

Management of Elementary Education

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INTRODUCTION

The period from 1993 to 2000 was extraordinary in terms of bringing elementary education centre-stage in national discourse. During this period, the universalisation of elementary education emerged as one of the few issues on which all political parties declared their agreement, while developmental economists stressed the urgency for it. Further, the judgement¹ of the Supreme Court in *J.P. Unnikrishnan vs. State of Andhra Pradesh* (1993) transformed an incremental development goal into an entitlement of all children up to 14 years of age, by pronouncing the Right to Education to be a *fundamental right* derived from the Right to Life itself. The issue of Child Labour and Child Rights became key topics in development debate. Media and academics joined hands in mounting national and international pressure on the state, for ensuring universal access to elementary education. UN bodies most significantly the UNICEF, shifted their focus to primary education and integrated the same with their child care and immunisation programmes. 'Joyful Learning' became the national slogan, symbolising the shared agenda across the country. The issue of 'marginalised' and 'unserved' groups was reopened at all levels, inspiring a number of macro as well as micro-studies.

This period also saw a growing pressure to revisit the scheme of 'non-formal education', questioning its legitimacy for meeting the inadequacies of the existing educational

delivery system. Further the myth² that 'people' do not want to educate their children was exploded systematically and finally. What emerged clearly was that it was not education, rather what was served to them in the name of education that was seen as 'useless' by them.

This entire discourse, in effect, created three streams of thought and action, which resulted in a large volume of research studies over this period.

*At the ground level*³, an escalating demand for education and simultaneous critiques of the quality and quantity of schools gathered momentum. These demands, which were slowly building up from the grass-root level, urged for researches to be conducted that carried people's perceptions regarding elementary education to be reflected in management and policies. *At the middle level*⁴, a number of innovative initiatives emerged and pilot projects were designed to 'inform' policy in terms of what could be 'better management' of the educational delivery system. These initiatives gained significance in the field of elementary education. *At the policy level*⁵, there was unprecedented international pressure to operationalise an educational programme that integrated these ongoing research studies to practically feed into the current educational scenario, along with Educational Management Information Systems (E-MIS) to enable accounting of such a large programme when scaled up to national level. As a result, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) got on the ground with a huge collaborative educational

investment. As a cyclical process, the DPEP is creating major ripples in educational research, by placing heavy demands for generating an appropriate knowledge base for informed planning and monitoring.

All these above-mentioned streams contained stated positions and ongoing critiques that were elaborately articulated, though not always heeded. These three streams jointly generated an unprecedented quantum of research and insightful writing. India's participation in the Dakar conference in 2000 urged the country to reflect on its educational scenario, through preparation of consolidated studies relating to elementary education over the recent past in the country. Given the close interrelationship of sectors in educational management, almost all dimensions of education had to be covered in this exercise and twenty-four national papers were prepared and formally discussed at NIEPA⁶, to understand and analyse the status of education in India, for the Conference in 2000.

Given the above scenario, the present paper attempts to discern the patterns that mark distinct trends in educational research, influencing policy and management of education. The exercise is not one of looking at the total quantum of studies undertaken over the eight years. Rather, *the attempt is to trace the manifest shifts in educational management to some significant sets of research. It also attempts to look at the efforts towards 'reminding' planners of those commitments that have had no effect on the ground, despite their acceptance as a priority in policy.*

The paper is divided in five broad sections. The first section places research trends in a historical perspective, linking them to the process of bringing community perceptions centre-stage in educational planning. The second section deals with the research, which has informed the policy with respect to para-teachers, education guarantee scheme, residential camps and special focus on urban slums. The third section focuses on research that points towards implementation lapses/gaps between policy and ground reality,

particularly with respect to Dalits and girls' education. The fourth section looks at the contribution of DPEP towards research which, by the very fact of its scale, has resulted in a revised understanding of what may be called educational management. Finally, the concluding section identifies the gaps in research, which account for the continuing lament that the 'quality' of education is still far from what could meet people's expectations.

PEOPLE CENTRED RESEARCH

Demystification and Decentralisation

Educational research, till mid-eighties, had a compartmentalised character. Three distinct sets of research studies were being undertaken as ongoing processes. These three streams emerged from different sources, contributing to the information base of educational planning and management.

