

Development of Elementary Education Under Central Sponsored Flagship Schemes in Jammu & Kashmir: Issues and Challenges**Dr. Tariq Ahmad Sheikh**Assistant Professor
School of Humanities
Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India**Shoaib Mohammad**Research Scholar
School of Humanities
Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India**Abstract**

Education is considered as foundation stone for the mental development of a child. In India large number of people living in far flung or hilly areas belonging to below poverty line like scheduled tribes, scheduled caste and other underprivileged classes are considered as EBB's (educationally backward blocks). Due to poverty and other hardships children face many problems in access to get education. In this regard central government of India introduced integrated scheme under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan now called "Samarga Shiksha" which contributes to facilitate and develop education among EBB's. The central sponsored flag scheme has different development motives at different levels of education to reach out to the masses. The present study will focus on the development and role of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the spread of education at elementary level in Jammu & Kashmir with a special reference to Kashmir division. The Paper will also bring into fore the pros and cons in the implementation of the scheme and its ultimate results.

Key words*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Samarga Shiksha, Education, Students, girls, KGBV, Gender Equity***Introduction**

Education is an important weapon for the progress and development of people. Education stimulates human values and sows seeds of success in one's life. A well educated person boosts resilience to deal with hardships and challenges in life. Thus the quality education recognizes outcome based initiatives and teaches us to become civilized. In order to develop good educational system then proper platform, infrastructure, quality teaching and learning, tools and

basic necessities are substantial and imperative. The far most tectonic task is to build a proper stratagem that could lead to better outcomes.

Jammu and Kashmir is a sensitive area having population of 1.25 million people. Population is further divided into Rural and Urban. About 72% of population lives in rural areas while as 28% remains in urban areas. It is seen that bulk of the population is concentrated in rural areas. J&K comprises of 22 districts 10 districts in Jammu, 10 districts in Kashmir division and 2 from Ladakh. As per the census 2011 there is a rise in literacy rates of both males and females while the former has increased to around 78.26, the latter has a literacy rate recorded as 58.01. According to census report 2011 the overall literacy rate of Jammu and Kashmir stands as 68%.

Table 1: Jammu and Kashmir Census- Male and Female Literacy rates from 1961-2011

Year	Literacy Rate		
	Persons	Males	Females
1961	12.95	19.75	5.05
1971	12.71	31.01	10.94
1981	33.02	44.55	19.86
1991	N.A	N.A	N.A
2001	55.52	66.60	43.00
2011	68.74	78.26	58.01

J&K census report by (GOI) Government of India

The education system is governed by Centre and State governments in collaboration for its development and maintenance; therefore some major center sponsored policies like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are launched to offer free elementary education from the age group of 6-14 years as being a fundamental right to education for every child. However in Jammu and Kashmir right to education has not yet gained its status under serious provisions of educational act. Moreover level of education is divided into Primary, upper primary, secondary, senior secondary and then higher level of education. Besides that central government of India observes sponsored schemes both at national and state level for the upliftment and development of education. Although government sponsored schemes have been rated satisfactory at national level but it recorded poor performance at different divisions. There are multifold reasons behind places like Bihar, Jharkhand, and Jammu & Kashmir where development under the framed policies remains at backseat. By taking Jammu & Kashmir as an area and Kashmir respectively we must understand that Kashmir being a high intensity conflict zone between India and Pakistan hence the place remains disturbed in usual days. The conflict zones like Kashmir deserve better implementation of educational policies to universalize education, fill the gender based gap and

gulf and lower the impact of turmoil upon young generations. But the policies framed showed low and negative results when evaluated in broad perspectives viz process and strategy of implementation, teacher student's ratio, training and subject specified teachers, development of infrastructure , facilities provided and gender equality ratio based on enrollment.

Government Schemes for the development of Elementary Education

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

Primary education is the base of the whole education system. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan now known as Samarga Shiksha is a National sponsored flagship education programme for the development and spread of education in India within a specified time bound by providing free elementary education upto the age of 6-14 years. The overall goal of this flagship scheme stands for giving access and retention, bridging gender based gap and filling other social class gaps in education, and to enhance the levels of learning among pupil. Apart from this It distributes a number of different interventions like opening and construction of new schools, developing facilities for alternate schooling, drinking water facilities, textbooks and much more, The scheme was launched in 2001-02 with an aim to eradicate ignorance and to provide ease and free excess to education by developing community based schools for schedule caste, scheduled tribes and other underprivileged people of the society. While as the basic initiative claimed by the foundation aims to uplift and improve the economic and social status of India and to bring India into limelight of well developed nation not just developed nation. Target ensures that by 2030 all boys and girls must complete free and quality education both at primary and secondary level with effective and positive learning outcomes. Moreover eradicating gender disparity in education and to provide equal access to all levels of education remains one its major goals (MHRD, 2019).

