

DPEP EIGHTH JOINT REVIEW MISSION
26 October - 6 November 1998

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ANDHRA PRADESH STATE REPORT

unserved locations has had an immediate impact on enrolment. 41,650 additional students have enrolled in 833 such schools. 456 new schools are planned for 1998/99. Awareness creation and the extensive involvement of communities in the preparation of village education plans have decisively contributed to an increase in the demand for education. Retention rates have yet to improve significantly.

6. School construction has - after a slow start - picked up due to a new system of contracting site consultants and providing incentives for quality control of works. This, in conjunction with special designs and technologies, has resulted in very high standards. Low-cost designs have enabled considerable savings. High standards and cost savings have led to the adoption of DPEP designs and technologies by other departments and private persons. All pending school construction is planned to be completed by April, 1999.

7. Interventions to increase girls' education, particularly of the 9+ age range, consist primarily of the opening of ECE centres at primary schools. During 1996/97 and 1997/98, 1619 girls were relieved of sibling care through ECE provision. The ongoing textbook revisions include the removal of gender biases. Contracting girl child development officers at mandal levels has not been possible in the majority of cases. One alternative suggested by the SPO is to employ women's groups and village volunteers in awareness creation instead of mandal officers. Another possibility being considered in Vizianagaram is to relax qualification requirements for MGCDOs. These alternatives should be tried out on a pilot basis as soon as possible. At state level, a comprehensive strategy to increase retention of girls has yet to be developed.

8. ECE provision is well elaborated, including the development of materials, instructor courses, and community participation through mothers' associations. 944 ECE centres have been opened during 1996/97 and 1997/98, 1000 additional centres are planned for 1998/99. Attempts to streamline DPEP ECE centres and ICDS anganwadis require a closer cooperation, particularly if long term sustainability is to be achieved through ICDS financing of the ECE centres.

9. While some districts have developed promising initiatives to improve tribal education, including the development of bi-lingual teaching-learning materials, and of special teacher training courses. A comprehensive strategy which can integrate the various activities at the state level is being evolved. A state level workshop has recently been held for this purpose.

10. Strategies to integrate working children into formal schooling are being piloted in some mandals with the cooperation of NGOs and Unicef. It is important to expand such schemes rapidly. Cooperation and coordination with other ongoing schemes, such as NFE, or the National Child Labour Project, regarding concepts, learning materials, teacher training, and

awareness creation, is important for the development of an integrated approach.

11. IED is being piloted in three districts, addressing identification of children with special needs, awareness creation for teachers and parents, teacher training, the provision of medical aid, etc., in an integrated fashion. The focus lies on providing access and achieving literacy of children with special needs. Cost-effectiveness needs to be considered in scaling up the pilot project.

Quality and Equivalence

12. Improving quality of primary education is an important objective of DPEP. Quality of education is linked to learning as is evident from the *World Declaration on Education for All* "*Whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development - for an individual or for society - depends ultimately on whether people actually learn as a result of those opportunities*". Since the training of teachers has just started it is too early to expect any significant gains in learning achievements. However, systems to monitor achievement, for example preparation of pupil's profiles and teachers' performance records, have yet to be put in place.

13. The in-service training programmes are participatory and interactive in approach. Little effort is, however, being made to recognise that also teachers acquire skills differently. As of now no effort has yet been made to develop resource materials which could help teachers to meet different learning abilities and cultural backgrounds of learners. The team did not find any evidence of this issue being addressed even during the training of teachers.

14. The situation with regards to opening of alternative schools varies from district to district. 393 alternative school have been opened during 1998/99, while 182 schools are to be completed by December 1998. Community participation programmes are in progress to enlist their support and take the responsibility of setting up alternative schools. It has been decided to offer Grades I and II only in alternative schools. After Grade II students will be admitted to the formal schools.

15. To ensure that education provided in alternative schools is equivalent to formal education, the decision has been taken to follow the same curriculum in both categories of schools. The volunteer teachers will receive 10 days training which will be followed by visits of MEOs and MRPs for on-site support. To enrol and retain all needy children the programme of opening of Alternative Schools will have to be accelerated.

16. The distance learning programme is still at a conceptual state. A workshop to develop content briefs which could later be used for audio and video programmes has been completed. About 20 videos have been selected which could be used for teacher training. The team was informed that

arrangements are being made to supply dish antennas and computers to DIETs.

Programme Management

17. General progress has been good in Andhra Pradesh. There has been a substantial spill-over of budget allocation from 1997/98. The total allocation for the current financial year is Rs 5505.49 lakhs. Up to the end of September 1998, only Rs 1283.59 lakhs have been spent (this is less than 30% of the annual budget). Measures to speed up implementation and expenditures include the new construction system, instruction to the APCs to purchase equipment and furniture, as well as the finalisation of the training schedules. The recent transition between two State Project Directors has inevitably caused delays in implementation.

18. Most of the posts at state and district levels have been filled. The accountant post at the DPO in Vizianagaram, however, needs to be filled immediately. More frequent visits by SPO staff to the districts would provide better feed back to the SPO on programme implementation. Systems are by and large in place, or in the process of being operationalised (see section on information base).

19. EC meetings have not been held as regularly as foreseen. The GC needs to be formally reconstituted with the appointment of members whose nomination was limited to two years. The functioning of both bodies is important, since the cooperation between different departments and convergence of services is being facilitated at this level.

20. Community involvement in planning and management at village level is one of the strongest points of DPEP implementation in Andhra Pradesh. This is evident from the elaboration of village education plans as the basis for mandal and district plans, as well as impressive voluntary community contributions in form of cash, kind and land donations for school improvements. The approx. 27000 School Committees (see below) have received one day orientation. Further training will be necessary, and an action plan for training should be elaborated. DPEP can thereby build on earlier experiences in training village education committees in PRA techniques.

INSTITUTIONALISING CAPACITY IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

21. Instead of setting up a separate SIEMAT, a Planning and Management Wing will be established in the SCERT. Six posts are foreseen, and permission for the recruitment of staff on contract basis has been obtained. Advertisements have been launched in the local press, but so far the reponse has not been satisfactory.

22. School Committees (SCs) have been institutionalised through the "Andhra Pradesh School Education (Community Participation) Act" of July,

1998. The act replaced village education committees by School Committees, reducing the membership from 15 to five parent/members. The School Committees are empowered to handle all funds for school improvement and management, with the exception of teacher salaries. The transition of VECs to School Committees might cause some confusion, where VECs still handle construction, and are responsible for associated bank accounts. Some attention is necessary to facilitate the handing over of funds from VECs to School Committees, in order not to jeopardise previous successes in community mobilisation through potential loss of credibility. At the same time, mechanisms need to be created to tap the potential of interested community members who are not eligible for School Committee membership, in order not to lose the enthusiasm and momentum created in the planning phase.

23. The interface of School Committees and Panchayati Raj institutions, particularly the panchayat education committee, needs to be clarified for all stakeholders.

DECENTRALISATION OF DECISION MAKING

24. Appraisal of AWPBs has been partly delegated from the DPEP' Bureau to the state level. State level staff and resource persons have been trained for this purpose. Final assessment of the AWPBs was, however, done by resource persons designated by the DPEP Bureau.

25. Decentralisation of decision making from the state to the district level is partly shown by the fact that districts have gone ahead with the development and implementation of programme interventions, which have not yet been conceptualised by the state level. This is particularly evident regarding tribal education. Furthermore, lessons learned in programme planning and implementation will be transferred to the 14 new districts, to which DPEP will be extended, by attaching them to the five "old" DPEP districts which would have a "mentor" function.

26. Decentralisation of decision making at sub-district level has been shown through the institutionalisation of School Committees, as described above.

27. Convergence of services from educational and non-educational departments has been initiated in a range of programme components, such as ECE, tribal education, and IED at the district level. More attention to systematic cooperation and coordination needs to be given regarding working children, ICDS, and alternative schooling, and education of tribal children. The mission found some evidence that even after three months of operation of a tribal community school (Maabadi School) teaching-learning materials are yet to be supplied. Long-term agreements and arrangements between different departments and agencies will greatly contribute to achieving sustainability of DPEP interventions.

28. Decentralisation and convergence of services are also attempted in the *Janma bhoomi* programme. *Janma bhoomi* (Motherland) requires officials from all levels to work on a quarterly basis with villages and mandals, assessing the financial and non-financial needs of the communities in a participatory manner. *Janma bhoomi* rounds lead to an increased accountability of government administration vis a vis communities. Vizianagaram has, in the same spirit, developed an additional programme, *Spandana*, which stands for response. Both programmes address education as a priority of the provision of public services.

INFORMATION BASE

29. The EMIS has not yet become fully functional. The delay was caused because Andhra Pradesh wanted to modify the EMIS provided by NIEPA to suit their administrative structure. DISE is now functional and data as well as trend analysis will be available by December, 1998. A new version of DISE has been installed in all the five APDPEP districts but they have yet to be connected to the SPO. APDPEP has recently collected data from three of the five DPEP districts. Warangal and Nellore have yet to submit the data to SPO. In order to meet the state data requirement a Statistical Comprehensive System (SCS) has now been developed which meets the state requirement. A third system of data collection is being developed to collect information on alternative schools, ECE centres and child labour schools. This was evident from the data collection forms. District staff now need to be trained in the use of the new systems. The state is aware of the urgency for fixing the problem. In the absence of a fully functional EMIS, planning is mainly done by analysing the data manually collected by the office of the District Education Officer.

30. The PMIS is now operational. Attention needs to be given to use these data for planning at all levels.

TEACHER EDUCATION AND TEACHER SUPPORT

31. A 5 day in-service teacher training course has been developed by the State Resource Group (SRG) which focuses on developing the capacity of teachers to (i) recognise the innate abilities of the child (ii) create a natural learning environment in which children could learn without fear and (iii) contextualise learning by relating it to the immediate environment. Visits to classrooms indicated that teachers have started using the new approach with children. There were displays of students' and teachers' work on the classroom walls. There is, however, a need to systematically evaluate the impact of in-service training on children's learning and to use the findings of the study to fine-tune course materials. The content as well as its delivery of training programmes need evaluation. In order to sustain the new pedagogy teachers need to be trained in pupil assessment which is consistent with the new pedagogy.

32. The first round of training courses for all teachers, which were built on the strength of APPEP and focused on three principles stated above, will be completed by the end of December 1998. 17393 teachers out of 35593 have received training so far. The SRG has already started planning the second round of training which would focus on (i) effective utilisation of grade III English and Telugu Readers and grade I mathematics workbook; (ii) effective use of OBB mathematics kit; and (iii) effective use of the tele-school programme and radio broadcasts. Training of SRG has been planned in these new areas which will be conducted by suitable institutions such as the Regional Institute of English, Bangalore, for grade III English. After the training, the SRG will develop training manual for the trainers. Teachers' handbooks were not available during the first round of courses. Providing such books will help to further minimise transmission losses. The next round of training for all teachers is proposed to be conducted during the summer vacation so that the MRPs and DIET staff are free after the vacation to visit schools and provide on-site support to teachers.

33. The main responsibility of in-service training for teachers is that of MEOs, MRPs and DIET staff. Because of the heavy workload, some districts are finding it difficult to recruit MRPs. Approx.100 posts of a total of 510 MRPs are thus vacant. This is decelerating the delivery of training programmes. The faculty member of the DIETs act as tutors during the training of teachers when the training is conducted in DIETS. DIETs are regularly conducting different types of training courses and orientation programmes. Many vacancies still exist in DIETS which need to be filled as soon as possible enabling DIETS to contribute fully to the implementation of APDPEP programme. In Vizianagram DIET alone the posts of Principal and seven lecturers are lying vacant. Other lecturers are over burdened with work. This may adversely affect the quality of training programmes being offered by DIETS.

34. To provide continuous professional support to teachers, teachers' centres (TCs) established under APPEP are being revitalised by giving three day training to TC Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries. The MEOs, MRPs, DIET staff and members of SRG are visiting schools to provide on-site support to teachers and to obtain feed back on implementation of training contents. Monitoring proformce have been developed to obtain feedback on courses which are proposed to be used in the revision of content and delivery of courses. There is a need to develop supplementary materials in the form of activity booklets for teachers. These materials should be developed in such a wat that they could be used by teachers with children of different learning abilities and cultural backgrounds. There is already a lot of material available in Andhra Pradesh prepared by teachers in TC meetings during APPEP which could be put together.

35. Because of APPEP experience, there is capacity within Andhra Pradesh both at the state and district level to plan and implement in-service training courses through a cascade model. More attention is, however, required to

ensure that the quality of training is not compromised during scaling up at any level of the cascade. In order to achieve the ownership of training inputs, MRPs and primary teachers should be involved in developing training programmes. In the content of training courses emphasis should be laid on integrating the needs of focus groups.

SUSTAINABILITY

36. At the beginning of the third year of implementation of DPEP in AP, there are various indications how APDPEP experiences and achievements benefit the reform of primary education sector in Andhra Pradesh:

- During the summer vacation transparent and performance-based rationalisation and redeployment of teachers was carried out and completed.
- The extension of APDPEP to another 14 districts under the Andhra Pradesh Economic Restructuring Programme will further contribute to reforming the primary education system as a whole.
- The revision of textbooks which was carried out during APPEP is being continued to revise textbooks in all subjects and for the entire primary sector.
- The principles of DPEP pedagogy are being fed into the pre-service training by the DIET lecturers who are actively involved in both pre-service and in-service teacher training. Moreover, the pre-service course is being extended to two years from 1999 onwards, in order to accommodate the new aspects. The association of DIET lecturers has sent a request to the SPO to train each and every DIET lecturer on all aspects of APDPEP.
- The new posts of MRPs have been created, and the posts of teachers relinquished by them filled. The team learned that MRPs will continue to perform their current functions even after the end of the project.
- The state wide establishment of approx. 1.3 lakhs school committees to achieve community involvement in education on the line of DPEP is yet another milestone towards achieving APDPEP experience for the reform of the entire sector.

THE NEXT STEPS

37. The progress made by APDPEP in the areas of civil works, particularly quality, design, and technology of construction, community participation, and ECE is commendable. However, in order to take the project forward

strategically, it is recommended that:

- The focus group programmes for girls, SC/ST, children with special needs, and out-of-school children be conceptualised and implemented in a strategic manner to achieve greater impact. Different activities under each intervention are at present isolated. There is a need to plan these activities in an integrated fashion. Pilot projects should be evaluated and the feasibility of their scaling up studied. Furthermore, the sensitisation of focus group issues should be integrated into all teacher training modules.
- The transition from VECs to School Committees be carefully monitored such that the motivation generated by VECs does not get diminished. VECs consisted of 15 members from the village community, while School Committees consist of 4 parents, whose children study in the school, and the headteacher. Mechanisms need to be created to continue to tap the potential of interested community members who are not eligible for School Committee membership, in order not to lose the enthusiasm and momentum created in the planning phase. A comprehensive training on all aspects of APDPEP should be organised for the newly established School Committees on the line of VEC training.
- The impact evaluation of content and delivery of training programmes be undertaken and used in fine-tuning the training programmes, for teachers, ECE instructors, MRPs, Alternative school teachers, School Committees. Handbooks for teachers should be also produced along with trainer's modules to minimise transmission losses. Vacancies in the DIETs and of primary teachers be filled up as soon as possible.

Implementation of the Recommendations of the Seventh Joint Supervision Mission

Recommendation	Action Taken
Strategy for school-based improvement plans be developed	The institutional mechanisms for the development of school improvement plans have been put in place through the establishment of Scs. The legislation in this regard has been passed only in July, 1998. SCs have been constituted in August/September, 1998, and received only one day orientation. Training for SCs is planned for December/January. Thus, it is too early to expect any school based improvement plans. However, the districts are aware of the necessity of getting such plans developed.
Classroom based implementation strategy be elaborated	MRPs, DIET staff and MEOs are overburdened because of vacancies and training activities. The time available for school visits is therefore limited. There is evidence that a comprehensive strategy for classroom based implementation is being evolved through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organising teacher training during summer vacation; • developing classroom observation schedules ; • undertaking transmission loss studies; • developing qualitative monitoring system.
Timetable for the implementation of evaluation activities with concentration on capacity building at sub-district level be developed	Schedule for the implementation of evaluation activities has been prepared. Workshops for capacity building at the district level have been organised, but sub-district activities have not yet been planned.

ASSAM STATE REPORT

DPEP 8th JOINT REVIEW MISSION
26 October — 6 November 1998
ASSAM STATE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. The team consisting of Ranjana Srivastava (GOI) and Venita Kaul (WB) visited Assam from October 27 to November 1 , 1998 . During this period , the team interacted with state and district officials associated with DPEP and visited Dhubri and Goalpara DPEP I &II districts respectively , for field observations .
2. The main focus of the mission was to review key strategies and processes and assess progress towards realization of programme objectives. In this context the mission also followed up on the recommendations of the 6th review mission carried out in September 1997.
3. The team met Mr.Dinesh Burman, Secretary Education, GOA, Mr PK Tiwari, State Project Director and other members of the task force including, Director, SCERT , Director, Textbook Bureau, Joint Director Elementary Education, Director Mahila Samakhya and representative of State Institute of Education. In addition, the mission interacted with the staff of the SPO and of the district project offices of four districts viz. Dhubri, Morigaon , Karbi Anglong (DPEP I) and Barapeta (DPEPI). The wrap session was held on November 1, 1998 under the chairmanship of Mr. P. Dutta, Joint Secretary, Elementary and Higher Education ,GOA. The mission would like to acknowledge with thanks and records its appreciation of the courtesy and cooperation extended by the state and district teams during its visit .

PROGRESS OF DPEP TOWARDS ITS OBJECTIVES

Access, Retention and Equity

4. The DPEP in Assam is evidently making some progress in its efforts towards expanding access to and improving quality of primary education in the project districts. The impact of these efforts is more visible in terms of programme processes in the Phase I districts which have seen a longer period of implementation. While the Phase II districts including Karbi Anglong are still in the initial stage of implementation, their strategies and processes clearly reflect a positive impact of the experiences gained under DPEP- I
5. The overall progress towards realization of programme objectives reflects a positive trend, although some concerns remain. As per the information provided to the mission, enrolment trends indicate a marked increase over the base year of the project. The overall GER shows a consistent increase from 79.1% in 1995-96 to 108.4 % in 1997-98 although inter- district variations remain. However, the enrolment growth rate

particularly in DPEP-I districts has slowed down during the past year, apparently due to irregular implementation of the mid- day meal scheme and segregation of the data related to the underage children. While enrolments have increased, the low rates of retention of children in school continues to remain an area of concern. The incidence of repetition is also high, with about one fifth of the children enrolled repeating grades. In certain cases repetition rate is as high as 90% .The maximum repetition is witnessed in grade-I wherein, in Dhubri alone, about one half and in Morigaon and Darrang about one third of those enrolled repeat the grade. Possible reasons for this could include enrolment of underage children and irregular attendance. The DPEP efforts in initiating and expanding Early Childhood Education through Mukulikas is an appreciable effort in addressing this concern. The recent decision of the GOA to provide ECE in all primary schools of the state is thus another positive step in this direction. In terms of impact, the overall achievement levels in primary grades in Language and Mathematics, as indicated in the Mid Term assessment, indicate inter- district variations with only Darrang district demonstrating a consistent improvement over the baseline assessment.

6. The efforts of the State DPEP in addressing the needs of the Special focus groups in the context of social equity have been fairly commendable. Several initiatives have been taken for each of the identified focus groups i.e. girls, tribals including tea tribes and the char area inhabitants. The initiatives include community mobilization efforts through involvement of VECs and Women's groups, Environment Building strategies and advocacy campaigns, for example *kalajathas*, *Meena campaigns*, nature campaigns, etc; provision of NFE, Maqtabas and ECE; and adaptation of textbooks and handbooks in tribal languages. The Mahila Samata Society , active in four DPEP districts, is also involved in activities related to demand generation, ensuring regular hours of teaching, provision of mobile libraries (*jhola pustakalaya*) and establishment of NFE centres. Research studies instituted recently under DPEP are expected to provide more information in the next few months regarding the impact of these interventions. However, the initiatives reviewed do indicate the need for adopting a more holistic and integrated perspective for special focus groups, using an area intensive approach towards planning and implementation, in the remaining years of the project. In this context, the intention of the SPO to start alternative schools in school less habitations and in the urban sector for working children in a flexible mode, is a welcome step but would require care in terms of making these contextually appropriate from the point of view of curriculum, materials etc.

7. The needs of children with disabilities have been addressed through some special provisions in civil construction activities, which is a positive feature but much more intensive efforts would be needed in terms of both advocacy and infrastructural provisions to ensure their participation in school education. To this end, an initiative has been already taken by SPO to appoint a state programme officer, a SRG and DRG have been formed and a survey is in progress in one block in each district.

8. A very crucial aspect in the context of access, retention and quality is the provision of adequate infrastructure in the absence of which the environment building efforts can become even counterproductive. In Assam the school buildings and classrooms in the districts visited were really a matter of concern. In this context the DPEP initiatives in school repair and construction are very much required on a priority basis. While the progress in this area was a little slow due to vacancies in some districts of junior engineers lying vacant the pace of construction activities has now gained momentum and needs to be maintained. In DPEP 2 the focus is not on new construction but on school repair and evidence of work done in the districts visited appears to be very satisfactory. Some initiatives are also being taken in exploring alternative low-cost construction technologies.

Quality and Equivalence

9. The planning for pedagogical renewal does reflect a shift from a simplistic 'joyful' learning approach to a more holistic, learning centered, whole school based approach based on a vision outlined of an active, child-centred classroom. The effort to address processes related to quality in a comprehensive way is evident in the various efforts made. These include ensuring that the sub-district level structures are in place, orientation of all concerned personnel in the revised pedagogy, improved teacher training practices, preparation of teachers' handbooks to supplement existing textbooks while new textbooks are under preparation, provision of para teachers to address problem of adverse teacher pupil ratio, involvement of NFE and ECE instructors in taking the first and last period in schools to ensure punctuality and regularity in school functioning and provision of facilities for better monitoring and on-site support at district and sub-district levels. Setting up of learning corners in classrooms, provision of library books to schools, compilation of folklore, folk songs etc as supplementary reading material are also some initiatives being introduced towards quality improvement. Under Distance Education Programme (DEP), a programme officer has been appointed and some initial activities undertaken, including development of self instructional materials at the state level and its trialling in Darrang district. However, the wide potential of DEP for quality improvement is yet to be fully explored for which guidance from the national level would help in terms of perspective planning.

10. In terms of both NFE and AS, the issue of equivalence with the formal schooling to ensure quality and standards, continues to remain an area that requires to be addressed with greater rigour in the context of both field experiences and field realities. Overall, the efforts towards quality improvement and pedagogical renewal do reflect a comprehensive and focussed approach which could be still further enriched by addressing the concept of child-centred approach not so much in terms of specific practices/activities but more in terms of a more updated and generic framework for

classroom planning, derived from the basic principles involved in how children learn.

Programme Management

11. The implementation of the planned activities for 1998-99 have been delayed due to pre occupation with the appointment of the project personnel viz. BRCCs and CRCCs through a lengthy procedure during the initial part of the year coupled with disturbances caused by recent floods. In addition, the frequent shifting of the State Project Director, District Commissioner and District Programme Officers have also contributed to slowing down of progress in programme implementation and fund utilization for approved activities during the current year. However, of late, some steps have been initiated to accelerate the progress of programme implementation. The State Project Director is now expected to continue in position for at least another two years. The State has recently taken a decision to appoint full time District Project Coordinators in all districts for which interviews are scheduled in November. As of now, the State Project Office and District Project Offices including those of DPEP-II districts are fully functional with staff in most districts being in position and trained in planning and management of their respective components through national and state support. Karbi Anglong district has made special arrangements for Hamren Subdivision, which is geographically isolated, by setting up an independent sub office staffed with four consultants for planning and monitoring of programme components. With the project personnel in place and some major activities including VEC trainings, conduct of surveys, teacher trainings, ECE advocacy programmes, civil works, development of workbooks and handbooks scheduled to be completed during the remaining months of the year, the pace of programme implementation and fund utilization is expected to get substantially accelerated and the State is hopeful of realizing the financial targets for the current year. However, the state government has not yet contributed its committed share of 15 % to DPEP.

12. The project envisages a significant role and involvement of community based organizations, particularly the VECs in programme management at the village level. To this end, many activities have been initiated. VECs in DPEP-I have been reconstituted through gram sabhas. DPEP II districts have also made significant progress in formation and training of VECs in a majority of villages. The involvement of VECs is particularly notable in the case of management of NFE and ECE centres, school construction and repair, appointment of para teachers, utilization of school improvement grant and conduct of house to house surveys. There are also scattered instances of active VEC involvement in school supervision, review of attendance registers (for example in Dhubri,) voluntarily arranging of community teachers, documentation of folklore and songs, community resources etc. VEC fora have been set up at block and district levels which facilitate monitoring and supervision of VEC activity and assist in providing resource support in VEC

trainings . This approach has in some cases contributed towards activating of some weak VECs.

