options for change

Innovations and experiments in the District Primary Education Programme

DPEP

District Primary Education Programme

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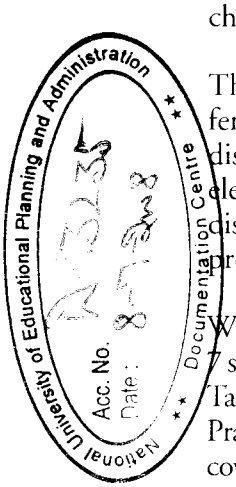
About the District Primary Education Programme

The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), launched in India in 1994, is one of the largest education projects of its kind in the world. The programme aims to achieve the long cherished goal of Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE) in the country through district specific planning with emphasis on decentralised management, participatory processes, empowerment and capacity building at all levels.

DPEP aims at providing access to primary education for all children, reducing drop-out rates to less than 10 per cent, increasing learning achievement of primary school students by at least 25 per cent and reducing the gap among gender and disadvantaged social groups to less than 5 per cent.

The programme is structured to provide additional inputs over and above the provision made by the State Governments for expenditure on elementary education. The programme fills in the existing gaps in the development of primary education and seeks to revitalise the existing system. DPEP is contextual and has a marked gender focus. The programme components include construction of classrooms and schools, opening of non-formal/alternative schooling centres, appointment of teachers, setting up of Block and Cluster Resource Centres, teacher training, development of teaching learning material and special interventions for education of girls, disabled children, Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe children, etc.

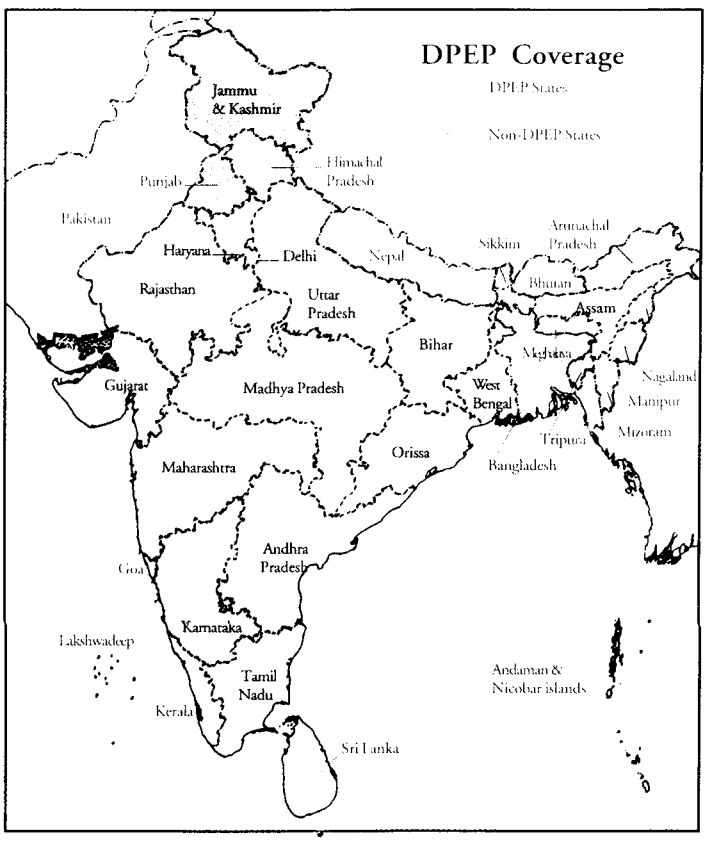


The twin criteria for selection of districts are : Educationally backward districts with female literacy less than the national average of 39.29 per cent (1991 census) and districts where the Total Literacy Campaigns (TLC) have generated demand for elementary education. The period of the project varies from five to seven years. Each district can get a maximum amount upto Rs.40 crore for implementation of the project.

When the programme was initially launched in 1994, it was spread over 42 districts in 7 states – Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Later, it was extended to Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. At present, the programme covers 60 per cent of the child population in the country, spread over 176 districts in 15 states. Further expansion to 60 districts is in the pipeline and with this the coverage will go up to 236 districts. Vertical expansion of the programme to include the upper primary classes is on the anvil.

The programme is a centrally sponsored scheme with 85 per cent of the cost shared by the Government of India and the remaining 15 per cent by the State Government. Both the central and state shares are directly passed on to the State Implementation Societies as a grant. The Government of India's share is externally funded by several bilateral and multilateral agencies. The total amount of external assistance so far tied up comes to about Rs 4885 crore. Out of this Rs 3760 crore is soft loan from IDA and the remaining Rs 1125 crore is in the form of grant from EC, DFID, UNICEF and Netherlands.

Contents



States	Total No. of Districts	DPEP Coverage					
		Phase I Districts	Phase II Districts	Phase III Districts	Phase IV Districts	In the Pipeline	Total
Assam	23	4	5				9
Haryana	16	4	3				7
Karnataka	20	4	7				11
Kerala	14	3	3				6
M. P.	45	19	15				34
Maharashtra	30	5	4				9
Tamil Nadu	21	3	3				6
A. P.	23		5		14		19
Bihar	42			27			27
Gujarat	19		3				3
H. P.	12		4				4
Rajasthan	31				10	9	19
Orissa	30		8			8	16
U. P.	83		18			38	56
West Bengal	17		5			5	10
Total	**426**	**42**	**83**	**27**	**24**	**60**	**236**

Introducing

Bringing about reforms in the primary schooling sector is a challenging proposition anywhere in the world, more so in a country as vast and diverse as India. The problems to be addressed are varied and numerous. In fact, every child, every teacher, every primary school presents a different set of challenges while attempting reform. The issues affecting primary education keep shifting, changing, assuming different hues and dimensions, presenting a fresh set of challenges all the time.

The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was initiated in November 1994 to address the various challenges in the primary education sector in the country. The systemic issues, at that point in time, were quite obvious:

- the infrastructural facilities were inadequate
- teachers' competence, motivation and performance were at low levels
- the quality of the pedagogy and training of teachers was mediocre
- textbooks, syllabi and curricula were inappropriate
- academic support structures were ineffective
- teacher absenteeism was high
- teacher deployment was not rational
- community linkages were weak
- financial resources were insufficient

The answers to these problems seemed to be elusive.

In such a situation, experimentation, innovation and continuous improvisation were considered vital. This was recognised by the District Primary Education Programme, which adopts a holistic approach and aims at universalising access and retention, improving learning achievement and reducing disparities among social groups. The programme parameters encourage functionaries, at all levels, to experiment all the time, to review the effectiveness of their efforts, to continuously strive for improvements and to abandon what is not working.

The DPEP Guidelines clearly spell out '...basic to the DPEP is the premise that there are large "unknown" areas that are crucial to the achievement of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). Innovation, which is critical to DPEP, entails systematic trial, evaluation, scaling and phasing....' The explicit provision of innovation funds 'to encourage innovations at all levels', is an indication of the programme's emphasis on universalisation through reform and innovation.

DPEP has drawn upon the experiences of earlier programmes such as the Lok Jumbish Project of Rajasthan, the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project (UPBEP), the Bihar Education Project (BEP), the Mahila Samakhya Programme (MS) and the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP). DPEP has also consciously attempted to build upon the experiences of the numerous educational initiatives in the government and non-governmental sector.

Many of these experiments and innovations initiated under DPEP have been carefully piloted, evaluated and systematically refined before they were upscaled within the project districts. Recognising the worthiness of these efforts, states have ventured to replicate them in the non-DPEP districts as well. This has resulted in a situation where DPEP's initiatives are proving useful for the larger system.

The District Primary Education Programme started by covering 42 districts in seven states of the country. At present the programme covers 180 low female literacy districts in 15 states, involving about 4.5 crore children enrolled in about 3,00,000 primary schools and over 8,00,000 teachers.

Evaluation and assessment of progress reveal that the programme is well on its way towards achieving its goals.

- Enrolment is near universal in many districts. The median value of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is now 98 in the Phase I districts
- Cohort drop-out rate has declined by 4 to 20 percentage points since 1993 in majority of the Phase I districts; it now stands in the range of 4 to 32 per cent
- Learning achievement has crossed the target of 25 per cent in most districts in grade 1 and there is significant improvement in grade 4, in the Phase I districts
- Gender disparities are almost closed in the Phase I districts
- 8,000 formal schools have been opened and 15,000 more are in the pipeline
- 38,000 Alternative Schooling (AS) centres and 16,000 Summer Schools have been opened. Another 75,000 Alternative Schooling centres are planned
- Teacher attendance has been improving steadily
- Pupil attendance has improved substantially. A sample study conducted in Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh in 1998 showed that pupil attendance varies from 61.7 per cent in Dhar (Madhya Pradesh) to 91.2 per cent in Simour (Himachal Pradesh)
- Enrolment is growing by 5 to 6 percent annually against less than 1 per cent in the non-DPEP districts.

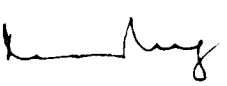
Implementing a process oriented programme of such massive dimensions and attempting change of such unprecedented magnitude, has not been easy. The achievements of the District Primary Education Programme to date can only be attributed to the sustained and rigorous efforts of all the players - the project functionaries down the line, the state level authorities, the trainers, the teachers, parents.... everybody. It called for professional integrity, dedication, and more than anything else, ownership and a belief in the need for change.

Experiments and innovations have contributed substantially to the change process. Perhaps, the most significant contribution of the programme has been the evolution of a new culture of innovations, an acknowledgement of the role of bold experiments in any programme attempting real change.

What were these innovations and experiments?

What was the context in which each of them emerged?

This document attempts to take a look at the extent to which the options for experimentation and innovation have been explored under the District Primary Education Programme and the extent to which they have actually contributed towards the attempted change.



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1 ENHANCING REACH

BACKGROUND

Provision of schooling facilities within easy reach of children is a basic requirement for universalisation of elementary education. Despite considerable progress since independence, as many as 1,80,370 habitations (17 per cent of the total) in the country did not have primary schools within easy reach even in 1993. A staggering 3.2 crore children in the 6-11 years age group still remained out of school.

The norms for a habitation to be eligible for a school vary across states. In general, every habitation having a population of 300, which does not have a primary school within a radius of 1 – 1.5 km. is eligible for a formal school. The norms are relaxed in the case of tribal, hilly and desert areas. Providing new primary schools in un-served eligible habitations has been an important activity under DPEP. To about 3,00,000 schools existing at the time DPEP was launched, 8000 new schools have been added and 15,000 more are likely to be set up in the coming years. Nearly 11,000 classrooms have been added to existing schools. Simple measures have been adopted in some districts to accommodate additional children enrolling in formal schools. Double-shifting is being resorted to by many states whereby one half of the children in a school attend the school in the morning session and the remaining attend the afternoon session. Many communities provide volunteer teachers and para teachers to compensate for the shortage of regular teachers.

While efforts for providing and improving school infrastructure and the overall quality of schooling in the formal sector are being made through a variety of bold and innovative interventions, DPEP is equally concerned with the daunting, perhaps the more difficult, issue of reaching the 3.2 crore children in the 6 – 11 years age group who are still out of school.

The out of school children are those who have either never been enrolled at school or have dropped out of school. The reasons for children being out of school are many.

- Lack of schooling facilities in small, remote habitations which do not qualify for formal schools as per the norms of the state government, based on population size and distance from the nearest school
- Some children simply do not enroll in schools, even though a school exists nearby and many children who were enrolled at school are found to have dropped out on account of school related reasons and their own socio-economic conditions. Many of these out of school children are from migrant families, are child workers and street dwellers and are burdened with the responsibilities of house work and sibling care. The social beliefs, customs and practices in certain communities have also denied some children the opportunity to receive education.

Apart from these, there are children with minor or moderate disabilities who have been denied effective access to the formal schooling system.

Clearly, no single strategy could address the problems of such a diverse clientele of children. The diversity of the hindering factors has spawned the emergence of a variety of innovative steps to address them. The attempt through these strategies has been to mainstream such disadvantaged children into regular schools or providing them with alternative schooling facilities that are more flexible and accessible.

Efforts to provide access to these diverse categories of children have been initiated by the Alternative Schooling programme and other measures under DPEP.

Reaching out

The Alternative Schooling Programme

In its efforts to provide access and quality primary schooling to out of school children, the Alternative Schooling programme under DPEP has started off by building an understanding of the background of the respective groups of children, to be able to plan the most appropriate strategies. The basic guiding principles of the programme have been:

- use of micro-planning for assessment of needs
- diversity, flexibility and local specificity of the strategies
- decentralised management systems with strong community involvement
- adoption of appropriate pedagogy, stressing on the quality of the teaching-learning process
- cost effectiveness

There has been a conscious effort to develop decentralised management practices for implementing the Alternative Schooling programme which includes community involvement, process of selection of instructors, using state, district and block level resource groups for decision making and guiding the course of the programme.

Assam has used innovative practices for **selection of instructors** for the AS centres. Currently there are more than 2000 AS centres in the DPEP districts. Children covered through these centres are either in single teacher schools where the Teacher Pupil Ratio (TPR) is above 1:80 and schools with more than one teacher having a TPR above 1:60. The centres also cover children working in tea gardens or living in *char* (riverine) areas.

To be able to objectively select such a large number of instructors posed a challenge for the project. For every position of an instructor three applications were invited. The applications were recommended by the Village Education Committees (VEC). Question papers were prepared and administered at the district level. The examination was conducted with the help of the District Level Resource Group (DLRG) members who went across districts to conduct the examination. The answer sheets were coded and evaluated at the state level. Village wise results of the examination were declared, giving the names of the selected instructors according to merit.

In **Uttar Pradesh** the selection of the AS instructors was carried out in a two-day workshop conducted at the block level. Applications in the ratio of 1: 3 were invited by the Village Education Committee and recommended to the Nyaya Panchayat Resource Centre co-ordinator. All the short-listed candidates were called for a two-day residential workshop where various activities were conducted to assess the candidates. These activities comprised writing stories and songs for children, writing about their personal views on education, an assessment of mathematical skills along with an interview. The interview panel had project officials and representatives of a Village Education Committee. At the end of the two-day workshop, a list of selected candidates was put up at the selection venue. The list is village based and the names of the candidates were listed in order of merit.

Particular attention has been given to supervision and academic support. In earlier programmes of non-formal education, the components of training and supervision were independent of each other, whereas in the AS programme of DPEP the two have been merged in a manner that one complements the other. This has led to a redefinition of the role of a supervisor from that of an inspector to one who provides academic support. Continuous support to the AS teacher is being extended by the supervisor through regular centre visits and monthly meetings. These monthly meetings have also become forums for teachers to plan for the next month and discuss their experiences, innovations and difficulties. Many states have appointed separate supervisors for the AS centres (one supervisor for 8 to 12 centres) while others have chosen to assign the responsibility to Cluster Resource Centre (CRC) co-ordinators.

This has also brought the capacity building of AS instructors centre-stage. The duration of the foundation training programmes, most of it residential, varies from 7 to 30 days. This training is followed up through refresher and recurrent trainings. The AS teachers are oriented to function as social activists as they are expected to work with the community.

Ensuring effective community participation in house-to-house surveys, providing infrastructural support for the schools, ensuring participation of children, regular review of the functioning of the school including academic aspects, generation of funds for various school activities has been the crucial aspect of most AS strategies.

The AS programme is committed to providing quality education to all children. Its emphasis on cost effectiveness does not make it just a low-cost programme. The investment in the AS programme differs from state to state depending on the design of the strategies adopted.

The diverse strategies adopted by the AS programme to include out of school children are discussed under the following heads :

- children in small and remote habitations
- children of migrating families
- children of specific communities
- working children and street children
- children engaged in household chores
- girls

Children in small and remote habitations

Many States have attempted to provide alternative schooling facilities in habitations that have remained without primary schools through a variety of innovative programmes.

....an opportunity to learn

A state-wide *Lok Sampark Abhiyan* (community contact programme) identified a large number of habitations which had no access to formal school facilities in **Madhya Pradesh**. To **achieve universal physical access** the **Education Guarantee Scheme** (EGS) was implemented in 1997. Any community which has 40 children (25 children in the case of tribals) in the 6 to 11 years age group, who are not enrolled at a formal school and do not have schooling facilities within a radius of 1 km. have the right to and can demand a school. The village community places the demand for the school to the *janpad panchayat*. The request for the school has to be fulfilled within 90 days of receiving the application. The verification of the application, training of the *guruji* (teacher) identified by the community and purchase of the material and equipment for the school has to take place in this 90-day period.

The teacher is a local person having passed at least higher secondary who is proposed by the community. The teacher receives 20 days training in the first year and is paid a monthly honorarium of Rs 1000. The Cluster Resource Centre co-ordinator provides on-the-spot academic support to the *guruji* during school visits. The *guruji* attends monthly meetings at the CRC and block levels. Teaching-learning materials used in the AS centres are used in the EGS schools as well.

The budget for the school is transferred into the account of the School Management Committee (SMC) comprising villagers. The community decides the school timings and vacations as per the convenience of the children and the local circumstances. The space for the school is provided by the community – under a tree, in a community space, or a temporary structure set up by the community. The school operates like any formal school, except that it is completely owned by the community.

The EGS schools are single teacher schools with the TPR ranging from 1: 32 to 1: 50. Therefore, multi-grade/multi-level teaching becomes essential. A second teacher is provided when the number of children in a centre exceeds 50. These schools are operational for at least 200 days in a year.

The children are orally assessed twice a year and their parents are informed about their performance in the monthly meetings. The Cluster Resource Centre co-ordinator evaluates the performance of the children annually. At the Class V level, the system of evaluation prevalent in the state is applicable.

Currently there are 21,150 EGS schools covering more than 8,00,000 children. The estimated cost of one EGS school for 40 children works out to Rs 14, 860.

The Rajiv Gandhi Prathamik Shiksha Mission was the recipient of the Gold Winner for the Service to the Public Award for 1998 for the Education Guarantee Scheme.

An evaluation of the programme, highlighted the following :

- The EGS schools are functioning effectively in general and have contributed positively in providing access to the disadvantaged and marginalised groups
- EGS needs to be seen as an alternative within the formal system imparting the same curriculum through a differently managed scheme
- One of the most remarkable qualities of the programme is its simplicity and this needs to be retained

Source : Jyotsna Jha, Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative Schooling : Community based Initiatives in Primary Education Madhya Pradesh, An Assessment , July – September 1998

A community school in Andhra Pradesh

The Community Schools in **Andhra Pradesh** have increased the scope for **universalising coverage** as they can be set up in any habitation with just 15 children. There are tribal habitations from where children had never been to a formal school until the community schools were set up in their habitations.

The school is the responsibility of the community and is managed through the School Management Committee, formed by the parents. The committee is responsible for the selection and placement of the teacher, providing appropriate space for running the school, which could be a temporarily constructed shed, and also ensure regular attendance of the children.

