

Periodic Research

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Begusarai District of Bihar: Success and Shortcomings

Abstract

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a national programme to revamp the primary and upper primary education in the country. Since education is a state subject, so the responsibility to implement this programme has been entrusted to every state with funding from Central and State Governments. The data of evolution of the SSA in Begusarai district of Bihar which has been used in this paper have revealed that SSA has contributed significantly in streamlining the primary and upper primary school system of the district. Though some important shortcomings have also appeared which need to be taken care of in due course. The most important is the poor attendance of the students in attending the schools daily.

Keywords: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Primary and Upper Primary Schools, Mid day, Meal Scheme, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Residential Bridge, Course.

Introduction

Universalisation of elementary education in India was a goal ever since Independence in 1947. Elementary Education is recognised as a fundamental right for all citizens in India (Srivastava, D.S & Tomar Monica). Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was a programme of universalisation of elementary education by community participation in school management. This scheme of SSA was evolved from the recommendations of the state education ministers' conference held in Oct. 1998 to pursue UEE as a mission. Approved in 2000, the goals of SSA were, a) that all 06-14 age children (i) are in school/education guarantee scheme (EGS/ Bridge Course by 2003, (ii) complete primary education by 2007, (iii) complete eight years of schooling by 2010; (b) Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life. (c) bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010 ;and (d) Universal retention by 2010 (Thakur Devendra & Thakur D.N). It was intended to improve the quality of basic education across the country. Eventhough SSA was meant to provide quality elementary education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years by 2010 but the programme has been extended further. Implementation of SSA Programme including National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level, Mid-day-Meal Scheme and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalaya Scheme, hereinafter referred to as schemes, was extended beyond 2012. The programme is still going on but the speed and allocation of finances have slowed down. There was also another goal attached with SSA which was to bridge social, regional and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community in the management of schools. The state of Bihar is of special interest for any study of education in India. It is among the most educationally deprived states in the country (Jabbi, M.K & Rajyalakshmi, C). Hence it was desired to study the scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Begusarai which is a district of Bihar.

Aim of the Study

The main objectives of this paper are:

1. To analyse the implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Begusarai district of Bihar
2. To identify the barriers in the way of attainment of goals in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Begusarai district of Bihar
3. To find out the role of community in Begusarai district of Bihar in successful implementation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan



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Periodic Research

Methodology

A total number of 40 schools which included 19 primary schools, 16 upper primary schools, 2 Residential Bridge Courses (RBC) and 3 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyayas (KGBV). These schools included all categories of schools. The criteria of sample selection was the higher gender gap in enrolment, higher proportion of SC/ST student, low retention rate, higher drop-out rate, schools with a minimum of three CWSN, habitation where the school is located has sizeable number of SC households., habitation where the school is located witnesses in-bound and out-bound seasonal migration, habitation

where the school is located is known to have sizable number of urban deprived children, school is located in a forest or in flood area. The habitation where the school is located witnesses recurrent floods or some other natural calamity and Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) at school level. The sample primary and upper primary schools were taken from each of the 4 blocks and 1 urban area of the district. The entire sample consists of 19 primary schools, 16 upper primary schools, 2 RCB's and 3 KGBVs. In this way, a total number of 40 schools have been taken as sample schools from Begusarai district. The detail sample size has been shown in Table-1.

Table-1: Number of Sample Schools, District Begusarai, Bihar

Name of Block	Primary Schools	Upper Primary Schools	RBCs	KGBVs	Total
Urban Area	4	3	Nil	1	8
Barauni	5	4	1	1	11
Birpur	5	4	Nil	1	10
Cheriya Bariyarpur	5	5	1	Nil	11
Total	19	16	2	3	40

Source: Field Survey, SSA Programme, District Begusarai.

Source: Office of the District Education Officer, Begusarai.

Tools Applied

Well-structured schedule was used to collect primary data from selected sample schools. Separate schedules were used for primary and upper primary schools. Two more schedules one for KGBV and another for RBC were used to collect data and information. In this way 4 types of scheduled were used to collect data from different types of schools in the district.

Findings

The following were the main findings:

Physical Quality and Social Access of Sample Schools

The condition in sample schools, availability of facilities therein, distance of schools from habitations, various barriers on the way to schools and the distance of nearest upper primary schools from sample primary schools have been examined. The number of classrooms, student-classroom ratio, and availability of different facilities according to the convenience of students has also been analyzed. The different information is related to social, cultural and linguistic barriers to students and efforts made to remove these barriers at the level of teachers, family and community members.

