CHAPTER III

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN AND CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: OVERVIEW AND CRITICAL EVALUATION
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The efforts to universalise and popularise elementary education in India had a long history starting from the pre-independent period. It has made significant progress in the last 60 years in the field of education by adopting a number of education policies. A number of educational policies were launched to universalise elementary education. Due to these interventions, initiated jointly by the Government of India and the respective state Governments, there has been considerable progress in providing access, improving retention and the quality improvement in primary education sector. Here, in this context, it would be worthwhile to mention and discuss the contribution made by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the development of education in India.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a comprehensive and integrated flagship programme adopted by the Government of India to attain Universal Elementary Education and to secure the right to basic quality education for all the children of the group of the 6-14 years. This programme was launched in 2001 following recommendations from the state education ministers’ conference held in 1998. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan focuses mainly on access to education, social and gender equity and quality of education imparted to the children. This programme is implemented covering the entire country in a partnership between the Central and all the state governments with the aim of providing universal access, enrolment of all children in relevant age group and universal retention to be achieved by 2010. It lays down a mission mode framework for achieving the goals of universal enrolment through time bound targets to be achieved within 2010. In India, we witness a gap between the right to education and people’s accessibility to basic education. In a developing country like India, there is a lack of awareness among the disadvantaged sections of society towards the need of education. This is caused due to absence of adequate livelihood that compels the children to engage themselves in economic activities that earn for their families instead to go to school to achieve education. Again, there are many remote places in the country that lack in basic education facilities. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an attempt adopted to fill this vacuum which is present in Indian education system. This programme is marked by its own special targets,
norms and processes which give the programme a gigantic umbrella characters covering different programmes within it like District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Operational Blackboard, etc. This programme covers the whole gamut of elementary education sector and is flexible enough to incorporate new interventions like specific interventions for girls, e.g., NPEGEL, Kasturba Gandhi Programme. One of the main characteristics of this specially designed education programme is that it includes a “bottom-up” process where the education needs of every sections of the society are well taken care of. It includes provision of education not only for the students who belongs to disadvantaged sections and the minority communities but also for the children with the mild and moderate disabilities. In order to achieve the goal of universalization of education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan maintains active participation of the community in the school education system through the involvement of the local people and stakeholders in the education planning.

3.1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN
Following are the main aims and objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:

- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
- All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010.
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
- Universal retention by 2010.
- Open new schools in areas which do not have them and to expand existing school infrastructures and maintenance.
- Address adequate teacher numbers, and provide training a development for existing teachers.
- Provide quality elementary education including life skills with a special focus on the education of girls and children with special needs as well as computer education.
- Develop strategies and programs for the integrated education of the disabled.
- Conduct training programs to NGOs, special teachers, teacher educators and teachers.

3.2. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN
The whole structure of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is guided by the following basic principles:
• This programme is encouraged and influenced by the Holistic view of education, which is interpreted in the National Curriculum Framework of 2005. This view emphasises on the implications of curriculum, teacher education, educational planning and management for a systemic revamp of the entire content and process of education.

• Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan wants to ensure equity in education system. It evolves plans and programmes for not only to ensure equal opportunity among children, but gives priority towards the creation of conditions in which the disadvantaged sections of the society, basically the children belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Muslim minority, Girl Child, landless agricultural workers and children with special needs, etc. can avail of the education opportunity.

• Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan mission is guided by the holy idea of education accessibility. It provides education facilities not only within the specified distance to make education accessible to children, but also implies an understanding of the educational needs and predicament of the traditionally excluded categories of society. It makes provision for a non admitted child to be admitted to an age appropriate for particular class. It specifies the duties and responsibilities of appropriate government, local authority and parents in providing free and compulsory education

• One of the main policies that guide the entire functioning of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is the gender concern and gender equity in education. Keeping corollary with the idea of women empowerment, this programme also devices plan of action for bringing about significant changes in the status of women.

• The whole set up of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan places teachers at the central point and formulates actions to motivate them and to create a culture in the classroom, and also beyond the classroom so that the teachers might produce an inclusive environment for children, especially for girls from oppressed and marginalised backgrounds. It provides for rational deployment of teachers by ensuring that the specified pupil teacher ratio is maintained for each school rather than just as an average for the state or district or block thus ensuring that there is no urban rural imbalance in teacher postings. It also provides for prohibition of deployment of teacher for non educational works others than decennial census, elections to local authority, state legislatures and parliament and disaster relief. It provides rationale for appointment of appropriately trained teacher i.e. teacher with the requisite entry and academic qualifications. It prohibits (a) physical punishment and mental harassment (b) screening procedures for admission of children (c) capitation fee (d) private tuition by teachers and (e) running of schools without recognition.
• Along with the teachers, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan monitors that moral compulsion is imposed through the RTE Act on parents, educational administrators and other stakeholders, rather than shifting emphasis on punitive processes.

• Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme believes that the innovation of a convergent and integrated system of educational management is pre-requisite for implementation of the RTE law and expects that all states must move in that direction as speedily as feasible.

3.3. EDUCATIONAL PROFILE UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN
Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a district has to develop a District elementary education plan (DEEP). The main emphasis of this plan will be on elementary education, which means both on primary and upper primary levels. The plan should also briefly present information on higher levels of education namely secondary/ higher secondary, professional and technical education. However, details on these levels may not be required in DEEP. The presentation of elementary scenario & inclusive education in the district should contain information on the following items for proper diagnosis of the educational situation.

i) In this program I.T. (Itinerant teachers) will go door to door and search the special need children.

ii) Block -wise special teacher appointed in primary education.

iii) Block –wise research teacher appointed in primary education in the district.

iv) Block- wise number of schools/sections for primary and upper primary education.

v) Block –wise access position for primary and upper primary education in the district.

vi) Block –wise number of teacher at primary and upper primary level with the following categorization:
   • Trained /untrained teachers
   • Male and female teacher
   • Teacher pupil ratio (1:8)
   • Number of sanctioned posts and vacant post (for rationalization and requirement of additional teachers.
   • SC/ST teachers

vii) Block-wise enrolment at primary and upper primary level in district and maintain the list of special need children.
   • According to disability i.e. H.I., V.I., M.R.
   • According to category i.e. boys, girls
   • Grass and net enrolment ratio: girls, boys, S.C., S.T. etc.
viii) Block wise dropout, repletion and transition rates at primary and upper primary level boys and girls S.C., S.T. etc.

ix) Block wise Inclusive school facilities at primary and upper primary level of schools)

- Noise free school environment.
- Infrastructure of school and rooms according to inclusive setup.
- Suitable black board.
- Suitable T.L.M.
- Drinking water
- Play ground
- Toilet for boys and girls separately.
- Boundary
- Classroom setting arrangements for special need student.
- Suitable lighting.

The district educational plans should include the all information related to N.G.Os and other private as well as aided and unaided schools. Further the information about N.G.Os., schools, enrolment and special trained teacher etc. It should be ensured that the educational profile presented in the plan is of the district as a whole and not of government schools only.

3.4. CHARACTERISTICS OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

The whole set up of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is marked by the following broad characteristics:

- **Clear Time Frame**: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a programme with a clear time frame for universal elementary education. It aims to achieve its objectives within a fixed period of time.

- **Quality Basic Education**: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is adopted in response to the demand for the access of quality basic education all over the country including all the districts in all the states of the country.

- **Capacity Building**: In order to achieve the objectives of education and to ensure quality basic education to all, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan gives emphasis on the improvement of education system through the improvement of the school environment. Therefore, it tries to improve the school buildings, classrooms, and teachers’ efficiency as well as toilet facilities.

- **Promote Social Justice**: The scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan can be considered as an opportunity for promoting social justice through popularising and spreading basic education among all the communities of society, like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled
Tribes, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Girl Child and also the children with disabilities so that no children is left out without basic education.

- **Community Ownership and Decentralization**: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan believes in community ownership of school based interventions through effective decentralization. It expects to achieve its educational objectives through the active involvement and participation of different organisations in the education system. It ensures the participation of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, School Management Committees, Village and Urban Slum Level Education Committees, Parents' Teachers' Associations, Mother Teacher Associations, Tribal Autonomous Councils and other grass roots level structures in the planning and management of elementary schools.

- **Community Based Monitoring**: In addition to involve the community in the planning and implementation of the education programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission also maintains community based monitoring of the education system at all the level with full transparency.

- **Partnership**: The Abhiyan ensures a financial partnership among the Central, State and local governments to fulfil the education objectives.

- **Opportunity for States**: The scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an opportunity for the states to develop and fulfil their own vision of elementary education.

- **Political Will**: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an expression of the political will for universal elementary education across the country.

- **Mainstreaming Gender Approach**: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a mainstreaming gender approach that works to bring gender equity to be highlighted in the education system. It works to bring significant changes in the education status of girl child and to keep pace between boys and girls in terms of education facilities.

