

Role of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Mission at Elementary Level through Alternative Schooling Centres: A Case Study on Jyoti Kendras of Tinsukia District.

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ABSTRACT: Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Mission has been trying to provide quality elementary education to every child up to the age of 14 years. In order to achieve this noble objective, SSA in Assam has been working very hard to bring the 'out of school' children in the purview of education through its Alternative Innovative Education(AIE) strategies. Under AIE, four different activities are implemented i.e. Sanjogi Siksha Kendra (SSK) in rural areas, Jyoti Kendra (JK) for urban deprived children, Community Coaching Programme(CCP) for the habitations having small number of out of school children in a scattered manner and Residential Bridge course (RBC) for the child labour of 10 -14 years age. Present study will try to study the activities of the Jyoti Kendra under the SSA of Tinsukia District (Assam). Jyoti Kendra is set up in urban areas for street and slum children of the age group of 6-14 years children are collected from railway platforms, bus stands, markets etc. They may be delinquents and even commercial sex workers. In Tinsukia District there are 30 Jyoti Kendras are found to be functioning with 49 Shiksha Karmis and 899 students (field study in 2012). By this paper an effort has been made to see the activities of SSA on 'out of school children' through Jyoti Kendras. Total 22 Jyoti Kendras of Tinsukia District are included in the present study.

Keywords: AIE-Alternative Innovative Education, SSK-Sanjogi Siksha Kendra, JK-Jyoti Kendra CCP-Community Coaching Programme RBC- Residential Bridge Course

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I. INTRODUCTION

Right to education is a fundamental right now. Today's children are tomorrow's future. Therefore, it is our duty to ensure that every child at least gets his elementary education if not higher degrees. With this objectives SSA has come up with the mission to provide quality elementary education to every child up to the age of 14 years. In order to achieve this noble objective, SSA tries to enrol the all children of 6-14 years of age either in school or in alternative schooling centres. SSA in Assam has been working very hard to bring the 'out of school' children in the purview of education through its Alternative Innovative Education (AIE) strategies. under AIE, four different activities are implemented i.e. Sanjogi Siksha Kendra (SSK) in rural areas, Jyoti Kendra (JK) for urban deprived children, Community Coaching Programme(CCP) for the habitations having small number of out of school children in a scattered manner and Residential Bridge course (RBC) for the child labour of 10 –14 years age. Present study will try to study the activities of Jyoti Kendras under the SSA at Elementary Level of Tinsukia District, Assam.

1.1 Brief description about the area of study:

The area of the present study is Tinsukia district of Assam. Tinsukia District is one of the 35 administrative districts in the state of Assam. Tinsukia is located in the upper part of Assam. Its population is very dense & various type of people live here. All these people belong to various financial, cultural and social status. People belonging to ST,SC, MOBC and OBC are found in large numbers. The city is well connected to other cities in the north east and at present it has the biggest railway station in Assam. The geographical area of Tinsukia district is 3790 sq km. At present there are three sub-divisions under Tinsukia district—Tinsukia, Margherita and Sadia. Tinsukia was declared as a full-fledged district on 29th sept'1989 as a 23rd district of Assam. In the census report of 2011, the complete literacy condition of the entire population is reflected in the following manner---

TABLE: 1

1) Total Population -----	1316948.
2) Male -----	675986.
3) Female -----	640962.
4) No.of children in 6-14 yrs. Age----	208882.
5) No.of school going children 6-14 yrs.	143788
6) No.of out of school & drop-out children 6-14 yrs. Age.	65094.
7) Literates	809796.
8) Male literates	457356
9) Female literates	352440
10) Literacy rate	70.92% (male=77.89% female=63.54%)
11) Density of population	347 per sq.km
12) Growth rate	14.51%
13) Sex ratio (no. of female per 1000 men)	948