At one level, the state-run *Departments of Statistics and Evaluation Cells* took one course, regularly feeding in quantitative data and informing the "system" with reference to policy measures, as well as providing *systematic justification for resource allocation for maintaining the system.*

Another direction was sought by the *Colleges and Institutes of Education* across the country that supported focussed studies, dissertations for doctoral work and journal papers as post-doctoral exercises⁷. These, generally, reflected a strong statistical bias in what was considered 'academic research'. Even where qualitative challenges were taken up, internal coherence and consistency in argumentation constituted a major criterion in the assessment of merit of the work. *That these insights could have any creative bearing on the state run design of educational management was not a critical consideration in evaluation.*

A third set of research studies emerged from *many innovative small scale experiments* in educational delivery, conducted by inspired voluntary groups in different parts of the country. These were mostly in the form of documentation, evaluation and 'case studies'⁸.

These three streams of research generally took their own course and consequences. The state-run system maintained its *status quo*, justified by departmental evaluation. When pressurised by escalating critique from the people, the State Departments of Education only threw up their hands to say that it was not possible to "change the system" and that such an endeavour was far too unwieldy. A network of vested interests usually controlled such stands. On the other hand, University-sponsored academic research was mostly 'author-rooted', seldom making a cumulative dent in State policy. Individual researchers got applauded or rejected, resulting in their personal professional mobility. This could rarely generate enough pressure for revision in policies and management-processes. The third set of codified knowledge which could potentially contribute to initiate 'change' was more often than not sidelined by comments like "where would you find creative dedicated people like a David Horseburgh or Aruna Roy or Anil Sadgopal or the likes?"

A major shift in this scenario got initiated in the mid-eighties through the nationwide circulation of the document 'The Challenge of Education'. This was a self-critical piece circulated for consultation with people across the country. Subsequently, in the nineties, universalisation of elementary education became a central issue for the State, with pressure from the people as well as the international community. *A rethinking⁹ on research needs surfaced very strongly, recognising it as the most critical component required for redesigning educational management.* It was apparent to all concerned that if the constitutional commitment to make free education available to all children aged between 6-14 years could not be fulfilled, this failure would point at the level of educational 'planning'. Oft-repeated excuses, lamenting parental apathy coupled with ignorance at one level and indifferent implementation mechanism at the ground level, were no longer relevant and had lost their credibility. An inappropriate and ineffective educational delivery system was a glaring fact, not requiring clever tools of measurement. *The action plan*

for redeeming the situation, to start with, needed a strong information base.

Taking community as partners in research: School-mapping and micro-planning

Creating a strong information base for planning an inclusive and effective delivery system meant moving away from the routine 'survey' techniques. It was fairly apparent that the information required an in-depth, validated assessment of the situation. It amounted to a clear recognition that inappropriate planning was partly due to the inadequacy – as well as inauthenticity – of the basic data on the ground reality. Some questions that needed an in-depth understanding were:

- What exactly is the quality and quantity of the educational needs of children?
- How many children are really outside the educational net?
- Who are these children? Where do they live? What is their lifestyle?
- What are the educational facilities available to them?
- What kind of new facilities are required to respond to their needs?
- What kind of research can meet these information needs?
- Who is competent to undertake this exercise? Who can generate adequate, appropriate and authentic knowledge on this front in this huge, diversely populated country?

Recognition of this need led to a major shift in educational planning, resting it on school-mapping and micro-planning as a preliminary research exercise. (*Also detailed in next section regarding micro-planning*) This alone had the capacity to tune the system in the right direction, by providing village level data to ensure inclusion of all children, irrespective of gender, caste and class factors of marginalisation.

Thus, educational research,¹⁰ in a sense, had to be demystified and decentralised to enable 'real' contribution to the existing body of knowledge, informing management. This debate – on what constitutes 'research' and who

can undertake the same – converged with major trends in women's studies across the country. It was clear that all macro studies required quantitative data, to see broad patterns that inform management. But, the wider statistical profile had to be supplemented by and understood in the light of qualitative textures brought out in micro-studies, mostly *relying on people's voices*. It is these voices, which have time and again demonstrated the power to initiate 'change' and 'growth', preventing stagnation and decay.

