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SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher has presented the summary of the whole study in a nutshell by focussing the purpose of the study, objectives, methodology and major findings. This chapter also dwelt with the discussion on the findings as to what constitute the decentralisation of Management in the Education system, What DPEP has been thrust upon and what are the stumbling blocks at various levels of management and the emerging issues and challenges for Universalisation of Elementary Education. At the end of the chapter, the researcher tries to conclude the study by suggesting areas for further research in the decentralisation of Educational Management.

Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has been the national commitment since 1950 and several steps have been initiated in this regard to accomplish the objectives. The journey towards UEE is not satisfactory at the same time not disappointing also. The innovations in the field of Primary Education through Joyful learning, Mid-day meal scheme, Minimum Levels of Learning, Operation Black Board etc, have certainly increased the quantitative indicators in terms of enrolment, retention and quality education. However, it was realised from the experiences, that the decentralised

approach would be the ideal approach to reach the grass root level schools and to involve the community in this endeavour. District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) had come in to operation in 1994 in the selected districts as a centrally sponsored project, built upon the principles of decentralised management. The researcher, who was involved in the preparation of Perspective plans for the three districts in Gujarat State. After thoroughly understanding the project parameters, and the experiences gained through the participation in the Draft proposals preparation, the researcher had inclined to study the decentralisation of DPEP.

5.2 Summary of the Study

Education is expected to lay the foundation of human development by improving the knowledge, skills and attitude of individuals and thereby changing their economic, social, mental, moral and cultural aspects of human life. The process of education, being continues of different stages, from Primary Education to University Education, each stage covers a specific age group of learners and provides fixed levels of learning experiences. At the primary education stage, which is the first five years (I-V) of learning, the emphasis is on the 3R's (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) along with the foundation for the personality, attitude, social confidence, habit formation, learning skills and communicating capabilities of pupils. It assists physical growth, arouses interests in sports and games and also develops manual dexterity.

Primary Education in India has undergone sea changes for the last five decades in the post independent era. Provision of free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years is a Directive Principle of the Indian constitution, Article 45. Since 1950 concerted efforts have been made towards the achievement of this goal. Enrolment at the primary stage increased about five times from 19.02 million in 1950 to 110.4 million in 1996-97. Girls enrolment ratio has grown at the primary stage from 5.4 million in 1950-51 to 47.4 million in 1995-96 and the rate of growth of enrolment of girls has been higher than that of boys, gender disparities still persist as girls account for only 43.2 per cent of enrolment at the primary stage. Access to schools increased considerably with 95 per cent of the rural population, living in 8.26 lakh habitations, having a school with a walking distance of one kilometer. However, Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) in its totality is still an elusive goal and much ground is yet to be covered. Despite improvement in access at primary level, a large number of children in the primary school age group are still out of school. The participation of girls, Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) children remains a challenge. These groups of children comprise a large proportion of the dropouts. Low level of learning achievement in many schools, particularly in rural areas and urban slums is a matter of concern.

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 (as updated in 1992) and the Program of Action, 1992 reaffirm the national commitment to

Universalisation of Elementary Education Para 5.123 of NPE resolves that free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality should be provided to all children upto 14 years of age before we enter 21st century. NPE specifies in para 5.5 that UEE has three aspects

- universal access and enrolment,
- universal retention of children upto 14 years of age,
- A substantial improvement in quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning

For achieving the target goals several innovations have been introduced. The emphasis has been shifted from enrolment per se to enrolment as well as retention. An array of micro planning based strategies is being formulated for application at the grass root levels to ensure children's retention. The enrolment drives are being replaced by participate planning in which the teachers and villagers would formulate family wise design of action to ensure that every child regularly attend the school or non-formal system of education and complete at least five years of schooling or its non-formal equivalent. However the above measures have contributed towards improving the primary education to a limited extent. It has been realised that Universalisation of Elementary Education can not be accepted as having been achieved unless children acquire Minimum Levels of Learning. Achievement has come to be assigned equal importance along with the access and retention. This is reflected in the revised policy formulation (1986, updated in 1992). The priority shifting in the process of achieving UEE's national

experience identified the contextuality of UEE that entails local area planning with desegregated targets and decentralized planning and management. Operationalising the para 7.4.6 of the Programme of Action 1992, which states,

