contribution from E.M.S. Namboodripad, who writes about what needs to be taught is what we learned. Prof. Ananthakrishnan gives an overview about the importance of science education and society. Dr. R. Ramanujam speaks about the lack of practical approach of today’s educational system. Prof. Ramasundaram highlights about the necessity of implementing the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in schools. Dr. T. Sundaraman states that the government’s share in educating the masses. Teesta Setalvad speaks about channelising education based on language and N. Ram reasons out the practical necessity for fighting against new educational system.

Arasiyalil Arinnyar Anna by E.R. Bharathi Munoharan, highlights Anna’s two years of political life as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, efforts taken to implement various laws and plans for the state. The author has very systematically stated Anna’s administrative skill, policies and plans for the social upliftment.
Kalvi Chirakka by Durai Ramu is a book on education and the factors that play an important role in making education the main area of focus for the improvement of the society.


- To provide basic education facilities by increasing the number of schools in the hamlets where there are no schools present
- To reduce the dropout rate
- Individual development of students to enhance economic development of the nation and betterment of the society
- To promote literacy level for those who do come under formal education system.

A note School Information from the Directorate of Primary Education Centre-Chennai gives statistics of the distribution of schools in Tamil Nadu Districts as per their management.

Indian Education in the Emerging Society by J.Mohanty enunciates the assumed responsibilities and new challenges faced by the emerging society of Indian education and some new concepts in the field of modern philosophy and sociology relating to Indian education.

School Education in India by H.S.Singha deals with contemporary issues and trends in school education in India as in 1991, trying to explain how the country has been trying to tackle its educational problems.

School Organisation and Management by Prof.B.C.Rai deals with the infra-structural aspects of school organization, administration and management.

On Education – An Analysis of Past and Present Education System in India by Sukumar Singh gives a detailed picture of the educational system of ancient-western system and Indian National Educational Movement and the related programmes under each five year plan till 1987.

Indian Education Report – A Profile of Basic Education edited by R.Govinda, Professor at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA). It is a unique volume presenting, for the first time, a comprehensive overview of the status of basic education in India that goes beyond the usual statistics on literacy and school enrollment. It is the outcome of a detailed and reflective review of all aspects of the Indian education system undertaken on the occasion of the World Forum on Education for All, convened in Dakar in 2000.
Progress Towards Universal Access and Retention – An Analytical Report by Yash Aggarwal is a detailed study of Access and Retention under DPEP, which has now become a regular feature of the DPEP review process. This study is of great magnitude and was completed with the participation of national and sub-national level professionals involved in the implementation of DPEP.


The main objective of the study are to derive a trend based on past developments in education: An exercise would be carried out for each stage of education, e.g., primary, secondary, higher technical and higher non-technical, at all-India level as well as for States.


The National Policy on Education, 1986 and the Programme of Action have laid considerable stress on the eradication of illiteracy and provision of Universal Elementary Education to all children up to the age of 14 years by 1995. It has also laid stress on the need for micro-level planning to achieve these objectives.

Speech of Prof. Anbazhagan, Minister for Education in M.Karunanidhi's cabinet, government of Tamil Nadu at the State Education Ministers' Conference in New Delhi on Oct.1998, was released as a booklet for the benefit of the public. He has expressed that it is a well-recognized fact that Education formed the basis of the society and the Nation. Tamil Nadu has always been in the forefront in the field of Education. He briefs about Primary Education in Tamil Nadu, DPEP, DIETs. School education, non-formal education, sports and youth welfare, education funding, management and statistics, higher education, information technology, vocationalisation of the first degree courses and autonomy to colleges.

Tamil Nadu State Mission of Education for All, the Annual Report and Audited Accounts – 1994-95, 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000, gives the detailed picture about the continuing journey of Tamil Nadu District Primary Education Programme. This report states the pace and style of implementation of the project and the attention of many other state DPEP implementers. The report gives the year’s activities and highlights, a detailed report of the annual work plan budget and financial achievements and outlay milestones and events of the year etc.

India Education Report: A Profile on Basic Education by Govinda R., this report presents an overview of the status of basic education in India. It reviews all aspects of the Indian Education System. It is more than fifty years since the Indian constitution made a commitment to provide free and compulsory education for all up to the age of 14. Although India has made significant strides in quantitative terms, the promise of providing education for all has remained unfulfilled.

Achieving educational targets remains a dream by Aileen Qaiser. The education sector is recognized today as the key to development and progress. However, past experiments in this sector have led to nowhere but stagnation in our literacy rates and general rot in our public schools, colleges and universities. Yet new experiments in this sector continue to be unveiled, with all the desired targets seeming to be as elusive as before.

Challenges- It is important to define the roles and responsibilities of each participating organization right from the very beginning. By Mohsen Tawfik, UNESCO Janshala may have faced problems in the beginning, but today it is seen as a model programme, which complements DPEP and other new initiatives like the SSA.

The Landmark Judgement of the Supreme Court on Educational Rights of Minorities by S.J. Mathews. This booklet contains the majority judgement delivered by the Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court of India on 31st October, 2002 on educational rights of minorities. The verdict is based on the fundamental rights of minorities guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. An evaluation of the judgement and suggestions for adequate implementation of its principles and guidelines are also included.

Three Years of DPEP: Assessment and Challenges. Educational Consultants India, New Delhi. In 1998, DPEP has completed three years of its operation. A number of evaluative studies were conducted to ascertain its impact and to seek directions for the future. This volume makes an attempt to provide an update of the key interventions made towards achieving the goals of DPEP and an assessment of their impact. The tasks, which lie ahead, have also been highlighted.