13. While success stories exist, enlisting full participation and sense of ownership with respect to the schools in most VECs continues to be an area of challenge, as acknowledged by the project personnel themselves. Efforts to initiate micro interventions through PRA techniques in selected districts are being undertaken in this context for which District level resource groups have been formed and trained. This is likely to be further upscaled. The overall approach to eliciting VEC participation and involvement in school management is likely to yield better results if the responsibility for expected outcomes are evolved through a more participatory approach rather than through assigning of tasks and functions uniformly in a top- down manner. In this context, the concept of micro planning needs to be demystified for a clearer understanding of its objectives and benefits by all concerned. The various approaches identified under this, such as house-to-house surveys, PRA approach and 'micro planning' require to be integrated to identify district specific and area/ village and context specific plans and strategies.

INSTITUTIONALISING CAPACITY IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

14. The progress towards institutionalizing capacity in planning and management has been rather slow. The State had taken a decision to set up an independent SIEMT at Guwahati almost a year ago. However, the modalities and status are yet to be finalized with the GOA, which may need to be expedited, since this would be essential for developing and strengthening resource capacity in the state in the field of planning and management. While the SPO has taken some initiative in studying the Kerala proposal and is hopeful of initiating the selection process for appointment of personnel by March 1999, it is important that the State develop its own perspective and approach.

15. With a view to build capacity and bring about effective convergence and coordination, the DPEP has invited participation at the various levels through formation of a task force and resource groups at the State level which involve representation from departments other than education also. Resource groups have been set up at various levels and VECs formed at the district, block and cluster level to facilitate a participatory and decentralised approach.

DECENTRALISATION OF DECISION MAKING

16. The Assam experience in AWP&B appraisal indicates the need to develop a resource pool in the state with guidance and support from the national organizations, whose expertise can be drawn upon for external appraisal. Although the state has made an appreciable effort in associating and orienting some members of the state task force in the appraisal of the AWP&Bs for 1998-99, the actual appraisal at the district level appeared to

be more of an in-house exercise conducted by the programme officers of the SPO, which is not likely to serve the intended purpose of an objective assessment.

17. To facilitate the process of decentralized decision making and programme management below the level of the state, the state has formed VECs in all revenue villages with VEC forums constituted at cluster, block and district levels. In addition, the state has also set up resource groups and centres with coordinators at block and cluster levels and constituted a resource group at the district level with participation of the DIET faculty, under the chairmanship of Principal, DIET.

18. While decision making related to broad areas of interventions such as training design and materials, alternative schooling, NFE etc. appear to be taken more at the SPO level, in association with the district personnel, decisions related to implementation are largely with the district and sub-district structures. However, field observations and interactions with various project functionaries indicate the need to make the process even more participatory at all levels so as to help them develop a vision and internalize the philosophy of the interventions better, as also to facilitate a sense of ownership among the VECs .

TEACHER TRAINING AND TEACHER SUPPORT

19. Through DPEP, the state has evidently come a long way from a single shot, lecture based mode of training to a concept of classroom based, holistic training approach. This is a significant achievement particularly since the revised strategy has evolved through a formative process of objective based need assessment and mid-course review of training content and methodology. While previously, training was offered in joyful learning approach and in MLLs and a combination of the two, currently three kinds of training are conducted-whole school approach, content based approach and workshop for TLMs. The methodology for 'whole school approach' training , which was previously through discussion mode is now more 'hands on ' with demonstration of lessons in simulated situations. The teachers find this approach more useful.

20. However, observations of classrooms and interaction with teachers still indicate a gap between training and practice. Although some changes are visible in teaching practices, a better understanding of appropriate use of TLM, learning corners, activity method etc. may still be necessary to internalise the principles of the child-centered approach. This could be addressed by including demonstration and practice in actual classroom situations with children with a stress on classroom organization and management. Familiarizing teachers with the more generic classroom indicators of a child- centered approach, with opportunities to individually and

collectively reflect on these, may also help teachers adapt what is learnt in training to their own classroom situations in a better way.

21. Exposing teachers to three different kinds of trainings reflects the emphasis the state lays on continuous training. However, there may be a need to ensure continuity and interlinkages not only between the three kinds of training but also of these with the BRC /CRC meetings and visits which could provide opportunities for continuous, on-site support and guidance. In this context, a more intensive training of resource persons in academic monitoring and supervision would go a long way in strengthening the capacities of teachers and ensuring quality in the classroom.

THE INFORMATION BASE

22. A mechanism for ensuring regular and reliable data and information base has been developed through the creation and utilization of the Educational Management Information System (EMIS) along with attempts to generate village and school based information through household surveys and micro planning exercises. Data capturing formats for ECE and village registers have also been developed for recording information on enrolled and out of school children. With household surveys being completed and EMIS reports and information on indicators being generated on an annual basis, the micro level data base is expected to expand shortly. As of now, EMIS reports and information on indicators for 1997-98 have been generated for all districts and data collection for 1998-99 is underway, which is expected to be made available by the end of November this year. The available micro level data can be effectively utilized for planning more context specific interventions. Although data sharing exercises have been initiated by the SPO with computer programmers of all districts, it will be useful to orient programme officers of all functional areas at the state and district levels too in analysis, interpretation and utilization of available data and indicators. This would enable a more meaningful and holistic approach towards identifying area specific issues and strategies for creating better learning conditions and outcomes, rather than investing in sporadic inputs.

23. Action research is taking roots in the state. Trainings have been initiated and areas identified. Five studies have also been instituted to evaluate the impact of DPEP interventions in the state and these are expected to be completed by December, 1998.

MAINSTREAMING

24. From the point of view of mainstreaming and sustaining of DPEP interventions, linkages with SCERT and DIETs have been renewed of late, although these require still further strengthening. The faculty of SCERT and DIETs are closely involved with the training activities under DPEP as members of the SLRG and DLRG. The Principal of DIET is ex-officio the chairperson of the DLRG. A common action plan has been evolved in a

participatory mode indicating respective areas of responsibility for training, although the institutions are of the view that the coordination responsibility should be shifted to them totally. SCERT has also been responsible for development of the integrated text-cum-workbook for grade 1 and its accompanying handbook for teachers under the DPEP. As a result, the textbook is scheduled to be introduced in the entire state from the next academic session, and not only in the DPEP districts.

25. In terms of training, however, the impact of DPEP initiatives outside the DPEP fold seems limited. The BTC training of teachers carried out by the DIETS continues to be lecture dominated and has evidently incorporated very little of the new participatory approaches seen under DPEP. Since, in Assam, the BTC training is an inservice training, the DPEP innovations can lead to a much wider impact on quality of classroom practice across the districts if not the state, if the BTC curriculum is reviewed and recast on similar lines.

26. It would be advisable for DPEP to work with close involvement of SCERT and DIETS, a process which has already been initiated. But for effective collaboration and utilization of these resource institutions, they need to be strengthened and made fully functional. At present, most DIETs are inadequately staffed and in some cases do not even have principals in position. This would require to be attended to urgently. Some decision in this regard has already been taken by the state. DPEP has also proposed reinforcement workshops and exposure visits for DIET faculty of non- DPEP districts. With the DIETs envisaged as district resource centres, in the context of sustainability of DPEP innovations, possibilities can also be explored of developing one of the more functional DIETS as a model by reconceptualising its role in terms of DPEP interventions and experiences and building in its linkages with the newly created sub- district level structures.

THE NEXT STEPS

27. A review of the progress of DPEP in Assam since inception clearly indicates a close link between the availability and continuity of personnel in core positions and pace of implementation. The programme received a setback with frequent transfers of personnel and is now again gaining momentum. In order to maintain this the JRM recommends that GOA should continue the state project director and other personnel at district and block levels for a reasonable period of at least the next two years.

28. The current year's plans, which have been reduced to annual budgets, continue to be structured around inputs and activities instead of addressing DPEP objectives in a holistic and area intensive mode. In view of this concern the JRM recommends that the planning process in the remaining years of the project should focus on inter linking of strategies across different functional areas in the context of specific outputs and

outcomes, based on varying learning conditions with due emphasis on utilization of existing data and information bases, including review and impact assessment studies

29. Close collaboration with existing state institutions would be required to be maintained and strengthened with a view to build state and district level capacities and sustain the gains from DPEP. While the state will be expected to make these institutions fully functional in terms of staffing and infrastructure, the JRM recommends that a systematic plan should be formulated to build institutional capacity in DIETs and SCERT under the DPEP which could include interventions in terms of training, exposure to good practices in the field for the faculty and adoption of a more functional DIET with a view to help develop it into a demonstration model as a district resource centre.

ACTION TAKEN ON DPEP IN-DEPTH REVIEW MISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION TAKEN
1. SPD strategic plan continue for at least two years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem continues. Present SPD retained after GOI intervention.
2. A strategic plan should be devised jointly by DPEP Assam and GOA for mainstreaming the DPEP interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkages with SCERT and DIETs are being strengthened. • A State Task Force has been constituted with participation of senior officials of education department and other departments related to education which is expected to meet on a monthly basis.
3. A comprehensive objective oriented action plan should be developed to support, strengthen and diversify community involvement, with special reference to women empowerment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VECs have been formed in all DPEP districts and training of VECs has been initiated on the basis of a training module. • VEC forum have been constituted representing VEC presidents at cluster, block and district levels. Women empowerment has been addressed by enrolling women AS members of VECs, formation of Mahila Jagram Samiti, constitution of Gender Resource Group at block level. appointment of Shiksha Sevikas in 10 villages with low literacy levels and appointment of women as ECE/ NFE instructors.
4. A more comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment system needs to be worked out ensuring active participation of district and sub-district level stake holders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At state level progress is being monitored through meetings of DPC and District Programme Officer at state level on 10th of every month and of DPC with Programme Officers and BRC coordinators at district level also on a monthly basis. • Impact of the programme is assessed through feedback received from BRCs on a check-list, and through VEC forums.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All levels of personnel are required to visit at least 10 schools in their respective BRCs on a checklist, and through VEC forums.
<p>5. To facilitate continuity of holistic pedagogical renewal process efficient coordination among various stakeholders and resource group must be ensured and pool of resource people and institutions expanded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Programme Officers have been appointed for teacher training. BLRG and CLRG constituted at sub-district levels in DPEP 1 & 2 states. • Training in whole school approach has been initiated and modules prepared for orientation of all levels of stakeholders in this approach. • Integrated text cum workbook for Grade 1 and teachers handbooks for Grade 3 and 4 are in process of being finalised and introduced in the entire state.

BIHAR STATE REPORT

DPEP EIGHTH JOINT REVIEW MISSION
26 October - 6 November 1998
BIHAR STATE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. The 8th Joint Review Mission (JRM) visited Bihar between 26 and 31 October 1998. The Mission comprised E. Unterhalter (DFID), Nihal Chand Goel (GoI), Pieter A. van Stuijvenberg (EU), and N.K. Jangira (WB). The team visited Patna and held discussions with State educational authorities, State Project Director, and a wide range of programme officers in the SLO, the directors of SCERT and SIEMAT, and the District Programme Coordinators (DPC) and other programme officers of Muzaffarpur, Purnea, East Singhbhum and Bhagalpur. Field visits were undertaken in Dumka and Ranchi, where the team met with District Deputy Commissioners, DPCs and other officers of the DLOs, staff of DIETs, BRCs and CRCs, members of a number of Village Education Committees (VEC), Mata Samitis, members of Mahila Samakhya (MS), Utpreraks, parents, teachers, teacher trainers and pupils. Wrap up meetings to discuss the Mission's main findings and recommendations were held on 31 October 1998 with the Chief Secretary, and with the Minister of State for Education.

2. The team members wish to place on record their sincere appreciation of the arrangements made and the co-operation and hospitality extended by the Government of Bihar (GOB), SLO, DLOs and all others who contributed to the Mission's visit.

PROGRESS OF DPEP TOWARDS ITS OBJECTIVES

Improved access, attendance, retention and equity

Teaching capacity

3. The available teaching capacity in Bihar remains a matter of great concern. Current shortages are estimated at some 17,000 teachers in the 17 DPEP districts (including new schools to be opened next year). Selection is well advanced for 7,950 teachers in the DPEP districts through Bihar's Public Services Commission. This falls far short of the number required. Faster methods for the recruitment of teachers need to be devised, so that the DPEP programme is not held back by the absence of teachers. The deployment of teachers also appears out of step with DPEP equity concerns regarding access, quality and retention for the focus groups. For example, teachers with no knowledge of e.g. ST languages are posted in these areas. Moreover, teacher absenteeism remains a problem as e.g. government service often takes teachers out of the classroom. Retention of teachers may be improved by posting teachers within their home block or by employing para-teachers.

Focus group pupils

4. The project is in a very early stage, and although it is drawing on the work conducted under BEP, many of the major components of the project are new undertakings, or are still to be put in place. Thus while there is evidence of considerable thought, and planning having been undertaken to improve access, attendance and retention for the focus groups, it is too early to say that significant progress has been made. Information on GER and NER for 1998 for many of the districts is available, but a complete state level picture is still to be compiled. The Mission commends the achievements of the Mahila Samakhya (MS) component of the programme, not only for taking up education of 9+ girls, but also for linking this to a broad curriculum, and working towards successful pupils induction into the mainstream system.

Alternative Schooling

5. A programme involving 350 out of the target of 890 Alternative Schools (AS) was launched in October 1998, with further launch meetings planned for November 14th 1998. This is encouraging, the more so as plans have been made for training and the provision of support through an academic supervisory cum resource group. The Mission recommends that the GOB and SLO review the scope for positioning para-teachers in schools in the light of successful Shiksha Karmi schools in Rajasthan and AS strategies in Madhya Pradesh. With the diversity of contexts in Bihar the GOB may wish to explore and pilot a range of approaches to alternative schooling

Civil works

6. An imaginative and thoughtful programme was undertaken during BEP, which brought together thinking about design, construction, pedagogy, access and retention. In the coming year school construction will commence, while the construction of BRCs will be completed. The lessons learned from the work under BEP have been well assimilated and the sites visited, including the newly completed BRC at Kurrua (Dumka), were of high quality. The participation of teachers and other members of village communities, generally through the donation of labour, is very commendable, as is the use of low cost technologies.

Media activities

7. A media coordinator is in position at the SLO. Audio, video, print, photography, wall writing and theatre have been used in the mobilisation of villages and the training of teachers. Thought has been given to the multilingual context of Bihar, particularly with regard to SC and ST areas. The utilisation of a wide range of media gives great vitality to the programme.

Quality of classroom practice, learning achievements, and equivalence

Teaching/learning process

8. Thought has been given to activity-based learning, and this has been put into practice in the first rounds of teacher training at BRCs, or at alternative sites where BRCs have not been constructed. Thought has also been given to the issue of teacher reflection on practice and follow up training. However, in addition, the SLO needs to consider the very diverse needs of the children in the focus groups (across differences of gender, Ability, language, tribal/ non-tribal etc), and the need for teacher training to take this on board.

Curriculum and textbook development:

9. Regional workshops in curriculum and textbook development have been held and a questionnaire-based study of community views regarding the curriculum has thus been conducted. A good range of text books has been prepared in language and mathematics by the SLO together with SCERT. Books have also been prepared for AS and ECE, taking MS advice on board. Gender biases have been avoided in the illustrations. The history, language and culture of ST people have been given due consideration. The GOB has accepted these books for use in all schools in the project districts. However, the delays relating to the bidding procedure for printing textbooks for 1999 is a matter of considerable concern. The Mission recommends that no effort be spared to ensure that textbooks are made available in schools by the beginning of the school year commencing in January. Failure to deliver textbooks for the beginning of term will have a powerful demotivating effect and may undercut much of the effort that has gone into the mobilisation of VECs and training of teachers.

Assessment of learning achievements

10. A range of changes in assessment procedures are being explored by SCERT. The team working on monitoring, research, and evaluation have developed a programme for assessment, in consultation with teachers' associations, that is intended to motivate pupils and parents and involve teachers. This is an improvement on the existing scheme for examinations. It is intended that the detailed findings from assessment will help in further teacher training and curriculum development. An initiative in Dumka for regular two monthly assessments of children in AS in order to help sustain their progress towards mainstream schools seems worth replication in other districts.

Resource groups

11. While a number of State resource groups are in place, hardly any

district resource groups have been constituted. The same holds for the block and cluster level. The development of resource groups at all levels is an important objective for the next year and the Mission recommends that this process be given high priority.

Equivalence

12. A pilot on AS equivalence is underway and AS textbooks have been developed. In the light of the important aim for children in AS to be able to enter the mainstream, the Mission recommends that a range of appropriate strategies for this be explored expeditiously. Older children in AS might not need to complete a full term of studies to reach the level of children in Class

Further investigative research regarding this issue could be undertaken.

Programme Management

Management capacity

13. DPEP's management capacity in Bihar is constrained by staffing shortages at virtually every layer of the programme. Relatively best endowed are the SLO and DLOs, though even in the SLO 9 out of the 28 sanctioned key positions are still vacant. The situation at SIEMAT and the DIETs is not conducive to programme implementation. At SIEMAT, in Patna, only one Additional Director is in position, whereas none of the 14 DIETs (in the 17 DPEP districts) is really operational. As a result, major academic inputs into the state's educational system, notably the provision of training to teachers and resource persons, are not forthcoming, thus hindering the implementation of the programme.

Institutional cooperation

14. The programme officers of the SLO dealing with textbook and curriculum development, and research and evaluation are working well with the assistance of SRGs and SCERT, but their work cannot progress beyond a certain level without considerable institutional development taking place in the DIETs and SIEMAT. Prevailing institutional weaknesses and the lack of interlinkages at all levels are likely to hamper the sustainability of the programme.

Supervision and Review

15. To strengthen management and supervision over programme implementation, the SLO organises regular Mission Task Force meetings. The JRM considers this a welcome initiative. Regarding external review and support, communication with DPEP Bureau is considered very fruitful by

SLO, and the recommendations of the 7th JRM had been considered in preparing for the 8th JRM (see Annex). In addition, the SLO initiated an internal supervision mission (ISM) in all 17 project districts during June - October 1998. The Mission commends the SLO for this initiative, which was also considered beneficial by the DLOs. The need for future ISMs to concentrate not only on regulation and procedures was discussed and suggestions made considering how future ISMs might address institutional and sectoral linkages. The GC and EC meets regularly, and a useful process of GC teams visiting districts has been launched.

PMIS/EMIS

See section 5.

Procurement and disbursements

16. Training of SLO and DLO staff in procurement procedures was organised at Patna. However, interviews with a number of district officers by JRM and ISM indicated that technical procedures relating to procurement and financial procedures are not fully understood at all levels. Moreover, procurement regulations for DLOs may need to be relaxed in view of efficiency considerations. The Mission recommends:

- positioning of the senior accounts officer in SLO and filling of remaining positions in the DLOs, including support staff, by November 30, 1998;
- a review of all existing procurement regulations and the preparation of a clearly set out manual;
- training of the new staff in SLO and DLO as well as BRC coordinators in procurement and disbursement by December 31, 1998;
- taking steps to ensure timely adjustment of advances and reconciliation of Bank accounts and cash books at all levels.

Expenditures and disbursements remain very low, but with the positioning of key staff in DLOs, BRCs and CRCs, these are expected to pick up in the next six months.

INSTITUTIONALISATION OF CAPACITY IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Preparation of the decentralised planning process

17. This is still in an infant stage, taking into account that no Panchayati Raj institutions exist in Bihar and that only some 15-25% of the planned number of 32,000 VECs had been constituted by the date of the JRM visit. Moreover, those that have been constituted require recurrent training in order to strengthen their role in planning and management.

Appraisal of Annual Work Plan & Budget (AWP&B)

18. A very useful process of preparing the AWP&B involving districts was undertaken which has had major spin-off effects with regard to team building between DLOs and SLO.

Status and activities of SIEMAT

19. The continued failure to recruit staff for SIEMAT, which was also noted by the 7th JSM, is a major cause for concern. The Mission urges the positioning of staff and the framing of an institutional development plan for SIEMAT to be in place by next JRM (March/April 1999).

Training activities

20. Participation was noted in training programmes by LBSNAA focussing on APW&B preparation, including data analysis, as well as project planning and preparation. SIEMAT has carried out training for District Superintendents of Education to orient them to DPEP. Training in planning and management for VECs and Mata Samitis has been envisaged for all districts.

DECENTRALISATION OF DECISION MAKING

21. Micro-level planning, community mobilisation and VEC formation
Some very useful work in micro-level planning has been undertaken thus far. Yet, this has had to give way to intensive efforts towards VEC formation. The Mission recommends that micro-planning be extensively used after December 31st in order to regain, and maintain, momentum and thus cement community mobilisation efforts. The large numbers of village people that met with the Mission indicated a high level of community interest in DPEP and a strong commitment to universal education, notably in areas with high illiteracy and considerable poverty. The need to meet these legitimate aspirations and to respect the wishes of communities is a challenge for the GOB in its Partnership with DPEP. The Mission also suggests that if quantitative targets are not met, this should not be considered a major setback for DPEP implementation, provided the meticulously planned process of VEC formation is adhered to. In the end, sufficient attention should be paid to support newly formed VECs, so as to ensure proper institutionalisation, possibly by using micro-planning, recurrent training and other strategies for institutional development.

Capacity building

22. While training has been carried out on a range of different fronts to support the development of the programme components, including the expansion of VECs and the development of teachers, it is still too early to ascertain how training impacts on practice. The Mission recommends that by

the next JRM 90% of BRC level training and 80% of CRC training be completed and that training officers at state and district level work with the state research and evaluation team to develop an approach to monitor how training is feeding back into practice.

THE INFORMATION BASE

PMIS/EMIS

23. Computers have been acquired for this and training has been given to teachers in filling out the forms. Data was collected for EMIS in all blocks in the 17 districts in 1998 and was subsequently computerised. This will effectively form the baseline for the project. The system for data collection on attendance will be operational by April 1999 and a full picture will only be available by December 1999. Many districts are using the 1998 EMIS data in relation to projections and project development. The Mission was informed that the system for using the PMIS and FMIS has been only recently put into place, so that concrete reports and detailed analyses using this format may be expected before the next JRM. DLOs, however, questioned the periodicity of reporting requirements, as well as some duplication of work that seems part of the data collection process. Some ameliorative actions have been proposed in section 2 (cf. procurement and disbursement).

Evaluation and Research

24. An ambitious programme has been planned at state level related to questions that have arisen during implementation of the programme. Initial results are promising, as use is being made of a range of different research strategies, including qualitative methodologies for the study of MS.

Dissemination and use of research findings

25. Research findings from baseline studies have been disseminated to teachers through a booklet. Further work of this kind, relating to different areas of research, might be undertaken more widely throughout the project districts and beyond using of different forms of dissemination (including workshops and audiovisual media).

TEACHER TRAINING

Content

26. Attention is now being given to teacher training, not only focusing on motivation and activity-based learning, but also on curriculum content, multigrade teaching and IED. Content based training is to receive further

emphasis during the coming years.

Training process

27. Training has taken place at BRCs or at alternative sites. Once this training is completed, resource persons for CRCs are identified from each batch of teachers. CRC level training will follow up the initial BRC training. The Mission looks forward to considerable gains from this in the next six months.

Training materials

28. Modules on child psychology will be available from SCERT from November onwards. The basic training modules are being expanded in accordance with contextual parameters, like the need to take account of particular conditions for tribal people in a region. In addition, thinking is going into training modules for the sensitisation vis-à-vis children with a disability. Training relating to multigrade teaching has taken place in 3 districts and will go to scale in 1999. A workshop on how distance education can support training is planned for November, and concrete plans for using distance education at all levels, down to the cluster, have been made.

Evaluation of training

29. This is still in a preliminary stage of implementation as the first training round is yet to be completed. Nonetheless, the issues were being thoughtfully addressed at SLO, DLO and BRC levels.

Delivery structures

30. The lack of delivery through DIETs is a major problem as noted above. Additional solutions may be advisable, for example the staffing of DIETs by teachers already posted in the district with high levels of qualification. Such a scheme has been utilised in UP. BRC level training delivery appears to be working better, but is still limited in scope. Follow up and evaluation is needed in a systematic fashion for next JRM.

Integration with the regular PE structure

State commitment

31. There are no Panchayati Raj institutions functional in Bihar. Whether or not as a result of that, DPEP activities appear to be severely constrained in a number of districts by the lack of an effective administrative operationalisation of already funded national schemes to ensure school participation, like e.g. the mid-day meal scheme, Operation Blackboard etc. In addition, non-recognition of private schools through procedural delays is discouraging

children who wish to shift to the regular school system. GOB has a vital role to play in ensuring that the expectations raised by DPEP materialise within a timebound framework through the above noted schemes.

Enabling environment

32. The mobilisation of new VECs and the reconstitution of earlier (BEP) VECs have created a good atmosphere of community ownership of the project. However, care needs to be given to sustain this environment when the Utpreraks have gone home and the cultural groups are no longer at hand. Examples of moves towards sustainability could include the school's involvement in the celebration of festivals. The most important way, however, of sustaining community ownership will be when the communities see concrete results - teachers in post, materials available, and children enjoying school. While good beginnings have been made to bring this about, there are still important gaps that need urgent attention.