### 3.5. MAJOR AREAS OF INTERVENTIONS IN SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has some major areas of interventions to achieve the goals of universal elementary education. These areas are:

#### 3.5.1. Education of out-of-school children

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan recognises the need to bring back the school drop outs children to fulfil its objectives. For this purpose, it adopts the following methods:

- To set up Educational Guarantee Centres in unserved habitations.
- To set up other alternative schooling models.
• To run short term Bridge Courses, Back to school camps with a focus on Mainstreaming of all Out-of-School children into regular schools.
• Remedial Teaching for children mainstreamed from bridge courses and also back to school strategies and children already in formal schools particularly in the areas with high concentration of SC/ST population and minority communities.

3.5.2. Quality Improvement: Another major area of intervention under this special scheme of education is the quality improvement. For this, it emphasises on:

• Teacher: To ensure 1 teacher for every 40 children in primary and upper primary schools, at least two teachers in primary school, Teacher Grant Rs.500/- per teacher per year for developing the Teaching learning material for classroom interactions.
• Teaching Learning Equipment (TLE): a) Regular setting up of new school as per state norm, b) Provision for RS. 10,000 per school as per local context and need, c) involvement of teachers and parents necessary in the selection of teaching-learning equipments, d) school level appropriate body to decide on best mode of procurement, e) 50,000/- for each new Upper Primary school constructed out of SSA funds.
• Teacher Training: For the development of In-Service Teachers, there is provision of 20 days In-Service training for all teachers, 60 days refresher course for untrained teachers already employed as teachers and 30 days induction training for new recruits working at elementary level at Rs. 70 per day.
• Computer Education: Up to Rs. 50 Lakh per district per year may be utilized for creating, developing and implementing Computer Aided Learning Activities in schools.
• Setting up of Block/Urban Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres: To create these resource centres in schools to provide academic support to the teachers and schools and to help them in the improvement of quality of elementary education.
• Free Text Books: Free books to all the Girls and SC/ST children at Primary and Upper Primary Level within an upper ceiling of Rs. 1501 per child.

3.5.3. Special Focus Groups: Up to Rs.1, 200/- per child for providing all kind of needed support including aids and appliances, resource teachers to Children With Special Needs enrolled in schools and making efforts to mainstream out of school disabled children. Again, Any four innovative projects within the ceiling of Rs.15 lakh per district for a particular sub area up to a maximum of Rs. 50 Lakh per district per year for all four areas of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Girls, SC/ST children, Urban Deprived children and Minority Children.
3.5.4. Research and Evaluation: Research and evaluation is the main concern of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan mission to improve its quality. For this, it adopts the following activities;

- Rs.1, 500/- per school per year to develop and implement monitoring systems to measure quality related outcomes, *inter alia*, for students learning outcomes, teacher performance, student and teacher attendance rates by gender and social categories, as also parameters for measuring changes in classroom practices, impact of teacher training, efficacy textbooks and textual materials, quality of academic supervision provided by BRCs/CRCs, DIETs etc.

- To update Household data on 6 to 14 years old children’s educational status.

- To carryout Action Research Projects to improve the quality of education in schools and to organize seminars, training and workshops.

3.5.5. Community Mobilization: To involve the community in the education of children and in school management, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan emphasises on the community mobilization. For this purpose, it provides training to the community members. Maximum 3 persons for each school/habitation in the urban areas are to be oriented for two days utilizing funds at Rs.30/- per day per person.

3.5.6. Civil Works: Giving priority to the improvement of Civil Works is another area of intervention under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission. Accordingly, a total of 33% of the entire project cost may be spent to construct school buildings, additional classrooms, toilets and providing drinking water facilities. Some major initiatives are:

- **Opening of New Schools:** Primary school within 1 Km and Upper Primary school within 3 Kms of each habitation may be constructed as per State norms and with the approval of Ministry of Human Resource and Development. State should ensure that a ratio of 2:1 is maintained for primary and upper primary schools.

- **Construction of Additional Classrooms:** To construct additional classroom to ensure a room for every class/grade at primary and upper primary level including a room for Head Master/ Head Mistress at upper primary level.

- **Construction of Toilet Blocks:** An amount of Rs.20, 000/- per toilet block may be utilized, if proposed by the State and approved by Ministry of Human Resource and Development, Government of India.
3.5.7. Financial Management and Procurement: Rs.5,000/- per school per year for each Primary school and Rs.7,000/- per school per year for each Upper Primary School (including aided schools) run by the Government and Local Bodies, is given for replacement of non functional school equipment, procurement of items for Science Laboratories and other recurring costs such as consumables. It is given to the schools in both shifts separately and double amount to a Sarvodaya Vidyalaya (for Primary and Upper Primary classes separately).

3.5.8. Institutional Reforms: Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the states undertake assessment of their existing education system and adopt plans to bring about institutional reforms including administration of education system, financial administration, achievement levels of schools, community involvement, review of the educational policies of state, monitoring and evaluation etc.

