CHAPTER III
DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME- STRUCTURE, POLICY AND PROGRAMME
DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DPEP)

BACKGROUND ABOUT LAUNCHING OF DPEP

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of District Primary Education Programme (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 has 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 national, state and district institutions and organizations for planning, management and professional support in the field of primary education.

Ever since independence in 1947, India has strived to achieve the goal of UEE in accordance with the constitutional commitment to provide education for all children of 6 to 14 years. Primary education has been one of the focus areas in successive five year plans. True, India has made enormous progress in terms of increase in the number of schools and enrollment at the primary stage since independence. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) at the primary stage in India has exceeded 100%. Despite all these achievements, a large number of children were still out of school and the goal of UEE continued to be elusive.

High drop out rate ranging up to 60%, large number of out of school children (about one third), lack of access in 17% (1.8 lakh) of habitations within one kilometer radius and high wastage (33%) taking 7.2 years for 5 years of schooling were some areas of concern. Then there were problems relating to low levels of learning achievement and low participation of girls, Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled tribe (ST) and other disadvantaged groups. Coupled with it were various systematic issues relating to effectiveness and efficiency of primary education like poorly functioning schools, inadequate school infrastructure and facilities, high teacher absenteeism, large number of teacher vacancies, poor quality of education and inadequate funds.

The Government has taken several initiatives to tackle these problems. The National Policy on Education (NPE), a landmark in the history of Indian education, framed in 1986, recognized the need to make concerted effort to expand and improve basic education. As an outcome, various schemes were initiated. Operation Blackboard was launched in 1986 with focus on providing additional classrooms, teachers and a package of teaching materials and aids. District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) were established in districts under a centrally sponsored scheme in 1988, to look after teacher training. The Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) was also launched in 1988 to eradicate illiteracy. Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) programme was started in 1991 to identify basic competencies in language, mathematics and other subjects and to develop new text books.
Meanwhile various states also initiated basic education projects around this time. The Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Programme (APPEP) with DFID assistance was the first of its kind. The Lok Jumbish Project with SIDA assistance was initialized in Rajasthan while Bihar and Uttar Pradesh also started similar basic education projects. Although these projects vary in their design, they share the objectives and strategies of 1986 policy.

The Programme of Action (POA) 1992 provided fresh insights and directions for achieving Universalisation of Elementary Education. It called for an integrated and decentralized approach to the development of primary education with focus on building capacities, particularly at district and sub-district levels. Imbibing the spirit of this policy initiative emerged DPEP in 1994.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of District Primary Education Programme are to:

- **Provide** all children with access to primary education (class I to V).
- **Reduce** primary dropout rates for all students to less than 10%.
- **Reduce** differences in enrollment, dropout rates, and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than 5%.
- **Raise** the average achievement levels of students by at least 40% achievement levels in other subjects.
- DPEP also seeks to strengthen the capacity of national, state and district institutions and organizations for planning, management and evaluation of primary education.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The criteria for selection of districts under DPEP are:

- Educationally backward districts with female literacy below the national average (39.29%) and
- Districts where Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) have generated demand for elementary education. (Out of 536 districts in the country TLC covers 450 districts as on March 31, 1999).

COVERAGE

The programme was initially launched in 1994 in 42 districts spread over 7 states – Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Later it was extended to Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. At present the programme covers 60% of the child population in the country, spread over 176 districts in 15 states. Further it was expanded to 271 districts in 18 states.
majority of the DPEP districts – with high share of tribals and socially disadvantaged population – are among the most educationally backward districts in the country with low male literacy.

**FATES AND DISTRICTS COVERED UNDER DPEP: Table 3.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>No. of districts covered under DPEP</th>
<th>Name of Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ASSAM</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Darrang, Dhubri, Karbi Anglong, Morigaon, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, Barpeta, Sonitpur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HARYANA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hisar, Jind, Kaithal, Sirsa, Gurgaon, Bhiwani, Mahendragarh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KARNATAKA</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Belgaum, Kolar, Mandhya, Raichur/Koppal, Bellary/Davangere, Bidar, Gulbarga, Mysore/Chamarajnagar, Bijapur/Bagalkot, Bangalore (rural), Dharwad/Gadag/Haveri.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KERALA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kasaragod, Mallapuram, Wayanad, Thiruvananadapuram, Idukki, Palakkad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MADHYA PRADESH</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Betul, Chhatarpur, Dhar, Guna, Mandsaur/Neemuch, Panna, Pajgarh, Raipar, Ratlam, Rewa, Satna, Sehore, Shahdol/Umaria, Sidhi, Tikamgarh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MAHARASHTRA</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Aurangabad, Latur, Nanded, Osmanabad, Parbhani/Hingoli, Bid, Dhule/Nandurbar, Gadchiroli, Jalna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TAMIL NADU</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dharmapuri, Cuddalore/Villipuram, Thiruvannamalai, Pudhukottai, Ramanathpuram, Perambalur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANDHRA PRADESH</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Karimnagar, Kurnool, Nellore, Warangal, Vizianagaram, Adilabad, Ananthpur, Chittoor, Cuddappah, Guntur, Khammam, Mahaboobnagar, Medak, Nalgonda, Nizamabad, Prakasam, Rangareddy, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.</td>
<td>GUJARAT</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Banaskantha/Patan, Dang, Panchmahal/Dahod, Kutch, Sabarkantha and Surendranagar, (Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Junagarh – Funded under State Sector)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>HIMACHAL PRADESH</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chamba, Kullu, Lahaul &amp; Spiti, Sirmour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.No</td>
<td>Name of State</td>
<td>No. of districts covered under DPEP</td>
<td>Name of Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>ORISSA</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Bolangir, Dhenkanal, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Gajapati, Baragarh, Sambalpur, Keonjhar, Boudh, Koraput, Malkangiri, Sonepur, Kandhamal, Nabarangapur, Nuapada, Mayurbhanj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>WEST BENGAL</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bankura, Birbhum, Cooch Behar, Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas, Jalpaiguri, Malda, Purulia, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>UTTAR PRADESH</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Maharajganj, Siddharthnagar, Gonda/Balrampur, Badau, Kheri, Lalitpur, Pillibhit, Basti/Sant Kabir Nagar, Moradabad/Jyotiba, Phule Nagar, Shahjahanpur, Sonbhadra, Deoria, Hardoi, Bareilly, Firozabad, Rampur, Bahraich/Phulavasti, Barabanki, Agra, Azamgarh, Ballia, Bijnaur, Bulandshahr, Etah, Faizabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Farrukhabad, Kannauj, Fatehpur, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, Ghaziabad, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Jalaun, Jaunpur, Jhansi, Kanpur, Dehat, Manipur, Mathura, Mau, Meerut, Baghapur, Mirzapur, Muzaffarnagar, Padrauna, Pratapgarh, Rae Bareilly, Sultanpur, Unnao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>UTTARANCHAL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bagheshwar, Hardwar, Pithoragarh, Chamawat, Tehri, Garhwal, Uttar Kashi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>BIKHAR</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Muzaffarpur, West Champaran, Sitamarhi, Sheohar, Rohtas, Kaimur, Vaishali, Gaya, Darbhanga, Purnea, Araria, Kishanganj, Bhojpur, Buxar, Munger, Jamui, Lakhisarai, Sheikhpuram Bhagalpur, Banka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>JHARKHAND</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chatra, West Singhbhum (Chaibassa), Dumka, East Singhbhum, (Jamshedpur), Hazaribagh, Koderma, Ranchi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>RAJASTHAN</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Alwar, Bhilwara, Jhalawar, Jhunjhunu, Kota, Nagaur, Sikar, Sirohi, Sri Ganganagar, Tonk, Churu, Dausa, Jaipur, Bharatpur, Dholpur, Bundi, Karauli, Sawai Madhopur, Hanumangarh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total districts discovered**: 271

**SALIENT FEATURES**

DPEP is different from other schemes in several ways.
- **DPEP** adopts holistic approach, from the schematic to the integrated, with emphasis on convergence of existing programmes and resources.
It adopts area-specific approach, with district as the unit of planning and implementation. The key strategies of this district-specific planning have been to retain the contextuality and sensitivity to local conditions. This means plans are tailored to the specific needs of the districts.

Corollary to the area-specific approach is the local area planning or decentralized planning with disaggregated target setting.

Consistent with the philosophy of decentralization, plans are prepared at districts through participatory process involving district and sub-district functionaries, teachers, parents and community members.

DPEP has a marked focus on sustainability, sustaining the benefits beyond the project period.

Equity is a major concern in DPEP. All plans strategies and intervention are tailored to address the specific needs of the disadvantaged groups such as Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), minorities, girls and the disabled.

The programme stresses on community participation and community ownership.

DPEP, which has adopted innovative practices and approaches, is a home grown idea.

DPEP is addiitontality to the existing resources for education. A basic requirement of DPEP is that at least 1991-92 levels of expenditure on elementary education should be maintained in real term. DPEP is based on 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 at least maintain expenditure in real terms at base year level.

