

Comprehensive Study Notes: Strategies, Planning, and Management for Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in India

Part 1: Foundational Concepts and Key Strategies for UEE

1.1 Understanding Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE)

Introduction

Elementary education is a foundational component of India's educational policy, representing a shared concern between the central and state governments. The **Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE)** has been the focus of numerous state-level projects and national programmes designed to ensure every child receives a quality basic education.

Defining UEE

Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) is defined as the "availability of education everywhere according to the specific need of the children and place."

Stages of School Education in India

The structure of school education in India is categorized into the following stages:

- **Preschool:** 3-6 years of age
- **Elementary:**
 - Primary (I-V): 6-11 years of age
 - Upper Primary (VI-VIII): 11-14 years of age
- **Secondary (IX-X):** 15-16 years of age
- **Higher secondary (XI-XII):** 17-18 years of age

Elementary education is the combination of the primary and upper primary stages.

Three Core Aspects of UEE

UEE is a multi-faceted concept built on three fundamental principles that create a comprehensive educational framework:

- **Universal access and enrollment:** The primary goal is to establish a primary school within easy access (every kilometer) for all children. This involves conducting annual family surveys to identify all eligible children, including those out of school, and observing an "enrollment week" at the start of the academic year to ensure 100% enrollment.
- **Attendance and retention:** A significant challenge is retaining enrolled children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. To improve attendance and prevent dropouts, various facilities are provided, such as a daily attendance allowance, free mid-day meals, and free travel passes.
- **Quality of education:** This dimension emphasizes the provision of quality education benchmarked against **Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL)**. It involves substantial improvements in school infrastructure, provision of basic facilities like drinking water and toilets, and robust teacher training programs to enhance pedagogical quality.

Illustrative Example: Sakhar Shalas

The case of Prakash Ganesh Patil, a student whose family seasonally migrates for sugarcane cutting work, highlights a key challenge to UEE. Due to migration, children often miss months of school and cannot reintegrate, leading them to drop out. To address this, the Maharashtra state government introduced '**Sakhar Shalas**' (Second semester schools) in 2001. These schools operate near sugar factories for approximately six months during the migration and crushing season, allowing children of sugarcane cutters to continue their education without interruption.

1.2 The Project-Based Approach for UEE in Various States

To achieve the goals of UEE, numerous programmes were implemented in a "**mission mode**." This approach involves clearly defined objectives, specific timelines, and measurable outcomes to ensure accountability and progress. These projects represent diverse, context-specific approaches to the common goal of UEE, each with unique funding models and target groups.

1.2.1 Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project (UP-BEP)

- **Overview:** Launched in 1993 with assistance from the World Bank, the UP-BEP was implemented by the 'Sabhi ke liye Shiksha Pariyojana Parishad' (UP Education for All Project Board).
- **Objectives:**
 - Provide access to primary education for all children up to 14 years of age.
 - Ensure universal achievement of the **Minimum Level of Learning (MLL)**.
 - Promote female empowerment and gender equality in education.
 - Provide equal educational opportunities for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) children.
- **Strategies:**
 - Establish a strong framework for state and district-level planning and management.
 - Improve educational quality through curriculum revision, in-service training, and strengthening school management.
 - Increase access by constructing more primary and upper primary schools in deprived areas.
- **Activities:**
 - Focused educational activities on culture and communication.
 - Activities related to science and the environment.
 - Initiatives to create a sense of social justice.
- **Implementation:** The project was concentrated in 10 targeted districts: Varanasi, Allahabad, Banda, Etawah, Sitapur, Aligarh, Saharanpur, Gorakhpur, Pauri, and Nainital.

1.2.2 Bihar Education Project (BEP)

- **Overview:** Initiated in 1991-92, the BEP was a joint undertaking by UNICEF, the Government of India, and the Government of Bihar. It focused on improving the quality of education and providing opportunities for deprived sections of society, particularly SCs, STs, and women.
- **Objectives:**
 - Achieve universal primary education and ensure children meet minimum levels of learning.
 - Orient the educational system to promote equality and empowerment for women.
 - Provide equal educational opportunities for lower castes, ethnic communities, and the poorest sections of society.
- **Strategies:**
 - Construct approximately 11,000 primary and upper primary classrooms.
 - Recruit and train around 16,000 additional teachers.
 - Implement the **Mahila Samakhya** component for women's empowerment.
- **Activities:**
 - Organizing **Village Education Committees (VECs)**.
 - Conducting poster workshops to expand the concept of rural libraries.
 - Implementing Mahila Samakhya to ensure local school accountability and support.
- **Implementation:** The project was implemented in 12 districts, with project supervision conducted in conjunction with that of the UPBEP-I.