Primary Education in India. The World Bank, Washington. Book on primary education in India. Contents: Economic and social outcomes as justification for investing in primary education; Improving access and efficiency; Enhancing learning achievement; Reducing gaps in enrollment, retention and achievement; Improving teacher's performance; Improving the quality of textbooks and the efficiency of their production; Building managerial and institutional capacity; Financing elementary education; Financing more and better primary education.

Sixth All India Educational Survey: Selected Statistics. By J.P. Sharma. Statistical tables on education.
The PROBE Team (1999): Public Report On Basic Education in India. This PROBE-report investigates the schooling situation in India in all its aspects, chiefly concerned with the reasons why so many children are deprived of the fundamental right to learn. It examines the economic, political and social causes of the crisis, and argues that change is possible. It deals with: the fundamental right to elementary education; myths about the schooling situation; perceptions of parents and children; school environment; teacher concerns; classroom processes; education management; recent developments.

Break the Cycle of Poverty. By Kevin Watkins. Millions of children are still being denied the opportunity to develop the basic learning skills they need to escape poverty, to realise their full potential, and to participate fully in social, economic, and political life. This report sets out the scale of the problem, identifies some of its underlying causes, and provides an agenda for reform. That agenda includes proposals for a new Global Action Plan for basic education. Modified by respective organizations to arrive at an agreed and acceptable system.

Class Origin-Destination Relationship and Education By B. C. Mehta and Kranti Kapoor. An attempt is made here to assess the extent to which education policy has succeeded in ensuring inter-generation class mobility. Seven models of societies are characterised by different patterns of relationship between origin class, education and destination class. Two methods are used to test these models. Results show that though there is considerable improvement in education level achieved by almost all classes in India, the upper classes have gained much more than the lower classes. Though class origin is still the dominant factor determining class destination, there is considerable inter-generational mobility made possible by education.

Is Universalisation of Primary Education Possible? By Anil K. Yadav and Madhu Srivastava. The study seeks to examine the issues involved in universalisation i.e., how far we have gone in this direction and what more can be done to move towards the goal of universalisation of primary education. The author tried to compare and analyses different studies relating to the economics of universalisation of primary education to understand its dynamics and possibilities.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Many in house and Governmental agencies have been periodically assessing the performance of the District Primary Education Programme. There is urgent need for independent agencies and researchers to study DPEP for its effectiveness and suitability under Indian conditions, as it has grave implications for millions of individuals and the Nation’s future as a whole.

This research work is independent and multi-dimensional in depth study of the effectiveness of the DPEP in Tamil Nadu. This study has assessed the performance of the DPEP under actual conditions to the target beneficiaries, namely the children. It is very
appropriate that the study has been done in Dharmapuri district in Tamil Nadu, an industrially and economically backward district, where DPEP was launched Phase I in 1994 itself. The programme has run its full course in Dharmapuri District and gives ample scope for a total evaluation of its impact on illiteracy.

This research work is based on very extensive fieldwork and primary data collection. The researcher has personally spent many months covering remote inaccessible villages of Dharmapuri District to get a first hand experience of DPEP. There were many practical difficulties in conducting a survey of this magnitude and the researcher has taken great care in maintaining the objectivity and scientific validity of the study. The extensive field work done and the voluminous but very scientific, primary data collected are easily the strengths of this study. The findings and the conclusions of this study may be treated as very reliable and authentic as far as Dharmapuri district is concerned.

DPEP is nationwide programme covering eighteen States and two hundred and seventy one districts of varying size and socio-economic conditions. An intensive study on one particular district reveals many insights into the functioning of DPEP, but is certainly not adequate to pass any judgment or bring any generalizations on the programme at the national or even the state level. There is an obvious geographical limitation to this study. There is an obvious need for similar intense studies to be done on other districts and also comparative and broader studies on DPEP.

Primary data collection, very extensive and based on strict sampling design, was conducted during the first half of 2002 and largely pertains to the academic year 2001-2002. This brings in a time limitation to this study. Most of the respondents were not related to the initial years of the DPEP, its inception and formative stage. However, extensive secondary data from studies done earlier have been incorporated into the study to gain a holistic understanding of the effectiveness of the DPEP since its launch in 1994. Learning is an extremely complex and multidimensional process. A programme of the magnitude of DPEP has numerous dimensions, social, economic, political and administrative apart from the primary academic dimension. This study is limited to assessing the academic output and secondly some of the administrative aspects of running this programme that have direct impact on the teaching learning process. The larger social, economic and political issues that surround the DPEP have been left out for the sake of intensity.

CHAPTERISATION

The first chapter introduces the topic of Universalisation of Primary Education and District Primary Education Programme and the efforts adopted by the Government to near the Constitutional Directive. Aim of the present study, specific objectives, statement of hypotheses and strengths and limitations are outlined.

The second chapter speaks about the primary education policy of India since independence and the national objectives and the Tamil Nadu education policy and some
of its concerns in relation to primary education. It also studies the indicators that have been set in search of Universalisation.

The third chapter deals in detail about the District Primary Education Programme its policies, programmes and structure.

The fourth chapter emphasizes on the DPEP programme in Dharmapuri district and the Status report about the implementation of DPEP in the district.

The fifth chapter speaks in detail about the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Programme, its implementation and functioning.

The sixth chapter enumerates the importance of primary education and the factors hindering Universalisation of Primary Education in India.

Finally the conclusion sums up the purposes of removing the inconsistencies between the old evaluation of the policy and the new urgent need for Universalisation of Primary Education for our political and economic growth. It provides the major findings of the study and prospective areas of further study.