THE NEXT STEPS

33. All existing vacant teacher posts and additional teacher positions for the new schools in the project districts should be filled before the next academic session, commencing January 1999. Attend, as a matter of urgency, to the establishment of DIETs and SIEMAT, and the filling of remaining SLO and DLO posts. Apart from expediting the selection process that is currently on, and sanctioning new teacher posts for DPEP schools and initiating the next recruitment process very early, the GOB could consider whether it is possible to select an additional number of teachers in the current selection round.

34. Ensure that printing of textbooks will be so organised that new textbooks are in the hands of school children by January 1999.

35. SLO to work with SCERT, SIEMAT and DIETs on an institutional development strategy, identifying mutual functions, linkages and capacity building needs, in order to meet the requirements of an effective support framework which is close to the school.

36. Develop aspects of contextual thinking in the programme particularly regarding questions of diversity and differential learning in relation to training, curriculum and material development, approaches to assessment and research.

37. In view of the above, the Mission recommends that Bihar be monitored closely with regard to filling teacher vacancies, staffing of the DIETs and SIEMAT, the timely supply of textbooks and progress of expenditures.

ANNEX
Actions taken with regard to 7th JRM

	Recommendations of 7th JRM	Actions taken
1	All remaining key positions for the SLO and DLOs as per the legal agreement be filled as soon as possible, but not later than June 1998, and the SLO and DLOs be made fully operational.	The SLO and DLOs have been made fully operational and, excepting a few, all key positions were reported to have been filled.
2	The SLO continues its efforts to establish VECs, especially in new districts, and to strengthen the micro-planning process and appropriate training to foster VECs' ownership in addressing school-related issues. In doing so, the SLO may wish to also ensure that school-age population data collected through the household surveys in the micro-planning processes is being considered for the location and school construction designs and to decide on the number of teachers required.	The work of formation of VECs has gained sufficient momentum, and the SLO and DLOs hope to complete the process in all the 17 Project districts by end of January, 1999. Micro-planning will be emphasised much more after the VECs are in place.
3	The SLO and DLOs continue exploring and formulating specific strategies for focal groups (girls, SC, ST, children with learning disabilities and working children) that underpin the already initiated interventions.	Considerable thought has since been given and planning undertaken to improve access, attendance and retention for the focus groups.
4	The SLO continues strengthening the: (i) horizontal integration of the curriculum, textbook, teacher training, classroom transactions and assessment through the state and district technical resource groups already established; and (ii) vertical integration among all levels of training institutions as well as with the state and district planning teams.	(i) As regards horizontal integration, considerable work has been done (ii) Meaningful vertical integration will be possible only after the DIETs and the SIEMAT have become operational
5	The state authorities and the SLO continue pursuing with the Bihar State Textbook Corporation the process to formulate the draft bidding documents for the printing of textbooks to be acquired by DPEP III for CY99 under a national competitive bidding scheme and ensure a timely delivery of these textbooks both at the school and the market in the beginning of the next school year.	Though it took unduly long time, draft bidding documents have since been finalised. But if the textbooks are to be made available for the beginning of the next school year (January, 99), the time lost in the process would need to be compensated by speeding up the printing process.
6	The SLO and DLOs ensure appropriate and more effective convergence with other developmental funds available at the district level for the construction and maintenance of classrooms and schools.	Such convergence was evident at several places visited by the 8th JRM

GUJARAT STATE REPORT

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DPEP EIGHTH JOINT REVIEW MISSION
26 October - 6 November 1998
GUJARAT STATE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. The DPEP II State of Gujarat was visited by Dr. (Mrs) Sudesh Mukhopadhyay (GOI Nominee) and Mr. Ad Hordyk (Dutch nominee) from Oct. 26 to Oct. 31, 1998.
2. The objective of the visit was to spot-check and review the developments in Gujarat in the light of the recommendations made in the 7th JRM State reports as well as the AWPB's of the year 1998-1999. The Mission was also to report on the processes initiated and in place leading to improved outcomes as envisaged by the DPEP.
3. The team visited District Dangs, which was being visited by a JRM mission for the first time. Progress for the other two districts (Pamchmahal, Banaskantha) was reviewed with the help of the documents and presentations by the districts at the State Project Office.
4. The visit started with a meeting with members representing Education Department (GoG), SPO, GCERT, Directorate of Primary Education and other stake holders. The meeting was chaired by the SPD. State level interventions and projects were discussed in the meeting. It was followed by discussions at GCERT and visits to two (none DPEP) DIETS at Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar.
5. An extensive tour was planned to various programmes in the district Dangs. During the night halt at Bharuch the mission had a meeting with the Bharuch district functionaries including CRCs and Principal DIET to listen to their observations and perspectives about DPEP as a non DPEP district. Schools were closed in the whole state due to Diwali vacations till 6 November. Meetings in Dangs were held with the staff of the DPO, the DDEO, the DIET, NGOs, PTAs, MTAs and VECs. Representative teachers also kept the school buildings opened for the visit. The Wrap Up meeting with the SPD concluded the visit where the draft report of the visit was shared. The Government of Gujarat was represented by the Deputy Secretary (DPEP).
6. The Mission expresses its appreciation to all State functionaries who planned and facilitated this visit in terms of academic inputs and physical comforts.

PROGRESS OF DPEP TOWARDS ITS OBJECTIVES

7. The mission observed a positive sign with the State's response to the implementation of the 7th JRM recommendations (detailed report annexed). The first evidence was that of the relative stability of the SPD and adequate staffing of the structures created under DPEP and the DIETs.

8. The expenditure against budget percentage of the project has increased from 20% in 1996-97, to 57% in 1997-98, to 72% for the first six months of 1998-99. It is expected that with the construction of the schools, BRCs and GCERT the percentage for the last six months will increase the percentage for the whole year. The contributions of the State Government, have been amounting to more than the commitments of 15 % of the total budget. Pending the receipt of the funds from the DPEP bureau for the current year.

9. The State as a whole is benefiting from the focus created for primary education under DPEP, while on one hand, there is a desire to expand DPEP to at least six more most deserving districts, other districts are also benefiting from the spirit of increased access and quality improvement created by the DPEP.

10. By involving GCERT closely in the DPEP implementation, the State has set an example of networking, using existing structures as well as reaching out to non DPEP districts with the lessons learnt under DPEP.

11. Enrolment and retention rates appear to be improving but it is too early to make any evaluative comments. The mission recommends that state may develop indicators to monitor the impact of the interventions on interim basis for retention and dropouts.

12. Alternative schooling models are well thought of and action research is being generated before upscaling. The mission notes with satisfaction the efforts to address the issue of migrant children. In Dangs, educated girls/women within the community have been identified as catalysts. (N.B. It is to be noted that women in Dangs are empowered culturally and socially). These serve as the support groups for implementing bridge course for children missing schools for more than three months, communication channel to parents of frequently absent children, supporting classrooms in the absence of teachers etc. The mission recommends honorarium to these catalysts to ensure continuous involvement in the critical sectors.

13. IED is still at the initial stages. State needs to recapture lessons learnt under IEDC of the centrally sponsored scheme and accelerate interventions. Other interventions for focus groups are also at the stage of take off.

INSTITUTIONALISATION OF CAPACITY IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

14. The state has reached adequate level of staffing including the SPO, GCERT, DIETS, BRCs and CRCs. All the structures are in place. The state has decided to recruit 20 000 trained teachers (Balgurus) in October and November to fill the exiting vacancies.

15. As compared to other states the SPD has been changing too frequently. However, the present SPD has been there since last JRM.

16. In Gujarat the SPO and GCERT, are the main implementing agencies, under the responsibility of the Executive Committee, which meets every three months. The mission observed the need for role clarification for the SPD, Director GCERT and other parallel offices.

17. GCERT has rightfully acquired the crucial role of planning and implementation of capacity building activities for DIETs, BRCs and CRCs. It is a natural linkage in the state system where CRCs have been given an official status and DIETs are with the GCERT. However BRCs' official linkages are yet to be established in the non DPEP districts. It is in this context that the mission recommends a special role defining exercise with the aim to "empower" the head teachers and CRC co-ordinators. The national level structures can facilitate as catalysts for development of programmes which empower the teachers to solve the day to day problems when implementing the new curriculum. The DPEP has started a pilot with a "Visit and monthly meeting" programme in which teachers get on the job (and in school) guidance.

18. A Planning and Management cell has been planned in GCERT in lieu of SIEMAT. The picture is not clear whether the cell, with its minimal staffing, will be able to handle all the training required and to take care of AWPB and other functions related to educational management. It is recommended that state may review its decision on the parallel arrangement to SIEMAT and prepare a detailed institutional development plan for the role, function, structure and activities related to educational planning and management. These activities and interventions definitely need to be accelerated if the state is visualising expansion districts.

19. Out of the three DIETs in the DPEP, DIET at Waghai (Dangs) is a truncated DIET with few branches and pre-service training not being considered. It appears that as a policy pre-service training component exists only in fewer DIETs and even fresh recruitment of teachers has been in suspension for considerable time. The state is advised to review its policy especially for the DIET at Waghai. While recently more recruitment have been done in the DIET, it still needs revitalisation in terms of activities and impact. Opening of pre-service training course would lead to an increase of teachers for Dangs district as well as a capacity building forum for the DIET faculty itself.

20. The role specification for DIET and BRC in Dangs was not clear and activities appear to overlapping, because of the fact that the district consists of one block only. The state may like to review the situation in Dangs since over training for under staffed schools may not be desirable. The mission re-emphasises the earlier mission's recommendations to view teacher training as an integrated whole in terms of coverage, frequency and spacing.

21. The Planning and Management role of the DIET was not very clear. The mission recommends that an institutional plan of the DIET in Waghai can be undertaken: It has the potential to develop into a DIET with focus on tribal education, which is a concern not only for Dangs but also for the tribal blocks of the neighbouring districts Navsari, Surat, Bharuch and Balsar.

22. Other DIETs also need to have respective institutional development plans and assume leadership for planning and management. The mission appreciates the efforts till date and would like to emphasise the initiative oriented actions by DIETs along with the consolidation of the existing ability of implementation.

23. Support Resource Groups have been identified at all levels upto BRCs. GCERT has been instrumental in this exercise through its DIETs. This effort is appreciated. VECs have been planned as ward education committees and are likely to emerge as sustained structures even after DPEP. The capacity building inputs are yet to be fully functional though 7 JRM recommendations have been fully noted.

24. The Executive Committee meetings are being held at regular intervals. The minutes of the last few meetings indicate that the agenda covers policy matters with physical targets and interventions.

DECENTRALISATION OF DECISION MAKING

25. In the DPEP districts decision making structures from State to village level have been established and training of functionaries has (and is) taken place. It is however too early to make any evaluative comments on whether these structures will become fully functional and operational.

26. At the state level there is evidence that with the meetings of the Executive Committee, chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary Education, there is convergence between the DPEP administration and the other education offices and programmes. GCERT has been the nodal institution for pedagogical renewal for DPEP and non DPEP districts. Since DPEP interventions are directed to quality improvement of the existing system, convergence would have to be formulated in a state policy for primary education.

27. At district and sub-district level there is also evidence that convergence

takes place between the DPEP and other education and the non education departments and the Panchayati Raj institutions. However in order to make the DPEP structures sustainable further organisational development at the levels of the school, cluster, block and district level will be required.

28. At the village level convergence between the Panchayati Raj institutions, the VEC , the PTA and the MTA and the VCWC has been to ensure that key persons such as the Surpanch and the headmaster are members of the different committees. So, far no legal linkage and interface has been noticed. The state may consider procedures for statutory arrangements to enhance sustainability and accountability.

29. The empowerment of the different committees and the CRCs , BRCs etc. has been mainly felt through the extra resources (buildings, teaching material, school funds) which DPEP has made available and the training which has been organised. This will gear up the agencies and new concepts can be introduced, but change and institutional development strategies will have to be worked out , to enhance the whole school approach and local ownership.

THE INFORMATION BASE

30. Both EMIS and PMIS are made fully functional. The DISE report for the year 1997-1998 has been generated for all three districts and DISE Implementation plan for the next year is also well operationalised. Following the recommendations of the last JRM, DISE reports are being translated in Gujarati and will be shared back at sub-districts levels through booklets and planning workshops. PMIS reports per September have been generated for SPO as well as the three projects districts and submitted to MHRD.

31. During the district visit it was found that apart from errors in the data also the meaning of the data was not understood and as a result has not had any impact on improved planning and management. The establishment of EMIS is felt to be a (useful) condition to participate in the DPEP programme and (not yet) as a management tool. The mission recommends that information collected, apart from using is as data for DISE, will be analysed at the level where the data is collected and to enhance local management decisions.

32. The civil works department is developing a new application of Project Management software Suretrack which if successful could provide a useful planning and management tool for the implementation of civil works but also will make a contribution to the educational information base.

33. The research base has been strengthened at the state level, the DIET and research students level. The focus of the state level is on problems of multigrade teaching, status of ICDS centres and the problems of migratory children. New areas will include teaching-learning strategies, community

related issues, pupil achievement, in-service teaching and functioning of institutions such as VEC, VCWC, BRC, CRC and DIETs etc. The state has a research fund which allows GCERT to make a subsidy for students who undertake research in one of the focus areas. It is recommended that review studies by independent research institutions in Gujarat (e.g. Ravi J. Matthai Centre for Educational Innovation and Gujarat Institute of Development research) may be commissioned by the SPO to assess the results of work carried out and its policy implications.

TEACHER TRAINING AND TEACHER SUPPORT

34. GCERT has acquired the status of the co-ordinating agency for training for DPEP and non-DPEP districts. This has facilitated transfer of lessons learnt to non DPEP districts as well. The state has gone ahead with competency based textbooks renewal upto grade 7 as state level decision. Within DPEP, the renewal of the textbooks and accompanying teachers' material and TLM are the major interventions. Teacher training is largely oriented towards these. Evidence was observed of the multiple/multigrade teaching specifically in the district Dangs indicating the need and practice for integrated and realistic teacher support interventions. A pilot project in other DPEP districts on multigrade teaching was also reported.

35. As schools were closed due to Diwali vacations till November 6, teachers couldn't be consulted or processes within the school couldn't be observed by the mission. However discussions and visits to specially organised exhibitions on TLM did facilitate the task of the mission. The mission observes that the state is now at the point of moving towards consolidation of processes having direct impact in the classrooms. There already exists a consciousness and process of curriculum and pedagogical renewal. This capacity needs to be directed towards reducing the time frame for the interventions reaching the classrooms. The GCERT and SPO need to develop a strategy for school based change processes.

36. The mission recommends a two edged approach: (a) training component to be integrated in accordance with the specific needs of the (DPEP) districts to boost learner attendance and achievement and (b) the focus on multi-grade and multilevel teaching-learning strategies since many schools especially in difficult pockets would continue to be multiple-teaching schools. Also shortage of teachers in larger schools would necessitate this. Though GCERT and SPO have initiated steps for MGT, it may be considered for up-scaling. TSG and NCERT can facilitate this process but SPO would need to initiate action. The practice of attaching SRG members to schools is appreciated by the mission. Care has to be taken that too frequent absence of teachers for training may boomerang the intention of training.

37. Distance education component as teacher support mechanism has been planned. Teleconferencing has been reported but follow-up by GCERT and DIETs or any resource group still needs to be worked out.

38. BRCs and CRCs as teacher training support mechanism are still evolving. The states' decision for identifying appropriate persons for recruitment facilitates this process. School based support mechanism is being developed through visits and meetings. More attention will still be required for the whole school approach, especially as it relates to the change processes. It is recommended that GCERT and other support resource groups may focus on the whole school approach and accordingly build capacity of these two levels for teacher support. Follow up of the 7th JRM recommendations was noted by this mission.

SUSTAINABILITY

39. There is strong evidence that the State is employing the DPEP experiences and achievements for the benefit of the reform of the primary education system as a whole. DPEP is seen as a programme which will improve the quality of the primary education system and therefore address educational management and pedagogic reform in an integrated manner. It is therefore the wish of the state to enhance the critical (and strategic) mass of the DPEP interventions and expand to at least 6 districts and focus on block level developments.

40. Administration in primary education is a state issue and mainstreaming of DPEP interventions therefore is to be part and parcel of state policies and responsibilities. It is recommended that based on a Reflection workshop on lessons learnt from interventions such as DPEP and other programmes will lead to specific policies and strategies of how the state could strengthen its policy development and educational reform processes.

THE NEXT STEPS

41. The mission recommends that the following steps may be taken:

- The state to reconsider its decision to develop a Planning and Management cell in GCERT in lieu of SIEMAT and to commission a detailed institutional development plan. This plan will be based on the required changes in educational management at all organisational levels involved in primary education.
- The state to consider to organise a State level workshop to reflect on the lessons learnt from interventions such as DPEP and other programmes in order to strengthen its policy development, educational reform process and convergence strategy.
- The state to plan for expansion districts under the DPEP programme to strengthen its strategic mass and capacity for up-scaling.
- The state to consider to make Dangs a "special attention" district with a

focus on pedagogical renewal and educational management for tribal areas.

- The SPD to up scale its activities to develop teacher and headmaster support mechanism.

Seventh Joint Supervision Mission- Follow up of Recommendations

GUJRAT

Functional Area	Recommendations	Action Taken
Planning Process and Management	<p>1. Stability of SPD</p> <p>2. Strengthening of the Current Planning and Management Cell at GCERT</p> <p>3. Making VECs, PTAs and MTAs aware of DPEP activities and objectives</p> <p>4. Alternatives to establishing VEC for each revenue village- VEC for each school/entrusting PTA/MTA with this responsibility.</p> <p>5. Convergence with other grass root organizations such as Mahila Samakhya.</p>	<p>1. GOG has taken note of it. SPD continuing since last JSM.</p> <p>2. Staff appointed in the cell . Total staff strength is three. State level Capacity building workshop held with guidance of NMIMS, Bombay.</p> <p>3. Intensive training programmes for VECs / PTA / MTAs on the roles, responsibilities and duties have been held.</p> <p>4. Structure of WEC (Ward Education Committee) has been decided for municipality areas. The necessary orders for formation have been issued.</p> <p>5. MS workers are involved as one of the members in MTA, VEC, SRG (Gender) DRG, BRC, and CRG.</p>
Institutional Capacity Building for Sustainability	<p>6. Institutional development plan for GCERT</p> <p>7. Autonomy to DIETs</p> <p>8. Legal and administrative status of BRC and CRCs.</p> <p>9. Role clarification for BRC and CRC Coordinators.</p>	<p>6. GCERT plays a vital role in DPEP implementation. Institutional development plan yet to be initiated.</p> <p>7. In due course autonomy may be considered.</p> <p>8. CRCs have been given an Official Status even in non-DPEP districts. Official Status of BRC is still under consideration.</p> <p>9. State and District level Workshops for smoother co-ordination among education inspectors, BRC and CRC coordinators were held.</p>

	<p>10. Design Development for distance education component</p> <p>11. Construction Manual for VCWC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New system of monthly review and coordination meeting also involving BR coordinators have started. <p>10. An action plan for distance education under DPEP developed in state level workshop. Detail planning and strategies are given in the progress report submitted to 8th JSM.</p> <p>11. Construction manual for the VCWC has been prepared in Gujarati.</p>
Pedagogical Renewal	<p>12. Internalization of efforts for pedagogical renewal.</p> <p>13. Review of teaching aids renewal process.</p> <p>14. Prioritization of training needs for headmasters and appropriate sequencing and spacing.</p> <p>15. Status of the pilot project on Multigrade teaching.</p>	<p>12. Series of workshops and training programmes have been held as per pedagogical renewal plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New child-oriented and attractive textbook for Languages, EVS & Maths are developed. Teachers' participation is also encouraged. <p>13. Statelevel TLM exhibition has been organised. 78 TLMs prepared by teachers, Cluster Resource Centres & DIETs at district level have been selected. 11 best aids have been screened for scaling up through Rural Technological Institute Gandhinagar. The scripts on use of these aids has been prepared by an NGO 'SWADESH'. These TLM will be provided in all districts in Gujarat.</p> <p>A workshop on TLM - specially for DPEP Focus groups has been held.</p> <p>14. The training module for the HM has been condensed and sequenced in three phases</p> <p>15. The project is operationalised through three level core teams in 50 multigrade schools in Banaskantha. The teachers of project schools were trained for trialling new textbooks for Std. 1.</p> <p>Sharing workshop with teachers, BRC, CR coordinators and core team members was held</p>

Augmenting Infrastructure	16. Status of civil works for BRCs and GSCERT	16. Site and preliminary design are finalized. The chief architect, GOG has been involved. The preliminary design & Bid documents have been sent to GOI / EdCiL for approval.
	17. Recruitment of Balguru Teachers	17. Under "Vidya Sahayak" scheme of State Govt. selection of teachers for vacant posts had been completed. Posting process is going on. After Diwali Vacation selected candidates will be placed in respective schools.
	18. School improvement grant of Rs. 2000 and its provision and utilisation.	18. Grants released as soon as the schools reopened and guidelines for utilisation of the same has been issued to the VEC and headmaster
Special Focus Groups	<p>19. Strategy Identification for tribal education intervention.</p> <p>20. Visit to other states for relevant experiences in tribal education.</p> <p>21. Involvement of community for providing facilities for the disabled children.</p>	<p>19. All the habitations with population > 25 are provided with schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special committee on Alternative Schooling Committee has suggested four schemes, which is under implementation. • Pockets dictionaries for non-tribal teachers working in Dangs is printed. • Special incentives for primary education among special focus groups like SC / STs are also operative (free text books) in DPEP Districts. • The training modules developed in corporate tribal and gender interventions (for example training modules for VEC members). • 200 girls have been " identified in Dangs as motivators to encourage girls' enrollment . A pilot project in 32 villages will be initiated soon. • Survey for special focus groups like disabled children is planned. <p>20. Few states under DPEP-I were visited for getting the experience of tribal education and other focus areas.</p> <p>21. A conceptual workshop was organised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A coordinator from a well known NGO, Blind man association has been appointed for facilitating plan of action.

HARYANA STATE REPORT

DPEP EIGHTH JOINT REVIEW MISSION
26 OCTOBER - 6 NOVEMBER 1998
HARYANA STATE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. A team composed by Mr. Lai Advani (GOI), and Ms. Himelda Martinez (WB), visited Haryana between October 27 and October 31, 1998. The purpose of the visit was to review progress in the implementation of DPEP with emphasis on review of implementation in the DPEP II districts. This report summarises the findings and recommendations of the team.
2. The State Project Director briefed the team on the first morning of the visit and provided a comprehensive report especially prepared for the review mission. The 4 District Project Directors for the four districts included in DPEP I also briefed the team and provided detailed documentation. Additionally, the team met with the State Minister for Education and it had a debriefing meeting with the State Secretary of Education Mr. Bishnu Bhagwan. All meetings took place in the District Project Office for one of the project districts: Gurgaon.
3. During the short stay in Haryana the team tried to maximise the time spent in the field. The SPD was agreeable to increasing time in the field, and as a result the team was able to visit 10 schools, 12 VECs, 8 CRCs, 5 BRCs, two district offices, and one DIET. Additionally it visited one workshop for IED, one mother-daughter mela¹, a training workshop on learning materials, one alternative school, and a quiz program for teachers².
4. The team is grateful to the Haryana authorities for the hospitality received, for the co-operation in maximising time to visit project institutions, and for the helpful support provided during their stay. The state and district briefings were exceptionally well documented. They were presented in thoughtfully designed power point projected slides with well-prepared charts and graphs. These presentations greatly facilitated the team's understanding of the status of each one of the components of DPEP. The discussions were open, and allowed for understanding both the strengths of the program and the weaknesses. Field visits in Gurgaon and Mahendergarh Districts were efficiently planned and gave the team the opportunity to see a variety of programs in both developed and

¹ Mela is a fair. In a daughter – mother mela, mothers and daughters meet to sing, dance, show their crafts, participate in competitions and enjoy the time together. Fathers and sons usually join as observers. The melas have succeeded in increasing the participation of girls in schools. Songs and dances related to the importance of attending school are key features of the mela; and increased enrollments are observed in places where melas have been held.

² Haryana has established a series of incentive programs for teachers. Quiz programs have been very popular. Teachers in teams are asked questions that include reasoning, mathematics, culture and pedagogy. Prizes are awarded by block and by district to winning teams

underdeveloped areas.

PROGRESS OF DPEP TOWARDS ITS OBJECTIVES

5. The main findings of the team include evidence of enrolment increase, particularly for girls and for s/c students; evidence of pedagogical improvement at the classroom level, and evidence of the demand to extend the program to non-DPEP districts. These findings were presented in the state and in all district reports and they were confirmed by the field visits. They are explained in sequence below.

Access Retention and Equity.