1.2.3 Lok Jumbish (Rajasthan)

- **Overview:** **Lok Jumbish**, meaning "People's movement for Education for All," was launched in 1992 with support from the **Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)**. Its primary focus was on mobilizing communities to support education for all, with a special emphasis on girls' education.
- **Objectives:**
 - Achieve education for all by the year 2000 through people's mobilization and participation.
 - Empower women by making education an instrument for equality.
 - Increase literacy levels to 80% in the 15-35 age group in **each gender and disadvantaged group**.
- **Main Components:**
 - Creation of an autonomous body to manage the program.

- Use of **school mapping** and **micro-planning** at the village level to assess educational needs and track each child's progress.
- **Strategies:**
 - Creating bottom-level mechanisms like the Prerak Dal (motivational team) and **Village Education Committees (VECs)**.
 - Establishing the Adhyapika Munch (women teachers' forum) to encourage female participation.
 - Holding regular Review Planning Meetings (RPMs) at cluster and block levels to monitor progress.
- **Activities:** The project undertook a wide range of targeted activities:
 - **For Girls' Education:**
 - **Mahila Shikshan Vihar:** Residential courses for out-of-school girls in the 15+ age group in rural areas.
 - **Balika Shikshan Shivir:** Residential camps of 6-8 months for girls in the 9+ age group to facilitate their entry into formal education.
 - **For Tribal & Minority Children:**
 - **Hostels for tribal children:** To cater to the needs of children of seasonal migrants and those in remote habitats.
 - **Muktangan:** A program for tribal children in the Khandela Cluster of Kishnenganj block.
 - **Madrassa:** Strengthening education to reach children from minority communities.
 - **General/Support Programs:**
 - **Institutionalization of Sahaj Shiksha Kendra:** A nonformal education program for working children.
 - **School health programme:** Focused on generating health awareness among school children.
 - **Anganwadi centers:** Strengthening pre-primary education and its links with primary schools.

1.2.4 Shiksha Karmi Project (Rajasthan)

- **Overview:** Started in 1987 with SIDA assistance, this project was designed to combat teacher absenteeism in remote, single-teacher schools. It innovatively replaced the regular teacher with a team of two local educational workers known as '**Shiksha Karmis**'.
- **Objectives:**
 - Achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE, an earlier term and a core component of the broader UEE goal).

- Promote women's empowerment and equality.
- Overcome problems of poor enrollment and high drop-out rates, particularly among girls.
- **Strategies:**
 - Conducting bi-annual project reviews.
 - Using consensual decision-making and field experiences to guide procedures.
 - Promoting decentralization and community involvement.
- **Implementation:** The project was a collaborative effort involving the Government of Rajasthan, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the Project Director.
- **Activities:**
 - **Day Center:** The name for existing primary schools run by Shiksha Karmis.
 - **Prehar Pathshalas:** Schools conducted at night for children who cannot attend day centers due to work or other obligations.
 - **Mahila Prakashan Kendra:** A training center to prepare local women to work as Mahila Shiksha Karmis.
 - **Integrated Approach:** A scheme to integrate disabled children into Shiksha Karmi Project schools.

1.3 Case Study: State-Specific Projects in Maharashtra

This section provides a case study of the diverse projects implemented in Maharashtra to achieve UEE, categorized by the target group they serve. These schemes demonstrate a granular, needs-based approach to tackling specific barriers to education.

1.3.1 Schemes for Socially Deprived Children

These schemes aim to remove direct and indirect costs of schooling that disproportionately affect socially marginalized families from Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and other backward classes.

- Stipend up to 10th class
- Free uniform and books
- Boarding houses and hostels
- **NCERT** scholarship for SC & ST students
- Attendance allowance
- Ashram schools (residential schools)
- Book bank scheme

1.3.2 Schemes for Girls

These interventions focus on overcoming social and logistical barriers that specifically hinder girls' access to and continuation of education.

