





## THE DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVES OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

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### **Introduction**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a flagship programme of Government of India for the promotion of Universalisation of Elementary Education has several features that seek to improve the quality of elementary education. The physical spaces of schools can be transformed into learning spaces only if certain basic provisioning is ensured. This provisioning includes an adequate number of teachers in schools, facilities for training of teachers, structures to provide regular on site academic support, grants to facilitate development of teaching learning material to aid classroom instruction, textbooks for children from special focus groups etc.

Teacher training programme places great emphasis on preparing the teachers for teaching by building their capacity through a series of training programmes. The SSA provides for regular 20 -days in-service training for every teacher every year along with facilities for 30 days training for newly recruited teachers and 60 days training for teachers those have not received pre-service training. Training covers several pedagogical issues including content and methodology, to improve teaching learning transactions at classroom level. States have started exploring several innovative means of imparting these training ssuch as use of distance education, self learning mode and use of the educational technology.

Teacher training under SSA emphasizes, child-centered pedagogy and competency based teaching learning. In 2006-07, about 29.5 lakh teachers underwent the annual in-service training. NCERT has prepared guidelines for in-service teacher training under SSA, called 'The Reflective Teacher' that advocates an optimum training duration of about 10 days per year. In-service training as suggested by NCERT, should be split up into institutional training 'on site' (that is, in the school), implementation of recommended strategies by the teachers in their own classroom settings.

### **1. History of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**

The "Education for All" movement, better known as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, aims to bridge social, gender and region facets of education in the country. Education is not only

about reading books but sustain a full-fledged growth for the children, enabling them to take valued decisions and contribute to the society and community for betterment. The 86th amendments to the Constitution enacted in 2002, made elementary education a fundamental right. The Right of Children to free and Compulsory Education Act that operationalised the provision of free and compulsory education were not passed by the Parliament until August 2009. This programme envisages in making education free, compulsory and a fundamental right of every child in the age group of 6 years to 14 years. The programme was started during the time of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure as Prime Minister during the year 2000 - 01. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was put into force by the aid of state governments so as to cover the entire country and help more than 1 billion children to have elementary education.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan historic stride towards achieving the long cherished goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) through a time bound integrated approach in partnership with state. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been operational since 2000 - 01 to provide for a variety of interventions for universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in elementary education and improving the quality of learning. It is probably for the first time in the history that the elementary education has been given the shape of National Movement in the form of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). It is through this programme that the dream of qualitative comprehensive education is being realized in the state. In this regard the role of a teacher is of paramount importance.

There have been number of Teachers Training Programmes being organized in the state mainly through District Institute of Education & Training (DIETs) under SSA. An initiative of the Government of India, SSA or Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been instrumental in nurturing the concept of "Universalisation of Primary Education". Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is the government's flagship programme to provide universal access to elementary education for children 6-14 years old.

The objective of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan mainly focus on increasing access, enrolment and retention of all children and as well as improving the quality of education. In spite of many efforts of government, both at Central and State level (mid-day meal, free books, uniform and bicycles, etc.) more than 50 percent children leave school before completing elementary stage. Beside many, one of the major influencing factors is that children do not find school interesting and enriching. The scheme aims to improve enrolment, retention, and the quality of education to enable children to achieve grade appropriate levels of learning.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan interventions include inter alia, opening of new schools and alternate schooling facilities, construction of schools and additional classrooms, toilets and drinking



water, provisioning for teachers, periodic teacher training and academic resource support, textbooks and support for learning achievement. With the passage of the RTE Act, changes have been incorporated into the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan approach, strategies and norms. Quality education is a crucial issue in elementary education which revolves around the availability and quality of infrastructure, support services and instructional time in the school, teacher characteristics and teacher motivation, pre-service and in-service education of teacher's curriculum and teaching – learning materials, classroom processes, pupil evaluation, monitoring and supervision, etc, the quality of teaching-learning process depends upon professional competence of a teacher. The fast changing knowledge in all spheres of life requires continuous updating of knowledge among teachers. Now the attainment of knowledge does not restrict only up to four walls of classrooms. Due to expansion of mass electronic media, students of rural and remote areas come across a variety of knowledge and are not interested in text books based knowledge only. Therefore, teachers have to enrich their knowledge continuously so that students can be provided quality education relevant to local as well as global needs and thus be retained in schools.