The teacher being a local person is sensitive to the language used by the children as also their local context. The teacher is paid an honorarium of Rs 500 per month through the School Management Committee and in some cases the community collects money to supplement this fixed amount.

There are about 1950 community schools covering 50,000 children in habitations with a population of 200 and more. An additional 15,000 schools are proposed to be established in even smaller habitations having a population of 100 with at least 15 children.

In **Kerala,** during the micro-planning exercise conducted in the state, some remote inaccessible pockets/ habitations were identified from where children had never been enrolled in school. It was noticed that the problem was acute in tribal pockets in remote, hilly forest areas and also in the fisher-folk colonies in the coastal areas. This prompted project functionaries to initiate a **programme of volunteers**. There were essentially two types of volunteers, girl-volunteers for specific communities from which there was a reluctance to send girls to school and tribal volunteers for the tribal pockets. The volunteers who belonged to these habitations worked with the community to persuade parents to send children to school. Subsequently, single teacher **multi-grade centres** were set up in many of these pockets. Once enrolled, the volunteers ensured regular attendance of children who were potential drop-outs.

The teachers for the multi-grade centres are from the same community, identified and appointed by the community. This has helped in addressing problems associated with sensitivity towards the lives of these communities including language and local contextualities. The school has incorporated pedagogic innovations by using a variety of self-learning material with the teacher performing the role of a facilitator. The self-learning material was developed with technical support from the Rishi Valley School, Madanappalli, Andhra Pradesh.

There are 49 multi-grade schools in the DPEP districts of the state covering 1103 children.

Interesting strategies have been adopted by many of the states to provide alternative schooling facilities for children in remote, isolated pockets. These include Alternative Schooling centres based on the Rishi Valley model (Uttar Pradesh), Contract Schools (Maharashtra), *Shishu Shiksha Kendras* (West Bengal) and *Shishu Swayam Sevi* Schools (Rajasthan). *Shiksha Ghars* in Uttar Pradesh, the AS Centres in Tamil Nadu and *Aamaar Kendras* in Assam have also been set up for children from these areas.

Children of migrating families

Sometimes, families are forced to migrate for prolonged periods (6 to 8 months) to places where work is available, disrupting the children's education because they have to accompany their parents. This could be due to various reasons:

- there are no adults to look after the children in the village

- while both parents work they need the older children to look after the younger siblings and to look after the family's belongings at the camp site
- the wages are so low that the entire family, including the children, have to work

A variety of strategies have been tried out with these groups on a pilot basis in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

In Gujarat, a **Vacational Course** of 40 to 60 days is organised for children who migrate with their parents to sugarcane fields. The course enables children to cover portions of the syllabus missed during their absence from school. In **Maharashtra**, temporary **Sugar Schools** have been set up for children at the sites of sugarcane fields or sugar factories. These schools are operational for six months during the sugarcane cutting season. Similarly schools are set up at **brick kiln sites** in Maharashtra for children who migrate with their parents.

Children of specific communities

Religious institutions and leaders play a significant role in determining the life pattern in certain traditional communities. These include the *maulavis* and *jonabs* of the muslim community, *bhuva* of the *rabari* community and the *gol* leaders or *taluk* leaders of the *thakur* community in Gujarat. These leaders translate religious tenets into social norms and practices.

Low enrolment of girls is characteristic of these communities. Various ingenious efforts have been made to reach children from these communities in Assam, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

In **Assam, *maktabs*** are being used as **alternative centres of learning** for muslim children. *Maktabs* are community initiated and sustained centres for religious education that are attended by girls and boys alike. Many a muslim girl who goes to the *maktab* is not enrolled in school. To bring such girls under the fold of primary education, the *jonabs* (*maulavis*) having a background of formal education were approached for running the Alternative Schooling centres on a voluntary basis.

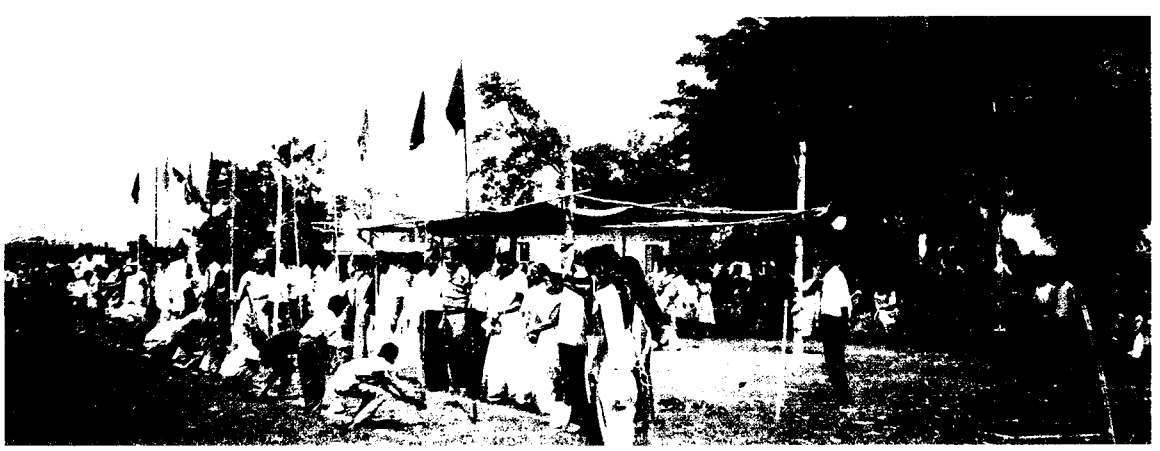
Prior to grounding the strategy, advocacy campaigns were held in the selected villages with the support of district level religious leaders. DPEP Assam provided necessary material support for running the centres and teaching-learning material. The *jonabs* were trained for effective transaction of the curriculum.

There are 170 such centres functioning in the DPEP I districts and their evaluation carried out by the National Society for Promotion of Development Administration, Research and Training (NSDART) has revealed that

- the enrolment of girls has been proportionately higher in all the three districts
- retention rate of girls has been higher (calculated in two CRCs in Darrang district)
- learner achievement has been encouraging and same levels of achievement have been found among girls and boys. The overall performance has been better in language as compared to mathematics

Source : Evaluation of Alternative Schooling through Maktabs in Assam, NSDART, Mussourie, March 1999

A *Shishu Mela* in progress in Assam



Attempts have been made to strengthen ***maktabs*** and ***madarassas*** in **Madhya Pradesh** and **Uttar Pradesh**. The strategy aims at **providing primary education** to children belonging to the muslim community in surroundings and conditions acceptable to them.

An experimental project for muslim girls has been taken up in collaboration with the local *madarassa* management in Jaora block of Ratlam district in **Madhya Pradesh**. *Madarassas* are being provided with teaching learning material (TLM), training and contingency for teacher aids, by DPEP. Based on the experiment in Jaora, strengthening of *madarassas* has been taken up as a strategy to ensure the participation of muslim girls.

In **Uttar Pradesh** children who are already coming to the *maktabs/madarassas* for 2 to 3 hours for religious education are given formal education over an additional three hours. To facilitate this, the *maulavis* undergo training similar to that of other AS instructors. They use the formal school textbooks to teach the children. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1: 25. All the material provided to AS centres are made available for the children in the *maktabs/madarassas*.

In Gujarat, alternative schools have been set up for girls from the *rabari* community following a *sammelan* (large scale community meeting) where the religious leaders played a major influencing role.

Working children and street children

Child labour in India can be broadly classified into the following categories :

- covered by legislation, both prohibitive and regulatory
- falling outside the legislative framework - agriculture and allied activities, informal, unorganised, semi-urban and urban sectors.

Several strategies have been attempted to address the educational needs of these children.

....awaiting their turn

The **back-to-school camp** in Lalitpur district of **Uttar Pradesh** is a strategy to **get children back into schools** through a bridge course in a residential mode for a defined period of time. Both the teacher and the children stay at the camp. The residential mode of the bridge course enables to wean away children from activities which keep them out of school. The duration of the camp varies from a minimum of three months to a year. The camp in Lalitpur was organised on the basis of learnings from the M.V. Foundation, Andhra Pradesh. The camp helped children working at the stone quarries in the area. The camp was attended by 75 children which included 19 girls. At the end of the camp the children were either enrolled in the formal school in their respective villages or in the AS centre.

Back-to-school centres have been set up in **Gujarat** to cater to children in the 7-14 years age group who are either not enrolled or drop-outs. A bridge course is conducted to help children achieve educational levels corresponding to their age. The duration of the bridge course depends on the age and academic level of the child at the time of admission. The *shala sahayaks* (teacher) of these centres are paid an honorarium at the rate of Rs 50 per child for 20 children and an additional Rs 10 is paid for every female child enrolled. The *shala sahayak* is paid in instalments — 60 per cent of the remuneration due is paid every month and the balance 40 per cent is paid if the children achieve the desired educational levels.

The **summer schools** in **Andhra Pradesh** are **bridge courses** for 6-8 year old children who are out of school. These are operational during the summer vacations in the local formal school. A summer school can be started in any village where there is a minimum of 20 children. The children are mainstreamed into the formal school after they are assessed at the end of the course. Around 16,000 summer schools, covering 35,000 children have been conducted in the state during 1999.

On a pilot basis, **condensed courses** of 75 to 100 days duration have been started for children working in the slaughter houses of **Maharashtra.**

With support from DPEP **West Bengal** the Loreto School, Calcutta along with Child in Need Institute (CINI), an NGO working with street children in Calcutta and the CLPOA (City Level Plan of Action), organised a workshop in January 1999, to promote **initiatives in urban centres** for the education of children from the slums, street children, children of sex workers etc.

Following the workshop, a State Resource Group (SRG) has been formed with representatives of different government departments, NGOs, the corporate sector etc. This is being co-ordinated by Loreto School and supported by DPEP, West Bengal. A house-to-house survey has been conducted in Calcutta by all small NGOs working in different slum areas. Detailed action plans for Calcutta and other urban centres in project districts are under formulation.

On happy learning grounds!

Strategies for addressing the educational needs of working children, under the AS programme also include the *Shiksha Ghars* in Uttar Pradesh and the proposed *Shiksha Swaiyam Sevi* schools of Rajasthan.

Children engaged in household chores

Many children are burdened with the responsibilities of household chores, which include looking after the home, cooking, collecting firewood, fetching water and caring for the younger siblings. Such situations prevent them from attending school.

Aamaar Kendra, Apna Vidyalaya, Shiksha Ghar and *Prerna Centres* are examples of strategies addressing this group of children. Centres such as the *Bal Shalas,* which have a pre-school component, enable older children to attend school while the younger siblings are taken care of by a *Sahayika.*

Aamaar Kendras of **Assam** are **non-formal education centres** for 6-14 year old children who are out of school due to difficult circumstances. The *kendras* function in shifts for a total of four hours for two years. Each *kendra* has a teaher pupil ratio of 1:40.

The objective of the *kendras* is to provide primary level education to children from tea estates and *char* areas and to mainstream them in the nearest formal school. A total of 724 *kendras* are in operation catering to 18,000 children. The *kendras* can be started in villages and habitations with 25 to 30 out of school children. Two *kendras* can be opened in habitations with more than 40 children. The important consideration is that no child should have to walk more than 1 km. to reach the *kendra*.

The **Alternative Schooling programme** in **Madhya Pradesh** provides primary education to 1,89,210 children in the age group 6-14 years through 5179 centres. Most of these centres are located in small habitations, mainly in tribal areas without schooling facilities. The schools function for four hours everyday, 250 days in a year. Each alternative school has two teachers, one of them a woman. Both the teachers belong to the village where the school is located.

The programme is distinct in the pedagogy and teaching-learning materials being used. The teaching-learning process is activity-based, allowing children to learn at their own pace. Children are divided into small groups on the basis of their academic level. These groups are changed according to the pace of learning of the students. The curriculum used in the centres is related to the daily lives of the learners.

A series of textbooks have been designed in language, mathematics and environmental studies. Internal evaluation of the children is conducted by the teachers every month. These centres have a strong academic support system through a supervisor for every 10 centres. The initial teacher training and refresher training programmes are very intensive. Every month, all the teachers in a cluster meet for two days for a review meeting to discuss classroom activity, performance of the children etc.

The management of these centres is the responsibility of the school management committee or the VEC. The supervisor is responsible for maintaining regular contact with the parents of the children. An evaluation of the AS programme in Madhya Pradesh has shown that the achievement levels of the children are very satisfactory and often higher than that of children in the government primary schools. DPEP Madhya Pradesh has taken a decision to adopt the curriculum, pedagogy and training strategies of the AS programme in the EGS schools.

Learning can be fun!
A *Shiksha Ghar* in Uttar Pradesh

Girls

Despite physical access to formal primary schools, many girls remain out of school in most states due to various social, cultural and economic factors including parents' reluctance to send girls to far away schools, child marriage etc. Under DPEP various Alternative Schooling strategies are being planned and implemented for them. These interventions lay emphasis on details such as the choice of the teacher, the curriculum, the course content and include specific activities to involve the community. The *Angana Vidyalayas* and *Prehar Pathshalas* are examples.

Modelled along the lines of the *Jagjagi* centres initiated by the Mahila Samakhya programme under the Bihar Education Project, the ***Angana Vidyalayas*** in **Bihar** target **out of school adolescent girls.** They aim to motivate adolescent girls in rural areas to enroll and go through schooling up to Class V. The facts that the curriculum imparts life skills along with the regular primary education content, the instructors of the *Angana Vidyalayas* are women and that the management of these centres rest with the *mata samitis*, makes this an unique intervention.

The girls who have benefited most from this intervention are in the age group of 9 years and above, who are from the most underprivileged and marginalised groups in society. They usually live in unreached habitations or are unable to access schools as they work along with their parents or have been debarred from attending school on grounds of social and religious beliefs or are either married or engaged at a very young age.

By entrusting the responsibility of running the AS centres to the *mata samitis,* community involvement in the enrolment and retention of the children is ensured. It is also an empowering process for the women themselves as they take all decisions regarding the education of their children. The instructor of *Angana Vidyalayas*, the *saheli* (friend) is at least middle school pass and belongs to the same community as that of the children. She undergoes a 30 days foundation training which is followed by regular refresher trainings. The *Angana Vidyalyas* have covered more than 10,000 girls from 583 centres and more such centres are to be operationalised in the coming year.

Prehar Pathshala is a strategy in **Uttar Pradesh** for those **9+ girls** who are non-starters or may have dropped out of school. Though boys have also been enrolled in the *Prehar Pathshalas*, the emphasis has been to provide primary education to girls. The curriculum is transacted under flexible conditions that allows the child to learn at its own pace without feeling threatened. The centre is operational for four hours during the day time.

It is possible to start a *Prehar Pathshala* in a village if 15 girls in the age group of 9-14 years are willing to attend it. The unique feature of the *Prehar Pathshala* is the built in provision for training in certain local crafts along with the primary school curriculum. This is seen as a means of attracting the girls to the centre as well as keeping the craft alive. The common crafts taught include embroidery and stitching, basket weaving, etc. Two and a half hours of the day are spent teaching the primary school curriculum while the remaining one and a half hours are devoted to teaching the local crafts.

Our school .... beneath the skies, in the mango grove

The *Bal Shalas* of **Uttar Pradesh** target **pre-schoolers along with their older siblings** upto 11 years. While the 3-6 year olds are imparted the school readiness package, the older children receive primary education. Through this approach of combining children of two age sets, the problems of non-enrolment and drop out faced by girls, is being addressed.

Gujarat has initiated similar centres on a pilot basis in Dangs and Panchmahal districts. Each centre has one AS instructor and one Early Childhood Education (ECE) worker so that the needs of both groups of children can be met to satisfaction.

DPEP, **Tamil Nadu** took a strategic decision to launch, in a phased manner, a preventive scheme to address the problem of pupil absenteeism, in 75 schools in the three Phase I districts of Dharmapuri, Cuddalore and Thiruvannamalai by providing **escorts**. The intervention designed as an experimental measure was targeted at schools where the problem is reportedly acute. The Evaluation, Research and Monitoring (ERM) unit at the State Project Office (SPO) has evaluated this innovation which shows that this intervention has led to :

- increase in enrolment of girls
- decrease in absenteeism among girls
- decrease in the number of girls dropping out
- decrease in the number of girl grade repeaters

Reaching out further

Micro initiatives for girls' education

Micro initiatives for girls have focused on difficult areas where the general interventions have not been able to make a significant impact. The effort has been to identify specific issues and the deterrents to girls' education and to address them through mechanisms designed to monitor regular contact between the community and the schooling system to ensure effective linkages. This has provided the opportunity to plan for the overall educational development of villages.

Hence, the significance of zeroing in on select target groups in particular areas became an imperative. The criticality of identifying those girls who need immediate programmatic attention became a priority. Identification was done on the basis of impressions from the field, past knowledge, available data and the Educational Management Information System (EMIS) data.

The initial thrust has been to enhance enrolment, followed by retention and achievement. The success of the approach critically hinges on the extent to which the community takes on the role of a facilitating force in the entire process while DPEP provides resource support. Key functionaries were suitably trained. The hands-on field based training helped effective translation of ideas and concepts into action.

In pursuit of this approach different models have been evolved by Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Specific pockets and population sections in the DPEP districts of **Uttar Pradesh** showed very low female literacy rates, especially among SCs and minorities. This was a concern. To tackle the severity of the problem in these pockets, it was decided to work intensively in two clusters of eight to ten villages each in all the DPEP districts through the **Model Cluster Development Approach.** Efforts are made to provide all possible inputs, maintaining regular contact and closely monitoring the progress/impact using an operational mechanism specially designed for the purpose.

As a first step in this direction, guidelines were developed and shared with district level functionaries. This was followed by various preparatory activities such as sharing the concept with the community, VEC training, forming core teams, orientation for Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) etc. A time bound action plan was worked out for implementation of activities at every stage.

Core team members along with members of the Mother Teacher Association (MTA) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) were trained. Their training essentially focused on sensitising them about the importance of educating girls and also preparing them to play a positive interventionist role at the village level. The core teams have been functioning as an important link between the community and all district level functionaries.

To build a momentum for girls' education in the villages, street plays, meetings with villagers, parents, guardians and others concerned, *maa-beti melas,* women's parliament and Meena campaigns were organised. Through house-to-house surveys the educational status of the children in the villages became clear which also pointed out the possible course of action in each village. Village specific plans were then evolved.

Apart from setting up AS centres and strengthening the *madarassas,* flexible timings and escorts have been introduced to enable more children to attend school. The community is keeping close watch on the enrolment and attendance of children. Some models of Alternative Schooling have been started with the objective of preparing certain sections of the out of school children for enrolling in school. Special enrolment drives were organised to ensure that eligible children enter the school system. Consequently, there has not only been a spurt in enrolment in these villages but universal enrolment has been achieved in 65 per cent of the *gram panchayats* covered by the Model Cluster Development Approach.