The programme encourages convergence of services in education, health, NFE, ECCE etc. rather than replicating them.

The programme is supervised through periodic Supervision Missions. So far, 11 Internal Supervision Missions and 14 Joint Review Missions (comprising representatives of Government of India and External Funding Agencies) have been carried out. The first phase of the programme, which was launched in November 1994 in 42 districts in 7 States, was subjected to an In-depth Review during September-October 1997. The 2nd In-depth Review was conducted in November 1999-2000. The reviews and various evaluatory studies of the programme have brought out that the programme has resulted in significant increase in enrollment, improvement in learning achievement, reduction in repetition rates/drop-outs with increased community involvement, improvements in classroom processes, etc.

The period of the project varies from 5 to 7 years.

Up to a maximum amount of Rs. 40 crore is provided for implementation of the programme in each district.

ut of the total project cost, about 70% of funds are spent on improving quality of locaion. Expenditure on civil works is limited to 24% and management cost to 6%.
### Position of Budget provision and actual expenditure since 1993-94: Table:3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>RE</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>94.00</td>
<td>94.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>230.84</td>
<td>201.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>238.50</td>
<td>184.00</td>
<td>184.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>651.31</td>
<td>559.89</td>
<td>559.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>666.00</td>
<td>550.00</td>
<td>550.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>750.00</td>
<td>600.00</td>
<td>682.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>969.00</td>
<td>820.00</td>
<td>856.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>1100.00</td>
<td>1298.00</td>
<td>1298.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Funding

The project is a centrally sponsored scheme with 85% of the project cost shared by the Government of India and the remaining 15% by the State share are passed on to the State Implementation Society directly as grant.

The Government of India’s share is resourced by external funding. Several bilateral and multilateral agencies are providing financial assistance to this massive programme.4

### Table: 3.3 - Position of external assistance tied up for DPEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Agency</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>States and No. of Districts covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>World Bank (IDA)</strong> (Soft loan)</td>
<td>US$ 260.3 million (Rs.1027 crores)</td>
<td>November 1994 to 31.3.2002</td>
<td>DPEP Phase I Assam (4), Haryana (4), Karnataka (4), Kerala (3), Maharashtra(5), Tamil Nadu (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>European Commission (EC) (Grant)</strong></td>
<td>ECU 150 million (Rs.623 crores)</td>
<td>November 1994 to 31.3.2002</td>
<td>DPEP Phase-I Madhya Pradesh (17), Chhattisgarh (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>World Bank (Soft loan) + Co-financing by Government of Netherlands (Grant)</strong></td>
<td>US$ 452.2 million (Rs.1480 crores) + (US$ 25.8 million (Rs. 90 crores)</td>
<td>July 1996 to 30.6.2003</td>
<td>DPEP Phase II Gujarat (3) Dutch funded Himachal Pradesh (4), Orissa (5) Expansion in DPEP-I States already covered (53), Uttar Pradesh (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DFID (U.K) (Grant)</strong></td>
<td>42.5 million pounds (Rs. 220 crores)</td>
<td>August 1996 to March 2003</td>
<td>DPEP Phase-II Andhra Pradesh (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank (Soft loan) + UNICEF (Grant)</td>
<td>37.71 million pounds (Rs. 207 crores)</td>
<td>April 1997 to March 2004</td>
<td>DPEP Phase-II West Bengal (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank (IDA)</td>
<td>US$ 152.4 million (Rs. 530 crores) + US$ 10 million (Rs. 36 crores)</td>
<td>February 1998 to September 2003</td>
<td>DPEP Phase III Bihar (20), Jharkand (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDA (Soft loan)</td>
<td>US$ 137.4 million (Rs. 570 crores)</td>
<td>July 1999 to 31.12.2004</td>
<td>DPEP – IV : Rajasthan (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID (UK)</td>
<td>30.00 million pounds (About Rs. 200 crore)</td>
<td>February 1999 to September 2006</td>
<td>DPEP – Expn. : West Bengal (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID (UK)</td>
<td>41.21 million pounds (about Rs. 300 crore)</td>
<td>January 2001 to January 2008</td>
<td>DPEP 0 Expn. : Orissa (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands (Grant)</td>
<td>Amount Rs. 125 Crore (US$ 26.47 million)</td>
<td>2001-02 to 2005-06</td>
<td>DPEP – Expn. : Gujarat (6) out of 6 districts, 3 districts would be funded by state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total external assistance tied up</td>
<td>Approx. Rs. 6938.00 crores</td>
<td></td>
<td>IDA credit : Rs. 5137 crore Grant : Rs. 1801 crore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A SUCCESS STORY**

DPEP is emerging as a success story in primary education in India. It has already attracted international attention as a model for developing countries.
Impressed by the achievement of the programme, many states have extended the new curriculum, text books, teaching methods and innovative practices developed under DPEP to non-DPEP areas as well. Some States have set up Alternative Schools in non-DPEP districts based on the experimentation and experiences of DPEP.

The success and impact of DPEP have been evidenced by number independent studies. Some of the findings are:

- DPEP has emerged as a viable strategy for Universalisation of Elementary Education.
- Gender and social inequities have reduced to a substantial level.
- In the first phase of DPEP, 1, 60,000 teachers trained, 4500 new schools and 5000 class rooms were constructed and 14,400 toilet and water facilities provided.
- A study conducted by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) found that:
  - DPEP Phase – I districts has vastly out performed other districts in the country in enrollment from 1993-94 to 1996-97. The differential increase in enrollment between DPEP and non-DPEP districts in 4 states – Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra and Assam -- ranged from 3.7 percent to 16.8 percent. In Kerala and Tamil Nadu, where child population is declining, the decrease in enrollment in Project districts was far lower than that of non-DPEP districts.
  - The number of enrollment in 1996-97 in 39 out of 42 DPEP phase – I districts, increased by 6,30,000 in 1996-97, 51.5 percent (3,24,000) were girls.
  - Gender based disparities in enrollment were insignificant in most of the Project districts. Near absence of inequities was witnessed in enrollment between scheduled caste and general population group.
  - Repetition rate-a measure of internal efficiency-improved considerably, in many cases even by more than 50 percent, in 1996-97.
  - A study of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 7 DPEP Phase –I states to compare learning achievement of students in 1997 over the baseline measured 1994 revealed that:
  - Learning scores of class students in all project districts improved substantially both in language and mathematics over the baseline of 1994. In many cases, the target of achieving 25 percent improvements was crossed.
  - Similar improvement was witnessed among children of class III and IV as well.
  - The hike in achievement in language and mathematics in class I vary from 1% to 44% and in class III/IV, the increase varies from 1% to 25%. The average performance of students in class – I in majority of the districts has crossed 60% mark.

A national trend analysis conducted by NIEPA in 42 districts of DPEP, phase- I showed that:

- Additional 13.5 lakh children were enrolled between 1995-96 and 1997-98. out of this over 5.7 lakh children were enrolled during 1997-98 alone.
The highest enrollment increase of 35.6 percent was in Assam followed by Haryana (15.9%) and Maharashtra (14.6%) in 1996-97, compared to the national average of 9.4%. In 1997-98 the highest increase in enrollment was in Madhya Pradesh (10.5%) among DPEP phase-I states.

Village Education Committees (VECs) are in place and they are involved in community mobilisation, construction activities, local resource generation, running ECCE and Alternative Schooling (AS) centers etc.

VECs are functioning better, whenever women members are active or women head the committees.

Teacher attendance rate has improved to 82%.

VECs and other village based organization set up by DPEP or Mahila Smakkhya (Programme for women’s empowerment have succeeded in focusing the needs of girls.

Instances of overt gender bias in text books have been reduced.

The alternative models of ECCE in Assam and Madhya Pradesh have positively impacted on the children in their confidence level.

Enrollment of children on primary school has been positively influenced by ECCE centers. Children coming from ECCE centers are more regular and come cleaner to school.

The sub-district academic support structures are in place and steps to develop them into resource centers are showing results.

The programme created about 11,000 schools, 5200 classrooms, 5300 toilets and 3500 drinking water facilities. In all 3800 buildings were repaired.

The physical infrastructure of primary education has improved with new schools and classrooms, and toilet and drinking water facilities.

The school and teacher grants are becoming vehicles for teacher empowerment and community empowerment. The relationship between the community and the school has been strengthened.

The teacher grant has motivated teachers to improve the educational standards.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

DPEP has evolved a management structure from the Centre right up to the village level with substantial autonomy, high degree of flexibility, and above all space to experiment with different methods and models. The programme is working towards institutionalization of an appropriate management culture across the primary education system in the country. The management structure of the programme has several levels—national, states, districts, blocks, cluster and village. Details of these structures are given below.