Right to Education: Public Report on Basic Education in India (PROBE)

A unique contribution to educational research was made by what is popularly termed as PROBE. Designed as a public report to the citizens of India, this report systematically exploded several myths regarding education and created a tremendous impact at all levels – planners, policy and management personnel, departments of education and people at large. Given the authenticity of the facts presented in the report, excuses for the State's inability to

provide free education to all children in the country could no longer be justified.

This study, conducted in four States of India – Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh – demonstrated that people-centred research could be presented in a style and idiom which could make it reader-friendly, without compromising rigour and authenticity. This approach to research could inspire many more fresh efforts.

RESEARCH IN FORMING POLICY

Positive Trends

Operationalising universal elementary education in a country with vast socio-economic, geographical and cultural differences has been a major challenge. The identification and understanding of all unserved groups through various research efforts in the country has been a precursor for initiatives towards universalisation of elementary education. Various models to cater to these diverse groups have been pioneered and importantly documented over the years.

Lack of interest and apathy of parents – especially from the rural and poor, regarding education of their children – was disproved, with 98 per cent families wanting education for their male children and 89 per cent for their girl children. This apathy had been the most common interpretation of the people's lack of faith in the system to provide good education for their children.

The second myth exploded revealed that it was contrary to fact that child labour was a factor for out-of-school children. It was, effectively, the inability of education system to hold children to the schools that led to child labour. This once again compelled the educational system to critically review its delivery mechanisms.

The myth regarding availability of education free of cost was exploded and this study revealed that the average cost of grooming the child with uniforms and books and other schooling accessories was still beyond the means of many families in the country.

Availability and access to schools for all children in the country was the fourth myth that was dispelled. Whereas access to primary schools within one kilometre had reached 94 per cent of the children, yet social access to these schools remained only 30 per cent. Further, if education for children between 6-14 years was considered, 43 per cent children were still living beyond 1 kilometre of any upper primary school. In geographically difficult areas with mountains, deserts, thick forests and streams, this access was still worse. Thus, the already excluded groups, such as the Dalit children, girls and those who had disabilities, were further denied their rights.

Source: Public Report on Basic Education, 1999, pp 14-17.

They have broadened the horizons of the service delivery patterns in the field of elementary education, with different models co-existing rather than subscribing to a uniform education system across the country.

NFE Critiques and Shift to Alternative Schooling Systems

The NFE scheme was introduced in 1979-80, with the aim to fill the gaps and cater to the children who could not be accommodated in the formal education system. However, the failure of the states to operationalise this scheme to address the needs of the marginalised, poor and the unserved groups was heavily critiqued, subsequently. *These critiques¹¹ led to a major shift in planning perspectives and exploration of alternative schooling strategies to impact the marginalised and the hard-to-reach areas.* Some of the visible shifts in the policies that emerged out of this NFE critique and review process have been an acknowledgement of NGO efforts to pioneer alternative schooling systems, leading to a closer collaboration with NGOs, as a policy.

A significant conscious policy decision that emerged in this period was to take *serious cognisance of innovative experiments, promote process documentation and systematic evaluation and finally, share the experience in national forums.* The following are some of the significant recorded innovations for addressing the needs of unserved groups.

Para-teachers: Strategy for geographically marginalised groups

The *Shiksha Karmi Project*, started in 1987, evolved out of a successful pilot experiment by SWRC Tilonia in the year 1975, with three primary schools. The experiment was started with the aim to revitalise and expand primary education, in the geographically remote and backward villages of Rajasthan. Training community-based teacher activists to combat the teacher absenteeism in these remote areas created a cadre of para-teachers under this project. The evaluation of this initiative by

NCERT and the Regional College of Education, Ajmer showed positive trends regarding achievement of children in these three schools, when compared to that of the regular primary schools in the vicinity. This sowed the seeds for the project to be experimented with a larger pilot group.