To create a girl friendly environment in the school, special sensitisation programmes for teachers have been developed.

Children with special needs

The initial set of Guidelines for DPEP when the programme was introduced in 1994, did not provide for children with disability. Subsequently, however, the DPEP Guidelines were modified, two years later, to reach the integrable children with special needs. The DPEP Guidelines provide for *...the integrated education of disabled children...DPEP will fund interventions for the integrated education of primary school going children with integrable and mild to moderate disabilities....* The salient features of the guidelines are to:

- provide state and district level resour
  groups comprising project

Girls in a *maktab* in Uttar Pradesh

personnel and professionals
- position co-ordinators at state and district level for programme management
- integrate the element of disability in the community mobilisation programmes
- position a group of three professionals, representing different areas of disability, in each block to provide support to teachers, parents and children. Such professionals can be substituted by suitable NGOs operating in the block
- secure aids and appliances through convergence with health, welfare and other sectors. DPEP could also pay for aid and appliances in places where such convergence does not materialise
- orient general teachers for about a week in a year
- provide for representation of at least one parent of a child with disability in the Village Education Committees
- construct disabled friendly schools

Area approach

DPEP is trying to reach all schools by adopting an area approach. To begin with, the approach was to select one block and to initiate efforts to bring all integrable children from the catchment area to the school. The programme would then gradually expand to cover all the blocks in the district. Upscaling is now in progress. As the spread is decided by the states, there are different coverage patterns to be seen.

Haryana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu have decided to spread to all the blocks in the project districts. Bihar, Karnataka and Maharashtra have now upscaled the programme from one cluster in every district to one block. One *mandal* each in three districts of Andhra Pradesh has been covered and the expansion plans are being finalised. Gujarat has chosen five blocks in all the three districts; Uttar Pradesh has chosen two blocks each in five districts. Beginning with one block in all the districts, West Bengal has now taken the programme to four more blocks. Himachal Pradesh is implementing the programme in 28 blocks in three of the districts. Assam plans to take up 10 clusters in each district.

For effective implementation of the programme resource groups at the state and district levels have been formed.

Identification and screening

The different methodologies adopted by the states include:

- initial identification of children with special needs with the help of resource teachers
- formal assessment of children with special needs with the help of a team of experts to determine the integrability of the child
- door-to-door survey and micro-planning exercises

Doctor on the job in Tamil Nadu

Haryana is a good example of how the programme for **integrated education of children with special needs** can start from the grassroots. Two programmes were organised where about 60 teachers were given orientation on Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IED). For one group, visits to special schools were organised. These visits served the purpose of motivating teachers.

Two camps were organised where children from two clusters in one block of each of the Phase II districts, Gurgaon, Bhiwani and Mahendergarh, were medically and educationally assessed. An orientation course was organised for VEC members who gave a solemn declaration that they would identify every child with a disability.

In the beginning, 160 children were placed in schools in two clusters in Bhiwani and Mahendergarh districts. This success could be attributed to several important factors. The orientation courses motivated the teachers, while visits to special schools served as an inspiration. But above all, *Bhagwaan Mahavir Viklaang Samiti* agreed to provide orthopaedic aids free of charge to all children. Majority of the children seeking admission were suffering from some form of locomotor impairment. In a few cases, hearing aids were purchased with DPEP funds.

This initial success has inspired the State Government to launch a substantial programme of placing children with special needs in formal primary schools. Now 450 children with special needs are enrolled in different primary schools of Haryana.

Pre-integration training

Under DPEP, convergence with Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centres is seen as an enabling process to provide pre-integration training to children with special needs. Prior to their integration in mainstream education, special training is required to enable them to perform simple tasks like eating, dressing, walking and developing interpersonal and life skills. In Andhra Pradesh, training in early childhood development and early recognition of developmental delays is provided to project staff involved in ECCE and *anganwadi* centres. In Assam, early detection centres have been opened at the cluster level for disabled children. Key resource persons have been trained by state level experts, to run these centres.

Convergence with welfare and NGO sector is being attempted in all the states to provide aids and appliances to the identified disabled children.

Resource teacher providing pre-integration training .... preparing children for integration in formal primary schools

At the time of admission, Mageswari could not utter a single word. After introduction of the IED programme under DPEP in Kilpenathur block, Tamil Nadu, speech therapy was given to Mageswari by the head teacher, Swaminathan who had undergone training at the Block Resource Centre (BRC). He continued with regular speech therapy after school hours. As a result of the therapy, Mageswari slowly began conversing with her head teacher and friends.

She would like to become a teacher.

On-site resource support

DPEP guidelines provide for *"garnering resource support for integrated education at block/district level through arrangements with NGOs and other organisations having expertise in this field. Wherever necessary, DPEP will resource technical support with requisite personnel and equipment at block level in order to provide guidance and technical assistance to primary school teachers, the community, the parents and children of that area"*. Each state in DPEP has come up with its own model to provide this support to the disabled children.

Three broad approaches have been adopted by the states in providing resource support, *viz.*, creation of a three-tier structure with experts, appointment of resource teachers at the block level, engaging specialist NGOs.

In **Andhra Pradesh**, a **team comprising experts** has been set up at the state, district and *mandal* levels. **Haryana** and **Maharashtra** have developed a three-tier academic structure to impart quality education to disabled children. This three-tier structure comprises a resource teacher, CRC co-ordinator and general teachers.

Resource support is also being provided by appointing **three resource teachers at the block/cluster** level. In **Orissa** and **Gujarat** resource teachers are in place in the catchment areas. The posts for resource teachers have been created in **Haryana, Kerala, Karnataka** and **Bihar**. Interviews for resource teachers are in progress in **Maharashtra.**

Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and **Tamil Nadu** have opted to provide resource support to the disabled children through **NGOs**. The NGOs will be responsible for organising training programmes; appointing resource teachers for providing on-site support within the classroom; preparing special teaching-learning material for the children and preparing Individual Educational Plans (IEP) and to evaluate all round progress of each child.

Speech therapy being provided by resource teacher in Tamil Nadu

Training

The DPEP strategy includes orienting all general teachers in the selected catchment area to sensitise them to the problems and needs associated with special education by giving them a 3 to 5 day orientation. Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have oriented all general teachers on IED in the DPEP districts. Haryana and Andhra Pradesh have already provided this orientation in the catchment areas. Nearly all the states have prepared their modules for such orientation.

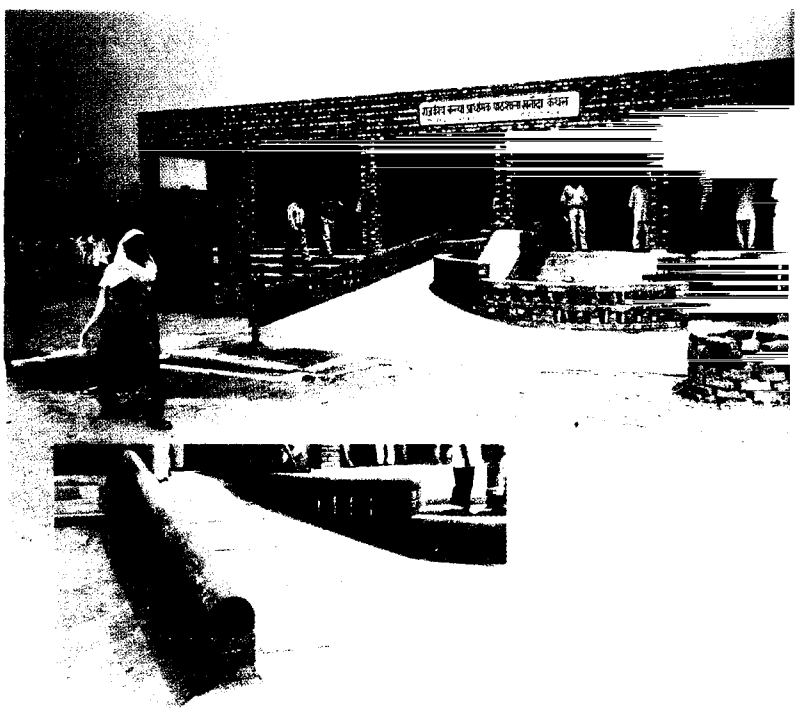
Andhra Pradesh started with the belief that the field of special education involves different disciplines at different stages. Hence, teams of experts were set up as staff for the state, district and *mandal* level. Piloting was done in one *mandal* each of the three districts of Kurnool, Warrangal and Karimnagar (30-40 schools) in collaboration with the Departments of Health and Women and Child Development. **Training** in early childhood development and early recognition of developmental delays was provided to the project staff involved in ECCE and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). Required assessment of vision, hearing and motor function was carried out with the help of specialists.

A three-day training for all general teachers of the selected *mandals* in all the three districts with the support of national and state level resource persons was also conducted. Convergence with the welfare sector in the state helped in getting aids and appliances free of cost for the children.

Community involvement and support

The community has a very important role to play in the education of children with special needs. The sensitivity of VECs has been strengthened by all the states through enlisting the membership of a parent of a disabled child. Haryana has developed a module for VEC members and has already oriented all VEC members in the catchment areas. In Tamil Nadu, community collections have made it possible to provide calipers and other such appliances required by children with special needs.

Ensuring ease of access to children with special needs ..... a school in Haryana



Barrier free environment

Removal of architectural barriers in existing schools is essential to provide an enabling environment to children with disabilities. A small beginning has been made in this regard to re-look the school designs to make the school more amenable to the needs of the disabled. States have initiated the process of providing ramps and other such access facilities which will help the disabled children and can be used by other children as well. In Maharashtra, prototype schools incorporating ramps have been constructed in Jalna district. In Tamil Nadu and Haryana, construction of ramps has already begun in schools. In Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh provision has been made to construct ramps in the new schools.

The teaching-learning environment in school

The process of expanding reach has been central to DPEP and it has enabled the inclusion of many more children in the ambit of primary education through a wide range of strategies. Despite the increased coverage there is need to :

- ensure that universal physical access, i.e., provision of schooling facilities in school less habitations is achieved quickly in all districts
- ensure that the present thrust on quality of education in the Alternative Schooling programme is intensified and maintained. This would involve strengthening of training and academic support mechanisms for teachers of the Alternative Schooling programme
- be able to bring the most deprived and marginalised groups of children into the fold of primary education e.g. bonded child labourers, street children, children of migrant families etc.
- extend the use of pedagogical experiments and innovations, already being undertaken in DPEP, to children with special needs; sensitise teachers to prepare a child wise systematic instructional programme and monitor the impact of different instructional strategies being used in an integrated setting

2 IMPROVING LEARNING

BACKGROUND

By the mid 80s, more than 90 per cent of the country's rural habitations had been provided primary schooling facilities within 1-1.5 km. Addressing the quality aspects of the teaching-learning practices in primary schools was the obvious next step. The traditional chalk-and-talk method of teaching was widely practiced and deeply entrenched in the mindsets of teachers and teacher educators. The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, modified in 1992, suggested .... *"a child-centred and activity-based process of learning should be adopted at the primary stage..."* The Programme of Action (POA), 1992 for the implementation of the National Policy recommended the ... *"revision of the process and content of elementary education to make teaching-learning child-centred, activity-based and joyful..."* The efforts made under the District Primary Education Programme for pedagogical improvement have to be seen against this backdrop. Introducing child-centred, activity-based classroom practices in the primary grades and ensuring that every teacher develops the required attitudes, skills and understanding to actually practice it, was perhaps the biggest challenge for DPEP.

Under the programme, the various dimensions of the pedagogical renewal processes have been examined afresh to improve them and to ensure a qualitative impact on classroom processes. For instance, the practices connected with in-service teacher training under DPEP are substantial improvements over earlier practices: in-service training is now being provided more frequently and closer to the school; there are systems for follow-up; training modules are now developed in a participatory manner involving teachers at all levels; the training-methodology is qualitatively better; there is a variety of new interventions to supplement and enhance the effectiveness of training; the impact of training is being monitored and evaluated much more frequently and rigorously and so on. The other interventions for improving classroom processes, such as renewal of curriculum, development of new textbooks and other teaching-learning material, providing continuous on-the-job support to teachers and improving the methods of assessing children's learning achievement are also being taken up.

In the efforts to bring about qualitative improvements in classroom practices, DPEP has encouraged and facilitated networking with resource organisations in the government and the non-government sector to benefit from their experiences.

It was clear that a set of activities, or a combination of interventions, which work in a given context do not always guarantee results all the time, everywhere. The timing, sequencing and intensity of the interventions proved to be critical. This has resulted in the emergence of new and innovative practices and an understanding about the need for continuously monitoring and evaluating the practices and processes.

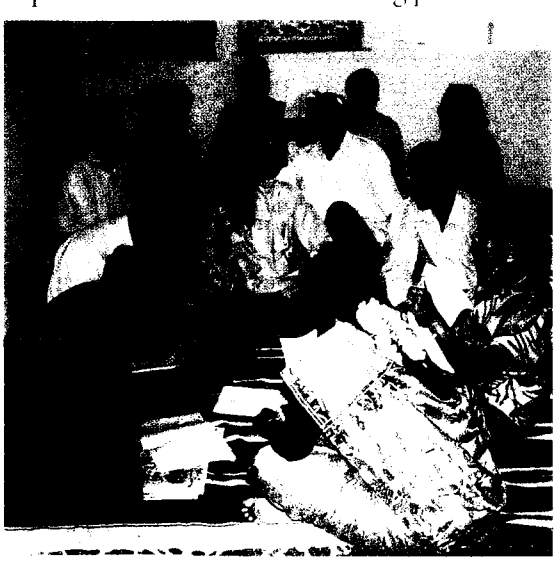
Efforts are being made to focus on the quality aspects of all the ingredients of the pedagogical renewal process so that there is a combined qualitative impact on classroom practices. This never ending search for the most effective interventions – and the right combination of interventions - has seen the emergence of a variety of innovations and experiments in all areas of the pedagogical improvement process which include:

- in-service training of teachers
- continuous resource support to teachers through sub-district level resource centres
- resource groups at all levels
- textbooks, teachers' handbooks and other teaching-learning material
- effective methods for assessing children's achievement
- other innovations – school libraries and reading promotion, multi-grade teaching, special coaching

In-service training of teachers

The need for organising recurrent in-service training programmes for teachers was probably recognised earlier than the role and effectiveness of other teacher support measures. Almost the entire target teacher population - 8,00,000 primary school teachers - is now being provided 5 to 15 days of in-service training every year under the programme. By March 1999, 1,50,000 teachers had undergone three rounds of in-service training while approximately 4,00,000 teachers had received two rounds of training and about 1,70,000 had gone through the first round. This is in stark contrast to the earlier situation where only a fraction of the teacher population was being provided in-service training at the district-level and that too once in 5-6 years.

As indicated earlier, the approach to in-service training of teachers under DPEP has important features distinguishing it from earlier approaches. In contrast to the earlier lecture dominated practices, efforts are now made to ensure that the training programmes are interactive, in tune with the desired classroom pedagogy. The trainer has thus become a facilitator rather than a know-all expositor. Training methodology now includes techniques such as group work, discussions by participating teachers, role-play, presentation of case studies and so on. The interactive, activity oriented and experiential nature of the training process gives teachers concrete ideas and messages about the need for non-threatening activity-based classroom teaching methods – the medium (training) is thus also the message (for classroom practices). The teachers have responded enthusiastically to the new training methodologies.



View of a teacher trainig programme

E.P. Sairabanu, a primary school teacher from Kothayoor, Palakkad district in **Kerala**, after attending her first **experiential training programme** in March 1997 recounted :

".... I was skeptical as I approached the training centre. I was quite sure that this was going to be just another one of those in-service programmes. But what DPEP gave us was certainly a very different experience from what we had gone through earlier. As I got inside the training centre, the first thing that caught my attention was the arrangement of the chairs in a circle. It was clear that this was going to be something different. The very first grouping itself was quite interesting. The haste with which we quickly introduced ourselves to the other members in the group — believing that this group was going to be constant — proved fruitless when we went through several grouping activities which were effective and quite interesting. Through this we could get to know every participating teacher at the programme. The various wake-up activities that we participated in certainly succeeded in waking up the sleeping minds in every one of us....

We understood a very important thing right on the first day: that the most effective learning takes place through experiences. The fact that the child looks at the world holistically and with a lot of imagination was presented to us using the object which every child dreads: the cane! The infinite possibilities of imagination was slowly unraveled to us as the cane took on various shapes...ranging from a sleeping baby to a fishing rod! The activity that we participated in— to understand that anything in the environment could be used for creating learning experiences— was really good. As we started framing questions in the object identification activity we realised how difficult it is to frame questions. The basic elements of a good learning activity gradually emerged....."

In-service training of teachers is residential in most states. Involving talented and committed primary school teachers as teacher trainers has become a regular practice.

The six-day **training programme** on child-centred activity-based teaching-learning process implemented by DPEP **Karnataka** during 1997 and 1998 explored innovative training methods including role-play, simulated classroom situations, games, group discussions, etc. The teacher trainer became a facilitator who was responsible for eliciting experiences, enhancing participation, focusing teachers' attention on their own potential, summarising and synthesising the discussion and providing inputs wherever necessary.

The training included the following aspects :

- How do children learn?
- What should an activity based classroom be like?
- What should the teacher-child relationship be like?
- What is language learning?
- How do children learn mathematics?
- How do children process information?
- Gender discrimination in classrooms.
- How should present evaluation practices be modified?

All these concepts were discussed and debated through conduct of activities and games in experiential learning situations. The feedback from the teachers indicated that following the training programme they had a much better understanding of children's learning processes and the importance of involving children in appropriate learning activities rather than following a teacher centred classroom process.

Training programmes and modules are now being developed on the basis of feedback from the field. The training modules are also much more closely linked with the primary school textbook. Conscious efforts are being made to reduce transmission losses. Trainers are getting used to the responsibilities involved in closely monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of their own efforts. In almost all the states trainers are also responsible for follow up of the training programmes through school visits, meetings, material making workshops, etc., to ensure that the messages of the training programme start taking root in the classrooms.

The first round of **in-service teacher training** in **Assam** (November 1995 – February 1996) was a six-day non-residential training at the cluster level. The preparation of TLM was linked to this training programme, which focused on joyful, activity-based teaching-learningfor Classes I and II and school readiness. Immediately following this training programme, BRCs and CRCs took up the task of follow-up through school visits and monthly meetings.