Physical Access

The data showed that all the sample primary schools were covering 30 habitations and upper primary schools were covering 25 habitations. Amongst all, 20 (66.66 per cent) habitations were having primary schools within a distance of 1 km and 15 (60.00 per cent) habitations were having upper primary schools within a distance of 1 km. On the other hand, 8 (26.67 per cent) habitation in case of primary schools and 6 (24.00 per cent) habitations in case upper primary schools were within a distance of 1-2 km. Moreover, 2 (6.67 per cent) habitations were having primary schools and 4 (16.00 per cent) had upper primary schools within a distance of 2 to 3 km.

Barriers in Going to Schools

The natural and human made barriers in-between habitations and schools were found in 3 (15.79 percent) primary schools and 5 (31.25 percent) upper primary schools. 1 (5.26 per cent) primary school and 2 (12.50 per cent) upper primary schools had a railway line/ crossing on the way to the school. 1 (5.26) primary school and 1 (6.25) upper primary school was found to be located on highways/busy road. There was a forest on the way of 1 (5.26) primary school and 1 (6.25) upper primary school. The primary schools had no river as a barrier in between but 1 (6.25) upper primary schools had a river as a barrier.

Distance of Upper Primary Schools from Primary Schools

The distance of sample upper primary schools from primary schools shows that. 10 (52.63 percent) upper primary schools were located within the distance of 1 km and 7 (36.84 percent) were located within the distance of 1-2 km and 2 (10.52 percent) were located within the distance of 2-3 kms from primary schools. Thus, all the upper primary schools were located within the distance of around 3 kms from sample primary schools. .

Type of School Buildings

All the primary and upper primary schools were found to be located in own buildings except one primary school which was located in the campus of other school.

Number of Classrooms

The number of classrooms in the sample primary and upper primary schools were examined. It was found that there were mostly 1-7 classrooms in the sample primary schools and 3 to 7 class rooms were in the sample upper primary schools as evident from the following table-2.5. 2 (10.52) primary schools had 1,2,3,4 classrooms respectively. 4 (25.00) upper primary schools had 3 classrooms. 2 (12.50) upper primary schools had 4 classrooms. 9 (47.37) primary

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schools and 1 (6.25) upper primary school had 5 classrooms. 1(5.26) primary school had 6 and 7 classrooms respectively. 5 (31.25) upper primary schools had 6 classrooms and 1 (6.25) upper primary school had 7 classrooms.

Classrooms as per Norms

The data showed that 4 (21.05 per cent) primary schools and 3 (18.75 percent) upper primary schools were having classrooms as per RTE norms (RTE Act. 2009). While 15 (78.94 percent) primary schools and 13 (81.25 percent) upper primary schools were having classrooms not conforming to RTE norms

Condition of Classrooms

In majority of schools, condition of classrooms was found to be good both in case of primary and upper primary schools of the district. However, it was found that 9 (12.5 percent) classrooms in primary schools and 12 (13.79 percent) classrooms in upper primary schools required repairing while 5 (6.94 percent) primary schools and 3 (3.45 percent) upper primary schools needed major repairs.

Schools with Electricity

Data showed that amongst all sample schools, 12 (63.16 percent) primary schools and 3 (18.75 percent) of upper primary schools were not having electricity connection.

Classroom Facilities

It became evident that students found to be sitting on tat patties were 12 (63.16 per cent) of the primary schools while in 10 (62.50 percent) of upper primary schools furniture was used for sitting. However, 4 (66.67 percent) of primary school students had availability of tat patti for sitting while 12 (100.00 percent) of primary schools were also found using tat patti for sitting arrangements. The quality of furniture was good in 4 (40.00 percent) and satisfactory in 6 (60.00 percent) of upper primary schools. The quality of tat Patti was good in 4 (33.33 percent), satisfactory in 8 (66.67 percent) of primary schools. In Upper Primary schools, the quality of tat Patti was found to be good in 2 (33.33 percent) and satisfactory in 4 (66.67 percent) schools. The proper ventilation, lighting and proper positioning of black board were found to be good in all primary and upper primary schools but the condition of black board was found good in 79 per cent of primary schools and in 57 per cent of upper primary schools as the following table shows. The condition of the black boards was satisfactory in 4 (21.05 percent) primary schools and 7 (43.75 percent) upper primary schools. It was found that black board was available and used in all primary and upper primary schools. The blackboard was properly painted and visible in all sample primary schools and upper primary schools.

