

# Evaluation study of axom sarva shiksha abhiyan mission with regards to deprived urban children

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■ **ABSTRACT** : The Government of Assam launched the Axom Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Mission, a society under Education Department, in 2001 with the primary aim of universalizing elementary education in Assam. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan aims at reaching out all children with a special focus on the most disadvantage groups such as domestic servants, sibling care, and children working in hotels/garages/shops etc. The problems of deprived urban children are peculiar and different from other groups. This calls for special interventions, strategy and approach. Hence, the investigator carried out a study targeting deprived urban children to find out the rate of dropout and to see achievement level of learners in terms of their literacy and numeracy scores and highlighting the suggestion for improving implementation of the programme. One hundred and twenty (120) learners were considered as respondents. The major finding revealed that there had been wide variation in enrolment status of learners and the drop-out rate from special training classes of SSA, ranged from 10.26 per cent to 36 per cent. The reasons for drop-out explained by the learners were lack of time, discouragement by the family members, ill health, distance of the centre from the residence etc. But the achievement level of learners in respect of writing ability, numerical ability and general ability was seen quite improved. The afore-said finding has provided useful information regarding the process involving in reaching out to the deprived urban children through SSA mission and thus has provided an insight in to the working of the scheme.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Deprived urban children, Effectiveness

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The children today have a need for understanding the rapidly changing world and the growing complexity of the society. It is response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan is an attempt of universalization elementary education by community owned school education system. It is a mission to provide opportunity for improving human capacity to all the children through the programme. The Government of Assam launched the Axom Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Mission, a society under Education Department, in 2001 with the primary aim of universalizing elementary education in Assam. The key feature of the programme since its inception has been its effort to promote community involvement in school improvement and enhance the demand for education in educationally disadvantaged areas through social

mobilization. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) aims at reaching out all children with a special focus on the most disadvantage groups. SSA's intervention in the urban areas has also been conceived because of this commitment to education for all. The problems of deprived urban children are peculiar and different from other groups. These call for special interventions especially targeting children staying in difficult conditions who are the most difficult groups such as domestic servants and street children have been grounded.

## Deprived urban children (DUC):

It includes any children out of formal school in the age group of above 6 years in an urban setting. The deprived urban children are denied of their childhood rights in general and right to education in particular.

There is an urgent need to focus on the educational needs of deprived children in urban areas. Recent studies indicate the growing problems of schooling of poor children in urban area. Because urban areas have special problems like the education of street children, the education of children who are rag pickers, domestic servant etc. There is also a need to bring awareness among the planers, administrators and functionaries of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Mission with regard to the problems related to the SSA centre and to design alternate solutions to solve their problems. An effective evaluation exercise is a necessity in analyzing the actual problems faced by the instructors and learners at different level and assess the achievement made so far and suggest some solution that are more practical.

The present effort is an attempt in this direction. The evaluation of the components of the programme relating to Sarva Siksha Mission through the study is aimed, which will enable the concerned authorities to implement the programme in the most appropriate manner to achieve the actual set objectives of the programme.

#### Objectives:

- To study the rate of dropouts of deprived urban children from the special training classes;
- To find out the difficulties faced by the instructors and learners with regard to method and materials for learning, location etc.,
- To study the level of achievement of learners in terms of their literacy and numeracy scores,
- To highlight the suggestion to improve the implementation of the programme.

#### RESEARCH METHODS

There are 22 special training centres running in Lakhimpur district of Assam out of which 10 centres were selected for the purpose of present study. These centres covered the children who are domestic servants, sibling care, children working in hotels/garage/shops etc.

#### Selection of respondents:

Since the study was dealing broadly in two aspects *i.e.* the learners and instructors, the respondents for this study were divided into two categories:

#### Category I:

Children above 6 years of age have not been admitted in any school were selected. For the purpose of the present study, 12 learners from each centres which made the total number of one hundred and twenty (120), were considered as respondents for this category.

#### Category II:

The educational volunteers (instructors) from each

selected centres were interviewed. Total ten (10) respondents in this category of respondents were selected for the study.

All together category I + category II *i.e.* one hundred thirty (130) were considered as respondents for the purpose of the study.

According to the objectives of the study, a specially designed interview scheduled was prepared to obtain the information regarding instructors and learners. It consisted of background information, dropout's rates, difficulties faced by them. An achievement test was conducted in evaluating the achievement level of children.

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the present study as well as relevant discussions have been presented under following sub heads:

#### Enrolment status and rate of drop-out:

The success of SSA Mission has throughout been judged by the phenomenon of enrolment status and rate of drop-outs in special training centres. The programme could not achieve the actual set objectives when learners did not come after enrolling in the centre. There had been seen wide variation in enrolment of special training centres. The investigator recorded the total number of children enrolled in 10 special training centres. The average attendance range and rate of drop-out was also calculated from 10 special training centres. Table 1 shows the enrolment status and drop-out rate in selected 10 special training centres.

