Policy Review Report
(Summary version)

IMPROVING LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY FOR
MEETING THE MDGS: India Education Sector Study

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIE - Alternative and Innovative Education
AWP&B - Annual Work Plan and Budget
BEO/ABEO - Block Education Officer/Assistant Block Education Officer
BRC(F) - Block Resource Center (Facilitator)
BSA - Basic Shiksha Adhikari
CRC(F) - Community Resource Center (Facilitator)
DIET - District Institute of Education and Training
DPC - District Planning Committee
DPEP - District Primary Education Programme
EGSAIE - Education Guarantee Scheme
HM - Head Master
MTA - Mother Teacher Association
NCERT - National Council of Education Research and Training
NSSO - National Sample Survey Office
PRI - Panchayati Raj Institutions
PTA - Parent Teacher Association
PTR - Parent Teacher Ratio
SC/ST - Scheduled Community/Scheduled Tribe
SDMC - Social Development and Monitoring Committee
SMC - School Management Committees
SSA - Sarva Siksha Abhiyan
ULB - Urban Local Bodies
UP - Uttar Pradesh
UPE - Universal Primary Education
VEC - Village Education Committees
THE REPORT

This report is based on the original report prepared by the national team. Efforts were made to highlight the key policy findings on education sector planning and management related topics that deserve the government’s immediate attention, and the possible ensuing actions, rather than a full account of the original report. As such, the compilation of this report aims to quickly disseminate the summarized, but credible, information in a clear and easily decipherable format for informing and strengthening knowledge in the policy making. The full original report is available upon request.

INTRODUCTION

Provision of educational access to every child in India is a challenge because of the large population size and that it is a diverse society with many castes, ethnic groups, languages and religions. Social hierarchy and inequality affect access to education in India where the disadvantaged traditionally remain excluded from educational services. The situation with respect to access to and participation in educational institutions varies considerably across Indian states.

Objectives of the Study

This document provides the findings of the India Education Sector Study, undertaken under the UN Initiative on improving local service delivery to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The study focuses on the second MDG, to achieve universal primary education, and examines the relationship between improvement in schooling and greater devolution of powers to panchayats (local government bodies), and other local bodies. The key areas of investigation pertain to the following issues:

- Extent of decentralization that has taken place in the education sector
- Relationship, if any, between planning, implementation and monitoring under the sectoral programmes and the work of the District Planning Committee
- Education Sector reform initiatives as related to decentralisation and their impact
- Role clarity and quality of functioning of bodies and user groups such as Parent Teacher Associations, and the Village Education Committees
- Access to education by disadvantaged groups, particularly girl children and children from SC/ST households – enrolment, retention and drop-out
- Education service delivery related to the school level and the roles and responsibilities assigned under decentralization reform
- Imperatives for policy and programme action in the light of the above

Methodology

The study combined a desk-based analysis of education delivery and decentralisation with extensive key respondent interviews and focus group discussions with education providers and beneficiary households. The field exercise was conducted in August and
September 2009 in Rajasthan (Chittaurgarh and Udaipur districts) and Uttar Pradesh (Jhansi and Lalitpur districts).

The report was written based on the following research and analysis:

- An overview of literature with respect to policy and practices of decentralization and its impact on local service delivery of educational facilities

- Interview results from the The Shiksha Adhikar Yatra (a programme organized by the National Confederation of Dalit Organisations in Uttar Pradesh. Programme volunteers visit several villages in Lalitpur district to raise awareness on importance of education especially for female children. The mobilization drive interacted closely with community members to gather their views and opinions on the status of education service delivery)

- Field visits were undertaken to both districts of both states to consult with local officials and functionaries to understand the ground realities, gather data and programmatic insights. The field visits and discussions were guided by a set of pre-determined issues identified through desk review on which information was sought.

- Finally, the above two lines of investigation were drawn together and analysed with inputs from the desk review.

REVIEW RESULTS

Political and Democratic Decentralisation in India

In India, decentralization through local government is not a new concept. Involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in development is acknowledged as one of the major political moves of India for promoting local governance. PRIs are local government bodies under the state level that became more prominent in development and academic discourse only after the 73rd and 74th amendments to the constitution in 1992, making it responsible for providing essential social services at the micro level. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), which are administrative bodies that provide basic infrastructure and services locally, prepare and implement plans/schemes for economic development and social justice for which a suggestive list of 29 areas including primary and secondary education, technical and vocational education, adult and non-formal education, libraries and women and child development. They could also perform other functions including 18 defined areas (for example, water supply, public health, sanitation, and solid waste management, mentally retarded, registration of births and deaths, promotion of cultural, educational, and aesthetic aspects, planning).
However, states have not matched the functions devolved to local government institutions with the necessary administrative reforms, or by devolving financial powers. As a result, PRIs and ULBs do not have the capacity to implement assigned functions.

Indian states differ in terms of the degree of support the state governments give to panchayats.

