

## Overview of District Primary Education Programme

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### ABSTRACT

The centrally—sponsored scheme of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was initiated in the year 1994 to revitalize the primary education system and achieving the objective of universalization of primary education. DPEP already adopted a holistic approach to universalize access, retention and improve learning achievement and reducing disparities among social groups.

### 1. District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)

The Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE) compiled the revision of the National Policy on Education (1986) in 1992 calling for an integrated approach to primary education department focused on district level. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) is based on the national experience with the pursuit of UEE has established even in those states where participation is near Universalisation.

POA, 1992 explains that "further efforts would be made to develop district specific projects with specific activities clearly defined responsibilities definite schedule and specific targets. Each district project will be prepared with major strategy frame work and will be tailored to specific needs and possibilities in the district apart from UEE. The goal of each project access the provision of alternative systems of comparable standards to the disadvantaged groups, substantial improvement in the quality of schooling facilities, obtaining a genuine community involvement in running of a school and building up of local level capacity to ensure effective decentralization of educational planning primary education as a whole in selected districts instead of piecemeal implementation of schemes. An inter-related approach is more likely to achieve synergies, among different programme components."

The DPEP is managed at national level by newly created DPEP bureau in Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). The bureau serves as financial and technical intermediary, appraising, monitoring and supervising state and district action programmes. The DPEP finances 85% of state and district expenditure with the bonus provided by the state budgets on the basis of seven years district and state plans indicators of learning achievements and dropouts are monitored every three years against base line established for each SCERT and such organizations attached to education departments and other state level organizations will participate to achieve the full coverage of districts for lower primary education, it could expand to cover upper primary level.

#### 1.1 Major Objectives of DPEP

- To reduce differences in enrolment, dropout and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than five percent.

- To reduce overall primary dropout rate for all students to less than 10 percent.
- To raise average achievement levels by at least 25 per cent over measured baseline levels and answering achievement of basic literacy competencies and a minimum of 40 per cent achievement level in other competencies, by all primary school children.
- To provide, according to national norms, access for all children, to primary education classes (I-V), i.e. primary schooling wherever possible, or its equivalent non- formal education.
- To strengthen the state and district capacities for planning, management and evaluation of primary education.

#### 1.2. Major achievements of DPEP

- More than 1, 60,000 new schools had been opened including almost 84,000 Alternative Schooling (AS) centres under DPEP in the country. The AS centres covered nearly 3.5 million children, while another two lacs children were covered by Bridge Courses;
- The school infrastructure created under DPEP has been remarkable. work either completed or in progress included 52758 school buildings, 58,604 additional classrooms, 16,619 resource centres, 29,307 repair works, 64,592 toilets, and 24,909 drinking water facilities;
- The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for Phase-I states was around 93 to 95 per cent for the last three years. After the adjustment for the Alternative Schools/Education Guarantee Centres enrolment, the GER in the 2001-2002 work was above 100 per cent. In the districts covered under subsequent phases of DPEP, the GER including enrolment of AS/EGS was above 85 per cent;
- The enrolment of girls has shown significant improvement. In DPEP-I districts, the share of girls enrolment in relation to total enrolment has increased from 48 per cent to 49 per cent, while this increase in

the subsequent phases of DPEP districts has been from 46 per cent to 47 per cent;

- The total number of differently-abled children enrolled is now more than 4,20,203 which represents almost 76 per cent of the nearly 5,53,844 differently-abled children identified in the DPEP States;
- Village Education Committees/School Management Committees have been setup in almost all project villages/habitations/schools;
- About 1,77,000 teachers, including para-teachers/Shiksha Karmees have been appointed;
- About 3,380 resource centres at block level and 29,725 centres at cluster level have been set-up for providing academic support and teacher training facilities.

### 1.3. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

In 2000, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) has been extended to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a historic stride and the comprehensive and integrated flagship programme of Govt. of India towards achieving the long cherished goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) through a time bound integrated approach, in partnership with State. During the year 2000, there was a conscious effort towards convergence of programmes and approaches concerning realization of the goals of 'Education for All'- the country has launched the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. This provides the umbrella under which all the programmes pertaining to Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) have been merged. SSA, which promises to change the face of the elementary education sector of the country, aims to provide useful and quality elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age groups by 2010. Firstly, it was implemented up to year 2010 but now it has been extended up to year 2020.

The SSA is an effort to recognize the need for improving the performance of the school system and to provide community owned quality elementary education in mission mode. It also envisages bridging of gender and social gaps.

#### 1.3.1 Objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

- i) All children to be in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternative School, "back to School campus" .
- ii) All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
- iii) All children complete eight years of schooling by 2010.

- iv) Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
- v) Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
- vi) Universal retention by 2010.

#### 1.3.2 Components of SSA

The components of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan includes appointment of teachers, teacher training, qualitative improvement of elementary education, provision of teaching learning materials, establishment of Block and Cluster Resource Centres for academic support, construction of classrooms and school buildings, establishment of education guarantee centres, integrated education of the disabled and distance education.

NFE and Alternative Schooling (AS) now form important components of SSA. The Government policy emphasizes the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) would continue to have three components as in the earlier NFE scheme.

- State run EGS Schools or a variety of back to alternative schools, back to school run by voluntary agencies.
- Experimental projects for innovative pedagogical strategies run by VA's.

The EGS and AIE's would form part of the SSA. Under SSA, every district would prepare a district elementary education plan. This would include a range of interventions for school improvement in regular schools, ECE along with intervention for education of out-of-school children (SSA, MHRD document, 2001).

### 2. Conclusion

Educational scenario in the coming years will provide us clear indication about how far we are from the cherished goal of education for all- quality education for all. Much of it depends upon effective convergence of Non-Formal Education (NFE), Alternative Schooling (AS), Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE). As it transpires Alternative Schooling (AS) is an evolving concept still in the formative stage. Keeping in view the existing conditions of our country, Non- Formal Education (NFE) system has also been considered very essential particularly in case of such categories of children who can not be benefited through existing system of Formal Education due to their varied problems and limitations which do not allow them to attend the formal school system as regular and full time basis.

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