After 65 years of independence we are far away from the goal of universal literacy. But one of the positive aspects of our country is that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission is trying their best in attracting this part of the population in primary school through various formal and non-formal measures. Jyoti Kendra is an important schemes of SSA through which it is trying to eradicate illiteracy from the society at large. A Jyoti Kendra is set up in urban area for street and slum children of age group 6-14 years. They are hard to reach children because they are found to work here and there under different conditions. Children are collected from railway platforms, bus stands, markets etc. and they may be juvenile delinquents and even commercial sex-workers. It is very difficult to make them feel and demand their educational right. Children are given education in the Jyoti Kendras and then they are mainstreamed in nearby formal schools. By this paper an effort has been made to see the activities of SSA at elementary stage through Jyoti Kendras. The 22 Jyoti Kendras of Tinsukia District (out of 30) are included in the present study.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this paper is to investigate the success of SSA in surveying all school dropouts, child labourers and deprived children in respective area and to see the activities of SSA at elementary stage through Jyoti Kendras of Tinsukia district.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will help us to know in details about the activities of Jyoti Kendra of Tinsukia District. The study will help us to identify the rate of success of the SSA movement in finding out the rate of dropouts, child labour, early marriage etc. among girls. As all the activities of SSA are faced by severe criticism from all section of the society, the present study will help us in assessing the exact facts behind Jyoti Kendras working under SSA.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study is conducted by descriptive survey method. The researcher has visited the 22 Jyoti Kendras and collected data with help of face to face interview with students, teachers and parents, and observation of the environment of the school.

V. SAMPLE

The study covers 22 Jyoti Kendras of Tinsukia District. Every teacher of 22 Jyoti Kendras and Five parents (randomly selected) from every school

VI. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Govt. of India had been adopting various schemes and programmes for the expansion of education and “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission” is one such big scheme which started with the problems of primary education. The activity of the SSA Mission started in Tinsukia district from the year 2002 with the census of the children belonging to the age group of 6-14 yrs. According to this report, 65,000 children were identified as ‘out of school children’ among whom some were “dropouts” and some were “never-enrolled”. So, in 2002 the total number of “out of school children” were 38% of the total children in the District. The number of “out of school children” are found to decreasing in quantity along with the growing yrs. It can therefore be commented that SSA is quite successful in drawing the school dropouts to their Alternative Innovative Education Centres. It can be proved with the help of following data—

TABLE – 2

Educational Block	Yr.2007-08	Yr. 2008-09	Yr. 2009-10
Hapjan	9105	5015	710
Kakopathar	6335	3198	228
Margherita	3218	1803	116
Sadia	228	62	215
Tinsukia Urban	336	310	62
Total	19222	10388	1331

Block wise “out of school children” in Tinsukia District

Source: DISE

From the field study it is proved that one of the significant step of SSAis to enrol all the children in the age group of 6-14 years into the Jyoti Kendras for the educationally deprived children in urban areas. Usually these children are found to stay in the areas like railway colony, market place, tea-states, hotel and restaurants, garages, factories, culverts, over-bridges etc. First of all these children are identified, enrolled with the help of ward Education Society in different Jyoti Kendras. Then they are prepared with special training for the study of subjects in different classes suitable for govt. Aided or provincialised schools according to their age and capacity. Total number of Jyoti Kendras in 23 districts of Assam are 1121 according to census 2009. Highest number of Jyoti Kendras are in Kamrup District, centre-277. In 2009-10 there were 42 JK in Tinsukia district but now 30 JKs are found to be functioning with 49 shiksha karmis and 899 students.

TABLE: 3

Name of the Town	Total no. of JK	Total no. of Students
Makkum	4	110
Margherita	4	102
Doomdooma	10	344
Tinsukia Town	24	798
Total:	42	1354

Informations about Jyoti Kendras in Tinsukia district according to 2009-10, DISE.

TABLE: 4

Name of the Town	Total no. of JK	Total no. of Students
Makkum	3	87
Margherita	2	62
Doomdooma	5	174
Tinsukia Town	20	576
Total:	30	899

Informations about Jyoti Kendras in Tinsukia district according to 2010-11, DISE.

Out of 899 students 480 are girls and 419 are boys, which shows that the no. of girls are much more than boys.