3.5.9. Priority to Girls’ Education: One of the principle concerns of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to ensure education for girl children, especially those who belongs to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and minorities. A new initiative in the form of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) was launched under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to promote education of girl child in the habitations with low female literacy rates. Only one KGBV (Model III- a Hostel for 50 girls in one of the existing schools) for the girls belonging to minority community has been sanctioned to open up.

3.6. SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN AND THE RELATED COMPONENTS

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission incorporates the following components to universalise education among children.

3.6.1. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE): The ECCE programme was developed (started particularly after the National Policy for children in 1974) for realizing the importance of rapid physical and mental growth during early childhood. The existing ECCE programme includes:

- Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)
- Scheme of assistance to voluntary organizations for conducting early Childhood Care and Education Centres
• Balwadis and day care centres run by voluntary agencies with government assistance
• Pre-primary school run by the State Governments, Municipal Corporation and other Government and non-government organizations or agencies
• Maternal and Child health service through primary health centres and other sub centres.

In fact, ECCE is from two and a half years to six years, where basic emphasis is given on child-centered approach, play way and activity based learning is the method of teaching. As a key learning of this stage, early introduction of the three’ R (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) is also emphasized.

3.6.2. Strategies for Out of School Children: Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) and Education Guarantee Scheme: (EGS) are the two strategies for out of school children. EGS and AIE schemes are the part of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan framework. Guidelines issued separately for both EGS and AIE as Education guarantee School is for unserved habitation whereas Alternative and Innovative Education for out of school children including the children in difficult circumstances.

3.6.3. Hard to Reach (HTR): HTR is a programme through which Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan focuses on the educational needs of the deprived urban children (in the age group of 6-14) in an urgent way, because of the commitment of Education for All. The hard to reach children in urban areas are out of school, some staying with their parents, some with relatives, some with employees and others staying on the street, some working while others at home doing chores or caring for their siblings are the most vulnerable among all categories of school children and hence requires special focus.

3.6.4. Integrated Education for Disabled (IED): Under the ‘Zero Projection Policy’ Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan plans to ensure that no child of the State will be left out from the schooling facilities, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex etc. Besides these, one important focus is also given on the special needs of children who are suffering from physical and mental disabilities and through this scheme it has tried to make mainstreaming them to the normal children of the school by employing the trained teacher on those special subjects under the IED component of SSA. The categories divided under IED are basically - visually impaired, hearing impaired, orthopedically impaired, mentally impaired, learning disabilities and others.
3.6.5. Community Mobilization (CM): Community involvement is the prime concern of SSA. For empowering the community members and its grass root level structures (like, Village Education Committee, NGO) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan tries to focus the participation of the community members, its leaders, volunteers, mothers, parents etc. The process of training, sharing, visionary workshop is the regular feature which helps to develop the inbuilt capacity of the members of the School Managing Committees, Village Education Committees, Parents-Teachers Association, Mother-Teacher Association, Tribal Autonomous Councils, NGO’s, PRI’s and other stakeholders.

3.7. PLANNING PROCEDURE UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

For the successful implementation of the programmes and plans, a well knitted structure of plans has been adopted under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan gives importance to the grass root level planning. District Elementary Education Officer is assigned with the task of preparing preparatory phase of the plan by preparing Village Education Registers on the basis of household survey, regular monitoring through Retention Registers and Pupil Progress Card. In this phase, preparatory planning teams are constituted at each village by including community members, Head Master, teachers, parents, women groups etc.

The second step is the community based planning which includes a core group of governmental and non-governmental persons and the faculty members of DIET, BRC and CRC entrusted with the task of implementing the plans of elementary education under the mission. After the study made by the community teams, financial and physical norms of school infrastructure and teaching-learning materials is provided on the basis of the plan.

Again, each district also adopts annul plans for institutional capacity building with the existing position regarding the attendance, retention, drop-out and learning achievement among children. The annual plan is prepared on the basis of resources available to a particular state in a particular year.

At the same time, financial resources play major role in the working of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The allocation of finances under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan depends upon the plans made by DEEP, performance of state government in their commitment of providing elementary education as mentioned in the plan, new institutional reforms initiated to facilitate decentralised management of education and also on the reports submitted by supervision team on the working of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The proposal for the allocation of finances is prepared at the district. The state level implementation society of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
forwards this proposal to National Mission. The National Mission considers the annual plan prepared by the State Implementation Society. The Central government then releases funds directly to the State Implementation Society. Financial resources are allocated to a particular state two times in a year, once in April and the other in September to carry forward the plans made by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan of that state.