Trends in Enrolment in DPEP and Non-DPEP Districts
For the Period 1993-94 to 1996-97 (in %)

	Enrolment Increase in DPEP Districts, (%)	Enrolment increase in Non-DPEP Districts (%)
Boys	9.23	0.13
Girls	15.09	0.00
Total	11.80	0.07
SC Boys	24.60	-2.7
SC Girls	37.90	2.20
SC Total	30.30	-0.4

6. The figures displayed above were provided by the SPO. If they are correct, they certainly evidence significant increases in enrolment in DPEP districts. However, given that non-DPEP districts have no EMIS in place, the non-DPEP figures might underestimate actual enrolment increases. Moreover, the data on enrolment needs to be look at with some caution because it does not include enrolment on non-government schools. Haryana is considering adopting EMIS practices in all districts. It would be a good decision and one that would allow better statewide monitoring processes in future years.

7. The reports provided by the district authorities and the field visits confirmed the increased enrolment trends in DPEP districts particularly for girls and for S/C students. Additionally, in the villages visited by the team enrolment had reached 80 to 85% and there was parity between boys and girls enrolment. In some of the schools visited girls enrolment was higher than that of boys. It is possible that when private school enrolment data be added to government school enrolment data, Haryana will be showing enrolment rates higher than 90%.

8. According to the EMIS data, repetition rates in DPEP districts are lower in

Jind District, but there is no improvement in the other three districts. Average repetition is between 8 and 15% with boys having higher repetition rates than girls.³ Dropout is as high as 30%, and it is particularly high for S/C girls. There is no data on attendance and no data on time on task.

9. The increased enrolment trend is the result of awareness campaigns, melas, enrolment drives appointment of enrolment assistants and appointment of female teachers. The state has been active in the implementation of media campaigns including the preparation of jingles transmitted in the radio, and the distribution of posters. The team was able to see a theatre skit produced by a group of teachers. In few minutes the skit conveys to parents the importance of sending daughters to school. Media efforts need to be geared towards retaining children in school, increasing attendance and increasing time on task.

10. The distance learning program and alternative schooling program have started but need to gain momentum. Both distance education and alternative schools are essential for attainment of DPEP objectives. Greater attention is therefore required. The team recommended that special materials be purchased, or adopted from other states, for the alternative schools. 11. IED programs are under preparation. During his visit to Haryana Mr Advani assisted staff in preparing a six-month plan for the implementation of IED activities, including a workshop to be held before the end of this month.

Quality and Equivalence

12. During the last ten months Haryana has undertaken a significant number of pedagogical initiatives. It has redesigned the textbooks for class one and two and has tried them out in 100 schools. The first grade textbooks were redesigned after the initial trial and they are currently in use in all DPEP schools. The teacher training approaches were modified and greatly enhanced. A well-documented report on the evaluation of the new training approaches was provided to the mission. Additionally, the staff in the project offices has had a series of "visioning" workshops aimed at building consensus on the types of pedagogical changes that they want to see in the schools.

13. The new textbooks are nicely illustrated and are appreciated by teachers and by children. The teacher training is more participatory, aims at changing teachers attitudes and classroom practices, uses modelling techniques to show teachers what is expected of them and uses a 'peer' learning approach allowing teachers to learn from each other.

14. Results of these efforts are visible at the classroom level. The team was able to observe teachers actively interacting with students, children responding to questions about the pictures in the books, and children enthusiastically

³ Haryana EMIS Study.

engaged in the learning process. Children in the first grades visited by the team were drawing figures on the floor or on the specially painted walls. Children's participation is also visible in places where the lower sections of the classroom walls are used as blackboards where children use chalk to paint and draw.

15. The school environment has also been improved. The schools visited by the team are painted with bright attractive and contrasting colours, schools and acknowledged that nice schools encourage attendance and prevent dropout from school.

Programme Management

16. Haryana has decided to integrate the DPEP project offices with the state and district institutions responsible for education. At the state level the Project Director is the State Director for Primary Education. At the district level, in the three new districts, the District Project Director is the District Education Officer, and at the block level, the Block Education Officer manages the Block Resource Centre. Integration is expected to make sustainability possible and to strengthen project implementation. At the cluster level, there was no pedagogical resource person in the existing state structure, so newly recruited cluster resource staff have been appointed by the project.

17. Expenditure during the last year has been low, particularly in the pedagogical areas. The Project Office attributes low expenditure to delays in appointing teachers to be paid by the project⁴, to delays in producing the new textbooks and, to the limits on expenditures on civil works. According to the information received by the team, the expenditure is less than 20% of the annual work plan budget for the period. A special effort needs to be made in the appointment of teachers. The visiting team discussed the issue with the State Secretary for Education. He informed the team that there were mechanisms being considered for the satisfactory resolution of this problem.

18. The 24% limit on civil works expenditures seems to be creating serious problems in the less developed areas. With enrolment increases, demand for additional toilets for girls, additional water pumps and boundary walls have increased. For next year's work program it would be advisable to raise the limit on civil works to meet these demands in the less developed areas. Price escalation contingencies included in the project cost tables could be allocated to these requirements. The state could also consider increasing the state's own allocations for civil works. Additionally, the state could consider using cluster resource centres as classrooms. Moreover, it could limit the construction of specialised training rooms in BRCs. The state seems to have facilities that can

⁴ Before appointing teachers financed by DPEP, all state appointed teachers have to be in place. But the appointment process is long (10 months or so) and so vacancies are never filled. The state is aware of the problem and is finding ways to resolve it.

be used for training purposes during the training periods and it has been observed that BRCs remain idle during the week and during the period when teachers are in schools. The money saved by not building large BRCs could be used to meet the demand for additional water and toilet facilities in poor villages, and in particular, in places where girls enrolment targets will be jeopardised if no toilettes and no drinking water is made available.

19. For IED activities it was suggested that a special corner in CRCs be provided with learning materials and other resources needed by children with disabilities.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT.

20. The State Project Office and District Project Offices are now integrated within the State's permanent institutions. As mentioned above, the State Director for Primary Education is the DPEP Project Director, and in the DPEP II districts the District Education Officer is the DPEP District Project Director. Sustainability of DPEP will be ensured through this integration of positions. Additionally, BRCs in the new districts are well integrated with the Block Education Office, and the BRC head is the Block Education Officer.

21. Cluster Resource Centres are already operational and assuming responsibility for pedagogical improvement at the cluster level. VECs are visibly active. In all schools visited by the team, the VEC representatives were present and were able to explain the objectives of DPEP and the achievements made by the school in recent years. They have been active in the enrolment drives and in improving the school environment. Co-ordination with Panchayat Raj, and with women's groups seems functional in all villages visited by the team.

22. SIEMAT needs strengthening. At the beginning of the project SIEMAT was housed in SCERT and it was in a kind of limbo. The State has decided to place it in Bhiwani District and to give it responsibility for micro planning. The results of this change are not yet visible. Micro planning is being done by an NGO hired for this purpose and the team that visited Haryana did not see results of SIEMAT'S work.

23. SCERT could be more actively involved in producing the teaching materials and training materials required by the project. They should be encouraged to hire staff with years of experience in teaching at the primary level and they should be encouraged to spend time in the schools where books are being tried out.

24. New textbooks were developed with the co-operation of teachers and cluster resource persons, but, not with sufficient co-operation from SCERT. As in Kerala and MP, in order to guarantee sustainability, efforts need to be made to ensure involvement/participation of all State Institutions, including SCERT, in the preparation and trial of new textbooks.

DECENTRALISATION OF DECISION MAKING

25. Districts seem well empowered to develop and implement the annual plans. They have also shown initiative by developing new training programs as well as new cultural activities aimed at increasing enrolment. They have well developed information systems that are now used to plan and monitor programs.

26. The State was active in appraising the DPEP II districts and is now planning to have internal review missions. This activity should be encouraged and documented. It would assist in better understanding how the pedagogical changes are being implemented at the classroom level across a wide number of schools and, it would also help in learning how to further improve teacher's participation and involvement in the DPEP activities. SIEMAT and SCERT should be involved in these internal review missions.

27. A special feature observed by the team that visited Haryana is the posting of the DPEP targets in visible walls and the posting of the expenditures incurred in visible posters attached to the construction sites. This initiative guarantees both transparency and greater participation at the grass roots levels.

THE INFORMATION BASE

28. Haryana has produced an excellent EMIS Study. Copies could be given to other states that have not yet made their EMIS operational. The Haryana EMIS report is analytical, well presented and useful for future planning and decision making. Districts are also making good use of the EMIS system. The reports given to the mission show good use of the information collected. It is evident in the reports produced for this review mission that the data is used for improved planning and monitoring purposes.

29. Micro planning is just beginning in Haryana. An NGO was hired to do the work in one district. The results of the work are very meaningful. Mr. Hari Dang, one of the consultants, confirmed that private schools are included enrolment is almost universal. Household data results which include attendance in both government and non-government schools show net enrolment rates of 96% in the areas covered.

30. The team's impression was that too much data is being collected. The NGO doing the work in one district mentioned visiting 20,000 households and it mentioned the difficulty of summarising all this information. The SPO should

consider simplifying the exercise and giving more attention to developing cluster school maps that show student's attendance, student teacher ratios in each school, and s/c participation. These maps when posted in wall help the VECs and cluster resource groups to better plan teacher distribution and to plan future school construction and civil works requirements.

TEACHER TRAINING

31. Haryana has provided all DPEP teachers with training in maths and language and in recent months it has made a special effort in the design of new in-service teacher training strategies. The new course aims at changing teacher's attitudes and increasing their motivation. Participation of teachers as trainers has been a special feature of the new training strategy. The new course has been well received and its impact is visible in the classrooms visited by the review team.

32. Cluster Resource Centres are providing support to teachers. The CRC resource persons have expertise in primary teaching, they are enthusiastic and they are visibly engaged in attaining DPEP pedagogical improvements.

33. However, active and child centred teaching methods will not materialise in schools where student teacher ratios continue to be very high. The student teacher ratio in the DPEP districts is close to 50 to one. But according to the EMIS data there are schools with 4 teachers and enrolment below 100, while there is a large number of schools (more than 400) with one teacher teaching more than 100 children. Rationalisation of teacher transfer policies is essential to guarantee the expected improvement in teaching methods.

34. Reforms in the training strategies used by the DIETS are also required. DIETs continue to have several structural problems: the lecturers have little or no experience in teaching primary school children, and the subjects taught in the pre-service and in-service curriculum make little reference to key subjects taught in primary schools: mathematics and language. It is well known that the skills needed by primary teachers are developed through practice, but, DIETs offer little possibility for actual in classroom practice of these skills. The state should consider appointing in DIETs the primary school teachers that have excelled and have also studied and obtained higher degrees.

SUSTAINABILITY (Mainstreaming)

35. Estimates of the resources required to extend DPEP to non-DPEP districts have been made. Some efficiency and cost saving parameters have been considered. For example, the need for additional staffing could be reduced by making good use of staff currently employed at the state and district level, and by avoiding duplicate structures, particularly at the district and block level.

36. Adoption of EMIS and of teacher training procedures is widely accepted as needed and feasible. Discussion is going on regarding the adoption at the state level of the newly developed textbooks for class one and two. A new version with more acceptability by all concerned seems to be required, before statewide adoption is possible. The experience of Kerala and MP could be useful for Haryana in the sense of intensifying efforts to create ownership of the innovations by all stakeholders and institutions responsible for pedagogical improvement.

THE NEXT STEPS

37. The three most important recommendations are briefly summarised below.

a) The class 3, 4 and 5 textbooks with new pedagogical approaches need to be designed. The SPO is ready to undertake this task and offered to have the first manuscripts ready by the end of January 1999. Participation of teachers, curriculum experts and content experts in the design of these new textbooks needs to be ensured.

b) The 24% ceiling on civil works should be relaxed for backward areas, to ensure provision of boundary walls, toilets and water pumps. Contingencies included in the project cost tables could be allocated to these critical needs. The State could also consider increasing the state budget allocations for additional civil works in the most needy areas. Requirements should be based on the micro-planning exercise. Additionally, the amounts given to VECs for improving the school environment should be increased. They have made a significant difference in both giving VECs more participation in school decisions and in improving the motivation of children and teachers by providing improved classroom and school environments.

c) DIETs, distance education, alternative schooling and IED need to be strengthened. DIETs need staff with expertise in teaching in primary schools and in particular with expertise in teaching reading, writing and mathematics. Alternative schools need more workbooks and more textbooks. Teachers who are teaching groups of children with diverse needs should have the materials that can keep children engaged in learning during the short periods they are in school. IED plan for the next 6 months should be implemented as early as possible, and a longer-term plan needs to be developed. This plan should include the staffing, the materials, textbooks and training required in all DPEP districts.

HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE REPORT

DPEP EIGHTH JOINT REVIEW MISSION
26 October - 6 November 1998
HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. The Eighth Joint Review Mission Team Leader Barbara Payne (DFID) and Shushmita C. Dutt (GOI) visited Himachal Pradesh between 27 October and 31 October 1998. The team held discussions with Sri C Balakrishnan, Commissioner and Education Secretary. Sri Jagdish Chandra Sharma, the Mission Director (MD) and Sri Rajiv Sharma, the SPD at Shimla. Presentations on the progress of the Project at the State level and for districts Kullu, Sirmour and Lahaul Spiti were made by SPD and the district teams of the relevant districts. The team, accompanied by the SPD and members from the State and Chamba District Project Teams, then proceeded to Chamba. The Joint Review Mission team spent 3 days visiting schools and meeting with BRC/CRC and DIET staff, discussing Project implementation progress with VEC members, parents, teachers and community members. The team also interacted with a number of students.
2. The team held a final Wrap Up meeting with the Mission Director and State Project Director at Chamba and shared with them and their team the main findings of the mission. As the State Education Secretary had been unable to be present at the Wrap Up meeting a copy of the Aide Memoire was faxed to him. All findings of the mission were discussed and agreed upon by representatives of the State Government. The mission members would like to thank the State team for the extensive cooperation and hospitality extended to them during their visit to Himachal Pradesh.

General Background

3. Himachal Pradesh, as the Seventh Review Mission acknowledged, is a state with a unique set of challenges. One of the DPEP districts is sometimes out of for eight months of the year and climate and terrain make life difficult for many DPEP activities, especially construction. There is encouraging variation of approach in the four districts which indicate the sense in which decision making is being decentralised and solutions made context specific. There have been many creative responses to these challenges and innovative approaches have been introduced. Among the most striking of these are the Bal melas, the adoption of "model" schools by DIETS and the provision of innovative science kits and school libraries. There have been recent changes in Education personnel. The Mission Director and State Project Director who have been in

post for three months are working energetically to increase levels of expenditure, which are currently running at 13% and hope to achieve 45% by the end of the financial year. Every effort is being made, to accelerate construction activities, under harsh and challenging circumstances. (65 new schools are up to roof level or beyond as are 24 CRCs.) It would appear that mobilisation activity to date has brought about close to 100% enrolment. There is verbal report of low dropout rates though only one district (Chamba) appears to have completed a detailed analysis. and every where visited demonstrated a school attendance culture. The emphasis of the current work plan is on quality assurance .

4. The Mission team noted that the state would need to crystalise its plans for the sustainability of DPEP interventions given that primary education has been made compulsory in Himachal Pradesh.

Follow Up Since the Last Mission

5. The last Mission recommended that civil works be accelerated. Remarkable efforts have been made in this area. Research and evaluation has been taken up with alacrity (11 research projects and 49 action research activities) and some interesting findings made available to the team. Links between the DPOs and the DEOs have been made but this needs further on going attention. Work has begun and appointments made to develop distance education. Some preparations are in hand to accelerate the pace of curriculum and text book development. These latter activities are being given top priority.

PROGRESS OF DPEP TOWARDS ITS OBJECTIVES

Access, Retention and Equity

6. The State had planned to open 808 schools during the project period and of these 772 schools are now operational. There are at present 955 Primary Schools in Chamba, 459 in Kullu, 192 in Lahaul-Spiti and 818 in Sirmour. Total enrolment in classes I-V has risen from 141328 in 1995-96 to 176431 in 1997-98. Girls enrolment has risen from 64550 in 1995 to 85069 in 1997-98, while SC enrolment has risen from 36611 to 52391 and ST enrollment has risen from 20897 to 22995 during the same period. This leads to an overall 20% increase in enrolment over 1995-96.

7. The introduction of highly successful Bal Pravesh Melas which have attracted attendance of up to 800 (Chamba) have helped create enthusiasm among the community and in Kullu upto 70% of the thus far unenrolled children were enrolled at the Melas. Sirmour district reported 5000 in attendance at a Girl Child week in September.

8. While a clear retention strategy is yet to be developed Bal Melas, Ma beti Melas are being used to ensure retention, specially of the girl child. Awards of Rs 5000 paid in kind, have been instituted for those schools in each district which achieve the highest girl child and ST child enrolment Bal Melas also serve as a significant way of breaking the barriers created by the traditional pupil teacher relationship.

9. Specific strategies have yet to be worked out for supporting SCs, STs and working children. However schools in DPEP districts are also covered under the normal strategies adopted by the state for supporting SCs and STs which include scholarships, free uniform, reading and writing materials etc. As regards working children, a scheme of evening classes in selected schools is at an early stage of planning and implementation in both DPEP and non DPEP districts. There are a number of different groups such as the Gujars for whom further specific strategies may be required. (There is already a plan for a mobile school for Gujars in Chamba.) There also exists a State Government provision for a Bhoti language teacher for all schools in Lahaul-Spiti. Additional Bhoti teaching-learning materials to support these teachers would strengthen this initiative further and consideration could be given to similar support for other particular tribal groups. Residential schools (to supplement hostel places already offered by existing monasteries) and ashrams are planned in Lahaul-Spiti but need to be set within a given time frame.

10. Lahaul Spiti is covered by a tribal sub plan with sufficient budgetted funds for development. Therefore this could be considered an enabling factor in assisting DPEP to meet objectives.

11. All blocks in the State are covered by the ICDS scheme but there still exist habitations which do not have facilities for children in the 3-6 age group. It has not been possible to open the ECE centres planned under DPEP as yet. There is some reluctance to open these centres, given that they are not able to supply the school meal that ICDS centres do. A view endorsed by many with whom the team interacted at the village and school level is that it is important to operationalize the plans for new centres at the earliest time possible. Early childhood education not only supports girl child retention but also raises the potential achievement of those children. The SPD might wish to explore whether regular ICDS workers might be offered ECE training and school readiness kits under DPEP.

12. All districts have undertaken a survey to identify children with severe physical disabilities and about 889 such children have been identified. Children with learning disabilities have not as yet been identified and the recommended three specially trained IED teachers per district are also yet to be appointed. A district workshop for children with special needs was held recently in Sirmour

district. There exists a group of about 15 secondary school teachers and University teachers, who have been especially trained for IED activities who may be a resource group for DPEP.

Quality and Equivalence

13. Given that the challenge of getting all the children into school has been largely addressed. DPEP in Himachal Pradesh is channeling all energy available into improving the quality of educational provision.

14. A new curriculum for Class I has been developed and Curriculum for Class II is being finalized. A supplementary mathematics text book for class I has been developed and has been trialled. The results of the trialling are to be analysed and the text book will finally be integrated with the new text book.

15. There has been some assistance from Eklavya in beginning the process of new textbook design and the state are clearly looking at the recent experience of other states like Haryana. The process of text book development and trialling for classes II, III, IV and V will need to be accelerated considerably if they are in use before Project end. This is specially important as the first round of teacher training incorporating new teaching methodology has been completed and some teachers (Sirmour district) are already feeling the need of new textbooks. There is awareness of the need for new books to be gender sensitive.

16. DRG and SRG members and teachers are involved in preparing district specific supplementary reading material, including two or three new rhyme and story books, on the lines of the supplementary reader prepared by Chamba. Sirmour district has provided differentiated materials for the two distinct sections of the district. The preparation of audio cassettes with local rhymes songs and poems was discussed. As there is such creative talent available both for writing and illustrating, the team would encourage the DPOs to plan for much larger numbers of supplementary readers, on the grounds that teachers who become isolated through prevailing weather conditions need banks of materials available to them if they are to maintain quality.

17. The team endorse the introduction of school libraries and feel these could be further developed as they are clearly being well utilised and appreciated by the teachers and pupils. Similarly the introduction of innovative science kits has created an environment of enjoyment and confidence among students, regarding the understanding of scientific principles. The team also attended a state level Mathematics workshop which indicated that due attention was being given to the understanding of basic mathematical concepts and the use of TLM to impart understanding of these concepts to students.

18. The adoption of and creation of model schools by DIETS and BRCs and CRCs is also proving an important factor in increasing quality. This system provides support and encouragement for school effectiveness.

19. There is considerable evidence that research is taking off. A large number of action research activities are underway in each of the districts and a particularly interesting analysis of the impact of teacher training was presented at Chamba from which interesting lessons are being absorbed. Sirmour district have involved an NGO RUCHi in evaluation of training. In Kullu district action research plans include comparisons of performance re quality and female education between blocks. There is recognition of the need for internal and external evaluation to be further developed.

20. The team would encourage the planned development of use of distance education. This would be such a rich opportunity especially for districts like Lahaul and Spiti but would also be of particular relevance given communication and travel difficulties in the rest of Himachal Pradesh. There could be a major initiative to encourage the introduction of new technology into DIETs BRCs, CRCs and even schools .

21. Given the fact however that to date the main planning for pedagogical renewal has centred around the first year curriculum, the development of one ten day module for teacher training (discussed below) and some definite but disparate other activities, The SPO needs to give consideration to a more systematic and holistic approach to quality improvement. This would involve developing a cadre of master trainers, developing different training modules, a teacher training plan, which allows for differentiated needs and for accumulating skills over time, text book renewal for all five years, the development of structured academic support for teachers, (this is beginning to evolve through the CRC system) teacher performance records, pupil assessment records, parent school reports and criteria for whole school effectiveness. The team suggest that the SPD may want to examine the experience of other states which have been successful in this field (Kerala, MP,AP) The team further recommend that a time frame for pedagogical development be drawn up within the next three months.

22. Though the state may recognise the importance of alternative education the scheme is yet to take off since surveys of where these should be opened have only recently been completed. These centres would play a very useful role especially in those areas which are either sparsely populated and / or have natural barriers and difficult terrain, making it difficult for little children to attend conventional schools.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

23. The GC is yet to be formally constituted and the State Government nominees have yet to be named. This is a matter which needs attention. The EC has met recently and is to meet again in December.

24. All staff are in place at the State Project Office except some support staff. All District Project Co-ordinators, Deputy Project Officers, Evaluation Experts, Teacher Training In-charge, Women's Development In-charge, Accountants, MIS and Engineering staff are in place at the District Project Offices. All BRCCs have been appointed but 56 CRCCs require to be placed (Chamba 12, Sirmour 33, interviews have been conducted and Kullu 11) Similarly 4 lecturers in DIET Chamba, 2 in DIET Sirmour, and 1 lecturer in DIET Kullu are not yet in place.

25. There is little evidence of women playing an active part in the programme management. The WDI is working hard to ensure gender issues are given priority. In Chamba district, posts at CRC level have been held in order to attract/persuade women to take up responsibilities. The team understand the difficulties for women in taking up of posts which require mobility in difficult terrain and commend those few who have done so.

26. It is to be hoped that efforts will be made to ensure project personnel are retained during the remaining life of the programme, given that there has already been considerable investment loss through transfers to date

27. Planning and management is an area of the programme which needs strengthening. To date much of the planning has been activity rather than output focussed and there is little evidence of formulated strategies and integrated planning.

28. The decision to create the SIEMAT was deferred by the last EC in October and is to be considered again at the next EC in December. The existence of planning and management institutional capacity is critical to the smooth running of the programme and would add to the sustainability of increased planning and management capacity after DPEP, which should lead to greater system efficiency for education. Given the fact that the project is due to end in 2002 this is not a decision to defer. No posts have been sanctioned as yet for the SIEMAT.

29. Simultaneously, planning and management capacity at district level may be supported through DIETS. These are in Himachal, strong institutions and it would be useful if their existing planning and management capacity was strengthened to support decentralising capacity at the sub district level whatever the decision about the SIEMAT is.

30. It is further suggested that Himachal would benefit from some further linkage with NIEPA or another resource institution for planning support, to assist in thinking through an institutional plan and clarifying institutional roles and functions, given that efforts to engage with SCERT have not yet born fruit and that there appears to be few options at the state level

31. The posts created at the SCERT under DPEP have not yet been filled and there is no SCERT building. Though an SCERT building is planned under DPEP, it might be advisable to hire additional space and put the required DPEP staff in place so that they may help accelerate the pedagogical renewal processes and text book development at this crucial time.

32. One possibility the SPD is exploring, in the absence of SCERT assistance is to build capacity at the DIET level both in planning, management and pedagogy in order to decentralise these activities in an integrated manner.

33. BRCs are being developed. Sirmour district among others, report some resistance to change amongst older teachers and some of the administrative staff. Some concern was also expressed that the lack of allowances for BRC, CRC and other programme personnel may cause disaffection among what appear to be dynamic and enthusiastic young workers.