The details of Jyoti kendras in Tinsukia district are given below-(visited by me)

TABLE: 5

SL/ NO	Name of Jyoti Kendra	Name of Head	Experience of Head	No of S.K	Name of the Assistant J.K.
1	Sripuria L.N.B.Road	Smt. Mandira Gogoi	7 years	1	Nil
2	New Milan polli	Smt. Panna Das	6 years	2	Tumpa Kayat
3	Milan poli	Sri Prakash Jha	6 years	2	Maman Sengupta Roy
4	Gelapukhuri	Brajen Bora	3 years	1	Nil
5	National Boys Club	Rima Das gupta	7 years	2	Raju Bordoloi
6	Tarun Nagar	Shilpi Devi Bhattacharjee	5 years	2	Manju Lama
7	Kanaklata Path	Dipika Chakraborty	3 years	1	Nil
8	Borpathar Activist	Rupa Devi	8 years	2	Bornali Das
9	Misson Para	Nipu Das	6 years	2	Sumitra Paul
10	SankardevNagar,Makum	Sebika Das	6 years	1	Nil
11	Dhekiajuri	Jyotsna Begum	8 years	2	Surabhi Saikia

12	Ambikagiriroy Choudury	Dipamoni Kalita	4 Years	2	Ankita Das
13	Rajendra Nagar	Rubi Das	7 years	2	Manika Chanda
14	Lazum	Sampa Das	5 years	1	nil
15	Margherita Bazar	Rejia Begam	7 years	2	Afrin khatoon
16	Kumar Patty	Ratul Saikia	5 years	2	Bharati Golai
17	Ram mohan Pathsala	Anita Ghose	6 years	2	Sanjib Patuary
18	Hindi L.P, Doomdooma	Sanjoy Gupta	5 years	2	Rajkumari Gupta
19	Sishu Bidhya Mandir	Paban Sarma	6 years	2	Rupali Das
20	Sukerting, Doomdooma	Bharati Hajarika Boruah	6 years	2	Rita Dhar Majumder
21	Chewarapatty J.K	Rupanjali Deb	7 years	1	Nil
22	Tamulbari	Ujjal Chauhan	4 Years	2	Nil

Source: Field Study

TABLE: 6 Number of Mainstreaming children in Jyoti Kendras of Tinsukia District (2006-2011) are shown below:

year	No.of students
2006-07	165
2007-08	366
2008-09	731
2009-10	504
2010-11	371

Source: SSA Office, Tinsukia

After the extensive field work in the 22 nos. of Jyoti Kendras out of total 30 Jyoti Kendras in Tinsukia district I have come to know the following important facts:

□ Jyoti Kendras are established on the basis of surveys undertaken by the siksha karmis of SSA. These Surveyors were quite successful in enumerating all school dropouts except some of the child labourers. Most of the siksha karmis expressed their happiness because they were enrolling all the drop out children. Only a few siksha karmis denied total enrolments of drop outs. They said that they could not enrol some of the child labourers working in household, tea stalls, hotels etc.

□ By enquiring it was known that most of the Jyoti Kendras face different types of problems in mainstreaming the children. Some schools are not interested to mainstream the students of Jyoti Kendras, but nine Jyoti Kendras reported that they did not find any problems of mainstreaming. They said that their children were welcomed in the schools and they wanted to mainstream more children. From my study it is also seen that vocational training and some special activities are taught in some specially arranged classes in a club and any other institution. Through these specially arranged vocational training classes girl children are extremely benefited.

□ All the guardians are not totally conscious about the need of the education of their wards and the need of attending guardian/parents meeting. They have to be motivated by the siksha karmis to come to the school and participate in meetings regularly. But siksha karmis confirmed that some exceptional guardians do exist who take keen interest.

□ While checking the ratio of boys and girls in the Jyoti Kendras it was noticed that the number of boys and girls students are different in different centres. But over all observation proves that the total number of girls are more than the boys students. It proves that no. of out of school children of girls are more than boys.

□ From the interview, it was cleared that the siksha karmis are very happy for the human service, they are rendering to the society in the removal of the problem of illiteracy, but they are not at all happy and contended with the salary, service condition and rules and regulations about the centres. They like to take trainings because they can gain knowledge from them but unfortunately they cannot apply these knowledge in their actual classroom activities due to financial and infrastructural problems.

□ When it was enquired whether the siksha karmis follow some specific method or not, it was found that they usually follow the method of teaching with lots of TLMs such as picture, chart, activity card, radio and library etc. Besides the use of different innovative TLMs they like to use the play way method or activity method. There are provisions of remedial classes for the slow learners also.

□ Regarding the attendance of the students in the J.K. it is observed that girls are more prone to be absent than boys. Girls were found to be engaged in house hold activities like house keeping, looking after young members of the house, going to the paddy field during planting seasons, working as tea pluckers etc. Some questionnaires

revealed that girls are frequently exploited by the parents. They are denied admission and continuity in the school only being a girl. Girl students become victims of dropout problem because of the above mentioned reasons.