- The states with strong *Panchayats* i.e. Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and West Bengal
- ‘Middling’ states, Assam, Delhi, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh
- The states with weak *panchayats*: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkand, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh fall in this category

**Education Decentralisation**

Decentralisation of educational governance has been recommended by earlier committees and commissions like Kothari Commission to reduce the distance between community and school. Subsequently, the National Policy on Education and the Programme of Action (NPE, 1986 and its POA, 1992) have also envisaged decentralisation of educational governance as a fundamental requirement for improving the entire education system and creating an appropriate framework for accountability at each level of administration. Several State Governments have already initiated the process of decentralisation by adopting new legislation, ordinances, norms, statutes, rules and regulations. Almost all the states have evolved mechanisms for involving community, teachers and grass-root level functionaries in the process of planning and management. Efforts are also being made to shift the locus of decision making from state to district and sub-district levels, including *panchayati raj* bodies. However, efforts for decentralisation are mostly visible in case of elementary education to ensure participation of all the stakeholders and it is essential for successful implementation of ongoing programmes of Universalisation of Elementary Education, meaning primary education.

**Legal Policy, Framework**

The Indian Constitution and the 86th Educational Act recognize the right to education for children of 6-14 years. To respond to this right, ongoing programmes like Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), which is a government programme which aims to achieve universal primary education, and promotes the decentralization of power and authority in multi level process of decision making and policy planning and places emphasis on decentralization involving community, parents and grassroots level functionaries.

Community based organization like Village Education Committees (VEC), Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), Mother Teacher Associations (MTA) are expected to play important roles in promoting access, equity and even quality. Their role is now not only limited to aiding to school services by enrolling children; they are also expected to
monitor regular attendance of children and teachers, day to day functioning of schools and the teaching/learning process in the classroom. Innovative programmes for girls and socially disadvantaged children, including the Education Guarantee Scheme/Alternative and Innovative Education (EGS/AIE) scheme are running in many places with the support of community members with a positive impact on access and enrolment. The education sector is the largest employer of educated people, such as planners, implementers, and teachers and it is also a highly diversified system with different groups of institutes, stakeholders and so on. It is in this context, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the SSA have envisaged a multi-level decision making process.

**Roles and Functions**

There is more emphasis on decentralized administrative functions and management and it is believed that certain decisions need to be made at the lower levels, such as district and blocks with support from state. The district level is seen as the most viable unit for planning and financing educational activities. It is perceived through experience that, some decisions are to be made at the sub-district level (cluster, Panchayat, school and village levels) as education of children is a joint responsibility of schools and home. Since over the years access has improved, the major responsibility of the programmes appears to be child retention and quality. Roles of School Management Committees, which are outlined in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, are specified below.

School Management Committees (SMC) consist of the elected representatives of the local authority, parents or guardians of children admitted in such school and teachers and perform the following functions.

- monitor the working of the school;
- prepare and recommend school development plan;
- monitor the utilisation of the grants received from the appropriate Government or local authority or any other source; and
- perform other functions as may be prescribed.
- prepare a School Development Plan (the basis for the plans and grants to be made by the appropriate Government or local authority)

**Approaches to Decentralisation**

Because of existing centralized systems, most states developed a hierarchical system of educational governance within the bureaucracy from the state level to the school level. Two major approaches to decentralization in India exist. One such option is the technical administrative approach involving top down transformation through change of rules and regulations with or without corresponding legislation. The other, the socio-political approach, involves building the institutional structures from at the local level through direct and active participation of the people at the grassroots. Govinda and Bandyopadhyay have identified several approaches that resulted in different institutional arrangements. These are as follows:
1) **Empowering local self government institutions through legislative measures**, typically consists of committees set up under PRIs at various levels, which have been empowered to act through appropriate legislative action at the state level (e.g. Kerala).

2) **Combining delegation and devolution** for introducing measures for making necessary changes in a gradual fashion with extra care and caution. The principle is to initiate changes in such a way that one can quickly withdraw the change if proved inappropriate (e.g. Jana Sikshan Adhiniyam by Madhya Pradesh Government in 2002).

3) **The establishment of Quasi-autonomous Local Units** to channelise funds in a prompt fashion and implement the programmes effectively.

4) **To build a system of local governance for primary education from the grassroots level** by using participatory school mapping and other aspects of micro planning as a method of people’s mobilization. (Lok Jumbish project in Rajasthan)

### Financial Management and Fund Flow

Following the Balwantrai Mehta Committee report of 1958, almost all Indian state legislatures introduced a three-tier system of rural local government, with a district council (zila panchayat) at the top, an intermediate level (panchayat samiti), and the gram panchayat at the village level. This legislation included a host of activities to be undertaken by these local bodies, including community development, making development plans, and overseeing health and education. Finances are strictly under the control of state-level departments or their subordinate offices at the district and sub-district levels. Personnel working in schools do not report to elected local representatives rather they work under the higher authority at district/ state level. Their salaries are directly payable by the appropriate state department. Decisions about construction of new primary schools and health centers and their location generally take place at the level of the District Planning Committee and above, ignoring local needs and opinion of local representatives. Despite this short coming, some efforts have recently been made for financial decentralization in elementary education sector particularly for implementation of SSA. These are mentioned below.

### Funds Flow

State governments have been working with the central government since the proposal of the SSA to change the funding framework. Under the initial framework the central government’s responsibility was 75% for financing elementary education, 25% being left to the state. As of 2009, funding patterns have shifted to 50:50, except for North-East States, where the ration is still 90:10. Reports also show that central government outlays and total expenditures have grown markedly. These reports show the expenditure for the
FY 2008-09 to be around Rs. 19,000 crore ($4 billion USD). This is a huge improvement since the early years of the SSA, where most states were unable to pay their shares.