- **Allowance for attendance:** One rupee per day for girls in Std I-IV from backward classes with 75% attendance.
- **Free travelling scheme (Ahilyabai Holkars):** Free travel for girls in rural areas.
- **Matruprabodhan Project:** A program to educate mothers about their children's education, health, and development.
- **Army School:** An army school for girls established in Nasik to encourage their participation.
- **Samuh Nivasi School:** Residential schools for girls from remote areas.

1.3.3 Schemes for Economically Backward Children

These schemes are designed to mitigate the financial burden of education on low-income families, reducing the pressure for children to drop out and enter the workforce.

- **Scholarship:** For talented and economically backward students at the higher secondary level.
- **E.B.C. (Economically Backward Class concession):** For students with 75% attendance whose parental income is below a certain threshold.
- **Nutritive Diet:** Providing nutritive meals to children attending school regularly.
- **Savitribai Phule Parent Adoption Scheme:** Allows individuals to "adopt" a girl student by providing financial support.
- **Book bank Scheme:** Provides free school books to primary school students.

1.3.4 Schemes for Distant Area Children

This category of schemes addresses the challenges of geographical remoteness and cultural differences, particularly for tribal communities.

- **Nutritive Diet Scheme:** Provides nutritious meals to children in Anganwadis and Balwadis.
- **Ashram Shala (Basic and Para basic):** Residential schools providing free education, lodging, and uniforms.
- **Vidya Niketan:** An institute for talented tribal students.
- **Kuranshala:** A mobile, nonformal school where teachers follow students into forest areas to teach them informally.
- **Child Education Project:** Provides picture-rich books to increase children's interest in school.
- **Project for Tribal Languages:** Prepares textbooks in tribal languages to help children transition from their mother tongue to the regional language.

1.3.5 Schemes for Out of School Children

These projects provide flexible and alternative pathways to education for children who have either dropped out or never been enrolled in the formal system.

- **Bridge School:** A 45-day boarding program to help dropouts reintegrate into regular schools.
- **Indus Child Labour Project:** Aims to eliminate child labor and bring these children into mainstream education.
- **Sakhar Shala:** "Second semester schools" for children of migrating sugarcane cutters.
- **Cape Project:** Self-learning centers attached to education colleges for out-of-school children aged 6-14.
- **Remedial Teaching Classes:** Helps students with learning gaps reach the minimum level of learning.
- **Vastishala:** Informal primary schools in hilly, tribal, and remote areas where no school exists within a 1 km radius.

1.3.6 Schemes for Special Target Groups (Handicapped, Devdasi Children)

These interventions are highly specific, designed to support children facing unique social stigmas or physical disabilities.

- **Schemes for children of Devdasis:** Provides nutritional meals, attendance allowance, and other support.
- **Education for handicapped:** Integrated education through open learning, non-formal education, and vocational training.
- **Education for disabled children (Integrated approach):** Admitting disabled children into general schools to improve their self-confidence and promote inclusion.

Comparative Synthesis of State-Level Projects

The various state-level projects reveal distinct strategic priorities. **Shiksha Karmi** in Rajasthan addressed a systemic failure—teacher absenteeism—with an innovative human resource solution. In contrast, **Lok Jumbish**, also in Rajasthan, focused on social engineering through deep community mobilization ("**People's Movement**") and a sharp focus on girls' education. The **UP-BEP** and **BEP** were more comprehensive, institution-building projects aimed at improving access, quality, and management systems, with a particular emphasis on deprived sections like SCs/STs. The Maharashtra case study showcases a highly granular approach, creating a multitude of micro-schemes tailored to specific barriers, from seasonal migration (**Sakhar Shalas**) to poverty and social exclusion. This comparative analysis highlights that while the goal of UEE is universal, the most effective strategies are highly contextual, addressing specific local challenges.

1.4 The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)

Introduction

Launched in 1994, the **District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)** was one of the largest education projects in the world. It aimed to revitalize the primary education system by emphasizing district-specific, decentralized planning. The programme was initiated in districts

where women's education was below the national ratio **and** districts where **Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs)** had successfully led to an enhanced demand for elementary education.