Toilets

Provision for separate toilets for boys and girls were found in all sample primary and upper primary schools but, availability of the same was 100 percent in upper primary schools but only 90 percent in primary schools. The display on the doors about the boys and girls toilets was also found in 14 (82.35 percent) primary and all upper primary schools. The toilets were in proper use in 15 primary schools

Periodic Research

(88.24 percent) and in all upper primary schools. Despite the availability of toilets, they were not properly used because it was locked in 2 (11.76 percent) sample of primary schools. 4 (21.05 percent) primary schools and 8 (50.00 percent) upper primary schools had common toilet which was in use. The use of the common toilet was permitted to all students in primary schools and was use in 17 (43.75 percent) of upper primary schools. Running water was not available in all primary schools but in case of upper primary schools it was available in 2 (18.75 percent) schools. However, it was not properly maintained in 15 (88.24 percent) primary schools and in 14 (87.50 percent) upper primary schools. The toilets were suitable for special children in 10 (58.82 percent) primary schools and 3 (18.75 percent) upper primary schools.

Drinking Water, Sport Facilities and Library

Safe and hygienic source of drinking water supply was available in all primary and upper primary schools through hand pumps, used by all students in both the schools. The availability of play ground was 10 (52.63 percent) in primary schools and 13 (81.25 percent) in upper primary schools. The play grounds were properly maintained in majority of primary 10 (52.63 percent) and upper primary schools 13 (81.25 percent). Furthermore, availability of sport items was 7 (36.84) percent) in primary schools and 6 (37.50 percent) in upper primary schools. Student's participation in out of school sports was found in only 7 (36.84 percent) of primary schools and in 6 (37.50 percent) upper primary schools. The library facility was available in 16 (84.21 percent) of primary schools and in 15 (97.75 percent) upper primary schools. The maintenance of library was found good in 2 (12.50 percent), satisfactory in 9 (56.25 percent) and unsatisfactory in 6 (31.25 percent) of primary schools. Furthermore, maintenance of library was good in 3 (20.00 percent), satisfactory in 10 (66.67 percent) and unsatisfactory in 2 (13.13 percent) of upper primary schools. Free books were distributed in 16 (84.21 percent) of primary schools and 15 (97.75 percent) of upper primary schools.

Enrollment and Presence of Students in Primary Schools

The class wise and gender wise enrolment of SC, OBC, Minority and General castes students at primary level was recorded from the school registers of all sample primary schools and thereafter the head count of the students present on the day of visit of our research team was done. The exercise was done in order to find out what is the proportion of students out of total enrollment who generally come to schools. The percentage of total boys who were found present was 84.12 per cent in comparison to 85.38 percent of the girls who were found present on the day of visit. It is to be noted here that the percentage of total enrolled students at primary level who were attended the school on the day of visit of investigators team was found to be (84.77 percent). Amongst all (75.89 percent) students belong to SC's, while in OBCs it was (87.37 percent) and of General castes (87.18 percent) including (78.74 percent) of total minority

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students were found to be present on the day of our visit to sample schools.

Enrollment and Presence of Students in Upper Primary Schools

The presence of the students in respect of their enrollment in classes from VI to VIII showed that (81.21 percent) of all students enrolled from class VI to VIII were found to be present on the day of visit of research team in sample schools. The presence of girls was (82.34 percent) as against (75.18 percent) of boys. Here presence of OBC (90.86 percent) students was found to be higher in comparison to the presence of students of other social groups. The proportion of boys attending classes regularly was lower than that of girls in both primary and upper primary schools.

Teachers in Primary Schools

In total sample primary schools, a total of 94 teachers were available in primary schools, amongst them 49 were males while rest 54 were females. The proportion of female teachers (57.45 percent) was higher in comparison to male teachers (42.55 percent) in primary schools. Amongst the Head teachers (73.68 percent) were males and (26.32 percent) were females. However, amongst the Assistant teachers (42.86 percent) were males and (57.14 percent) were female teachers. Similarly, amongst all Niyojit temporary teachers (31.48 percent) were male teachers and remaining 68.32 percent) were female teachers.

Teachers in Upper Primary Schools

Data showed that in upper primary schools total 127 teachers were posted. Amongst all of these teachers around 65 percent were male teachers and rest 35 percent were female teachers. Furthermore, amongst all Head teachers 87.50 percent were male teachers and only 12.50 percent were female teachers. Similarly, amongst all Assistant teachers 57.69 percent were male teachers and 42.31 percent were female teachers. Amongst all Niyojit teachers 62.35 percent were male teachers and remaining 37.65 percent were female teachers. In upper primary schools, male teachers were in majority in all categories except in case of Niyojit temporary teachers where females were in majority.