The training programme was followed by a number of measures to secure teacher involvement and motivation including TLM competitions, *shikshak melas*, teachers' meetings etc. Inselected schools where the new Class I texbooks were introduced in the 1996-97 academic session, special teacher training programmes were organised. Thereafter, a follow-up of the first round o activity-based training programme was organised for four days.

Karnataka has brought out a series of **educational films to support the teacher training efforts.** The films cover areas ranging from the hindrances to primary schooling, including social issues, to specific areas such as the teaching of language. The films are regularly used at the block level training programmes for generating discussions. The films include:

Whose school anyway?
Play and learn
Syllabus, syllabus
Nalli Kalli (on the HD Kate experience)
Sha, sha, sha is correct
Add, subtract
Banni Naavu Kattona
May I know your caste?
This is our school

A series of films, *Karuka* have been developed by DPEP **Kerala.**

Various innovative practices have emerged in connection with in-service training of teachers. Among them, *Kinginikkoottom* (literal translation: a meeting of little children), a children's camp conducted in Kerala was a novel experience for children, teachers and parents.

Among the various possibilities highlighted by Kerala's second Internal Academic Mission, — which took up an in-depth evaluation of the different elements of the pedagogical renewal process in Kerala — was the need to encourage teachers to experiment, innovate, to try out various classroom strategies, to reflect on the effectiveness of their efforts and to continuously improvise. Another useful suggestion was to explore the possibility of involving children in the in-service training programmes for teachers.

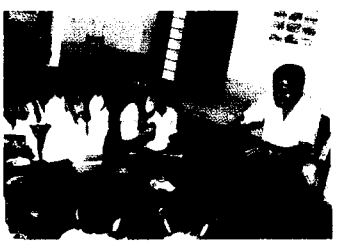
It was in this context that DPEP **Kerala** decided to conduct a 16-day **children's summer camp** called ***Kinginikkoottom*** between May 15 and 31 1998. More than 5,00,000 children, in 3,500 schools spread over the six DPEP districts, participated in *Kinginikkoottam*, a carefully designed effort to regain the joy of learning through meaningful and enjoyable experiences for children, in a totally informal and relaxed manner. About 28,000 teachers and thousands of parents took part in *Kinginikkoottam*. In many schools the parents took the lead role in organising the camp, getting to recognise their role in providing meaningful learning for their children.

Expanding horizons of learning .... the *Kinginikkoottom* experience, Kerala

..... sharing experiences

..... waiting for the performance

..... on a nature walk



..... face to face with the police

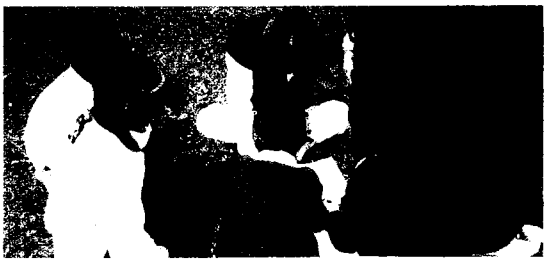
When learning was attempted through exploring the flora and fauna of the village, talking to village elders, visiting post offices, police stations, the village market, it became totally informal and was a fascinating experience for the children and teachers. Children came to realise that history is not just uninteresting information about conquests by monarchs with strange names. They realised that their own village had a fascinating past which they explored by posing spontaneous questions to village elders. Informal conversations with freedom fighters was much more fun than reading about the freedom movement in textbooks. Children were put through experiences, which made them aware of their environment, the need for preserving nature's gifts, for protecting nature from degradation.

Kinginikkoottam had another important dimension. The 16-day children's camp was closely linked to the on-going five-day in-service training programme for teachers. The teachers identified common classroom difficulties and collectively formulated classroom strategies for team-teaching, facilitating group activities with peer-learning, designing classroom activities to address the multi-grade/multi-level situations, developing small projects for children, organising field-trips and so on. These strategies were tried out at *Kinginikkoottom*. The children's camp, therefore, was also an important hands-on training programme for teachers.

There was enthusiastic public support for the programme. Newspapers in Kerala reported the day-to-day activities at the children's camp. Press reporters actually accompanied the children on the field-trips. There were hundreds of letters to the editors expressing appreciation for *Kinginikkoottom*.

An evaluation of *Kinginikkoottom* by the State Resource Group confirmed that the effort had succeeded in achieving its objectives to a considerable extent. Among the important recommendations of the study was the need to sustain the spirit of *Kinginikkoottom* by encouraging teachers to continue experimentation, self-reflection and self-correction throughout the year, systematically recording their experiences and sharing their growing understanding at the monthly one-day cluster meetings.

The possibilities of utilising the in-service training programmes for a variety of purposes soon came to be explored. Apart from initiating the process of developing attitudes, understanding and skills in teachers, teacher training programmes came to be used for other purposes such as selection of trainers, identifying schools for locating CRCs, distributing the TLM grant and so on.



Teacher in discussion with the student government in a school in Assam

An interesting aspect of the first round of training under the District Primary Education Programme in **Bihar** was the manner in which batches were chosen. Each batch of 35-40 teachers from 12 - 16 schools (which would ultimately constitute the cluster), attended the 10-day residential **in-service training programme, *Ujala*** (literal translation: light), together, as a group. This generated a feeling of togetherness in the cluster group, since the same group would be attending future monthly CRC level refresher programmes together. The practice had the following advantages:

- the possibilities of the cluster meeting becoming an opportunity for experience sharing, was easily imbibed by the teachers
- the process of all teachers from a cluster collectively identifying problems related to classroom practices and collectively identifying solutions could be initiated at the *Ujala* training programme itself
- at subsequent cluster meetings teachers would refresh their memories about their experiences at *Ujala* and look at them closely in the context of their actual classroom experiences, thereby transforming the CRC meeting into a refresher training programme. This is one of the reasons why there is genuine academic content in the CRC sessions
- since all the teachers from the cluster were attending *Ujala*, all the schools in the cluster had to be closed down. The practice of all teachers from the cluster attending *Ujala* together was modified later. One half of the teachers from a particular cluster attended a training programme along with half the number of teachers from the adjoining cluster. This ensured that schools functioned while *Ujala* was going on

At the *Ujala* training programmes, teachers in a participative manner, selected the BRC resource persons and even the school where the CRC was to be located.

The overall objective of the teacher development strategies under DPEP is total teacher empowerment: Improving teachers' attitudes, understanding and skills to bring about substantial improvements in the quality of classroom practices. Teachers' professional development is attempted not only through in-service teacher training but also through on-the-job support, experience sharing meetings and provision of teacher grants for preparing teaching-learning material. Teachers' regular involvement in the development of textbooks, training modules and preparation of teaching-learning material are all contributing to a steady improvement in their level of motivation.

The academic activities at the block and cluster level are now being conducted with considerable public involvement. There is growing evidence of increasing community involvement in school related activities.

The joy of teaching! A classroom in Karnataka

A 'measuremat fair' or ***Metric Mela*** was organised on Jnuary 13, 1999 with the active involvement c children, teachers and the community in omanahalli (Malavalli Taluk, Mandya District, **Karnataka.** There were 50-60 stalls in all. Ea one of these stalls was looked after by 2-3 chdren. The children sold milk, flowers, peanus, bananas, tomato, potato, cucumber, sweet*ooji* balls, tea, vegetable *bonda, vade, Mysore pak*a sweet originally from Mysore), fried items. Mosf the vegetables sold were from their own hom. Each shop sold a different commodity.

The main differece, of course, was that children were supposed manage the entire show and make a profit inhe bargain. For once, children were the resour persons managing the stalls, maintaining thecords, handling the change. They were leaing the practical uses of arithmetic whic was quite different from the boring chalk-antalk methods that children are often subjected . Profit, wherever it was made, went back to thespective families.

The measuring wheel used to measure the distance betwen any two points from the mathematics labratory provided by *Suvidya,* an NGO working on M for mathematics, was a great hit. At another all, one could measure one's weight and ches The BRC team, the Assistant Project Coordirtors, Bellashetty, the Block Education OfficerBEO), Malavalli Taluk were some of the people wh updated themselves on their body statistics. S did many villagers. The *Metric Mela* continued ell into the evening. Anxious parents wanderd around to see how their children were maaging.

The communityame to understand and appreciate the fier points of the new pedagogy being ttempted in the local primary school.

Continuous reource support to teachers

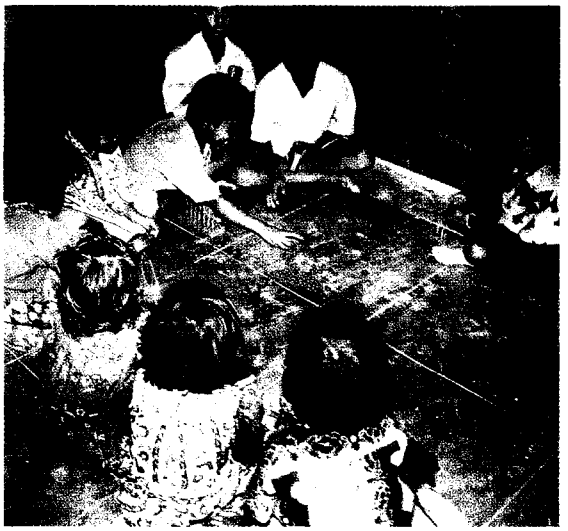
Before DPEP w introduced, in-service training of teachrs was being provided mostly at the Dirict Institute for Educational Traiing (DIETs). The limitations of cetralised district level teacher support structurs were quite apparent. The most obvious limtation of the DIETs was that of reach. Nomore than 600 teachers could be provide a five-day in-service training in a distct every year through the DIET. This meant that a teacher could hope to attend a refresher training programme only once in six years! Perhaps more important was the growing realisation that in-service training by itself is ineffective unless it is rigorously followed up through repeated refresher programmes, experience sharing sessions for teachers and on the job support through school visits. Obviously DIET as an organisation was not designed for all this.

It was this acknowledgement of the limitation of reach of district level teacher training institutions that generated the initial thinking about the need and possibility of sub-district level structures for providing continuous support to teachers.

Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres have been set up in all DPEP states. A cluster consists of 8-10 primary schools. A group of about 10 clusters constitutes a block where the BRC is located. The area of operation of the BRC is either the educational block or the community development block. Exceptions to this arrangement are found in Andhra Pradesh where a Mandal Resource Centre (MRC) has been set up for every 30 to 40 schools and in West Bengal where the Circle Level Resource Centre (CLRC)covers 60 to 80 schools.

Since the local needs and the local institutional structures in each state are different, the block and cluster resource

Discussing school related issues



Self-learning

centres had to adopt different approaches. In Bihar and Karnataka 3-5 subject experts are located at the BRCs and the role of the centre is visualised as that of a training-centre. In Kerala, the BRC co-ordinator is supported by a team of 11 to 16 trainers (equal to the number of clusters) and an academic coordinator (DIET faculty member permanently located at the BRC). The resource centres in Kerala are playing a key role in the implementation of the pedagogical renewal process. In Assam, the block and cluster resource centres are more than academic structures. They also play an important role in bringing the community and school together on school improvement issues.

DPEP acknowledges the need for following up on the in-service training efforts through continuous support to teachers, on-the-job support and cluster level experience sharing sessions.

Regular monthly experience sharing meetings for teachers are held at the cluster level. These meetings facilitate the process of teachers sharing experiences, collectively identifying classroom problems and exploring possible solutions in a participative manner. In Andhra Pradesh these are done at the *mandal* level and in West Bengal at the circle level. Even these monthly meetings serve a variety of objectives. In Bihar, for instance, the monthly meetings are perceived as refresher training programmes for teachers.

Some of the activities that take place during a monthly meeting of teachers of the cluster include lesson demonstration, planning of activities and TLM for the next few weeks, discussions on problem areas identified by teachers. Sometimes issues like shortage of teachers and interaction with parents and VECs are also discussed. During a recent national level study carried out in five states, the researchers found the following activities taking place in the monthly meetings at the CRC that they attended without notice:

In Assam the **teachers discussed** the lesson wise progress in Classes I, II III and IV during the previous month. This was followed by a group discussion on addition and modification concepts for Classes I and III respectively. Later the teachers developed an action plan for the next month and prepared the necessary TLMs.

In **Kerala** the **teachers were found discussing** the problems children faced in writing. Certain activities were devised for this purpose including development of a dictionary by children, card games, word games etc. The meeting also discussed some questions raised by children for which the teachers attempted to find answers through discussion or by looking up the encyclopaedia available at the CRC.

In **Bihar teachers divided themselves into groups** and were discussing hard spots for different classes. The group work was followed by presentation and discussion which helped to create activity pools for different concepts and lessons. Later, a lesson was demonstrated by one teacher.

Source : Glimpses from the grassroots : A synthesis report based on case studies of successful practices at local resource centres in five states, 1999

Orientation programme on development of resource materials .... Assam

School visits are now undertaken by trainers and CRC co-ordinators regularly. The visits are not supervisory in nature. They are essentially interactive and supportive and provides on-site support to teachers. The visiting resource teacher is as much a learner herself as the teacher. The focus is on sharing of ideas, innovative practices, new activities and content related issues.

The nature of school visits by CRC co-ordinators and other resource persons like block and district resource group members varies from state to state.

In **Assam** and **Madhya Pradesh** the **CRC co-ordinators visit 10 – 12 schools in a month.** During the visit they spend the entire day in one school. In Assam the focus of the visit is on taking demonstration classes and discussing need based issues identified during monthly meetings. In Madhya Pradesh the co-ordinator also checks the progress on class wise targets fixed in the monthly meeting, taking a class where there is no teacher, collection of data and dissemination of information.

In **Bihar** and **Karnataka** school visits by CRC co-ordinators are much less frequent.

In **Kerala**, the school visits by the co-ordinators are **purely academic** in nature. Each co-ordinator or trainer, as one is called, looks after one cluster of 7 to8 schools for a month or two and then shifts to another cluster. This helps each school benefit from the skills of all the trainers in the block. The trainer spends the entire day in school undertaking classroom observation, team teaching along with the school teacher, poviding academic inputs to teachers etc. At the end of the day the teachers and the trainer show and discuss their observations and poblems.

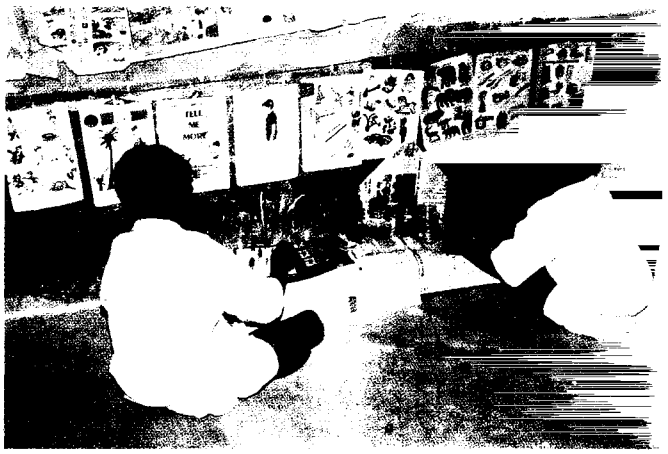
Source : Glimpses fron the grassroots : A synthesis report based on case sudies of successful practices at local resource centres in five states, 1999

Assam, Karnatala, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh are some of the states where these centres have initiated a variety of innovative activities like introluction of learning corners, students' government, *metric mela*, *bal mela, shishu mela* etc.

BRCs and CRCs are evolving into active resource centres. They no longer are mere training venues. Teachers come to the resource centres torefer to different types of materials, books, journals, etc. In some states frequent workshops and seminars are organised at these centres on important issues identified by teachers. These resource centres are also being used by teachers to sit together and develop new materials and activities for which they may not have had the time during the training programme or monthly cluster meetings. In addition to the monthly meetings and school visits, most resource centres also undertake activities like organisation of TLM workshops, teachers' and children's *melas,* excursion tours for children and publication of teachers' newsletters. However, the resource centres have taken on different hues in different states. For example, in Assam, BRCs and CRCs have emerged as institutions which play a crucial role in eliciting community support for academic and non-academic matters.

The community linked activities of BRCs in **Assam** range from documenting folklore and flora and fauna to mobilising funds to build a road (to reach the school) and to developing a learning corner at the centre with the help of the community. These institutions participate in the overall development of the cluster/block.

In this direction, one BRC has made an attempt to start a system of regular meetings at block, cluster and village level which are open to the public. In these meetings, which are conducted in a workshop like manner with participatory discussions, various developmental aspects of the area are discussed, with a focus on the school. Survey and enrolment drives, wastage controlling measures, learning corner preparation in the classrooms, running of a pre-primary section, effort towards better hygienic conditions and sanitation, school campus beautification, plantation in and around the school, have been issues on the agenda for such meetings.



Busy at a learning corner

The selection and capacity building measures for the resource teachers working at BRCs and CRCs have been rigorous in states like Assam and Kerala. This has helped the centres emerge as powerful support mechanisms for the teacher in the field. Various approaches are being adopted by states for training of trainers at BRCs and CRCs. An interesting hands-on capacity building effort called *Kalari*, involving school-attachment for the BRC trainers is reported from Kerala.

A teacher training programme in progress

Although most of the trainers in **Kerala** were primary school teachers with considerable teaching experience, they had actually never used the classroom practices they professed. An Internal Academic Mission had suggested that explicit efforts need to be made to enhance the capacity of the teacher trainers, especially their capacity to provide effective on-site support to teachers. This was the background to the evolution of ***Kalari*** (literal translation: a training venue, especially for the indigenous martial art *Kalarippayattu*) the first **capacity building effort for teacher trainers** taken up under the DPEP. It was a month long school attachment programme specifically designed to provide opportunities to teacher trainers to develop, on their own, attitudes, understanding and skills for providing on-site assistance to schools and teachers.

During July 1998, all the 825 teacher trainers were put through the month long school placement programme in carefully selected schools spread over the 55 blocks in the six DPEP districts. The first thing the trainer did at the school was to become a full fledged teacher, replacing a regular teacher who took on the job of assisting the trainer, in designing, implementing and actually evaluating classroom strategies. The continuous joint evaluation was done against the ingredients of the classroom observation tool, which the trainee-trainer used during school visits.

At the school, the trainer — functioning as a regular teacher — was expected to meticulously record her day-to-day experiences in her *My own teaching manual*, and also on a separate diary. The trainer encouraged and initiated the holding of daily planning and review meetings of teachers every evening.

She triggered of the process of activising the PTA and the School Support Group (SSG), in those schools where these were not yet effective. She also attempted to initiate efforts to slowly start the implementation of the School Perspective Plan, at least for those interventions which could be attempted without substantial financial implications like preparing a school garden, orienting the PTA members on the intricacies of the new pedagogy and so on.

