



## Implications of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for Reducing School Dropout

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**INTRODUCTION:** Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an initiative to universalize quality elementary education in a mission mode through district based decentralized, context specific planning and implementation strategies. It is a significant attempt to bridge social and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community in all aspects of planning and delivery of elementary education programmes. It envisages bringing all-out of school, never enrolled and dropped out children in the school. It also aims to bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage and at elementary education level. In few words "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan means to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the age group of 6-14 years; bridge social, regional and gender gaps, that too, with the active participation of the community in the management of schools". SSA scheme was started in the year 2001-02 (in J&K it was started in 2002-03) with the above mentioned objective i.e. Universalization of Elementary Education. It is an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities of all children including the girl child, through provision of community-owned quality in the form of a mission mode. However, SSA has limited financial provisions for girl's education in the form of "innovations" at district level and free textbooks and thus need was felt for an additional component. Thus, National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBV) were introduced as an additional support to SSA for education of girls belonging to underprivileged, disadvantaged groups of society and by setting up residential schools with boarding facilities at elementary level respectively (<http://ssa.nic.in>). One of the important objectives of SSA is to bridge all gender and social category gaps. It is therefore necessary to set the targets separately for boys, girls, SC and ST and the disadvantaged groups. Over a period

of time the gap between boys and girls and between SC, ST and others may be reduced. The target of reducing the gaps may depend upon the magnitude of the gaps that exist between these categories in the base year (<http://www.education.nic.in/ssa-/sap>). One of the focus areas of the SSA is to establish linkages with other social sector schemes and programmes of various agencies and draw benefit from them. It provides an opportunity to all the districts to formulate their vision of quality elementary education and develop District Elementary Education Plans (DEEP) suited to their needs, local environments and capacity to implement the plans. Rajan (2006) conducted a study in Ahmedabad sponsored by Indian Institute of Management (IIMA) and found that the SSA has met with considerable success quantitatively if not qualitatively. While quality remains an area of concern, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been able to bridge the enrolment retention and achievement gap between sexes and among social groups. This scheme has been able to bring social groups, SC/STs under the ambit of education. Weak points in earlier efforts to universalize elementary education into the educational mainstream have been filled by SSA scheme. SSA is a time bound programme and is committed to an overall improvement of the elementary education sector with a clear mandate to achieve specific goals. The SSA framework clearly stipulates that it is mandatory to track the progress of each and every child. As such, it is essential to gather information about all the children up to the age of 14 years - enrolled or never enrolled, out-of-school or within the system, studying in private sector schools or schools of autonomous bodies/ government.

**OBJECTIVES:** The objectives of the present study are to: " Assess the awareness of SSA personnel about the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan scheme and its various facts. " Assess the awareness of teachers

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about the techniques used to increase enrollment rate in SSA schools. " Elicit suggestion from SSA personnel for reducing school dropout.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodological framework used for the study is as under:

##### **Sample description and Sampling Procedure:**

The sample of the study comprised 100 SSA personnel such as principals, teachers and other school personnel working in government schools of Kathua district. Locale of the Study: The study was carried out in Kathua district. There are a total of 13 zones in this district; from these 04 zones were selected randomly namely Kathua, Lakhanpur, Barnoti and Marheen zones all falling under Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir State by lottery method. Then from each selected zone 25 government schools were selected randomly. Hence, from the total of 100 School, one SSA personnel was selected per school.

##### **Tools for study:**

An interview schedule was prepared to elicit requisite information from the sample respondents.

##### **Data Analysis:**

Both qualitative and quantitative method was employed for analysis.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The selected SSA personnel were in the age group of 20-30 years and had a working experience of 2-4 years. All the selected SSA personnel were aware about the SSA scheme being run by the Government for increasing the literacy rate in the country. All the teachers were also aware about the scheme being functional in the State of J&K.