“ Further efforts would be made to develop district-specific projects, with specific activities, clearly defined responsibilities, definite time schedule and specific targets. Each district project will be prepared within the major strategy frameworks and will be tailored to the specific needs and possibilities in the district. Apart from effective UEE, the goals of each project will include the reduction of existing disparities in educational access, the provision of alternative system of comparable standards to the disadvantaged groups, a substantial improvement in the quality of schooling facilities, obtaining a genuine community involvement in the running of schools, and building up local level capacity to ensure effective decentralisation of educational planning. This is to say, the overall goal of the project would be reconstruction of Primary education as a whole in selected districts instead of piecemeal implementation of schemes. An integrated approach is more likely to achieve synergies among different programme components ”

Imbibing the spirit of the policy provisions, the District Primary Education Program (DPEP) emerged in 1994 as a response to various challenges in the primary education sector. DPEP adopts a holistic approach and has the essential ingredients required to universalize access retention and

improve learning achievement and reduces disparities among social groups. Adopting an area specific approach with district as the unit of planning, the key strategies of the program have been to retain the contextuality and sensitivity to local conditions and ensuring full participatory of the community. The emphasis on participatory planning and management and capacity building are clearly articulated. The criteria for selection of districts are.

- Backward districts with female literacy below the national average
- Districts where total Literacy Campaigns have generated a demand for elementary education

Since its initiation in 1994, DPEP covered 42 districts in 7 states; its reach has spread to 149 districts in 14 states to another 33 districts, which is in the pipeline. In Gujarat State, three districts namely, Panchmahal, Banaskanda and Dangs were identified as DPEP districts in the second phase.

The salient features of District Primary Education Program are

- Operationalises NPE's strategy for decentralized planning and desegregated target setting
- Implementation in project model in districts. The project period varying between 5-7 years

- Makes a holistic approach, from the schematic to the integrated, with due emphasis on convergence of existing programs and resources
- Focus on sustainability and equity central to the program
- Emphasis on intensive community participation
- Predominance of quality aspects supported by feedback from research and evaluation
- A process based program
- Responsibility of implementation vested with state level registered society empowered to make financial and administrative decisions, with national level co-ordination and support
- A Centrally sponsored scheme with 85% of the project cost being made available to the states by Government of India and states contributing the balance 15 percent
- The Govt. of India funds are sourced from international funding agencies
- Approximately Rs.30-40 crores funding earmarked for a district for the entire project period
- Financing is done on the principle of additionally, such that the states continue to maintain at least their pre-DPEP allocations for primary education.
- Special supervision mechanism-bi-annual joint supervision mission with representatives of Ministry and the International funding agencies

5.2.1 The Concept of Decentralisation in Educational Management

The issue of decentralisation features quire prominently in all contemporary discourses on educational management. The central control versus regional autonomy problematic is not new to the field of public administration. The developments in the educational management system in India represent a wide spectrum of policies and practices. Conceptualizing the concept of decentralisation, it is any operation aimed at achieving some form of decentralisation is not merely a technical and administrative undertaking; the nature and degree of power transferred within such a reform process are dependent upon political will and the power struggles that underlie all efforts to achieve decentralisation (Adamolekun, Robert and Laleye, 1990). Traditional literature on the subject refers to a variety of management phenomena, all under the rubric of decentralisation (Lauglo, 1990). These include at least three easily distinguishable trends. The first trend is that in some countries decentralisation is perceived to consist of adding to the existing political and administrative structure a number of “deconcentrated” bodies, either at the local level alone or at the two or three levels. An obvious implication of this process is to move the administrative set up nearer to the action setting but by increasing the weight of the bureaucracy. It is often expressed that this approach to decentralisation is only a means to increase-not weaken- the role of the state. Decision making through locally placed civil servants may be better informed than central bureaucrats and can therefore take more account of local view (Lauglo, 1990).