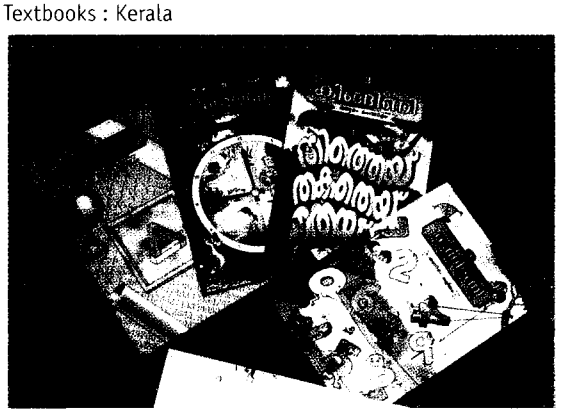
At the end of the first week, the trainers met at selected BRCs and shared individual experiences. They also discussed heir improving understanding about the new pedagogy and made plans for the ensuing week. As the trainers went through the school attachment programme over the next three weeks, they kept meticulous notes on their experiences of gradually attempting to bring about total school improvement.

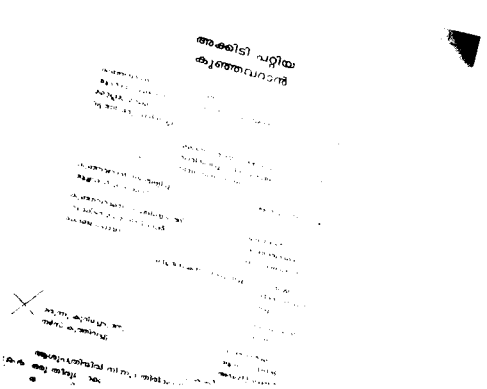
An evaluation of *Kalari*, revealed that most teacher trainers, once they got over their initial inhibitions, realised the posibilities of the attachment and effectively utilised the opportunity for building up their understanding and skills. An important recommendation was that *Kalari* needs to be repeated, perhaps progressively reducing the duration of 'school attachment' till the trainers become skilful in providing good school-support even on a one day visit.

Resource groups

Traditionally, the tasks related to developing curriculum and textbooks, planning and implementing teacher training programmes, designing and executing evaluation studies used to be undertaken by a small group of academic experts. DPEP created the space for opening up these areas for practitioners and committed non-experts. Creation of non-hierarchical resource groups at different levels is a significant contribution of the programme. State, district, block and cluster resource groups have been constituted in most states. Most State Resource Groups have representatives from primary school teachers, teacher trainers, DIET and State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) faculty, NGOs and university professors. It is this State Resource Group which usually conceptualises the pedagogical renewal package to be implemented in the state. Assam, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are some of the states where the SRGs have played a critical role in shaping the pedagogical renewal strategies. District and block resource groups too have played a key role in teacher training programmes and extending need based academic support to teachers.

Textbooks : Kerala





The District Resource Group in **Assam** consists of DIET faculty members, BE and CRC co-ordinators, block resource grou members and teachers. Based on the feedback from school visits, monthly meetings etc., the DRGs plan need based programmes to be nplemented at the block and cluster level.

In Assam, Block Resource Grups have been constituted comprising retired chool teachers, experienced and qualified resouce persons from NGOs and educated youth volunters. Members of this resource group make reguar visits to the field to interact with teachers n schools. They give a monthly report to the RC and attend cluster, block and district level eetings. These resource persons also help in ide tifying training needs of the teachers, arrge seminars, orientation programmes etc.

The tasks accomplished by he SRG, **Uttar Pradesh** include: revision of th curriculum for primary classes, development f textbooks for Classes I, II and III and teache' handbooks on Mathematics for Classes II and II. The SRG also developed the teacher training ackages for the first and second rounds of traini g.

Textbooks and other teacling-learning material

Although teachers had apparently picked up a rudimentary understanding about the desired pedagogy as a result of in-service training and continuous follow-up/suppor, it became clear that teachers were still insufficiently equipped to take up classroon practices which facilitate natural, sponaneous self-learning among children. Thefeedback from the cluster meetings and the school visits brought out an important fincng - the major hindering factor, in most stats were the existing textbooks (which ha generally been designed for rote-memorisatin) and the teachers' handbooks which pescribed mechanical teacher-centred, emonstration activities.

Many states recognised the eed for making substantial changes in the texbooks as an important step in the process f bringing about improvements in classnom practices. Kerala was one of the first stes to attempt developing textbooks specifially catering to the requirements of activity-ased, child-centred classroom practices.

In Kerala, through a marathon effort spanning just nine months the entire task of developing a primary school curriculum and 48 books (24 textbooks and 24 handbooks in 3 languages) was completed. In striking contrat to the earlier practice of experts writing up the textbooks with the token involvement of teachers, a genuinely participative process was adopted by DPEP for the development of the **primary school curricuum and textbooks.**

The process and the textooks had several distinguishing features. Widespread consultation was an important element of the process. Public opinion and suggestions were solicited through district and sub-district level debates and discussions. Hundreds of letters were received at the State Project Office in response to a press release from teachers, parents, university professors, priests, politicians, child psychologists journalists, educationists.... on what they perceived to be the shortcomings of the existing curriculum and textbooks and what they thought could be done to improve them.

A group of 50 primary school teachers was selected, through a series of rigorous selection workshops, to be part of the exercise. The group was put through several rounds of training on the essential features of activity-based child-centred pedagogy. This group of teachers worked with child psychologists, educationists and national level experts for consolidating the basic assumptions about the child, the teacher and the learning process and also the basic approaches to be followed in the teaching of language, matlematics and environmental studies. These were the foundations of the new curriculum and textbooks.

The sets of leaning experiences that children were to be put through were painstakingly developed, keeping the focus on the learning experiences themselves rather than on forcing outcomes. At the same time a Kerala specific set of Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) was developed around which the learning experiences were designed. The curriculum was integrated for Calsses I and II: EVS, mathematics and language would be learnt simultaneously. The traditional alphabet-to-word-to-sentence approach to the teaching of language was discarded and replaced with an approach which was more in tune with the communicativeapproach to language teaching.

The textbooks and the teachers' versions (handbooks) were developed simultaneously. The role of the textbooks and he manner in which they were to be used was carefully redefined. The textbook became just one of several texts with which the child interacts in the process of constructing her understanding about the world. The teachers' handbooks provided teachers sufficient space for developing learning experiences on their own. The learning experiences provided to children – through the textbooks and otherwise – ensured that the child's innate thinking capabilities were naturally and spontaneously exercised.

Care was taken to ensure that the textbooks were genuinely child-friendly. The books had stories, poems and interesting illustrations which provided plenty of opportunities for self-learning and discovery. National level

experts were involved to ensure that the quality of illustrations, design and production was of a high order.

A formal evaluation of the curriculum/textbooks and the processes adopted for their development in Kerala was undertaken by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). The NCERT commended both the process and the product '. ... the new curriculum/textbooks are more in tune with the constructivst theoretical framework which lays emphasis on:

- creating a learning environment for children wherein children, by interacting with the environment and getting varied experiences, construct their own knowledge
- providing opportunities and experiences to children and not taking control of children's learning through an input-output, behaviorist model
- emphasising on co-operative learning and peer-group/adult-child interaction through group activities, co-operative games etc. for facilitating extension of learning'

Source : Textbook with a difference :A study of two DPEP experiments, Department of Pre-School & Elementav Education, NCERT, New Delhi.

A similar effort was made in Madhya Pradesh to develop a set of new primary school textbooks. The textbooks developed in Madhya Pradesh are also different in respect of content, presentation and production. Like the textbooks developed in Kerala, the content not only match the children's cognitive level but also takes care of their natural interests. Since the textbooks have been, perhaps for the first time, produced by local teachers, the local environment of the children, including their community, the geography and history of the village etc., find an important place in the textbook and the manner in which it is used.

Steps followed in the **textbook renewal process** in **Madhya Pradesh** included collecting and analysing feedback on existing material and re-constructing the curricular framework, preparation of textbooks by three agencies (SCERT, Eklavya and Shikshak Samakhya Project), field trialling by each agency for one year in selected schools, development of amalgamated textbooks in workshops involving agencies, teachers and resource persons. The NCERT's comments on the process of textbook development in Madhya Pradesh included the following:

- an extremely commendable feature was the decision to bring together the experience of all agencies
- another positive feature of this approach was to involve and not bypass, the existing state structure
- trialling was recognised as an essential part of the process of development of material

In fact, these textbooks later evolved into a whole pedagogic reform package - *Seekhna Sikhana* (learning -teaching), guided by a technical resource support group of academicians, administrators and activists set up by the state government. *Seekhna Sikhana* encompassed the curriculum, textbooks, school libraries, other teaching-learning material and of course, intense, large scale teacher training, which was itself activity-based, participative and enjoyable. Later a component of learner evaluation was also incorporated.

Source: Textbooks with a difference : A Study of two experiments, Department of Pre-School and Elementary Education, NCERT, New Delhi.

A material development workshop, Assam

New textbooks and teachers' handbooks for the primary classes have been developed in almost all DPEP States. Apart from textbooks, a variety of TLM have been developed in most of the DPEP states.

These materials have helped teachers to organise interesting learning activities for children. A grant of Rs 500 is provided to every teacher, every year, for preparing TLMs. A rich variety of materials is now available in the classrooms of DPEP districts which are being increasingly used by teachers.

In **Assam**, teachers, BRC,CRC co-ordinators and resource persons developed **materials and activities** to facilitate transaction of each chapter of the textbook at block level workshops. In **Haryana**, a team of teachers, BRC and CRC co-ordinators and DIET faculty members came together to review and study materials from across the country on mathematics (Classes I & II) and science (Classes III to V). This study resulted in the development of state specific materials at a state level workshop and their trial. These supplementary resource books, improved on the basis of the feedback from trialling, are being supplied to all teachers.

The new generation of textbooks and self-learning material is gradually contributing to improved classroom practices and ensuring improved learning of children. For example, the *Nalli Kalli* approach (based on the Rishi Valley Education Centre's approach and TLM

kit) to learning involving group and self-learning activities in a multi-level classroom situation, has been adopted by DPEP Karnataka in selected blocks of the programme districts.

In an attempt to integrate the children of the Soliga tribe into mainstream education, DPEP **Karnataka** has developed a **separate textbook, *Soliga Siddi***, for Class I. For the first time in the state, the pedagogical renewal process has included a tribal language with no script of its own.

The Soligas are inhabitants of the forest tracks of Mysore district and depend on forest resources for survival. They have remained educationally backward mainly because of their isolated existence and poor access to formal education.

The new textbook seeks to bridge the language barrier between the teacher and the tribal students. Using the Soliga language, it is based on the native experiences of the children of the tribe. The workbook contains symbols, drawings, pictures and ideas based on local experiences of the children in their life in the forest. It integrates language, mathematics and environmental studies. Oral work is emphasised more than the written aspect as it helps to encourage children to express themselves and thereby improve their language skills.The *Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra* (VGKK), a local NGO which has done exemplary work for the upliftment of Soligas, has contributed significantly in developing the textbook.

Encouraging group learning in multi-level situations

To make classroom interactions more meaningful, DPEP **Karnataka** has redesigned the curriculum to include folk stories, poems and riddles. Recognising the fact that story telling has always been an integral part of the traditional learning process, DPEP took the initiative to reintroduced folk stories and songs in rural classrooms. An **anthology of children's stories, *Ratna Paksi***, has been introduced to help primary school teachers incorporate these into the teaching-learning process. This initiative has also served the purpose of

- preventing stories from dying
- making learning more relevant and culture specific
- bridging the gap between the language spoken at home and in the one used in the classroom
- building a greater sense of self esteem and confidence among rural children

In the year long process of publishing this anthology the first step was to engage the services of K. Ramiah, a Dalit writer, to document these stories. A series of three workshops followed which involved the participation of village elders from various parts of the state. In the process nearly 3000 stories were collected.

Thus the major innovations brought about by the District Primary Education Programme in the area of curriculum/textbook/material development have been:

- generating an understanding that the textbooks play a critical role in the process of improving classroom practices
- involving practicing primary school teachers in these processes
- using a participative, consultative approach in these efforts
- providing Rs 500 as grant to teachers every year and systematically developing their capacity to prepare and use teaching-learning material
- involving professionals in design, illustration and production of material
- substantially reducing the overall physical and mental load on the child; the new curricula/textbooks are much lighter
- considerably reducing the cost of development of the textbooks while enhancing their quality

Assessing children's achievement

The in-service teacher training, decentralised academic support mechanisms and revised textbooks and TLM have contributed to a significant shift in classroom practices in some states. Active learning by children is stressed much more than rote memorisation.

As the classroom situation changed gradually, the limitations of the existing examination system, which essentially evaluates the extent of memorised information, became apparent. Madhya Pradesh and Kerala have attempted improvements in the process involved in assessing children's learning.

Continuous and comprehensive assessment of children's learning is now becoming a part of the teaching process itself. Perhaps the most radical of the changes attempted under DPEP in Kerala was the introduction of an improved examination system, which facilitated the assessment of real learning rather than children's ability to memorise. Teachers were encouraged and provided training to enable them to individually design and conduct evaluation activities, and assess children's learning as part of the term-end examinations also.

Children using material

Instead of awarding marks, **the process of assessing children's learning** introduced in **Kerala** required teachers to assess and award grades to various aspects of the language learning process such as reading, writing, creativity and so on. These were recorded on the Progress Reports *Amma Ariyan* (translation: 'for the mother's information) which were given to the parent after each term-end examination. The teacher discussed the implications of the various grades with the parent and jointly worked out strategies for improving the child's learning.

The major recommendation by the SRG's evaluation of the new assessment system was that teachers need to be provided regular support and encouragement that would enable them to practice the new evaluation system comfortably. The progress report *Amma Ariyan,* which, is a crucial link between the teacher and the parent needs to be issued promptly. Individual teachers have to be encouraged to develop their own sets of evaluation activities rather than follow those designed at the district or block level. The process of discussion and reflection involved in the development of the new method of assessing children's achievement is evident from the following episode.

A heated debate on the grading system in the new evaluation strategy took place in Pattambi BRC. It began with a small argument on the inclusion of the grading indicator for two digit addition in the first term of Class I. The trainer presenting the case felt that the grading indicators suggested by the SRG do not match the curricular statements. Taking one example he said "children master two digit addition only by the end of the session, but one is expected to evaluate it in the first term. Why evaluate when one knows that the child will not be able to accomplish the task?" After discussion the entire group decided not to use it as a grading indicator for the first term.

This discussion led them to addressing questions like, do we evaluate the child's experience or the curricular statement? Is learning activity different from a evaluation activity? and so on. After discussions this group of trainers came to the conclusions that

- learning activity is not different from an evaluation activity
- present grading indicators do not always help in assessing the experience of the children
- term examinations are to be conducted to satisfy the society
- evaluation is a part of every learning activity

Other Innovations

School libraries and reading promotion

Recognising the importance of providing reading material other than the textbooks to children, school libraries and reading promotion programmes are now being taken up in earnest by a number of states. Library grants for schools, CRCs and BRCs are being provided by all states.

Learning corners with a variety of teaching-learning material for use by children are now present in almost all DPEP classrooms. Teachers' newsletters and even children's magazines are beginning to be developed in many states. An interesting development is the evolution of school wall magazines. In Kerala, the wall magazines are developed by the children. In Assam, the wall magazines are produced at the state level and include activities for children, tips for teachers, riddles, interesting facts etc. The Karnataka wall magazines are called *Kalli Nalli.*

West Bengal has come up with an innovative programme for promoting the reading habit amongst children in rural areas. In association with the National Book Trust (NBT) and the Department of Library Services, DPEP organised a **book van tour** in four districts for one and a half months. During this programme the National Book Trust Book Van went to various villages and small towns and held mobile book exhibitions. Along with it a number of other activities like science experiments, activities and games for children and teacher orientation programmes were also held. This reading promotion campaign drew an overwhelming response from the public.

DPEP West Bengal is initiating the NBT's Readers' Club Scheme in every school in the DPEP districts. Each school will be allotted Rs. 500 annually for purchase of library books. Out of this books worth Rs.300 will have to be bought from NBT. In return NBT will give free books worth the same amount to each school. NBT's Children's Bulletin will be produced in Bengali and sent to each school.

The Book Van is continuing its journey to Maharashtra and other states.

Under the auspices of DPEP **Uttar Pradesh** a **book fair** was organised at Bareilly to cover all the six districts of the Bareilly division. Around 123 publishing houses participated in this five-day book fair organised with the active support of the NBT. Publicity about the ensuing book fair through newspapers and individuals enabled people's participation in large numbers.

The underlying spirit of the book fair was to effectively decentralise the process of book selection so that the books purchased for schools and resource centre libraries were locally relevant and useful for children, teachers and community members. People's committees were set up to undertake the task of selecting books based on local relevance.

The Bareilly book fair was a statement of the programme's faith in the culture of reading and its commitment to decentralisation.

The world of knowledge on wheels, West Bengal

Multi-grade teaching

Serious efforts have been made to address the issue of multi-grade teaching in a number of ways. Orissa has tried to tackle the situation through teacher training programmes where multi-grade teaching situations were simulated for a variety of combinations of grades and subjects. In Gujarat in a multi-grade pilot project, processes have been initiated to develop the primary school curriculum, materials and teacher training programmes specific to the needs of multi-grade schools. In Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh the Rishi Valley School, Madanappalli, Andhra Pradesh, has provided resource support to help develop self-learning material for children and for providing training to multi-grade teachers.

Haryana and Maharashtra have also initiated block level pilot programmes to try out certain strategies for multi-grade teaching.

Special coaching

Special attention has been given to ways of improving the levels of learning among children, who have lagged behind in this respect. Responding to the fact that girls do not always get a supportive educational environment at home, DPEP Tamil Nadu introduced special coaching classes for scheduled caste (SC) and scheduled tribe (ST) girls in selected schools.

..... exploring nature

Among girls, the Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) girls have invariably remained most backward.

One of the reasons for their backwardness stems from the fact that they do not get requisite support in their educational pursuits at home. To make up for this, DPEP **Tamil Nadu** has provided **special coaching classes to SC/ST girls** in Cuddalore, Dharmapuri, Thriuvannamalai and Villupuram. The 1921 special coaching centres are spread over all the 72 blocks in these districts. A centre can be started if a minimum of 20 SC/ST girls from Classes III,IV and V are available in the school. Another centre can be started for the same school if the number of such girls exceed 30. Thus, depending on the number of eligible girls, schools may qualify for more than one centre.

The coaching classes are held on all working days for an hour and a half, immediately after school gets over. One of the teachers in the school, usually a resident of the locality, is made the teacher of the special coaching centre.