34. The Last EC agreed in principle to have 1 CRC for 7/8 schools which should complete requirement of CRC. Staffing of CRC requires to be completed and adequately trained so that they may offer meaningful support to teachers' training. Since most training is envisaged in cascade model this is important to reduce transmission loss.

35. Most VECs have been formed.(2153 out of 2198) VECs are formed for each school in Kullu, Sirmour and Lahaul-Spiti and on the basis of population for Chamba. The proportion of women on the VECs is approximately 36%. Two thirds of the VECs have been given some orientation training. Discussions with Project staff reveal that all VECs are not uniformly motivated or involved and may perceive their role to be mainly as construction committees. This implies a need for further training and motivation. A larger number of parents on the VEC may help to ensure their qualitative involvement with school affairs. Discussions with a VEC in Chamba district revealed that there have been occasions when the VEC has added up to Rs 1000 to corpus and used the whole for school repair or purchase of furniture. It is also understood that a number of sites for building new schools has been offered free of cost by community members. Community has also been known to offer to complete levelling the ground around the new school buildings and pay for prizes during Bal Melas etc. The planned training module on community mobilization should prove helpful in leveraging greater involvement the community.

36. There is apparent convergence between the DPEP and Health department from the evidence of the Health survey and enumeration of childrens' common ailments and health problems and follow up treatment. There has also been help from voluntary bodies in the follow up treatment. A guide for teachers and health workers has been prepared for recognising common health problems and a health card prepared for children. This is a further indication of the concern for childrens' well being which characterises DPEP in Himachal.

37. Approximately 13% of total year's budget has been spent so far. There is also shortfall in expenditure from earlier years. It is expected that 65 new schools and 24 CRCs currently at roof level (and others at earlier stages of completion,) will be completed within this financial year and this should bring up expenditure levels to about 45%.

38. The team saw for themselves the considerable amount of planning and management in terms of design effort, engineering skill incurred in building on narrow sites where landslides and seismic movement make reinforcing walls and structural reinforcement obligatory. Transportation costs to sites, often by mules or man add to the costs significantly. There may need to be a review of costs on a site specific basis for the remaining programme, which would also increase expenditure. Overall increase in the expenditure levels now needs to cover proportionately, other functional areas of the budget.

INSTITUTIONALISING CAPACITY IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

39. It is early days to be contemplating institutionalising capacity when institutional arrangements are not yet fully developed. Yet there is a dialogue taking place in Himachal about the need to institutionalise capacity and a genuine desire to see the DPEP programme gains disseminated across the state. It is the intention to utilise the teacher training modules prepared under DPEP across all schools and to utilise also the text book and supplementary materials for the whole system

40. It is recommended that some further consideration be given to planning for the necessary institutional arrangements after DPEP. The importance of the SIEMAT has been raised earlier in this connection as has the need for a State level institution to support pedagogical renewal. Plans for institutionalisation at the district level are more apparent and potentially powerful to date.

THE INFORMATION BASE

41. EMIS data up to the year 1996-7 has been completed for all districts. EMIS data for 1997-98 is complete for Sirmour, Lahaul-Spiti and Kullu and Chamba. PMIS data is also complete up to the March quarter of 1998. YUMDHA, a Sirmour based NGO has been selected to carry out a 5% sample checking of EMIS data for 1997-8. The Mis in charge in Spiti did not take up post and has still to be appointed.

42. There is evidence in Chamba that the EMIS system is being studied at the district level and utilised in planning. The presentation included a detailed analysis of retention and drop out. It would seem that other districts have yet to develop similar capacity, though Kullu are also using data with confidence. Hardware has been provided but not installed in the SCERT.

43. The team were told that the state has been selected to trial the State Level Education Management Information System.

44. A comprehensive VEC register has been developed which records all children between 0-12 years in the area and documents their educational progress for the Project period. This would give an idea of retention as well as the transition rates of class V students to Middle School. The register also tracks whether all children in Primary School have received all benefits due to them from State Govt schemes and DPEP, eg books, uniforms. Properly maintained this register would serve to support and verify EMIS data and is a commendable innovation. Other Micro planning tools and techniques are not much in evidence to date.

TEACHER TRAINING AND TEACHER SUPPORT

45. There is a greater need in Himachal because of their periodic physical isolation, and the difficulties associated with travel and communications, for teachers to possess a greater degree of self reliance, than may be required elsewhere. In these circumstances, the team suggest that consideration be given to increasing the amount of time given to training each year. It would be possible to create a training programme which incorporated distance education training and gave each teacher 20 days training each year between now and the end of the programme .

46. Teacher training modules for Multigrade teaching, Content enrichment, Community Mobilization and Activity based Child centred training and gender sensitization to support the existing 10 day module on general pedagogical issues are being envisaged. It is essential to plan that the full range of training

programmes reach all teachers sufficiently prior to Project end so that its impact may be felt in classroom processes and that training is integrated into other aspects of pedagogical renewal as indicated earlier.

47. At present teachers are being appointed on deputation to BRC and CRC posts.. Special training programmes will need to be developed for BRCCs and CRCCs. There has clearly already been some effective work in this area from the quality of work observed by the team.

48. Another important support for teachers is a teacher's guide for use with the existing text books, which has been developed by the DPO Chamba and is being used in other districts as well. As an interim measure this is useful.

49. Visits to Chamba schools revealed that teachers were developing their own TLM and introducing a lot of activity in classroom teaching. Interaction with teachers also indicated that they were appreciating their training and support and that it was improving the quality of their teaching(see evaluation report Chamba).

50. The team attended a special Women teachers orientation and empowerment workshop which was also deemed of real benefit by the participants.

SUSTAINABILITY

51. There are serious issues for consideration for the sustainability of the programme. At the village level there is yet to develop an effective synergy between the panchayat and VEC systems. Efforts are required for empowering local communities and bodies to undertake greater responsibilities. The system needs to be flexible enough to recognize the varied needs of communities and support them.

52. Sustainability is based on a state government commitment to making financial provisions for salaries, continued quality inputs and capital requirement for maintenance and repair. Personnel requirements, to maintain an appropriate teacher-student ratio and fulfil the differing needs of differing groups need to be met.

53. Sustainability of quality aspects is linked to institutionalising both pedagogical development and programme management requirements at various levels. While DIETS appear to be coming up, there are no dependable resource institutions at the State level to maintain continuity.

54. NGOs have provided support in meeting many of the programme objectives. However the sustainability of the programme would require many

more such organisations to play the role of social activists and watch dogs for meaningful community participation, monitoring and evaluation.

THE NEXT STEPS

55. These were discussed with the State Government representatives at the Wrap UP and the first draft of the text book-curriculum development plan was prepared during the team's visit.

- The preparation of a holistic pedagogy plan incorporating an interlinked textbook- curriculum development and a range of teacher training programmes which build required skills over time.
- The development of an institutional framework which meets the need for pedagogical as well as project management support at State, district and sub district level and clarifies the roles and responsibilities of institutions at various levels.

KERALA STATE REPORT

DPEP EIGHTH JOINT REVIEW MISSION
26 October – 6 November 1998
KERALA STATE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. The DPEP 8th Review Mission visited Kerala from October 27th to October 31. The team which included Ward Heneveld (World Bank) and Padamvir Singh (GOI) had discussions at the State Project Office in Trivandrum with personnel from the DPEP State Project Office, the Secretary of Education, and the representatives of the State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and local DIETs and Block Resource Centres. It also visited three schools and two BRCs in Trivandrum (DPEP II) where discussions were held with teachers, headmasters, Block Resource People (BRP), and academic coordinators from District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET). Then the team visited another DPEP II District, Palakkad, where it visited schools and talked with people from the District Project Office (DPO), Block and Cluster Resource Centre staff, DIET lecturers, teachers and headmasters, a group of Tribal Education Volunteers, and various public officials. The Mission Team thanks those involved in its visit for their adaptability in deciding the mission's programme as it occurred, for the documentation and frank discussions, and for the warm hospitality accorded the team during the visit.

2. This report presents the mission team's observations and recommendations on Kerala's progress towards achieving DPEP's objectives, institutionalising the capacities created by DPEP, and stimulating improvements in classroom teaching.

PROGRESS TOWARD DPEP'S OBJECTIVES

Access, Retention And Equity

3. The SPO reported that the disparity in terms of enrolment and retention in the case of SC and ST was less than 5%.

Quality And Equivalence

4. Quality: There has been no statewide classroom observation study since the last mission. This year Palakkad DPEP conducted a classroom survey over 600 classrooms and planned this year's activities based on the assessment. Also, no achievement data was provided to the Mission Team. The pedagogic team of the SPO noted that the assessment procedures of the Mid-term Assessment Survey were not suited to the pedagogical innovations introduced in DPEP schools through the new curriculum, textbooks, and the teacher training and support provided by the BRCs and CRCs.

5. The mission team confirms the earlier review mission's observations that the well conceptualised approach to pedagogy as reflected in the curriculum framework, teacher handbooks, and textbooks and teacher training models have already been introduced successfully, even visited, as evidenced in the schools in the two DPEP II districts that the mission team visited. One may assume that the three DPEP I districts have changed classroom teaching practice at least as much as in these districts. Based on the success of these new materials, the DPEP textbooks for grades 1-4 have been adopted statewide, and the State Education Department has mandated the DPEP curricular approach for use in grade 5 throughout the state. How the curriculum will be framed for the higher grades is still under discussion. It is likely that the state will work out a curriculum framework for grades 1-12 based on the DPEP model. The Mission Team supports this idea provided that it is based on the DPEP curriculum framework, is worked out through the process of a wide debate, and includes sufficient school-level support to help teachers implement the curriculum.

6. Grade 1-4 textbooks are based on the conviction that children learn from experience through teacher-organised experiences. The lay-out of the teacher guides (printed textbook page with notes for the teacher around it) and the content are well-suited to teacher use.

7. SCERT has revised Grade 5 textbooks to conform to the DPEP curriculum framework, but DPEP staff are not satisfied because the grade five teacher guides posit experiences more in terms of direct teacher presentation than in terms of student activities. Because of the differences of opinion on these materials the state Department of Education has not yet provided training for teachers in the use of the new books, though it is planned to start in November, 1998.

8. Staff of the SPO also noted that procedures exist and have been used for one year of following up the training with observation and guidance to teachers by the teacher trainers. Also procedures for classroom teachers noting points for improvement in the textbooks at the BRC were set into motion, but there

concern that these procedures may be diluted under the new modalities for textbook revision that are being worked out.

9. On account of the extension of the new textbooks and curriculum to the non- DPEP districts and the expanded role that the SCERT will play in writing and revising textbooks the consolidation of the DPEP model in teacher training practices is not yet clear. The Education Secretary is actively involved in deciding what should be done.

10. The Mission Team noted that although there is a difference in approaches between DPEP models for teacher development and student materials and that of SCERT, there was some convergence of thinking and practice at the field level. However interactions with people from both groups at the state level suggest a lack of acceptance of the other's point of view, and there seemed to be some evidence of the same differences between the DPEP staff and the DIET in the one district visited. This conflict, if not resolved effectively by the state management, could be the major threat to the long-term success of the pedagogic reforms that DPEP has introduced successfully in Kerala.

11. Although the Mission Team was very impressed by all that has been implemented, it noted that there is a continuing need for study and reflection to deepen the understanding and utilisation of the new pedagogy. The Team agrees with the findings of the March, 1998, 2nd Internal Academic Support Mission. This Mission's report included conclusions such as the following which indicate that, while the change process has begun, there is still much to be done to make it permanent. Some examples:

- "Children are, at times, experiencing learning as a 'mechanical' process;"
- "Teachers are making an effort to adopt a more 'open-ended' approach in classrooms. . . , but teachers have not completely broken away from the earlier 'closed' approach which is centred around a single 'expected' answer."
- Many teachers still find it difficult to design classroom activities which provide 'contextual' opportunities for developing language skills."

12. The Mission Team agrees with the Internal Mission's general conclusion that all aspects of the pedagogic support system require continuing strong attention while BRC staff and teachers work through to a deeper understanding and the effective use of the new pedagogy.

13. Equivalence: The need for alternative schooling has been identified in only one district namely IDDUKI where 30 NFE centres are planned. These centres are proposed to be made operational through the Directorate of Non

Formal Education with the participation of the State Literacy Mission. The modalities have still to be worked out. The Mission Team did not obtain evidence that the state has developed a strategy for children from these centres to continue education in the formal schools.

Programme Management

14. Expenditure levels have not matched the plans since the last Review Mission. As of 30 June 1998, 43% of the total funds for DPEP I had been spent, and only 15% of DPEP II funds. Expenditures on DPEP II are expected to pick up with the completion of the civil works component. In the case of DPEP I most civil works under the project have been completed, however, expenditures have yet to pick up. The Programme Officers' presentations on activities related to Distance Education, Integrated Education, alternative schooling, early childhood education, gender issues, scheduled castes and tribes, and media confirmed that there has not been much progress in these special areas, as did the discussions held in the two districts. Only for Integrated Education does there seem to be a plan, a cooperative pilot project with an NGO in one block that includes a household survey, teacher involvement, and in-school programming. The just-appointed State Project Director has initiated a reprogramming exercise that will identify what activities have not been undertaken, the source of savings from the original project plan, and new programming for these funds' utilisation.

15. The Mission Team observed that financial information for management decisions affecting implementation could be improved, though clerical accounting procedures seem appropriate. In the SPO there is perhaps a need to categorise the accounts according to activities to facilitate clearer reporting of expenditures against activities. The project management team would then be able to monitor and manage implementation more effectively by activity (teacher training, IED, ECE, etc.). Similarly, at the district level further clarification on how to keep track of the use of funds could help school, block and district staff understand how funds are being used. The Mission recommends (a) that there be a review of the PMIS procedures and reporting formats, (b) that this review might lead to changes in the PMIS and to additional staff training.

16. Also, the SPO and DPO staff concurred with the Mission Team that there is a tendency for management meetings to occur at the SPO level for DPOs and at the DPO levels for BRC and DIET staff, reducing the higher level's exposure to the realities of project implementation. The Team suggested management would improve if there were closer supervision through more frequent field visits and meetings in the field, both by the SPO in the districts and by the DPO in the blocks and schools.

17. The SPO reported that most DPEP posts are filled, but data on their training and its impact is still to be collected. However, according to the June 30 quarterly report roughly a third of the DPO positions are vacant in both the original and expansion districts. The SPO is reported to be fully staffed including the position of the SPD.

18. During the visits to schools the Mission noted that the maintenance of schools needs attention. If the PWD is unable to respond to the needs of maintenance, it may be a good idea to involve the school level institutions like the panchayats and the VECs in the maintenance of the school buildings. Government could think of diverting the necessary resources for annual repairs to these institutions. The Mission also noted that in the otherwise attractive new school buildings sufficient provision has not been made for adequate lighting.

INSTITUTIONALISING CAPACITY IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

19. The SPO reported that the matter of setting up a SIEMAT was under process at the level of the state government. There was no evidence of any expenditure on this item.

20. At the district level Kerala has taken initial steps to integrate the DPEP structure and programme into normal operating procedures. As already noted, the state has adopted the curriculum and textbooks introduced by DPEP into all the districts, and the new grade 5 textbooks have been introduced statewide following the DPEP curriculum framework. Also, DIET lecturers act as BRC academic coordinators; most of the DPO staff come from these institutions; and DPEP staff report that relations with local appointed government representatives and the local representative institutions are at least cordial and often collaborative. However, at the state level, there have been differences of opinion on pedagogy between DPEP and SCERT, the statutory curriculum development institution. This tension has made collaboration and implementation of the DPEP model challenging. The Secretary of Education has taken a decision that the delayed teacher training for all grade 5 teachers would commence in November and that SCERT, DPEP and DPI will cooperate in the preparation and revision of textbooks, curriculum and teacher training. The first steps in the cooperation have been scheduled for the rest of this year.

21. The SPO team reported that DPEP Kerala pays 100% of the salaries of BRC and CRC staff for the life of the project, but the DPEP Bureau told the Mission Team that an instruction had been sent to the states over a year ago that the salaries of staff in these positions would be reimbursed on a declining basis, as for teachers paid by DPEP. The DPEP Bureau might want to look into

this report from the state.

DECENTRALISATION IN DECISION-MAKING

22. The SPO reports that so far no management decision powers for DPEP have been delegated the community level. However, VECs at the panchayat level in rural areas and Municipal Education Committees in the urban areas are formally constituted, and the SPO and DPOs report that they are functioning. The Mission Team shared with the DPEP staff its concern that direct community participation may be sacrificed by organising the committees at this supra-village and multi-school level. For example, each municipality, however large, has only one committee; participation of the community through such a committee is likely to be limited.

23. The DPEP staff report that the school Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) and Mother-Teacher Associations (MTA) provide the local participation that DPEP is designed to stimulate, and School Resource Groups exist to extend participation in school development beyond the parents. At this community level, the Mission Team examined minutes and attendance lists of meetings and school plans (see below) when visiting the schools. These records provide evidence that local participation is occurring, but the Mission Team did not have any organised meetings with PTAs or MTAs.

24. School plans for schools in all six districts were prepared between November, 1997, and January, 1998, and the mission team examined a couple of these in schools. Although some of the staff in the SPO felt that these plans were not being utilised, the Mission Team saw a couple of plans at the school level. The staff in these schools described how these plans are guiding local decision-making beyond the assistance provided by DPEP. Also, at one school the local presidents of a Block Panchayat and one Gram Panchayat described how they are programming their own funds for education. The mission team suggested that the school plans and programming by the community institutions could converge during the annual budgeting process if the state government prepared guidelines for doing this.

THE INFORMATION BASE

25. As note above, the Mission Team was not able to examine the EMIS system in operation, and the SPO presented little coherent data on enrolments. Trends in enrolment have been presented however in the recent study by NIEPA. However, the documentation that the DPO in Palakkad prepared for the mission demonstrates that useful data is being collected and a DISE summary for one district obtained from the SPO demonstrated that the data can be

aggregated and made available at the state level. Because of the current poor functioning of the EMIS and PMIS system, the Mission Team was unable to assess whether this data was being used effectively for planning and management.

26. In the districts there is evidence of some local research by BRC staff and by teachers. The SPO's "2nd Internal Academic Support Mission" which the assessment of classroom practices and teacher training needs identified implementation problems in supporting the changes introduced by DPEP and suggested actions to overcome them. Similarly, Palakkad DPEP based its annual plan this year on a similar study, an excellent example of the kind of research that can be done locally and of the complementarity of state and district research. However, the Team suggests that local research, especially teacher research and reflection, be encouraged further. During its field visits the Team provided suggestions for local studies (e.g., an analysis of what happens to students in one school after grade 4, who must travel over 10 kilometers to grade 5; a survey by ST volunteers of the reasons why some children do not enrol or attend school regularly). Also, the SPO could make greater use of this local research to guide statewide planning.

27. The Mission Team did not observe a coherent strategy for developing evaluation procedures, especially on learning outcomes, nor does there seem to be a long-term strategy for capacity building in this area.

TEACHER TRAINING

28. The DPEP has developed a coherent model of training and in-school support at state, district, and BRC/CRC levels; the model incorporates the principles of good teacher development practice – serious initial orientation and training, follow-up visits in the schools, frequent teacher in-service workshops and monthly meetings. For example, in one DPEP II school visited the teachers had been involved in at least six teacher development events outside their school in the first year. In a BRC in the other district visited the mission team observed the file of detailed reports from school visits. And it talked with a group of teachers at the end of their day-long monthly meeting led at the CRC by the BRC trainers.

29. Headmasters have been oriented to DPEP, and some participate in the regular teacher meetings. However, as noted by the 2nd International Support Mission there has not been a coherent development program to turn headmasters into school level pedagogic leaders. Since Kerala has almost no one- and two-teacher schools, so that almost all the schools have headmasters, the state education department should consider undertaking a more organised program for school heads on how to lead pedagogic change among all the teachers in a school. This could help with follow-through on the In-depth Review Mission's

recommendation last year that Kerala would benefit from instituting a whole school development approach.

SUSTAINABILITY

30. Kerala is well on the way to expanding the DPEP curriculum model and teaching materials statewide. As noted above, textbooks for grades 1-5 based on DPEP's framework and approach are being used statewide. However, as with any innovation there is some resistance to these changes. The State Education Office understands the issues concerned and is working to resolve them.

31. It appears that the impact of the BRCs and CRCs have not been adequately evaluated yet to determine whether and how the state should adopt this support system for the state as a whole. Also, the Mission Team has noted the need to consider now the fiscal impact of the positions that would have to be funded permanently if this model is to continue after the project ends. Finally, it appears that the local line authorities for education, from the District Education Officers on down, should be involved more effectively in the DPEP process if the new support structures are to become a permanent feature of educational management in Kerala.

THE NEXT STEPS

Conclusions

32. The Mission Team applauds Kerala's success at developing and disseminating an effective curriculum framework and teaching materials with a coherent and effective teacher training and support system. These reforms need continued support and nurturing, especially since they have generated serious debate and tension over their adoption statewide.

33. However, it appears that these developments have come at some cost to the overall development of DPEP. As noted above, the EMIS and PMIS need to be improved and managed more effectively in order to ensure that smooth implementation. Similarly, the SPO reports that the special focus areas of the project – Integrated Education, distance education, alternative schooling, early childhood education, gender issues, scheduled castes and tribes, and media – are all well behind their planned levels of implementation. The SPO has started the planning that is needed to bring clearer focus and direction to the overall implementation of DPEP. The challenge will be to improve overall management and implementation while sustaining the significant

and laudable achievements made in reforming the pedagogy in the classrooms, especially since this success has engendered concerns among groups outside of DPEP. The state will need the full support of the DPEP Bureau and the TSG to respond to this challenge.

Recommendations

34. The gains in pedagogy which have been impressive need to be consolidated through more collaboration among the different agencies involved in primary education. The difference of opinion regarding these reforms which presently exist among the different agencies need to be resolved at the earliest.

35. With the initial focus on pedagogy having made its impact on in the educational system, it is time to give greater attention to other focus areas like Integrated Education, ECCE, Distance Learning, Alternative Schooling, Gender Issues, SC, ST and the disadvantaged groups etc.

36. The Education Management Information System needs further attention. Although the hardware and the staff are in place, assistance is needed to make the EMIS and PMIS better organised with products that are useful to management. This may need the attention and support of the DPEP Bureau and the TSG.

37. Project implementation should improve if the following management actions occur: (a) More frequent visits by the SPO staff to the districts and by the District staff to the blocks and schools; (b) A reprogramming exercise of the entire project which would identify what activities have not been undertaken, the source of savings for each activity compared to the original project plan, and new programming for the utilisation of these funds; and (c) the creation of regular summary financial management reports to track expenditures by activity and by district.

**MADHYA PRADESH STATE
REPORT**

DPEP EIGHTH JOINT REVIEW MISSION
26 October - 6 November 1998
MADHYA PRADESH STATE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. Four members of the 8th Joint Review Mission (JRM) visited Madhya Pradesh from October 26 till November 1, 1998. The team consisted of Ms. Carrie Auer (UNICEF), Ms. Prema Clarke (WB), Ms. Mervi Karikorpi (EC) and Mr. Ron Kukler (EC). The purpose of the mission was (i) to review the extent to which DPEP is making progress towards its objectives, identifying possible constraints and suggesting remedial steps, (ii) to assess the extent to which decision making has been decentralised, (iii) to gauge the extent to which MIS and qualitative indicators are emerging, (iv) to discuss progress towards cost effective strategies for the utilisation of resources, and (v) to assess the extent to which DPEP is influencing the mainstream education system, and that plans are in hand for sustaining, institutionalising and integrating programme benefits within the primary education system.

2. A comprehensive programme was prepared that enabled the JRM to meet with the Chief Secretary, Principal Secretary School Education Department, Principal Secretary Department of Tribal Welfare, representatives from Rajiv Gandhi Prathmik Shiksha Mission (RGPSM) as well as eight DPEP districts, namely Betul, Raisen, Rajgarh, Shahdol, Bastar, Morena, Seoni and Shajapur. Subsequently two team members visited the Tikamgarh district (DPEP I) and the other two members visited Jhabua district (DPEP II). In the districts, the JRM interacted with district officials and programme staff, while field visits ensured ample interaction with BRC and CRC co-ordinators, Panchayat and VEC members, parents, teachers and children.

3. The mission gratefully acknowledges the assistance, co-operation, support and hospitality offered by the state and district officials, and expresses its appreciation for the enthusiasm and commitment of teachers and members of the communities involved in the implementation of the DPEP initiatives.

PROGRESS OF DPEP TOWARDS ITS OBJECTIVES

Programme Management

4. DPEP in Madhya Pradesh covers 34 socio-economically-backward districts, 80,000 habitations, 65,000 schools, over 200,000 primary level teachers and gurus and about 9 million children of school going age. Ten DPEP districts have predominantly tribal population and seven have pockets of tribal concentration. The tribal population in Madhya Pradesh is about 23% of the total population of the state.