The second trend commonly identified can be referred as to “delegation” In this case the state apparently transfers some of the powers of decision-making to bodies outside the government bureaucracy This would theoretically allow for involvement of non-governmental bodies in the management process. However in practice, such delegation of authority generally involves para-statal bodies, created by the state itself to handle special areas of public concern. Even though such delegated bodies would enjoy some amount of autonomy from state control and allow for participation of non-government personnel in decision-making and they are easily dispensable as their creation is effected mainly through executive orders of the state and not through promulgation of law Establishment of Textbook Boards in different states of India is a good example of such approach, which includes vesting of decision-making powers with members of the bureaucracy within the governmental hierarchy down the line and away from the center

“Devolution” is the third kind of reform generally considered as representing a more comprehensive and genuine approach to decentralize the management process In this case, specified powers are transferred to sub-national units through appropriate legal reform processes, generally these units consist of local self-governments constituted through democratic means In countries, which adopt such model," decentralisation is considered and perceived as an in-depth reform, which is both a fundamental and an essential part of national development In this case, decentralisation is presented as a “choice of

society” (Adamolekun et al,1990) Caldwell and Spinks(1988) discussed the nature of decentralisation in the educational setup and mentioned the parameters of decentralisation in terms of knowledge(decentralisation of decisions related to curriculum, including decisions related to the goals or ends of schooling), technology(decentralisation of decisions related to the means of teaching and learning), power(decentralisation of authority to make decisions), material (decentralisation of decisions related to the use of facilities, supplies and equipment), people (decentralisation of decisions related to the allocation of people in matters related to teaching and learning), time (decentralisation of decisions related to the allocation of time), and finance(decentralisation of decisions related to the allocation of money)

After independence India has strived to accelerate the process of development through active participation of the people at the grass-root level. The decentralisation of socio-economic development programmes was conceptualised as early as the First Five-Year Plan. It was envisaged that the villages would undertake and execute the programmes of development with actual support of the state. Accordingly, it was felt necessary to change the structure of development administration. Launching a community development program in 1952 was a first step in this direction. Development was conceived as an integrated process. A need was felt for building development administration which is sensitive to the aspirations and needs of the people. The significance of decentralization in accelerating the process of development was emphasized by the Balwantrao Mehta Committee (1957) which was set up

make recommendations on new structures to be created to involve local people in the development process. The committee recommended the establishment of an interconnected three-tier organizational structure of democratic decentralization at the village, block and district levels. The DPEP has been operationalised on the principle of decentralisation of management and specific management structures have been evolved to reach out to the community.

5.2.2 Purpose of the Study

In order to elicit best results by enabling the DPEP to evolve and regain its dynamic character, interventions to improve management practices, decentralised planning, research, monitoring, evaluation and supervision must go hand in hand with the programme. Any reform in education can not be achieved, unless and until the prime functionaries digest the principles, objectives, roles and responsibilities and put them in to practice. The structural changes in DPEP on the lines of decentralisation, provided broad spectrum of participation of local community in planning and decision making process. In the context of DPEP, the critical issue need to be answered is that, a smooth transition from the project mode to the programme mode depends on the way the connected policies, rules and regulations are re-oriented to accommodate the new initiatives. One of the common tensions that arise in this regard is with respect to project personnel and their integration into the system. The DPEP project became operational with a relatively new sets of policy guidelines only in some selected districts while the existing rules and regulations will continue to be in force in the

remaining How do overcome this problem of dual sets of rules and regulations and ensure smooth integration of the project with the regular programme Since the DPEP is time bound project with lot of financial input, it requires a critical study on the programme implementation level. In this perspective the present study is designed to probe into the following research questions that are vital and implicit in the DPEP model

- 1 Is Decentralization of Management existing in its real terms at all levels with proper autonomy, accountability, participation and professionalism in decision making and implementation?
- 2 What are the management structures, its objectives, composition, processes, functions and its co-ordination with the existing management system working in the field of primary education?
- 3 Do the functionaries at the grass-root levels practicing on the principles of decentralized Management?
- 4 What extent the decentralized system of management achieved its pre-defined objectives and contributed for the attainment of the Universalisation of Elementary Education?
5. What are the functional difficulties and challenges in the DPEP district as a unit operating on the basis of this system of management ?