**E-transfers/Web-based monitoring**

The use of e-transfers for funds from state to district levels has been initiated in all but 3 states. Nine states also use e-transfers to allocate funds to the sub-district level. Implementation of e-transfer to sub-District levels has resulted in smooth fund flow and ensures transparency and accountability. This also can improve the timely availability and utilization of funds required for various activities at different levels. Also, web-based monitoring of funds allows SSA managers to access and monitor funds releases and cash balances in the accounts of the state and district levels. Additionally, the Web-Portal for SSA allows for the monitoring of output and progress of the programme. Even with these initiatives in place, financial decentralisation is not complete. Transparency, being one of the necessary elements for financial decentralisation and social accountability, has yet to be realized in all states. Display of financial information on State’s websites of all government primary and upper primary school is essential of social accountability of the programme, but has yet to be achieved throughout India.

**Linking Educational Services and Decentralisation**

Socially disadvantaged sections of society depend heavily on the government for delivery of different public services, including education. The quality of education offered by the government system remains low. Reasons for such poor services as identified by some researchers are; lack of accountability of government service providers (Junaid et. al), absence of monitoring of these services (Paul 2000, Paul et al, 2004), lack of adequate resources and its effective utilization. Teacher absenteeism is a major problem; in Bihar around 70% of teachers are not engaged in teaching activities.

**Status of Educational Services: an Overview**

Due to importance placed on universal primary education (UPE), there has been increased financial investment on expansion of facilities and improvement of quality. In spite of this increase, concerns are raised for not meeting the target of six per cent of GDP as the education expenditure, as it is around three percent. Investment on education is far from satisfactory but some initiatives have been taken by the government to provide basic education to the children of eligible age group by introducing some national as well as state level programs like District Primary Education Program (DPEP), Lok- jumbish, Bihar Education Project, Siksha Karmi and many others. In addition, India is also one of the signatories of ‘Education for All’ movement and EFA goals have also directed the policy and priorities for achieving UPE in many ways. These initiatives have already shown some impact as there has been considerable increase in number of schools, teachers and students in almost all the states wherever these programmes have been implemented. The progress is still continuing under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, the national programme for achieving UPE across the states although states are showing variations in
status of implementation of this programme due to different socio-political, economic and administrative reasons.

Enrolment and Coverage

According to recent (SES, 2005-06) data, there are 771768 primary schools with around 133 million students and around 2.2 million teachers. There are 288304 middle schools with around 52 million children and 1.7 million teachers teaching in these schools. The increase in number of schools and enrolment is attributed to improvement in coverage of more and more rural habitations by schooling facilities.

In West Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra, Haryana, Gujarat, Chattishgarh, more than 90 percent of habitations have access to primary school within 1 km. The situation is not satisfactory at all in Jharkhand, Jammu, Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh where approximately 25 percent of habitations do not have primary school within one km. It is noteworthy that states like J&K and Himachal Pradesh are both characterized by difficult terrain and Jharkhand, home land of large number of tribes is covered by deep forest and is has undulating terrain. However, Kerala, an educationally progressive state, has only 79.5 per cent habitations within one km of primary institutions.

A rapid increase in enrolment has been reported by 61st National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data, which suggests that 50 per cent of people in the age group of 5-29 years are currently attending (53% males and 46% females) educational institutions. The current attendance rate is found to be the highest among urban males (54%) and lowest among rural females (44%). The NSSO data reveal that about 49% of 5-29 years were attending primary school and 22% are attending middle schools. It is disheartening to see that notwithstanding the improvement, a large number of children are still found out of school, although declining. The number of out of school children was 44 million, which accounts for around 28.5 per cent to total child population of 6-14 years in 2001 census. For example, the All India Education Survey conducted by NCERT is one such source that indicated number of out of school children has declined during 1992 and 2003 at large extent. Estimation from data of sixth and seventh AIES supports this observation. While The Sixth AIES (NCERT, 1998) reported around 38.5 million children of 6-10 years age group as out-of-school in 1993, their number declined to 22 million by 2003 at the time of Seventh AIES (NCERT, 2005).

Equality

Some recent surveys also confirmed the exclusion of certain children from school. For example, with respect to the age group of 5-14, the 61st NSS data (NSS, 2006) found that as many as 17.4 per cent were not attending any educational institution. Many of these out of school children are girls and belong to disadvantaged communities. As per 61st NSSO, around 14 per cent of girls aged 6-11 were found un-enrolled as opposed to only 10 per cent boys in the same age group. Around 2.25 million Muslim children are out of school and 3.10 million children from Scheduled Caste (SC) community and 1.65 from Scheduled Tribes (ST) were found out of school. Thus, around 52 percent of out of
school children were from marginalized groups as highlighted by this sample survey in 2005.

**Dropping Out From School**

Although India has witnessed considerable improvement in participation of children by including the hardest to reach groups, improvement in quality of education remains one of the most critical issues in India. While India has experienced massive expansion of schooling facilities, the effectiveness of the schools seems to be most essential in retention, enabling them to learn adequately and complete at least the elementary level. Despite a continuous decline in trends in last decade, around 28 per cent of children are still dropping out at the primary level. The dropout rate at the upper primary level is much higher showing 1 out of 2 children dropping out at the upper primary stage. The data also indicate that a substantial proportion of children who are leaving school before completing eight years of schooling come from SC and ST communities. More girls than boys are found dropping out from SC communities although it seems equal in the case of ST communities.