The teacher needs to be adequately equipped to manage multi-grade teaching situations which is an imperative of the scheme. Evidently, the pedagogic challenge is immense. Hence, teachers have been specially trained in mult-grade teaching to cope with girls of three different classes. Adequate arrangements have also been made to ensure availability of professional assistance to the teachers on a continuous basis. The Women Development Officers at the DPO and the supervisory personnel at the district and block levels are extending the required programme support.

Recently, a specially prepared teachers' handbook has been developed and circulated to all the target teachers, wherein detailed guidelines on the different competencies in the major subject areas for the three classes, have been provided on a prioritised basis. A suggested month wise time frame for transacting the different units along with evaluation approaches has also been provided in the document which is meant to update the teachers' skills of management and administration.

The reforms and innovations that have been brought in through DPEP in the area of curriculum, textbooks, training programmes and decentralised academic resource support for teachers are now being used in non-DPEP districts.

The lessons learnt from DPEP's experiences in pedagogical renewal point to a need for:

- continuing experiments, explorations and innovations since there are no ready-made, universally applicable solutions to the challenges of pedagogical improvement
- approaching pedagogical renewal in a holistic manner including the various components like teacher training, textbook and material development, pupil evaluation, etc.
- understanding and responding to field level realities and needs and promoting decentralised academic processes
- toning up monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for keeping a constant track of the impact of various interventions as well as the processes involved.

3 BUILDING SCHOOLS

BACKGROUND

The construction programme -provision of schools, classrooms, resource centres, toilets, drinking water, repairs etc - is an important input to the primary schooling system and has a distinct role to play in furthering the objectives of the programme. It aims to go beyond just constructing many thousands of buildings. Like other components, it works towards a synergy with other areas, objectives and requirements of the programme. Attempts are also made under the programme to critically examine various issues related to construction such as aesthetics, functionality, cost effectiveness in design as well as modalities and agencies for construction.

DPEP does not prescribe a uniform system of construction throughout the country. Thus varied systems of construction, supervision and monitoring have come up in different parts of the country. DPEP's only guideline regarding the construction component is the restriction on the cost of construction to within 24 percent of the district's total project cost. Within this ceiling, the districts are free to decide on their construction targets based on existing requirements. As requirements and priorities vary across the districts, the thrust of the construction programme has also been different. In some districts the emphasis has been on constructing new schools, while in others the priority has been on providing additional classrooms and repairing dilapidated structures. Water supply, toilets, boundary walls, ECCE centres or ashram schools also receive importance in some states. All DPEP districts have taken up the construction of resource centres at the sub-district level.

DPEP allows for changing of priorities during the project period, even by deviating from the orignal perspective plan. Changes can be also incorporated while implementing Annual Work Plan. Gujarat, which had initially planned for repairs in a big way, subsequently prioritised additional classrooms as it was possible to undertake repair work through convergence. West Bengal, which initially had resource centres planned at block and cluster levels changed to circle level resource centres - this allowed the districts to optimise the number of resource centres and spend more on school constructions.

DPEP's initiative for convergence with government schemes has helped narrow the infrastructural gap. In many districts, water supply and sanitation works are being taken up through existing schemes. Convergence has also been established with the Departments of Tribal Welfare, Women and Child Development and the Mahila Samakhya programme to avoid duplication of efforts. For all school buildings being constructed under DPEP in Uttar Pradesh, 60 percent of the funds come from the *Jawahar Rozgar Yojana* (JRY) while 40 per cent are provided from DPEP. The JRY funds are placed with DPEP, which in turn, undertakes the responsibility of implementation. A formal convergence arrangement is also being worked out with the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission at the national level for providing sanitation facilities to schools in selected DPEP districts.

Three aspects of the construction programme under DPEP have broken new ground:

- community involvement in construction
- development of contextual classroom and school designs that are child-friendly and support the pedagogic practices being advocated under DPEP
- stress on cost effectiveness in construction

Community involvement

School construction in rural areas has traditionally been the responsibility of the various government departments such as the PWD and similar agencies. The villagers who are the beneficiaries and stakeholders of the school, had no say in the construction process. Ownership was therefore lacking and the school buildings were perceived as *sarkari* (governmental) property. Learning from the experiences of community construction in the Bihar Education Project and Lok Jumbish, DPEP sought to enlist greater participation of the community in its civil works programme.

Construction of schools in almost all DPEP states has been taken up through the Village Education Committees (VECs) and sub committees set up for civil works. This was the first instance of direct community involvement in construction on such a large scale. Huge sums of money have been transferred to the community bodies for construction - about 63 per cent of the total amount allocated for construction in DPEP has been managed by the community. Apart from the improved quality of these buildings, the sense of pride and ownership generated is clearly visible - it is no longer a *sarkari* property but *hamara* (our own) school.

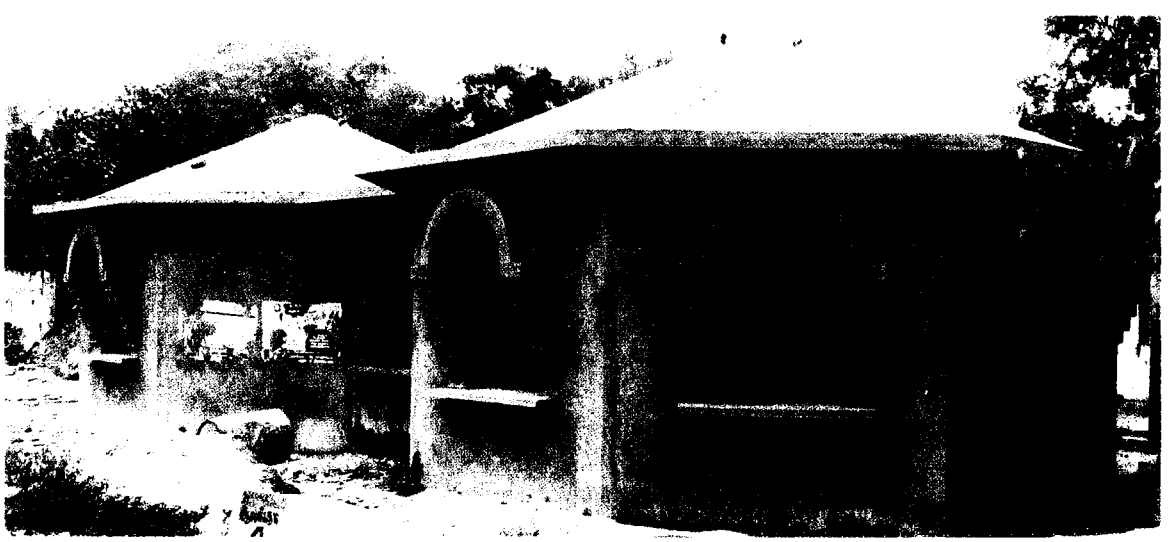
In Tamil Nadu only a small portion of the construction programme has been attempted through the community. But the **quality and cost-effectiveness of community construction** have been a revelation for the state.

All construction in Phase I was done through the Public Works Department (PWD). A traditional rectangular design was adopted and conventional construction systems were used. The quality of construction was reasonably good. The cost of a school building varied from Rs. 4.5 lakh to Rs. 5.5 lakh which, with the area provided, worked out to be Rs. 403 to Rs. 422 per sq.ft. Under Phase II also most of the schools are being constructed through this system.

However, in Phase II, 33 schools were taken up for construction through the community on an experimental basis. The results were very encouraging. The cost of these constructions varied from Rs. 3.8 lakh to Rs. 5.0 lakh, which works out to be Rs. 357 to Rs. 367 per sq.ft, a savings of around 12-13 per cent. The quality of construction was as good as, if not better than the PWD works.

The experimentation continued and in 17 of the schools the community was motivated to take up construction using alternative cost-effective technologies. New child friendly designs were also used in these schools. The cost of the 3-room school buildings reduced to Rs. 2.3 - Rs. 2.4 lakh which, as per the covered area, worked out to be Rs. 247 to Rs. 257 per sq.ft. There was therefore a savings of 39-40 per cent over the initial PWD constructions. There was no compromise whatsoever on the quality and strength of the building.

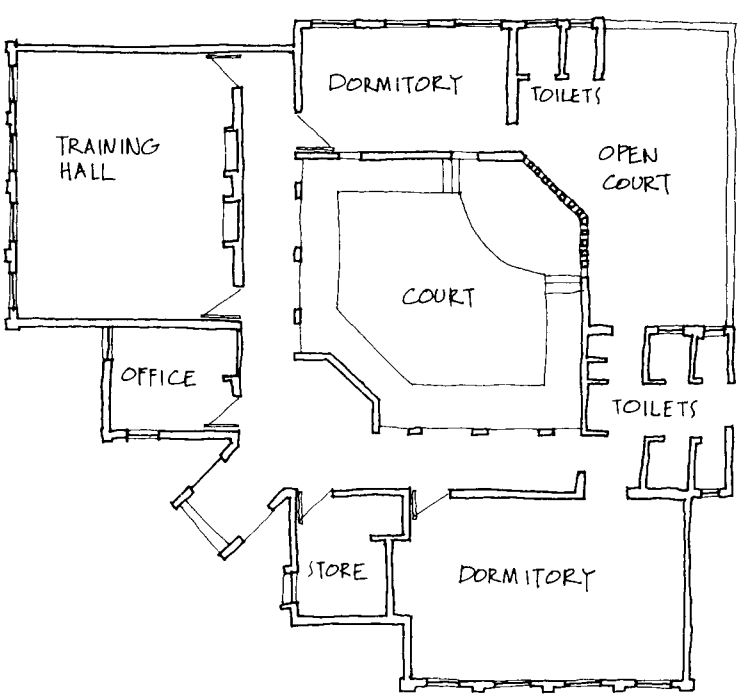
Community construction of child-friendly designs using cost-effective technologies, Tamil Nadu



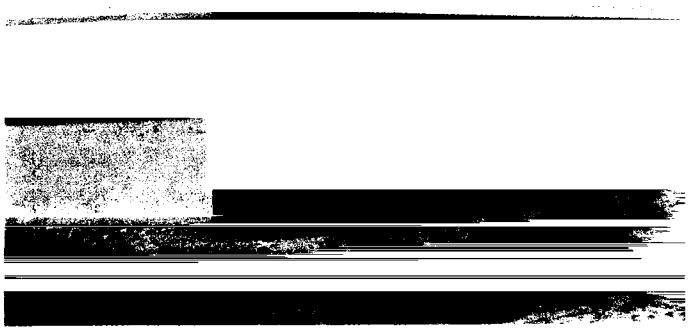
There have been innumerable instances of the community contributing in terms of land, labour and material.

In **Andhra Pradesh, community contribution** amounted to Rs. 1.09 crore against a total DPEP expenditure of Rs. 13.56 crores in the last two years of the Phase I construction programme. Though it was not an official requirement, there were cases of the community contributing upto Rs. 30,000 per school. In the constructions in Phase II districts, the community is being provided a unit cost of Rs. 1.75 lakh per school, the actual cost of which is more than Rs.2 lakh - the balance is expected to be contributed by the community.

Rajasthan plans to collect 50 per cent of the total cost for constructing AS centres from the community. In tribal and Mewat areas the community share is envisaged to be 20 per cent with DPEP contributing 80 per cent of the cost. While DPEP will bear the entire cost of construction of school buildings, BRC buildings, water supply etc., contributions will be collected from the community to build a corpus fund – the 'School Development Fund' – to be used for maintenance of school buildings, general development of the school, providing furniture, boundary walls, water supply and sanitation facilities, etc.



Block Resource Centre design in Madhya Pradesh - a well-knit combination of formal, informal, external and internal spaces



Primary school in Karnataka - not only is the design more functional, it is attractive too

Design renewal

A major innovation under DPEP has been in the area of school designs. The conventional school design across the country had two to three rectangular classrooms with a narrow verandah in the front. DPEP has been able to make a shift from the traditional 'box type' building to a more functional and child-friendly school. These schools with wide verandahs, big windows, children's chalkboards (of various shapes), display and storage shelves etc. would have a positive impact on the learning environment of the school. These schools are definitely more attractive to the children. It is perhaps for the first time in the country that classroom designs have been prepared keeping in mind specific pedagogical requirements.

Yet there are no standard designs. District and regional variations are visible in the designs developed which are based on local conditions and requirements. To enrich the design renewal process, consultants were involved and the designs were finalised after discussion with various user groups. Details of the design process, the designs developed and the various issues addressed have all been documented and disseminated. This documentation is also the first of its kind which specifically deals with designs of rural primary schools.

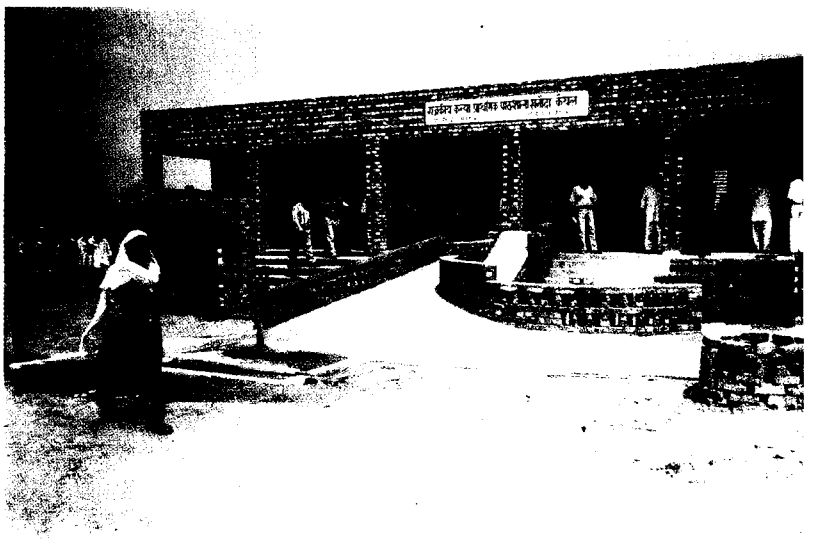
Further refinement in school designs is being attempted through provision of interior storage and display spaces for children, seating arrangements in furnitureless situations and better use of external spaces through construction of external chalkboards, platforms, pavilions, open air theatres. Play elements like slides, swings, play walls, etc. and simple modifications for disabled children are also being included in some states. Prototypes, demonstrating many of the above elements have been constructed in Kaithal district of Haryana. All states are initiating steps to develop the external learning environment of the school - an area which has not received much attention in earlier programmes. Examples of good campus development can already be seen in some schools of Bihar. Madhya Pradesh proposes to have activity centres which would be an open area enclosing the school with plantation and playing aids, encouraging activity based learning.

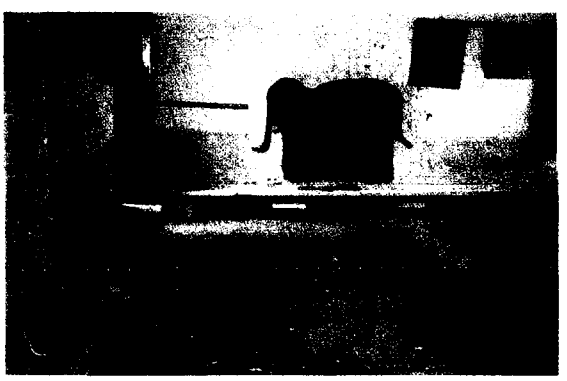
Cost effective construction

Reducing cost of construction has been a commitment in all DPEP states. Given the scale of construction, even a 10 per cent savings generated (on the total value of construction), would help construct 8000 – 10,000 more classrooms. Steps have been taken across states to reduce the cost of construction through a variety of measures including modifications in architectural designs, rationalisation of structural designs, use of local materials and cost effective technologies.

Architectural designs

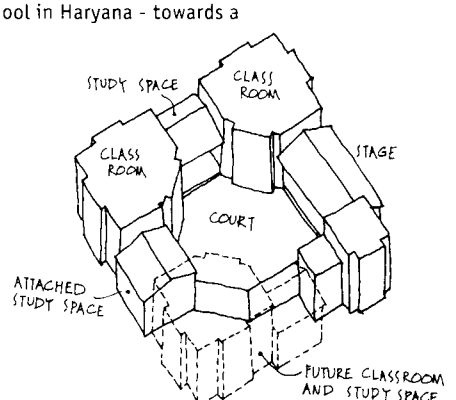
The new architectural designs ensure maximum usable space with the same investment, thus making the building cost-effective. Many of the new designs developed are a combination of closed and open learning areas like classrooms, verandahs, pavilions and court yards. As seen in the design from Gujarat, the amount which would have been spent for the construction of three classrooms accommodating 120 students, has been used to construct two classrooms,



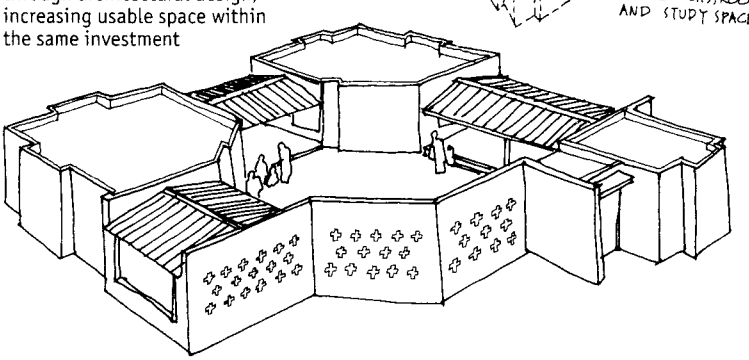


(Top) Prototype School in Haryana - an experiment towards total campus development

(Above) Internal elements in a school in Haryana - towards a child-friendly classroom



Primary school in Gujarat - Cost-effectiveness through architectural design, increasing usable space within the same investment

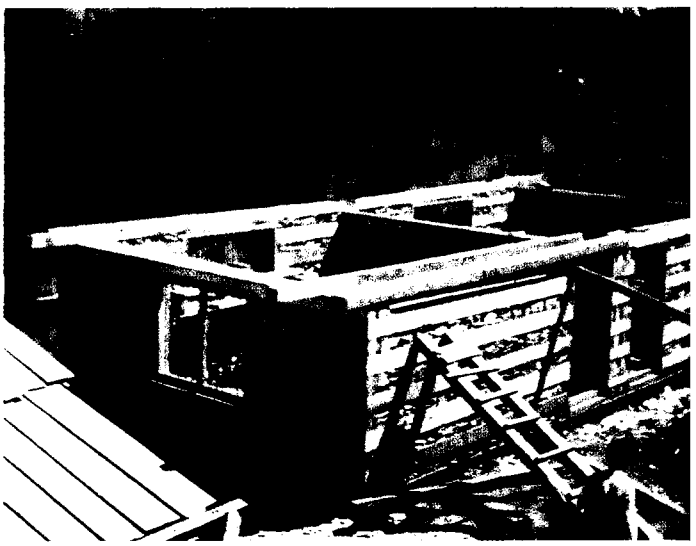


two semi-open activity areas, a stage and a central courtyard which will accommodate more than 150 students, with five separate teaching spaces.