3.8. SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN AND MID-DAY MEAL PROGRAMME

Although Midday meal or National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education is a separate scheme of Government, yet Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has more impact on processing the scheme in school. It provides utensils for cooking and servicing the programme to Government/ Provincialized schools, Govt. aided school, EGS & AIE centre. Government of India launched the MDM programme for school going children on 15th August, 1995. This programme had tremendous impact in the country during the year 1997-98. The main Objectives of this programme are expected to boost Universalization of Primary Education:

- Increase enrolment and regularity of attendance.
- Reduce dropouts and sustain retention
- Improving competency level of children’s learning and self-esteem impacting the nutrition of students

Government of India and other states try its best to provide nutrition to the students as per the norms prescribed by the Honourable Supreme Court of India. To facilitate the cooking in a hygienic manner all the LP and ME schools have been provided with huge financial involvement. Women’s groups like Mother’s Group, Mahila Sangha and Self-Help Groups have been engaged in cooking of Midday Meal. Thus the Institutional arrangement for food grains transportation on Mid-day Meal can be shown in the following diagram:

- **Lifting the food grains from F.C.I. to School:**
  FCI ⇔ GPSS ⇔ FPS ⇔ School
  FCI = Food Corporation of India
  GPSS= Gaon Panchayat Samabai Sammittee
  FPS= Fair Price Shop

- **Payment and Transportation Cost**
  GOI ⇔ DNO ⇔ GPSS
  GOI= Government of India
3.9. EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is instrumental in changing the social perceptions regarding the Children with Special needs and their abilities. It seeks to ensure that every child is to be provided meaningful and quality education in the age group of 6-14 years with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability. The Right To Education Amendment Act, 2009 which came into force with effect from 1 August 2012, provides for inclusion of children with disability under its functional area and provide them with free and compulsory education. Further, this Act also provides facilities to the parents of children with severe and profound disabilities to opt for home-based education. Under the SSA, the focus of the education programme for children with special needs has been on mainstreaming children with special needs in regular schools and supporting their participation in the schooling process. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a process that focuses on the inclusion of the Children with Special Needs in the normal schools through the integrated and inclusive education. It provides upto Rs.1200/- per child for the inclusion of disabled children, as per specific proposal, per year. District plan for children with special needs is formulated within the Rs.1200/- per child norm. In each primary school, trained teachers teach the special needs children with the normal children using suitable methods, like Open teaching system and Open school, non formal education, Distance education & learning, Itinerant Teacher, Resource Teacher, Community, Based Rehabilitation, vocational and other government programmes and after that, they go to the upper primary as well as secondary and higher education. , interventions and approaches in the area of education for children with special needs will be implemented in convergence with existing schemes like Assistance to Disabled Persons for purchase/fittings of Aids/Appliances (ADIP), Integrated Education of the Disabled Children (IEDC) and in coordination with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, State Department of Welfare, National Institutions and NGOs etc. The thrust of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is on providing integrated and inclusive education to all children with special needs in general schools. It will also support 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, special schools, wherever necessary, home based education,
itinerant teacher model, remedial teaching, part time classes, community based rehabilitations (CBR) and vocational education and cooperative programmes. In this way special children join education and get equal opportunity, equal safety, and full participation along with the normal children. All these components, their implementation mechanism along with related activities have been explained in detail in the Inclusive Education Manual entitled: “Responding to Children with Special Needs – A Manual for Planning and Implementation of Inclusive Education in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan”. Three types of education system are mentioned here to focus on CWSN. They are:

- **Special education system**: Special education system is for the children special needs where specially in reading writing are fulfilled by special trained teacher in special created environment.

- **Integrated education system**: In Integrated education system, the children with special needs remain in special school for maximum time for fulfilment of their special needs & then goes to normal school for some of their activities.

- **Inclusive education system**: Inclusive education system is that type of programme where special need children and normal children study together with suitable support.

The main components of the inclusive education including the Children With Special Needs under this scheme are:

**3.9.1. Identification**: Identification of children with special needs has become an integral part of the micro-planning and household surveys under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Concerted drive to identify children with special needs has been undertaken through PHCs, ICDS, ECCE centres and other school readiness programmes.

**3.9.2. Functional and formal assessment**: Functional and formal assessment of each identified child have been carried out under the scheme of Sarva Shiksha. Teams have been assigned at every block to carry out assessment and recommend most appropriate placement for every child with special needs.