Objectives

- Achieve 100% access to education for children aged 6 to 14 through formal or non-formal means.
- Ensure 100% enrollment and retention.
- Enable children to achieve the **Minimum Level of Learning (MLL)**.
- Reduce stagnation and dropout rates.
- Promote capacity building, decentralization, and community participation.

Major Components

- **Civil Works:** Construction of new schools, additional classrooms, toilets, and bore wells.
- **Programme:** Implementation of alternative schooling approaches for children outside the formal system.
- **Management:** Creation of distinct management structures at national, state, and district levels, supported by a **Management Information System (MIS)**.
- **School Mapping/Micro Planning:** Involving the community in identifying barriers to education and empowering **Village Education Committees (VECs)** to monitor the local system.

Execution Plan

DPEP translated the concept of decentralization into practice by:

- Identifying the **district** as the primary unit for educational planning.
- Shifting resource allocation decisions from the state to local levels.
- Making the planning process more consultative, participatory, and transparent.
- Providing professional academic support through **Block Resource Centers (BRCs)** and **Cluster Resource Centers (CRCs)**.

Strategies and Activities

- **Access:** Opening new primary schools and alternative learning centers in remote tribal and coastal areas.
- **Quality Improvement:** Providing recurrent teacher training, on-site support through BRCs, and supplying teacher support materials. This included providing annual **contingency grants of Rs. 2,000 to each school and Rs. 500 to every teacher**.
- **Community Mobilization:** Creating and training **Village Education Committees (VECs)** and parents.
- **Girls Education:** Supplying free textbooks to girls and conducting awareness programs.

- **Identification and Education of Disabled Children (IEDC):** Identifying disabled children, supplying aids, and training teachers.
- **Management Information System (MIS):** Supplying computers and updating a school database annually to monitor progress.
- **Village Education Register:** A register tracking the educational status of every child in a village to calculate retention rates and identify dropouts.

Impact of the Programme on UEE

Implemented in a mission mode, DPEP had a significant impact on elementary education.

- **Coverage:**
 - **States Covered:** 18
 - **Districts Covered:** 219 (248 including bifurcated districts)
 - **Schools in the system:** 375,000
 - **New schools added:** 10,000
- **Students and Support:**
 - **Students in the system:** 51.3 million
 - **Total teachers:** 1.1 million
 - **Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers set up:** 56,124*
 - **Alternative Schools (AS) centers set up:** 56,124*
- **Enrollment (including EGS & AS):**
 - **Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER):** 102%
 - **Net Enrollment Ratio (NER):** 90%

(Note: The source document lists the same number for both ECE and AS centers, which may be a typographical error.)

The success of DPEP, particularly its decentralized, district-based planning model and emphasis on community involvement through VECs, provided critical lessons and a foundational framework. This experience directly informed the design and strategy of its successor, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which scaled up these principles to a national level.

Part 2: The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Framework

2.1 Introduction to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

Background

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), initiated in 2001, is the Government of India's flagship programme for achieving UEE. It aims to provide universal elementary education for all children in the 6-14 age group, building upon the experiences of earlier projects like DPEP to create a comprehensive national framework.

Essential Features

- A programme with a clear **time-bound** framework for universalizing elementary education.
- A response to the national demand for **quality** basic education.
- An opportunity to promote **social justice** through education.
- An effort to actively involve **Panchayati Raj Institutions, School Management Committees**, and other local bodies.
- An expression of political will for Universal Elementary Education.
- A **partnership** between the central, state, and local governments.
- An opportunity for states to develop their own vision of elementary education.

2.2 Aims and Objectives of SSA

Aim of SSA

The primary aim of SSA is to provide **useful and relevant** elementary education for all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010, while bridging social, regional, and gender gaps. "Useful and relevant education" signifies a value-based system that draws on community solidarity and allows children to master their natural environment, harnessing their full human potential.

Specific Objectives

- All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, or 'Back-to-School' camp by 2005.
- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
- All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010.
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with an emphasis on **education for life**.
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at the primary stage by 2007 and at the elementary level by 2010.
- Achieve **universal retention** by 2010.

2.3 Broad Strategies of the SSA Programme

SSA's implementation is guided by a set of comprehensive strategies designed to reform and strengthen the elementary education system:

- **Institutional Reforms:** Central and State governments undertake reforms to improve the efficiency of the education delivery system.
- **Sustainable Financing:** The programme is based on a long-term financial partnership between Central and State governments.
- **Community Ownership:** Calls for community ownership of schools through effective decentralization and involvement of local groups like VECs and women's groups.

