



## SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN IN MANDI DISTRICT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH: A CASE STUDY

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### Abstract

*In this, study an attempt has been made to study the existing status of SSA in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan aims at providing access to schooling to all the in the age group of 6-14 years of elementary education of satisfactory quality. Keeping in view the experience of micro and macro level, educational intervention and to ensure equal opportunity to education to all. The Himachal Pradesh Primary Education Society (HPES) which had the experience of implementing the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in Himachal Pradesh was selected as a state level society to implement the SSA in the state. This paper focuses on the target of universalization and tries to assess the different strategies to achieve the target of hundred percent enrollments of the children of the age group of 6-14 years. In this paper the authors studied the perception of teachers undergone the various training programme by SSA, specially designed to cater the need of elementary teachers.*

**Keywords:** SSA, Elementary Education, School Attendance, Enrolment and Retention



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### Introduction

The National Policy of Education, 1986 and Programme of Action 1992 have given top priority to the achievement of goals of universal elementary education. Education of children of 6-14 years of age group has been made fundamental right by the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act.

Many projects and programme have been undertaken at macro and micro levels in past in this direction which, have resulted in considerable progress in providing access to elementary education, increase in enrolment and retention, improvement in school attendance and generation of strong demand for education, especially for girls. However, inter-state and inter-district differences in pupil attendance and their achievement level, continue to prevail. The pupil achievement has particularly been low, which has caused concern at every level. In order to speed the achievement of the goal of universal elementary education, the National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM) was constituted in 2001 under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister and Vice-Chairmanship of the Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Similar Missions have also been constituted at State levels under the chairmanship of Chief Minister if the state. A number of programme and projects have over the years been implemented to provide experiences for achieving the constitutionally mandated goal. Illustrations of these are- Area Intensive Education Project (AJEP) for Human Resource Development, Primary Education Curriculum Renewal (PECR), Developmental Activities in Community Education and Participation (DACEP), Comprehensive Access to Primary Education (CAPE) in the seventies and eighties and more recently in Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Programme (APPEP), Bihar Education Project (BEP), Lok Jumbish and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as Mid-Day Meals, Operation Blackboard, Teacher Education Improvement, Non-Formal Education etc. were also launched to maximize the efforts in this direction. Building on the lessons learnt from the implementation of various programme and keeping in view the needs, the Government has launched the programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (S.S.A.) in 2000, the main objective being, to accelerate the achievement of UEE. It is a holistic and convergent programme targeting both primary and upper primary classes in all districts of the country. SSA is an effort to improve the performance of school system and provide community owned quality elementary education in the missionary mode. This programme has become particularly necessary because many states were not covered by any of the externally funded educational programmes such as DPEP, BEP, Lok Jumbish etc. thereby depriving them of the benefits.

**Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is:**

- A programme with a clear time frame for universal elementary education;
- A response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country;

- An opportunity for promoting social justice through basic education;
- An effort for effectively involving the Panchayati Raj Institutions, School management, Committees, Parent-Teacher Associations, Mother-teacher Associations, Tribal Autonomous Councils and other grass root level structures in the management of elementary schools;
- An expression of political will for universal elementary education across the country;
- A partnership between the central, state and local governments.
- An opportunity for states to develop their own vision of elementary education, and implement them; and
- An attempt to affect convergence among programmes of the education development and with those departments concerned with poverty alleviation and promotion of people's quality of life.

With a view to providing relevant and necessary input for enhancing the understanding of the educational administrators, field level functionaries and teachers, a need was felt by the researcher to examine various aspects of quality education in relation to SSA. Research in the field of education has enabled us to move from traditional to modern approach, so as to educate not only the few but all. The review of related literature enables the researcher to define the limits of his field. A careful review of the research journals, books, dissertations, theses and sources of information on the problem to be investigated is one of the important steps in the planning of any research study. Atma Ram (1997) in his book 'Education to Poor' with respect to Tribal Education noted that we try to impact the same kind of education everywhere without incorporating deeply rooted tribal culture. He pointed out that in Himachal Pradesh Govt. spends nine percent budget on tribal. He found that the conditions for elementary education prevailing on the whole are deplorable. For reforming Indian Education serious thoughts needs to be given to the reform of teacher education. National Policy of Education (1968) has stated among many other things that of all factors, which determine the quality of education and its contribution to National Development, the teacher is undoubtedly the most important. It is on his personal qualities and competence that the success of all education endeavors must ultimately depend. Teachers must therefore, be accorded an honored place in society. Savita (1999) found that there was a positive change in the opinion in those who are attending in-service training programmes organized by DIETs. She also suggested that such in-service training programmes be made

