Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) forms the cornerstone of government interventions in the sphere of basic education for all children. It was launched in November 2000 as an umbrella programme to support and build on primary and elementary education projects. The programme aims to ensure five years of primary education for all children in the age group of 6-14 years by 2007 and eight years of schooling by 2010.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was evolved from the recommendations of the state education minister’s conference held in October 1998 to pursue universalisation of elementary education in a mission mode. The assistance under the programme involved a sharing arrangement between the central and the state government, on 85:15 basis during the Ninth Plan, at 75:25 during the Tenth Plan and 50:50 thereafter. The programme covers the entire country (except the state of Goa) with a special focus on educational needs of girls, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other children in difficult circumstances.

The present chapter gives an overview of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. It contains the background, features, aims, objectives and programme implementation. It also deals with the central interventions, monitoring of the programme, coverage of special focus groups, quality issues in elementary education and improvement of school facilities. An in-depth understanding of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will help us in explaining the role of community in education which was analysed in Chapter six.

Since the present chapter deals with the policy provisions in implementing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the contents discussed in this chapter are taken mainly based on the document: ‘Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: Framework for Implementation’.  

1. Basic Features of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is an effort to universalise elementary education through community-ownership of the school system. It 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 of all children, through provision of community-owned quality education in a mission mode.

1.1. Understanding Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a Hindi phrase which means “Education Programme to All”\(^4\). This programme is time bound and aims at quality education. The target beneficiaries in the community and other stakeholders are involved in all stages of implementation to achieve the education outcomes. In overall Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is understood in the following manner. \(^5\) It is:

- a) A programme with a clear time frame for universal elementary education.
- b) A response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country.
- c) An opportunity for promoting social justice through basic education.
- d) 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 grassroot level structures in the management of elementary schools.
- e) An expression of political will for universal elementary education across the country.
- f) A partnership between the central, state and the local government.
- g) An opportunity for states to develop their own vision of elementary education

\(^3\) Government of India, 2000, op. cit.
\(^4\) The meaning of the words in this phrase is like Sarva (everyone or all) Shiksha (education) Abhiyan (programme/activity).
\(^5\) Government of India, 2000, op. cit.
1.2. Aims and Objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

The aim of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the 6 to 14 age group by 2010. The other goal is to bridge social, regional and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community in the management of schools. Its aim is also to allow children to learn about and master their natural environment. It focuses on value based learning that allows children an opportunity to work for each other's wellbeing rather than to follow mere selfish pursuits. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan also realizes the importance of early childhood care and education and looks at the 0-14 age as a continuum. The efforts to support pre-school learning in ICDS centres or special pre-school centres in non-ICDS areas is made to supplement the efforts being made by the Department of Women and Child Development.6

The objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are; a) all children should be enrolled in school by 2003, b) all children should complete five years of primary education by 2007, c) all children should complete eight years of elementary education by 2010, d) focus on quality of elementary education, e) bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary education by 2007 and at elementary education by 2010, and f) universal retention be achieved by 2010.7

1.3. Framework for Implementation

The framework of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan; a) allow states to formulate context specific guidelines within the overall framework; b) encourage districts in states and UTs to reflect local specificity; c) promote local need based and planning based on broad national policy norms; and d) make planning a realistic exercise by adopting broad national norms.

The objectives in the framework of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are framed at national level though various districts and states can streamline the framework into policy to achieve universalization of education taking into consideration their own respective contexts in their own time frame. For such an achievement the time limit is 2010. The emphasis is on mainstreaming out of school children through diverse strategies and to

6 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
7 Ibid., p. 2.
provide eight years of schooling for all children in 6-14 age group. The thrust is to bridge gender and social gaps and a total retention of all children in schools. Within this framework it is expected that the education system is made relevant so that children and parents find the schooling system useful in accordance with their natural and social environment. Such a type of schooling will be much more relevant in the context of tribal areas.

1.4. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as a Framework and as a Programme

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has two aspects; i) it provides a wide convergent framework for implementation of elementary education schemes; ii) it is also a programme with budget provision for strengthening vital areas to achieve universalization of elementary education. As a programme, it reflects the additional resource provision for the purpose.

1.5. Broad Strategies of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Programme

Since community participation is one of the broad strategies in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, it has to be ensured in the governance of the primary schooling system. In this context it is said that parents of primary school going children are given a role in improving the inspection system and the functioning of primary schools. Formation of parent-teacher committees in every primary school with legal powers to make school grants conditional on the approval of these committees is likely to be a positive step forward for making primary schools accountable. Keeping this idea of community participation in view, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is made a strategic programme for universalisation of elementary education in India. The programme has various strategies for community participation, village level planning, institutional reforms and financing. The programme also has a special focus on education for tribals, girls etc. and these are explained below:

Institutional Reforms: As part of the SSA, the central and the state governments undertook reforms in order to improve efficiency of the delivery system. The states made an objective assessment of their prevalent education system including

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educational administration, achievement levels in schools, financial issues, decentralization 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.

**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 decentralization. This is augmented through involvement of women's groups, Village Education Committee (VEC) members and members of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI).

**Institutional Capacity Building**: The SSA conceives a major capacity building role for national, state and district level institutions like National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). Improvement in quality requires a sustainable support system of resource persons and institutions.

**Community Based Monitoring with Full Transparency**: The programme has a community based monitoring system. The Educational Management Information System (EMIS) correlates school level data with community based information from micro planning and surveys. Besides this, every school is encouraged to share all information with the community, including grants received.

**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 are the basis for formulating district plans.

**Accountability to Community**: SSA envisages cooperation between teachers, parents and PRI members, 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, are one of the principal concerns in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Focus on Special Groups: The 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 commenced 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 provisions for household survey, community-based micro planning, 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 Mandal\textsuperscript{10} 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 has to 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 is a perspective plan which gives a framework of activities over a longer time frame to achieve UEE. There is also an Annual Work Plan (AWP) and budget that helps in listing 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.