In 1984, the Government of Rajasthan – with NGOs and community as partners – launched this experiment in thirteen remote villages of one block. The experience gained from the documentation of this pilot project gave rise to the idea of undertaking a more systematic attempt to apply the *Shiksha Karmi* concept on a larger scale. The full-fledged five year *Shiksha Karmi* action project, launched in 1987, was documented using cohort research methods on the “Retention and Achievement in *Shiksha Karmi* Schools” (1995). Thus, *a systematic research study¹² and evaluation of this initiative – starting from three schools to a full-fledged project, documented and augmented by cohort research methods – created ripples in the field of elementary education in the country. This led to a paradigm shift in the policy towards the acceptance of Para Teachers, with an in-built teacher training component (1996 and 1997).*

Institutionalisation of Micro-planning and School-mapping

The exercise of school mapping, initiated by the *Lok Jumbish Project in Rajasthan*, brought in the community as an active partner, in the generation of knowledge for appropriate delivery of educational facilities. *This approach to revisit the basic data informing educational research was a revolutionary step in shaking up the understanding of what constitutes research and who can do it.*

The validation of school-mapping and micro-planning exercise, as a basic tool for effective educational management, can be summed up in the following propositions:

- The quality of educational management can best be assessed by the extent to which it matches people's needs.

- It is therefore important to have a clear and complete assessment of what these needs are.
- The only group which can provide validated information on this are the people themselves. Hence, they have to be active partners in digging, as well as consolidating this knowledge. This capacity building is a necessary first step for quality data.

In fact, the very process of obtaining systematic information about their own situation becomes a tool for community mobilisation. Simultaneously, this process also throws up the principles on which specific planning needs to be done in that area.

The use of school-mapping techniques, for making micro-planning exercise possible, was recognised in the larger DPEP initiative, across the country. It also needs to be recorded that this stress on authenticating basic data was not specifically recognised as 'research' by the 'purist' group. The argument given was that such a label, in effect, trivialises the rigour required in academic research. However, such an argument was counter-balanced by many others, who felt that micro-studies rested mainly on the participation of the community. Furthermore, if community members were given the tools of analysis and consolidation of data, their contribution to the existing body of knowledge could be invaluable, qualitatively as well as quantitatively. That this is possible, had been demonstrated by Lok Jumbish.

Alternative Schools: Education Guarantee Scheme

Madhya Pradesh took the lead in announcing Education Guarantee Scheme which has inspired many other states in India. This scheme ostensibly records a commitment by the state government for making elementary education a fundamental right. This state-designed policy rests on :

- Recognising the 'rights-framework'.
- Valuing community partnership and placing 'people' centre-stage in micro-planning.

- Drawing implications from the tried-out innovations with respect to para-teachers.
- Bringing in the experience, teaching-learning materials and training support from NGOs in the implementation of Alternative Schools.
- Vigilant implementation and monitoring by educational administrators.

The combined role of multiple sets of researches¹³ in this scheme cannot be overstated.

Documentation of Campaigns against Child Labour: Shifts in Legislation

Systematic documentation of campaigns against child labour (CACL) (1992) has made significant contribution to promoting basic elementary education. These efforts have been able to merge these strategies on one end of the continuum of activities, which promote elementary education as a right of the child. This has been successfully demonstrated through a network of social action groups, voluntary organisations, activists from various sectors to:

- enable building public opinion on child labour,
- persuade the government to enforce the existing laws, and
- compel the government to enact a comprehensive progressive legislation to ensure the rights of children.

Bridge Courses and Camps: From Experiments to Programmes

The **MV Foundation** has contributed enormously, through their micro studies on strategies whereby working children and bonded child labourers are enrolled back into the stream of formal education. Researching into the intricate variations in approach required to enrol children of various age groups into the education system, they have classified the working children into those who are involved in domestic work (5-8 years), hard-core child labour/bonded workers (9-11 years) and the older children (12-14 years).

Appropriate strategies, which are a combination of intensive motivation and awareness programmes, bridge courses in summer camps and long-duration camps are also being used to enrol them successfully into the regular and formal schooling system.

Further, the *Pratham** initiative in Mumbai, informed by extensive research on 'out-of-school children', conducts bridge courses for older children who are currently out of school, preparing them to join formal school classes appropriate to their ages.

Balika Shikshan Shivirs (BSS), initiated by the Lok Jumbish Project, are short term residential camps for adolescent girls who have missed the opportunity for schooling, due to lack of access and family compulsions. Organised basically in the desert and tribal areas of Rajasthan, it started with four camps in early 1997. The evaluations of the impact of these camps were documented. With a 20 per cent achievement rate of these girls up to Class IV and another 45 per cent up to Class III, a second series of fourteen camps was organised starting from November 1997. With an extension of one month to the already six-month duration of each camp, nearly 84 per cent of the girls were able to complete Class III. This documented success and systematic evaluations – of the content, duration and impact on the girls from educationally backward and low income areas – has led to the wide acceptance of these camps, as a programme component in the area of elementary education.