Therefore basic features of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are an effort to universalize elementary education by community-ownership of the school system. It is a response to the demand for quality basic education. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to all children, through provision of community-owned quality education in a mission mode. The level of educational achievements in a particular society can only be evaluated on the basis of the performance of teachers at both –institutional as well as societal levels. There has been common consensus among the intellectuals and the policy makers that there is an urgent need to give due consideration to the issues related to teachers so as to provide quality education to children. Keeping this fact in mind, there has been series of inputs in the state.

### **Aims of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**

The policy goal of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (education for all) programme focuses on access and quality education. Using indicators like access and overcrowding, achievement, mainstreaming, fund utilization and retention of children, this field survey of municipal schools in Mumbai and Delhi provides a comparative analysis of each city's progress towards the stated goal.

- Quality elementary education for all children in the age group 6 - 14 years.
- All children complete five years schooling by 2007.
- All children complete eight years schooling by 2010.

- Retention of children in schools by 2010 or zero dropout rate.
- Bridging all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.

**Process of Operation:**

Through this programme, there is the aim of opening up schooling facilities in areas where no such facilities exist and also make the existing facilities of education stronger by providing sufficient classrooms, toilets, drinking water and other needs for the children coming to the school. Maintenance grants and grants for improvement of the schools are also targeted through the Abhiyan.

The strength of teacher is improved by providing more number of teachers and the existing teachers' quality is improved by imparting training. Teaching learning materials are being provided along with grants to access them and academic support structure at the cluster level as well as in the block and district level is strengthened.

Another aim of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to impart life skills apart from elementary education. With special focus on girl child education, attention is also given to those children with special needs. There are also efforts directed towards bridging the digital deficiencies by providing computer education.

The National Mission for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister has overall responsibility of the programme. It comprises of a governing council which is the apex policy planning body for elementary education and the executive committee under the chairmanship of the Minister of Human Resource Development (MOHRD) which carries out all the functions of the Mission in accordance with the policies laid down by the governing council. The Mission coordinates with State Departments for Education and the Village Education Committees (VECs) created by the State Education Departments to manage the educational affairs of villages. Implementation at the district level is overseen by the District Collector, Magistrate or the Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad. Social Science Institutes of national stature have been given the work of monitoring in states and union territories.

**Components of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**

- Appointment of teachers
- Construction of classrooms and school buildings
- Establishment of Block and Cluster Resource Center academic support.
- Establishment of education guarantee centers



- Provision of teaching learning materials integrated education of the disabled and distance education.
- Provision of Teaching-Learning materials.
- Qualitative improvement of elementary education
- Teacher Training

### **Types of Teacher Education Programme under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**

- Distance Teacher Education.
- In-Service Teacher Education
- Pre Service Teacher Education

### **The Scenario so Far**

Consequent to several efforts, India has made enormous progress in terms of increase in institutions, teachers, and students in elementary education. The number of schools in the country increased fourfold- from 2,31,000 in 1950-51 to 9,30,000 in 1989-99, while enrolment in the primary cycle jumped by about six times from 19.2 million to 110 million. At the upper Primary stage, the increase of enrolment during the period was 13 times, while enrolment of girls recorded a huge rise of 32 times.

According to the report of Elementary Education Trends in India, in the year 2014-15, 26.4% of school children in government schools were provided Special Training. 22.6% upper primary schools /sections had Computer Aided Learning Lab, 82.1% schools had library. 77.4% schools providing mid-day meal had kitchen-shed, 98.7% Government schools received textbooks, Pupil - teacher ratio in government schools were 24, Private Aided School were 23 and Private Unaided schools were 24.