\textsuperscript{10} Mandal is a revenue division in district, which earlier was called Tehsil.
Education in Tribal Areas: SSA emphasized and strongly recommended for the development of education in the tribal areas. While emphasizing special attention to the children belonging to Scheduled Caste, girls, minorities, Schedule Tribe were also a focused group in the entire programme. Infrastructure development, appointing qualified teachers, ensuring accessibility for education, enrolment, retention are some of the provisions made in the programme for the children belonging to the Scheduled Tribe communities.

1.6. Public and Private Partnership in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan takes note of the fact that provision of elementary education is largely made by the government and government aided schools. There are also private unaided schools in many parts of the country that provide elementary education. Poorer households are not able to afford the fees charged in private schools in many parts of the country. There are also private schools that charge relatively modest fees and where poorer children also attend. Some of these schools are marked by poor infrastructure and low paid teachers. While encouraging all efforts at equity and 'access to all' in well endowed private unaided schools, efforts to explore areas of public-private partnership are envisaged. Government, local body, and government aided schools are covered under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, as is the practice under the mid-day meal scheme and DPEP. In the framework it is said that in case private sector wishes to improve the functioning of a government, local body or a private aided school, efforts to develop a partnership is to be made within the broad parameters of state policy in this regard. Depending on the state policies, District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) and other government teacher training institutes could be used to provide resource support to private unaided institutions, if the additional costs are to be met by these private bodies.

1.7. Financial Norms and Provisions under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

The financial norms under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are; a) the assistance under the programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is on a 85:15 sharing arrangement during the IX Plan, 75:25 sharing arrangement during the X Plan, and 50:50 sharing thereafter between the central government and state governments, b) the Government of India releases funds to the state governments/UT only and installments (except first) to be released after the previous installments of central government and state share has been
transferred to the State Implementation Society, c) the National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid Day Meal) remains a distinct intervention with food grains and specified transportation costs being met by the centre and the cost of cooked meals being met by the state government, d) all funds to be used for upgradation, maintenance, repair of schools and teaching learning equipment and local management to be transferred to VECs/ School Management Committees/ Gram Panchayat/ or any other village/ school level arrangement for decentralization adopted by that particular state/UT. The village/ school based body may make a resolution regarding the best way of procurement, and f) other incentive schemes like distribution of scholarships and uniforms is continued to be funded under the state plan. They are not funded under the SSA programme.\(^{11}\)

Regarding teacher pupil ratio, one teacher for every 40 children in primary and upper primary school, at least two teachers in a primary school and one teacher for every class in the upper primary schools are given. It is also ensured that within one kilometer of every habitation the school would be made accessible to the children. Regarding facilities to the teachers, provisions like a separate room for every teacher in primary and upper primary schools and two class rooms with verandah to every primary school with at least two teachers is also mentioned in the programme.\(^{12}\)

Free text books are provided to all the children belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes at primary and upper primary level within an upper ceiling of Rs. 150/- per child. For maintenance and repair of school buildings, it is carried through school management committees/Village Education Committees. It also involves community contribution. All the expenditure regarding school related procurement involves the acceptance of teachers as well as parents in the committee. VEC/ school-village level appropriate body is to decide on best mode of procurement and requirement of successful running of schools.\(^{13}\)

Regarding school grants, Rs. 2,000/- per year per primary/upper primary school for replacement of non functional school equipment is provided. Rs. 500/- per teacher per year in primary and upper primary schools is also provided under teacher grant.\(^{14}\)

\(^{11}\) Ibid., pp. 5-6.  
\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 7.  
\(^{13}\) Ibid.  
\(^{14}\) Ibid.
Regarding interventions for out of school children in un-served habitations other alternative schooling models like Bridge Courses and Back-to-School Camps is also provided for enhancing enrolment of the children. Particularly for ensuring community participation and micro planning is also provided as per specific proposal of a district, duly recommended by the state.¹⁵

2. Planning, Appraisal and Fund Flows under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

2.1. Preparatory Activities

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan assigned greatest importance to the preparatory activities as these have been conceived as a necessary condition for quality implementation of the programme. Systematic mobilization of the community and creation of an effective system of decentralized decision making are part of the preparatory activities. Setting up of an effective information system has therefore been highlighted, besides procurement of essential office equipment and computer hardware. However, the framework points out that involving community leaders at all levels and orienting existing governmental functionaries in carrying out their activities more effectively is more important than the hardware component.¹⁶

The preparation of habitation level educational plans through effective community mobilization for micro planning and school mapping is the greatest challenge of the preparatory phase. Since Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has the clear aim of Universalization of Elementary Education, it is mandatory to track the progress of each and every child in the 0-14 age group. Preparation of Village Education Registers (VER) on the basis of household survey, regular monitoring through retention registers and pupil progress cards are developed in the preparatory phase itself. This calls for a focus on capacity building among the Panchayati Raj Institutions, members of Village Education Committees, School Management Committees, Parent Teacher Associations, etc. The preparatory phase provides for a process and activity based constitution/organization of such committees and training of community leaders for better management of schools. Capacity building in the local community requires a constant interface with

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 11.
the school and the teachers and this is attempted through a large number of school based activities in the preparatory phase itself.\footnote{Ibid.}

**Micro Planning Exercise:**

Through a participatory process a core planning team is constituted in each village at the habitation level. These planning teams include selected VEC members, selected community leaders, NGO representatives, school head master, selected teachers and some selected parents. The process ensures participation of women as well as persons from the deprived communities. Parents of children with special needs are included in the team. The selection of this team is very critical for effective planning.