- **Institutional Capacity Building:** National and state institutions (**NCERT, NCTE, DIETs**) play a major role in building professional capacity within the system.
- **Improving Mainstream Educational Administration:** Focuses on improving administration by adopting cost-effective and efficient methods.
- **Community Based Monitoring with Full Transparency:** Every school is encouraged to share all information, including grants received, with the community.
- **Habitation as a Unit of Planning:** Habitation-level plans form the basis for creating district-level plans, ensuring a bottom-up approach.
- **Accountability to Community:** Fosters cooperation and accountability between teachers, parents, and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).
- **Priority to Education of Girls:** The education of girls, especially those from SC, ST, and minority communities, is a principal concern.
- **Focus on Special Groups:** There is a focus on the inclusion of children from SC/ST, minority groups, urban deprived children, and children with special needs.
- **Thrust on Quality:** Emphasizes improving the curriculum, promoting child-centered activities, and using effective teaching strategies.
- **Role of teachers:** Recognizes the central role of teachers, focusing on their development through training and resource support from **BRCs** and **CRCs**.
- **District Elementary Education Plans:** Each district prepares a comprehensive plan reflecting all investments and needs in the elementary education sector.

2.4 Financial Norms and Partnership Models

Financial Norms

- **Sharing Arrangement:** The financial partnership between the Central and State governments followed a phased ratio:
 - **IX Plan:** 85:15
 - **X Plan:** 75:25
 - **Thereafter:** 50:50
- **State Investment:** State governments were required to maintain their level of investment in elementary education as it was in 1999-2000.
- **Fund Release:** The central government releases funds to a **State Implementation Society**, which manages disbursement.
- **Other Schemes:** The **Mid-Day-Meal** scheme remains a distinct intervention, with the center providing foodgrains and the state covering cooking costs.

Public-Private Partnership in SSA

SSA encourages exploring public-private partnerships. If the private sector wishes to improve a government or aided school, a partnership can be developed **within the broad parameters of State policy**. Government teacher-training institutes like **DIETs** can provide resource support to

private unaided institutions, provided that the **additional costs are met by these private bodies**.

2.5 Key Interventions and Facilities under SSA

- **AIE (Alternative and innovative education):** Develops various strategies to ensure the participation of children from marginalized groups, such as those in tribal and coastal areas.
- **Civil works:** A major component, with up to 33% of the project budget allocated for infrastructure, including new schools, classrooms, and resource centers.
- **Innovative activities:** Schemes such as Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Girls Education, SC/ST Education, and Computer Education are implemented to make learning more engaging.
- **R&E (Research and Evaluation):** Includes regular school mapping, household data updates, achievement tests, and cohort studies to monitor progress through an **Education Management Information System (EMIS)**.
- **School grant:** An annual grant of **Rs. 2,000** per school for improving library facilities, repairing equipment, and school beautification.
- **Teacher grant:** Each teacher receives **Rs. 500** annually to produce and procure Teacher Learning Material (TLM) for effective classroom instruction.
- **Teacher training:** Continuous in-service training on content, pedagogy, and issues like the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 and Inclusive Education.
- **Distance education:** The Distance Education Programme (DEP-SSA), implemented by IGNOU, supplements face-to-face training using multi-media packages to reach a larger number of teachers.

2.6 The Mid-Day Meal Scheme and its Contribution to SSA

Background and Purpose

The Mid-Day Meal scheme plays a crucial role in achieving the four key factors of UEE: Access, Enrolment, Retention, and Achievement. By providing nutritional support, it motivates children from poor economic backgrounds to attend and stay in school. The scheme works by addressing key barriers:

- By providing a guaranteed meal, it **reduces the opportunity cost of schooling** for poor families (improving **enrolment**).
- It **incentivizes daily attendance** (improving **retention**).
- It **addresses classroom hunger**, which is a direct barrier to concentration and learning (improving **achievement**).

History

The national scheme was launched on October 2, 1995. A landmark Supreme Court directive in November 2001 mandated that all government and government-assisted primary schools must

provide a prepared, cooked mid-day meal. Early pioneers of such schemes include Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, with the latter starting a universal school feeding program as early as 1930.