Pupil Teacher Ratio in Primary Schools

The pupil teacher ratio and positions vacant of different type of teachers indicated that in upper primary schools pupil teacher ratio was greater as compared to primary school. Also most of the teacher's position was vacant as only 60 Assistant teachers in primary schools and 74 in upper primary schools teachers were appointed in the district.

Teachers Training

The teachers of primary and upper primary schools were given different type of trainings. It appears that the proportion of teachers in primary and upper primary schools who got trainings was low. Those who got training, received it in induction/ LEP/ computer and orientation language/other. The venue of training was the BRC and most of them got training of 5-8 days. All the trainers were the regular teachers and those teachers who got the training were satisfied and reported that the training was useful to them.

Periodic Research

Distribution of Free Text Books and Use of TLM:

The data showed that the students of all primary and upper primary schools reported to have received free text books within one month of opening of the schools. The TLM items in primary schools were the cards, charts, maps and balls while cards, charts and maps were the TLM items in primary and upper primary schools. The data further showed that all teachers in primary schools and all teachers in upper primary schools were aware of their duties according to RTE Act, 2009. There were three sources viz. news paper, radio and officers through which teachers could know of their duties as per RTE Act, 2009. It was found that the teachers used their experience properly in all primary and upper primary schools and all teachers accepted the importance of students in teaching learning process (TLP). The teacher's cooperation to students was found in most of the primary and upper primary schools and also notes were provided by the teachers to students in all primary and upper primary schools.

Method of English Teaching

English was found to be taught using translation method in all primary and upper primary schools. They also tried to develop skills of reading and writing. Teachers also wanted students to develop habit of English speaking.

Method of Mathematics Teaching

It was found that the teachers had the ability of thinking on the basis of argument in all primary and upper primary schools. It was observed that the teachers in all primary schools and upper primary schools had ability to formulate and handle abstraction of mathematics. The teachers in (94.74 percent) of primary schools and in all upper primary schools had development of thinking and reasoning. They also had knowledge that how to use community resources in teaching learning process.

Classroom Management

The role of teachers in classroom management was found to be in all primary and upper primary schools. It was also observed that students in all primary and upper primary schools were encouraged to ask the questions.

Equity Issues in Quality Education

It was evident that no noticeable gap in the learning achievement of SC/ST/minority girl students in all primary and upper primary schools was evident. Further, there was no noticeable discrimination of SC/ST/minority and girls students by their friends and teachers in all primary and upper primary schools. It was also observed that co-curricular activities to boost the moral and self-esteem of the children from the weaker section were adopted in (91.30 percent) of primary schools and in (87.50 percent) of upper primary schools. Teachers understanding of the challenges and diversity in classroom were found in all primary schools and all in upper primary schools. It was found that the teachers made efforts to connect the text book lessons and knowledge and experience of the socially disadvantaged children in their teachings.

E: ISSN No. 2349-9435

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya

In the study, 3 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas were taken up as sample. It was evident that school building of KGBVs was located in own, rented and rent free one. All three KGBVs were being run by the Government.

Enrollment and Attendance

It was reflected from the data that 160 girls were enrolled per KGBV. Amongst all enrolled girls in the school from six to eight classes; highest percentage of students belonged to SC group, followed by minority, general and OBC. It was further evident that out of total girls enrolled, (62.99 percent) were found present on the day of visit to KGBVs.

Teaching and Other Staff

There were 3 wardens cum teachers, 5 full time teachers and 6 part time teachers were in position in all the three KGBVs. All the teachers in KGBVs were trained.

Infrastructure

The availability of infrastructural facilities were sufficient in all the 3 KGBVs.

Condition of Infrastructure

The status of different type of key infrastructural facilities was examined in case of sample KGBVs. It was found that all the facilities were either good or satisfactory.

Receipt of Grants

It was found that timely fund was received by all 3 KGBVs from their respective districts. Source of the fund flow was district and all the records were found to be updated in all 3 KGBVs.

Perception about KGBVs

It was observed that KGBVs were running well in Begusarai district.

Residential Bridge Course (RBC)**Number of RBCs**

In the sample Begusaria district, 2 residential bridge course (RBC) schools were run by the government in upper primary schools.

Enrollment and Attendance in RBCs

A total of 98 girl students were enrolled in RBCs and amongst all 56.12 percent were found present on the day of visit. It was also found that most of the students belonging to different social groups were enrolled in RBCs were present on the day of visit to the school.