**3.9.3. Educational Placement**: Educational Placement is the major objective of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to ensure the education of the Children With Special Needs. According to this scheme, every child with special needs should be placed in regular schools as far as possible, with the needed support services.
3.9.4. **Aids and appliances**: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan puts emphasis on providing aids and appliances to all the children requiring assistive devices as soon as possible as obtained by obtained the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, State Welfare Departments, National Institutions or NGOs.

3.9.5. **Support services**: To provide the Children With Special Needs with the additional facilities in education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan also maintains support services like physical access, resource rooms in the existing BRC/ CRC, special equipment, reading material, special educational techniques, remedial teaching, curricular adaptation, adapted teaching strategies and other services like physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy could be provided.

3.9.6. **Teacher training**: Intensive teacher training is undertaken under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to sensitise regular teachers on effective classroom management of children with special needs. Such trainings are organised on block/cluster levels and integrated with the ongoing in-service teacher training schedules. All training modules at SCERT, DIET and BRC level include a suitable component on education of children with special needs.

3.9.7. **Resource support**: Resource supports have also been provided to the teachers working in special schools under Sarva Shiksha Mission to empower them in discharging their duties. Specially trained resource teachers are also appointed, for teaching special skills to children with special needs. Wherever this option is not feasible, regular teachers have to undergo long term training so that they can educate Special Children.

3.9.8. **Individualised Educational Plan (IEP)**: Keeping in mind the individuality of each child, an Individualized Educational Plan has to be prepared by the teachers for every child with special needs in consultation with parents and experts. This is to be monitored from time to time. The programme is adopted to measure the effectiveness of various strategies and models and also to evaluate learning achievement of children with special needs.

3.9.9. **Parental training and community mobilization**: The Parents of children with disabilities also receive counselling and training on how to bring them child up and teach them basic survival skills. Awareness programmes are also included as a part of strategy to educate every child with special needs.

3.9.10. **Planning and Management**: Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, resource groups have been constituted at state, district levels to undertake effective planning and management of
the programmes in collaboration with Panchayati Raj Institutions and Non-Governmental Organisations. An apex level resource group is also formed at the national level to provide guidance, technical and academic support to children with special needs.

3.9.11. Removal of Architectural barriers: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission tries to remove the architectural barriers in schools for the easy access of Children With Special Needs. Efforts are taken to provide disable-friendly facilities in schools and educational institutions. Development of innovative designs for schools to provide an enabling environment for children with special needs is now considered as an integral part of the programme. All new school buildings are to be constructed with barrier-free features as mentioned by the Mission.

3.9.12. Research: Research is the most innovative part of the whole set up of Sarva Shiksha. It encourages research in all areas of education of children with special needs including research for designing and developing new assistive devices, teaching aids special teaching material and other items necessary to give a child with disability equal opportunities in education.

3.9.13. Monitoring and Evaluation: To improve education for the Children With Special Needs, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan carries out on-going monitoring and evaluation to refine the programme from time to time. For this, appropriate monitoring mechanisms have been devised at every level and at regular intervals.

3.9.14. Home-Based Education: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan also provides home-based education for children with severe and profound disabilities with the objective of preparing them for schools and for life by imparting basic life skills.

3.10. SCHEMES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission has announced different plans of actions for the purpose of fulfilling the objectives of inclusiveness education system. Some major policies adopted by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for the inclusion of the Children With Special Needs in education are:

3.10.1. Zero rejection policy: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan ensures that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided meaningful and quality education. Hence, it has adopted a zero rejection policy. This means that no child
having special needs should be deprived of the right to education and taught in an environment, which is best, suited to his/her learning needs. For this, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan adopted a multi-option model which includes enrolment in regular school, in EGS/AIE and in home-based education.

3.10.2. Free and compulsory education: To ensure the goal of zero rejection and keeping conformity with the right to education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan also provides free and compulsory education to all the children. It adopts different strategies so that every child can take the opportunity to be able to read and write.

3.10.3. Facilities according to different needs: The major thrust of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is on inclusion or mainstreaming the Children With Special Needs into the fabric of formal elementary schooling. Experiences of programmes like DPEP and various research findings have shown that inclusion is best determined by the individual needs of the child. Most children with special needs is enrolled and retained in regular schools if adequate resource support is provided to them, whereas there are others who are provided some kind of pre-integration programmes, before they can be mainstreamed in a classroom. Children With Special Needs with severe profound disabilities are provided with an educational programme and intensive specialized support in the form of Home-Based education.

3.10.4. Mid day meal for growth enrolments: In order to ensure the enrolment of Special children, the Mission also provides for Mid-day Meal at school.

3.10.5. Teacher: student ratio (1:8): Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan also tries to maintain teacher-student ratio for educating the Children with Special Needs. For this purpose, one teacher is appointed in ratio of 8 students.