It is important that the broad norms for improving school facilities are shared with habitation level planning team. The norms under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan provided the broad framework for such an exercise. The habitation level planning team comprises community leaders with a keen interest in the education of children. It has a large number of parents whose children study in the school whose improvement is attempted.\footnote{Ibid., p. 13.}

**Transparency and Mobilization of the Community:**

It is also said that organization of a large number of school based activities like *kalajathas*, sports and festivals, are important preparatory activities under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. It is believed that mobilization of the community can be achieved effectively through a series of school based activities that opens up the school as a social institution to the community. The objective of all these efforts is to ensure community partnership in the management of the school.\footnote{Ibid., p. 14.}

For the financial transparency within the community level, the policy suggested that opening of bank accounts of Village Education Committee or School Management Committee is an important preparatory activity. The fund flow and the school expenditure are expected to chanalise through the community resolutions so that effective decentralization can be brought in education. The financial norms clearly
state that a number of interventions are carried out by the Village Education Committee or its equivalent committee at the village level.

The programme suggests that the preparatory activities have to ensure the formation of the VECs or its equivalent committees at the village level through activities and participation of people rather than by official orders of nomination. Some states have accepted a system of election for School Management Committees and the same is continued. Involvement of teachers, representatives of women and other weaker sections, active community leaders, parents of children studying in that school, parents of out of school children from poor habitations, is ensured in the process of formation of committees.

Besides provision for training and orientation of community leaders and functionaries in Education Department, the preparatory phase provides for office equipment as per need, cultural activities for mobilization for mobilization of community and computer hardware and software for effective MIS at the district level.20

2.2. Community Based Planning Process

The success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan depends upon the quality of the community based planning process. While SSA is formulated on the premise that the community can plan, it also accepts the tremendous requirement for developing capacities in communities to do so. The heterogeneity of local communities in many regions often poses problems of unanimity on proposed planning criteria. It is important to recognize a habitation, rather than a village as a unit of planning as most habitations have a higher degree of community solidarity. In this context it is also said that “community participation implies the participation of the disempowered; those who have not had access – as a community, as a geographic area or as a gender”.21

As per the policy framework, the district team has to work out its information needs and steps to develop formats for household and school surveys. This requires capacity support from national/state level institutions. The local context has to reflect in all such activities. The school plays a critical role in the planning process and efforts to

20 Ibid., p. 15.
bring community leaders to the school are encouraged. This is facilitated by regular activities in the school. The school head master and his/her team have to function like the local resource team for planning.

After orientation of community teams, the process of micro planning takes place. This involves intensive interaction with each household to ascertain the educational status and the educational need. The requirements need to be discussed at the habitation level before they are finalized. The broad financial and physical norms regarding school infrastructure, teachers and teaching learning materials are the basis of the planning exercise.

As per the policy framework, the habitation level plans are drawn up on the basis of the micro planning exercise. The habitation level educational plans are appraised by the cluster level units in consultation with the mandal level teams. The district unit appraises the mandal level plans. While this is in process, due care is taken to ensure that the demand for teachers, classrooms, etc. are as per the broad norm for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.22

The community based planning process ensures effective enrolment and retention of the children in school. This process calls for a child specific monitoring by the local community and the community planning processes also result in a specific action plan.23

2.3. Perspective Plans and Annual Plans

The programme provides for a perspective plan and an annual plan for each district. It contains of a plan for universalisation of education within the time frame of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. It is based on the existing position with regard to attendance, retention, drop out and learning achievement. It works out the total requirement for universalization, spread over a number of years. A clear plan for improving access, increasing retention and ensuring achievement are a part of the perspective plan. The perspective plan is a dynamic document rather than any blue print and subject to modifications based on the feedback on the programme implementation. It works out the requirement of school infrastructure and teaching learning materials based on

23 Ibid.
these assessments. The perspective plans also take note of the presence of the non-
governmental sector and its contribution towards Universalisation of Elementary
Education (UEE).

The annual plans are based on a broad indication of resource availability in a district
in a particular year. The district undertakes a prioritization exercise in the light of the
likely availability of resources. The annual plan is a prioritized plan in the light of the
likely availability of resources. The national/state mission appraises these annual
plans and changes in keeping with resource availability could be effected by the
national/state mission.

While the objective of the perspective plan is to assess and plan for the unfinished
UEE agenda in a particular district, the annual plan is an exercise in prioritization.
The perspective plans of districts are the basis for placing demand for additional
financial resources for UEE in the years to come. As stated earlier, these plans are as
per broad norms under SSA. The appraisal teams ensure that planning is as per
nationally/state accepted norms.

Preparation of perspective and annual plans require creation of capacities at all levels.
Besides the teams of resource persons from the national/state mission, efforts to
develop state specific institutional linkage for planning support are also explored.
Consultation with research institutions for undertaking state specific educational
agenda has to be initiated. The same is finalized in consultation with the state
governments. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan required support of institutions of proven
excellence for research, evaluation, monitoring and capacity building.

The quality of the planning exercise depends on the efforts at capacity building and
the supervision of the planning process. Institutions like Cluster Resource Centres
(CRCs) and Mandal Resource Centres (MRCs) have to be carefully nurtured to
provide capacity for effective planning. The starting point in any such exercise is for
the states to accept the need for careful selection of personnel from the existing
governmental functionaries and also to deploy experts on contract from the
management costs provided under the SSA. The national/state mission has a role in
selection of personnel in order to ensure objectivity in such processes. It reiterated
that quality planning process require institutional reforms that allow local
communities to participate effectively in the affairs of the school. The involvement of the teaching community in the planning process is also necessary to ensure that the school system emerges as the principal institution for community partnership.

The District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) have a planning and management unit. These units have become fully operational. As stated in earlier sections, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan encourages institutional capacity development at all levels. Ultimately, no amount of external supervision by monitoring teams or capacity building teams is a substitute for institutional capacity development at all levels. The CRCs, MRCs and DIETs have a large role in the preparation of perspective and annual plans and their systematic capacity development has to be a priority in programme implementation.