Sufficiency of Infrastructure in RBCs

It was evident that all necessary infrastructural facilities were available but these were 50 percent sufficient and 50 percent insufficient in RBCs.

Community Awareness

The SMCs were constituted as per RTE Act in all the 19 sample primary schools and 16 sample upper primary schools. It was found that the SMC members in all sample primary schools and in all sample upper primary schools were aware of their roles and responsibility as notified by the State Government. Familiarity of SMC members of guidelines regarding school development plan was also found in all primary and upper primary schools. It was found that guidelines were printed in simple/Local language for the community members to understand.

Periodic Research

The SMC meetings were held mostly monthly in most of sample primary and upper primary schools.

Awareness of Social Activities

The awareness of SMCs (School Management Committees) regarding different school activities was found to be through the teachers, students, other VEC (Village Education Committee) members, panchayet members/mothers/community members / PTA (Parents Teachers Association) members in all the sample primary and upper primary schools.

Awareness of Development Plans

In 19 primary schools and 16 upper primary schools, SMCs knew the guidelines of school development plan. All the SMC members got training. The content of training was related to roles and responsibilities, management of schools, awareness of SSA and school development committee. The opinion of SMC members regarding the training was satisfactory. Frequency of visit of VEC Members to Schools was mostly monthly in both primary and upper primary schools.

Monitoring

In monitoring the attendance of the students, text books distribution, use of toilets and its cleaning, absenteeism of teachers, schools and schools processes and MDM (Mid day meals), the role of SMC members was largely found good and satisfactory.

Role of Community in Upliftment of Schools

The role of the community in the upliftment of the schools and overall schools upliftment was found to be in few primary and upper primary schools. School security system, community contribution, registration and attendance of children, scholarships distribution and MDM, role of the community was prominent in most of the primary and upper primary schools.

Maintenance of Financial Books

The upkeep of financial books and records was found good enough in all sample primary and upper primary schools of the district. The cash books were available in the 19 primary and in 16 upper primary schools. The data showed that pass books were available in 19 primary and in 16 upper primary schools. Stock Register was available in 11 primary and in 5 upper primary schools. Cash book, pass book found updated in 19 primary and 15 upper primary schools, also stock register were found updated in 10 primary and 4 upper primary schools.

Transfer of Funds, Audit and Role of Community:

Transfer of funds to VECs from district/state was through E transfers. All the VECs were covered under the audit.

Conclusions

The findings in the paper revealed that physical access of primary and upper primary schools was found to be within the norms. The students of some of the primary and upper primary schools faced barriers of railway lines/crossings, highways/busy road and forest while going to the schools. All the primary schools were found to be located within the distance of 3 kms. from sample upper primary schools. It was found that majority of primary and upper primary schools were not having class rooms as per RTE

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norms. However, the condition of majority of classrooms was found to be good. In majority of schools electricity was not available. The class room facilities were found to be good in majority of schools. It was found that separate toilets for boys and girls were available. But the use of toilets was not found in all primary schools. The condition of toilets was also not found good in terms of water supply and suitability for girls. Free text books were distributed to all students of primary and upper primary schools. Social accessibility to all caste, religions and different groups was available. No barrier was found in social accessibility. No difference was found between attendance register of schools and MDM distribution registers. It was found that around 84.77 percent of total enrolled students from class-I to V standards were found to be present on the day of visit to sample schools. The attendance of girls was slightly greater than that of boy's attendance. It was found that 81.21 percent of all enrolled students at upper primary level were found to have generally attended their classes regularly. It was found that at the aggregate level 94.11 percent of all students were present on the day of research team visit to sample upper primary schools against their enrollment. The Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) was high in primary and upper primary schools. The study of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhalayas (KGBVs) revealed that all sample KGBVs were run by the government and located in their own, rented and rent free buildings. A total of 160 girls were enrolled in 3 sample of KGBVs. Amongst all 62.99 percent were present on the day of research team visit. The teachers of the KGBVs were sent for different type of capacity building / trainings programmes. All the infrastructure facilities of KGBVs were found to be good or satisfactory. RBCs school building was rent free and run by government and 56.12 percent of all social category students were present in school on the day of visit to school. Infrastructure facilities of the schools were mostly

Periodic Research

good and satisfactory. The SMC members were found to be aware of their roles and responsibilities as notified by the state government. To sum up the entire findings, it can be concluded that the functioning of the SSA programme in Begusarai district of Bihar was found satisfactory.

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