From Table 1 it is evident that majority of the respondents (68%) said that the meaning of SSA is to give education to all children and 26% respondents said it improved the quality of education. Rest (6%) of the respondents said the meaning of SSA is to spread the education to far flung areas. Results also show that the respondents visualized different aims of SSA scheme. Majority (34%) of the respondents said that the aim of SSA scheme is to provide education to all children in the age group of 6-14 year. 33% respondents said it increase the literacy rate of children. SSA is a scheme that improves the availability of education by covering more children under its ambit and provid-

ing quality education to all. It especially aims at covering below poverty line children. Results reveal that the teachers put forward different objectives of SSA scheme. According to majority of them (41%) its basic aim is to achieve 100% literacy. It works towards including all children in the school education system. For others, 23% felt that the basic objective is to help all children complete 5-8 years of primary schooling and 22% felt that it is a step towards reducing incidence of out of school children. These results suggest that though all the teachers were aware about the scheme they have very narrow knowledge about its objectives. None of the sample teachers were aware of all the objectives but rather knew only a few of its objectives.

Table 2 reveals that 81% of the respondents said that SSA scheme has been able to fulfill its objectives. Apart from these 19% of the respondents said that SSA scheme does not fulfill its objectives because teachers are busy in their own activities such as discussion of family issues, enjoying food etc. and they do not pay proper attention towards students. The result reveals that most teachers and school personnel felt that the benefit of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was to raise the literacy rate of the society and to get all the children enrolled at school (42%). SSA is a scheme that has been able to reach out to the poor children (22%) and especially reaching to children in slums (10%).

From table 3 it is evident that majority (91%) of the SSA respondents said that SSA scheme runs under education department and only 9% respondents said that it runs under center govt. 71% of the respondents said SSA scheme was launched in 2002-2003 in J&K and 29% said that it is launched in 2000-2001. From the above it is evident that majority (91%) of the respondents said that SSA scheme was initiated in the year 2002-2003 and only 9% respondents said that this scheme started in 2000-2001 in Kathua district.

Different techniques were used by SSA school personnel to improve enrollment rate in schools. Mostly the teacher (61%) used to provide free teaching learning material which included charts, maps and plastic alphabets etc. Apart, from these free textbooks were also provided in a no. of cases (23%). This was mostly done with the view to relieve parents of the

financial burden of buying books for their children. In just 16% of the cases the teacher conducted meeting with parents to motivate them to send their children to school. Data presented in table 4 reveals that 100% respondents said that Government gives the financial aid for running the school under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Scheme. Such as approximately Rs.250/female student and Rs. 200/male student were given annually for SC, OBC (Gujjar, Bakarwal) and orphan children. Government also provided free textbooks, uniforms or mid-day meals for student who studied under SSA scheme and 100% respondents said that the age criteria of children at the time of admission was fixed as 5years.

Regarding the agenda of the Government for running Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan schools in addition to the regular government schools, there were various responses put forward by male and female teachers. All the sample teachers were found to be aware about the SSA school in their locality. Also, these teachers were happy about having a SSA school apart from the regular government school. According to most male teachers (32%) with these SSA schools, enrollment of dropout children can be increased. However, most female teachers (32%) reported that through SSA schools, government aims at increasing the overall literacy rate, 14% each of the teachers felt that through this scheme it is possible to work towards universalization of education and that it is helpful in national development. The respondents felt that the regular school is bound within limits and hence cannot focus on some group of children unable to attend school. The SSA schools can especially direct attention towards this potential group of children and can help them get into mainstream education system. A significant segment of male and female teachers were aware of the role of SSA in enrollment of dropout children and 100% respondents said that there is no fixed number of children to be enrolled in a year.

The result from table 6 reveals that most of the (66%) teacher personnel said that poverty and illiteracy of parents were the main reason for children to dropout from school. Poor parents could not afford the money for admission fee and other expenditure related to schooling, therefore, they failed to send their children to school. Unaware parents also failed to understand the need for education. 12% each of the re-

spondents felt that due to the child labour and death of head of the family, children had to grow up overnight and hence had to leave school. Apart from these 10% of the respondents felt that due to early marriage they dropped from school. Further results reveal that over all majority (61%) of the respondents said that the most common reason behind children who are enrolled but irregular at school is illiteracy of parents. These parents themselves being uneducated fail to realize the importance of schooling. They stopped their children back at home and involved them in house hold task. Another, major reason cited was poverty. As again because of this, children worked along with their parents in economically gainful activities and hence missed school. At times due to migration (6%) of children with their parents they tend to be irregular and due to bad habits children also fail to attend school (6%).