2.4. Allocation of Resources as per Approved Plans

As mentioned earlier, the allocation of resources depend on the following: preparation of district elementary education plans and their appraisal; commitment of the state government with regard to the state share; performance of the state government regarding resources made available earlier; institutional reforms in states to facilitate decentralized management of education; reports of supervision teams regarding the quality of programme implementation; and availability of financial resources in a particular year. The actual allocation of resources depends on all these factors. It is likely that districts with poor infrastructure require more resources. However, the release is also performance linked. If an educationally backward district does not utilize the resources in the manner intended, it is unlikely to continue to receive a priority. Their plans are also appraised and resources made available as per the conditions mentioned above. There are no fixed criteria for allocation of resources, as the actual allocation depends on a large number of factors, including the availability of resources.

2.5. Requirements of District Plan

The district plans contain large scale participation of women and other disadvantaged groups in the planning process. It also ensures a clear gender focus in all the activities. It also contains the evidence of interface with elected representatives at all levels. In this process the plan is ensured constitution of various committees at each level,
institutional arrangements for decentralized decision making, consultation with teachers, community contribution, school mapping and micro planning.

The district plan also contains with survey of available school facilities, including non governmental educational institutions. It also contains relocation of teacher units taking into account the presence of the non governmental sector and its impact on school attendance. As part of other requirements in the plan, it also reflect community ownership of the plan, plan for quality education including a plan for children with special needs. The incorporation of issues like local specific school timings, reflection of all investments in plan and non plan are made in a particular district for elementary education.

2.6. Appraisal of District Plans

Appraisal of district plans is critical to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The national/state mission undertake appraisal of plans with the assistance of resource teams constituted by the operational support unit of the national/state mission. These resource persons are fully oriented for undertaking the task of appraisal. The appraisal missions undertake regular visits to districts in order to monitor the quality of preparatory activities. The monitoring and operational support teams at the national/state level mission constitute the appraisal teams. Appraisal teams are jointly constituted by the national and the state level mission. One of the national mission nominees is a representative of the research institution that undertakes responsibility for that state. The national mission circulates a list of resource persons on the basis of past experience gathered under the DPEP and Lok Jumbish Project. The nominees of the state mission is also be approved by the national mission. A checklist of activities is prepared for the guidance of the appraisal team.

2.7. Determining the Base Line Status

The national evaluation of the Operation Blackboard scheme\(^{24}\) has generated state specific findings on a large number of parameters regarding elementary education.

\(^{24}\) Operation Blackboard scheme was launched in 1987 in pursuance of NPE-POA, to provide minimum essential facilities to all primary schools in the country. External evaluation of the scheme had indicated that lack of training of teachers in using the teaching material, specification of a large number of uniform facilities to be provided without modification according to local needs and lack of provision for breakage of equipment have been some of the draws of implementation of the scheme.
The evaluation of the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) has similarly generated state specific reports. In a manner, these studies give a broad base line picture with regard to the school system and the effectiveness of the teacher training institutions. The National Sample Survey 52nd Round (1995-96), the National Family Health Survey-I and II (1992-93 and 1998-99) also gives insights on 6-14 age children attending schools in various states. These studies serve as a state specific baseline for the launch of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Besides these, provision for base line studies focusing on the local context has been provided as part of the preparatory activities. The policy framework felt that base line achievement tests would be undertaken by the NCERT in the non DPEP states on a priority, to ascertain the current levels. The national and the state mission monitor on the basis of these established base lines.

Besides the state level baselines, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan provides for conducting base line assessment studies as a part of the preparatory activities in each district to be covered under SSA. These studies are diagnostic in nature so that these studies contribute to the planning process by taking note of the local context. In this context NCERT provides technical guidance.

2.8. Supervision of Activities

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan requires regular supervision of activities. Ideally, the CRCs, MRCs and DIETs are developed effectively to carry out supervision activities. Supervision teams are periodically sent by the national/state mission usually once in six months. Such supervision visits also includes the state specific resource institution that has undertaken the task of research and supervision in that state/UT. Theme specific supervision visits besides the overall assessment visits are also undertaken. Classroom observation by resource persons are provided for. States work out their supervision/appraisal/monitoring and research plans, based on the indication of resource availability as per the norm approved for such activities under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Two supervision visits of at least three days each are undertaken by the national/state level mission each year, to each of the programme districts. Initially these supervision teams are constituted by the national mission in partnership with the states.
Subsequently, states constitute their own supervision teams. Each supervision team consists of four members, two from the state mission and two from the national mission. Representatives of national resource institutions, state specific research institutions and University Departments of education are encouraged to participate in the supervision team.

2.9. Procedure for Release of Funds

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is conceived as a long-term partnership between the central and the state/UT governments. The procedure for release of funds incorporates this idea of a partnership. Under the programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the districts prepare their proposals through a community owned pre-project phase, based on the Broad Framework for Implementation (BFI). The State Implementation Society (SIS) for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan forwards these proposals to the national mission of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for release after appraisal by a joint team. The central government release funds to the state government. The state government is expected to transfer this to the State Implementation Society within thirty days. The state governments have to give written commitments regarding its contribution towards the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

3. Management Structure for Programme Implementation and Integration

3.1. Management Structure at the National Level

One of the basic features of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is that the mainstream structures primarily used for implementing the programme. A separate Department of Elementary Education and Literacy has been created for this purpose. In order to facilitate convergence and a holistic perspective, a single Bureau of Elementary Education has been constituted. The General Council at the national level is headed by the Honorable Prime Minister with the Human Resource Development Minister as the Vice-Chairman.

The national mission has a major role to play in developing capacities. In order to facilitate such a process, demand based capacity development visits are organized by the national mission, in consultation with the state missions. State missions also play an important role in meeting the capacity development needs of the districts as per their requirement. The professional and operational support institutions regularly
interact with State Implementation Societies and districts to ascertain the capacity development needs. Flexibility in meeting the capacity development needs is critical to the success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The national mission has the role of disseminating good practices across the states. This includes encouraging study visits and regularly publishing such good practices. The monitoring and operational support unit of the national mission responds to the demand from states and districts. It has the flexibility of sending monitoring teams at short notice. The national mission constantly up-date lists of experts in functional and geographical areas in consultation with State Implementation Societies.