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the primary stage has exceeded 100%. Access to schools is no longer a major problem. At the primary stage, 94% of the country's rural population has schooling facilities within one kilometer and the upper primary stage; it is 84%. The country has made impressive achievement in the elementary education sector but the flip side is that, out of 200 million children in the age group of 6 - 14 years, 59 million children are not attending school. Of these, 35 million are girls and 24 million are boys. The country is yet to achieve the elusive goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), which means 100% enrolment and retention of children with schooling facilities in all habitations. It is to fill this gap that the Government has launched Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

### **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as a Framework and as a Programme**

Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has two aspects: (i) It provides a wide convergent framework for implementation of Elementary Education schemes. (ii) It is also a programme with budget

provision for strengthening vital areas to achieve universalisation of elementary education.

While all investments in the elementary education sector from the State and the Central Plans will reflect as part of the SSA framework, they will all merge into the SSA programme within the next few years. As a programme, it reflects the additional resource provision for UEE.

### **Broad Strategies Central to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Programme**

**Institutional Reforms** - As part of the SSA, the Central and the State governments will undertake reforms in order to improve efficiency of the delivery system. The States will have to make an objective assessment of their prevalent education system including educational administration, achievement levels in schools, financial issues, decentralization and community ownership, review of State Education Act, rationalization of teacher deployment and recruitment of teachers, monitoring and evaluation, status of education of girls, SC/ST and disadvantaged groups, policy regarding private schools and ECCE. Many States have already carried out several changes to improve the delivery system for elementary education.

**Sustainable Financing** - The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is based on the premise that financing of elementary education interventions has to be sustainable. This calls for a long -term perspective on financial partnership between the Central and the State governments.

**Community Ownership** - The programme calls for community ownership of school based interventions through effective decentralisation. This will be augmented by involvement of women's groups, VEC members and members of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

**Institutional Capacity Building** - The SSA conceives a major capacity building role for national, State and district level Institutions like NUEPA / NCERT / NCTE / SCERT / SIEMAT / DIET. Improvement in quality requires a sustainable support system of resource persons and institutions.

**Improving Main stream Educational Administration** - It calls for improvement of main stream educational administration by institutional development, infusion of new approaches and by adoption of cost effective and efficient methods.

**Community Based Monitoring with Full Transparency** - The Programme will have a community based monitoring system. The Educational Management Information System (EMIS) will correlate school level data with community-based information from micro planning and surveys. Besides this, every school will be encouraged to share all information with the community including grants received. A notice board would be put up in every school for this purpose.



**Habitation as a Unit of Planning** - The SSA works on a community based approach to planning with habitation as a unit of planning. Habitation plans will be the basis for formulating district plans. **Accountability to Community** - SSA envisages cooperation between teachers, parents and PRIs, as well as accountability and transparency to the community.

**Priority to Education of Girls** - Education of girls especially those belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and minorities, will be one of the principal concerns in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. **Focus on Special Groups** - There will be a focus on the inclusion and participation of children from SC / ST, minority groups, urban deprived children, children of other disadvantaged groups and the children with special needs in the educational process.

**Pre-Project Phase** - SSA will commence throughout the country with a well planned pre-project phase that provides for a large number of interventions for capacity development to improve the delivery and monitoring system. These include provision for household surveys, community-based micro-planning and school mapping, training of community leaders, school level activities, support for setting up information system, office equipment, diagnostic studies, etc.

**Thrust on Quality** - SSA lays a special thrust on making education at the elementary level useful and relevant for children by improving the curriculum, child centered activities and effective teaching learning strategies.

**Role of teachers** - SSA recognizes the critical and central role of teachers and advocates a focus on their development needs. Setting up of Block Resource Centres / Cluster Resource Centres, recruitment of qualified teachers, opportunities for teacher development through participation in curriculum-related material development, focus on classroom process and exposure visits for teachers are all designed to develop the human resource among teachers.