integral part of the educational programmes for Primary School Teachers. She found that these teaching programmes equip the teacher with better teaching method and use of other techniques for better educational atmosphere and in the changing scenario; the teachers need to be given freedom and incentives for preparing teaching aids to suit them and their pupils. Zachariah (2005) has remarked that there are road blocks towards achieving UEE: access, retention, equity and quality; social economic culture and religious, in school and out school factor. Further he observed that India is closest to the goal of achieving UEE than ever before and there is sense of urgency in the efforts of government – both center and state – NGO and all the institutions to provide education for all. Thus the present study was selected to fill the gaps in the available researches on universalization of elementary education.

### **Need and Justification of the Study**

The study may shed better understanding of the quality dimensions of elementary education which will help the field level functionaries of SSA to devise ways and means for recognizing classroom interaction, using suitable evaluation techniques and developing harmonious relationships with parents and community thereby leading to improvement in the quality of education at elementary stage. SSA started different programmes in this direction this case study can be taken to see whether the SSA is approaching to realize its objectives effectively. Therefore, the investigator has selected to study the SSA in Mandi District, its existing position and future prospects.

### **Objectives**

The present study was conducted to attain the following objectives:

1. To study the SSA in terms of;
  - (i) Aims and objectives.
  - (ii) Enrolment and retention trend in primary and upper primary stages
  - (iii) Quality Improvement in education,
  - (iv) Coverage of special focus groups,
  - (v) Innovative Education.
2. To study the perception of teacher educators regarding the in-service training programmes.
3. To examine the educational implications of SSA.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated in the present study:

- (a) The objectives of SSA have been realized.
- (b) There is significant increase in the enrolment and retention of the students at elementary stage.
- (c) Dropout rate has been reduced
- (d) There is qualitative improvement in the teaching-learning process.
- (e) Attention has been given to the special focal groups such as socially disadvantaged sections of the society and the physically challenged children.

**Delimitation of the Study:** The study was confined only in Mandi District of Himachal Pradesh. The existing status of SSA has been taken only. The study involved the perception of teacher educators with respect to the quality of in-service teacher training programmes organized by DIET Mandi.

**Methodology:** Case study method has been followed to study Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Mandi District of Himachal Pradesh. A case study is an intensive investigation of an individual, group or community, an institution or a programme etc. One Institution i.e. DIET Mandi which has been entrusted for implementing SSA in District Mandi has been taken as a case and 20 teacher educators who were present at the time of visit have been included in the sample. For collecting data, two tools- a) Interview Schedule for Teacher Educators and b) Secondary Data which is collected from DIET Mandi were used. The data were mainly analyzed in terms of frequencies and converted into percentages.

### **Findings**

The following conclusions were drawn on the basis of analysis and interpretation of data:

**(A) Universalization of Enrolment and Retention:** One of the main objectives of SSA is that all children within the age-group of 6-14 years of age will be enrolled in the schools. For this purpose various categories of schools such as Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS), Alternative Schools, and mobile schools were established in the district. Now these have been converted into NRST Centres for achieving 100 % enrolment. Educational facilities are provided to all the children within a walking distance of 1.5 Kms. New primary schools are being opened in the district. The enrolment data in respect of both primary school as well as upper primary schools reflect that there is no gender or social bias in the enrolment at elementary stage. The girls participation for all categories of students is 49.41 % at elementary stage where as it is 49.56 % for SC and 46.89 % for ST. The participation of general category students of both sexes in

elementary stage make a part of 63.12 % of total population of students whereas SC made 35.96 % participation and ST and OBC made their 0.60% and 0.32% respectively in the district. Moreover the SC students comprise 35.96 % of the total students against the 27.13% SC population in the District, so as the elementary education (i.e. primary and upper primary) is concerned which show slight social bias. Thus there is a need to sustain the achievement of gender and social equity in terms of enrolment at primary level.