In 2018 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan along with (RMSA) Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and (TE) Teacher Education came to be integrated into once single scheme now known as "Samarga Shiksha Abhiyan". RMSA is one among these sponsored flagship scheme governed by (MHRD) Ministry of Human Resource Development GOI, for the development and upliftment of secondary education within India. The glittering objectives of RMSA are to provide quality secondary education and boost the overall enrollment rate by technical support, funds and variety of such implementations. Besides TE which stands for teacher education under which teachers are trained on various segments of teaching levels so that basic requirement of quality education could be delivered to students by well trained subject specified teachers. On the other side SSA in accordance with other programmes include variety of other welfare programmes like free (MDM) Mid Day Meals, special care for girl education under KGBV, Health care aids etc to motivate children and boost the enrollment level. In other words the overall development and major interventions across under these integrated schemes are: "(1) Universal Access including

Infrastructure Development and Retention (2)Quality infrastecture) (3)Inclusive Education (4)Gender and Equity(5)Financial support for Teachers Salary (6)Digital Initiatives (7)RTE Entitlements including textbooks,uniforms etc (8)Pre-school Education (9)Vocational Education (10)Sports and Physical Education (11)Training and Strengthening of Teacher Education (12)Monitoring process and (13)Programme Management”(Samarga Shiksha MHRD Report, 2019).

Therefore Union Budget of India in 2018-19, has proposed an initiative to develop school education in holistic manner without any segmentation from pre-nursery upto Class 12th. The paper will discuss in details the issues at elementary level of educational development under SSA and will also focus upon the development of girl education under Kasturiba Gandhi Balika Vidiyala (KGBV).

Kasturiba Gandhi Balika Vidiyala (KGBV)

We are quite aware that gender inequality in education and among other social classes in education is one of the major issues in India. Bridging such gaps at all levels of school education and to encourage the participation of girls in education remains one of the major goals under Samarga Shiksha. In order to bridge such gaps Government of India in the year 2004 launched Kasturiba Gandhi Balika Vidiyala (KGBV) also known as National Programme for Education of Girls under which education at upper primary level and allotting girls Hostels at secondary education level are converged to facilitate them with residential and schooling facilities upto Class-12th. The scheme was framed to provide quality education at upper primary level and at secondary level, retraining dropout girls in education and to create bridge courses for girls. Although ‘KGBV’ functioned as a separate programme but remained in harmony with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. It aims to enhance educational facilities especially for girls belong to Scheduled tribes, Scheduled castes and other EBBs who fall under below poverty line having no access to education. Moreover main focus of developing such schools is to boost the female literacy. Such schools are framed for girls who are not capable to peruse education due to poverty or location of schools. Thus KGBV centers can boost and release them from rural exposure to absorb intellectual and moral sense of education. Thereafter Professional education is also included in order to develop technical hand and skills among girls (MHRD, 2019).

Implementation of schemes in Kashmir division

The flagship programme (SSA) was launched in Jammu & Kashmir in the year 2002-2003. The enactment of RTE Act 2009 implies enhancing free and compulsory elementary level Education to 6-14 years age group. However, the Act is not applicable in the State of J&K as on date thus provisions under SSA get implemented via ‘Ujala’ society (JK education.SSA, 2019).

Both the flagship schemes launched in Jammu & Kashmir resulted in having partial success and fell too short to bring positive changes. Amid construction of school buildings upto delivering Mid-Day Meals to understudies, the scheme was wrongly managed under the official authorities at the steer of affairs, and as well as employees including teachers(Greater Kashmir April, 2018). The programme failed to motivate children towards education. It was however further observed by teacher student ratio, enrollment and dropout rate, poor trained teachers, non construction of school buildings and lack of stratagem to fill gender based gap among male and female students. It has been noticed that children of government school teacher goes to private school as infrastructure and quality of education matters for the proper upliftment of child. In such regard a NGO named “TALAASH”conducted a survey to identify OoSC (Out of school children) was held in the state in the year 2012-13 (Economic Survey DESC, 2013-2014).The retrieved revealed that total number of OoSC is 59061. And only 19262 children have been mainstreamed into residential schools up to year 2015-2016. Total numbers of remained 39799 of the children are shifted to be mainstreamed in other different interventions like (NRBC) Non-Residential Bridge Courses, level I, II, III, RBCKGBV and Children With Special Needs‘CWSN’ (Economic survey DESC, 2015-16).