□ While investigating the drop out problem, surveys revealed that migration is a major problem of dropouts. Parents move from place to place in search of jobs and their wards are compelled to leave school.

□ The researcher found out that a special group of workers called IED volunteers (inclusive education for disabled) are working a lot for the benefit of different types of handicapped children. I have seen 2 nos of disabled children in Kanaklaata Path JK. one deaf and dumb & one deaf children. IED volunteers come five/six times in a month in those schools where there are disabled children.

□ In short it was found out that the scheme of J.K. run by SSA has become very successful due to the dedicated service of the Siksha Karmis . They take maximum trouble to run the classes, bring children to the school, motivate them, make them civilized, take care of health etc. Compared to the work load I found that their salary is not proportionate and sufficient. On the other hand, their service also not permanent for which they are striving against the government time to time.

6.1 Brighter Side of Jyoti Kendras:

- ❖ One important bright aspect of Jyoti Kendras is the contribution of the scheme 'Inclusive Education'. In some of the center I found some physically & mentally disabled children who are given regular training along with normal children by the IED volunteers. IED volunteers work hard for the education of the slow learners also. Special coaching classes are also arranged for those children who are in need of them.
- ❖ Children in Jyoti Kendras also learns some useful craft like carpet making, jute craft, cutting, knitting, embroidery, doll making etc which has got good vocational prospect.
- ❖ Children are provided with text books, work books, evaluation work books with comprehensive graded questionnaires etc. free of cost. (Class 1-IV). Support to the mainstream children is also a good feature of Jyoti Kendras. SSA provide school dress, slipper, bags, pen, pencil box, water bottle etc. to the newly admitted children.

6.2 Darker side of Jyoti Kendras:

- ❖ Out of all the JK, 22 nos. JK have visited, none of the center can be said to possess a healthy, attractive and hygienic environment. Siksha Karmis said that in Tinsukia District, it is very difficult to get a rented room with only five hundred rupees. That is why almost all the Jyoti Kendras have foul-smelling, congested, narrow space without any provision for the entrance of light and air during hot summer days. We found that it was a pitiable condition in the rooms. Most of the Jyoti Kendras have very poor kachcha toilet, Some toilet don't have any roof to protect children from heat and rain.
- ❖ In the Jyoti Kendras where the no. of children are less than 20, no additional Siksha Karmis is given appointment. I found several such Jyoti Kendras where single teachers were running the centers with much difficulty.
- ❖ Moreover, monthly salary of the SKs (Rs.1500) is not all satisfactory. Most of the Siksha Karmis expressed their agony regarding the salary because the amount is less than the pocket money provided to the college teenager.
- ❖ Over and above, there is another big problem for the Siksha Karmis. Very often when all the children or almost all the children of a particular Jyoti Kendras become mainstream, the center is abolished or stopped permanently by the SSA. At that time the Siksha Karmis become totally unemployed.
- ❖ Jyoti Kendras also face a big problem for migratory children. One Siksha Karmis reported that most of the children in Jyoti Kendras belong to this highly migratory group. In Assam, a large number of families migrate from their own village in search of livelihood every year. As a result a large number of children have to leave school mid-way.

VII. CONCLUSION

After visiting twenty two Jyoti Kendras I can say that it was a gainful experience regarding the contribution of these institution in the field of elementary education. The main reasons for the lack of success in Jyoti Kendras are the illiteracy of the parents, frequent migration of parents, multilingual nature of the student, varying age level, varying professional background difference in abilities etc. Siksha Karmis found difficulties in the treatment of the learners with such diversified background. If the Jyoti Kendras want to achieve 100% success in their mission, certain concrete steps will have to be taken by the SSA & their Siksha Karmis. Large scale motivating programme will have to be undertaken by the Siksha Karmis with the guardians. Siksha Karmis should be provided with better salary & attractive service condition. Moreover these school should find more focus and advertisement in the medias. It would bring more number of drop-outs. Environment of the Jyoti Kendras should be improved. Healthy environment with attractive sitting arrangement can be hired with more money only. Children cannot love their school which is damp, foul smelling, dusky atmosphere. Better funds seems to be solution of many such problems in the Jyoti Kendras.

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