The following intervention programmes have been started in the district to achieve the target on universalization of enrolment and retention:

- **Provision of additional teachers:** Para teachers are being appointed in the district where there are vacancies of teachers. Also the process of rationalization has already done by the Directorate of elementary education. After the implementation of RTE- Act2009 the provisions have been made to make every school of District RTE – Compliant.
- **Provision of Civil Works:** In the year, 2010-11 , in total of 681 upper primary schools, there are still 52 schools having single room and 118 schools having 2 classrooms,298schools having 3 classrooms and213 schools having more than three rooms are available. Similarly in 1735 primary schools the school having single room, 2 rooms , three rooms and more than three the number is 86,538,682 and 429 respectively. The provision to make headmaster room is made under SSA to those schools having the scarcity of rooms. The number of kitchen shed is1696 out of1704 primary schools and this number is in case of upper- primary school is 677 out of 687 , drinking water facility to all the primary as well as upper primary school of the district. The status of toilet facilities out of 1704 pry schools the school having girls toilet the number is1703, boys toilets are1275 and common toilets for the both is 416. Now SSA made financial provision to minor and major repair to the building as well to improve the sanitary conditions of the schools. The target to make every school RTE-Compliant, has been achieved. Only 10% of the schools having no separate toilet facility for girls students, the work is under progress and target will be achieved in current year 2014.
- **Maintenance and Repair of School Buildings:** As per SSA norms all the schools are being provided with an annual grant of Rs. 5000/- per annum to primary schools and 7000/-- per annum to upper- primary school to meet maintenance requirements. Every year all schools were covered under the maintenance grant.
- **Free Text books to the Students:** In this year the free text books are given to all the

students studying in classes 1-8<sup>th</sup>.

- **Quality Improvement in Education:** The intensive in-service teacher training programmes are being organized by DIET Mandi equipping the teachers with necessary skills and knowledge as required for the implementation of SSA. The following teacher training programmes are being organized by DIET Mandi: IED programme of 2 days duration, programme on Girl Education of 2 days duration. Content related training programme on the subjects like EVS, Mathematics, and Language for 3 days duration. Preparation and use of TLM for 2 days and General - Methodology, Value Education, Sports etc. for 1 2 days of duration. Training for BRCs and CRCs has been imparted by the DIET staff at Mandi, whereas the aforesaid group imparts the training for all the teachers in blocks/clusters. Five days training for upper primary teachers and five days training for primary teachers were imparted to all the teachers of elementary classes. The training imparted to every teacher is based on the philosophy of activity based teaching learning and according to the need of teachers. Base line surveys have been conducted, and then after every teacher is focus to increase the achievement level of the students.

#### **(B) School Support - Professional Support Structure**

The support structures have been made functional for providing infrastructural support for the implementation of SSA in the district through DIETs, BRCs, and CRCs.

#### **(C) Coverage of Special Focus Groups**

- **Girls Education:** After the implementation of RTE-Act 2009 free textbooks has been given to all girls of Himachal Pradesh. Special focus on main Mandi Town and Nerwa Block of District Mandi has been given. Special Karate courses under skill education are provided to girls of some schools.
- **NRST Centers** are also set up in the district to achieve the target of 100% enrollment and fulfill the provision of Age Appropriate Class made under the RTE act. These centers are run by SMCs and NGOs in these Blocks. After the implementation of RTE-Act 2009, the provision of age appropriate class is made and in this direction 9 NRST centers have been opened. Nine special instructors have been appointed by SSA to run these centers.
- **Inclusive Education:** There were 2105 disabled children in primary as well as in upper primary classes in the district. All these children are being covered under SSA. Special Educators are appointed by the SSA in the year 2010, 24 special educators are giving their

services in the district. In the district 691 children are covered under home based education. Every year Medical camps has been organized every in convergence with health department in all 20 education blocks of the district Mandi.

- **Incentives for SC/ST/OBC:** These social groups are covered under the various schemes of State Government. Moreover, some special plans are being developed with the help of district planning core team under the chairmanship of DC Mandi.

#### **(D) Innovative Education**

Under SSA efforts have been made to bridge the social and gender gap through active participation of local community. Therefore, the major focus was the out of school children who were never enrolled, dropped-out, irregular students etc. The following strategies have been undertaken for main-streaming of out of school children under innovative projects:

- Enrollment and retention drives are being conducted.
- Special camps and bridge courses are being conducted as per their needs.
- NRST centers are being opened as per requirement.
- Community mobilization through SMC/PTA/MTA/NGOs etc.

#### **(E) Perception of Teacher Educators regarding SSA In-Service Teacher Training Programmes**

**(a) Introduction of Teacher Training Programme:** Before the introduction of SSA, there were also the in-service teacher training programmes conducted by DIETs at district level as well as by SCERT at state level and by NCERT national level.