**PART III**

Based on Field work an attempt has been made to understand this situation in two so called educationally backward states like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Subsequent section is giving the in-depth analysis of the situation in these two states.

**The Study Area and Detailed Findings**

Field data was gathered in two districts, Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Rajasthan. An attempt has been made to examine the provisions put in place to ensure that all children receive access to quality education. The data have been collected from six selected areas from two different districts from UP and Rajasthan. Lalitpur and Jhansi districts from UP and Udaipur and Chittaurgarh districts from Rajasthan have been selected for this study.

**Overall Observations**

The analysis of field data and documentation collected during fieldwork indicates that a number of inter-related factors are responsible for low retention and the poor achievement level of learners in the districts/ blocks covered under this study. The field study identified a range of issues related to low retention and poor quality of education - low attendance/absenteeism of children from school, teachers’ non-academic work reducing overall time spent on teaching-learning activities and single teacher schools. There was also the issue of adverse pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) caused by a number of factors. In addition, issues with textbooks and the limited provision of qualified and trained teachers.

Since each school has its own strengths and weaknesses and functions within a specific context, most initiatives for its improvement need to be taken at the school level.
involving all local stakeholders and service providers. The field study has found that the quality of the school has far reaching impacts on access, retention, attendance and the performance of children. Therefore, both systemic reform and school-specific improvements are required.

The Shiksha Adhikar Yatra also found that most of the community members and parents interviewed during the were not aware about the VEC and its activities. Few of them were not even aware about Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Approximately 95% respondents were found totally disappointed and critical about functioning of local schools. Many complained of the shortage of qualified teachers in school, non availability of teachers for each class, absenteeism and non-punctuality of teachers and poor learning ability of children. They also have expressed their concern about lack of essential physical and academic facilities in their local schools. Most parents said that their children like to go to school and regularly attend their classes. However, very few of them rated their children’s performance as ‘good’. Field interactions point out that the demand for quality education has increased and people are aware of value of education.

Emerging Issues Regarding Policy and Practice of Decentralisation

- There is a considerable mismatch between functional responsibilities and financial powers at different administrative levels and particularly at the grass roots level in both states of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. There is very little interface between the DEC and the DPC during the planning process and on achieving the common objective of bottom-up planning process involving the PRIs. In addition to this, there is a problem of dual or even multiple control and teachers bear the brunt of this administrative arrangement.

- There is also a problem with respect to norm based planning as envisaged by the SSA. These centrally determined norms may also not always accommodate needs at the local level.

- It has also been found that the power and responsibilities are not adequately shared with grassroot level functionaries and local bodies. There are conflicts in interest of different stakeholders and a tendency to bypass the local bodies is quite visible.

- There were several instances reported from the field where political influence is used on Administration or Panchayats to achieve goals in violation of program processes.

- There is no formal interface between the gram Shiksha samiti (VEC) and the gram panchayat samiti (committees at the block level).

**UTTAR PRADESH**

Organisational Structure and Functions of Elementary Education in Uttar Pradesh

The responsibility for elementary education in Uttar Pradesh rests with Basic Shiksha Parishad. The Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Act, 1972 was passed by the state legislature to establish the Basic Shiksha Parishad. The term ‘basic education’ for purposes of the act is taken to mean education imparted in the schools up to grade 8. The
roles and responsibilities of PRI have been well defined by the Act introduced in Uttar Pradesh. However, the extent to which these acts are being implemented is unknown. The VECs were given specific roles and responsibilities including selection of contract teachers, establishment of EGS (education guarantee scheme) centres, supervision of construction of new schools, mobilisation of community for schooling of children (Srivastava, 2006). The decentralized structures at the district and sub-district level include the Gram Shiksha Samiti, PTA, MTA, and District Planning Committee and sub-committees. An attempt has been made in the following paragraphs to understand the extent to which these bodies are involved in day to day functioning of schools.