National Level: The role of National Level Structure (NLS) of DPEP is in facilitation, capacity building, appraisal, coordination and overall direction of the programme. Till adequate capacity is built in states, it would also assist in planning and implementation. The NLS includes:
Mission General Council (GC) headed by the Union Minister of Human Resource Development, is the apex body which provides policy direction to DPEP and reviews the progress. It also facilitates centre – state coordination and promotes debates on issues with policy implications for primary education development. GC meets annually and is adequately represented by NGOs, educationists, public men and representatives of state and central government.

Project board (PB) headed by the Union Education Secretary, is the empowered executive body with full financial and administrative powers to implement the programme. It recommends to the Government policies on DPEP, considers Annual Work Plan, promotes convergence, approves norms and reviews DPEP quarterly. PB meets at least once every quarter.

Joint secretary of DPEP will be the Member Secretary of both GC and PB. DPEP Bureau in the Ministry is a dedicated cell to implement the programme. Much of the background work relating to policy, servicing of PB, release of finances to states, overall review of the programme is done by this Bureau. It also provides for appraisal, supervision, monitoring, research and evaluation, reimbursement, procurement and technical support. The Bureau is accountable to the General Council and the Project Board for implementation of the Programme.

The technical Support Group (TSG) of the Educational Consultants India Limited (Ed.CIL) provides professional and technical support. The National Resource Centres - National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) and Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), also provide support, apart from Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).

State Level: At the state level, the programme is implemented in a mission mode through a registered autonomous society, which has two organs.

General Council (GC) with Chief Minister as ex-officio president and Executive Committee (EC) headed by the Chief Secretary/ Education Secretary of the State.

The Project is implemented by the State Project Office (SPO) and the executive responsibility rests with the State Project Director (SPD) being the Member Secretary of the GC and EC. Government of India is represented in the GC and EC. As the plans are formulated and implemented with the association of the community. NGOs, teachers, universities, national apex institutions and educationists, they are given adequate representation and voice in management of the project at all levels – state, district, block and village.

Management structures of DPEP have many common features across the states. These include small staff size, linkages with the state departments and consultancies of accessing expertise in key functional areas. The state project management structure is supported by State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), State
Institute of Educational Management and Training (SIEMAT), State Resource Groups (SRGs), Textbook Corporations and other Institutes.

**District Level:** District and sub-district level programme and planning and management are carried out by the District Project Committee headed by the District Collector or the Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad. The Committee reviews the progress of DPEP in the district and works towards widening the network of supportive agencies. The committee has representation of NGOs, Panchayats, educational institutions, Village Education Committees and functional specialities apart form the government departments. Besides, there is a District Implementation Committee which functions as the executive body at the district level.

District Project Office (DPO), headed usually by the District Primary Education Officer, has been established as a separate structure in all the districts. Day-to-day implementation is managed by a full-time District Project Coordinators (DPC) assisted by Assistants Project Coordinators. Staff of the Department of Education posted in the district including supervisory officials and functional specialists work closely with the district DPEP units.

District level structure is also supported by District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), District Resource Groups (DRGs), NGOs and other institutes.

**Sub-district Levels:** Some of the Project districts also have Block Project Implementation Committees. Block Resource Centre lends academic support, so also Cluster Resource Centre at cluster level (group of villages).

**Village Level:** At village level, there are Village Education Committee (VEC), Mother – Teacher Association (MTA) and Parent –Teacher Association (PTA) to oversee implementation of the project.

**DPEP MISSION**

**National General Council Project Board**
- Chairperson (HRM)
- Chairperson (Education Secretary)
- Member Secretary (JS, DPEP) – Member Secretary (JS, DPEP)

**DPEP Bureau**
- National Resource Centres
- Technical Support Group (NCERT, NIEPA, LBSNNA) Ed.CIL

**State General Council State Implementation executive Committee**
- Chairperson Society – Chairperson (Chief Secretary/(Chief Minister) Education Secretary)
- Member Secretary (State Project Director)
District Project Implementation
- Office Committee-Chairperson (District Collector)
- Block (Academic Support) Block Resource Centre
- Cluster (Academic Support) Cluster Resource Centre
- Village VEC/MTA/PTA

Note: Sectoral networking with resource institution/agencies, NGOs are seen across levels.

PROGRAMME COMPONENTS AND INTERVENTIONS

The programme is structured to provide additional inputs over and above the provisions made by the State Governments for expenditure on elementary education. DPEP fills in the existing gaps in the development of primary education and seeks to revitalize the existing system.

The programme components include community, creation of community based structure, construction of classrooms and new schools, opening of non-formal and Alternative Schooling Centres, appointment of new teachers, setting up of Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs), and Block Resource Centres (BRCs), teacher training, development of Teaching Learning Material, distance education and special intervention for education of girls, the disabled children and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Children.

a. Community Mobilisation
Community Participation is an inbuilt intervention in DPEP. The programme elicits the involvement of the community including minoritites: women and the socially deprived groups, making them stakeholders in the primary education system. This is the first large scale attempt to involve community participation for achieving universal primary education. Given the social, economic and cultural diversity in India, community participation is an economical challenge.

A wide range of communication and media options are adopted for community mobilisation in the programme. DPEP has drawn upon the experiences of Kala Jathas (Cultural troupes) mode of the Total Literacy Mission (TLM) for community mobilisation. Kala Jathas have been extensively organized using folk forms, puppet shows, traditional media, street plays, films and songs to create awareness. Rallies, workshops, meetings, house to house campaigns and camps are also held to motivate parents to send their children to school. Opportunities such as weekly market, melas (fairs), and religious gatherings have been used apart from the media channels of radio, television and print media.

Special melas take Mahila (women), Ma-beti (mother-daughter), Bap-beti (father-daughter) and Sishu (child) are organized to sensitize the community on needs of primary education. Posters, banners, hoardings, pamphlets, folders and brochures also create the environment of a campaign. The states implementing the programme today have rich repository of print and audio visual material.
Studies have shown that these campaigns have generated interest and enthusiasm resulting in increased enrollment. Before DPEP, the community perceived the existence of the school as its only area of concern. Recent development show that the community is increasingly participating in issues related to the school environment, pedagogical renewal learning achievement of children, etc. The increasing involvement of parent and wider community is also having a salutary effect on the teaching learning process. DPEP's experience has shown that when interventions are designed by the community and are tailored to the village's distinctive characteristics, then the best results follow. In fact from Gujarat to Assam and from Himachal Pradesh to Kerala, instances of community members volunteering their time, energy and resources can be related.

b. Village Education Committee (VECs)
DPEP has set up community structure commonly known as Village Education Committee (VEC) in all villages to function as an interface between the community and the primary education system. This generates community's interest and involvement leading to community ownership of the programme. Studies have shown that VECs have played an important role in mobilizing the community, motivating the parents to send their children to school and even managing Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and Alternative Schooling (AS) centres. In some places VECs are supervising construction of schools and classrooms. These committees have assisted in enrollment, retention and reduction of drop-out rate, besides strengthening and maintaining the physical infrastructure of the school. In some places, they raise contributions for schools, prepare village educational plans, appoint para teachers and conduct house-to-house surveys and micro planning.

The tenure of VECs ranges from 3 to 5 years. VECs meet once in a month and review functioning of the school. They also discuss about enrollment and drop-out position, progress of civil works and effectiveness of mobilisation campaigns. These committees adequately represented by women, disadvantaged groups, parents, social workers and prominent persons. In some states, women comprise half of the total members. The headteacher of the village school and member of the Village Panchayat (local body) are ex-officio members of the committee. DPEP provides school grant of Rs. 2,000 per annum to each VEC for improving school facilities, furniture, health check up, etc.

The Programme has undertaken to orient and train VEC members to enable supervision, school improvement and also for bringing about attitudinal changes among parents and the community. Studies have revealed active participation of women resulted in better functioning of VEC as also school. Wherever women headed VECs, widespread information sharing and consultation with larger community has been witnessed. Village Education Committee has been set up in all villages of the project area.

Besides VECs, there are other community based structures like Mother Teacher Association (MTA), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and Mahila Samakhya Sanghs (Women's clubs formed under the scheme for women's empowerment) which also assist the programme.
The interface between Panchayat Raj (local self government) Institutions and VECs needs to be strengthened and harmonized for wider participation of the community in education.

c. Physical Infrastructure

Provision of necessary physical infrastructure is a basic requirement of ensuring universal access and enrollment of children. DPEP undertakes construction of new schools buildings, classrooms, and repair work, provision of drinking water and toilet facilities and also developing infrastructure for Block Resource Centre (BRC), Cluster Resource Centre (CRC), District Institute of Education and Training (SCERT). DPEP also supports construction of ECCE centres, residential schools, multigrade centres, partition walls, boundary walls, etc.

DPEP has evolved over 100 innovative district and state specific designs — a district improvement over the traditional box-type schools with facilities for activity based learning. Improvement of learning environment to suit pedagogical needs is central to the new designs, which are child and handicapped friendly. It uses appropriate technologies using local material and skills. These new design emphasize on making better physical and visual access, creating space other than classrooms like verandah, pavilion, platform, etc. and providing external classrooms and display and storage space. An innovation fund has been made available to all project states to develop new pedagogically — sensitive school construction designs.