Infrastructure and Facilities

Imparting education in proper sense isn't possible without a well built structure. Infrastructure and working facilities are imperative in expecting better outcomes among students in knowledge gaining process. Infrastructure thus include number of classrooms, seating facility, toilet points etc, in other words researchers and scholars of psychology recommend that the surrounding environmental factors can increase the academic performance of a child and decreases quality of absenteeism in them. Majority of the population in Kashmir are below poverty line and it becomes hard to secure education especially among tribal, hilly and far flung areas. In such regard the plan of SSA was to construct number of school building within a radius of one's residential area. It has been observed that the structure of these schools is not enough to absorb students for free quality learning. Some schools have only one or two room moreover in some middle schools only 4 class rooms are available. The facilities provided are not worth as promised under scheme. Many schools in 2018 lacked toilet facility especially for girls.This remains another tectonic and stunning block for less participation of girl students especially at upper primary or elementary level(Malik I.M, et al, 2017). Although the initiative was taken to provide such facilities but there is still a gap and partiality under development process. The challenging issue which SSA was implementation process remains non availability of land to construct such residential schools. In most of the places land was not offered by communities therefore authorities decided to rent buildings. The rented buildings were having no school structure and fewer rooms were adopted to give education. it has been clear that Jammu and Kashmir sustains long history of social-political disturbances

and under insurgency many schools were left burnt and damaged thus there pertains dare need of institutions and availability of infrastecture. To cross these road breakers remained a challenging aspect for SSA throughout the implementation process at ground level. There are numerous reasons for such underdevelopment as ‘Murtaza’ mentions’ there remains a very high scope of corruption and undue interference of local authorities under the infrastructural development of Sarva Shiksha (Mir, 2018). Besides corruption and local interferences the stratagem and planning remains equally responsible as implementation process was not properly observed under serious socio-political and economic conditions. In such regard government could have purchased land instead of renting houses as schools. Despite spending money worth crores was not utilized in a proper way. As per the report of Institute of Public Auditors of India while monitoring of the financial management and procurement relating to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 2008 reveals that understudies are not benefited by accurate arrangements of seats, health care check-ups and a number of classes pushed and packed under one single room which is violation of scheme guidelines. Moreover basic facilities like drinking water and toilets are not provided despite availability of funds used for other objectives(MHRD Report, 2008). It was further reported in 2019 that government ceased support regarding 600 half constructed school buildings (Greater Kashmir July, 2019). Due to lack of proper implementation of funds some constructors left the construction work half way. Under such confused phenomenon education and students seem like ‘having bangles but no hands’. School buildings and basic infrastructural facilities remained far to motivate and attract students which gradually lead to dropout of students especially among girls. Although after 2008 development process still went on and officials cum monitoring authorities decided to start clubbing of schools in 2015. Schools which fell under the category of clubbing where those of having (i) zero enrollment, (ii) less than 30 enrollment (iii) areas with no school buildings (iv) rented houses having only one single room. Thus most of such schools where merged to other schools to balance student enrollment and teacher student ratio. This is another stunned block for lower participation of girls in education especially at upper primary level

On the other side girl education which is given extra preference under Kasturiba Gandhi Balika Vidiyala (KGBV) faced similar issues and depicts grim picture of educational development among girls. Some subsequent reasons responsible for poor quality implementation of gender based intervention schemes remain corruption, lack of curiosity and awareness among people and lack of stratagem for proper monitoring and supervision (Ahmed Gul S.B, Khan Z, 2013). According to scheme guidelines, KGBV centers are based both for day and night schedule. Due to non availability of care takers like wardens and availability of basic facilities like electricity etc remained barred thus these centers turned out as day schools. Moreover the minimum enrollment as recommended should not be less than 100 students in one center but in some areas the roll has shrunked down to 30s. The bad condition of KGBV centers showed low grade development inmost of the districts in Kashmir

like Baramulla, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Kulgam, Kupwara, Shopian and Anantnag etc. while as gender disparity in education continues prevailing.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development has approved 99 buildings for KGBV residential schools in Jammu & Kashmir (MHRD, Report) out of 99 two centers are offered to Kishtwar and Leh districts which are not yet operated. Since out of the other 97 KGBV’s, 32 schools are still un-operated as due to the laxity of the authorities in giving suitable accommodations and essential facilities for understudies at various locations. Some of the KGBV’s which have been rated as residential schools are operated from rented buildings while as some remain half way constructed. Thus government has failed to provide good structure and school campus for these schools. The state project director of Samarga Shiksha Abhiyan, Arun Kumar Manhas in 2019 discussing the issue and said,

