

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All Movement) or SSA, pioneered by former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, is aimed at the universalisation of elementary education "in a time bound manner" as mandated by the 86th Amendment to the Constitution of India, making free and compulsory education to children between the ages of 6 to 14 a fundamental right. This 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.

HISTORY OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

SSA has been operational since 2000-2001. However, its roots go back to 1993-1994, when the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was launched, with an aim of achieving the objective of universal primary education. DPEP, over several phases, covered 272 districts in 18 states of the country. The expenditure on the programme was shared by the Central Government (85%) and the State Governments. The Central share was funded by a number of external agencies, including the World Bank, Department for International Development (DFID) and UNICEF.

MEANING OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is :

1. A programme with a clear time frame for universal elementary education.
2. A response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country.
3. An opportunity for promoting social justice through basic education.
4. An effort at effectively involving the Panchayati Raj Institutions, School Management Committees, Village and Urban Slum level Education Committees, Parents' Teachers' Associations, Mother Teacher Associations, Tribal Autonomous Councils and other grass root level structures in the management of elementary schools.
5. An expression of political will for universal elementary education across the country.
6. A partnership between the Central, State and the local government.
7. An opportunity for States to develop their own vision of elementary education

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN AS A FRAMEWORK AND AS A PROGRAMME

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has two aspects:

1. It provides a wide convergent framework for implementation of Elementary Education schemes;
2. It is also a programme with budget provision for strengthening vital areas to achieve universalisation of elementary education. While all 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.

AIMS OF SSA

The aims of SSA are as follows:

1. To provide useful and elementary education for all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010.
2. To bridge social, regional and gender gaps with the active participation of community in the management of schools.
3. To allow children to learn about and master their natural environment in order to develop their potential both spiritually and materially.
4. To inculcate value-based learning this allows children an opportunity to work for each other's well being rather than to permit mere selfish pursuits.
5. To realize the importance of Early Childhood Care and education and looks at the 0-14 age as a continuum.

OBJECTIVES OF SSA

The objectives of SSA are as follows:

1. All children in school. Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, 'Back-to-School' camp by 2003.
2. All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
3. All children complete of elementary schooling by 2010.
4. Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
5. Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
6. Universal retention by 2010.

FEATURES OF SSA

The main features of SSA are as follows:

1. Programme with a clear time frame for universal elementary education.
2. A response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country.

3. An opportunity for promoting social justice through basic.
4. An expression of political will for universal elementary education across the country.
5. A partnership between the central, state and the local government.
6. An opportunity for states to develop their own vision of elementary education.
7. An effort at effective involving the Panchyati Raj Institutions, school management Committees, village and urban slum level Education Committees, parent's Teachers' Associations, Mother-Teacher Associations, Tribal Autonomous councils and other grassroots level structures in the management of elementary schools.
8. Focus on the educational participation of children from the SC/ST, religious and linguistic minorities, etc.
9. An opportunity for states to develop their own vision of Elementary Education.
10. Community ownership of school based interventions through effective decentralization.

BROAD STRATEGIES CENTRAL TO SSA PROGRAMME

The strategies central to SSA programme are:

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, decentralisation 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.

Improving Mainstream Educational Administration: It calls for improvement of mainstream 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 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 microplanning 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 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.