5.2.3 Objectives of the Study

- 1 To study the nature of Decentralized Management of DPEP in the Panchmahal District in terms of academic and administrative dimensions
- 2 To study the management structures and processes of DPEP in Panchmahal District
- 3 To study the impact of Decentralized Management of DPEP on enrolment, retention and achievement
- 4 To study the perception of the Teachers, Village Education Committee and Local Community on the District Primary Education Programs.
5. To find out the major difficulties faced by the functionaries at the Panchmahal district

5.2.4 Methodology

The nature of the study is qualitative Panchmahal District of Gujarat State is selected for the present study. Panchmahal is identified as a DPEP district in the second phase 1995-96 Panchmahal district is having 11 talukas Among them two talukas are selected for the present study Researcher had developed interview schedules and questionnaires for the respondents of the different sampling units The year wise documents and

reports were procured from the National, State and regional level DPEP councils. The researcher has been attending the different committee meetings at all levels and the detailed observation records are being maintained for the further analysis. The quantitative indicators are also taken into consideration in analyzing the data. In Pachmahal district, two talukas namely Halol and Kalol were selected purposively for the present study, as these two talukas were accessible to the researcher to pursue the study. Considering the scope and dimension of the study, Unit Sampling Technique was used to draw the sample. Thus the sample consisting of the following,

(a) Size of the Sample and Respondents for the Study

Sampling Unit	Respondents
Gujarat State DPEP Headquarters	State DPEP Project Officer Director, SCERT
District – Panchmahal DIET	DPEP Project Officer
Block (2) • Halol Taluka • Kalol Taluka	Block Resource Centre Co-ordinators
Cluster (6) • Halol (3) • Kalol (3)	Cluster Resource Group
Village Education Committee(10) • Halol (5) • Kalol (5)	Village Panchayat Parents/Community
School (10) • Halol (5) • Kalol (5)	Teachers/Headmaster

*Note. The number in the bracket indicates the number of persons taken as sample.
The number in the brackets indicates the number of the sample units included in the present study*

Thus the sample of the Clusters, schools and Village Education Committees selected for the presented study are as follows,

(b) Selection of the cluster Resource Centres(CRC), Schools and VECs in Halol and Kalol Talukas in Panchmahal district.

Block	Name of the CRC	Name of the School/Village
Halol	Khanjari	Panchmudi Primary School
	Vitalpura	Moghasar Primary School
	Chapner	Gayatrinagar Primary School
		Duniya Primary School
		Dharmapuri Primary School
Kalol	Derol Station	Derol Gam Kumar Primary School
	Derol Gam	Derol Gam Kanya Primary School
	Kalol Taluka	Jeli Primary School
		Golibar Primary School
		Madhavasani Movadi Primary School

- *The list of persons contacted and interviewed is enclosed in the appendix.*

The scope and dimension of the present study demands initially, baseline information and the same were generated through the document analysis by the

researcher The researcher has used questionnaires and in depth interviews with the functionaries of the DPEP at various levels