Urban Disadvantaged Children: Micro Studies¹⁴ regarding Magnitude and Categories

This is an area where ongoing experimentation in policy is visible. Migration of families into the urban areas not only disrupts the education of their children, but also exposes them to situations that deter them from availing of basic education. Various voluntary

organisations have contributed to the enumeration of these out of school children, though discrepancies are still prevalent. These are a result of a lack of authentic data on non-enrolled, non-attending, school dropouts, compounded by the magnitude of child labour in the country. An analysis and research of these factors, in this decade, identified children from the urban disadvantaged section needing special attention into seven broad categories:

- children living in slums and resettlement colonies,
- child workers/labourers,
- street children,
- children of prisoners,
- children of sex workers,
- children living in institutions, and
- children of construction workers and other migrant labourers.

RESEARCH IDENTIFYING GAPS FOR REVITALISING POLICY

Addressing the issue of Gender in Elementary Education

In a highly stratified society like India, there are numerous layers of differentiation apart from caste and class. Gender is now recognised as a more pervasive and distinct category of social stratification. In the context of literacy too, gender has been – and continues to remain – an important aspect. Data reveals a lower enrolment of girls and high dropout rate, as compared to boys, in elementary education. Girls from the tribal community have a double disadvantage regarding access to – and in the completion of – elementary education in the country.

Over the last decade, a noticeable shift in female education has been that education of girls is seen as a basic human right and a crucial input for national development. Investment in female education is seen as a development imperative, rather than a moral commitment, thus lifting it from the plane of

* The Pratham Movement, an inspiring coalition between community members, corporate leaders, academics, members of the local and central governments, NRIs and qualified professionals from the corporate and non-profit world, has spread to 26 centres across 9 States in India since 1994 to address the problem of children being out of school and not learning.

pure ethics to that of sound economics. The National Policy of Education, 1986, and the subsequent Programme of Action, 1992, gives education a mandate to work for women's equality and empowerment. This is meant to translate in action towards equal opportunities, by transforming the content and process of education meaningfully.

All policy statements gave thrust to incorporating gender in all aspects of any functioning programme, such as maintaining data disaggregated by gender, social grouping and type of school, to assess the effectivity of different policies. Several innovative interventions were actualised, with conscious efforts in all the existing programmes. Appointment of local women as teachers in the *Shiksha Karmi* Project, Micro-level planning and community mobilisation under the *lok Jumbish* project in Rajasthan, other micro-level studies on the interventions and initiatives like Mid-day meals scheme, creation of self-help women's groups and environment building programmes under different projects have contributed towards education for girls. While these have been an encouraging trend, data also indicates that there is still a long way to go before the gaps pertaining to gender are bridged. Micro-studies, as against research on a macro-level, have been able to capture these differences with more accuracy. The micro-studies have not only helped in revealing the disparities presented in aspects such as net enrolment, retention and average years of schooling, but have also been able to generate insight on the causes and influencing factors of the family and society, with regard to gender and elementary education. Noteworthy research studies by Vimala Ramchandran, Usha Nayyar, Rekha Wazir point to a continued gender gap in educational access.

Education among Dalit Children

Any efforts towards realising the constitutional commitment of universal elementary education for all children must seriously address the constraints that have hitherto excluded the large sections of Indian society from basic education. Among the educationally most

deprived in India are the Dalits. According to the 1991 census there were around 138 million Dalits accounting to 16.5% of the population of the country. The literacy levels accounted to 41.5 %, with 62.5% of children in the age group 6-14 enrolled in school at some point of time (NCAER). Further, there are many micro-studies¹⁵ carried out over time to throw light on the attitudinal, infrastructural and social discrimination of the Dalit children within the schooling system.