3.2. State Mission Authority

There is a state mission authority for UEE and it facilitates decision making at the state level. The mission mode signifies a focused and time bound arrangement for decision making and the presence of planning and finance on these bodies at the state level facilitate this process. The General Council is headed by the Chief Minister and the Executive Committee by the Chief Secretary. Representation of Finance and Planning Departments on the General Council and the Executive Committee facilitate decision making. Department of Rural Development's involvement facilitates the process of mobilizing additional resources under the rural employment programmes for school infrastructure development. Involvement of NGOs, social activists, university teachers, teacher union representatives, panchayat raj representatives, and women's groups help in ensuring full transparency to the activities of the mission. Ministry of Human Resource Development is represented both on the Governing Council and the Executive Committee.

The implementation team under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan works within a framework of decentralized management of education with full accountability to the community. The Panchayat Raj Institutions and school level committees are involved in the programme implementation, along with the mainstream structures.

The state level team constantly undertakes field visits to ascertain the quality of programme implementation. Information systems to monitor progress with regard to SSA objectives, effective structures for financial management and audit, support to districts for capacity development, are some areas that require continuous partnership.
with the state level team. The state level team also has to encourage diversity across districts and document good practices so that they could be adopted in other regions.

3.3. Management Structure at State, District and Mandal Levels

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan allows states/ UTs to have their own management structures, respecting the diversity that exists in these structures across the states. This, however, does not mean that decentralization is not be monitored. In fact, the effort is to empower schools to take their own decisions, within the overall management context of a state/UT.  

District and sub district units are similarly set up by the state. As mentioned earlier in the section on community planning process, creation of a district, mandal and cluster level teams comprising of governmental and non governmental persons would help to go a long way in establishing effective structures. The selection of the core team has to be very careful, as that it determines the quality of programme implementation. Setting up of Educational Management Information System (EMIS) team has to be done on priority in order to put in place an effective Management Information System (MIS). Efforts are made to involve representatives of Non Governmental Organizations with proven excellence while constituting teams for programme implementation at various levels. 

3.4. Role of Non Governmental Organizations in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan conceives a vibrant partnership with non governmental organizations in the area of capacity building, both in communities and in resource institutions. These partnerships are required nurturing through an on going partnership in activities. The research, evaluation, monitoring activities under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is proposed to be done in partnership with institutions and NGOs. This improves transparency of programme interventions and also encourages a more open assessment of achievements. In the education sector, non governmental organizations have been making very meaningful contributions. Work related to pedagogy, mainstreaming out of school children, developing effective teacher training programmes, organizing community for capacity development for planning and

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25 Ibid., p. 32.
26 Ibid.
implementation, expressing gender concerns, work in the sphere of disability among children, are some such examples.  

3.5. Major Central Interventions and their Integration with SSA

There have been several innovative schemes in the sector of elementary education following the National Policy on Education in 1986 such as Operation Blackboard, Teacher Education, Non-Formal Education, *Mahila Samakhya*, National Programme for Nutritional Support for Primary Education, State Specific Education Projects in Bihar, Rajasthan, UP and Andhra Pradesh and DPEP in 248 districts of 18 states. It is proposed to integrate these in the fold of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the following manner:

i. **Operation Blackboard**

Operation Blackboard is aimed to improve physical infrastructure of education whereby school space is expanded and more teachers are provided. However, Operation Blackboard could not cover the entire spectrum of schools. The SSA aims at qualitatively improving and expanding the existing structure. No fresh teacher recruitments take place under OBB once SSA programme is operationalised.

ii. **Strengthening of Teacher Education**

The revised scheme of Teacher Education provides for a Memorandum of Understanding with the states in order to ensure that they receive priority attention of state governments, especially with regard to filling up of vacancies through a rigorous selection criteria. This supplements the DIETs, which provide guidance at district level.

iii. **National Programme of Nutritional Support for Primary Education**

Evaluation of the National Programme of Nutritional Support for Primary Education indicates that the supply of food grains leads to improvement in student attendance while raising their nutritional standard. It is proposed to continue the scheme with suitable modifications, in consultation with states.

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iv. **Mahila Samakhya**

*Mahila Samakhya* approach indicates the progress made in empowerment of women. This in turn generates demand for elementary education of girls. There is a need to further strengthen these linkages with basic education of girls by giving women groups a more active role in the management of the school.

v. **District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)**

DPEP districts indicate that decentralized planning and implementation facilitates community involvement in the process of school management. DPEP has met with varied degree of success in different states. Some have availed of DPEP benefits and have improved their elementary education sector. A large number of teacher vacancies have been filled up in many DPEP states. Setting up of Mandal and Cluster Resource Centres has facilitated academic interaction among teachers. Development of new text books with the participation of teachers and experts has been encouraging in most DPEP states. All DPEP districts also form part of the SSA framework. Efforts to prepare comprehensive district elementary education plans were made in DPEP districts. The focus is on vertical expansion into upper primary education and on consolidation of the primary schooling efforts.

vi. **Lok Jumbish Project (LJP)**

Under the LJP, the positive impact of micro level planning and school mapping successfully ensured with the community participation. There are specific interventions for girls’ education through *Balika Shiksha Shivirs* and *Sahaj Shiksha Kendras*. While there has been improvement in enrolment and retention, the actual learning achievements have been modest. LJP implemented in 13 districts of Rajasthan and holistic district plans were prepared for these districts.

vii. **Janshala (GOI-UN) Programme**

*Janshala (GOI-UN)* Programme is a collaborative effort of Government of India and five UN agencies, viz., UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO and UNFPA to provide programme support to the on going efforts towards achieving UEE. *Janshala*, a community based primary education programme, aims to make primary education more accessible and effective especially for girls and children.
in reprieved communities, marginalized groups, SC, ST, minorities, working children and children with special needs. *Janshala* form part of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan framework in the district in which it is in operation.