Community participation has been one of the successes of the civil works programme and VECs playing a lead role in construction activities. The community employs labour, buys materials and oversees the construction.

Voluntary contribution in terms of land, labour and material can be seen in various places. Some states have constituted Village Construction Committees (VCC) a sub committee of VEC to oversee civil works. Three fourths of all works under the Programme have been undertaken through the village community. Procedurally, community participation is a significant departure from the conventional system of construction. DPEP recognizes the community as the major stakeholder in the provision of infrastructure and this creates sense of ownership and pride in the village. Interestingly, now the community is acting as a watchdog over the works being done departmentally or through contractors.

To facilitate the process of community involvement, training modules and construction manuals have been developed in local languages. The engineers, interestingly, are now acting mainly as technical resource persons to help and guide the community.

As per DPEP guidelines, cost of civil works should not exceed 24 % of the project cost. This had led to prioritisation of construction needs and ensured that only additional requirements, over and above the normal state government sponsored or Operation Blackboard funded construction activities, are promoted by DPEP. It has also led to convergence of funds for civil works under other programmes like Jawahar Rozgar Yojna and area development programmes. In some states funds of Panchayat, District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and Tribal Welfare Departments have also been tapped.
Over 7,000 new school buildings, 5,300 additional classrooms, 8,800 toilets and drinking water facilities have been constructed in all 3,800 buildings were repaired, in the project area as on January 1, 1999, DPEP has a massive construction programme with outlay of about Rs.15,000 million. It plans to construct over 26,300 new schools, 22,400 classrooms and over 10,000 other buildings in 163 districts of the project. It also proposes to provide drinking water and toilet facilities at over 63,000 places and to repair over 32,000 schools.

**d. Alternative Schooling (AS)**

Studies have shown that physical conditions such as far off schools from habitation, geographical barriers like river in between the village and school; socio-economic conditions such as children engaged in agricultural work; and school related factors like poor environment, have sometimes limited the access to formal schools. This broad category of out-of-school children includes dropouts, enrolled but not attending classes and non-enrolled children. Most of the out-of-school children are from the disadvantaged groups and they are from backward and tribal areas. Of them, majority are girls. True, there are formal schools in 95% of the villages in the country within a distance of one kilometer and also there are many Non Formal Education (NFE) centres. But both the systems have been rigid with fixed duration and schedule.

Alternative schools under DPEP, on the other hand is flexible and provides learning at a free pace. It is set up after studies and house to house surveys. A number of Alternative Schools (AS) has been opened for children in remote and small habitations as also for out-of-school children in other areas. This has ensured school participation of working children, street children, and children of migrating communities, slum children and other marginalized groups.

Normally AS centres are run for 250 to 300 days in a year with a minimum of three hours per day. But there are also many AS centres which function like formal schools with five hours daily. The period of Alternative Schooling strategies vary from 2 to 5 years, based on the free pace of learning and multi-level situation. Minimum qualification for Alternative Schooling teachers in most states is matriculation and normally women teachers from the community are preferred. Apart from the foundation training, these teachers are imparted regular in-service training.

Education in AS centres is not inferior to that of formal schools. Stress is given on equivalence in quality with formal schools in terms of teacher's qualifications/training, academic support, school hours, duration and TLM. In fact, studies have shown that quality of education and learning achievement levels in AS are higher than formal schools. In most of the AS schools, formal textbooks are being used. Most of the project states have evolved separate academic support systems to assist AS teachers.

Community participation is the hallmark of various AS strategies. Teachers belong to the community, they are selected by the community and harmonium is paid by the community.
A number of Alternative Schooling models and strategies are in vogue in project states, depending on specific needs and requirements. For instance, there are 7 Alternative Schooling models in Gujarat. Some models of Alternative Schooling are:

Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) of Madhya Pradesh, where Government opens schools within 90 days if an area without school within 1 ½ kilometer radius of the habitation is identified and if there are at least 40 out-of-school children. It is managed by the Panchayat.

Back to School Campaign in Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, where through intensive camps, children are withdrawn from work and educated to the level, corresponding to their age. They are then brought back to the mainstream school system.

Makhtabs and Madrasas Assam and Uttar Pradesh where Makhtabs (Muslim religious leaders) or para teachers impart formal primary education – especially to Muslim girls who do not come to formal schools in Makhtabs and Madrasas after the religious instructions.

Alternative Schooling in Madhya Pradesh under DPEP is run with the help of "Digantar" an NGO. This is a four-hour school based on free pace learning. There are no grades and the teacher is only a facilitator.

Multi-grade schools in Kerala. These are opened in collaboration with Rishi Valley School Group in habitations and villages which do not qualify for opening new schools. It emphasizes on group learning and use of self-learning material.

AS in Tamil Nadu has been opened to bring back out-of-school children to mainstream after an input of one year.

Residential Schools in Gujarat envisages opening Ashram residential schools, seasonal hostels and vocational courses for children of migratory population during harvesting seasons.

Sugar Schools in Maharashtra is for children of families who migrate to the area of sugar factories during the season. These schools are close to sugar fields or sugar factories. In some cases, children are accommodated in the nearby formal school for about 6 to 7 months.

Other innovative approaches like summer camps and mobile schools are also being planned. The stress is on developing flexible school strategies, tailored to the needs of particular groups.

So far over 38,000 AS centers with enrollment of over one million children have been opened in the project areas and 80,000 more such centers are proposed to be set up. By opening large number of schools under AS, many states have achieved universal physical access and universal enrollment.
e. Pedagogical Renovation and Quality Improvement

Quality improvement is the cornerstone of DPEP and focus is on ensuring improvements in classroom processes. This is being attempted through renewal of curriculum and Teaching Learning Material (TLM), teacher training and empowerment, provision of decentralized academic support and capacity building of institutions. Improving classroom processes have been found not only more cost-effective but also more beneficial than incentives for achieving targets of universalisation.

Route to Quality Improvement
Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Material/Processes
- Textbooks
- Supplementary reading material
- Pupil evaluation

Teacher Empowerment
- Teacher Training (competence building attitudinal change, gender sensitive)

Decentralised Academic Support Institutions
- DPEP installed BRC/CRC for onsite academic support to teachers
- Academic Resource Support
- SCERT, DIET and Education Department machinery – BEO/SI
- Teacher grant of Rs.500

Institutions Capacity Building
- SCERT
- DIET
- BRC/CRC

Better learning achievement for children

School improvement and classroom processes joyful, activity based, child-centered.

a. Textbooks Development

DPEP emphasizes on improving the quality of teaching and making learning a joyful experience for students. Classroom processes are child centered, activity based, bias free (tribal, gender social and economic), attractive and interesting. It is also a two-way interaction, promoting self and group learning but avoids information overload. The new philosophy meant a review and in most cases an overhaul of curriculum and teaching learning materials including textbooks, workbooks, teacher’s handbooks, supplementary reading material etc.

Textbook development commenced right in the first year of the programme and states are at various stages in this process. Most of the states have developed and trialed MLL oriented activity based textbooks through a participatory process involving teachers, coordinators of BRC and CRC, DIET, and SCERT personnel, subject experts, artists and illustrators. Some states have even replicated DPEP textbooks in non-DPEP districts.
Development of the textbooks has entailed a very rigorous process of debate, discussion, drafting and review before the final manuscript is arrived.

The processes have been guided by the State Resource Groups (SRGs) specially constituted for facilitating pedagogical renewal. Tie-ups with organizations such as Ekalavya (Madhya Pradesh, Centre for Learning Resources (Pune), Diganatar (Rajasthan), Development Network (Bihar) and Lok Jumbish (Rajasthan) have also facilitated pedagogical renewal processes in states, besides experts from NCERT and other premier institutions.

In most of the states trialing of textbooks had been undertaken to identify gaps that could be corrected before large scale introduction took place. Trialing has been done in some schools over a specified period of time involving teachers and resource persons specially trained for the purpose. The trialing outcomes were discussed in workshops and changes incorporated accordingly.

The illustration, design and production aspects of textbooks, workbooks and handbooks have been given due attention. As a result, books produced under DPEP are far more attractive and interesting while costs have either reduced or remained the same.

Some of the DPEP states have developed textbooks in more than one language, depending on the different languages used medium of instruction in the schools. Other than this to overcome learning difficulties of tribal children, Bridge Language Inventories (BLI) has also been prepared and teachers trained in their usage. This is particularly helpful for the teachers who are not familiar with the mother-tongue of the children. With improved communication between teacher and taught is expected that the children will gradually be able to follow the formal language of instruction.

What is being attempted under DPEP for quality improvement and pedagogical renovations is little short of renaissance, and quite one at that.

b. Supplementary Reading Material. In addition to textbooks, supplementary reading materials were also developed to provide additional inputs to both teachers and students. They are usually in the form of:

- Readers/story books
- Graded language reading booklets
- Fun-booklets on mathematics etc.