5.2.5 Major Findings of the Study

From the overall analysis of the data, it is clearly seen that there has been a clear evidence of the DPEP interventions for accomplishing the Universalisation of Elementary Education in India However, achieving the goals of the programme remains a challenging proposition The study has clearly shown that the initial steps taken under DPEP have shown encouraging results in Panchmahal District with a spurt in Enrolment, retention and achievement of the students It is also seen that DPEP has made a significant effort in eliciting community participation in the Primary Education through the establishment of the Village level structures in almost all the villages of the Panchmahal District However, these community level structures need to be rooted into the system and move from people's participation to the people's ownership This would enable the system to ensure the sustainability of the programme development It was found from the study that the management structures and functions under the DPEP decentralised management system have specific gaps, which hinders the programme operation and function Therefore, there is a need to redefine the roles of different functionaries at all levels of programme management It was found in Panchmahal District that the inter alien of the District and block level structures in terms of co-ordination and collaboration on various programmes has not been satisfactorily reported Synthesizing the above-presented analysis of the data collected through various sources in Panchmahal District, the major findings of the study are arrived at and are presented below

- 1 The DPEP has made impact on the academic decentralisation by linking institutional resources and teacher training with classroom processes. This approach created learning resources in terms of teaching learning materials that envisages joyful learning in the schools

- 2 The Teacher Grants and School Improvement Grants were found as motivational approaches in strengthening and sustaining the institutional and individual commitment on the achievement of DPEP goals

3. The DPEP has also made impact on the of administrative decentralisation by creating district, village and community level structures. There has been a great deal of structural revolution that took place under DPEP Planning process, execution and appraisal of the programme gave a scope for participatory approach

- 4 However, there are certain principle areas identified, which require more concern in visualizing the administrative decentralisation as envisaged in the DPEP. These areas for concern are the functional effectiveness of administrative structures, moribund nature of village level administrative structures, autonomy and accountability conflicts, limited levels of co-ordination among various personnel and the low participation of community in the school programmes.

- 5 The existing structures for the management of Primary Education and the evolved structures for the management of District Primary Education Programme have been working as parallel structures and in some cases the vertical and horizontal working relationships are not clear
- 6 Block Resource Centers are established in almost all the Blocks of Panchmahal District by creating a full-fledged functional building The BRC co-ordinators were appointed on deputation and most of them are teachers in Primary schools Each BRC is having around 15 clusters
- 7 Cluster Resource Centers are attached to Pay Center Schools and the Head master of the school considered to be the co-ordinator There is no full-fledged functional building for CRC Each cluster looks after 10 to 12 schools and provides guidance to the teachers
- 8 Master Trainers' are identified by the BRC and were trained by the DIET and the GCERT. These trainers train the teachers in their clusters on various themes. These master trainers do not take classes in their school and continue to be the trainers through out the tenure.
- 9 Village Education Committees were established in almost all the villages of the Panchmahal District and it was found that their participation in school programmes and their level of awareness on the DPEP is not satisfactory The

VEC meets one's in three months and the discussion in the meeting usually around the RS 2000/- School Grants

10. Parent Teacher Associations and Mother Teacher Associations are found established in most of the schools of the Panchmahal district and their functional utility is found not satisfactory
- 11 The members of the Village level and Community level management structures remains to be members for long years It was felt that there should a rotation among the parents and community to be the members of such bodies to provide equal opportunity to all to take part in the school programmes.
- 12 The Gross Enrolment Rate of the students at Std It is found to b increased over the years after the implementation of the DPEP in the Panchmahal District.
13. The Retention Rate in Lower Primary school is also found increased over the years after the implementation of the DPEP.
14. In both the enrolment and retention rates, the figures of boys are more than the girls. It was found that these gender differences are mostly due to the socio-economic and cultural issues in the society

- 15 There has been a significant increase in the academic achievement of the students after the implementation of the DPEP. It was found that there is a near absence of gender based inequality in the lower standards
- 16 Sixty Eight percent of the respondents opined that there has been a significant increase of the school resources in terms of teaching learning materials and other equipment
- 17 Twenty Six percent of respondents opined that the community involvement is very much increased and whereas Twenty Five percent of respondents opined that community involvement is not at all increased due to the DPEP.
- 18 Fifty Five percent of respondents opined that there has been a decentralisation of management right from the programme planning to programme implementation
- 19 At the Village level, it was found that the level of awareness on DPEP is low especially in the components like roles and responsibilities of the community, funding procedures, the nature of decentralisation of management and quality education
20. The level of awareness on the DPEP components at village level is seen more on the school development grants, school programmes like shala Praveshostav, Bala mela and the constitution of VEC, BRC and CRC