Given that the roots of educational deprivation of the Dalit communities trace back to their position as the untouchables, a framework of social justice beyond aggregate concerns for equality – in the context of access, participation and outcomes in education – has been outlined, within various policies in the last decade. Article 46 of the Constitution of India directs the states to promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of the Dalits. Further, the National Policy on Education, 1986, aimed at universal enrolment of Dalit children till 11 years of age, and 75% enrolment and their successful completion of elementary education, up to 14 years. The same has been reiterated in the Revised Action Plan in 1992. The DPEP¹⁶, which dominates the educational scenario in the last decade, has also laid special emphasis on the access, participation and achievement of Dalit children in their programmes.

Expanding school provisioning in the last decade, within the prescribed norms of 1 kilometre for primary and 3 kilometre for the upper primary schools (with these distances relaxed in many tribal areas) towards facilitating increased access have been worked upon. Hostel facilities have also gained importance, to promote access and learning among Dalit children. Subsidising costs, providing incentives, scholarships and financial assistance, recruitment of teachers from within the community have been initiated; yet, there is abundance of research that points to their exclusion and subtle denial to elementary education.

According to a survey by the NCAER in 1994, the middle school completion of Dalit children vis-à-vis other children is significantly

low, especially in low-literacy states, such as Rajasthan, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Data on the dropout rates, collected by NSSO Survey (1993-94), points to significantly poorer school completion rates among the Dalits, as compared to other social groups. These dropout rates are particularly high for girls – at approximately 50 per cent, according to the NSSO Survey in 1997.

Beyond these statistical reports are the many micro-studies that talk about the social acceptability of these children in primary schools as a major inhibiting factor in their enrolment and successful completion of elementary education.

Universalisation of Education and the Persons with Disabilities

The last decade has witnessed many policy statements in the area of education for persons with disabilities. At a global level – the World Conference on Education for All (EFA), 1990, The Standard Rules on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, 1993, The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994 – all stressed *inclusive education* for the disabled. The emphasis was on combating the *discriminatory attitudes*, by creating enabling environments and increased access at all levels – physical, social, and attitudinal. Beyond being a signatory to all these declarations, there have been many policy statements, within the country. The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, Delhi Declaration on Education for All, 1996, and most importantly, the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 – have all played a role in highlighting the issues of persons with disabilities and their right to education, within the national education system. However, with no authentic data or procedures available within the country to enumerate the magnitude of disability and the types of disabilities, models of education – catering to the diverse needs within this marginalised section of children – still remain a distant cry.

Further, the utilisation of the ICDS to enrol children with disabilities at an early stage, opening of special schools in all districts, operational integrated education system for all types of disabilities to the extent possible, are all presently in the infantile stages of research and practice in the country. The support for disabled persons has been primarily initiated by the NGOs in the country; a well-planned partnership between NGOs and Governments is still quite minimal.

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Intricate Linkages

DPEP in India is, possibly, the largest single initiative over the past decade that has attempted to vitalise the State-run educational delivery system. The programme attempts at decentralised management, by keeping the District as the basic unit of planning and management for education, while it has a strong, centrally managed Bureau, as well as a Technical Resource Organisation to monitor the processes. This initiative has, over the years, supported an enormous quantum of research at all levels. While the programme itself generated a great deal of participation of organisations and individuals across the country, it has also provoked an ongoing critique from educationists. What is worth recognising, however, is the major shift that this initiative has brought about in the very *understanding of what can effectively transform an educational management system*.

The shared understanding that emerged over the period was that educational management does not entail simple provision of facilities at the ground for 'access'. Even these require a systematic benchmark, and school-mapping. What needs to be ensured is classroom management. And do we really know how the classroom is managed? *The teacher should be seen as an educational manager who addresses the 'needs' of the students in a disaggregated manner*. Is the teacher equipped with the skills required for it? This is intricately connected with the issues of Teacher Education. Also, quality of materials and