5. The JRM commends the overall strategic approach by the RGPSM to address the educational challenges. In order to respond to the needs of the children, teachers and village communities, decentralisation of educational and programme management has been adopted as the key strategy by the RGPSM to achieve programme goals. The efforts made by the RGPSM need to be reviewed in the context of the broader decentralisation agenda of the State Government. The JRM

found that the linkages and collaboration between the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI), the educational administration and the RGPSM in terms of the programme management have in many ways led to more effective utilisation of existing resources. For example in Jhabua 100% access to primary schooling has been ensured in a short time frame due to the convergence of funds from DPEP, JRY and other sources available at the district level. Provisions have been made by the Zilla Panchayat to provide all primary schools in Jhabua with water and toilet facilities.

6. The preparation of the Annual Work Plan and Budgets (AWPB) appears to function satisfactorily with the planning process starting from the village level. The appraisal of the 1998/99 AWPB was delegated by the DPEP Bureau to the RGPSM. The state planning team and District Project Co-ordinators from four DPEP districts received training at LBSNAA and SIEMT Allahabad. National Resource Persons were engaged to assist the State Project Office (SPO) in the appraisal process, which included consultation with the district teams. The JRM commends the plans of the RGPSM to further decentralise the plan appraisal in 1999/2000 and enable the district DPEP teams and Zilla Panchayats to take a leading role in the process.

7. The total expenditure to date in DPEP I districts is Rs 280 crores and in DPEP II districts is Rs 57 crores, i.e. 95% and 103% respectively of the funds received to date by the RGPSM from the Centre and the State governments. The RGPSM devolves 85% of its funds to Panchayats, of which 57% goes to Gram Panchayats, investing them with powers of recruitment, construction and procurement.

Access, Retention, and Equity

8. In August 1998, the RGPSM in collaboration with the state government and the PRIs completed the task of universalising access to primary schooling in the state. Before DPEP, GAR in Madhya Pradesh was only 70%. About 30,000 accessless habitations were identified during micro-planning exercises in 1996. In four years, the RGPSM has expanded access in 30,274 habitations. Out of these 10,985 have been realised by DPEP MP in 34 DPEP districts and 19,289 through the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS). Whereas the formal system provided 80,000 primary schools in 50 years the RGPSM provided over 30,000 primary schools in four years indicating a remarkable acceleration in the rate of growth of school services made possible through a mission process.

9. Apart from facilitating the opening of new primary schools, alternative schools and EGS centres, mobilisation campaigns such as Lok Sampark Abhiyaan (LSA), Mahila Shiksha Abhiyaans (MSA) and Shiksha Panchayats have been organised by the RGPSM. An additional 820,000 school age children enrolled in schools in 34 DPEP districts during this year's MSA. The number of non-enrolled was reduced from 1,060,000 to 460,000. Dropouts reduced from 397,000 to 171,000, and the net enrolment ratio improved from 81% to 88%.

10. The DPEP experimentation, such as the new pedagogical approach in alternative schools, has succeeded in creating increased opportunities for girls' education by intending to make schooling more flexibly organised and locally proximate, so as to mobilise community attention towards supporting girls' education. The MSA, which was undertaken in 1997, resulted in the enrolment of an additional

700,000 girls in schools. This campaign has been followed up this year with activities with special emphasis on girls belonging to scheduled castes and tribes. The Mahila Samakhyas Programme is operational in three DPEP districts and Sahayoginis are placed in one block of each of the DPEP districts conform to the MS model. Similarly, for the first time pre-primary education was introduced in rural schools through Shishu Shiksha Kendra (SSK) which gave attention to the 3-5 years age group children providing supportive environment for learning and socialisation. Based upon feedback from villages, the SSKs also facilitated children, especially girls, engaged in sibling care to attend a regular primary school. To date 4,025 SSKs have been opened in the DPEP districts. In Tikamgarh the JRM learned that a scholarship is provided to girls who have completed Class V as an incentive, if continuing with further education. The SPO is also preparing a proposal on the specific conditions and requirements to facilitate enrolment of more girls from Muslim families.

11. Initiatives specifically designed for tribal children have been introduced. These include opening Ashram Shalas on a cost sharing basis between DPEP and the Tribal Welfare Department, development of local specific supplementary teaching learning materials, and assistance and training of teachers in acquiring working knowledge of local dialects to facilitate their communication with school children at the initial state of learning.

12. Integrated education for children with disabilities is gradually receiving more attention in DPEP MP. The focus has been on social mapping to identify children who can be integrated into normal schools, as well as on improving the convergence between the various services. A pool of 76 resource persons has been established in the state with the support of UNICEF. Plans include the organisation of ten one-day workshops for principals of teacher training institutions to acquaint them with the principles of addressing the specific needs of children with disabilities. Teacher training modules already include a component on identifying mild disabilities. The JRM visiting Tikamgarh learned that the district provides from its own sources a monthly incentive of Rs 150 to parents of children with disabilities to encourage them to take their children to school. Designs for school facilities in MP have not yet facilitated the access of parents, staff or children with disabilities. Apart from the obvious modifications, such as providing ramps for users of wheelchairs, it is suggested that the state civil engineers consult specialists in IED on various other low-cost amenities that could be introduced. The RGPSM could also consider other options to facilitate children with disabilities.

13. The strategies of the RGPSM to improve attendance, retention and learning outcomes include efforts towards: (i) bring school closer to home, (ii) make schools look more attractive, (iii) make classroom more interesting and the teaching/learning processes more effective, (iv) address impediments like sibling care, and (v) introduce flexible timing and holidays. The JRM observed that in the visited schools 60-90% of the enrolled children attended the school. The JRM acknowledges the work initiated on a sample basis by the RGPSM on monitoring attendance, repetition and dropout. The JRM encourages the RGPSM to finalise these studies and analysis, as well as fine tune their monitoring and evaluation processes and the Integrated Programme Management Information System for broader applications.

Quality and Equivalence

14. One of the main accomplishments of DPEP in Madhya Pradesh, observed by the JRM, is the initial transformation in the classroom atmosphere. The learning environment has become friendlier and more interactive. Teaching/learning materials (TLM) are visible in the classroom, and to a certain extent used by the teacher and students. In addition, children are engaged in helping to create learning aids. In some tribal areas, supplementary materials based on life-experiences of children are being developed. The development and use of such supplementary materials is recommended for all communities.

15. SCERT in collaboration with Shikshak Samakhya (UNICEF supported NGO), Eklavya and other experts from different parts of the country has developed, with the support of DPEP MP, a package of academic improvement materials for the primary school called Sikhna Sikhana package. It contains a whole new curriculum, TLMs, teacher training, new evaluation techniques and a system of monitoring and feedback. The package also includes brief teacher guides for each lesson. The Sikhna Sikhana package is based on MLL competencies, joyful and activity centred learning and the experiences of rural children. Both the EGS schools and regular primary schools are implementing it. TLMs for grades I-IV have been field-tested, revised and are now being distributed to all the schools. The JRM acknowledges that for the first time in the state the TLMs for primary classes were developed on a field trial basis involving teachers, NGOs and academicians. The process of field-testing and distribution for grade V will be completed this year. The JRM however found that there is a scope for improving the trialling process to receive relevant feedback from the field. In course of the revision some of the elements of the child-centred and activity-based pedagogy seem to have faced also resistance as the original package got partly reverted to more traditional approach. The introduction of the child-centred approach is a major change and may have to be realised on a step-by-step basis. Increased sharing of experiences and opening up the debate for a broader forum would facilitate this process.

16. Alternative approaches to curriculum have also been initiated by the RGPSM with the help of an NGO from Rajasthan called Digantar. The Alternative Schooling programme investigates the possibility of non-graded contextualised learning to motivate children, particularly those of marginalised groups, to participate in schooling. In 34 districts 3, 366 Alternative Schools (AS) have been already opened. The JRM commends the RGPSM for the variety and quality of its TLMs and the fairly positive effect of AS pedagogy on classroom processes and achievement (Ref. Studies on AS and EGS 1998, Jha and Shrivastava). However, the JRM highlights the importance of monitoring the development of teachers' ability to continuously assess differential learning outcomes of individual children and the AS supervisor's understanding of the underlying pedagogical principles and skills to support the teacher. The JRM also welcomes the intention of the RGPSM and the SCERT to get the new curriculum, the different pedagogical approaches and different textbooks evaluated by the NCERT or by another national resource group.

17. The results of the recent Midterm Assessment Survey on Learning Achievements by NCERT indicate that DPEP MP needs to focus on improving the quality of learning processes and children's actual learning outcomes. In this regard there is a need to develop capacities at all levels and undertake internal monitoring

and evaluation and impact assessment of the various interventions and support mechanisms that DPEP MP is facilitating.

INSTITUTIONALISING OF CAPACITY IN PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

18. The SPO as well as most DPOs are fully functional, with the majority of posts filled. Various relevant training programmes have been provided. An important positive development is that the RGPSM has been able to retain most of its key staff at the state and district levels during the entire four-year project period. This has definitely had a positive bearing on the progress made in the implementation of DPEP MP.

19. Previously reported staffing problems of the SCERT have been overcome. It also appears that the SCERT has taken up its role in DPEP's drive for improving the quality of primary education. SCERT is aware that the improvement of the quality of primary education at the school level largely depends upon the ability of district institutions such as DIETs, BRCs and CRCs to deliver the required services. The SCERT sees its role very much as a delivery centre for the provision of services in a vertical way through the DIETs as intermediate institutions to the BRCs and CRCs. The understaffing of the DIETs are therefore regarded as a key issue to be addressed.

20. The JRM is of the opinion that the problems of DIET staffing need to be addressed in an integral manner and in the context of the proposed institutional reform plan for decentralisation of the primary education services as outlined in this chapter 4 of this report. In this context the implications of the DPEP experiences and the new expectations resulting from the decentralisation of educational planning and management to the profile and functioning of SCERT in the field of primary education also needs to be reviewed. Some states have opted to establish SCERT as an autonomous institution. MP may wish to consider this option as well.

21. The establishment of a SIEMT has been under consideration for some time in MP. In 1997 an advisory group was established by the State Government to examine the nature and functioning of the institution. The group recommended to establish the SIEMT as an independent institution. Meanwhile the SIEMT has been functioning within the State Project Office. Whereas 29 posts were established, serious problems have been encountered in filling these posts. The appointment of a director is still unresolved. The five appointed staff have developed training programmes and trained personnel in DPEP I and DPEP II districts in addition to writing modules for financial procedures and management for the sub-district implementation structures of the DPEP II states. In the absence of more detailed need analysis, the JRM is not convinced that the demand for education management warrants the establishment of a separate SIEMT, and as such the placing of the SIEMT cell within the SPO appears to be a workable solution for the time being. It is suggested that the future role and status of the cell be included in the discussions on the institutional reform plan for decentralisation.

22. At the village level there are clear signs that the VECs are gradually becoming more aware of their rights and responsibilities and of the real influence they can have on the management of the schools. There is however a need to provide continued and intensive capacity building support. This will require that the project staff and

functionaries at all levels as well as the agents delivering this training gain a deeper insight into the processes and techniques of participatory management. It also would be useful to explore the kind of support VECs are providing to the teachers in community schools related to the teaching/learning process.

DECENTRALISATION OF DECISION MAKING

23. Considerable headway has been made in MP with the decentralisation process enabled by the substantial initiatives undertaken by the State government during the past years. These include the transfer by notification of all physical assets of schools such as land, buildings and equipment, to the panchayats; placing of teachers and lecturers under the Panchayats, including the powers to appoint, transfer and take disciplinary action. The CEOs of the Zilla Panchayats have also been made ex-officio additional directors of the Department of School Education. Recruitment of teachers has been stopped by the government and the vacant posts have been transferred to the Panchayats.

24. It is on the basis of this decentralisation process that the RGPSM intends to model its institutional arrangement for educational management. Having worked for four years now in the mission mode at the state level, the RGPSM is proposing to bring the planning and management of primary education to the local level. The RGPSM proposes that the communities take control over the primary education and literacy. This would mean that the Panchayats carry the political and organisational responsibility, while the education department from district level downwards provides the academic support. In this model the cluster level will be the nucleus of the structure.

25. According to the proposal, at cluster level the CRCs will be renamed Jan Shiksha Kendra and will get full responsibility for all primary education components through the joint involvement of Panchayat representatives, teachers, gurujis and TLC volunteers. Similarly, at block level the Janpad Panchayat Education Committee, the BEO and the BRC will jointly become the Janpad Shiksha Kendra, while at district level the Zilla Shiksha Kendra will amalgamate the Panchayat District Education Committee, the DEO, the DIET, the Zilla Saksharata Samiti and the district unit of the Zilla Prathmik Shiksha Mission. All primary education and total literacy will be handled by this institution. The Mission mode will thus be transferred from the state to the district and village levels.

26. This is a challenging proposal and is worth pursuing. However, there are various aspects of the proposal which need intensive consultations and refinements before official sanction should be sought and implementation can take place. With this proposal MP is clearly setting the trend for other states in becoming serious about decentralisation. The JRM, therefore, strongly recommends that the proposal is given immediate follow-up, and that progress is shared with the DPEP Bureau and with the other states.

THE INFORMATION BASE

27. The RGPSM has made special effort to improve the authenticity of the basic educational statistics and to open up the data collection process to the teachers and communities in order to enable them to come up with their own priorities and solutions for the universalisation of primary education of quality. The JRM acknowledges the

the data collection processes in Madhya Pradesh cover formal primary schools, EGS centres as well as alternative schools.

28. The EMIS data 1995/96–1997/98 is available from all the DPEP I districts, and twelve out of the 14 DPEP II districts have provided the 1997/98 data to the SPO. Improvements in the data collection processes and instruments have allowed the SPO and DPOs in DPEP I districts to undertake reliable trend analysis on the EMIS data. Since 1996/97 the RGPSM has also facilitated a village-based, people centred data collection process in all 34 DPEP districts. Starting with the Lok Sampark Abhiyaan and continued through Mahila Shiksha Abhiyaans, this methodology has provided authentic information about out of school children. According to the SPO, the trends on enrolments based on the analysis of EMIS are confirmed by the LSA/MSA data and sample surveys.

29. The JRM team found that the stake holders at all levels in Jhabua and Tikamgarh and the eight districts, interacted with at the SPO, were aware of these trends and were using the data to set milestones for increasing enrolments and reducing dropout over the programme period. The data was being used for opening new schools, filling teacher vacancies and planning special interventions for target groups.

30. The VECs and CRCs monitor the attendance and retention of children at school through the Village Education Registers and their visits to the schools. The SPO has initiated a study on attendance in a sample of schools in six DPEP I and two DPEP II districts. The Integrated Programme Management Information System provides school wise information about the target groups, the DPEP inputs and the progress towards the DPEP objectives. As discussed in chapter 2.2 of this report, it enables cohort monitoring of repetition and drop-out rates. These areas now require special attention and intensified efforts by the RGPSM. Further development of monitoring and evaluation capacities, processes and mechanisms would be informative to DPEP at this stage where the focus has shifted to the quality improvement of primary education. This would also enable furthering of contextual planning, design of specific interventions and provision of technical and academic support, which the JRM team finds necessary requirements for the progress towards the ultimate DPEP goals. The JRM suggests that special efforts would be made by the SPO and DPOs to build the capacities at the block, cluster and village levels to utilise the emerging data on the qualitative aspects of the programme, towards this end.

31. The JRM acknowledges that a number of research studies and action research projects have been conducted and initiated, and a research cell has been set up in the SPO. However, the JRM found that there is a need to further diversify research and strengthen the capacities of existing institutions in qualitative research.

TEACHER TRAINING

32. Teacher training falls mainly under the purview of the District Institutes of Educational Training (DIET) together with a number of Master Trainers and Resource Groups, Block Resource Centres (BRC) and the Cluster Resource Centres (CRC) guided by the State Centre for Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and the RGPSM. These institutions are responsible for the training of regular primary school

teachers, Shiksha Karmis, Alternative School teachers, EGS Gurujis and SSK teachers.

33. There has been a quantum jump in training of teachers in the state. Prior to DPEP an average of 12, 500 teachers were trained in a year. As a result of the academic interventions of the RGPSM an average of 100,000 teachers are trained every year for an average period of 12 days. Furthermore, 369 Block Resource Centres (BRC) and 6, 296 Cluster Resource Centres (CRC) have been set up in the 34 DPEP districts. Such academic decentralisation has created a regular academic support and supervision system for schools which was missing before. Two new teacher training programmes are envisioned by the DPEP MP: (i) a five-day professional training course in five areas – math, language, environmental sciences, multi-grade teaching and student evaluation; and (ii) a one-year Professional Training Certificate course for EGS gurujis.

34. Teachers in EGS and regular primary schools undergo a different training than AS teachers. The District Resource Groups established for alternative schooling is responsible for training AS teachers who are then supervised by CRCs or CACs and AS supervisors. In the future the AS supervisors will also support the EGS gurujis. Training in this regard is underway. In areas where NGOs are implementing the AS programme, they are responsible for providing supervision.

35. There is still rather limited evidence that qualitative changes, which ultimately would lead to improved learning outcomes, have taken place at the classroom level, despite the amount of training, teachers have participated in. The JRM acknowledges the on-line evaluation of this year's teacher training programme which was conducted by the RGPSM involving independent agencies like the Regional Institute for Education along with others. The strengths and weaknesses of the programme were analysed and have been shared with the SCERT. The need therefore is to act on them now. In view of the aim of the RGPSM to bring the quality of learning processes and outcomes up front, the JRM however recommends that DPEP MP assesses in more detail its overall strategies to improve the teaching/learning processes and children's learning outcomes and reviews issues as: (i) decentralisation of training design to the district and sub-district levels and examine its implications to the DIETs if this were to happen, (ii) teacher development, and (iii) effectiveness of the teacher training and support.

36. The JRM has the impression that DPEP has not given the required attention to reflect on the extent to which the cascade structure and the training modules conceived by the state are transforming teachers' traditional methodologies and allowing them to effectively appropriate the new pedagogy in the classroom. In an effort to reduce the transmission loss from one level of training to the next, DPEP reduced the levels of training from four to three. The impact of this academic decentralisation needs to be monitored and documented. The JRM observed the need to develop teachers' reflective capacities specifically with reference to students' conceptual understanding and acquisition of learning competencies. Though student achievement is monitored on a quarterly basis, this data was not being used diagnostically to improve the learning processes in the classroom. By enabling teachers to continuously assess and monitor children's progress towards achieving learning competencies, education can be tailored to meet children's individual

learning needs. Further, attention needs to be given to the way in which the CRCs can facilitate this process more effectively through training and ongoing support to teachers.

37. SCERT has developed an assessment strategy for grades one and two, which will be implemented three times in the classroom beginning this year. Clearly, there is a need to accelerate the development of assessment strategies for grades III to IV in addition to implementing the use of this strategy in the classroom. It appears from the conversation and observation that teachers, while enthusiastic about the joyful and activity centred nature of the new pedagogy, give less importance to monitoring the academic level of their students and their actual acquisition of skills in literacy, numeracy and learning to learn. Therefore, strengthening capacities in diagnostic assessment and rethinking in-service teacher training and ongoing support can improve learning in the schools.

SUSTAINABILITY

38. The State Government acknowledges the role that the RGPSM is playing in the development of primary education in MP. Examples include the following: (i) the close collaboration on the important initiative of the EGS and its achievements within the planned period, (ii) the various policy decisions to decentralise educational planning and management to district and sub-district levels, and (iii) the prominent roles which various senior state and district officials are playing either in a private or ex-officio capacity to facilitate the DPEP implementation. The JRM had the opportunity to meet the Chief Secretary, as well as the Education Secretary and the Tribal Welfare Secretary and was at each meeting impressed by the level of commitment and appreciation expressed by these senior officials for the activities of the RGPSM.

39. Whereas under the 8th Plan MP's budgetary allocation to the social sectors is 23%, a raise to 42% is budgeted for the 9th Plan. The major part of this allocation is earmarked for education. Within the education sector elementary education receives approximately 75%, which is considerably higher than the national average. The State Government is aware that the improvements in the access to and quality of primary education together with various incentive schemes and followed by increased enrolment, retention and learning will ultimately lead to growing demands for opportunities in middle and high schools. This will require major additional investments, thus putting a further strain on scarce public funds for which MP so far has not yet found a solution.

40. Other decisions, which indicate that many of the DPEP experiences and achievements are being integrated within the rest of the primary education system and plans which augur well for the sustainability of DPEP's impact, include the following:

- The new competency based curriculum and textbooks have been introduced and distributed not only in DPEP districts but also across the State.
- Training for the academic co-ordinators and teachers has been extended also to the non-DPEP districts.
- The experiences of DPEP MP in implementing the SSK are being employed under the ICDS in three DPEP districts in view of increased emphasis placed on the educational component in the ICDS.

- The DPI, the SCERT and the RGPSM have reviewed their data requirements in primary education and the existing MIS to rationalise data collection and information management in the state.

41. Opening of AS and EGS centres and the state policy on the recruitment of Shiksha Karmis have provided children with access to learning opportunities in localities which otherwise would have remained without such services for many years to come. However, the Shiksha Karmis and Gurujis employed in these schools are paid a much smaller salary than the regular primary school teachers. It is likely that at a certain time, after being trained adequately, they will demand a similar compensation structure. If not properly managed, this may have a counterproductive effect on these innovations.

42. Although a small budget is allocated to schools for minor repairs, regular maintenance is not yet taken as a serious issue in DPEP MP. Relying upon resources coming from the Rural Engineer Services is at best naive. DPEP needs to ensure that during all training and induction of the Gram Panchayats' maintenance of school facilities is treated as an important and essential liability, and should be an integral part of the AWPB process.

43. The AS and EGS models are now operating side by side with the regular primary schools. It is important that these experiments be consolidated and assessed to facilitate ultimate decision-making. There is a certain amount of mobility noticeable between the various schools. In some formal primary schools the enrolment has decreased due to children opting for AS, reportedly better meeting their personal life conditions. Whereas such mobility in itself is not a negative phenomenon, it is worthwhile for the State authorities and the RGPSM to consider the lessons learned from the EGS and AS experiments and to explore the extent to which some of the innovations could be implemented in the formal schools. Experiences of the non-graded approach of Alternative Schooling bear particular relevance in view of the aim to improve the teaching/learning processes in multi-grade situation. Such analysis might subsequently lead to introducing positive changes to the formal primary education system.

44. Also, the establishment of various state and district level resource groups, e.g. for the development of the TLMs, has created a pool of expertise, which need be retained after DPEP has been completed. Strategies need to be worked out to ensure that such expertise is institutionalised and sustained.

THE NEXT STEPS

- The JRM acknowledges the recent study by the RGPSM on this year's in-service teacher training programme and recommends that the RGPSM now reviews in a holistic manner its approaches and strategies for, as well as the impact of the the DPEP supported interventions related to teacher development and support to enhance the quality of the teaching/learning processes and the actual learning outcomes of children.
- The JRM acknowledges the importance of the ongoing development of an institutional reform plan for decentralisation and recommends that the draft

proposal prepared by the RGPMS be used as the basis for further dialogue and decision-making concerning decentralisation.

- The JRM recommends that research, monitoring and evaluation capacities are further strengthened, particularly at the district and sub-district levels, and a specific program for research be worked out in collaboration with state, district and sub-district level stakeholders.

Recommendation IDR Mission	Progress Made
<p>1. DPEP to organise an interactive dialogue with all governmental and non-governmental parties involved, to reflect on the future role of DPEP.</p>	<p>In 1998 the RGPSM organised in collaboration with the Department of Education a workshop where experiences of DPEP and other initiatives in elementary education were shared. Emerging issues to be addressed were among the topics discussed at this workshop.</p> <p>As a follow-up of this workshop the RGPSM has prepared a first draft proposal for an institutional development strategy. The proposal focuses on the decentralisation of the planning and management of primary education.</p> <p>Under the research and evaluation component the Mission is developing partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organisations, in order to get regular feedback on the progress of the programme implementation.</p>
<p>2. DPEP interventions to include a transfer of project implementation activities to districts and schools.</p>	<p>Various initiatives have been undertaken to increase the participation of district, sub-district and community involvement in the implementation of the project activities.</p> <p>These have been supported by state policy decisions such as the transfer of authority to the panchayats for the recruitment, appointment and posting of teachers, as well as a transfer of ownership of all school buildings, equipment and land.</p>
<p>3. There is a need for the transfer of all technical support interventions to the support organisations.</p>	<p>There are clear signs that such transfer are taking place. However the "traditional" support organisations such as SCERT and DIETs are still inadequately staffed. Staff-in-post often lack the right background and attitude towards innovative primary education developments. NGOs and TRGs are involved at the state and district level, but some TRGs lack adequate external expertise and hence are too dependent upon internal education staff.</p>
<p>4. DPEP needs to strengthen its role in management development.</p>	<p>The RGPSM is gradually addressing this complicated issue: e.g. DPOs were sent to Missouri for training in the appraisal of AWPBs in the context of capacity building for decentralisation.</p>
<p>5. At state level more focus must be given to the formulation of adequate and innovative policies.</p>	<p>A significant demonstration of the formulation of such policies is the headway made by drafting the institutional development proposal for decentralisation. Other activities undertaken include the planning of activities specifically targeted at education for Muslim girls, and the EGS programme, which has won a gold award at the International Innovations Award Programme of the Commonwealth.</p>

ORISSA STATE REPORT

DPEP EIGHTH JOINT REVIEW MISSION
26 October - 6 November 1998
ORISSA STATE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. A team comprised of Susan E. Hirshberg (World Bank) and John Shotton (DFID) visited Orissa from 27 October until 1 November, 1998. The team met with key staff of the SPO and SRG, SCERT, SIEMAT, the RIE and four DPCs in Bhubaneswar, and the District Collector, district level officials, teacher trainers, teachers, VEC and MTA members, and Head Teachers in the expansion district of Sambalpur. The objectives of the mission were to assess the extent to which DPEP is making progress towards its objectives; identify constraints which impede progress; assess the extent to which decision making is being decentralised to the district and community level; determine ways in which DPEP is influencing the mainstream education system; and to evaluate plans for sustaining, institutionalising, and integrating DPEP interventions beyond the life of the project.