- 21 Lack of community participation and awareness is found to be the most acute difficulty faced by the functionaries of the DPEP Politicization is also considered as one of the difficulties faced at the village level
- 22 Repetition of the training programmes by various bodies State, District and Block level for teachers, lack of facilities in the training programmes and the frequently changing text books and methods of teaching are found to be difficulties by the teachers in the DPEP Schools
- 23 It was found that there is a need to have a well organized monitoring and evaluating system by specifying roles at District, Block and Village levels for the sustainability of the programme in an integrated manner

The above major findings of the study need to be discussed within the framework of the concept of decentralisation and the project principles of District Primary Education Programme The researcher has discussed these findings in the light of purpose of principles of decentralisation and emerging issues and challenges in the Universalisation of Elementary Education

5.3. Discussion and Conclusion

Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) is a long pending constitutional commitment to the nation Several steps have been taken in this regard from time to time by spelling out emphatically the recommendations of National

Policy on Education (1986) and the Program of Action (1992) A number of schemes and programs were launched in pursuance of the emphasis of the policy recommendations These included the scheme of Operation Black Board, Non formation Education, State specific basic education programs like APEP, BEP, LJP, National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education and Centrally sponsored DPEP. However the journey toward UEE is still on its way, far away from the expected goal The present status of UEE in the country indicates that as against 200 million children in the age group of 6-14 only 140 million are attending primary schools. About 60 million school-aged children are outside the school Out of whom 35 million are girls. The Net enrolment ratio is just 66% at primary and 43% at upper primary level indicates enormous wastage and stagnation Findings of the achievement test show that large number of children attending schools don't achieve competency level and surveys highlight the issues of relevance of curriculum and thrust on the cognitive areas at the cost of holistic development There are still at least one-lakh habitations in the country without schooling facility in a kilometer. We have been continuously and comfortably extending the target time in achieving UEE

The positive picture of UEE on the other side seems to be impressive and optimistic Consequent to several efforts especially the experiences of DPEP, India made significant progress in terms of increase in institutions and infrastructure Number of schools increased by four folds (9,30,000) by 1998-99, enrolment in primary schools increased by six times (140 Million), the girl enrolment has huge

rise about 32 times DPEP experience gave a fresh out look for the management reforms and strategies to tackle contextual issues

DPEP lays a great deal of emphasis on planning and management on the principles of decentralisation. Decentralisation is not an end in itself but a means for achieving other ends and purposes. Here it is very important to review the impact of decentralisation on the DPEP. The present study focussed the changes that occurred in the system of Primary Education for achieving the Universality. These changes are basically in terms of management structures and functions, academic transactions on the principles of child-centered teaching and community participation in the management of the school programmes. However the effect of decentralisation on the effective governance depend to a large extent on the form and nature of the decentralisation involved at different stages. At this juncture, keeping in mind the major findings of the study, it is essential to discuss on the four major aspects of the decentralisation, i e , autonomy, accountability, efficiency and equity

The effect of decentralisation on the learner's autonomy, autonomy of the educator, autonomy of the institution and the autonomy of the school-based management are the crucial points of the District Primary Education Programme. The study reveals that the teachers and the local community have been given autonomy in preparing their curriculum transactions, but this autonomy is on the grounds of guided principles provided by the resource institutions. The researcher even in the administrative structures has recorded similar situations also. Therefore, the autonomy that has been envisaged in the draft proposals of DPEP were not

exactly perceived neither by the functionaries nor by the administrative units. The appropriate level of autonomy will need to take account of the practical conditions of an education system. The degree of curriculum decentralisation needs to be a function of the capacities of the teaching force to define their own curriculum. The less developed teaching force leads to more central specifications and guidelines. The autonomy largely becomes successful in the organisations with the help of the skilled and committed task force. The DPEP has been realised this aspect and strived for empowering teachers and other functionaries at all levels of programme implementation.

