



THE IMPACT OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN IN THE RETENTION OF STUDENTS IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT OF BURDWAN

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

Education has been recognized the most component which plays a vital role in the process of transformation of man into human resource. The first step, in this process, is enrolment of children in the primary schools. The second and most vital step is to ensure retention of the enrolled children in the primary schools so they can complete five years of primary education. The government of India, in the post independent period, has taken several measures to increase the rate of retention in the primary level of education. Among them *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) is known as flagship program of the government of India which has been introduced to achieve universal elementary education in a mission mode. Therefore, retention of children in the primary education is the precondition for the completion of five years of primary schooling within the stipulated time period. The objective of this study is to find out the quantitative change in the retention of children in primary schools in the district of Burdwan due to the structured programme of SSA. The analysis of the collected data unveils an optimistic picture of retention of children in primary schools in the district of Burdwan in the post SSA period.

Keywords: *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Enrolment in Primary Education, Retention of children in Primary Education*

Introduction

“Education for All” has been the foundation of the system of education in India since Vedic period. In ancient India the concept of “education for all” was socially accepted norm of education. In Chhandogya Upanishad (V.11, 5), King *Asvapati* states, “In my kingdom there is ... no ignorant person...”. Therefore, it is quite natural that free India has taken the endeavor for universalisation of elementary education and it was incorporated in the Part IV of the Constitution of India in the chapter of heading of Directive Principles of State Policy. The Art. 45 of the Constitution of India reads; “The state shall endeavor to provide within a period of ten years from commencement of constitution, for a free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.” However, target was not fulfilled; one after another commission, committee, policy was formed; they have recommended various strategies but the target was not fulfilled. At last, National Committee of State Education Ministers, in its meeting has drawn an exhaustive scheme of “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan” (SSA). A National Level Mission has been set up under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister on 2nd June 2001 to give effect the goals of SSA in systematic way.

Historical Background

The Education for All i.e. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a movement and a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. The movement was launched at the ‘World conference on Education For All’ in Jomtiem, Thailand, 5-9 March, 1990. This philosophy of education for all was endorsed in the World Education Forum, held at Dakar, Senegal (26-28 April 2000). It was known as ‘Dakar Framework of Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments’. This document commits governments to achieve quality basic education for all by 2015, with particular emphasis on schooling of girl child. Therefore, the Government of India once again modifies its policy of universalisation of elementary education in India in the light of the Dakar Framework of Education for All.

Around the same period, there were various efforts to give effect to the idea of Education for All. In this regard the Tenth Regional Consultative Meeting of Asia-Pacific Educational Innovations for Development (APEID) and Regional Expert Meeting on Universalisation and Renewal of Primary Education of Illiteracy in Asia-Pacific, held in Bangkok from 20-27 May 1986, may be mentioned here. In these meetings, after prolonged discussion, Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All

(APPEAL) was adopted. This new programme ‘education for all’ is related to the following three broad areas: a) Eradication of Illiteracy, b) Universalisation of Primary Education, and c) Continuing Education.

Therefore, it may be said that universalisation of elementary education is not only a problem of India; the entire Asia-Pacific Region has been in deep trouble with this problem. The dimension of this trouble could well be comprehended from the observation of Mr. Bow, Director General of UNESCO. On the occasion of Regional Advisory Committee Meeting of Education, held in Manila on August 22, 1982, he says that illiteracy is one of the worst evils of 20th century and Asia-Pacific Region would be entering the 21st century with 3.5 billion illiterate persons of whom 4 % will be under 15 years of age.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

“Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a holistic and convergent programme targeting both primary and upper primary stage of education with main focus on providing quality basic education within a clear time frame”. It was launched by the government of India in 2000. The goals of SSA include;

- 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.

The plight of primary education in India on the eve of 21st century was not at all satisfactory which also compels the government of India to take a positive step towards the universalisation of elementary education in this country.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out the quantitative change in the retention of children in primary schools in the district of Burdwan due to the structured programme of SSA.

Sample

The study was conducted to estimate the rate of retention in primary schools in the district of Burdwan during the period of 2001-2007. According to the requirement of the present study, the following sampling design was followed for selection of samples.

(1) In the first stage, 12 circles were selected out of 59 circles by adopting random sampling procedure from 6 sub-divisions of the district of Burdwan, i.e. 2 circles from each sub-division.

(2) In the second stage, 5 primary schools were selected randomly from each selected circle. So the total schools were 60.

Tool

Tools such as checklist and tabular proforma were used for collection of data. Appropriate statistical methods were adopted for analyzing data. After detailed analysis, findings were deduced on the basis of statistical results.