The other kinds of teaching learning materials developed and used in DPEP include practice work cards, picture-words, school readiness packages, activity guides, rhymes and story collections.

c. Pupil Evaluation. Some states have begun work on recurrent pupil evaluation which is in accordance with pedagogy of activity-based, child-centered teaching learning processes, instead of annual examination system.
f. Teacher Training

Along with the change in textbooks and workbooks, all teachers in DPEP districts are trained in joyful learning, competency and pedagogy. Teachers are central to the Programme as they can bring about changes in classroom processes, through commitment, creativity and innovation.

In-service teacher training earlier has rarely been undertaken on a large scale. Training in DPEP, is not conceived as a one-time exercise. Instead, the training programme is being followed up with regular and ongoing academic support with the help of CRCS and BRCs. Arguably, the most significant intervention has been the initiation and consolidation of teacher support through decentralized sub-district level resource centres and resource persons.

DPEP has developed trialed and transacted teacher training modules in all the Project districts. An evaluation study has found a visible shift towards the new training programme, which is motivational and content and need based. The teacher training programmes have been largely participatory in nature. These programmes are usually residential and of different duration, spread over three to ten days and are usually conducted at BRCs. Some states have also integrated the monthly meetings and other block/cluster level activities to support the structured training programmes. The overall training strategy in DPEP has made a major departure from the earlier pattern in which the courses were centrally designed, which followed the lecture mode and were not regularly updated or conducted.

As the cascade model has been generally followed by the states in training their teachers, the services off Master Trainers (MTs) and Resource Persons (RPs) have been utilized in a big way. To minimize transmission loss in the process, the number of levels of training is kept to the minimum and the selection and training of MTs/RPs has been meticulously done. The SCERT and SRGs (which have now been established in almost all the states) train district or block level RPs who in turn train the teachers directly. In some states the CRC coordinators conduct training programmes at the cluster level. The institutions involved in training are SCERT, SPO, DIET, state and district resource groups, NGOs, BRCs and CRCS.

Teacher training packages are introduced only after it is field tested. The feedback received is used to improve upon the package. In some states feedback is taken regularly during the training programmes and efforts have been made to make mid-course corrections.

All states have completed several rounds of training. Till date more than 7, 20, 000 teachers have been trained. Training of head teachers has also been taken up in some states. In addition to teachers, DPEP has also trained over two million community leaders, 20,000 master trainers, 5,000 action researchers and 20,000 master trainers, 5,000 action researchers and 2,000 planners and managers.
All teachers are given a grant of Rs. 500 per year to prepare teaching learning material and aids.

g. Academic Support Institutions
Teacher training programmes cannot be the only input for teachers’ empowerment. In line with the understanding of teacher development as a continuing process with the requirement of regular academic support, sub-district structures at block and cluster level Cluster Resource Centre (CRC) for a group of 8 to 10 villages and Block resource Centre (BRC) for a group of 8 to 10 clusters have been established in all states. The block and cluster level resource centres have been set up under DPEP to provide on-site support to teachers in terms of school visits, demonstrations and feedback, teacher training, material preparation, discussion of specific problems at monthly meetings, etc. under DPEP, about 14,000 CRCs and about 3,700 BRCs have been set up.

h. CRC
The function CRCs broadly include:

- Training at cluster level
- Organizing and conducting monthly meetings for teachers
- Follow-up and support visits to schools (sharing problems, lesson demonstrations, etc.)
- Making CRC a resource centre (equipping with books, discussion paper, etc.)
- Collecting data and information asked for by BRC (enrollment, attendance, dropout, etc.)
- Holding meetings with VEC members
- Undertaking environment building activities
- Collecting information about civil works
- Feedback to BRC
- Attending monthly meetings at BRC

CRC have been involved in conducting training programmes for teachers. In some states they have supervisory powers. In the monthly meetings all CRC teachers come together to share and discuss their academic and administrative problems. One of the major activities at these meetings has been lesson demonstration followed by discussions. The CRC coordinator facilitates the discussions and sometimes gives lesson demonstrations also.

A CRC is headed by a coordinator, who is normally a primary school teacher with 10-15 years of experience.

i. BRC
Role functions of BRC are:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Planning, organizing, coordination and administration</th>
<th>Monitoring and follow up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building BRC into a resource centre where books, discussion papers, etc. are available</td>
<td>Planning and organizing training programmes, workshops, review meetings, monthly meetings at BRC</td>
<td>Monitoring of CRC activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Collaborating and coordinating with BEO and DIET</td>
<td>Collecting reports of various meetings and submitting to DPO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development teaching-learning Materials</td>
<td>Preparing Annual Work Plan and budget and training Calendar, etc.</td>
<td>Feedback from teachers through school visits Attending review meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits to schools and monthly meetings (observation and feedback)</td>
<td>Disbursing payments Providing support to activities undertaken at CRC level Setting up CRCs and AS centres Coordinating with ECCE centres Planning environment building activities Coordinating with DPO</td>
<td>Supervision of civil works</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BRCs are headed by coordinators, who are normally secondary school teachers with experience in primary education.** BRCs may also have resource persons, trainers, teacher educators, subject experts and academic coordinators.

School visits are undertaken independently by both BRC and CRC functionaries, but the nature of support provided by the BRC and CRC are generally different. The CRC coordinators generally make monthly visits to each school. During the visit the CRC coordinators attempt to provide on-site academic support and guidance to the teachers by listening to their problems, giving lesson demonstrations and by helping them to make lesson plans. **The BRC coordinators visits to school are less frequent and they generally play a supervisory role.** In some states where CRCS are still in the process of evolving their roles, the BRC faculty provides direct on-site academic support to the teacher.

**DIETs**

District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) which provide academic and resource support to elementary education teachers and non-formal instructors in districts, have been identified as the principal technical and professional resource institutions in PEP districts.

Strengthening of DIETs has been attempted through provision of equipment, books, etc, equipment provided includes photocopies, overhead projectors, typewriters, duplicating machines etc. In most of the states library books have been provided to the DIETs by PEP. **The initial effort was to ensure adequate staffing in DIETs.**
Most DIETs have taken up the following activities under DPEP:

- In-service teacher training
- Academic monitoring and supervision
- Action Research, TLM preparation etc.
- Facilitating implementation of activities under other functional areas.

Key DIET faculty members have been identified and involved with the programme in most states. They have contributed significantly to the programme. The SCERT, DIETs and the resource groups have been contributing in the areas of developing training packages and materials for training, curriculum and textbook development, supervision and provision of academic inputs to the BRCs and CRCs. District Resource Groups (DRGs), wherever they are functional, are helping BRCs and CRCs in the regular academic support to teachers.

To supplement the efforts of SCERTs and DIETs, state and district level resource groups have been constituted comprising representatives from the State Departments of Education, SCERT, SIE, DIET, Universities, Colleges (including B.Ed, Colleges), NGOs, SPO, DPO, BRC, CRC, etc. the State Resource Groups (SRGs) have often included ‘good’ primary school teachers, who undergo an intensive selection process. The presence of persons with experience of working in primary schools has helped in the development and training programmes that have participatory and experiential training methodologies and content that is more relevant to the school situation.

k. SCERT

Academic support in the area of school education is provided by the State Councils of Educational Research and training (SCERTs) and the DIETs in the states. However, deficiencies in human resource and other infrastructural problems have limited the extent of their effectiveness in some states. DPEP has tried to improve the situation by providing additional personnel and infrastructural support in terms of new or additional buildings, vehicles and office equipment.

Presently, in almost all the states, SCERT faculties are involved in the whole range of quality improvement interventions. In states like Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and recently in Assam the entire responsibility of pedagogical renewal has been entrusted to the SCERT.

l. Teacher Recruitment

DPEP initiatives have set up the teacher recruitment process in the project areas as most states have shortage of teachers to the extent that there are many single teacher schools and multi-grade situation in primary schools. About additional teachers have been recruited in the project states.

DPEP provides funds for appointment of additional teachers, preferably women teachers as studies indicate that presence of lady teachers will enhance participation of girls. On an average only 35% of the primary school teachers are female. DPEP states are making
conscious efforts to recruit more female teachers. About 51% of teachers newly appointed in DPEP states are women.