4. Monitoring of Programme Implementation

4.1. Community Based Monitoring, EMIS, Research and Evaluation

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has a community based monitoring system. The Educational Management Information System (EMIS) incorporate provision for correlation of school level data with community based information from micro planning and surveys. Besides this, every school maintain a notice board showing all the grants received by the school. All reports sent to the mandal and the district level with regard to enrolment, attendance, incentive, etc. need to be displayed on the school notice board. Reporting formats are simplified so that the output is demystified and anyone can understand the data. A school is required to display the information it sends up so that attendance and performance of pupils is made public. The Educational Management Information System forms the basis of the periodic reporting system. Besides this, trainers act as classroom process observers to record changes in classroom practices. It is also indicated in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan framework that periodic monitoring teams make random visits to selected schools for quality checking. The basic principle in monitoring is its community ownership and periodic quality checks by external teams external to the activity but internal to the system. To encourage independent feedback on programme implementation, research and resource institutions with proven excellence involved in monitoring at all stages.29

The State Implementation Societies (SIS) also undertake intensive monitoring. Representatives of the national mission for UEE and national level institutions like NCTE, NIEPA, and NCERT also undertake periodic monitoring and provide resource support to the SIS to strengthen appraisal and monitoring systems. Efforts to associate autonomous institutions willing to take up state specific responsibilities for research and evaluation are also made to be available. Many independent institutions can also be associated in developing effective tools for conducting achievement tests,

29 Ibid., p. 37.
monitoring quality aspects of programme implementation, evaluation and research studies.

Besides community based monitoring, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan encourages independent research and supervision by autonomous research institutions. Institutions of proven excellence have been requested to take up state specific responsibilities. The focus in partnership with institutions also on developing capacities through the interaction in SCERTs/SIEMATs/DIETs to carry out research and evaluation tasks. The Regional Institutes of Education (RIE) of NCERT are also associated in these tasks.\(^\text{30}\)

Effective community based monitoring requires demystification of processes. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan makes efforts to develop partnership between communities and research institutions in order to improve the quality of monitoring and research. Since quality is a major concern under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, its monitoring is a priority. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan framework strongly states that process and quality indicators would have to be developed as per felt needs in order to track the quality of programme implementation. Such efforts require partnership with institutions, PRIs, school committees, etc. The monitoring system under SSA is multi pronged so that a constant strive for quality is maintained.

The system of financial monitoring is an important component in developing demystified community based approaches that allow for social audit. All financial monitoring has to work within a system of social monitoring with full transparency. Joint training programmes for auditors, community leaders, teachers, etc. to understand and appreciate the context of universal elementary education made under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

5. Coverage of Special focus Groups

5.1. Education for Girls, Scheduled Caste and Tribal Children

5.1.1. Girls' Education

Recent assessments show that girls’ participation in schooling has improved significantly during the last 10-15 years. However, the Global Monitoring Report of

\(^{30}\text{Ibid., p. 38.}\)
UNESCO on progress towards Education For All (EFA) goals considers the progress to be far from satisfactory and emphasizes the goal of gender parity and equality must be met. It is in this context, education of girls, especially those belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, becomes the primary focus in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Efforts are made to mainstream gender concerns in all the activities under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme. Mobilization at the habitation/village/urban slum level, recruitment of teachers, upgradation of primary into upper primary schools, incentives like midday meals, uniforms, scholarships, educational provision like textbooks and stationery, are all taken into account the gender focus. Every activity under the programme judged in terms of its gender component. Besides mainstreaming, special efforts like the Mahila Samakhya type of mobilization and organization, back to school camps for adolescent girls, large scale process based constitution of Mahila Samoohs, also attempted. The selection criteria take into account the low female literacy among the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan recognizes the need for special efforts to bring the out of school girls, especially from disadvantaged sections, to school. This requires a proper identification of girls who are out of school in the course of micro planning. It also calls for involving women through participatory processes in the effective management of schools. Experiences across the states under Mahila Samakhya and District Primary Education Programme have suggested the need for a clear perspective on women's issues. The provision for girls' education is situated in the local contexts and interventions are designed to suit the specific community needs in this regard. Special interventions need to be designed to address learning needs of girls and relating education to their life. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is committed to making these interventions possible.

5.1.2. Lessons from Past Programmes like DPEP and Lok Jumbish

The implementation of various previous programmes in the field of elementary education, like DPEP and Lok Jumbish, have thrown up interesting and successful lessons on gender intervention for improvement in access, enrolment, retention and

achievement of girls. Some of these, which can be adopted by the states in SSA, are as follows.33

Access and Enrolment

To ensure the regular enrolment of the children different states followed different means. Conduct of special camps and bridge courses for girls to mainstream them, setting up special models of alternate schools exclusively for girls- angana vidyalayas, bal vidyalayas, bal shalas, Sahaj Shiksha Kendras, Alternative School (AS) cum Early Child Education (ECE) centres, Balika Skikshan Shibiras (Camps for adolescent girls), intensive mobilization efforts among the resistant groups, working in close collaboration with the community in identified pockets, using women's groups (both formed under the programme and those already existing), VECs, MTA, to follow up issues for girls' education are some of these measures.

Retention

Monitoring attendance has been high on the agenda in all states where micro initiatives for girls' education have been taken up. Community involvement is high in this process, particularly in mobilizing parents for regular attendance of their children. Follow up of drop out girls to bring them back to school either through camps or bridge courses, organizing retention drives to put regular pressure on parents and the school system to ensure retention of girls and these are not one time drives but are organized at regular intervals to sustain the pressure and take up corrective measures as may be necessary, in pockets identified for intensive activities, attendance of each child is monitored to prevent dropouts, in Uttar Pradesh, children are awarded graded colours for their monthly attendance - green for the best, yellow for the mediocre and red for the deficient are some of them. These methods showed good results.