From table 7 it is evident that majority (96%) of the respondents said that there are some special provisions for dropout children in SSA scheme such as bridge course, Education Guarantee Scheme centre and remedial / extra teaching practices for average children and 4% respondents said that there is no special provision for dropout children. All the teachers acknowledged that SSA plays an important role in reducing school wastage. It is one of the most powerful tool in reducing school dropout and exclusion. It tends to cover all children with special focus on the girl child, SC/ST/OBC children and below poverty line children. Some of the steps which can be undertaken to further accomplish the goal of universal education includes providing free teaching- learning material (61%), financial help (24%) and mid day meal (15%). It was reported that most children fail to come to school because of the money to be spent on the books, uniforms and other school related aspects. So, if free books and materials are provided this problem can be overcome. Also, many children especially in rural areas assist their parents in economic activities so if some financial aid is provided then more children can be attracted to school. Also, regions where there is abject poverty, mid day meals can provide an attractive alternative. The sample school personnel also suggested a few means through which enrollment rate of children can be raised. According to 33% of the respondents the existing curriculum and methodology need to be

revamped .The current course content in a number of cases is boring, repetitive and unimaginative .So, the courses taught need to be revised and teacher need to deliver the course in innovative and interesting manner. About 21% of the teacher respondents said door-to-door campaigning help to improve enrollment rate of children in school. 20%of teacher also felt that by providing totally free education to all children more and more children can be attract to school. Apart from these 14% and 12% of teacher felt that through the awareness generation by, public rallies and financially help to poor children, SSA scheme can help to improve the enrollment rate in schools.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country. The SSA 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 results reveal that according to SSA personnel the meaning and aim of SSA is to provide education for all children in the 6-14year age group and the major objectives of this scheme was to achieve100%literacy rate. Majority of the respondents revealed that SSA scheme

was being run under Education Department and launched in Jammu and Kashmir in 2002-2003 in J&K state including Kathua district also. Respondents also indicated that the benefit of this scheme is to increase the general educational level. Most SSA personnel appreciated this scheme because under this scheme the teaching - learning material is available and also availability of mid day meals which is helpful for children who belong to poor families. Mostly of the teachers used teaching learning material to improve enrollment rate which includes, hand made chart, maps, thermocoal models etc. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan personnel also reported that Government provided free textbooks, mid-day meal for student who are studied under SSA scheme; the personnel are more comfortable in their teaching by having these teaching aids. The agenda of the Government for running Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan School was to increase the literacy rate. Irregularity, poverty and illiteracy of parents were the common reasons reported for school dropout of children. Similar results found in a study conducted by Naidu 2008, in Mahe district of Union Territory of Pondicherry (recently renamed as Punducherry). 30 schools consist of 18 Government Schools and 12 Private schools selected and the direct participant interview method was adopted for collection of required data from the se-

#### 1. Awareness about Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan scheme

Meaning of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Respondents		
	M(%)	F(%)	T(%)
Education for all children	29(58)	16(32)	5(10)
Improving the quality of education	39(78)	10(20)	1(2)
Spreading education to far flung areas	68(68)	26(26)	6(6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>
<b>Aims of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan</b>			
Increasing literacy rate	19(38)	21(42)	-
Providing education to all children in the 6-14year age group	10(20)	14(28)	13(26)
Education for below poverty line children	12(24)	11(22)	33(33)
Enhancing the quality of education	34(34)	12(12)	21(21)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>
<b>Primary objective of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan</b>			
Universal retention by 2010	7(14)	2(4)	12(24)
All children complete5-8 year of primary schooling	29(58)	7(14)	21(42)
Reducing incidence of out of school children	10(20)	12(24)	14(14)
Achieve100%literacy rate	23(23)	22(22)	41(41)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>

M=Male, F=Female, T=Total, (%)=Percentage

#### 2. Benefits of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan scheme

lected schools covering all the immense care was taken to monitor the school in rural and urban areas of Mahe region. Further more information were collected by discussion with the personnel in the field were analyzed qualitatively. They also found that the textbooks and notebooks to the students were provided under SSA Scheme by the District Government education fund.