The education department at the district level is responsible for monitoring spending. The Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) and the ABSA, which work in inspection and supervision at the district level, are held accountable if financial and physical targets are not achieved, as financial powers lie only at the district level. Remaining powers are outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions (Personnel)</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Block/Panchay at/Village/School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>Directorate, Basic Shiksha</td>
<td>BSA through committee</td>
<td>SM &amp; Para teachers recruited by gram Shiksha Samiti (PR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Out of district transfers by Basic Shiksha Parishad office, Allahabad</td>
<td>Within district transfers by BSA through committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punishment</td>
<td>BSA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time &amp; Task Management</td>
<td>In case of government formal schools (Basic), State decides summer/winter timings and hours of teaching</td>
<td>In case of RBC, NRBC, AIE, EGS, etc., district decides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training (Preservice, Inservice,)</td>
<td>SCERT decides pre-service</td>
<td>DIET decides in-service training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction training¹</td>
<td></td>
<td>By DIET for para teachers and SM with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ No induction training since all teachers already have a BTC qualification. Basic Training Course is a precondition for teacher recruitment in Uttar Pradesh.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>the help of master trainers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>No teacher evaluation. Holding Vth and VIII school board exams is State decision (Directorate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Dates and question papers of the Board exams decided by Assistant Director Basic (Divisional Level);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Annual exams of classes I-IV and classes VI-VII conducted at school level itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>DIET organizes the sessional tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>BSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>SCERT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Content &amp; Standards</td>
<td>By DIET for instructional material used in RBC/NBRC run by para teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Developm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TextBooks, Equipments and Instructional Materials</td>
<td>Textbook Committeesat Directorate (Basic Shiksha) level decide on Criteria/Standards and Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Criteria/ Standard</td>
<td>District/BSA office procures textbooks after comparing with sample;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Production</td>
<td>District/BSA office distributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Procurement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-Distribution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Expansion/</td>
<td>District Yojana Samiti (Zilla Parishad) approves the proposals of District Education Planning Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Recognition/</td>
<td>BSA-Private Primary Schools;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Recognition/</td>
<td>AD Basic-Private Junior Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>BSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction Maintenance</td>
<td>Through Gram Shiksha Samiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Enrolment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Regulation</strong></td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection Criteria</strong></td>
<td><strong>(Student, school)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality Control</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Assessment</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Teacher Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Supervision</strong></td>
<td><strong>-School Supervision</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Academic Support</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Supervision</strong></td>
<td><strong>-School Supervision by ABSA;</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Academic Support Provided by BRC &amp; NPRC (Block)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**District Planning Committee (DPC)**

In this process the Gram Shiksha Samiti plays a decisive planning role while it envisages for a participatory planning process involving PRIs (at all levels), teachers, education and other concerned department functionaries and officials, NGOs etc. Planning teams\(^2\) constituted at the local, block and district level facilitate systematic preparation of plans at these levels and consolidation of the plans into one district plan. The District Education Committee (Zilla Shiksha Pariyojana Samiti) and the SSA is directly responsible for preparing the district education plan.

The Uttar Pradesh Zila Yojana Samiti Adhiniyam (District Planning Committee Act) 1999 was passed on July 29, 1999, “to provide for the constitution of District Planning Committee ((DPC\(^3\)) at the district level for consolidation of plans prepared by the Panchayats and the Municipalities in the district and preparation of draft development plan for the district as a whole and for matters concerned therewith or incidental thereto”.

**The Planning Process in Practice**

The district prepares an Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B) which consists of 20 tables (year 07-08) covering the whole range of information needed. Each school provides the information necessary. Collection and updating of data requires involvement of the school principals and their team of teachers. A household survey is also conducted every year.

\(^2\) pls. see the AWP&B document narrative for full details
\(^3\)source: UP Planning Commission website:-
Plan Finalization and Budgeting

The AWP&B is reviewed by the Zilla Shiksha Samiti before it is sent to the State for approval. Basic Parishad (or council) provides for an education committee at the district level called the Zilla Shiksha Samiti (District Education Committee). This committee ensures interface between people’s representatives, panchayat education sub-committees and the education department at the district level. Usually there are no changes forthcoming from the Zilla Shiksha Samiti at this stage. However, once the plan is approved, the Zilla Shiksha Samiti actively decides the locations where approved construction works are to be undertaken.

Education planning and budgeting is confined to the sectoral district plan under SSA. At times, some of the activities decided by the districts are not approved by the State. For example, the Lalitpur district proposed mobile schooling for children of a nomadic community. This proposal did not get approved.

With respect to budgeting activities all unit costs and norms are already determined at state level following the SSA guidelines. The district applies the unit costs and the norms on the information gathered from each Gram Shiksha Samiti and compiled at the district level to arrive at activity budgets and total budget.

There are many instances of overlapping and mismatch found in terms of actual budget proposed by the districts and approval made by the state authorities. The practice of norm based budgeting also has created difference in estimation of unit cost that has been recommended by SSA guidelines. According to officers at the district level (Jhansi district), under SSA, the unit cost has been kept very low and in the case of several items, do not cover all costs.

Gram Shiksha Samiti (Village Education Committee)

The Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Act 1972 provides for formation of committees at the district and village levels. The committees are to be consulted by the Parishad from time to time as directed by the state government. According to this Act, this committee is to be headed by the chairman of the Gram Panchayat and it needs to include representatives of the parents of students and the teachers. This committee is assigned to look after the functioning of basic schools in the village.

The Secretary of the Gram Panchayat Samiti is the senior most among Principals of Junior Schools falling within the same Gram Panchayat Samiti. The members are to be nominated by Assistant Director, Basic Shiksha Parishad. In practice one finds variations in actual practice against this official arrangement. For instance, in Gram Shiksha Samiti, Kachnaunda Kala of Vridhi Block of Lalitpur district, the practice is to have one female member and one member from the SC/OBC community.
It has been observed during the recent field visit that the Gram Shiksha Samiti is mostly un-heard of among parents of children going to school. As a result community support/monitoring of the school is very low. All powers of the Gram Shiksha Samiti are exercised only by the Pradhan and the Secretary (who is the senior most Headmaster of Junior School in a Gram Panchayat). The functioning of the Gram Shiksha Samiti leaves much to be desired.