“The enrolment is decreasing as the government has failed to make all the schools habitational while as most of these remain functioning from rented accommodations. These are basic issues for decreasing enrolment in these female residential schools”(Greater Kashmir July, 2019).

Henceamong educationally Backward Blocks thefillingof Gender gap, developing girl education, providing facilities and other essentials seem to be trending void between developments of education under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. However in matching with prosperity levels of the state of Jammu & Kashmir these flagship schemes remained languishing projects since their inception. The statistics of District Bandipora is given as under;

S.No	Name of KGBV	Year 2009	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018
1	KGBV Sumbal	100	100	98	100	100	90	100	102	98	98
2	KGBV Hajin	63	101	100	97	85	65	48	42	47	37
3	KGBV Quil	41	50	50	50	50	50	48	49	50	45

4	KGBV Gurez	21	17	55	49	50	43	19	20	21	26
---	------------	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

Table 2: Enrollment of girls under KGBV centers in four zones of district Bandipora

Data: - Government of Jammu & Kashmir- Office of the chief Education Officer Bandipora

An example of the KGBV enrollment can be seen in the district Bandipora of north Kashmir. Above data represents four zones of district Bandipora Viz- Sumbal, Hajin, Quil and Gurez. It can be clearly examined that the enrollment process under KGBV’s shows slow growth and rapid decline in enrollment onwards 2011. Although KGBV Sumbal has maintained enrollment ratio except in the year 2011-12, 2014 and 2017-2018 which is less than 100. KGBV Hajin shows good performance only in the year 2010-2011 the enrollment has further declined upto 37 in 2018. Zone 3 and 4 never enrolled more than 50 students in all these years besides zone 4 Gurez enrolled 55 students only for the year 2011 and enrollment has further declined to 26 in 2018. As per the guidelines of MHRD says maintenance of minimum 100 girls in one KGBV center was not fulfilled accordingly.

Role of the teachers and monitoring process

Teachers are role models in performing a special kind of impact upon students under social institutions like education sector. They help in building mind set and moral values among young ones in order to make them compete with prevailing generations. Role of teacher is not only confined to men and institutions but in family also as mother turns to be a first teacher of the child. The role of educated mother or women is crucial and effective for the development of one’s identity (Good, 1988) therefore this ensures that teaching women is much necessary to built knowledge gap within populace. Coming to the matter of concern, the adopted teaching faculty under SSA for the development of education at elementary level remained informal for teaching practice so far. The appointed teachers based on 10+2 qualification grouped as ‘RET’ teachers Rehbar-e-Taleem in Jammu & Kashmir. The teachers have played a vital role in displaying a grim picture under the scheme. A capacity building programme was set up to train such teachers which was given in three months. However the positive factors were not recognized in schools as such teachers lacked education pedagogical skills in motivating children towards education. The context specific training and monitoring of pre and post training assessments remained aloof to reach positive lines as per recommendation given under scheme. The deployment and adoption of non-subject specified teachers under training centers

like SIE and DIET amid to political interference failed to achieve proper goals and thus affected the quality of teaching (Mir, 2018). According to research conducted under 'REMS' Official Research, Evaluation, Monitoring and supervision body of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan reported that the village educational committees (VEC's) appointed under SSA as members of school management committees showed negligible role in management process while as most of them were lacking educational background. The evaluation data further reveals there was no role found to monitor and supervise academically weak students for further counseling and no serious guidelines were being provided to students (REMS, Report). Another problem faced by teachers was getting less pay under scheme which was not more than 1500. Many teachers reported that the infrastecture, facilities and salary does not motivate them to work accordingly (RIMS-SSA, Report). In such grievance many teachers protested, came out on roads due to nonpayment of salaries while some got injured. The protest lasted for months and several meetings were held under a particular period of timeline to find out the solution. It was reported that until the matter was taken serious by authorities due to frequent attempts of protests by SSA teachers' schools lost their scenario of curriculum which badly affected the academics portion of understudies (The Tribune, Aug, 2018).