Parallelly, DPEP has been experimenting with the community selected para teachers who know the local language, especially in remote and tribal habitations. Such teachers are not only effective, but also less costly, as they are paid less than the regular teachers. A large number of such teachers have been recruited in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh and are proposed in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

Institutional Development and Capacity Building

Institutional Development and Capacity building in DPEP focuses on the following:
- Developing a network of technical resource support institutions having expertise in planning and management;
- Creating and strengthening of state level institutional capacity for educational planning and management. For this purpose, State Institutes of Education Management and Training (SIEMATs) are set up and the existing institutions such as SCERT, IIMs, and Institutes of Public Administration are networked for support;
- Development of district and sub-district level programme support institutions such as DIET, BRC, and CRC;
- Developing research and development agents related to educational planning and management;
- Developing and implementing capacity building programmes for VECs and other Panchayat Raj bodies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL SCIENCES AND RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS</th>
<th>UNIVERSITIES</th>
<th>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCERT</td>
<td>NIEPA</td>
<td>BRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIE</td>
<td>SIEMAT</td>
<td>CRC</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCERT</td>
<td>IIMS</td>
<td>VEC/PTA/MTC/SMC</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIET</td>
<td>LBSNAA</td>
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<td>IGNOU</td>
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The project is steadily building a base for technical support to enrich the programme by creating a network of appropriate institutions and also using the experience and expertise available within the country to the maximum. The initial network of DPEP comprising mainly of TSG, NIEPA, and NCERT has expanded further to include institutions like LBSNAA, IGNOU, IIMS, ICSSR Institutions and Universities, etc.

In addition to the ongoing efforts on capacity building of the resource institutions into SCERT, DIET, SRG, BRC, and CRC, the need for exclusive and extensive efforts for developing capacities outside the regular structures was felt.
The process of capacity building has been initiated at the national level by involving institutions like National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) and Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Planning and Administration (LBSNAA) for module development and training.

NIEPA's involvement has been in the areas of:
- Module development for training
- Project planning and implementation
- Micro planning, school mapping and community mobilisation
- Institutional development especially SIEMATs and SCERTs

LBSNAA has been contributing in the areas of:
- Project Planning and Implementation
- Annual Plan Formulation
- Appraisal and Supervision

m. SIEMAT's
To strengthen the planning and management capacities as also develop the capabilities of the existing staff, DPEP supports setting up of State Institutes of Educational Management aspects of education including training of functionaries at all levels of planning, implementation, research and evaluation.

SIEMAT, an effective management institution at the state aims at:
- Develop training courses for educational administrators.
- Build capacities of school heads, supervisory staff and project functionaries in planning, management and supervision of education.
- Undertake research and evaluation in planning and management.
- Develop databases and decision support systems in education.
- Devise guidelines and training programmes in areas like school mapping, micro planning, institutional planning etc.
- Develop approaches for convergence of services.
- Develop innovative approaches for effective supervision and school evaluation.
- Establish network with Government NGOs and other organizations for training, research, monitoring and evaluation in educational planning, management and assessment.

n. Distance Education
The Distance Education component in DPEP, supports and supplements on-going training programmes for teachers and other primary education personnel by using distance learning (DL) inputs and materials. The component of open distance learning was built into the programme realizing that no single approach or model will be able to train about 6,000 to 7,000 primary teachers and over 10,000 primary education personnel in a district.
The Distance Education Programme (DEP) was set up under IGNOU as a lead agency, in collaboration with NCERT to provide expertise to project states for strengthening the training efforts by using DL inputs and materials. DEP aims:

- To provide technical support in designing, developing, producing and delivering DL inputs and materials for training the primary education personnel.
- To build capacity among institutions and people at national, state, and district and sub-district levels in designing, producing and delivering DL inputs and materials.
- To assist in reducing transmission loss by suitable DL interventions, thereby increasing consistency and quality of training efforts.
- To develop materials and organize training inputs for selected district level personnel.
- To assist in augmenting the existing EMIS to incorporate database related to training.
- To develop mechanism to assess trainee performance for providing credits leading to certification.
- To target groups of DEP, apart from teachers, include DIET faculty, CRC/BRC coordinators, District Project Office Staff, SRG, VEC members and NFE/ECCE/AS personnel.

DEP has developed and produced many DL inputs and materials in print, audio and video. A number of audio-video programmes in various areas have been selected and distributed among states for use in the teacher training programmes. The project has conducted several training programmes through teleconferencing.

The District Education component was launched through a teleconferencing on February 26, 1997.

**o. Integrating the disabled**

Universalisation of primary education cannot be achieved if 10% of the children, who have some physical, intellectual or emotional limitations, are excluded from the general mainstream of education. DPEP, therefore, has chalked out a concrete programme to provide for Integrative Education for the Disabled (IED) children. The programme will fund interventions for integrated education of primary school going children with integral and mild moderate disabilities. Five categories of disabilities covered under the Programme are – visual, hearing, orthopedic, and learning impairment and mental retardation.

**Towards the end DPEP supports:**

- **Setting up** of State Advisory Group for integrated education in DPEP with at least three experts in the field. Similar group team is to be set up at the district level too.
- **Appointment** of IED coordinator at the district level.
- **Networking** with NGOs, special schools and other organizations.
- **Development of skills and competencies** in primary school teachers through inservice training for early detection of disabilities, functional assessment, use of aids and appliances and monitoring progress.
- **Early detection** of disabilities through house to house surveys.
• Recruitment of three resource teachers at the block level.
• Construction of a resources room at the block and cluster level.
• Provision of essential rehabilitation and educational aids and appliances to children with special needs.
• Removal of architectural barriers and construction of ramps in the school and creation of extra space for disabled children etc.

With the enhancement of the Persons with Disability Act 1995, inclusion of disabled children in general education system has assumed added significance. Thus keeping the educational goals firmly under perspective, DPEP is taking a determined and purposeful stand to successfully create an ambience for the integration of the disabled children into the national educational mainstream.

Household surveys have been conducted in many states to identify disabled children. Some states have given representations to parents of disabled children in VEC.

p. Early Childhood Education (ECE)
DPEP finances expansion of Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres in villages not eligible to be covered by the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). To improve the quality of ECE, the Programme also develops pre-school materials and imparts training to functionaries and ICDS Anganwadi and Balwadi workers. ECE is a vital input to this programme because it prepares children particularly first generation learners for primary school readiness.

Early Childhood Education has an impact on girls’ participation in primary education. With the pre-school children in the ECE Centres is further enhanced if these are situated in or near the primary schools.

In many states DPEP is supporting centres set up by ICDS. In such places there is close coordination with ICDS to ensure that school timings and Anganwadi centre timings match and the Anganwadi centres are located close to the schools. DPEP also takes up capacity building of ICDS functionaries and provides teaching learning material to strengthen the ECE component of Anganwadi centres.

Under the Programme over 8,000 ECE centres have been opened, besides strengthening over 35,000 Anganwadi centres.

q. Girls Education
DPEP’s commitment to universalize primary education necessarily implies equal and universal participation of all children regardless of religion, caste, creed, and sex. Girls, who comprise almost half of the child population, fall into this category of children requiring special attention, as their participation in education is not proportionate. Enrollment, retention and achievement levels of girls are low, especially those belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities and backward and disadvantaged groups.
DPEP therefore stresses marked gender focus in all aspects of planning and implementation for improving access, retention and achievement level of girls, as also to permeate gender sensitivity in training, recruitment of teachers, textbooks and other educational facilities and incentives. The project goal include enrollment of all eligible girls in primary school, retain all girls enrolled, ensure minimum levels of learning for girls and reduce gender gap to less than 5%.

There are many deterrents in girls’ education – household and sibling care responsibilities, non-supportive school environment, natural barriers, distance to school, safety, etc. Specific strategies have been designed in the Programme to enhance girl’s access, enrollment and retention in the school system. These include:

- Educational incentives such as free textbooks;
- Flexible school timings;
- Gender sensitive curricula and textbooks;
- Improved school buildings with provision of toilets for girls;
- More female teachers; 51% new teachers are women; almost half of the AS instructors are women;
- Escort system in some states;
- ECCE centers close to primary schools and convergence with ICDS to support girls’ attendance in schools;
- School health programmes;
- Special coaching for girls;
- Opening exclusive AS centres.

Apart from these, the Programme recognizes the crucial importance of enabling communities, particularly women, to play an active role in every aspect of the Programme;

- Formation of village-level women’s collective and training of local women activists to catalyze collective actions around education issues.
- Empowerment of local bodies such as Village Education Committees, Mother-Teacher Associations and women’s groups to enable them to take the responsibility for promoting education in their areas.
- Intensive capacity building of community and women’s groups, to focus on issues of education for girls.
- Involvement of community and women’s organizations in mobilisation and school management, and in monitoring enrollment, retention, levels of achievement and classroom transactions with emphasis on girls.
- Mobilizing informed and active participation at the local level to build and sustain an environment supportive of girls’ education.
- DPEP either funds Mahila Samakhya programmes or works in close coordination.

A number of affirmative activities have been taken up to deepen gender awareness and build capacity for the same. These are carried out in the form of regular interactions with state level coordinators, by evolving district-specific gender sensitive strategies, building
local resource institutions and facilitating information flow on emerging concerns. Pertinent lessons have been drawn from Mahila Samakhya Scheme, where women are helped to recognize and affirm their own and each others strengths and skills and overcome fears and inhibitions.