Distribution of DPEP Sponsored Research Studies during 1994-2000

Sl. No.	State/ Institution	National Level (NCERT, NIEPA and Ed. CIL)	State Level (SCERT, RIE, SIE, SIEMAT etc.)	District Level (DIET, BRC/ CRC)	NGOs/ Research Institutions/ Individuals	University/ College	Total Research Studies
1.	Andhra Pradesh	—	4	—	2	—	7
2.	Assam	—	2	9	15	8	34
3.	Bihar	—	3	—	25	—	28
4.	Gujarat	—	14	—	—	—	14
5.	Haryana	—	24	—	6	1	31
6.	Himachal Pradesh	—	—	—	—	—	—
7.	Karnataka	—	1	1	—	2	4
8.	Kerala	—	—	—	4	3	7
9.	Madhya Pradesh	—	5	—	3	3	11
10.	Maharashtra	—	3	—	3	1	7
11.	Orissa	—	6	22	—	—	28
12.	Tamil Nadu	—	5	—	—	—	5
13.	Uttar Pradesh	—	—	1	8	3	12
14.	West Bengal	—	—	—	11	—	11
15.	Ed. CIL	27	—	—	—	—	26
16.	NCERT	2	25	—	—	—	27
17.	NIEPA	2	—	—	—	—	2
	Total	31	92	33	77	21	254

Source : P-6, Research Abstracts in Primary Education (1994-2000), November 2000, Ed. CIL House, 18-A, Sector 16-A, Noida-201301 (U.P.).

equipment, textbooks, evaluation techniques, regular support structure, etc., has to be ensured, to help the classroom management. Finally, working with the community, women's groups, parents also have to be recognised as part of the larger challenge of management. Given this perspective, it is significant to note that *DPEP sponsored research, while disaggregated on issues, was pulled together in all supervision missions/ review missions, to generate a consolidated vision of what obtains on the ground, as well as what needs to be done.*

The following broad picture of the studies undertaken for DPEP gives an idea of the involvement of various institutions across the country. It also gives a pattern of weightages that were given to different aspects of educational management.

Out of these above mentioned 254 research studies, NCERT, NIEPA and Ed.CIL conducted 31 studies (12%) at the national level, with Ed.CIL supporting 27 studies (84% of the national level studies), and NIEPA and NCERT supporting 2 each.

At the *State Level*, 92 studies (36%) were undertaken, of which 27% were supported by SCERT. 26% of the state level studies were conducted in Haryana, 15% in Gujarat, 7% in Orissa, 5% each in Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh, 4% in Andhra Pradesh, 3% each in Maharashtra and Bihar, 2% in Assam and 1% in Karnataka.

At the *district level*, 33 studies (13%) were conducted by DIET, BRC and CRC. Out of these 33 studies, 67% were carried out in Orissa State, 27% in Assam and 3% each in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

Research undertaken by NGOs, research institutions and individuals accounted for 77 studies (30%). Out of these 77 studies, 32% were conducted in Bihar, 19% in Assam, 16% in West Bengal, 10% in Uttar Pradesh, 8% in Haryana, 5% in Kerala, 4% each in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh 3% in Andhra Pradesh.

Further, 21 research studies were undertaken by Universities and colleges. Out of these 21 studies, 38% were conducted in Assam, 14% each in Kerala, Madhya Pradesh

**Distribution of DPEP Sponsored Research Studies conducted during 1994-2000
According to the Field of Study**

Sl. No.	State/ Institution	Planning & Mgt. in Elem. Education	Society, econom & Education in Elem. Education	Teacher Education & Training	Pedagogy: curriculum, textbook & other materials	Pupil evaluation, RAS/MAS, achievement tests etc.	Other civil works, alternative/ unrecog- nised schools etc.	Total Research Studies
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2	1	1	3	—	—	7
2.	Assam	9	8	3	8	4	(b, c) 2	34
3.	Bihar	9	17	—	1	1	—	28
4.	Gujarat	—	—	—	3	11	—	14
5.	Haryana	8	7	9	1	3	(a,b,d) 3	31
6.	Karnataka	—	—	—	4	—	—	4
7.	Kerala	2	1	1	1	2	—	7
8.	Madhya Pradesh	—	—	1	3	2	(c) 5	11
9.	Maharashtra	3	2	—	—	1	(a) 1	7
10.	Orissa	2	7	3	12	3	(b) 1	28
11.	Tamil Nadu	—	1	1	—	2	(c) 1	5
12.	Uttar Pradesh	3	3	3	2	—	(b) 1	12
13.	West Bengal	6	1	—	—	4	—	11
14.	Ed. CIL	13	3	4	2	1	(c) 1	26
15.	NCERT	2	1	9	14	1	—	27
16.	NIEPA	2	—	—	—	—	—	2
	Total	61	54	35	54	35	15	254

Abbreviations: a = civil works; b = ICDS/ECCE; c = alternative/unrecognised schools/schooling; d = literature review.