An added feature of the present designs is the in-built scope for further expansion of the building with minimal investment.

Structural designs

Initiatives to rationalise structural designs have been taken in Orissa, Haryana and Tamil Nadu. The grossly over designed structures have been simplified to rationalise the use of cement and steel, which are the most expensive materials. Savings to the tune of 25 per cent have been possible in one particular design in Orissa (about 47 per cent reduction in the cost of the structural elements). In Haryana and Tamil Nadu savings in the range of 5 to7 per cent have been achieved.



School in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh - using wood and stone walls, the prevalent local practice

Comparison between Existing and Rationalised designs: Orissa

Item	Existing				Rationalised		
		Rate (Rs.)	Qty	Amount (Rs.)		Qty	Amount (Rs.)
FOUNDATION	RCC Columns & Footings with plinth beams				Stub Foundation with Grid beams		
Quantities							
Brick work in CM 7		93.8		0	In Stubs	4.5	3572.1
RCC (Cu M)	In Column footings, Columns upto GL & Plinth Beams	2285.5	11.6	26511.8	Plinth Beams only	2.734	6248.56
Steel (Kg)	do	17.67	879	15531.93	do	231	4081.77
SUPER-STRUCTURE	Columns with 250 mm (10") thick partition brick walls				250mm (10") tk brick load bearing walls		
Quantities							
RCC in Columns		2619.5	1.3	3405.35			0
Brick work in CM		806.2		0	Extra in place of RCC columns	1.31	1056.12
Steel (Kg)		17.67	177	3127.59		0	
ROOF	Sloping pyramidal slab supported with ring and inclined beams				Folded pyramidal roof supported with tie beam		
Quantities							
RCC in beams		2619.5	7.12	18650.84		2.02	5291.39
RCC in slab		2285.5	13.36	30534.28		13.36	30534.28
Steel (Kg)		17.67	1489	26310.63		870	15372.9
TOTAL COST OF STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS				**124072.42**			**66157.12**

Bamboocrete walls and CGI sheet roofing in Assam - use of traditional technology

Rat-trap bond wall and filler slab roof used in BRC construction of Bihar - cost savings of 20 - 24 % without compromising on the quality and aesthetics of the building

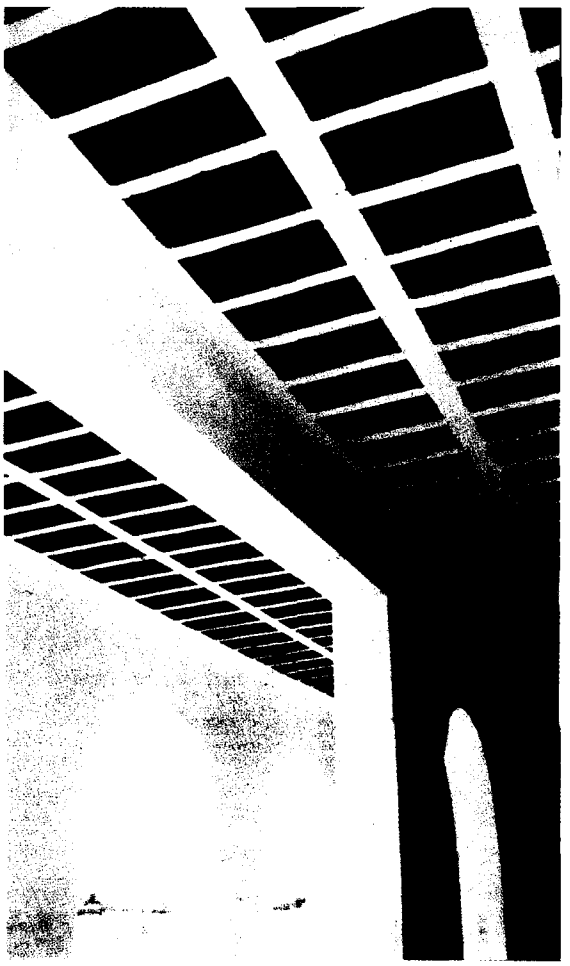
Use of local material

The use of locally available materials is being encouraged as a means of cost reduction. Stones are being used in stone intensive areas of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh, replacing Reinforced Concrete Cement (RCC) which is more expensive. In Himachal Pradesh, mud is being used for construction in Lahaul and Spiti, stone and wood in Kullu, dry stones in Chamba and bricks in Sirmour. Schools with bamboocrete walls (a bamboo based technology used mainly for walls) in place of brick walls and Corrugated Galvanised Iron (CGI) sheet roofing in place of RCC have been constructed in Assam.

Cost-effective construction technologies

Growing use of cost-effective technologies has been another significant achievement under DPEP. The initial apprehensions in adopting these technologies have been overcome. While Bihar is using cost-effective technologies on a large scale, Haryana, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal are constructing prototypes with such technologies for future upscaling. Efforts at cost reduction through use of cost effective technologies can also be seen in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa and Tamil Nadu. With continuous support and exposure being provided at the national level, it is only a matter of time before large scale constructions are taken up with such technologies. This will be one of the most important contributions of DPEP, having a bearing on all future constructions in rural areas.

Arched foundation in stones as an effort towards cost-effectiveness, Andhra Pradesh



School construction in Karnataka - use of cost-effective Filler Slab roof

Other innovations

Assam and Gujarat have developed a comprehensive repairs management system. This involves a survey of repair requirements, an accurate estimation of costs for these, prioritisation, implementation and monitoring including pre and post repairs photographs.

Gujarat has also developed a computerised project management system. This, apart from being a very effective monitoring tool, helps in reducing wastage of labour and materials (and thereby cost) through proper planning. This tool can be modified for use in similar projects with large scale construction.

Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have carried out extensive resource mapping exercises aimed at identifying the various kinds of materials, technologies and skills available in the State. These reports will be very useful for all future planning.

All the seven Phase I states have had their constructions evaluated by external technical agencies. The findings in all states were similar – reasonably good quality materials and workmanship.

The follow-up of the DPEP costruction experience needs to be as follows:

- The new child friendly designs developed need to be widely disseminated to influence future primary school designs.
- A range of initiatives have been taken under DPEP to ensure cost effectiveness in construction. These need to be consolidated and disseminated to other agencies responsible for delivering school infrastructure.

4 FORGING COMMUNITY LINKS

BACKGROUND

Traditionally, in India, schooling has always had strong links with the community. However, over the years, especially during the colonial period, this linkage gradually weakened, as the schools became government controlled. It was in this context that the National Policy on Education 1986 suggested ".... giving pre-eminence to people's involvement, including association of non-governmental agencies and voluntary effort..."while attempting any reform of the system of planning and management of education. However, this aspect of community involvement remained largely unattended under the formal education system.

In recognition of the importance of community involvement, the role of the community, under DPEP, has been considered quite central in the entire effort at universalisation of primary education. The schools and the community are seen as having a basic and organic linkage that needs to be nurtured through a range of programme activities and supported by decisions for decentralised educational management with a role for community organisations.

One set of programme activities have focused on community mobilisation and awareness generation on issues like enrolment of children, especially girls, role of community in the effective functioning of the school and so on. Strategies used in the different states include enrolment drives, campaigns using cultural/folk arts troupes, puppet shows, *pad yatras* and rallies, meetings of women's groups, *shishu melas*, *ma-beti melas*, Meena campaigns, publicity during village fairs and tribal markets. A variety of publicity material in the form of posters, leaflets, songs, scripts for plays, audio and video cassettes for use during such campaigns have been developed. Apart from increasing community awareness on issues of universal quality primary education, mobilisation activities have also helped to secure involvement of the community for educational processes .

The major thrust of DPEP activities has, however, been on active community participation in the programme activities as well as for school support and improvement to eventually instill a feeling of ownership.

While the orgnisations through which DPEP attempts to encourage active involvement of the community are the VECs , Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Mother Teacher Associations (MTA), the scope of participation extends to and involves the entire community. VECs have been formed in almost every village in the DPEP districts. In Andhra Pradesh, VECs have now been replaced by statutory School Education Committees. MTAs and PTAs are being formed and supported in some other states like Bihar., Himachal Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh. VECs also have close linkages with the existing village level organisations like *mahila mandals*, youth clubs, cultural groups, etc.

PRIs have been vested with autonomy, power and authority over the primary education sector in many states through state legislations. Now most DPEP states are strengthening the linkages between community organisations like VECs and the village level PRIs.

Many DPEP states have also stressed on greater involvement of women either as part of organisations like VECs or through women's collectives and local women activists. Many of these efforts have focused on promotion of girls' education.

To ensure effective participation of these community organisations regular training programmes are being undertaken for VEC members and other community representatives like Panchayat Raj, PTA and MTA members. The content of the VEC training programmes are designed to prepare VECs to perform their due role in educational processes. An effort is usually made to support specific 'do-able' activities with which the community can get directly involved.

Nature of community involvement

The VEC members meet regularly, at least once a month to discuss the educational situation in the village and the functioning of the primary school, alternative school and ECE centre. VECs and other community organisations have been delegated specific powers, functions and resources under DPEP.

The community in general and VECs, PTAs, MTAs have got very actively involved in activities such as micro-planning and house-to-house surveys, maintenance of village education and retention registers, enrolment drives, organisation of school events, construction of classrooms, school buildings, toilets etc., integrating disabled children in formal schools, enrolling out of school children, management of alternative schools and early childhood education centres, contributing to the maintenance and beautification of the school buildings, preparing learning corners in classrooms etc. However, the extent and effectiveness of the involvement of VEC members varies greatly between states and districts.

The various aspects of community involvement have been elaborated as:

- micro-planning
- civil works
- school improvement and school support
- other innovations

Micro-planning

In most states micro-planning is being conducted with the active involvement of VEC members and other villagers. Their involvement in micro-planning has been in gathering educational and socio-economic information through household surveys, school mapping exercises, identifying local specific needs and priorities and preparation of village specific education plans.

The micro-planning exercises are empowering mechanisms for communities in local decision making and in enabling a clearer understanding of the educational needs and demands of both school going and out of school children.

Micro-planning in **Bihar** is an elaborate exercise carried out in many stages. In the first stage, environment building is undertaken through wall writings, street plays, meetings of villagers etc. Formation of VECs through selection/election of members also takes place in this phase. During this process village level motivators (*preraks*) are identified. The *preraks* undergo a three-days training. They work intensively to ensure participation of the whole village in the collection of information and organising discussions at the village level to analyse the data collected. The process of involvement of villagers is very intensive and representation of all strata of the village is ensured and their views given due weightage. In the third stage, village school registers are prepared and a forward looking village education plan is prepared by the villagers supported by the *preraks*. During this stage, the original VECs are reconstituted to include individuals who evince greater interest. The VEC constitution gives predominant representation to SC/ST members and women.

Getting to know their village. A village mapping exercise in progress .... Uttar Pradesh

In **Madhya Pradesh** a *Lok Sampark Abhiyan* (LSA) was conducted in 1996 and a *Mahila Sampark Abhiyan* (MSA) in 1998 which combined elements of community mobilisation, creation of a detailed and reliable database and preparation of *panchayat* level education plans. The LSA (1996) which was conducted through panchayat members, literacy volunteers and teachers brought out the large number of schoolless habitations which resulted in the conceptualisation of the Education Guarantee Scheme.

Civil Works

A major proportion (63 per cent) of the construction programme has been/is going to be implemented through community participation under DPEP. Apart from managing and supervising construction, the VECs have contributed in a variety of ways including land, labour and even money (*may refer Section III for details*).

School improvement and school support

This has been the most important area of activity for the VECs. The role of VECs in school improvement has included utilisation of the annual school grant of Rs. 2000, beautification of the school environment, enrichment of learning corners in classrooms and even provision of local teachers to conduct classes in the absence of the regular teachers.

In Bihar, the VECs ensured that the schools did not close down at the time of the teachers' strike, which continued for a few months. Local village youth and VEC members took up the responsibility of teaching the children during that period.

The VECs in **Bihar** are involved in a variety of activities. Bihar has a system of **adopting the worst school** in a cluster. Specific activities are undertaken to enhance enrolment, retention and the achievement levels of the adopted school with the active **involvement of the VEC**. The process of adoption includes the following steps:

- the VEC is informed about a date for a special meeting to discuss the problems of the adopted school
- at this meeting, the overall improvement of the school is discussed and plans are made for the low-enrolment pockets and generally for enhancing children's retention
- substitute teachers are arranged by the VEC in schools with shortage of teachers
- awareness programmes are organised, involving teachers and the VEC, for motivating villagers to send children to school
- cultural programmes/festivals are organised at the adopted school : *bal melas, ma-beti mela*, Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanti etc.
- special training is provided to teachers of the adopted school
- efforts to motivate special focus groups (SFG) through special meetings of the VEC
- creation of a conducive atmosphere for learning; *Nukkad Nataks* and other cultural programmes are organised

Other innovations

The range of activities taken up by VECs, PTAs, etc., has really widened. These grassroots bodies have begun monitoring the attendance of both the children and teachers to ensure regularity of attendance.

The role of **PTAs** in **Andhra Pradesh** does not stop at enrolment drives but goes a step further to help strengthen the school system. This is done chiefly by providing additional teachers who are usually the first generation educated youth of the village. There have been examples of PTAs which have sponsored the visit of an outstanding head teacher to another PTA of a neighbouring village as a resource person.

Community and resource persons collectively identifying and prioriting issues for the village plan, Gujarat

VEC President inaugurates the Special Plantation Programme, Assam

VEC President inaugurating an alternative schooling centre

Pausegaon in Nanded district of **Maharashtra** had reported universal enrolment. For regular attendance the **MTA** has made it a practice to visit the homes of those children who are not present during the school prayer. Immediate action of this kind has certainly impacted on the families and attendance of children is beginning to show improvements. If this practice is sustained the retention rates are expected to improve.

Apart from this, VECs are taking interest in the academic functioning of the schools and the new pedagogical practices being adopted. There are instances of VEC members providing remedial classes to the weaker students. In Kerala the PTAs and MTAs were made partners in the effort to bring about change in the teaching-learning process in schools. Their support to the pedagogical renewal process proved crucial in ensuring that the reform process took root despite opposition from some quarters.

VECs in some places have taken up documentation activities for their villages including history and folklore, flora and fauna, traditional medicine, etc. This is a valuable resource that could be effectively used in classroom teaching-learning processes.

The ***Chinnara mela*** in **Karnataka**, evolved with support from the *Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti* (BGVS), aims at creating a demand for education among excluded groups in the village and providing children and community members with experience of fun and games in learning. It also promotes caste, gender and communal harmony.

The strategy grew with the experience of *Chinnara melas* conducted by the BGVS in 80 cluster villages of Mandya district in 1997-98. In 1998-99 this was expanded to the other Phase I and II districts through a series of state, district, block level *melas*-cum-training programmes. The strategy includes organisation of *melas* at a cluster village, wherein 50 cluster village children and their families play host to 50 children from adjoining villages and the guest children spend 3 to 4 days in the homes of the host children. The children are placed with the host families with support from the VECs, irrespective of the caste, gender and community to which they belong.

In the 3 to 4 day *mela* children participate in a variety of 'corner' activities. The corners include, among others – (a) treasures in and around the village (b) creativity corner (c) story building/ word games (d) mathematics can be fun (e) experiments corner (f) riddles and quiz corner. On the whole the activities create an ambience of joyful togetherness during the *mela*.

The MTAs are as active in **Kerala** as the regular PTAs. ***Grihasadas*** is a gathering of mothers. *Grihasadas* meetings take place at the household level, in different households by rotation. At these meetings mothers discuss the learning of the children, the household level support required for transacting the new primary school curriculum, the implications of children's grades, the need and ways in which the school teachers could be helped and so on.

In some places, DPEP has promoted community organisations to take up social issues as well. These bodies in many states have begun addressing issues such as alcoholism, child marriage, etc. An interesting example of the involvement of PTAs in addressing social issues is reported from Andhra Pradesh.

The **PTAs** in **Andhra Pradesh** have been successful in intervening in the practice of early marriages of girls, thereby ending an age-old tradition and ensuring that the girls get a fair and equal opportunity to complete their schooling. Some dynamic PTAs have even initiated the setting up of libraries and reading rooms.

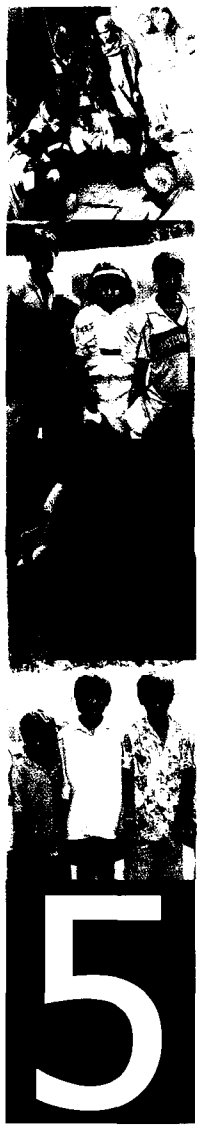
Drawing on the commitment and strength of well motivated women's groups has been a characteristic feature of DPEP Assam. Since the very early stages of implementation, women's awareness camps were held as a precursor to forming them into groups. This was followed by efforts to organise the women VEC members, again through special training programmes. Presently, village women and existing women's groups are being trained and oriented by specially empowered volunteers, on issues closely related to their lives with a focus on girls' education. Consequently, these women are getting more and more concerned with educational issues, though they continue to pursue income generation and micro credit activities, sanitation, etc.,

A women's organisation in Mayangia Cluster in Kapili Block, **Assam**, was already in existence. Three VEC members happen to be members of this women's organisation. On receiving a request from this group DPEP Assam supported the organisation of an awareness building convention by providing resource persons. This minimal input has yielded very promising results. The women got together and campaigned against the sale of liquor in three shops and the men have been motivated to ply rickshaws as an alternative means of livelihood. At present, no liquor is on sale. Eight Self Help Groups have been formed out of which seven have collected money. The women also conducted a sanitation campaign, developed the approach road to the school and *nam ghar* (place of worship/religious discourse). The most significant outcome has been the formation of **Mothers' Groups**, which visit the school thrice in a month. They check the attendance and try to prevent children from dropping out of school by visiting the homes of vulnerable children and talking to their mothers.

In Ahom Khagaria village in **Assam,** women have formed the **DPEP *Mahila Samiti*** after a convention was held. They chose to call it the DPEP Mahila Samiti on two counts – one that they got their basic orientation from DPEP and the other that they want the name of the programme to stay on even after the project is over. Here also, school visits are made in the entire cluster. Self Help Groups have been formed and the women now seek DPEP assistance/ guidance for utilisation of the money raised.