Thrust of DPEP is to make girls education a community agenda so that the gender perspective is retained even after the project period. This requires high level community involvement and motivation. Most of the project states have initiated community mobilisation activities including special campaigns, girls’ enrollment drives, door-to-door campaigns, ma-beti melas, besides generating films, audio-video cassettes, posters, banners, booklets, and hoardings highlighting importance of girls education.

Though slow, changes are now perceptible. There is discernible evidence to show both higher enrollment and retention amongst girl pupils and a more affirmative climate in the community to support education of the girl child. Women are taking in new roles, of effective political participation, of acquiring new skills and qualifications, of acquiring control over local resources, of building an autonomous and independent identity and of building links and networking with other groups and movement.

A recent trend analysis conducted by NIEPA shows that the share of girls in enrollment in the DPEP-I districts has increased to 46.37% in 1997-98. It also found gender based disparities in enrollment insignificant in most of the project district. Out of 42 districts 21 attained near perfect gender equity in enrollment while in 16 districts it was close to equity.

5. Social Equity
One of the major objectives of DPEP is to reduce the disparities between tribal and non-tribal children in enrollment, retention and learner achievement to less than 5%. Since the tribals are homogeneous group with regard to socio-economic conditions, literacy levels, etc., the approach under DPEP is group/region specific. Access and retention are the issues in tribal areas because of small and scattered habitations, involvement of children in various economic activities/household chores and migration. In many places, the problems are acute as the curriculum and textbooks have little relevance to tribal culture.

Based on these issues, the following have been identified as precedence areas under DPEP by the states.

- Identification of tribes having specific problems and addressing them under the DPEP.
- Covering all the tribal habitations by setting up schools or its alternative.
- Opening ECCE centres in tribal areas on a priority basis.
- Campaigning and contact programmes in tribal areas.
- Reviewing of the curricula and instructional materials and teacher sensitization programmes.
- Developing innovative alternative arrangements for migrating population.
- Sensitizing the field functionaries toward tribal-specific areas.
Towards this end, efforts are constantly on to increase the tribal community’s access to education and development while maintaining their distinctive culture. Education in tribal areas has received a boost with DPEP giving priority to the opening of schools in tribal areas. Some of the interventions include setting up of residential schools, creating a cadre of para teachers within the community, teaching in local dialects and developing culturally-sensitive education material. Several national-level workshops have been organized to facilitate interstate sharing and networking with resource organizations and institutions working on tribal education.

Strategies include identifying the focus areas and the needs of the states with respect to tribal education and providing the necessary support, ensuring the provision of complete access in tribal areas, targeting the migrating tribes, revision in the method of teaching language and mathematics to tribal children, attitudinal and language training for the teachers and identifying pockets with high incidence of child labour and addressing these issues under the DPEP.

Involvement of the community, NGOs and other organizations is the cornerstone of the DPEP initiative in this area. Special community mobilisation campaigns and Kalajathas are organized in tribal areas, using tribal languages. Many project states have textbooks and workbooks in tribal languages and dialects. In some states tribal language dictionaries and bridge language inventories have been developed. Teachers in tribal districts are given attitudinal training while coordinators of BRCs and CRCs are imparted several rounds of training on tribal specific issues.

Similarly, DPEP is in the process of galvanizing and mobilizing resources for the educational upliftment of the scheduled castes and minority community for ushering in social equity and justice for all. It is stipulated that VECs must have at least one representation from SC community. Educational incentives such as free textbooks and reading and writing material are provided to the disadvantaged children to encourage them to enter and remain in school. Demand generation at village level to bring the disadvantaged children to school is definitely encouraged and increasing emphasis is being laid on pedagogical renewal and new and innovative schemes to enhance child participation rates.

As per the Trend Analysis NIEPA conducted in 1998, the Index of Social Equity (ISE) for scheduled caste population was more than 95 (100 being the ideal measure of equity) in all 42 districts of Phase-I, showing near absence of inequities between Scheduled Caste and general population groups. Though inequities between tribals and others have also narrowed down, more focused strategy is required to overcome constraints in enrollment and retention of tribal children.

Planning
DPEP planning is decentralised, participatory and area-specific. It is also contextual, based on local needs, and priorities. This has entailed development and management of plan at the micro level. DPEP’s planning process evidences a major shift from the conventional planning paradigms. The planning process – unlike blue print planning – is
dynamic and continuous, providing for preparation of project plans, annual plans, and appraisal and supervision reports. Planning and implementation are regarded as mutually dependent activities that refine and improve each other. Monitoring and evaluation systems are important links in the process of planning and implementation, by providing continuous feedback on impact and field based insights that facilitate fine tuning of the plans. In this way, planning, appraisal, implementation, supervision, monitoring, and evaluation have given room for incorporating course corrections in the original plans.  

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

An elaborate process of perspective plan marks programme start-up in a project state, which is essentially participatory and decentralised in nature. The Perspective Plan chalks out the course districts propose to traverse during the entire project cycle of five to seven years. The Baseline Assessment Studies (BAS) and studies on Special Focus Groups have facilitated the planning process to a great extent. Besides, data available on census, and the state Department of Education have also fed into the formulation of plans.

Once the perspective plan is prepared, it is subjected to rigorous appraisal, spread over couple of months, before it is finalized. The Pre-Appraisal Mission, followed by an Appraisal Mission, analyses, the quantitative aspects of the plans to arrive at the project costs at the state and district level. Operational aspects of plan implementation such as rules, by-laws and regulations of the Society are also focused upon.

The preparation of detailed district and state projects and annual plans is the responsibility of the Project States and districts. Project Plans provide an analysis of district and state specific problems and issues leading to a clear definition of project objectives and project strategies.

The district level plans are developed through a consultative process to arrive at as agreed set of priorities. There is also a heavy emphasis on active participation of the community – Panchayat, parent-teacher association, Teacher’s unions, Village Education Committee and educational functionaries at the local level. District planning under DPEP takes into account the ongoing activities of the education department as well as social sector departments to achieve horizontal convergence at districts.

Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B) is developed with in the frame work of the Perspective Plan, through annual consultative process. Each district prepares the AWP&B reflecting the funds reviewed and expenditure over the past year, achievements in that year and proposed targets for the next year. The district pans are put through a process of participatory appraisal and review. Appraisal of AWP&B was initially done at the national level. Keeping with the spirit of decentralization, the responsibility of AWP&B appraisal has been delegated to seven DPEP-I states and three DPEP-II states. For these 10 states, DPEP Bureau conducted sample checking. Appraisal for remaining 4 states is done at the national level.
The National Institutes – NIEPA and LBSNAA – and also TSG and SIEMTs are assisting in capacity building, training project planning and implementation, micro planning, school mapping, annual plans formation, appraisal, and supervision.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The role of research based interventions as an effective mechanism for bringing in systemic changes and eliciting alternate strategies for improving and sustaining primary education reforms is necessarily emphasized by DPEP. The programme is based on extensive research based information from the conceptualized and planning phase onwards. As a part of the project formulation process, every state had undertaken selected baseline studies in the areas of learning achievement, teacher policy and training needs, educational problems of tribal children, gender issues, state educational finances and status of designing, production and distribution of instructional materials. The outcome of these studies have been integrated and made use of during the district level planning process in the DPEP-I states. The study findings helped in identifying and developing strategies for effective interventions.

Cardinal objective of national component of research and evaluation are to: promote qualitative research projects, promote action research by teachers and other practitioners, conduct need-based evaluation and special studies, disseminate research finding and establish networks.

Since the launch of DPEP, there has been more focused attention on primary education research by NCERT and NIEPA. During this period, NCERT through its constituent regional institutes of Education (RIEs) has so far conducted over 50 research projects in edagogic issues of primary education. Different departments of NCERT have also initiated various research studies in the areas of institutional development, teacher training, textbooks, textbook development, classroom processes, learner achievement, CCE etc. Capacity building in research, both by way of improving skills in techniques and promoting a “research” guided approach to programme implementation, have also been recognized within the DPEP framework.

Yet another area in the DPEP research and evaluation strategy is to generate awareness and interest in the area of primary education research and widen the research base in the country. To this end, provisions for research by individuals and institutions have been made at district, state and national levels. The Promoting Individual Research in Primary Education (PROMOTE) and Institutional Projects in Primary Education (INSPIRE) schemes are facilitating research on primary education in the national level.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

An effective and efficient MIS contributes to the success of any project. A variety of data collected at a time and in a format that conforms to the requirements of users can go a long way in improving the quality and effectiveness of educational planning and management.
DPEP has developed two software packages to track progress of project interventions. These are known as the Project Management Information System (PMIS) and Educational Management Information (EMIS).

The PMIS essentially serves as a progress monitoring tool. The main objectives of the PMIS are to:

- Track the progress of delivery of project inputs
- Monitor the fund movement
- Monitor the physical progress of the project activities
- Provide project performance indicators which help the project authorities to take corrective steps for smooth implementation of the project
- It monitors the trends in key project areas such as civil works, appointment of teachers, training of personnel, completion of studies, release of funds, expenditure and disbursement claims. The software also generates quarterly progress reports. Constant efforts have been directed at improving the PMIS such that efficiency in data generation is enhanced.