National Programme for Nutrition Support

The scheme evolved into the "National Programme for Nutrition Support to Primary Education." Under this framework, the Government of India provides grains free of cost, while state governments are responsible for the costs of other ingredients, salaries, and infrastructure required to deliver the cooked meals.

2.7 Harmonization of SSA and the RTE Act, 2009

Context

The passage of the **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act** in 2009 made elementary education a fundamental right. This necessitated the harmonization of SSA's vision, strategies, and norms with the new legal mandate, transforming SSA into the primary implementation vehicle for the Act.

Objectives of Harmonization

- To assess the attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of children with special needs.
- To develop teacher competencies for handling children with special needs in an inclusive setting.
- To analyze the socio-economic causes of school dropouts.
- To examine the physical and financial performance of the SSA scheme in achieving its goals under the RTE framework.

Implementation Challenges

Despite progress, significant challenges remain in realizing the RTE mandate. These include a shortage of schools compared to population norms and the continued existence of child labor, which prevents many children from exercising their right to education.

Part 3: Planning and Management of UEE

3.1 Decentralization of Education Management

Centralized vs. Decentralized Systems

In a **centralized** education system, decision-making, monitoring, and management functions are concentrated at the national or state level. These higher authorities regulate all aspects of schooling, from curriculum to teacher salaries, leaving limited scope for local responsiveness.

In contrast, a **decentralized** system is characterized by the exercise of substantial power at the local, district, village, or school level. This approach entrusts more responsibility to local authorities, making schools more responsive to the specific educational needs of their communities.

India's Experience with Decentralization

India has gradually shifted towards a decentralized model for elementary education. This goal was set by the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and was further empowered by the 73rd

and 74th constitutional amendments. Positive experiences from programs like the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the National Literacy Mission, and **DPEP** demonstrated that deep community involvement is crucial for success.

3.2 Micro-Level Planning for UEE

Defining Planning and Micro-Planning

Planning is the process of proposing a set of actions to achieve required objectives, identifying strategies, and mobilizing resources.

Micro-planning is a "grass-roots level" process where local people participate in identifying needs, generating resources, and preparing village-level plans. It ensures the community takes ownership of making elementary education accessible to all children in their habitation.

Steps for Involving Community in Micro-Planning

1. **Empowerment of community:** Conducting training workshops for VEC/SMC members and running awareness campaigns to inform the community about their roles and responsibilities under the **RTE Act**.
2. **Identification of planning teams:** Forming a representative core planning team with stakeholders from all sections of the community to give legitimacy to the plan and build community-school linkages.
3. **Capacity building of core planning teams:** Conducting orientation workshops to familiarize team members with SSA aims, norms, and targets, as well as the data and expertise needed for effective planning.
4. **Identification of issues requiring intervention:** Assessing local issues related to access, enrollment, retention, and quality to determine the best course of action and the level of support needed.
5. **Data requirement and sources of data:** Collecting comprehensive data on all children up to age 14, often compiled in a Village Education Register, to diagnose challenges and justify the demand for resources.
6. **Micro-planning exercises:** Setting specific targets, deciding on activities and timelines, estimating the budget, and preparing a formal plan proposal based on a logical frame of action.

In essence, these six steps create a cyclical, data-driven process that moves from community empowerment and team formation to evidence-based planning and proposal creation, ensuring that educational interventions are rooted in local reality.

3.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Key Educational Bodies

District Elementary Education Officer (DEO)

The DEO acts as a planner, implementer, coordinator, and monitor at the district level with key responsibilities:

- Ensuring schooling facilities are available in all habitations.
- Monitoring teacher vacancies and reporting requirements.

- Enrolling and retaining out-of-school children through flexible and alternative schooling.
- Building the capacity of School Management Committees.
- Setting up Grievance Redressal Committees.
- Consolidating plan proposals from schools, villages, and blocks to prepare the District Plan.

Block Education Officer (BEO), Block Resource Centers (BRCs), and Cluster Resource Centers (CRCs)

BEOs and their staff function as **Block Resource Centers (BRCs)**. Along with **Cluster Resource Centers (CRCs)**, which typically cover around 15 villages, they are responsible for providing regular assistance and curricular support to schools and teachers, including visiting each school **monthly**.