Challenges in the implementation of the policies

The major challenges faced under the implementation of policies remain as follows:

- **Land scarcity:** The department faced challenges in opening a school in 'school less habitation' because of scarcity of land. Even the inhabitants did not cooperate with the department which remained a challenge throughout.
- **Deficiency of qualified teachers:** The department could not find qualified teachers as the salaries offered was very meager resulting in selection of non professional teachers. Besides recruiting the teachers just on 10+2 qualification did not match with academic standards of elementary education as the curriculum undergoes a change with time.
- **Political intervention:** one of the major challenges was the political intervention in the scheme which leads to opening of schools according to their choice thus policy guidelines as seen were violated at certain places.
- **No survey before implementation of schemes:** the stake holders randomly opened the schools without any survey in and around the habitational area resulting in ineffective implementation of the schemes.

Conclusion

In order to conclude we can say that there was lack of strategy and planning in framing the policy of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The policy had almost failed as proper survey was not done and the policy makers lacked the knowledge of the valley. With regard to KGBV's which are part of

NPEGEL (National plan of girl education at elementary level) massive campaign was needed to make people of downtrodden and economically backward blocks aware about the educational benefits so that the young ones could benefit under the flagship scheme of KGBV's. Furthermore, there was a need to develop worthy infrastructure in order to make the sitting of the pupil comfortable. In addition to that there is urgency to revamp or overhaul the entire designing of elementary education by way of engaging subject specified teachers and reorienting them by capacity building programmes so that they can train students by using proper pedagogy.

References

Reports and Books

- GOJK. Economic Survey, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Srinagar, 2013-14.
- GOJK. Economic Survey, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Srinagar, 2015-16
- MHRD Deptt. Of Elementary Education & Literacy Government of India Report, (2008). Monitoring Of The Financial Management And Procurement Relating To Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan In Jammu & Kashmir, *New Delhi*: Institute Of Public Auditors Of India.
- Mir, Murtaza, Hussain. (2018). Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Implementation in Jammu and Kashmir- Challenges and suggestions to achieve quality education. *Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol-9 (3), ISSN:0975-6795, pp. 2-6
- Ibid.
- Good, (1988). Die structure Der Famillie, Westdeuicher Verlag, Koln, pp.40.
- Ahmed Gul S.B, Khan Z, (2013) Interventions For Promoting Gender Equity At Elementary Education Level In South Kashmir: An Evaluative Study, *Journal of Arts, Science & Commerce*, Vol.-IV (3: E-ISSN 2229-4686 - ISSN 2231-4172,), p 137
- Malik I.M, et al, (2017) The impact of welfare programmes on women education in Jammu and Kashmir. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Development*, Vol-2, Issue (6),: ISSN: 2455-4030, p. 127

Articles and Journals

- Samarga Shiksha, MHRD. (2019) Ministry of human resource development Retrieved from-<http://samagra.mhrd.gov.in/index.html>
- Samarga Shiksha Report, (2019). Ministry of Human Resource Development, Draft Document: MHRD. Retrieved from- http://samagra.mhrd.gov.in/docs/Framework_IISE%20_F.pdf

- REMS, (Report).Research Evaluation, Monitoring & Supervision: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
Retrieved from- <http://www.ssa.jk.gov.in/rem/rem.pdf>
- Geelani, Syed Rizwan. (April 2, 2018). How successive regimes failed SSA scheme in j&k state, Srinagar: Greater Kashmir
Retrieved from-<https://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/opinion/how-successive-regimes-failed-ssa-scheme-in-jk-state/>
- MHRD, Kasturiba Gandhi Balika Vidiyala
<http://samagra.mhrd.gov.in/index.html>
- Government of Jammu & Kashmir (2019) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan/Ujala.retrieved from-
<http://ssa.jk.gov.in/>
- Syed Rizwan Geelani, (July 22, 2019).In J&K, Govt 'abandons' 600 under-construction school buildings, Srinagar: Greater Kashmir.
Retrieved from-<https://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/opinion/in-jk-govt-abandons-600-under-construction-school-buildings/>
- Tribune News Service,(2018). Panel to look into grievances of protesting SSA teachers, Jammu & Kashmir: The Tribune.
Retrieved from-<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/panel-to-look-into-grievances-of-protesting-ssa-teachers/636394.html>