

DISE2001: IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

The context

The DPEP was initiated in late 1994 as a unique and innovative effort towards achieving the objectives of UPE in educationally backward districts of India. At the project inception stage, it was realized that a sound information base for planning and monitoring of project intervention was an almost non-negotiable requirement. There were many challenges to establish and sustain such a system. This was particularly so as the prevailing system had completely lost its credibility with the data users. The educational statistics collected by the states under the guidance of the MHRD were not only inadequate to meet the growing needs of the decentralized planning but were characterized by inordinate delays, highly aggregative and were not amenable to validation and reliability tests. Since school statistics formed the core of educational statistics, it was rightly recognized that major reforms in school statistics both in terms of their scope and coverage as well as availability have to be carried out. Accordingly, NIEPA was entrusted with the responsibility for designing and implementing such a system for primary education.

The task of developing a school based statistical system was initiated by NIEPA during 1995 with the financial assistance from UNICEF. In tune with the spirit of DPEP, the district was selected as a nodal point for collection, computerization, analysis and use of school level data. NIEPA professionals with the involvement of other experts designed and developed the core data capture formats. Accordingly, NIEPA designed software for implementation at the district level and provided the necessary technical and professional support to DPEP districts. A first version of the software named as District Information System for Education (DISE) was released during the middle of 1995. The district level professionals were assisted in the establishment of EMIS units, trained in the data collection, computerization and analysis using DISE. The MIS unit at TSG played an important role in ensuring implementation and provided valuable support to NIEPA.

In addition to the DISE, many additional mechanisms for data validation and quality control of school statistics have also been introduced. First, a 5-10% validation check is undertaken in all districts immediately after data collection. Second, the software provides for many consistency and validation checks. Third, a national survey is conducted every 2-3 years to establish the quality and reliability of DISE data. The second post enumeration validation survey is in progress now.

The DISE has also a built in provision for regular feedback. Besides the annual review workshops, the first major review of the DISE was undertaken during 1997/98 and was further followed by an extensive review during 2000/01 resulting in DISE2001. The capacity building program for implementing the new data capture formats and the software (DISE2001) have been undergoing since the last one year.

Main features of DISE2001

- Covers eight years of schooling in all primary, upper primary and primary/upper primary sections of the secondary and higher secondary schools.
- The concepts and definitions of educational variables have been standardized at the national level. All states/districts follow the same definitions.
- Provides village level information on access to educational facilities of various types. Identification of habitation without access to primary and upper primary schools based on distance norms. All types of educational institutes including recognized and unrecognized schools at various levels are enumerated at the village level. Selected data on the number, enrolment and teachers/instructors in NFE/EGS and alternative schools, pre-primary education including Anganwadis and Balwadis is also collected at the village level. Data on age specific population and out of school children generated through household surveys forms part of the village data.
- Defines core data on school location, management, rural-urban, enrolment, buildings, equipment, teachers, incentives, medium of instruction, children with disabilities, examination results and student flows.
- Detailed database on individual teachers, Para-teachers and community teachers and their profile including data on in-service training received would be available under DISE2001.
- Eliminates the chances of data manipulation at various levels. The school remains responsible for the correctness of the data supplied.
- The states/districts have flexibility of adding supplementary variables depending upon their specific requirements on year-to-year basis. No additional software for computerization and analysis of state/district specific data is required.
- The state/districts can develop their own large databases using 'designer' module and integrate a variety of school/cluster/block level data with DISE2001. The software handles multiple databases at various levels and includes many tools of data analysis and presentation.
- A large number of standardized reports on school related variables and performance indicators aggregated at the cluster, block and district level are generated by the software.
- School summary report for each school is generated for sharing with the school/VEC. The school summary report contains key data on school and a summary of indicators, which are compared with the cluster, block and the district averages.
- An easy to use dynamic graphics facility to enhance the presentation of various types of graphs and data.
- Multi-user and modular system of software design for better management and security of databases.

- Predefined queries on standard aspects like school list, list of villages without primary and upper primary schools, single teacher schools, schools without buildings, schools with high PTR etc., Users can define and save other queries.
- User defined dynamic query on hundreds of variables.
- Facilities for basic statistical analysis including generation of new variables and their analysis.
- The reports can be shared across a large number of users without full software installation.
- Users can export data to many other formats for statistical and other analysis.

Outcome of DISE efforts

The DISE software is now operational in more than 460 districts in 18 states of the country and is providing vital information for policy planning and preparation of district level DPEP plans. Many states have extended the DISE to the non-DPEP districts. These states include Karnataka, West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. Many states have requested for the extension of DISE software to cover the total school sector.

The DISE provides time-series data at school, cluster, block and district level. It is for the first time that a time-series data covering 3-6 years is available at the school level. The trend analysis of DISE data identified many issues requiring attention of DPEP authorities and also provided valuable input for the Joint Review Missions.

For the first time, a District Report Card on primary education was released during 2000, which contained time series and cross-sectional data on more than one hundred variables/indicators at the district level. NIEPA has been preparing a national level report on Access and Retention based on DISE data. Four such annual reports have already been released.

In the near future, DISE data and analytical reports would be available in many regional languages. The capabilities of the software are also being increased to undertake enrolment projections and other advanced statistical analysis. It is also expected to develop a national level system, which will integrate the present district, and state systems into an hierarchical database to provide online access at all levels. Efforts are also continuing to promote the use of DISE data for planning, management and monitoring of DPEP through case studies, orientation and training workshop of educational administrators.