The TLM grant was used in procuring teaching aids and it was reported that the teachers are more comfort-

**Table-2 Benefits of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan scheme**

Fulfillment of objectives	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Respondents		
	M(%)	F(%)	T(%)
Yes	46(92)	4(8)	35(100)
No	15(30)	81(81)	19(19)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>
<b>Benefits of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan</b>			
Gets all the child to school	16(32)	14(28)	12(24)
Reach to all the poor children	8 (16)	10(20)	8(16)
Increases the general educational level	30(60)	2 (4)	26 (26)
Spreads education to slum areas	22 (22)	42 (42)	10(10)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>

**Table-3 Launch and Departmental support to SSA scheme**

Departmental responsibility	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Respondents		
	M(%)	F(%)	T(%)
Education	47(94)	3(6)	44(88)
Center Govt.	6(17.14)	91(91)	9(9)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>
Launch of SSA in J&K			
2000 -2001	19(38)	31(62)	10(20)
2002 -2003	40(80)	29(29)	71(71)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>
Launch of SSA in Kathua district 2			
2000 -2001	6(12)	44(88)	3(6)
2002 -2003	47(94)	9(9)	91(91)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>

**Table-4 Technique for increasing school enrollment**

Technique used to improve enrollment rate	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Respondents		
	M(%)	F(%)	T(%)
Provision of teaching learning material	20(40)	41(41)	61(61)
Conduct of parents- teacher meeting	15(30)	1(2)	16(16)
Free textbooks	15(30)	8(16)	23(23)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>
Financial aid given by SSA			
Yes	50(100)	50(100)	100(100)
No	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>
Extra aid given by SSA			
Yes	50(100)	50(100)	100(100)
No	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>
Entry age at admission time			
4year	-	-	-
5year	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)
6year	-	-	-
Any other (specify)	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>

able in their teaching by having these teaching aids. The study further found that the teaching learning material includes, hand made chart, maps, thermocoal models, models of scientific equipments, models of science objects and other instruments used in laboratory, the students can also exhibit their own hand models, which helps the students to learn much more from other class teachers. Prabhakar V.P. (2007) reported that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), aimed at using it as the main vehicle to provide elementary education to all children in the age group 6-14. Under the programme, the Government of India plans to open new schools in places where schooling facilities are inexistent. It also aims at strengthening the existing school infrastructure through provision of additional class rooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance grant and school improvement grant.

**Table-5 Agenda of Govt. for running Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan schools**

Govt. running SSA schools	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Respondents		
	M(%)	F(%)	T(%)
To increase the literacy rate	21(42)	16(32)	37(37)
Universalization of education	4(8)	10(20)	14(14)
Enrolled the dropouts children	16(32)	19(38)	35(35)
To develop the country & give free education	9(18)	5(10)	14(14)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>

**Table-6 School Dropout and Irregularity among children**

Reasons for dropout	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Respondents		
	M (%)	F (%)	T (%)
Poverty & illiteracy of parents	40(80)	26(52)	66(66)
Due to early marriage	3(6)	7(14)	10(10)
Death of the head of the family	3 (6)	9(18)	12(12)
Child labor	4(8)	8(16)	12(12)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>
Reasons for irregularity	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Respondents		
	M (%)	F (%)	T (%)
Poverty	21(42)	6(12)	27(27)
Illiteracy of parents	21(42)	40(80)	61(61)
Indulgence in bad habits	4(8)	2 (4)	6(6)
Migration	4(8)	2(4)	6(6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>

**Table-7 Special provision for school dropout's children**

Special provision for school dropout children	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Respondents		
	M(%)	F(%)	T(%)
Yes	49(98)	47(94)	96(96)
No	1(2)	3(6)	4(4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>
Role of SSA in reducing school wastage	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Respondents		
	M(%)	F(%)	T(%)
Financially help	14(28)	10(20)	24(24)
Teaching learning material	25(50)	36(72)	61(61)
Mid- day meal	11(22)	4(8)	15(15)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>
Technique used to improved enrollment	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Respondents		
	M(%)	F(%)	T(%)
Free edu.to all children	8 (16)	12 (24)	20(20)
Door to door campaigning	13 (26)	8(16)	21(21)
Financially help to the poor children	9 (18)	3 (6)	12 (12)
Awareness generation by public rallies	8(16)	6 (12)	14(14)
New teaching methodology and content	12(24)	21(42)	33(33)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>50(100)</b>	<b>100(100)</b>

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