**(b) Change in Performance of Teachers after Attending the Programme:** All teacher educators viewed quite significant change in the performance of school teachers who attended in-service teacher training programme organized under SSA.

**(c) Sufficient Use of Active Learning Methodology and Other Techniques:** 86.67 % of the teacher educators indicated that teachers after attending the training made sufficient use of TLM and other techniques to explain different concept while teaching the course of studies.

**(d) Change in Teacher's Classroom Questioning Techniques:** All the teacher educators were positive in their responses that the teacher's perspective and questioning techniques got very significant change after the in-service training course.

**(e) Difference in Paying Individual Attention towards Students:** 93.33 % of the teacher educators admitted that there are positive differences in paying attention to the students by those



teachers who attended in-service teacher training programmes. Special Learning Enhancement programme has been developed and implemented in the district, to increase the learning level of the students

**(f) Introduction of Innovation in Teaching-Learning Process (Activity based Teaching):**

73.33 % of the teacher educators disclosed that the teachers after attending the in-service training programmes used sufficiently the innovations in teaching learning.

**(g) Encouraging Participation of the Students in Classroom:** All the teacher educators are having the view that in majority cases who attended the training programmes encourage students to participate in classroom teaching learning process.

**(h) Relating Learning with the Life of Community:** 93.33 % of the teacher educators are of the view that the teachers after attending in-service teacher training programmes have started to relate the subject matter with the life of the community.

**(i) Co-operation of Parents in Solving the Problems of the Students:** 80% teacher educators admitted that teachers have started to seek the cooperation of the parents/guardians in solving the problems of the students after attending the in-service training programmes.

**(j) Perception and Experience about Usefulness of In-Service Training Programme provide under SSA:** Majority of the teacher educators are of the view that the teacher training programmes envisaged are very good. They found that the teachers' perception and attitude has been changed after attending such courses. They are better equipped for the use of TLM and other techniques. Their professional knowledge is brushed and they become effective teachers.

**(k) Present Curriculum and its Validity:** 86.67 % of teacher educators have indicated the requirement of change of present curriculum and improvement in its validity and link the same with growing expansion of knowledge.

**(l) Relevance of In-Service Teacher Training and its Usefulness:** All the teacher educators found that in-service teacher training programmes and workshops conducted under SSA are quite useful and are relevant in the present day context.

**(m) Adequacy of In-Service Teacher Training Programme under SSA:** 93.33 % of teacher educators have shown interest in the in-service teacher training programmes conducted under SSA, which is in their opinion are serving the cause of teachers and taught but they are also in favour of strengthening these programmes with better management, adequate TLM, computer training, training in new innovative techniques in the subject taught by the teachers. All round

awareness of teachers is also required to be updated. The teachers should be given the knowledge about the preservation and saving of ecology and the environment.

**(o) Improvement in Teaching-Learning Process after Attending the In-Service Training Programmes :** 80 % of the teacher educators are having the view that the teacher training programmes provided under SSA for in-service teachers bring effective improvement in the process of teaching learning.

**(p) Development of Innovative Attitude among the Teacher Trainees:** 86.67 % of the teacher educators found that when they impart training to the in-service teachers, they are able to develop innovative attitude among the teacher trainees towards the effective teaching process.

### **Educational Implications**

Findings of the study indicate that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in District Mandi is progressing well and achieving its objectives of universalization of elementary education effectively. The target of 100 % enrolment and reducing the retention rate will be achieved soon. The primary schools are being opened within the walking distance of one km. in the district. Another finding of study regarding PTR indicate that PTR is good enough, there is no scarcity of teachers as per SSA norms but the problem of single teacher school is due to the non-rationalization of teachers. Also the study indicate the fact that in-service teacher training programme organized by SSA have brought change in the opinion of teachers about different aspects of teaching-learning. These training programmes equip the teacher with better teaching methods and use of other techniques for creating better classroom environment. Hence it is suggested that such in-service teacher training programmes should be made integral part of the educational programmes for elementary school teachers. In the change scenario the teachers' need to be given freedom and incentive for teaching aids to suit them and their pupils. It can further be seen from the results that the module of the teacher training programme should be changed and it should link with the latest knowledge. The teacher training programme should be need based and research oriented as well as participatory. The training imparted to the teacher must be of 10 days subsequently throughout the year by evaluating it in the field.

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