**District Elementary Education Plans** - As per the SSA framework, each district will prepare a District Elementary Education Plan reflecting all the investments being made and required in the elementary education sector, with a holistic and 5 convergent approach. There will be a Perspective Plan that will give a framework of activities over a longer time frame to achieve UEE. There will also be an Annual Work Plan and Budget that will list the prioritized activities to be carried out in that year. The Perspective Plan will also be a dynamic document subject to constant improvement in the course of programme implementation.

### **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Framework in Mumbai**

The revised SSA framework for implementation is derived from the recommendations of the Committee on Implementation of RTE Act. It is also based on child centric assumptions



emerging from National Policy on Education, 1986/92 and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will not disturb existing structures in State and districts but would only try to bring convergence in all these efforts. Efforts will be made to ensure that there is functional decentralization down to the school level in order to improve community participation. Besides recognizing PRIs / Tribal Councils in scheduled areas / including the Gram Sabha, the States would be encouraged to enlarge the accountability framework by involving NGOs/ teachers, activists/women's organizations etc. Its overall goals universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children SSA provides for variety of intervention including inter alia, opening of new schools and alternate schooling facilities, construction of schools and additional classrooms, toilets and drinking water, provisioning for teachers, periodic teacher training and academic resource support, textbooks and support for learning achievement. These provisions need to be aligned with the legally mandated norms and standards and free entitlements mandated by RTE Act.

#### **Modular changes to make the classroom process more effective**

- a) Open and live classroom – Old and traditional classroom system has become ineffective. Majority of average students in the class room find themselves unreachable and mismatch their perception with the teacher due to unequal socio-economic and marital status. Therefore, open classroom like Shanti Niketan or Gurukul Teaching System would be more profitable.
- b) Develop Eco friendly attitude in the students.
- c) Team teaching should be introduced to accelerate the interest and quality of the education pattern.
- d) Creative classroom and cooperative learning are effective ways to inculcate education among the students.
- e) Local games, Folk dance, Music and Folk Tale must be incorporated in Hindi. English to enable the student to take more creative interest in learning.

Following are the major implications taken by SSA for the development of Qualitative Improvement:

#### **Implication for Teachers**

- All teachers should be covered under various in-service training programme as per RTE-SSA norms.
- The attendance of teachers in various in-service training programmes should be made mandatory.



- Necessary follow-up / monitoring / review mechanisms should be devised to see that the training experiences percolate to the classrooms.

### **Implications for Resource Persons**

- The resource persons should be selected on the basis of their qualification; experience; number of in-service training they received; leadership quality; and content as well as theme knowledge.
- All the resource persons should be well versed with use of ICT in the classroom. They should be provided training on ICT usage.
- Besides lecture method, other effective methods such as team teaching, peer teachings, discussions, brain-storming, project work and field visits should be adopted by the resource persons during the training sessions.
- Adequate number of resource persons should be engaged for imparting in-service training to the teachers.

### **Implications for Curriculum / Materials Designers**

- The training materials should be developed by the designer keeping in mind the individual needs of the trainees / teachers.
- The contents of training materials should be arranged sequentially.
- Sufficient illustration, practical exercises, activities and elaboration of various concepts should find place in the training modules / packages.
- In the preparation of training materials, language difficulty should be taken care of so that all the trainees can easily understand the contents.
- The guidelines provided in NCF – 2005 and Reflective Teachers – 2006 brought out by NCERT, should be followed while developing in-service materials for the teachers.

### **Implications for Policy Makers / Administrators**

- The policy makers should be well aware of the latest learning / intelligence theories (e.g. constructivism, multiple intelligence) and the training strategies.
- State level policy makers should consult grass-root level functionaries through respective district level administrators for designing curriculum / training materials.
- The authorities should release funds on time for organization of training programme.

### **Conclusion:**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an effort to universalize elementary education by community-ownership of the school system. It is a response to the demand for quality basic education. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving

human capabilities to all children, through provision of community-owned quality education in a mission mode.

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