3.10.6. Appointment of Itinerant teacher (I.T.): To stop corruption and to increase efficiency of the programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan appoints itinerant teachers who can travel from place to place.

3.10.7. Awareness programmes: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan also carries out awareness programmes among the family members and the community members of the children with special needs so that the attitudinal barriers of the community cannot stop such children from coming to schools. It understands that without demolishing such attitudes of society, it is impossible to think about the education of such children. Hence, it undertakes widespread awareness on the need, importance and potential of children with special needs. Various
modes like ma-beti mela, bal sammelan, print and electronic media, success stories etc. are used. The training of community leaders in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is also an essential component on inclusive education. Mother Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Association (MTA/PTA) is used as powerful medium to inform the parents on the care, need, management and potential of children with special needs.

3.11. CRITICAL EVALUATION OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, being an important educational programme of India, adopted different plans and schemes to ensure elementary education to all. However, the functioning of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan can be put under realistic assessment regarding its goal achievement. There are different problems associated with the functioning of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan which prevent it from achieving success in its goals. Some of the major issues noticed during the study are:

3.11.1. Expenditure under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: The picture of expenditure under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan puts a question mark on the efficiency of the programme. Fourteenth Finance Commission recommended a decline in the funding through centrally sponsored schemes. It also mentions that the overall expenditure on elementary education increased by 26% in nominal terms between the financial years 2011-12 and 2014-15, but in real terms, the increase is marginal at only 6%. Union expenditure budget represents the following data regarding the allocation for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 2010-2016.

Allocation for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 2010-2016 (in crore)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>23,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>26,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>24,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>22,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>22,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the same time, it is also reported that there has been a marginal decline in elementary education spending education spending. Total educational expenditure constituted 1.57% of the GDP in the financial year of 2011-12, while it decreased to 1.38% of the GDP in the financial year 2014-15.¹ Again, per student expenditure of the government and aided schools
has also declined during this period. Thus the evaluation of budget allocation under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan reveals significant decline in public expenditure, which results in the poor quality of education in schools due to need of sufficient infrastructure. The shortage of allocation raises question on the link between quality education and finances to fulfil the need.

3.11.2. Enrolment of Students: elementary education plays an important role in the development of human being. Government must ensure enrolment of students under basic education system. However, it is noticed that after decade of the introduction of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, students’ enrolment in government schools in not encouraging.

Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has pointed out that during 2009-14, enrolment of children in primary school decreased from 4,40,990 to 3,61,046 while in the upper primary schools it decreased from 3,26,882 to 2,53,241. The relative role played by private schools in elementary education play a major role in the decline of enrolment in government school. Amarendra Das\(^2\) holds that “Over the years, in most states there has taken a decline in the percentage of enrolment in government schools. In 2004-05, only a few states (like Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa) enrolment in government schools was more than 90 percent. The states which had less than 50 percent of students enrolled in government elementary schools were Haryana, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal.”

UNESCO provides the following details on the out of school children who are out of the education system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of out-of-school children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>32.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>10.4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>2.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>2.7 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure (3.2): Number of Out of School Children


The figure reveals that the numbers of children who are out of school have reduced in the time span of 2001-2011. But still 2.7 million children are out of school in India in 2010-11. This statistics proves that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is not successful in fulfilling its objectives of universal education for all.
GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) represents the ration in the number of persons in the class-
group to the number of persons in the corresponding official age group. According to the
Educational Statistics at A Glance, a report prepared by Ministry of Human Resource
Development, Government of India, “The GER for all persons in elementary education
increased from 81.6% in 2000-01 to 96.9% (provisional figure) in 2014-15. At this level, the
GER for boys and girls increased by 4.5 (from 90.3% to 94.8%) and 26.4 (from 72.4% to
99.2%) percentage point respectively during the stipulated period of 2010-15.” ³ The report
also reveals that the enrolment in the government schools is not encouraging. Regarding the
enrolment of ST students, the reports show the following figure:

**Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) Among ST Students at Elementary Level**

![Figure 2: Trend in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) among ST students at Elementary level](image)

Figure (3.3): Enrolment of ST Student in Elementary Level
Source: Educational Statistics at A Glance, Ministry of Human Resource Development,
Government of India, 2016