**Gram Shiksha Nidhi (Village Education Fund)**

The Gram Shiksha Samiti does not have a bank account. Instead all the schools falling under the Gram Shiksha Samiti have individual accounts known as the Gram Shiksha Nidhi. The Principal of the school jointly holds the account with the President of the Gram Shiksha Samiti. The Gram Shiksha Samiti meets every month mainly to approve spending proposals. The meeting is attended by the Principals of all schools falling under the Gram Shiksha Samiti.

In practice the Principal of each school and the Pradhan decide between themselves regarding the spending of grants received in the school account. The Gram Shiksha Samiti meeting is only a formality to get spending proposals recorded in the Gram Shiksha Samiti meeting minutes and signed by all the members as this is mandatory paper work in order to withdraw money from the gram Shiksha nidhi.

The following are the activities against which district releases funds / grants into individual school accounts (Gram Shiksha Nidhis). Only MDM and Scholarship funds are released into the Gram Panchayat Samiti account.

- School repair and maintenance
- School development
- TLM/TLE
- School uniform
- School bag
- Construction (new schools, additional classrooms, boundary wall etc)
- Salaries of SM & Para Teachers
- Centre material of centres run by Para Teachers
- Electrification of schools
- MDM (conversion cost released to the account of the gram panchayat samiti
- Scholarship (money released to the account of the gram panchayat samiti

**PTA (Parent Teacher Association)**

In recent years, as observed during the field survey, a process to rejuvenate PTAs is included in the reform agenda of the state. The PTA comprises of six members (3 female and 3 male members) and one teacher. The Principal of the school is made the Secretary and a female member is either made the President or the Vice-President. While the Gram Shiksha Samiti is formed at the Gram Panchayat level, the PTA is formed at the school level.
The Issue of School Fees

Despite the claim that education is free, fees of various types are charged. It is Rs 6.50 (monthly average) for Classes VI-VIII and Rs 1.20 (monthly average) for Classes I-V. It covers fees towards sports, development, science, art, audio-video, red-cross, scout and two more. Non-payment of this fee invites cancellation of child’s enrollment. Clearly, the impact of the actual fee payment falls more heavily on poorer households, and also becomes a barrier to retention.

Expensive Guide Books in place of free textbooks

The parents reported that teachers ask the children to buy the guide books in place of free textbooks issued by the government. These guides are government textbook based. The price of the guide book increases lower to the higher classes. The Class VIII comes for Rs 90. The guide books are developed by private publishers.

Teacher Unions

Teacher Unions are extremely strong in Uttar Pradesh. The Basic teachers and private school teacher each have their own unions. Uttar Pradesh has a bi-cameral legislature with a Vidhan Parishad. One twelfth of Vidhan Parishad membership is elected by teachers of private secondary schools, colleges and universities. Informal linkages and solidarity exists between teacher unions across the State. The ‘teacher MLCs’ indirectly protect the interests of Government teachers. Action against teachers invites political pressure on officers. Officers at Jhansi cited examples of Kushinagar BSA and Jaunpur ADIOS who were murdered in 2007 and 2008 respectively.

Girls’ education

Some schools in Lalitpur district have higher enrollment for girls compared to boys. Girls receive incentives compared government schools, such as uniforms. The demand for government schools near home is high so that girls can easily attend. The study encountered many all girls government schools and fewer all boys government schools.

The Social Divide

The enrollment of children from the ‘general’ and ‘minority’ category in the government schools is much less than their proportion of village population. Children from the ‘general’ population category usually study in the better private schools. Many Muslim children study in Urdu schools.

Teacher Management, Training and Academic Support

Teacher management and their capacity building is a major concern in both states. The BTC (Basic Teacher Course) training in the DIET started in 2001. This training is a pre-
condition for teacher recruitment in Uttar Pradesh. But at the end of the first two-year course there was a court stay on BTC training and no BTC training in the period 2004 to 2008 resulting in a huge backlog in terms of teacher recruitment all over the State. DIETs started special BTC training, a six-month course for graduates in 2008. In 2008-09 the state sanctioned 397 teacher posts against which 392 teachers with special BTC were recruited. Only 80 teachers were from Lalitpur district. The remaining came from other districts. Almost 90% female teachers from other districts left after 2-3 months and transferred to their respective home districts even after having signed a service bond (bond terms including 3 years no transfer from school and 5 years no transfer from district). This has caused acute shortage of trained teachers in the district. Many schools as a result of this are devoid of trained teachers.

There are few important issues for further policy consideration. First, the state itself has huge vacancy of teachers and the number of posts sanctioned by the State is minimal. For example, Lalitpur district has vacancy of posts of 1286 teachers (year 07-08) but only 397 teacher posts were sanctioned by the State against this number. Since the special BTC training began more trained teachers could have been recruited to fill vacant posts in schools particularly when many schools are suffering from the problem of inadequacy in trained teachers.

Also, the freezing of teaching posts results in increased transfers with an adverse impact on PTR. The district has no control over transfers as inter district transfer is done at the state level. Another important issue is that upper primary teachers are from among those promoted from primary, which is a good thing for teacher motivation. In fact, teachers are more interested to become upper primary teachers that eventually lead to their promotion as high school head master. This is more lucrative than becoming a head teacher of primary schools. However, this results in further shortage of teachers and head teachers at the primary level.