The success on any programme depends on the accountability of the stakeholders. In the system of education, teachers, management, students, community at large etc., are the stakeholders. DPEP has provided a scope for these stakeholders to participate in the decision making process at school levels. It was observed from the study, the level of accountability among the various stakeholders was not much encouraging. The basic reason behind this could be the low level of awareness of the personnel involved in the DPEP. The study revealed the fact that the role conflicts, clarity of the tasks, responsibilities and commitment are the blocks for the development.

Regarding the efficiency of the programme in terms of the usage of resources and to what extent these correspond with the intended purposes. The study revealed that the enrolment and retention rates in both the blocks are increased along with the academic achievement of the students. It was found that DPEP

interventions brought academic standards in the Primary School system in the country. This is a positive point of the Programme. However, there is no clear indicator which mentions the attainment of the objectives in its full terms, but the developmental process is recorded.

The equity measures of the programme justified its concern on the gender disparities and disparities among social groups. DPEP has provided scope for minimising disparities and encouraging the sustainable development.

Gaining from all the experiences and looking forward to accomplish the target of UEE, the Govt. has launched Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)- a holistic stride towards achieving UEE through a time bound integrated approach in close collaboration with state governments. At this juncture it is necessary to present the follow up action for accomplishing UEE.

SSA was evolved on the national resolve as expressed in the constitution and in policy documents. The resolve was reiterated in 1998 in Education Minister's conference. A National committee of Education Ministers was setup under the chairmanship of Minister of HRD to examine the modalities of adopting holistic and convergent approach to achieve UEE in mission mode. The National committee submitted the report in 1999 and recommended that holistic convergent approach would be possible by taking the district as a unit of planning and implementation and by enhancing partnership between center, state and local governments.

SSA is a strategy with convergent approach where effort has been made to maximize the gains from investments, cost-effectiveness, decentralized decision making with community ownership, context specificity, effective administrative structure, absence of duplication in command, holistic perspective in planning and implementation, time bound and context specific decision making are the components of this approach. This strategy is coupled with mission mode that signifies the very focussed pursuit of objectives in order to achieve stated goals within a specified time period. The financial parameters of SSA are reasonable and provide wide convergent framework for strengthening the vital areas of concern. Investments in the Elementary Education sector from the state and the central plans merge in SSA programs. The budget provisions would be 85:15 sharing arrangement during IXth Plan, 75:25 in the Th plan and 50:50 in the consequent plans between center and state governments. Synergizing the efforts and resources in an integrated mode is the essence of SSA. Perhaps the previous progress including DPEP could not avoid duplication and merge in the then existing programs and processes. The review studies categorically highlighted this aspect.

The vision of SSA is to provide a relevant elementary education of satisfactory quality for all by 2010 bridging social and gender gaps. The main features of SSA are;

- All children in school, Education Guarantee Centers, alternative school, back to school camp by 2003
- All children complete five years of schooling 2007.

- All children complete eight years of schooling by 2010
- Focus on Elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life
- Bridge all gender gaps and social category gaps
- Universal retention by 2010

The key features of SSA are as follows;

- Institutional Reforms in States the starting point of SSA will be an assessment by the state itself, of the objective conditions in the state for implementing a community owned initiative for UEE This would enable the state governments to review and redefine their state education acts focussing thrust on the targets
- Community Ownership through effective decentralization Community based monitoring by developing educational Management Information System to correlate school level data and community based information for micro planning Every School will have a notice board showing all the grants received by the school and other details.
- Habitation as a unit of planning considering the habitations within the area and their educational requirements would do Elementary Education Plan at the village level.
- Thrust on Quality Education for quality life

- **District Elementary Education Plan** In order to avoid duplication, all funding under various heads like OBB, NFE, SOPT etc , would come under SSA. The District elementary Education Plan will be a comprehensive document aiming at UEE will take into consideration the existing infrastructure in a district, existing and the projected gaps and resources available under different groups.
- **Capacity Building of Teachers** Professional development through participation in curriculum related material development, focus on class room processes and exposure visits and 140 ration of the students as suggested by the Mujumdar committee etc
- **Focus on special Groups**
- **Convergent Approach** SSA does not believe in parallel structures that monitor and control the processes for the attainment of the same objectives Under SSA all the resources will be pooled and optimally utilized in a cost-effective manner.