2. The team wishes to express sincere appreciation to all the education officials and other stakeholders for the warm hospitality, open and frank discussions, and valuable sharing of information extended both in Bhubaneswar and Sambalpur.

PROGRESS OF DPEP TOWARDS ITS OBJECTIVES

3. Orissa has been a Special Watch State since the sixth JSM in October 1997. The mission notes the progress made with the support of a strong SPO and assistance from the DPEP Bureau and TSG. Particularly noteworthy are the well developed planning and training activities that resulted in creating competent implementation groups at the state and district level with a strong vision of the goals and objectives of DPEP, and important research conducted by SCERT, SIEMAT and the RIE. While implementation still lags behind desirable targets and will continue to need close monitoring, the mission believes that Orissa is now well placed to accelerate implementation activities due to progress in planning and training.

Access, Retention and Equity

4. Progress in enrolment for the year 1997-98 in the original five districts is mixed. In three of the districts the enrolment in classes one and two has declined whereas for classes three, four and five there has been an increase. It should be noted that the decline in enrolment in classes one and two could be explained by the inability of the EMIS software to capture private school enrolment, and/or incorrect data for the first year. Data is also available from the three expansion

districts for one year, confirming the pattern from the original districts, but as yet it is difficult to assess trends in relation to retention and equity across the state.

5. The SC community has not been targeted as a separate group, which may warrant attention, but there has been extensive analysis of the ST community's situation and needs. The SRG and BRGs have all been trained and sensitised to tribal issues. Two training modules have been developed and forty teachers in tribal communities have been trained in each. There have been some noteworthy increases in tribal enrolment, for example in Sambalpur where figures are up by 25 percent for 1997-98. In relation to working children currently the National Child Labour Project is operational in Orissa. DPEP is aiming to converge with this programme. A twenty one day training manual has been developed for IED interventions and co-ordinators for a pilot block project in each district are in place.

Quality and Equivalence

6. Planning for improved quality in classroom practice is evident in the content and delivery of the first seven day teacher training programme to 23,000 teachers out of 38,000. Teachers not trained in the first round due to the lack of BRCs available in 1997/98 will receive supplementary training during this fiscal year. The second module developed is currently being implemented across the districts, and should be completed by January 1999. Sustaining the impact of the training is impeded by the lack of full-time CRC co-ordinators to develop the monthly cluster meetings or support the teachers in their own classrooms. Class one and two textbooks have been revised and are now integrated and gender sensitive. They will be printed and distributed by June 1999. Class three to five textbooks are being revised according to MLL standards as well as embodying the pedagogy espoused under DPEP. The mission believes the revisions could be accelerated in order to ensure that all books will be revised, tested and used in schools before the end of DPEP.

7. There is clear evidence of the development of a more holistic pedagogical approach in the rationale and content of the teacher training programme, as well as research programmes that have been developed in the RIE, SCERT and selected DIETs. This knowledge and vision are evident amongst the SPO and DPO staff and the SRG, as well as the staff of the nodal institutions such as SCERT, SIEMAT and the RIE. More work could be done to transfer this understanding of the new pedagogy, particularly to the BRCs, the incoming CRCs and teachers. School visits revealed that most teachers who received the first round of training are attempting to change interactions in the classroom (e.g.: students are likely to be sitting in groups and TLM are widely used), but more experience and support would help teachers use the interactive activities to generate more effective learning. The SRG is aware that the further development

of teacher training plans needs to deepen teachers' comprehension of interactive learning, but the lack of functioning CRCs impedes this progress.

8. Orissa DPEP is engaged in developing a multicultural approach in relation to learning materials, yet despite this there is little evidence of a multi-level focus. A considerable amount of work has been done in the area of tribal education and IED which the state is currently piloting and intends to scale up in another year.

9. Developing the Alternative School (AS) program in Orissa is lagging and warrants acceleration. The state has done a considerable amount of planning and development in this area, and made critical decisions regarding target groups, developing the selection procedures and criteria for establishing AS and ensuring equivalence. Movement in implementation is impeded, however, because the microplanning exercise has not yet been completed in any districts. In the meantime, the state has decided to pilot 20 AS in each DPEP district in unserved communities small enough to merit establishment of an AS. The mission reiterates the importance of completing the microplanning exercise as soon as possible so as to help facilitate implementation of this critical component.

Programme Management

10. Orissa remains a low spending state. Only Rs 728 lakh out of an approved allocation of Rs 5890 lakh, or 12 percent, has been spent six months into the fiscal year. However, there has been a noticeable increase in expenditure over last year and the SPD believes that expenditure will continue to accelerate given the conclusion of the elections and the passing of adverse weather conditions.

11. Generally staffing at both state and district levels is up to strength. However, the programme is severely hampered by the lack of full-time, senior class-officers from the State Civil Service as DPC/ADPCs. Similarly there are no full-time CRC co-ordinators in place. The mission understands that the State Government of Orissa is giving consideration to filling these posts with full-time, permanent staff which the team welcomes, it being understood that this would greatly assist programme implementation. The mission also believes that there might be a gap in implementation and information sharing at the district level due to the absence of a DRG. In order to integrate the work of state and district level departments, such as SCERT and DIETS with the DPC, the state is planning to establish a DRG in the near future.

12. The evidence of community involvement in programme management at the village level, and indications of efforts from state and district level administrators to encourage schools to take an increasing share of responsibility

for school improvement and management is beginning, but might warrant attention. For example, the SPO could give consideration to piloting an initiative where support is given to one school in each block to prepare a school development plan in order to develop a modality to go to scale.

INSTITUTIONALISING CAPACITY IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

OM

13. Development of SIEMAT is one that demonstrates strong progress DPEP Orissa in the last six months. As the DPEP Bureau's special report on Orissa noted, 16 out of 22 posts have been filled, and the staff have developed training modules and conducted research projects to support DPEP. There is a clear delineation of the roles of SCERT and SIEMAT, and the work appears to be very complementary. However, staff in SIEMAT have not been given permanent status which may erode stability and continuity in planning and management capacity. It will be difficult to attract or keep the high quality staff needed for this essential institution without a commitment by the Education Department to maintain it following DPEP.

14. Various stakeholders (individuals from non-education departments, elected representatives of local bodies, academics and individuals from resource organisations and educational functionaries) participated in the initial planning process of DPEP at the state and district levels. The desire and intent on the part of these groups to be more fully integrated into primary education planning structures is high, but the position of the State Government as to what these structures will look like or how they will function is as yet unclear. There is little evidence or indication of the long-term institutionalisation of SRGs or DRGs following the completion of DPEP. The VECs are elected bodies and are likely to continue, but their role beyond managing the use of the Rs. 2000 school improvement grant under should expand over time to include wider school management responsibilities.

DECENTRALISATION OF DECISION MAKING

14. The state and district levels the evidence of convergence in the area of discussion and decision making between the DPEP administration, the education and non-education departments of the state and district administrations and the Panchayati Raj institutions is varied. At the state level convergence exists but only at the Executive Committee level. At the district level, especially in Sambalpur, the commitment of the District Collector to DPEP has led to the involvement of the officers of the education department in the programme but convergence with the PRIs is minimal, usually involving participation in enrolment drives.

15. Strategies to increase the participation at the sub-district level, particularly the village and the school, in key areas of decision making are in the process of

being established. Extensive planning and training has taken place for the SRG and BRGs in areas of community mobilisation and gender and tribal awareness. The SPO is considering engaging the international NGO Actionaid and its network of local, district-based NGOs in community mobilisation efforts. VECs and MTAs are established and it is anticipated that they will become more involved in the next phase of the programme. Extensive training for these organisations on their role outside of using the Rs. 2000 school improvement grant will be required for them to assume management responsibilities of any significance.

16. One particularly strong feature of decentralised decision making in Orissa is the independence of BRCs. Complete authority has been delegated from the DPO. Co-ordinators are entirely responsible for planning and administration and do not require the sanction of the DPO for budgeting and expenditure.

THE INFORMATION BASE

17. EMIS is fully functional at the state level and officers have been trained at the district level with the hardware being awaited for installation in the DPOs. There is evidence of the use of the data in identifying areas for new school construction, and for teacher deployment and in the preparation of the most recent AWPBs. Further, it is the intention of the SPO in conjunction with some DPOs to develop software that will complement the EMIS by capturing private school enrolment and teacher transfer information. These will be incorporated into the EMIS.

18. Significant amounts of research are being conducted by RIE, SCERT and SIEMAT in conjunction with the SPO, DPOs and DIETs. The mission received over twenty research studies which provide valuable insight into the development of the programme, but which also reveal a research capacity that will be of enormous value to the programme. Further, the SPO and SIEMAT intend to incorporate action research training into subsequent rounds of the teacher training programme.

19. There is little evidence of the development of evaluation and impact assessment procedures and the project may wish to consider this to assist planning and deepen the decentralisation process.

TEACHER TRAINING AND TEACHER SUPPORT

20. Evidence of improved quality in teacher training is clear from the first two training modules developed: the first focused on the new pedagogy and child development, and the second has built on this to include subject/content matter with better links to interactive activities. Teacher support mechanisms for follow-

on work are minimal and the mission would like to see these developed in the next six months as a matter of priority. Most critical would be the appointment of full-time CRC Co-ordinators to visit teachers in schools on a regular basis and to hold monthly cluster meetings to address group teacher development concerns. It will be essential that as these individuals are recruited and trained, that their roles are seen as supportive, to develop teachers' capabilities, and not monitorial.

21. BRC coordinators have been hired and trained in all districts, and are currently conducting the teacher training. It is interesting to note that Orissa has consciously broken the cascade model, and will continue having the BRCs train teachers, while the CRCs will focus on supervision and teacher development work. This is another reason that the CRCs must be made available full-time as soon as practicable. With regard to the BRCs, the three expansion districts are in the process of procuring motorcycles for use on rugged terrain. However, the five first phase districts, in which BRCs have similar supervision and training responsibilities, would also benefit by the availability of motorcycles.

22. There is little evidence of developing the capacity in DIETs to deliver the kind of training programmes that have been recommended under DPEP. The staff of all the DIETs have received some training under DPEP, but it is not being put to use. In part this is due to the perception that the DIET staff are weak and commonly not from the primary education cohort. DIETs are taking part in conducting some research, and in the training of BRCs, but to effectively support the pedagogical change introduced in DPEP over time will require more commitment to the DIETs and more training. At present, there is little effective communication between the DIETs and DPOs, but this appears to be reflective of a wider issue concerning the structure of the state system and the relationship among SCERT, the DIETs and the state and district DPEP implementing offices: the SPO and DPOs function in parallel to SCERT and the DIETs, so if the relationship is weak, coordination could suffer.

SUSTAINABILITY AND THE TRANSFER OF DPEP EXPERIENCE

23. Consideration of policies by the state government regarding issues such as the length of the instructional day, grade repetition, the recruitment and deployment of teachers and norms relating to student to staff ratios is not evident. The State Government has instituted a policy that 210 days is the accepted minimum number of days of instruction in a year.

24. There is a strong awareness on the part of the state and district level implementing officials and in the nodal institutions of the potential benefit in expanding the DPEP experiences and achievements to reform the primary education system as a whole. However, the state is still deliberating on whether to institutionalise certain DPEP interventions, and there appears to be a

reluctance to undertake some activities which would have recurrent cost liabilities. This has the potential to affect the sustainability of programme gains. For example, and as mentioned above, there may be a great benefit to SIEMAT and CRC staff being taken on as permanent staff to support planning for and management of primary education. The state could also analyse teacher recruitment needs in order to meet the demand of teachers for new schools, as well as those in which enrolment increases cause overcrowding.

25. The state might also wish to consider how new structures and interventions will be supported post-DPEP. Sustainability of the changes being made is a crucial area: DPEP is adopting new management processes and practices and critical reflection on how to move forward are taking place in the SPO and DPOs. These issues may warrant discussion with the State Government to ensure the sustainability of the impact of project gains.

NEXT STEPS

Institutional development plan:

26. Given that one of the principal conclusions of the first in-depth review of DPEP in 1997 was to recommend that states prepare development plans for key institutions in order to sustain the progressive aspects of DPEP, and that the seventh JSM specifically asked Orissa DPEP to develop such a plan, the SPO might consider preparing an outline for an institutional development plan that could be shared with the next mission for discussion. The outline could be general, which could lead to the presentation of actual institutional development plans for SIEMAT, SCERT, DIETs, BRCs, CRCs and VECs to the next in-depth review in twelve months time.

Training:

27. Training programmes have developed significantly in Orissa DPEP during the past year. The SPO is conscious that it is time to develop a longitudinal plan for training and support programmes to ensure that overall objectives of this vital component are met by the end of the project. The mission supports this view and suggests that the SPO might develop detailed plans for training for teacher training, community mobilisation, VEC and MTAs and teacher support/supervision mechanisms, so that each module builds on the experiences of the previous one.

Evaluation and impact assessment:

28. One of the key lessons from DPEP I states is the importance of impact assessment of project in-puts to inform planning. The SPO might consider

developing a strategy for impact assessment that could be shared with the DPEP Bureau in advance of the next mission.

UTTAR PRADESH STATE REPORT

DPEP EIGHTH JOINT REVIEW MISSION
26 OCTOBER - 6 NOVEMBER 1998
UTTAR PRADESH STATE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. A Mission team comprised of Messrs. Ulf Metzger (Education Consultant, EC) and Juan Prawda (Principal Education Specialist, World Bank) visited Uttar Pradesh from October 26 – 31, 1998, to review the implementation progress of the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project (UPBEP I and II) and the Second District Primary Education Programme (DPEPII). The Mission visited the districts of Bareilly (DPEPII) and Udham Singh Nagar (BEP) and held extensive discussions in Lucknow with the state project office (SPO) and representatives of SCRT, SIEMAT, State Institute of Education, Mahila Samakhya and the districts of Sitapur (BEP), Saharanpur (BEP), Gonda (DPEPII) and Firozabad (DPEPII). Findings of the mission were discussed with the Government of Uttar Pradesh (GOUP) in a wrap-up meeting chaired by the Principal Secretary Education and attended by the SPO Director. The Mission wishes to express its deep gratitude to GOUP, the SPO, the DPOs, district officials, authorities of the institutions sited, community members and teachers for the hospitality and arrangements made for the Mission to be able to carry out its objectives.

2. The mission followed up on the 7th JSM recommendations for UP and found that they have been substantially addressed. The mission notes that the filling of about 11,700 teacher vacancies in BEP/DPEPII districts by GOUP and the construction programme for DPEPII are in progress and are expected to be substantially completed by the time of the 9th JRM in March 1999.

PROGRESS OF DPEP TOWARDS ITS OBJECTIVES

3. UPBEPI in its 5th year of implementation and UPBEP II and DPEPII in their 1st year of implementation, are progressing satisfactorily albeit at different paces. The current thrust in UPBEPI's primary education is to enhance the pedagogical process and ensure a smooth transition to the mainstream educational institutions at project completion in the year 2000. In upper primary, the priority is being shifted from increasing enrolment to improving educational quality. The main focus in DPEPII has been to establish the managerial and technical infrastructure required for project implementation.

Access, retention and equity

4. Overall primary school enrolment in BEP districts in the period 91/92 to 97/98 has increased 32% as compared to 22% in non-BEP districts. The enrolment of girls in BEP districts in lower and upper primary has been

significantly larger than the one for boys (74.5% as compared with 48.6% and 45.4% as compared with 37.7% respectively) and the gross enrolment rates (GER) for boys and girls in BEP districts has already surpassed the targeted GER for the year 2000 (100% as compared with 85% for boys and 74% as compared to 72% for girls).

5. The construction programme in UPBEPI has been satisfactorily completed and the one for UPBEPII is about to be completed. The school construction programme for DPEPII is lagging behind schedule due to delays in: (i) approving innovative construction prototypes developed through the innovation fund available in DPEPII; and (ii) setting in motion the required technical supervision scheme. The mission was informed that the DPEPII construction programme will show significant progress by the time of the 9th JRM.

6. UPBEP has created almost 17,000 primary teaching posts in lower primary and close to 9,000 in upper primary. DPEPII will require about 3,000 new teaching posts for the additional schools to be constructed. The mission was informed that there are about 11,800 teacher vacancies in BEP/DPEPII districts in the process to be filled up by the GOUP and that this process is expected to be substantially completed by December 1998.

7. BEP/DPEPII is implementing a model cluster development approach for girls education integrating a menu of already independently proven strategies including: (i) gender sensitisation of VECs; (ii) opening of ECCE centres in convergence with ICDS; (iii) alternative schooling packages, in particular rahar Pathshala for 9-14 age girls; (iv) convergence with Mahila Samakhya; and (v) gender sensitisation in teacher training modules and teaching learning materials. The cluster development experiment will be piloted and closely monitored in two clusters of 8 to 10 villages of each project district. In addition, a strategy for working children is being implemented on a pilot scale in two DPEPII districts (Firozabad and Moradabad) which the SPO may wish to closely monitor for further expansion to other project districts. Furthermore, planning and development of training and information materials for the school integration of children with disabilities in 9 project districts in 1999 are being currently carried out.

Quality and equivalence

8. Findings of the second learning assessment survey indicate that composite mean scores in language in BEP districts improved from 34% in 1994 to 37% in 1997 and the mean achievement levels in mathematics in BEP districts were higher than in control districts.

9. Alternative school (AS) co-ordinators have been appointed in all project districts. There are 756 operational ASs with about 18,400 children in the 6-14 age group in BEP districts while 1,125 ASs are to be established in DPEPII

districts. GOUP has already approved an equivalence strategy to ensure a smooth transition of children from AS centres to the formal school system.

10. The state resource group (SRG) plays a key role to ensure a holistic pedagogical approach in curriculum revision, improved textbook development and design of in-service teacher training modules. The first round of teacher training in DPEPII districts to improve the motivation, commitment and attitudes of teachers was provided to about 44,000 teachers (out of 53,000). The second round of massive training comprising classroom transactions and teaching/learning methodologies is to start at the beginning of 1999 using alternative venues while the BRCs are under construction. This second round of training will utilise distance education materials and modules developed by the SIET. The improved textbooks for classes I to III, currently under development, will be ready for use in schools by July 1999.

Programme management

11. The SPO and the DPOs are fully operational and all the key professional sanctioned positions are filled. Some few clerical level positions are still vacant. The mission appreciates the learning management experience developed in the project at the SPO/DPO levels and requests GOUP to retain these key management professionals in the project.

12. The mission observed during the field visit a strong awareness and commitment of the community towards the objectives of the project. The mission appreciates the progress made in the direction of capacity building and mobilisation of VECs. Community mobilisation co-ordinators have been positioned in all project districts. More than 15,700 village education committees (VECs) with over 330,000 members have been trained in project districts. VECs are active in environmental building, microplanning, school construction and management including the monitoring of teacher and student attendance. The SPO may wish to further strengthen the follow-up of VEC training. Active women participation in the VECs and Panchayats and in the management of formal and alternative schools and ECCEs centres has been one visible outcome of the Mahila Samakhya programme. The SPO may wish to consider strengthening their strategy to encourage more parents with children in school to participate more actively in school management and quality improvement processes.

13. Expenditures in BEP districts almost mirror the targets included in the approved AWPBs. The expenditures in DPEPII, although low with respect to the expected targets included in the approved AWPBs due to delays in the construction programme, are catching up. The UPSKLSP (State Implementation Society) has already approved a plan to utilise about 40 crores Rs. resulting from the devaluation of the Rupee for additional school and

classroom construction in BEP districts, which the project should now speedily implement.

INSTITUTIONALISATION OF CAPACITY IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

14. The staff position and technical capacity of SIEMAT has significantly improved since the last JSM. SIEMAT is actively involved in organising and providing various training programmes and workshops on educational planning and management as well as in preparation and formulation of AWPBs. It is also conducting research on various topics, including classroom observation and EMIS data analysis. The findings of the classroom observation study, which is about to be completed, will be essential to ascertain the effectiveness of the gamut of project actions and strategies aimed at improving the quality of the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

15. The mission endorses the recommendations emerging from the discussions on future approaches in capacity building for planning and management held last August in the National Society for Promotion of Development Administration, Research and Training (NSDART) in Mussoorie. The forthcoming SIEMAT/NSDART training for the preparation of the 1999/00 AWPBs will further address the integration of the information of microplanning, EMIS, PMIS, BAS and other research findings as well as introduce a more analytical approach with respect to the physical and financial spillovers resulting from the execution of past AWPBs. The SPO may wish to ensure that the SCERT completes the dissemination of BAS findings to all project districts.)

16. There is ample evidence in BEP/DPEPII of convergence with other public and private institutions to tap on available resources (funds for construction from Jawahar Rojgar Yojana/Employment Assurance Scheme of GOUP) and/or proven expertise (Rishi Valley Education Centre in Andhra Pradesh, M.V. Foundation in Hyderabad, Loreto schools in Calcutta, Nalanda in Lucknow, Creda in Mirzapur, etc.) to enhance project implementation.

DECENTRALISATION OF DECISION MAKING

17. The appraisal of the 1998-99 AWPBs was decentralised to the state, which in turn commissioned NSDART (Mussoorie) to carry out this task. For the appraisal of the 1999-00 AWPBs, the SPO will commission SIEMAT to undertake this task. SIEMAT is receiving training assistance from NSDART for this purpose. The mid-term review of the execution of AWPBs has been already devolved from GOI to the SPO. In addition, SIEMAT and NSDART are co-operating closely in the training of SPO and DPO staff in project districts for the undertaking of the forthcoming AWPBs exercise.

18. The inclusion of qualified representatives from all levels of decision making, especially primary school teachers, into the SRG and DRGs in DPEPII districts

is a positive indication that the process of pedagogical renewal and other key project activities are being decentralised.

19. DPOs in BEP districts are fairly autonomous in the execution of their approved AWPBs (selection of sites for school, BRC and NPRC construction, establishment of AS and ECCE centres, etc.). In the case of DPEPII, there is still a need for closer monitoring of the execution of the approved district AWPBs by the SPO.

20. One mechanism put in place by GOUP/SPO in project districts to ensure convergence between the Gram Panchayati Raj and VECs is to have some common members in both institutions.

21. To continue strengthening the decentralisation process, the SPO may further encourage diversity, innovation and creativity in achieving the BEP/DPEP objectives at the district, sub-district and school/village levels.

THE INFORMATION BASE

22. Net enrolment rates (NER) are available in the EMIS for some BEP districts. NER for the rest of the BEP districts, will be made available at the time of the 9th JRM (March 1999). Retention rates are not yet available for BEP districts. SIEMAT is conducting a retention rate study in several BEP districts whose findings will be made available for discussion at the time of the 9th JRM (March 1999).

23. SIEMAT has started intensive efforts to strengthen capacity in classroom-related action research at the sub-district level (for example, use of the teachers' 500 Rs. grant). In addition, SIEMAT is networking with other national and international institutions (for example, IIEP/UNESCO) in the areas of educational planning, management, documentation and research.

24. The mission suggests that the construction of new upper primary schools in BEP districts be carried out in a phased manner based on enrolment and transition rates.

TEACHER TRAINING

25. It is too early to ascertain the impact of the teacher training activities carried out under DPEPII to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process in the classroom, as the project has just recently completed the first round of training activities. However, the mission observed a follow-up strategy in DPEPII districts. In the case of BEP districts, the mission feels that the process of school visits to follow-up the training impact should be strengthened. The classroom observation study conducted by SIEMAT in some BEP and non-BEP districts, to

be completed by December 1999, will provide essential information to ascertain the above-mentioned impact.