During an interview with the Principal of Lalitpur DIET it came into light that due to frequent training programmes throughout the year, teachers hardly get any time to implement their training skill. Moreover, their attendance in the training now and then results in their long absenteeism from school. DIET has no power to decide about these trainings even to change its schedule. In addition to the training, teachers also get involved in non-teaching activities of other departments though there is a GO that teachers will do no other work besides teaching but they can be called in to support if a program/activity is of national importance only i.e. polio immunization, elections etc.

In view of poor performance of a substantial number of students in the state run schools, the BSA strongly recommends for performance appraisal of teachers and all benefits to teachers to be linked to their performance. Furthermore, external examinations are recommended for students involving external checking of answer sheets and external supervision of examinations. There were also suggestions to form a committee of officials, teachers, Gram Shiksha Samiti members, NPRC, BRC to undertake random visits to schools to appraise and test them.
RAJASTHAN

The Main Functions of the Primary Education Department are:

- Policy Making and Implementation
- Management and Administration
- Expansion of the system
- Promotion of NFE and Adult Education
- Educational Development
- Resource Mobilisation for Elementary Education

The Directorate, Primary Education consists of the Director, Additional Director (Administration), Additional Director (Education), Joint Director, Deputy Director and District Education Officer. The Deputy Director is posted at the Divisional level. There are Block Education Officers (BEO) at block level. The SIERT based in Udaipur is responsible for education research, training and textbook development. The Office of the Registrar of Examinations (responsible for examinations relating to education department) is based in Udaipur.

Administrative Structures in Rajasthan

The Elementary Education Department in the State has two Directors, Director RCEE (Rajasthan Council of Elementary Education), who is responsible for SSA and Commissioner Elementary Education who is the Administrative Head of the Education Department. The DEO who is also the SSA DPC at the district level is directed by both the SSA and the Department of Education. At the block level there are separate staff members for Education Department (BEO) and SSA (BRCF). It is mention worthy that BEOs who have administrative powers at the block level do not have adequate support staff to help with their primary duty of school administration.

The BRCF and CRCF are a part of the strengthening system and do not have any administrative powers. They can monitor technical inputs, but they cannot supervise teachers or impose penalty for gaps in technical, academic or physical infrastructure development. Similarly, the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) does not have any administrative control over the teachers. In fact, DIETs also face acute shortage of administrative and academic staff that hampers its function.

At the district level the DEO and DPC is the same person. Hence at the district level there is an integration of the formal system and the SSA. Despite all the expenditures made by SSA on physical infrastructure development many of elementary schools still are lacking facilities like toilets and drinking water and good blackboards.

Rajasthan has a long tradition of Panchayat involvement in management of primary education. In 1959 with the operation of Panchayati Raj System in the State, the management of elementary schools in the rural areas was handed over to Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti under the department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.
This arrangement continued for nearly 40 years. By 1998, the responsibility for elementary education passed into the hands of the Directorate of Elementary Education. In 1999, primary education in Rajasthan was brought under the Administrative control of the Panchayat. The BEO and DEO were placed under the Administrative control of Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad respectively. Teachers reported that education was not a priority within such a setup. Construction related activities dominated all other activities. Salaries of teachers are still signed by the BDO and Pradhan.

The community reported that the teachers’ union is very active in the State. The social relations that teachers maintain with the poor and illiterate tribal and other caste populations is such that the latter is easily influenced by them. Teachers are also known to help the poor communities financially. Teachers indirectly motivate the community during elections to vote in favour of the party that meets the demands of the teachers.

**Provision of Education**

It has been found that despite the increase in the number of schools and enrollment of marginalized children, equity seems to be a major concern and education quality is poor in the government schools which were visited, although this may not be true of all government schools.

Levels of learning seem to be quite low, below the required levels for the grade. This is even true for repeaters of the grade. This means teachers have to re-teach basics so that the curriculum for the grade level is not being taught. There are concerns that learning attainment is so low in Government schools that it contributes to labor migration that might not otherwise take place.

Also concerns exist that education is contributing to the gender and socioeconomic gaps. The establishment of a school with one km of each habitat might contribute to low quality schools (as some have fewer access to resources) and caste based schools that may have an impact on the process of their socialization.

The child tracking system in Rajasthan ensures that individual children’s enrollment is maintained in the school. Admission festivals, lasting a fortnight are held every year to enroll the never enrolled, drop outs and children who remained absent for long periods due to migration. In addition, new enrollment of the eligible age group also takes place. School children and teachers participate in mobilizing community and School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMC) at block and cluster levels. During this process the children who dropped out because of various reasons like poor attendance, low learning level, repeaters etc. are all brought back to school.

**Irregular Attendance and Absenteeism**

- For almost a month during mahua (minor forest produce) picking season - School attendance falls to 40% – 45% in the tribal areas.
• For 15 days during sowing period. Children studying in standard I to VI are generally involved in sowing activity (school attendance falls to less than 60%).
• Attendance of children falls when school timings change from 7 AM-12 PM (July to September) to 10.30 AM-4.30 PM during October to March (6 months) because children have work to do at home in the daytime including looking after the cattle and working in the fields.