3.11.3. School Infrastructure: School infrastructure under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the
elementary level of education is also not sufficient to encourage students in study. According
to a report of Centre for Policy Research, “In FY 2015-16, by December, only 49 per cent of
schools had got their annual school grants (compared with 73 per cent for all of FY 2014-15).
In fact, 31 per cent of schools had not received any school grants till December. In FY 2015-
16, 23 per cent of schools surveyed needed to build at least one classroom in order to meet
the RTE norms. However, only 1 per cent schools received money from SSA during the
financial year to construct new classrooms.” ⁴ To Amarendra Das, “ in States like Andhra
Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, large number of students at the
lower primary level are enrolled in schools, which do not have adequate building facilities.” ⁵
Again, availability of toilets is also an important indicator of the developed infrastructure of
schools under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The same report of Centre of Policy Research maintains, “While 9 per cent of schools required girls’ toilets, approximately 1 per cent received a grant for building a girls’ toilet in FY 2015-16.” Data on the infrastructure of school in the year 2015-16 can be shown in the following diagram:

**Infrastructure Facility**

![Infrastructure Facility](image)

Source: Accountability Initiative Fund Tracking Survey (PAISA), December 2015.

In three states of Assam, Bihar, and Gujarat, there were some schools with one classroom only against the prescribed norm of two rooms with verandah. There was no separate room for the Headmaster in 4427 schools in Assam and Bihar.6 Audit Report of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 2016 maintains, “SSA envisaged establishment of at least one primary school/Education Guarantee Scheme/Alternative Innovative Education centre within one kilometre of each habitation throughout the country. Audit revealed that such facility did not exist in 31648 habitations in 14 states/ UT.... Teaching-learning equipment was procured either without assessing the requirement or ensuring availability of infrastructure for their utilisation. 7531 CTVs in Andhra Pradesh purchased under SSA could not be utilised for want of supporting facilities. Some schools where these sets were supplied did not even have electricity.” 7

**3.11.4. Dropout Rates:** Another critical issue involved with the functioning of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is the rates of School dropout. After a decade of the implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the national dropout rates of Students from schools have decreased. The following figure presents the dropout rates of India at primary level. Replying to the question of Rajya Sabha, HRD minister Smriti Irani said, saying, "Overall the annual average dropout rate at primary level has reduced from 5.6 percent during 2012-13 to 4.3 percent during 2014-15. At the same time, school dropout rates have increased in the North-Eastern States of India.” Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) published report on the
school dropouts in the North-Eastern states at the primary level in 2015. According to this report, school dropout rate of the states are: Nagaland- 19.4 %, Manipur- 18 %, Mizoram- 13 %, Arunachal Pradesh- 10.9 %, Meghalaya- 10.3 %, Assam- 7.4 % and Sikkim- 4.6 % which are above the national average of school dropout of 4.3 %.

3.11.5. Skilled Teacher: the absence of trained and skilled teachers is another problem which hampers the functioning of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Aims at providing basic education to all that also includes Special children along with other children. Such children require specially trained teachers to help them in their study. But it is found that the schools under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan lack teachers who are specially trained and skilled.

3.11.6. Gender Perspective: It is also found that the whole structure of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan fails to give priorities to gender equity in elementary level of education. Though girls’ participation in schooling has improved in last few years, but it is far below the satisfactory level. There are different policies launched under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to ensure girls’ participation at schools, like Operation Blackboard, National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturbha Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) etc. Even after adopting such schemes, girls’ attendance in schools under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is not satisfactory. UNESCO in a report reveals, “The gap between male and female attendance rates has declined over the past two decades. As of 2009–10, the attendance rates of males and females at the primary and upper-primary levels were almost equal, though a marked difference persists at the secondary level.”

Gender differences in attendance rates of children belonging to the age group of 6-10 from 1995-96 to 2009-10 can be shown in the following diagram:
School dropout rate among girls is also high in comparison to the boys.

3.11.7. Lack of Strict Monitoring: One of the crucial points which led to the failure of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is the lack of strict monitoring facility at each level of policy formations and implementation. There is no such mechanism to keep vigilant eyes on the working of the Mission. It leads to misuse of funds, lack of enthusiasm in the policy implementation, lack on the part of the teachers and students regarding their duty and ultimately towards the failure of the scheme.

3.12. CHAPTER SUMMARY:
The chapter discusses in details about the whole structure of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Highlighted points included in this chapter are: main objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, major components of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, major areas of intervention under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, plans procedure adopted under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan etc. Again, the chapter is also an attempt to discuss all the facilities available for the Children With Special Needs in schools under the inclusive education provided by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Along with this, a critical evaluation has been made under this chapter regarding the structural and implementation constraints that result in the failure of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in ensuring elementary education to all.
References:

1. Ambrish Dongre, Avani Kapur, Trends in Public Expenditure on Elementary Education in India, EPW, September 24, 2916, Vol Li No.39
5. Amrendra Das, How Far Have We Come in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan? EPW, January 6, 2007