Source: Research Abstracts in Primary Education (1994-2000), November 2000, Educational Consultants India Ltd., Ed. CIL House, 18-A, Sector 16-A, Noida-201301 (U.P.).

and Uttar Pradesh, 10% in Karnataka and 5% each in Haryana and Maharashtra.

Beyond these, 400 action research studies were conducted, of which 64% were conducted in the two States of Haryana and Tamil Nadu. 13% were conducted in Himachal Pradesh, 6% in Kerala, 5% in Uttar Pradesh, 4% in Gujarat, 3% in Assam and 4% in Karnataka.

These 254 research studies, apart from 400 action research studies undertaken at various capacities (national, state, district, NGOs/Individuals and Universities/colleges) can be divided into six broad areas:

- Planning and management;
- Society, economics and education;
- Teacher education and training;
- Pedagogy, curriculum, textbook and other materials;
- Pupil evaluation; and

- Others – civil works, alternative schools, etc.

What emerges from the above is that there has to be simultaneity and convergence of information generated by research on multiple issues, to inform a self-correcting system of educational management. All facets relating to educational delivery have to be reflected upon in totality, in order that the requirements are met in a satisfactory manner.

CONCLUSION

What has been the relationship of research to Policy and Management in the past decade? This question cannot be answered in totality. At one level, it is clear that many policy shifts at the central as well as state level have been informed by systematic research. Also, it is

equally apparent that very sharp critiques of state managed educational system have not demonstrated any shift in the departmental procedures of monitoring and evaluation, nor has it resulted in any announced flexibility for facilitating contextually appropriate innovations within the system. *Our study reveals that research can influence policy very significantly, if it is accompanied by administrative sensitivity and political will.* Wherever significant positive shifts in educational management have been noticed across the country, they can be correlated with the presence of a sensitive and inspired bureaucracy, together with supportive political leadership.

It follows, therefore, that the research agenda should not stop at only generating knowledge. It should also ensure its dissemination, persuasive argumentation and demonstrated validation. The last decade's success / failure of research to inform policy can possibly be linked at some level to this achievement or lapse, as the case may be.

A very significant gap in research relates to the theoretical foundation to support quality-management of education. What really is 'good' education? Is the question too obscure or abstruse? Then, why is the demand for 'good' education ever-vibrant and arising out of widely shared disappointment with what is available on the ground? At a basic level, we find that quality issues in education hinge essentially on the clarity with which

'expectations' from the system are articulated. If we can be clear about our 'requirement', then possibly the outcomes can be managed efficiently.¹ But, if there are contradictory requirements concealed in apparently value-loaded vocabulary, then it is almost inevitable that disappointments would surface at multiple levels – however sincere the efforts may be.

The basic requirements from education, however, cannot be formulated without some clarity on what we want from our children – what kind of individuals do we value? What kind of social relationships, and finally, what kind of society do we wish to create? And, why? The logic for this would require a rigorous philosophical base – an area that has been neglected completely in the volumes of research over the past eight years.

Another major gap in research has been with respect to private schools. While it has amply been recorded that people prefer, despite economic hardships, to send their children to private schools, a systematic situational analysis is yet to be undertaken. Why do we prefer private schools? Why can the state-run system not generate that quality? Can the studies undertake an analysis with discipline of the detail? *A systematic understanding, unmasking some of the conflicting social expectations may help to generate a public discourse on the subject. Possibly, we need another PROBE report on quality of education.*

ENDNOTES AND REFERENCES

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Right derived from the Right to Life itself. As regards determining the extent of the responsibility of the State would have to be as laid down by Article 12 of the Constitution of India which includes the Government and the Parliament of India; government and legislature of each of the states and all local or other authorities within the territory of India or under the control of the Government of India.”

- ² (a) The PROBE Team and Centre for Development Economics. 1999. *Public Report on Basic Education in India*. Oxford University Press. pp. 14-17
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 - Parents are not interested
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- (b) ANANDALAKSHMY, S. AND JAIN, SHARADA 1997. *Shikshakarmi: A Paradigm Shift in the Delivery of Primary Education*. Sandhan Research Centre. p 6.
"The tragedy in India is not that the rural poor do not value education; the tragedy is that they do and it is not available to them."
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