26. DPEPII has set in motion, through the SRG and DRGs, a comprehensive strategy to improve the quality and the impact of the teaching-learning process in the classroom. This strategy includes: (i) visioning workshops; (ii) conceptual framework workshops; (iii) exposure visits to other successful experiences; (iv) school placement; (v) holistic approach to curriculum revision, improved textbook development and design of in-service teacher training modules and materials; (vi) trialling; and (vii) monitoring through periodic visits to schools, evaluation and fine tuning of the entire process. The in-service teacher training cycle includes the following four rounds: (i) motivation, commitment and attitudes; (ii) classroom interaction and teaching methodologies; (iii) content and subject matter; and (iv) internal evaluation and assessment. The mission appreciates and endorses this holistic approach to pedagogical renewal and quality improvement.

27. The SPO may consider to further strengthen the capacity of DIETs in project districts. In addition, GOUP may consider to speed up the filling of sanctioned posts in DPEPII DIETs. The above measures are important in view of the fact that DIETs will be the main driving force and mainstream institutions at the district and sub-district levels to ensure sustainability of the pedagogical innovations after project completion. GOI, GOUP and the SPO may want to urgently address these issues before the completion of the UPBEP in March 2000.

28. The sites for the 215 BRCs and 2,116 NPRCs have been selected for construction work. The training programmes are being carried out on a massive scale (for 44,000 teachers) in alternative venues in spite of construction delays with respect to the AWPBs' schedule. The mission was informed that the construction programme will be completed by July 1999. BRC sanctioned positions in project districts are substantially filled and about 627 positions at the NPRCs (out of 2,116) remain to be filled.

SUSTAINABILITY

29. The SPO has commissioned a study for the development of a detailed sustainability and mainstreaming plan for UPBEP along the following four project dimensions: (i) innovative management practices and organisational arrangements; (ii) academic support structures and in-service teacher training activities; (iii) VECs' activities; and (iv) financial recurrent liabilities.

30. The physical location of the SPO in a wing of the Directorate of Basic Education of GOUP is a strategy to facilitate the day-to-day co-ordination and transactions between the project management structures and the mainstream state educational institutional authorities and will contribute to an orderly and

timely institutionalisation of all the technical and managerial assets created during project implementation.

31. The VEC training and microplanning modules developed in the project have been adopted by GOUP for the rest of the state. In addition, the BRC and NPRC training model is being analysed by GOUP to be extended to non-project districts. Finally, improved textbooks being developed under DPEPII will be submitted to the UP Basic Education Council for approval and adoption in non-project districts.

THE NEXT STEPS

32. GOUP assured the Mission, that the process to fill all sanctioned teacher posts and DIET vacancies in project districts will be substantially completed by the time of the next JRM in March 1999.

33. SPO assured the Mission to substantially complete the construction programme included in the approved 1997-98 and 1998-99 AWPBs by the time of the next JRM in March 1999.

34. SPO assured the Mission to accelerate the implementation of activities geared at improving the quality of education in upper primary in BEP districts.

WEST BENGAL STATE REPORT

DPEP EIGHTH JOINT REVIEW MISSION
26 October- 6 November 1998
WEST BENGAL STATE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. The members of the Joint Review Mission (JRM) who visited West Bengal were Drs Satbir Silas (Gol) and Terri Kelly (DFID). The team visited the State Project Office (SPO), the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), the West Bengal Board for Primary Education (WBBPE) and had meetings with the Minister and the Secretary of Education. The team had meetings with the State Project Director (SPD) and other State Project Office (SPO) officials representing the areas of Planning and Monitoring, Management Information Systems (MIS), Finance, Civil Works, Integrated Education for Disabled (IED) children, Distance Learning, Community Mobilisation, Alternative Schooling (AS), Research, Pedagogy and Training. There was also a meeting with District planners of Cooch Behar, Murshidabad, Birbhum and South 24 Parganas (where DPEP has been operating formally since July 1997); Jalpaiguri and Purulia (new Districts in the expansion scheme). The team visited Bankura and South 24 Parganas Districts. In the former the team had meetings with the DPO and a number of other DPO staff; with the District Magistrate and Additional DM, District Inspector (DI), the Chairs of the District Primary School Council (DPSC) and the Zilla Parishad, the Chair of the Standing Committee on Education of the Zilla Parishad and a representative of the Teachers' Association. The field visits included five primary schools, one Primary Training Institute (PTI), an Arts Centre which has been assisting the TLM activity and the planned District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) building. In the latter District the team's (briefer) visit included meetings with DPO staff and a visit to three primary schools. In each District the team also had meetings and discussions with guardians, teachers, Village Education Committee (VEC) Chairs and members and Panchayat Raj institution (PRI) representatives at different levels.

2. The SPD accompanied the team on all visits and meetings and the team greatly welcomed this and are grateful to the SPD for being so generous with his time and co-operation. The team would also like to thank everyone who extended such warm hospitality and genuine contributions to the discussions and for all concerned with the efficient and friendly logistical arrangements which greatly facilitated the Mission.

PROGRESS OF DPEP TOWARDS ITS OBJECTIVES

3. In considering general progress towards objectives, there are good indicators in West Bengal which forecast a well-grounded implementation of the thorough planning and fresh approach which has been undertaken since the last JRM. However, some of the activities intended to have been accomplished within the six months' period following the seventh mission are still outstanding. (See Annex 1.)

4. During the Mission, in answer to questions about enrolment and retention trends, beliefs were expressed that drop-out has declined and enrolment increased but no specific evidence was given on which this belief is based. Similarly, there is little information about the numbers of children with disability and the numbers of Scheduled Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST) children in and out of school, though some work (a survey) is now being done on this. An IED consultant has now been appointed to the SPO and clear (but short term) plans were described regarding a forthcoming sensitisation programme on disability issues and some good ideas were explained regarding introducing a pre-primary early start for disabled children. Policy on Alternative Schooling (AS) is still being developed but it is noteworthy that there is evidence now of West Bengal DPEP seeking to learn from others through collaboration with NGOs, specially in respect of AS.

5. The fact that baseline surveys are only just being attempted (through District level studies) means that the impact to date of DPEP cannot be adequately assessed. If comparisons can be based on evidence that will be all the better for quality assurance and quality enhancement. The lack of certainty and evidence about the trends and requirements for teaching and learning and the situation of target, marginalised groups of learners is a direct consequence of a lack of progress, until very recently, on resolving key institutional matters and in creating an integrated and supported environment for DPEP at State level. Conditions have changed very much for the better within the last two months and the prognosis for a healthy institutional arrangement is now good.

6. Some important staffing appointments at SPO and DPO level have been made but yet more are needed and have been proposed. Agreement to these extra posts has been publicly stated (at Ministerial level) with an assurance that they will be filled within at least three months (as from the end of October) and a Gender Co-ordinator should be in post by the end of November 1998. Teaching posts require rationalisation - some schools have a relatively high proportion of teachers to pupils whilst others have an alarmingly low ratio of teachers to pupils (one example the team found was a primary school in South 24 Parganas with a total of three teachers - including the Head - for over 500 children).

7. Progress in civil works continues to be disappointingly slow and this is a major reason for the very slow spend of budget, to date. However, there is now a complete set of operational, time-bound plans for every functional aspect of DPEP and this should ensure that appropriate spend follows activity in the near future. A new Annual Work-Plan and Budget (AWPB) for the coming year has now been drawn-up, has been revised (with a budget reduced from 47 crores to approximately 40 crores) and a final version is being prepared.

INSTITUTIONALISING CAPACITY IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

8. There are problems in locating where responsibility for planning and management of primary education lies in West Bengal because of the complex parallel systems which exist. However, recent re-definitions of functional roles and responsibilities of key agencies and units has clarified institutional arrangements. A paper, now issued as a State government "order," sets out a simplified functional arrangement, spelling out clearly the respective roles and responsibilities of the WBBPE, SCERT, DSE, State Resource Group (SRG - a team for achieving pedagogical renewal), DPSC, DI and Block Project Office (BPO - an intermediary level between DPO and VEC) for implementation of DPEP in the State. This paper cannot yet be said to be at the implementation stage. Turning the words of the newly defined institutional arrangements into action is therefore extremely important.

9. One way in which this can be achieved is by producing and then implementing operational plans. A long-term, perhaps five-year, plan subsequently broken down into annual work plans showing how the key agencies will interact specifically in respect of DPEP was proposed (during the Mission) as desirable and in the final debriefing meeting chaired by the Secretary it was agreed that this would be done and that the State would commit to the production of workplans from WBBPE and SCERT (in particular) for this purpose. The Secretary has offered to personally monitor the integrated planning and implementation which supports the new institutional arrangements and it was firmly stated that within three months the institutional arrangements will be properly implemented so that DPEP can function properly with the appropriate involvement of all the key State level agencies.

10. Institutionalising capacity for planning and management would seem to require, amongst other things, a shared vision of what can be achieved for primary education by all the key agencies at all levels. "Visioning" workshops have been held by both WBBPE and SCERT. The prime purpose of the former workshop was to help the Board in its renewal of textbooks work, the event helped define objectives of and principles for primary education in general. It would be very helpful if there could be widespread sharing of the deliberations of these events, especially where the findings focused on the approach and aims of

DPEP, in order to help achieve a shared vision of the future of primary education and of how DPEP can help achieve this.

11. The slow progress in West Bengal in implementing DPEP interventions and achieving discernible benefits does suggest a previous lack of capacity in planning and management. When views were elicited as to why there had been slow progress reasons such as elections, floods and monsoons were given. It is certainly the case that the Panchayat elections in May 1998 disrupted interventions, not by the fact of the election alone but in the long ensuing period when responsibilities were transferred, roles redefined and authorisation of actions greatly delayed - perhaps for a period of three months or so. VECs have only recently (October '98) been reconstituted, through a State government order, and this has also disrupted activity. Despite the fact that events such as the flood of '98 and the elections were not foreseen they do not explain the absence of plans or completely explain why some Districts (including those badly affected by the floods) have done better than others. It may be, given the complexity of institutional structures at all levels, that - as one SPO colleague put it - "everyone's business is no-one's business" and so everyone waits for someone else to lead. The imminent DFID Institutional Assessment should be invaluable in helping the State further achieve a functioning inter-agency operational model for DPEP.

DECENTRALISATION OF DECISION MAKING

12. Many believe that decentralisation is already a reality in West Bengal and this is true to a great extent in that the Panchayat Raj system operates at community level and there is a tradition in the State of village level involvement in issues such as education. However, decentralisation of responsibility, management and decision-making for DPEP is not yet a reality at the village level. Yet, there is such clear potential for decentralisation to the community level in West Bengal that once the blockages to implementation are overcome this State could well provide a model of assimilation and lead the way for others to follow.

13. The involvement of the community at school level is clearly essential for a full interpretation of decentralisation and also for achieving the access and equity aims of DPEP. The SPO staff certainly recognise that community mobilisation is a prerequisite for recruiting marginalised learners and also for raising the consciousness of the PRIs regarding DPEP values and aims. The team was told that "sensitisation workshops" are planned for PRIs and VEC training is also planned and some is current but is on the subject of Civil Works - not on the aims and purposes of DPEP.

14. A symptom of full decentralisation would be evidence of "convergence" at village level, using "convergence" in the sense of village communities combining

resources and efforts and deciding for themselves what their priorities are and how to plan and act upon them. The team found, in the two Districts visited, no evidence of convergence of actions and use of funds at village or block level but that may not be the case in other Districts.

15. Another symptom of full decentralisation would be evidence of shared responsibility at State level. Currently, there is an over-reliance on the individual efforts of the SPD to effect all necessary change, a perception of DPEP as being a self-serving autonomous entity and an expectation that DPEP objectives will be achieved only if the effective SPD continues to drive the process. Apart from the fact that the State would be in a stronger position if there is shared responsibility for the success of DPEP it is better, operationally, not to depend so much upon the efforts of one person. It is therefore essential that the SPD is supported adequately, that the necessary Additional SPD post which is meant to be filled within three months of the time of the JRM is filled as quickly as possible with a suitably expert and committed person and that other State agencies share responsibility for working together to achieve DPEP aims.

THE INFORMATION BASE

16. MIS systems are not yet developed and this lack, together with other factors, means that it is difficult for colleagues at SPO and DPO level to be sure about the causal connections between DPEP and trends in enrolment, retention and teacher performance. It is also very difficult to determine the needs of marginalised groups. For example, although, through the District Information on School Education (DISE) system, there is information about the numbers and percentages of SCs and STs in the District populations (and all this is captured and collated at State level), no sound statistical information exists about the numbers of STs and SCs in and out of school. Similarly, population numbers of children at different ages by gender are known but this does not help reveal a picture of the numbers of girls over the age of 9 dropping out of school. In almost every District, however, EMIS and PMIS are being established and will be operational within approximately three months. The DISE information will be transferred to the new DPEP MIS systems. It would be helpful if information was collected about trends and needs of children in and out of school. In most Districts house-to-house surveys are currently being conducted to gain local population information.

17. The implementation of MIS raises some important issues regarding approaches to monitoring and process analysis - both being weak at the present. The capacity to record and present numerical data is evident at present even if the sources and statistical bases are not sound. However, there may be a tendency to focus too closely upon numerical data and to not analyse this in order to detect issues and feed into the planning and management activities. There is a distinct possibility that MIS will remain a separate and specialised

activity and there is a danger that preoccupation with computerised information - though it is clearly needed - will get out of proportion. Staff may need prior training in process analysis and may need warning against turning the capture of data into a purposeless chore without benefits being felt at State, District and school levels. Above all, there is potential for passing on the chore of capturing data to the teachers and this, without clear understanding of the benefit to teaching and learning, could overwhelm already overloaded staff.

18. The information base might well be supplemented by information gained by different methods. Through a process of triangulation the team found that often what the DPO level staff thought was happening was very different at school level. It is appreciated that staffing is a constraint but more follow-up seems clearly required and a better flow of reliable information to the DPO would be of great value. The SPD is proposing a novel form of requesting and receiving information from the VECs to be fed to the DPO and this, if feasible, would greatly assist. However, there is a possibility that staff with responsibilities at District level are simply not spending enough time visiting schools and if they could manage to do this - even informally and occasionally - teachers would feel more accountable and better supported and District staff would be much clearer about the realities at village level. There are benefits to be gained from more personal, formative and supportive contact.

19. There is also a need to distinguish between capture of data for national level and capture of data to serve State and District planning and analysis needs. The EMIS and PMIS being installed are designed so as to be able to capture information required by the Bureau and also to suit District and State needs. If the flexibility of the systems are used to meet local needs this will promote the use of the data for analysis and make it more purposeful.

20. Other forms of information, such as other States' experiences and National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) and Bureau studies could be very useful to SPO staff, SCERT, WBBPE and teachers. However, these sources of information are not yet available to all.

TEACHER TRAINING

21. During the Mission beliefs were expressed that teacher training has improved to such an extent that schools are more attractive to learners now. However, no evidence was given of a definite causal connection between alleged improved learning and teacher training. There has been teacher-training activity and the team was supplied with detailed information of the courses provided through the SPO and DPOs. This ranges across different topics including the production and use of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM), multi-grade teaching, visioning workshops and so forth. The training has mainly been in one to three day blocks. However, there has been no training at all

provided by SCERT for teachers within the schools in DPEP Districts because of various institutional blockages which should now be resolved. It would have been helpful to have had the views of this professional body on the benefits derived from teacher training and on the impact of DPEP in the classroom but they are currently not able to judge this, given their lack of practical and professional involvement to date. Currently, at all levels, different models of teacher training and of learning are being combined - active learning, joyful learning, competency based learning, values-based teacher training, etc - and all are being referred to interchangeably. This could be argued to be an integrated or holistic approach but could also be argued to be a confusion of models.

22. The establishing of District Institutes of Education Training (DIETs) has still not been achieved but this is underway in most Districts. Importantly, the new institutional arrangements mean that these will now be under the academic supervision and leadership of SCERT not, as was previously the case, under DSE. However, for staffing, financial and administrative purposes the DIETs will still stay within the DSE line management arrangements. This bifurcation of reporting and management will require monitoring in case complications arise which impede progress. West Bengal does not have a State Institution of Educational Management and Training (SIEMAT) but an Educational Management Training (EMT) unit is being planned and will be established within SCERT. The team was told that the EMT proposal has been awaiting approval for approximately four months.

23. When teachers were asked about the training they had had most referred immediately to the TLM training and it became clear that this training is seen as the most obvious and visible form of support. TLM is seen by teachers as the vehicle which has helped them change and improve their teaching and it was evident, in some schools, that more materials are being used in teaching and learning. The training has also raised teachers' expectations and demands. However, there are problems which derive, mainly, from a lack of monitoring and follow-up at District level. Not all TLM training has been provided; training has not always been followed by provision of funds to purchase materials and disbursement is being held up - usually at VEC level; in some cases materials have been purchased before training has been provided so they lie on shelves or in boxes as teachers do not know how to use them; in some cases TLM is being confused with handicrafts and even where training and materials have been provided there is a misunderstanding about application and the aim of enlivening and activating learning is missed.

24. Some extended residential training is planned to follow-up initial TLM training in some Districts and this is commendable. However, it may also be necessary to actually monitor application of the training in the schoolroom and provide further reinforcement where necessary. It is also possible that more school- or block- focused training could be attempted so that teachers find that

they have a group of trained colleagues to return to who will help sustain the learning and provide peer-based mutual support on a continuing basis. It is possible that the benefits of training individually selected teachers from schools will be dissipated quickly if the teachers return to the same environment, see no rewards for their new efforts and get no follow-up support. If a critical mass of teachers is achieved in each block the TLM methods are more likely to adhere.

25. There is potential now for some interesting developments in distance education at State level and this initiative has been described as an extra resource to teachers to augment their training through self-paced learning materials. The ideas expressed to the team for application of distance education all seemed very viable and the approach is to integrate materials and methods into all areas, not as a bolt-on extra. It may be that the label "distance education" is misleading, though, and if the initiative is to continue to be used to augment teacher training then it may be more appropriate to designate this as some form of "open" professional development so that teachers can more easily recognise the relevance for them. It is probably too early for teachers, currently, to know about the distance education activity (although there has been a lot at State level) and, based on the Mission's finding, none spoken to knew of this area of work nor how it would help them.

SUSTAINABILITY

26. DPEP is being seen as a separate, independent entity, or as another GoI scheme, or an approach to enhancing primary education generally, a philosophy, or a means of getting some resource. DPEP means different things to different people at different levels and this, the team suggests, may impede sustainability of achievements.

27. The redefinition of institutional roles and responsibilities will greatly assist in achieving a shared vision of DPEP and, thus, in sustaining efforts and achievements. However, it will be essential for the heads of key functional bodies to accept and adopt the redefinitions and their role in implementing DPEP if the new institutional arrangements are not to remain rhetoric only. Presently, the DPEP is being seen by some only as "additional" and is somehow being personified as a whole, autonomous entity, unconnected with the business of any other agency. However, this is probably not a conscious or deliberate phenomenon but derives from a degree of confusion as to what DPEP is for. Currently, some believe (and state) that DPEP, by itself, must be responsible for strengthening existing institutions and for taking actions and others believe that existing institutions must and should adopt DPEP principles and share responsibility for planning and management. This confusion feeds further confusion about who is responsible for planning and policy development and where responsibility for implementation lies.

28. For assured sustainability and transferability parents and other community members at school level need to be able to understand the benefits of an effective primary education for their children and be able to play a role in achieving this. Currently, there is strong potential for and a strong likelihood of community involvement through PRIs and VECs but this opportunity has not yet been fully exploited. It is relatively early since the inception of DPEP in West Bengal so one cannot expect to see major changes yet at the village level. However, it might be noted that village-level communities are still looking upwards (though they are not clear where exactly action should emanate from) for direction and action. VEC representatives interviewed by the team considered their role to be mainly about ensuring attendance, however some were unsure of their purpose and could not describe activities other than "holding meetings." It seems to be the case that VECs have been re-formed out of what were previously Attendance Committees so members continue to do the same kind of work but under a different name. VECs interviewed did not consider they had a role in making sure the education was relevant for the children (nor did they see that this could be a reason for poor retention); nor did they see a role for themselves in monitoring teacher attendance or in lobbying for teacher appointments, and they did not see themselves having a role in undertaking school repairs for themselves or doing similar kinds of achievable improvements.

29. The progress in West Bengal has not been such that the team was able to identify any example of DPEP methods being transferred to schools outwith the DPEP programme. In due course, given the strong potential for DPEP's success in West Bengal, this can be tested on future JRMs.

THE NEXT STEPS

30. West Bengal has a "special watch" status. There is no doubt, as the September '98 Expansion Mission reported, that significant improvements have been achieved and there is reason for believing that progress will now be accelerated. However, given that much is still at the planning stage and many key activities (such as implementation of the new institutional arrangements, teacher training through SCERT, new staffing appointments, operational MIS, for example) are to be achieved within the next three months, the team recommends that the special watch status be maintained for the time being and is lifted subject to the intended activities being demonstrably under way. The team also suggests that the three most important next steps will be to:

- ensure that key functionaries and agencies at all levels - especially VECs - share the same vision and understanding of the DPEP scheme, their roles within it and of what primary education can be like in West Bengal;

- plan an extensive and systematic scheme of teacher training which is based upon a clearer pedagogical model than is currently available and which enables groups of teachers within one school to support each other and share ideas and good practice;
- fill the outstanding staff vacancies at SPO and DPO level with able and committed people, including the post of Additional SPD, so that the responsibility for achieving the objectives of DPEP does not rest on the efforts and drive of one person.

ANNEX 1

Report on Progress against Recommendations made in the 7th JSM Report for West Bengal:

INTRODUCTION:

1. Some progress has been made since the last JSM, largely in the last two months. The effort to put the State and District level machinery in gear is perceptible. Significant efforts have been made to fill key positions at SPO level and to get specialised staffing to deal with each functional area and major theme. Detail, well-conceived plans have been drawn up by the SPO for each activity to be undertaken in the next six months to one year. Following the order of the recommended "next steps" in the 7th JSM report the following points explain follow-up action:

MIS:

2. The computer cell of SPO is now functional with a Systems Analyst in position along with support staff. At the District level also the equipment has been installed and the staff have been identified, except for South 24 Parganas, in every District. The orientation of the staff for MIS has been planned. All should be in operation within the next three months.

Civil Works:

3). The workshop for junior engineers has been conducted, except for South 24 Parganas. The construction models for classrooms conducive for new teaching and learning methods have been drawn up. The resource persons for the workshop were invited from Technical Support Group (TSG). The Village Construction Committees (VCC - a sub-group of VEC) are being trained in all Districts. Civil works activities are likely to be accelerated now that action and design plans are finalised, the VEC construction manual has been prepared, and sites for BRCs and CRCs have been selected. A consultant firm is being contracted for technical support and supervision of civil works. For the current year 41 crores are proposed to be spent, out of which 21 crores will be on civil works. The Finance Adviser believes that the real reason for low spend is because of failure to implement civil works so far. Funds could have been spent on repairs but have not been to any great extent. So far, 462 schools have been taken up for minor repairs and 231 of these schools have had the repair work completed. This is out of about 10,000 total schools in the State. Currently, there seems to be little apprehension that tangible improvements such as school repair would bring direct benefits including signs of what DPEP can do, raising of morale and making schools more attractive for teachers and pupils - thus aiding retention.

Teacher Recruitment:

4. The problems of vacancies in teaching posts and need for redeployment is said to be in the process of being addressed. New teachers are likely to be appointed by December '98. However, the recommendation that this issue be given priority and that vacancies be filled with great urgency (and at least by the time of the 8th JSM) has not been acted upon as yet.

State Support for DPEP:

5. Since the last JSM yet another effort has been made to define the roles of the various institutional bodies involved in planning and management of DPEP. A working group is being set up under the State Education Secretary to draw up a common plan of action and to accelerate the progress of DPEP by ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of each group are (and continue to be) understood. The Secretary will hold meetings once per month and personally monitor the implementation of the new arrangements and the operational planning required to turn the words into action, within three months. Both the Minister and the Secretary assured the team that "every step will be taken" to make DPEP functional and viable.

Innovations:

6. There is evidence of collaboration with NGOs on topics such as AS and TLM and, indeed, some of the newly appointed consultants have been drawn from NGOs working in these areas. However, the recommended workshops on approaches for specific target groups have not been held. An innovative approach regarding keeping in contact with VECs, keeping them involved and monitoring their activities is being proposed by the SPD. This involves a simple method of using pre-addressed and pre-distributed postcards to be completed and despatched to the DPOs on a monthly basis.

Teacher Training:

7. There has as yet been no training at District level, as recommended, for teaching in overcrowded classrooms. However, a SRG on pedagogy has been formed, which will strengthen activities such as curriculum development, development of textbooks and teacher training (in liaison with SCERT). DIETs are being established in all DPEP Districts but EMT cell in SCERT is not yet established. The content of a teacher training programme is said to be in the process of finalisation but this work still requires to be put into an operational, time-bound plan of action for DPEP.

Learning from DPEP I:

8. 88. A visit of five members from each DPEP District was held from 16th to 20th August in Assam. Apart from that there is no evidence of learning from the first phase, although the SPD believes that it is first necessary to get the scheme into good order in West Bengal before attempting to draw from other States' experiences.

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