3.4 Governance, Management, and the Role of the School Management Committee (SMC)

Governance Issues

Decentralization raises several key governance questions that must be addressed:

- How can local bodies be assured of secure and continued funding?
- How will resources be allocated equitably among local bodies?
- Who will oversee and audit the finances of local authorities to ensure accountability?

Teacher Recruitment and Management

Under a decentralized system, norms for teacher certification, hiring, and pay scales must be consistent with those established by the **National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)**.

School Management Committee (SMC)

The **School Management Committee (SMC)** is a pivotal body in school governance, legally mandated by the **RTE Act, 2009**, making it a statutory body for governance, not just a voluntary committee.

- **Composition:**

Member Group	Composition/Share
Parents or Guardians	75% of the committee's strength
Other Members	25% of the committee's strength, comprising:
Elected Members of Local Authority	One-third of the 25% share
Teachers of the School	One-third of the 25% share
Local Educationists/Children in the school	One-third of the 25% share

- **Role in Preparing a School Development Plan:** The SMC is responsible for preparing a three-year **School Development Plan**. This plan must detail enrollment estimates,

requirements for additional teachers and infrastructure, and the year-wise financial needs to meet RTE norms.

- **Role in Protecting Child Rights:** The SMC, along with teachers and the head teacher, has the primary responsibility to protect child rights, including the right to survival, health, dignity, and protection from abuse.
- **Partnerships:** The SMC must work in partnership with other government departments, such as the Department of Women and Child Development and the Rural Development Department, to ensure children receive all their rights and entitlements.

3.5 Networking for Effective Management: ICT and School Nets

Capacity Building

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) defines **capacity** as "the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner." **Capacity building** is the process of establishing this human and institutional capacity.

Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs)

ICTs are technologies used to communicate, create, manage, and use information. In the context of UEE, ICTs—including computers, the Internet, and mobile devices—are essential for managing a decentralized education system. However, the "**digital divide**," or differential access to ICTs, remains a challenge.

School Nets

- **Definition:** A "**school net**" is a network of educational authorities, schools, teachers, and resources connected by ICTs. It serves as an ICT-based system for the e-management of school education.
- **Functions:**
 - **Technology services:** Providing internet connectivity and appropriate hardware/software.
 - **Content services:** Creating portals with locally relevant online content.
 - **Professional development:** Offering in-service training for teachers on integrating ICTs.
 - **Management of school and resources:** Improving the efficiency of data collection and providing information support for policy and decision-making.

3.6 Financing Pattern for UEE

Expenditure Sharing

Financial assistance for UEE is based on a sharing arrangement between the Central and State governments:

- **IX Plan:** 85% Central, 15% State
- **X Plan:** 75% Central, 25% State

- **Thereafter:** 50% Central, 50% State

Fund Flow

State governments are required to register a **State Implementation Society** to receive and disburse grants. The central government releases funds to this society, which then manages the flow of funds to the district and local levels.

Convergence of Funds

District Education Plans must show the convergence of funds from other government schemes (e.g., PMGY, JGSY, Area Development Funds). Funds for school-level work, such as maintenance and teaching equipment, must be transferred directly to **VECs/SMCs** to ensure decentralized implementation.

Appendix: Glossary of Key Terms and Abbreviations

Term/Abbreviation	Definition/Full Form
Universalization of Education	Availability of education everywhere according to the specific need of the children and place.
Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER)	The number of children enrolled in a school level (regardless of age) as a percentage of the official school-age population for that level. Primary GER = (Number of children enrolled in primary school) / (Number of children of primary school age)
Net Enrollment Ratio (NER)	The number of children of the official school age for a level who are enrolled in that level, as a percentage of the total population of that age group. Primary NER = (No. of children of primary school age enrolled in primary school) / (Number of children of primary school age)
UEE	Universalization of Elementary Education
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
UP-BEP	Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project
BEP	Bihar Education Project
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
RTE	Right to Education
GER	Gross Enrollment Ratio
NER	Net Enrollment Ratio
MLL	Minimum Level of Learning
VEC	Village Education Committee
SMC	School Management Committee

DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
BRC	Block Resource Centre
CRC	Cluster Resource Centre
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
NCTE	National Council for Teacher Education
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
MIS	Management Information System