The objectives and the key features of the SSA indicates the following points,

"Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' is a phase of transition in the process of Universalisation of Elementary Education It is a transition in the sense that it consists of new perspectives, approaches and orientation within the system broadly on the sound principles of MBO and synergetic Models of Management.

Management by Objectives is a strategy for enhancing institutional efficiency by which objectives laid down with consensus would be dwelt strategically in a cost-effective manner. Here the basic question is that whether the community ownership is successful in framing desirable objectives and attain them? Experiences gained from the previous projects show that politicisation of the community and their acute undue interference hampered the administrative processes. Therefore political dimension of community initiative need to be addressed in detail before mobilising community participation. Community participation is to be seen as a core value of education system and simple indicators for participation and the extent and methodology need to be worked out.

SSA is purely on convergent model wherein the efforts and resources are unified in close collaboration with state governments, Central and other organisations working in the area of elementary. In this regard a uniform code that match educational provisions and Acts of the state governments with the latest amendments of central policy. This demands the political will and commitment to the operating system. The mutual responsibility of Education under concurrent list needs through analysis and a code of cohesiveness needs to be evolved.

The SSA clearly seems to be a decentralised management strategy with inadequate importance to the academic community working in the field of elementary Education. As the networking expected between the administrative structures, the networking between different systems of Education and academicians needs to be strengthened to break the academic isolation.

The DPEP has provided a clear practical model of SSA for its successful operation for achieving UEE. The success of SSA model would be seen at the end of the project mission.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

From the major findings of the study and from the discussion, the study thrown light on certain emerging issues that require intensive research study. The deficiencies noted in the operation of DPEP in specific context to Panchmahal District provided a framework for researchers to probe into the issues thoroughly and conduct research to answer and understand issues intertwined with the long pending goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education. This sections deal with the suggestions and the scope for further research in this area

1. A through investigation is needed on the programme implementation of the DPEP in terms of Academic and Administrative aspects separately
2. In depth analytical studies are needed to be under taken to diagnose the problems of management structures and propose a more appropriate organisational design for programme implementation

3. A comparative analysis of the progress of Primary Education in DPEP and Non DPEP districts in the country in terms of the objectives of UEE needs to be studied
4. A Study on the perception of Primary School Teachers on the attainment of Universalisation of Elementary Education
5. A comparative analysis on the progress of DPEP in different states is needed to understand the contextuality of UEE.
6. A Study on the functional difficulties of the personnel of DPEP management structures at District, Block, Cluster, Village levels
7. An Analysis of the Training programmes conducted for the teachers of DPEP
8. A study on the nature of decentralisation in the system of education.
- 9 A Study on the impact of decentralised management on the quality education

10. A comparative study on the various interventions programmed in the area of Elementary Education

5.5 Conclusion

The present study is a synthesis of various components of DPEP and their processes. The study also focussed on the principles of decentralisation. The mission of the programme, the nature and intensity of the planning process, structural revolution in management processes, capacity building and community participation have together rendered the District Primary Education Programme an unique and exiting idea in the country.

Since its inception in 1994 to its current stage, DPEP has undergone various phases and of course shown promising results within the country and received international acclaim. The financial support and soft loans are the evidences for international support and collaboration. DPEP has come like a wave in the system of Primary education and got appreciation and it has broken new paths of development, which emphasises sustainability, equity, local ownership and supportive policy recommendations. It is the responsibility of the teachers, administrators, policy makers and community at large to protect the spirit of DPEP and integrate in the developmental process.