Teacher Issues

School hours and days are lost when teachers become involved in non-teaching activities. When a teacher from a single teacher school goes for a meeting or for personal work, the school has to be closed completely. Also, teachers in these situations will sometimes send home younger students after midday to focus on teaching the older students. The SSA has contributed strongly to recruiting teachers and starting the process of filling up longstanding vacant teacher positions. However, teacher transfer, surplus teachers, single teacher schools and low percentage of female teachers are very pressing issues of the present time.

Each school should follow the rule of two teachers per primary school and three teachers for middle school (including one HM) irrespective of the number of students. Thus primary schools which have less than 40 students will also get two teachers and primary schools which have more than 80 students will have two teachers.

In some cases, roadside schools have a surplus of teachers. There are roads going into the interior villages but the condition of the roads is poor. Teachers are assigned to Panchayat Samitis, not specific schools by budget, therefore it becomes easy for teachers to work in the school of their convenience rather than in the school of their posting within a particular Panchayat Samiti. The official records of the schools will show the position as filled but the teacher will not report to work.

Some parents said their children were willing to study in a nearby secondary school, which had teachers in full strength. But they were refused admission by the teachers that want to maintain the school’s enrollment levels.

BRCF/CRCF
A Cluster Resource Centre includes 10-12 schools for onsite academic support and monitoring. Schools have increased over the years. Today a cluster in Chittaurgarh district consists of 15-20 schools and a cluster in Udaipur district consists of 40-65 schools. The condition of approach roads to the villages is poor in both the districts. Actual expenses on travel far exceeds the TA a CRCF gets.

Monitoring

The CRCF also monitors the schools and if a CRCF has 40 or more schools, the rule is that at least 50% of the schools must be monitored, which is a difficult task. The CRCF find it difficult to monitor the Upper Primary Schools. District level officials also felt that
many CRCFs did not have the capacity to provide technical support to the schools and teachers.

Planning

Good experience of micro-planning was gained during Lok Jumbish. Micro-plans had been developed at the village level (VEC) through community mobilization and technical support. SSA micro planning is based on SSA program and planning framework document which lays out norms for schools and educational activity. The local situation is often at variance with these prescribed/ permissible SSA norms. Proposed plans that fall outside the SSA norms usually are not approved. ‘Norms’ rather than ‘evidence’ guide the preparation of micro plans.

Once the micro plans reach the State, MLAs and MPs belonging to the party in power sometimes change the plan (usually locations of new school buildings and schemes) so that benefits flow to villages of Pramukhs, Pradhans, Sarpanchs and Ward members who expressly belong to their party.

Community participation through SDMC as the basis for preparing micro plans under SSA remains a ruling on paper. In reality, the process is a mere mathematical aggregation. The aggregated plan often presents a distorted picture. It might show PTR as not an issue in case of a particular block or even district as a whole whereas the actual situation on the ground may be different with surplus teachers in some schools and poor PTR and single teachers in many other schools as is the case in Rajasthan.

At each level the consolidated plan is signed by the concerned panchayat head. These Panchayat heads seldom comment on the consolidated plans signed by them. The district/zilla parishad level educational plan, which is the proposed SSA Annual Work Plan for the district is then sent to the State for approval.

While the DPC (District Planning Committee) which has been constituted in all districts of Rajasthan in accordance with Article 243 ZD of the Constitution, there is little engagement at the preparation and consolidation of district plans. The DPC envisages a planning and plan consolidation process which is about prioritizing needs at different levels. This input is not seen flowing into the micro plan prepared by SSA/Education department.

SDMC meetings

The fieldwork findings are that the SDMC of a school meets for two purposes; first, to approve proposals for expenditure and to constitute a purchase committee for buying material. Second, the SDMC calls a meeting to give accounts of material purchased and activities undertaken. Money cannot be withdrawn from the SDMC account without calling a meeting of more than half the SDMC members, although usually very few members attend the SDMC meeting. The meeting minutes register is sent out for signature.
Two other meetings called by the SDMC are on Republic Day, 26th of January and Independence Day 15th of August. On these two days parents of school children are invited to the school. The parents are informed about the development activities undertaken by the SDMC during the year.

An SDMC member of Niloda Secondary school said that the school committee (village education committee earlier and now SDMC) formally collects an annual amount of RS 50/Child from children of classes VI & VIII and RS 100 from children of classes IX & X towards school development fund. He said one reason why this fund is maintained is because all other funds received by the school (SSA & BEO office) are tied funds calculated on a specified number of students. When the student strength increases the school falls short of funds. The SDMC has been using this school development fund for buying utensils and during school outings. It also uses this fund when there is a shortfall of funds from SSA for school / blackboard painting, varnish etc.

In Jhadol Block (Udaipur district), the BEO is assisted only by one assistant BEO for monitoring as many as 429 schools in the block. It affects quality monitoring of education. It is practically not possible for one ABEO to monitor 429 schools. Even if the ABEO had to leave aside all other work and only make school visits s/he would still not be covering all the schools even once a year. Using public transportation (bus) to visit a school, changing 3 buses on the way, chances are by the time BEO/ABEO got to the school, the school would have closed. It has also been found that office support staff posts have not been filled up in Jhadol. In fact the BEO does not have a proper office with furniture, computer and computer staff. Kapasan block also faces manpower issues for proper supervision of schools.