DPEP has succeeded, to a large extent, in actively involving the community in almost all areas of planning and management of the programme. However, there is still a long way to go towards realising the goal of community ownership. This would require:

- strengthening capacity building measures for community based organigations like VECs, PTA, MTAs and PRIs
- delegation of authority to appropriate people's organigations through legistative and administrative measures



5 MANAGING CHANGE

BACKGROUND

The limitations of attempting reform in the primary education sector through implementation of routine and stand alone schemes were acknowledged in the Programme of Action, 1992: "....further efforts would be made to develop district specific projects, with specific activities, clearly defined responsibilities, definite time-schedules and specific targets....the overall goal of the project would be reconstruction of primary education as a whole in selected districts instead of a piecemeal implementation of schemes...."

DPEP emerged as a holistic programme with time bound targets on a disaggregated basis. The complexity, range and scale of reforms being attempted under DPEP necessitated the adoption of innovative approaches in the area of planning and management. This is reflected in the areas of:

- adoption of a mission mode for project implementation
- tapping human resource
- decentralised planning and management
- a new, effective Educational Management Information System
- efficient supervision, monitoring and evaluation systems

On the way to planning their educational future

Mission mode for project implementation

For implementing DPEP, state societies have been constituted in each DPEP state with operational units at the district and sub-district levels. A mission mode that allows for flexibility, rather than following some pre-determined rules and procedures has been the *modus operandi* of these state societies. This has ensured timely and unhindered fund flow, advanced in six-monthly instalments to the states, districts and blocks. The prompt availability of funds at all levels has not only been a major departure from earlier programmes in this genre but has been a crucial enabling factor in effective implementation. Procedures and norms have been evolved as per need by the state societies. This has allowed the programme to harness resources, which are otherwise not easily available.

This shift from the departmental mode to the society mode of functioning has immensely supported the process of implementation.

Tapping human resource

DPEP recognised that expertise available within the elementary education system was insufficient to address the wide ranging challenges of programme implementation. The flexibility available to the management has facilitated the identification and involvement of individuals with expertise, talent and high motivation levels both as a part of the project team and also as resource persons. Resource persons have been contributing primarily as trainers and as members of advisory groups.

Resource groups have been constituted for pedagogy, alternative schooling, construction programmes, special focus groups and other areas at national, state, district, block and even cluster and village levels. Constitution of resource groups for various activities at different levels is a management device which allows a team of people to take collective decisions in a participatory manner. It has also encouraged dialogue, debate and provided forums for generating new ideas. Capacity building measures have been undertaken to enable individuals involved directly in programme implementation and those providing support to make effective contributions for achievement of programme objectives. These include training and orientation programmes, exposure visits and attachments to institutions, organisations and projects.

Such large scale tapping of talent and motivation within government is unprecendented.

Assam has been working for girls' education through resource persons and volunteers, who go through a rigorous selection and orientation process. Once they are prepared for their specific tasks, they fan out in the villages to work with the community on issues of primary education for girls. DPEP invests in their **training** and bears expenses of their travel, daily allowance and honorarium. In return they work as an extended unit of the programme without being a formal part of its organisational structure. This arrangement has made it possible to work among the community with greater intensity and more focus, which would not have otherwise been possible.

Professional involvement of NGOs has been another important feature of the planning and management process under DPEP. Organisations such as Bodh Shiksha Samity (Rajasthan), BGVS, Centre for Learning Resources (Maharashtra), Digantar (Rajasthan), Ekalavya (Madhya Pradesh), M.V. Foundation (Andhra Pradesh), PRIA (Delhi), Rishi Valley School (Andhra Pradesh), Sandhan (Rajasthan) and many more are involved in the programme in a variety of ways. Local and smaller NGOs are also associated with the programme and are contributing in various capacities.

Some states have engaged NGOs for designing and initiating innovative programmes. A case in point is the alternative schooling programme in Madhya Pradesh, which was initiated in partnership with Digantar. The expertise of NGOs has been utilised extensively in the area of pedagogical renewal – training of teachers and textbook

and material development – in almost all the DPEP states. Through the provision of grants-in-aid there are examples of NGOs running alternative schooling centres in Gujarat and executing community mobilisation strategies in Uttar Pradesh. Besides this, representatives of NGOs are included as members of various resource groups, advisory and decision making bodies at the state and district level. Their involvement is being increasingly sought for interventions in specialised areas such as IED, micro-planning, etc.

Apex institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Management, Indian Statistical Institute (Calcutta), Institute of Social and Economic Change (Bangalore), Housing and Urban Development Corporation , National Council of Cement and Building Materials, Central Building Research Institute (Roorkee), Indian Institute of Education (Pune) have been regularly consulted or entrusted with specific tasks under the programme.

Decentralised planning and management

Focus on district planning has also brought in the need for capacity building at the grassroots level for planning, which DPEP has taken up. The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi, National Society for Promotion of Development Administration, Research and Training, Mussoorie as well as the Technical Support Group, Educational Consultants India Limited (Ed.CIL), New Delhi, have organised training programmes for district teams. As the process of planning itself has been evolving over the years, the training inputs undergo regular review and modification.

Although plans are finalised at the district level, they respond to the needs identified by the blocks, clusters and habitations. For example, in Andhra Pradesh, habitation based education plans are made which are incorporated in the *mandal* education plans after regular interaction with Mandal Resource Persons (MRP) and Mandal Education Officers (MEO), which in turn feed into the district annual work plans.

An interesting development has been the adoption of micro-planning for preparation of village and school plans.There has been a steady improvement in the quality of the processes involved in developing not only the perspective plans but also in preparing the Annual Work Plans and Budget. This has worked both as a motivation and identification device. Micro-planning has helped in generating imense community interest in primary education. It has also facilitated identification of educational needs of the villages and the local resources available leading to preparation of actionable village education plans. Another benefit has been the renewed focus of programme implementation personnel on issues like community management of schooling and consolidation of efforts for UPE in small geographical units like clusters or panchayats based on the information generated through micro-planning.

In **Tamil Nadu** detailed **school level plans** have been prepared in the Phase-I and Phase-II districts. Cluster level plans are being formulated for four cluster resource centres in the Phase I districts. In Phase II districts three clusters have been identified for the same. Virali Malai block of Pudukkottai district has been chosen for making block level plans. These cluster level and block level plans will be considered while formulating annual plans for the next year.

The introduction of the new curriculum/textbooks in **Kerala** meant a complete overhaul of the entire primary school scenario. This required the teacher and everybody else to view the child with a lot more understanding than before. It was in this context that a **participative school planning** exercise was taken up between February and March 1998.

A School Support Group was formed for each school. The SSG consisted of members of PTA, the VEC, interested NGOs in the locality, retired teachers and others. The SSG was initially put through school visioning exercises. In the wake of the new curriculum the community raised questions about the nature of the new school. Gradually, the ingredients of Kerala's 'dream school' emerged.

The SSG then went on to explore the hindrances, which stood in the way of realising this 'dream'. Possible strategies for addressing the issues were explored. Who would do what? What could be done under the District Primary Education Programme? The strategies, which emerged, were then converted into specific activities, phased, sequenced and the cost implications worked out. This was how the perspective plans for 'total school improvement' emerged in every DPEP-primary school in Kerala.

The school plans developed in each school were consolidated at the *gram panchayat*, block and finally at the district level. What needs to be done over the next year was carefully culled out and this formed the foundation on which the Annual Work Plan and Budget for the year 1998-99 was subsequently developed.

Efforts are being made to ensure a closer interface with Panchayati Raj Institutions in planning and management processes. Functionaries of the PRIs are important members of structures like the VEC, the District Project Implementation Committee and so on. The extent of decentralisation varies across states.
There is emerging evidence that the acceptance of a decentralised and flexible management system is increasing.

A new Educational Management Information System

EMIS has enabled the programme to capture details of schools with respect to grade-age-gender-social group wise enrolment, grade repetition, infrastructure and teacher profile. A software, the District Information System for Education (DISE), was developed specially for this purpose. DISE saw the installation and working of a computerised, functional educational data system at the district level.

For the first time, it is now possible to calculate dropout, repetition and retention rates and thereby ascertain the internal efficiency at the level of schools, clusters, blocks and district. The information is now available at regular intervals.

To ensure the quality of data collected through DISE and also to improve veracity of information generated therefrom, a 5 per cent sample of the data for 1997-98 was **cross-checked** in seven states. This job was carried out by an external agency. The sample check confirmed that, by and large, the EMIS data reflects the correct position. However, upon discussion of the findings in a workshop the most important signal emerging out of the post enumeration survey was the need to improve the training of the head teachers who provide the information and updating of school records and registers.

As DISE collects data on a variety of parameters like availability of facilities and equipment in the schools, teachers' profile and enrolment, useful insights are available. This has proved useful for better management of the school system.

Latur district in **Maharashtra** carried out an **analysis of single teacher schools** and enrolments in such schools and has shared the same with the *Zilla Parishad*, an elected body. Based on the information, deployment of teachers was consequently rationalised in Latur.

It has also been possible to take up issues of inequity especially with respect to gender through the improved data system.

Detailed **analysis of the data available from the EMIS** has been undertaken at the national level to facilitate focused planning for the un-reached girls. By way of sharing the analysis and building capacities at the state and district levels, the central theme of the Seventh meeting of Gender co-ordinators was *Analysis and Usage of MIS Data for Programme Implementation and Planning*, which provided an opportunity to Gender and MIS Co-ordinators to

- carry out analysis of EMIS reports for identification of planning issues
- develop district plans using EMIS data/ analysis, other sources of data and feedback from the field, through group work

Through this effort it was possible to focus on:

- schools with pre-primary facility (PPF)
- availability of PPF in school *vis-a- vis* enrolment of children < 6 years
- schools without PPF *vis-a-vis* enrolment of children < 6 years
- block wise enrolment of girls
- class wise enrolment of SC, ST and OBC girls
- block wise GER and NER for total, SC, ST girls
- girls receiving textbooks
- repeaters by class
- pre-service training of female teachers
- proportion of female teachers and head teachers
- no female teacher schools : all schools and OBB schools
- female teachers in tribal schools
- analysis of teacher availability
- block and cluster specific analysis

Subsequently this was followed up by State level training using EMIS data, supported by visits to schools and villages with low enrolment of girls. As an outcome Assam, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Orissa have strategised for focused interventions to improve girls' participation.

Efficient supervision, monitoring and evaluation systems

DPEP mounts regular Joint Supervision Missions to the States to assess progress in the context of project goals and identify areas of weakness. Information on the progress of the implementation of the Programme components is gathered and analysed 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.

Initially supervision missions used to visit states every quarter. Two of the quarterly missions in a year used to be Joint Supervision Missions (JSM) and the other two Internal Supervision Missions (ISM). While ISMs are conducted by the Government of India, JSMs are manned jointly by the funding agencies – World Bank, Department for Internal Development (DFID), European Commission (EC), United National Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Netherlands government – and Government of India. Joint Supervision Missions (later renamed as Joint Review Missions) continue to be held biannually. ISMs are now launched by the government as targeted missions for specific purposes, as and when required.

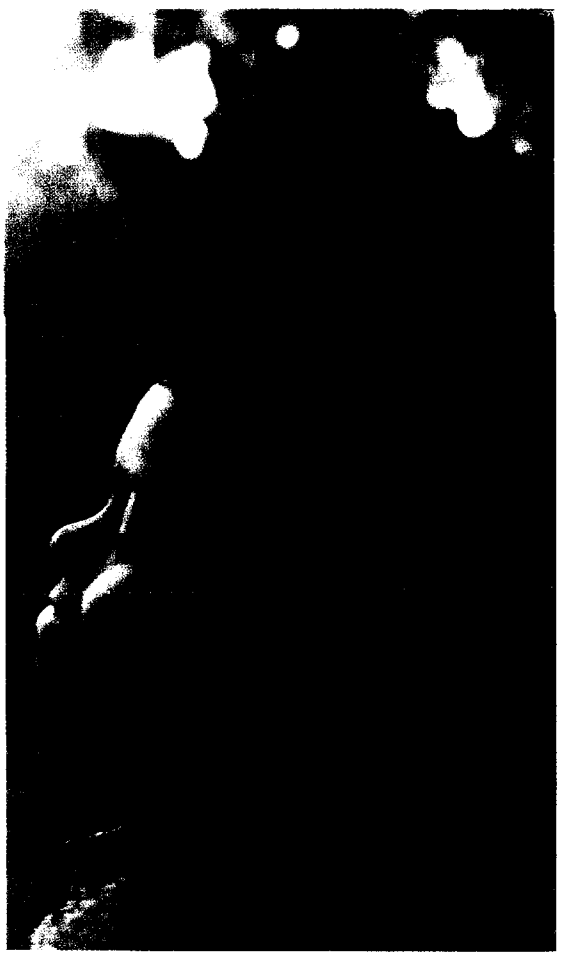
DPEP is the first externally aided programme in the country, which introduced a joint supervision mechanism involving both the funding agencies and the government. During the supervision missions, members visit states and districts, assess progress of the programme and prepare an aide-memoire. Some of the Joint Review Missions (JRM) perform the functions of an in-depth Review Mission.

States also have their own mechanisms for supervising the programme. These include monthly review meetings, visits by SPO functionaries to the districts and EMIS and PMIS reports. Internally the Department of Education, Government of India, also monitors the programme through various mechanisms including quarterly Project Management Information System (PMIS) and visits to the states by officers of the department. Many states, on their own, have initiated Internal Supervision Missions and have made efforts to institutionalise monitoring and evaluation efforts and build capacities for continuing these efforts.

The State Resource Group in **Kerala**, consisting of teachers, trainers, DIET faculty, under careful guidance, developed skills for specifying evaluation topics, deciding the nature of the study, identifying the broad evaluation/ study questions/areas, identifying the source of information, identifying the indicators, developing the framework of the study, deciding on methodology, scope, sample, developing tools: questionnaires, observation schedules, discussion papers and so on.

The SRG developed the design and conducted the **Internal Academic Missions**, an important element of the pedagogical renewal process in Kerala. Evaluation/studies became an integral part of every activity. Soon district and even block level teams began to take up evaluation/ studies.

The quality of the various evaluation/studies which were conducted by DPEP-Kerala can be attributed to two factors. One of the reasons was that the evaluators themselves knew about the details of what they were evaluating (unlike external experts who would have had to learn about them before undertaking the studies). The more important reason, perhaps, was that they knew that the evaluation was for their own benefit, their own self-correction, rather than for the consumption of others.



The flexibility built into the programme parameters does provide sufficient room for innovative planning and management practices and this has been exploited to a considerable extent so far. Wide networking and synergistic outcomes have been noticed.

Building a cadre of committed, motivated and skilled people at all levels would remain a challenge for the future. Decentralisation without adequate capacity building may even be counter-productive.

ABBREVIATIONS

APPEP	Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project
AS	Alternative Schooling
AWP&B	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BRC	Block Resource Centre
BEO	Block Education Officer
BEP	Bihar Education Project
BGVS	Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Samitee
CRC	Cluster Resource Centre
CGI	Corrugated Galvanised Iron
DFID	Department for International Development
DIET	District Institution of Education and Training
DISE	District Information System for Education
DLRG	District Level Resource Group
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
EC	European Commission
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
Ed.CIL	Educational Consultants India Limited
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
ERM	Evaluation Research and Monitoring
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IED	Integrated Education of the Disabled
ISM	Internal Supervision Mission
JRY	Jawahar Rozgar Yojana
JSM	Joint Supervision Mission
MEO	Mandal Education Officer
MRP	Mandal Resource Person
MLL	Minimum Levels of Learning
MTA	Mother Teacher Association
MS	Mahila Samakhya
NBT	National Book Trust
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NIEPA	National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
NSDART	National Society for Promotion of Development Administration, Research and Training
NPE	National Policy on Education
NGO	Non-government Organisation
POA	Plan of Action
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RCC	Reinforced Cement Concrete
SC	Scheduled Caste
SFG	Special focus group
SMC	School Management Committee
SPO	State Project Office
SSG	School Support Group
ST	Scheduled Tribe
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SRG	State Resource Group
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
UEE	Universalisation of Elementary Education
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPBEP	Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project
VEC	Village Education Committee

GLOSSARY

Aamaar Kendra	*Our Centre* – AS centre, Assam
Anganwadi Centre	A village-level centre for the 0-6 years old under the Integrated Child Development Services
Angana Vidyalaya	*School in the Courtyard* – AS Centre for adolescent girls, Bihar
Apna Vidyalaya	*Our School* – AS centre, Bihar
Bal Mela	Children's fair
Bal Shala	AS centre, Uttar Pradesh
Bhuva	Religious leader of the Rabari community in Gujarat
Bonda	Salted snack
Chabutras	Open air low level platforms typically around trees serving as a meeting spot in villages
Char areas	Riverine areas (Assam)
Gol	Religious leader of the Thakur community in Gujarat
Gram Panchayat	Village level body for local self government
Grihasadas	Household meetings of groups of women in Kerala
Guruji	Teacher
Hamara	Our
Janpad Panchayat	District level institution of local self government
Jila Panchayat	District level body for local self government
Jonab	Muslim religious teacher
Kala Jatha/Kala Jatra	Performance by cultural troupe
Kendra	Centre
Lok Sampark Abhiyan	Community contact programme
Ma-beti Mela	Mother-daughter fair
Mahila Mela	Women's fair
Mahila Mandal	Women's group
Mahila Samiti	Women's group
Maktab/Madarassa	Centre of religious learning (Islam)
Mandal	Sub-district administrative structure in Andhra Pradesh
Mata Samitee	Mothers' Group
Maulavi	Muslim religious teacher
Mela	Fair
Mysore Pak	A sweet originally from Mysore in Karnataka
Nam Ghar	A Vaishnavite place of worship/religious discourse (Assam)
Nukkad Natak	Street play
Praveshotsav	Festival of admission
Prerak	Motivator
Prehar Patshala	Evening School – AS centre, Uttar Pradesh
Prerna Centre	AS centre, Maharashtra
Saheli	*Friend* – the teacher in the Angana Vidyalaya in Bihar
Sarkari	Government
Sahayika	One who takes care of the pre-schools at the *Bal Shalas*, Uttar Pradesh
Shala Sahayak	Instructor/teacher at the back to school centres, Gujarat
Shishu mela	Children's fair
Shishu Swayam Sevi School	AS centre in Rajasthan
Shishu Shiksha Kendra	Children's Education Centre – AS centre, West Bengal
Shikshak Mela	Teachers' fair
Shiksha Ghar	AS centre, Uttar Pradesh
Sooji balls	Sweet Snack
Taluk leader	Leaders of the Thakur community, Gujarat
Thakur	A community in Gujarat
Vade	A salted snack