Planning and Implementation

States have been sensitized on the use of available data for local level planning for girls' education with community involvement. Field based trainings have been conducted in Assam, Kerala, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. States have been building on these skills and are concentrating in certain very deprived pockets.

33 Ibid., pp. 41-42.
Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Tamilnadu have also initiated focused interventions along similar lines.

5.1.3. Education of SC/ST Children

The educational development of children belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is a special focus in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Every activity under the project has to identify the benefit that ensures to children from these communities. Many of the incentive schemes have a sharper focus on children from these communities. The participation of dalits and tribals in the affairs of the school is especially encouraged to ensure ownership of the Abhiyan by all social groups, especially the most disadvantaged.

The interventions for children belonging to SC/ST communities are based on the intensive micro planning addressing the needs of every child. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan provides flexibility to local units to develop a context specific intervention. Some interventions like engagement of community organizers from SC/ST communities with a focus on schooling needs of children from specific households, special teaching support as per need, ensuring sense of ownership of school committees by SC/ST communities, training programmes for motivation for schooling, setting up alternative schooling facilities in unserved habitations and for other out of school children, using community teachers, monitoring attendance and retention of children from weaker sections regularly, and involving community leaders in school management.34

5.1.4. Interventions in Tribal Areas

The problems faced by children in the tribal areas are often different from that of children belonging to Scheduled Castes. Hence, special interventions are needed for such regions. Some of the interventions are like preparation of textbooks in tribal languages, appointing teachers belonging to tribal areas, providing Angnwadis and Balwadis in each school in tribal areas so that the girls are not required to do baby-

34 Ibid., p. 43.
sitting, special training for non tribal teachers to work in tribal areas, including knowledge of tribal dialect.35

5.2. Education for Children with Special Needs

SSA ensures that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided education in an appropriate environment. SSA adopts zero projection policy so that no child is left out of the education system. The thrust of SSA is on providing integrated and inclusive education to all children with special needs in general schools. It supports a wide range of approaches, options and strategies for education of children with special needs. This includes education through open learning system and open schools, non formal and alternative schooling, distance education and learning and special schools, wherever necessary.

5.3. Strategies for Out-Of-School Children

The Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) scheme is a part of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan framework. The management structure for implementation of EGS and AIE are incorporated in the management structure of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The new scheme makes provision for diversified strategies and has flexible financial parameters. It has provided a range of options, such as EGS, Back to School Camps, *Balika Shibiras*, etc. There are four broad focus areas in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan like, 1) full time community schools for small unserved habitations, 2) mainstreaming of children through bridge courses of different duration, 3) specific strategies for special groups like child labour, street children, adolescent girls, girls belonging to certain backward communities, children of migrating families, etc. and 4) innovative programmes - the innovations can be in the areas of pedagogic practices, curriculum, programme management, textbooks and TLMs, etc.

All habitations not having a primary school within one kilometer and having a minimum of school age children are entitled to have an EGS type school. Children who have dropped out of school have an opportunity to avail of bridge courses, aimed at their mainstreaming. The objective is to see the EGS and AIE as integral to the quest of UEE.

6. Quality Issues in Elementary Education

6.1. Pedagogy, Teacher Training and Capacity Development for Quality Improvement

The National Policy Resolve

The main indicator of the quality of elementary education can be visualized in terms of its product the learners achievement both in scholastic and co-scholastic areas i.e. the performance in various subjects of study and habits, attitudes, values and life skills necessary for becoming a good citizen. The factors associated with success in these areas, which relate to conditions of learning and learning environment, are also sometimes considered as indicators of quality of elementary education. Thus ensuring quality in the inputs and processes becomes necessary of quality achievement is aimed at.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan makes efforts to take a holistic and comprehensive approach to the issue of quality. Efforts to decentralize the whole process of curriculum development down (grass root level) to the district level are made. Reducing the load of non comprehension by facilitating child centered and activity based learning is attempted. Learning by doing, learning by observation, work experience, art, music, sports and value education is made fully integral to the learning process. Appropriate changes made in the evaluation system to make it more continuous and less threatening. Performance of children is constantly monitored in consultation with parents. Teacher’s role in preparation of textbooks and secondary learning materials are enhanced. School timings are made contextual.

6.2. Teacher Recruitment, Rationalization and Management

States have their own norms for recruitment of teachers and a lot of diversity exists in payments being made to new recruits. In many cases the appointing authority is the local panchayat. The states are free to follow their own norms as long as these are consistent with the norms established by National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE). There is no compromise on standards even though payments of less than the state pay scale as an interim measure may be adopted in states with large scale vacancies.
The programme provides for primary and upper primary school teachers to ensure that there are no single teacher schools. Overall, the effort is to provide at least 1: 40 teacher pupil ratio. Qualifications of upper primary teachers are as per state specific norms and the number of upper primary schools is broadly as per the national policy norm. The practice of at least 50 percent of women teachers is strictly followed.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan encourages decentralized management of teacher cadres. The local government recruits and the community have a say in the selection process. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan improved the accountability of the teacher vis-à-vis local community without diluting the standards for selection of teachers, as laid down from time to time by the NCTE.

6.3. Useful and Relevant Education and Education for Life

One of the goals of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to promote education and for life. The debate on learning skills and life skills is an old one in India. There is a lot to learn from the basic education system advocated by Mahatma Gandhi and the 'Nayee Taleem' advocated by Dr. Zakir Husain. The whole issue of relevance of education has been raised in the context of education for life. A lot of experts feel that education is not just the process of imparting literacy and numeracy. It is actually a process of socialization that helps children cope with the natural and the social environment. They have, therefore, emphasized the need to develop a school system that builds on the solidarities in societies and tries to learn from the natural environment. The pursuit of useful and relevant education implies a much greater focus on integrating physical and mental development.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan encourages states to focus on total development of children. Encouragement to sports, cultural activities, project work involving interaction with social and natural surrounding, activity based learning, exposure to life skills with regard to health, nutrition, professions, etc. Such a focus is looking upon a school as a social institution that is the hub of community activities.