Retention in Primary Schools in the District of Burdwan

The rate of retention in primary schools is one of the indicators of the development of the educational system of the country. The government of India has been trying to increase the rate of retention at the elementary level especially in primary schools. During 2003 to 2006 the retention rate in primary schools in West Bengal also indicates a rising tendency.

The administration of primary education in district of Burdwan has been regulated with the help of 59 Office of the Sub-inspector of Schools. These offices are also known as Circle Resource Centres (CRC). Out of these 59 CRCs, 12 were selected, taking at least 2 from each sub-division, by using the method of random sampling.

An empirical survey on 12 CRC in the district of Burdwan shows that there has been a remarkable increase in the retention of children in primary schools after introducing the program of SSA. It was found that the average rate of retention of students in primary schools from 1997-98 to 2001-02 was only 42.75 %. However, rate has been increased to 67.38 % during the period 2003-04 to 2006-07.

Analysis of Data in Connection with the Rates of Retention in Primary Schools in the District of Burdwan

In this study, the rates of retention have been analyzed before and after introduction of SSA in the district of Burdwan. To compare the progress of rates of retention in primary schools, “t” test has been adopted.

Table – 1: Showing the rates of retention in primary schools before and after SSA in the district of Burdwan

Cluster of years	Enrolment in Class I	No. of students in class IV	Repeaters in class IV	Number of students retained in class IV	% of retention
1997-98 to 2000-01	178151 (1997-98)	106143 (2000-01)	29991 (2000-01)	76152	42.75 %
2003-04 to 2006-07	188610 (2003-04)	135487 (2006-07)	8400 (2006-07)	127087	67.38 %

Interpretation: Above table indicates the average rates of retention in primary schools before and after the introduction of SSA in the district of Burdwan. It is clear from the results that there has been a progress in the rate of retention in primary schools due to the introduction of SSA.

Comparative analysis between the rates of retention before and after SSA

Table – 2: Showing the ‘t’ between the rates of retention in primary schools before and after the introduction of SSA in the district of Burdwan

Comparison between	Enrolment of children in class I / circle	% retention	S.E.%	‘t’	Level of significance
Before SSA	3125	42.75	1.24	19.86	.01
After SSA	3308	67.38			

Interpretation: Analysis reveals that the value of “t” is significant at .01 levels, meaning thereby the percentages of retention of students in primary schools before and after SSA differ significantly. Thus, the introduction of SSA helps to increase the rate of retention of students in primary schools in the district of Burdwan. Therefore, it may be inferred that the retention rate has significantly increased due to the introduction SSA.

Circle wise analysis of retention in primary schools after SSA

Table: 3: Showing the retention rates in primary schools in 12 circles in the district of Burdwan

Sl. No	Name of the Circle	Total number students enrolled in class I in 2004	Total no. of that Students studying in Class IV in 2007	% of retention in 2007	Average % of retention
1	Kanksha II	200	131	65.15	66.07
2	Ukhra	188	127	67.53	
3	Memari	211	158	74.88	
4	Jamlpur (E)	189	127	67.19	
5	Katwa (E)	172	110	63.95	
6	Ketugram (W)	235	148	62.97	
7	Kalna (E)	214	144	67.28	
8	Purbasthali	170	111	65.29	
9	Asansol	177	123	69.49	
10	Barabani	158	78	49.36	
11	Burdwan (M)	145	105	72.41	
12	Galsi	141	95	67.37	

Interpretation: The average rate of retention of children in twelve selected circles in the district of Burdwan is 66.07 % which is higher than the retention rate before the introduction of SSA.

Comparative analysis between the rates of retention before and after SSA

Table- 4: Showing the ‘t’ between the rates of retention in primary schools before and after the introduction of SSA in 12 circles in the district of Burdwan

Comparison between	Rates retention	SE %	‘t’	Level of significance
Before SSA	42.75	3.78	6.17	.01
After SSA	66.07			

Interpretation: The value of “t” between the rates of retention is 6.17 which is significant at .01 level. So, the rate of retention in primary schools in the district of Burdwan after the introduction of SSA differs significantly from the rate of retention in primary schools before the SSA. Therefore, it may be said that there has been a significant gain in the rate of retention in primary schools in the district of Burdwan due to the introduction of SSA.

Conclusion

The objective of the study was to discover the overall progress of the retention of children in primary schools in the district of Burdwan. So far the retention is concerned, a significant improvement has been found due to the introduction of SSA in the district. Therefore, SSA was effective to set forth a progressive trend in the overall retention of children in primary schools in the district of Burdwan. Therefore, it may be concluded that the strategy and the structured programmes of SSA in regard to the progress of retention has been successful in the district of Burdwan due to organized and systematic programme of SSA.

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