SUPERVISION AND MONITORING

What perhaps sets DPEP apart from the earlier attempts at UBE is close scrutiny of its performance and premium on accountability at all levels through supervision and monitoring.

DPEP provides for regular Supervision Missions to the States to assess progress in the context of project goals and identify areas where technical assistance is required to improve interventions. Information on the progress of the implementation of the programme components is gathered and analyzed on a continuous basis and with steady periodicity. This ensures targeting technical support and capacity building efforts in key areas, and enables states and districts to make mid-course corrections.

The Supervision Missions have been mounted till date. The feedback provided by this exercise has been both useful and relevant for programme implementation and provided useful insights for mid-course changes and better planning.

APPRAISAL

Appraisal in DPEP is both a quantitative and qualitative exercise and has been interwoven in the process of planning. It supports the planning inputs as much as it assesses the capacity of the state/district to implement the programme.

The appraisal objectives are to:

- Assess the process of planning.
- Identify and prioritize issues and problems.
- Examine activities in terms of institutional capability, scheduling and phasing.
- Assess strategies in terms of social feasibility, technical feasibility, financial feasibility, and managerial feasibility.
- Assist the direct and states in refining their plans through capacity planning.
Within the programme, the appraisal process is viewed as critical to project success of pre-project studies and other related documentation. DPEP is one of the few programmes of this size that attempts decentralised planning in a participatory manner. Thus, the process is wider in range than the usual project appraisal.

Appraisal is one of the five stages of DPEP project cycle. The appraisal of perspective plans of districts and states begins after identification and preparation of the project. Appraisal paves way for implementation of the project in the state and later for evaluation.

CONVERGENCE OF SERVICES AND NETWORKING

A central concern of the Programme of Action (PoA) of 1992 is the convergence of services such as primary education, health, ECCE, etc. DPEP encourages drawing upon the resource base of different agencies and bodies, both governmental and non-governmental. Expertise and experience from diverse sources have not only enriched the programme inputs, but have often afforded innovative solutions to field realities. DPEP, therefore, promotes convergence and networking wherever such services exist, rather than replicate them.

- The state governments are taking the following steps to ensure effective convergence;
- Coordination of timings between primary schools and Anganwadi/Balwadi centres;
- Primary school buildings to be used for Anganwadi/Balwadi activities wherever possible;
- Primary school teachers to visit Anganwadi/Balwadi centres to ensure better enrollment at primary school level;
- Organizations such as the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) to be identified to draw up pre-school materials and curriculum in local languages and locally acceptable techniques which could be used in ECCE activities.
- Personnel imparting early childhood education to be trained specifically in ECCE component by SCERT and other organizations.

Besides these, networking with Government as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) has been one of the strengths of DPEP. NGOs have emerged as important actors in the area of social development in the country.

NETWORKING IN DPEP

Government Agencies Academic and Research Institutions
  a. Integrated Child Development Services
  b. NCERT, NIEPA, LBSNAA
  c. Health
  d. Universities
innovation

The flexibility and responsive approach has allowed room for trying out innovations in DPEP. Funds earmarked for such purposes have been made available at various levels under the DPEP guidelines. It has been characteristic of the districts to first try out an innovation and assess its worthiness before up scaling. Though innovations have sought to address some larger issues, such as girls’ education they have usually been contextual as they seek to tackle specific situations in pockets. While some innovations are cost activities, some are policy related as in the case of opening admissions to schools throughout the year or introducing flexible school timings. One of the priorities for innovation has been to involve the community in finding solutions to many persistent problems such as the attendance issues, shortage of teachers, inability of certain categories of children to enroll in schools etc.

Innovations tried out include:

- Flexible school timings.
- Appointment of para teachers.
- Introducing double shifts in schools.
- Rescheduling holidays as per local festivals.
- Providing escort to girls.
- Ashram residential schools.
- Innovative Alternative Schools.
- New Pedagogically Sensitive School designs.

The programme has promoted the process of “thinking through” in all states on a decentralized basis as a result of which innovative programmes such as Education Guarantee Scheme in Madhya Pradesh, special programmes for gender equity promotion of evaluation of SC/ST innovation in civil works designs and construction etc have emerged.

Progress towards Super goals in DPEP

- Enrollment growing by 5 to 6% per annum as against less than 1% in non-DPEP districts.
- GER ranges from 64 to 130%, 90% being the median (excluding enrollment in unrecognized schools and alternative schooling centres). GER near universal in many districts.
- Enrollment of girls and weaker sections increasing faster.
- Index of social equity for SC more than 95 in all phase-I districts.
- Opened over 60,000 formal schools; 16,000 more planned.
- Opened 38,000 AS Centres and 16,000 summer schools, 75,000 more AS Centres planned.
- Double shifts increasingly used.
- Drop-out declined by 4-12% since 1993, now in 17-31% range in most districts.
- Internal efficiency in the range of 48-95. Average number of primary schooling year reduced to 6.2 in 1997 from 7 in 1993.
- Learning achievement crossed targets of 25% in most districts in class-I; sizeable improvement in class-IV.
- Gender disparities almost closed.
- Pupil attendance range 61.7% in Dhar (Madhya Pradesh) and 91.2% in Sirmour (Himachal Pradesh).
- Teacher attendance improving – around 80%.
- Impact of DPEP
- Drop-out rate declined by 4 to 12% and now stands at 17 to 31%.
- Average year of primary schooling comes down to 6.2 years from 7.2 years in 1993.
- Internal efficiency stands in the range of 48-95%.
- Learning achievement improved.
- National enthusiasm is visible and all states are demanding more coverage.
- International Recognition
- Emerging as a model for universalisation of education in developing countries including Nepal, Philippines and some African countries.
- Significant impact on Non-DPEP areas.

Impact on Literacy
The literacy rate in the country has increased from 57% in 1994 (At the time of DPEP launching) to 62% in 1997. According to the 53rd round of the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), it is projected to touch 64% in 1998 and 68% in 2001. The literacy rate, as per 1991 census, was 52.21%

TAMIL NADU STATE MISSION OF EDUCATION FOR ALL

The Government of India and Government of Tamil Nadu spare no efforts and leave no stones unturned to achieve the so-far elusive goal of free and compulsory education for all school age children. Nearly fifty years have elapsed since the constitution made a comment to provide a free and compulsory education for all children of age 6 to 14 years, within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution. The fact that the priorities in education in the post-independent era were helping the nation to achieve self-sufficiency in the food front and to help rapid industrialisation, does not in anyway mitigate the problems of coverage, non-enrollment, drop-out, low quality primary education the country faces now. Nor would the fact that there are other countries equally bad or worse off than us in the achievement of UPE, console us of our woes in the field.
At this juncture when the comity of nations realise the importance and the need for UEE in every part of the globe as seen in the Jomtien Summit Call of "Education for All by 2000 AD", and in the various international agencies advancing huge sums of money for this sector, it is no wonder, the GOI takes all out efforts in pursuit of this goal. The Delhi declaration, National Policy on Education of 1986 and revised programme of action 1992 are all landmarks in this direction.

The operation Blackboard, UEE, Minimum levels of learning, multi-grade teaching, multiple teaching activities of universal enrollment, retention and completion with quality improvement in primary education.

Under GOI's pronounced principles of decentralised and participatory planning, districts were found to be viable units for effective planning, efficient implementation, empirical evaluation, early feedback and timely course correction. And in the field of primary education also, the need for a process driven, people oriented district level plan was felt. Such plan could be easily designed to tackle all the problems of primary education (including those mentioned in the previous paragraph) at one stroke. It could incorporate pre-school education and care of children, alternative school for non-starters, dropped out, and working children, with a formal primary schooling, with special emphasis to SC/ST and girls added in all its strategies, such a scheme could offer a holistic solution in selected areas in the field of primary education.

These considerations gave birth to District Primary Education Programme. It has come as a panacea to all the ills from which the body of primary education was suffering.

In Tamil Nadu, DPEP was launched in November 1994 in three districts with a confident note. The various welfare schemes of the Government of Tamil Nadu aimed at increased enrollment and retention in primary school are already at work. With the help of newly launched, "Dr. Jayalalitha's 15-point programme for child welfare," and the pioneering "Compulsory Primary Education Act 1994 of government of Tamil Nadu", which is coming shortly to the aid of officials engaged in UEE, the DPEP is expected to make a mark in the educational scenario of the state.

The DPEP programme was implemented in seven districts in Tamil Nadu. The district of Dharmapuri was chosen for this research work based on the criteria of being the phase I district of DPEP with chosen parameters.
Endnotes


5 Govt. of India, DPEP, *Every Child in School and every Child Learning* (New Delhi: MHRD, GOI Publication, 1999)