Table 1 : Enrolment status and rate of drop-out				
Center code	Total enrolment	Average attendance	No. of drop-outs	Percentage (%)
1	34	23	7	20.58
2	37	28	9	24.32
3	44	33	10	22.72
4	50	43	18	36
5	53	48	11	20.75
6	46	37	5	10.86
7	37	23	9	24.32
8	46	34	8	17.39
9	49	22	9	18.36
10	37	23	6	16.21
Total	433	314	92	

From Table 1 it has been seen that the total number of children enrolled in 10 special training centres were 433 and it was also found that the average attendance percentage of children in special training centre was 314 *i.e.* 72.51 per cent. It has been further seen that the drop-out rate from SSA classes ranged from 10.86 per cent to 36 per cent. The reasons for drop-out explained by the learners were lack of

time, discouragement by the family members, ill health, distance of the centre from the residence etc.

### Difficulties faced by the educational volunteers (Instructors):

The instructors of SSA Mission faced many problems in running the special training centres which were related from identifying children to the solving problems of children. Table 2 shows different nature of difficulties faced by them.

Sr. No.	Difficulties	Frequency (10)	Percentage (%)
1.	In identifying learners	8	80
2.	Location of the center	6	60
3.	Non co-operation of the people	8	80
4.	Solving problems of learners	4	40
5.	Producing teaching/learning material	6	60

Table 2 shows that 80 per cent instructors faced difficulties in identifying learners; it was because of non co-operation of the people.

60 per cent instructors faced difficulties in producing teaching/ learning materials. They were not able to gather the things like slates, pencils, charts and text book supplied by the SSA Mission office due to lack of time of their working hours.

The majority (80%) of the instructors faced difficulties in respect of non-cooperation from the people of the community. Often instructors had to go to the learner's house to get them to the centre. 60 per cent of instructors faced difficulties for the location of the centre. They were carried out the classes in some unhygienic situation. They told that they required a permanent building with all facilities and also should be nearer to the learners' place of residence. 40 per cent instructors faced difficulties in solving problems of learners. Sometimes they were asked question by the children's parents, which were unable to give answers. But they tried to solve the learner's problems with the help of supervisors.

### Effectiveness of the programme:

Since the present study was aimed at the effectiveness of SSA Mission, it was decided to examine the programme more keenly. One of the sustaining areas that would decide the effectiveness was obviously, the achievement level of learners. But, here the investigator faced a new technical problem *viz.*, that although the instructors has been trained in conducting the SSA programme and the literacy kits had also been supplied to almost all the centres, the instructors as practitioners were following their own ways of teaching. Therefore, there is no homogeneity in the contents of the

programme. Another significant issue related to the study was that the instructor was following the evaluation procedures provided in the literacy kits. So, it was felt that, if the achievement level of the learners were measured on some common contents (as in this case the evaluation procedures suggested in the literacy kits) would have the fair measure for the effectiveness of the programme. Having limitation as well as understanding the problems, the investigator conducted an achievement test which is dealt with writing ability, numerical ability and general ability as shown in Table 3.

Sr. No.	Category	Pass		Fail	
		No	%	No	%
1.	Writing	76	63.33	44	36.66
2.	Numerical	82	68.33	38	31.66
3.	General	56	46.66	64	53.33

From Table 3 it was seen that among the total working children of 120 in special training centre, 63.33 per cent were passed in writing ability. Liked that 68.33 per cent learners passed in numerical aspects and it was seen that only 46.66 per cent learners passed in general ability. The passed percentages were calculated with the marks obtained by the learners in the achievement test paper. The pass mark was 30 (thirty) out of 100 marks paper.

Then, the scores were analyzed according to the average marks obtained by the learners. Table 4 shows the achievement test average scores result.

Sr. No	Average test result	Number	Percentage
1.	Pass	71	59.16
2.	Fail	49	40.83

The investigator applied an observation technique consisting of the statement regarding whether the learners

- Can read sentences
- Can count numerical up to 100
- Can make simple operations (oral sums).

The options for making observations had three points on a nominal scale:

- Not at all
- With difficulty
- Fairly well.

Each and every learner was observed with the above three statements along with achievement test. They were given a paragraph to read, counting table and asking some simple operation to solve. The various responses were analyzed in terms of frequency and percentage and tabulated in Table 5.

The summary of the findings (Table 5) on this aspect

<b>Table 5 : Distribution of observation</b>						
Statements	Not at all		With difficulty		Fairly well	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	11	9.16	57	47.5	52	43.33
II	17	14.16	63	52.5	40	33.33
III	9	7.5	51	42.5	60	50

of the study are appended as out of total sample of 120, 9.16 per cent were not able to read sentences at all, 47.5 per cent could read with difficulty and 43.33 per cent could read sentences fairly well. Again in case of counting numerical, only 30.33 per cent can count up to 100 fairly well. In the last statement, it was found that majority of the learners *i.e.* 50 per cent were able to solve the oral sums. This may be because majority of them worked mostly in establishment like shops, hotels, garages etc. They were dealing with day to day handling of money.

### Suggestions and conclusion:

The findings of the study have drawn attention to some aspects, which need to be considered for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission. A few such recommendations are:

- Certain modification need to be made to strengthen in certain aspects like – A unit of utilization and management of space, Selection of appropriate teaching material for promoting intellectual and cognitive development.
- Grass root level functionaries should provide training by emphasis on practical and field work.
- Appropriate supervisory skills need to be imparted to supervisors so that they are able to provide back up

support and the job training to grass root level functionaries.

- There should be regular monitoring of the programme through periodic meetings between supervisors, concern authority and educationist.

The afore-said finding has provided useful information regarding the process involving in reaching out to the deprived urban children through SSA Mission and thus, has provided an insight in to the working of the scheme.

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