6.4. Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

As Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan emphasizes quality education, it is necessary to periodically monitor and evaluate all aspects of pedagogical inputs like curriculum.
and textbook development, teacher training packages and class room processes amongst others. In this effort the role of community assumes paramount significance. The community leaders and groups need to be sensitized on issues related to monitoring of children's progress and other quality related school activities. Existing VECs, PTAs, SECs, MTAs, SMCs, etc., have to be involved in this process by organizing fortnightly or monthly meetings in the schools.

In order to assess enhancement in children's learning achievement and progress, after the launch of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a periodic assessment every three years is done at the primary and upper primary stages, using the base line findings as a reference point. Research groups at the state, district and mandal levels are constituted to facilitate quality improvement in teaching and learning. State, district, mandal and cluster resource groups function in collaboration with the SCERTs, DIETs, MEOs and CRCs respectively.

6.5. Resource Groups and Responsibility Centres

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan emphasizes on quality improvement in elementary education for which it seems necessary that resource groups and responsibility centres from national to mandal levels are identified. These groups oversee the policy, planning, implementation and monitoring of all quality related interventions. Their major role is to advise and assist at various levels in curriculum development, pedagogical improvement, teacher education/training and activities related to classroom transaction.

In order to facilitate a decentralized mode of education, these groups are constituted at various operational levels, namely - national, state, district and mandal. At the national level the groups consists representation of NCERT, NIEPA, Universities, NGOs, experts and eminent educationists, at the state level representatives of SCERT, SIEMAT, Universities, IASEs/CTEs, NGOs, experts and eminent educationists, at district level representatives of DIETs, DPEP District Resource Group, higher educational institutions, innovative teachers from the districts, NGOs, and at the mandal level representatives of MEOs, CRCs, innovative teachers are included in the groups.
7. Improvement of School Facilities and other Civil Works

Community participation is the only means of undertaking any civil works in the improvement of school facilities. Experiments in community participation under *Lok Jumbish* and under DPEP in many states had been very encouraging and such experiments are further carried out. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is first of all tried to mobilize resources under Rural Employment Programme (REP) and other developmental schemes for constructing school buildings. The community is to come forward to maintain school facilities if any investment is proposed in a village. An annual support to the community for repair and maintenance is envisaged under the SSA.

With the elementary education becoming an obligation of the state (including the local government), the panchayats are directed to prioritize construction of school facilities where it does not exist. The participation of the community in all civil work activities is mandatory in order to ensure a sense of ownership and a departure from contractor driven approaches. School Management Committees/ Village Education Committees/ Gram Panchayat Committee on Education have to carry out the civil works activities through a transparent system of account keeping. The DPEP and *Lok Jumbish* Project had developed effective community based approaches for civil works. As per the policy framework these are mandatory in all Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan districts.

The principle of social audit could be accepted for minor repairs. The School Management Committee/ Village Education Committee could certify the maintenance and repair work under taken in a school. For larger repair and maintenance as well as new construction, technical provisions are followed.

New building designs developed in *Lok Jumbish* and DPEP are adapted to promote child centered learning. Use of local materials and cost effective technologies is encouraged. A civil works innovation fund is set up in each state/UT to encourage experimentation with design. Repair and maintenance of buildings is given the top most priority in the policy framework.
As explored in the above, one of the thrust areas of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is the empowerment of community and enhancing the community participation in school related activities to achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education in all the social groups including Scheduled Tribes in India. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has completed the first phase of its implementation. With this background, the researcher made an attempt to find out its impact on community participation in primary education in Rampachodavaram agency\textsuperscript{36} area in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. The responses of tribal community related to their participation in school related activities, which resulted in (enhancing) the enrolment of children in the tribal areas is presented in Chapter 6.

8. Summing up

The present chapter on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan reveals that the programme aims to ensure elementary education for all including five years of primary education and eight years of schooling for all children. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan approach focuses on community ownership and the village education plans proposed in construction with Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs). The central focus in the implementation of the programme is community ownership and their participation in school related activities to bring more relevance in the field of primary education. Based on this as one of important objectives during the implementation of the programme, the policy framework strongly suggested for greater involvement of community in all the areas of programme implementation.

As it is said in the framework, coverage of special focus groups including Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Castes, girls and children with special needs are given priority during the implementation. The framework strongly indicates that every activity under the project identify the benefit that ensures to children from these communities. Many of the incentive schemes like free text books; uniforms etc. have a sharp focus on children from these communities including Scheduled Tribes. The participation of tribals and dalits in the affairs of the school is especially encouraged to ensure ownership of the programme.

\textsuperscript{36} Usage of ‘Agency’ is the legacy of the colonial government which identified the areas of tribal concentration as ‘Agency areas’. The agencies were administered with different policy formulation.
The interventions for children belonging to SC/ST communities are based on the intensive micro planning addressing the needs of every child. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan provides flexibility to local units to develop a context specific intervention. It is observed that community participation is an important component at village level that the community has to be involved in education planning and mobilization process at the school level. To achieve its objective of UEE, the programme calls for public and private partnership. The programme has given importance to the involvement of NGOs in the area of community mobilization and especially creating awareness through *kalajatha* activities. This programme has also allocated huge funds for constructing school buildings and improvement of school facilities. It also observed that the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan framework has ensured that the community has the prime responsibility in the finance related decision making at the school level. On the whole, the discussion in this chapter reveals that community ownership and their participation is an important aspect to achieve universalization of primary education especially in tribal areas. The next chapter deals with the profile of the study area and socio-economic background of the respondents in detail to analyse the ground realities in the implementation of the programme.