

## **Over view of Quality related interventions under SSA**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a flagship programme of Government of India for the promotion of Universalisation of Elementary Education, has several features that seek to improve the quality of elementary education. The physical spaces of schools can be transformed into learning spaces only if certain basic provisioning is ensured. This provisioning includes, inter alia, an adequate number of teachers in schools, facilities for training of teachers, structures to provide regular on site academic support, grants to facilitate development of teaching learning materials to aid classroom instruction, textbooks for children from special focus groups, etc.

1. The programme places great emphasis on preparing the teachers for teaching, by building their capacity through a series of training programmes. The SSA provides for regular in service training for every teacher every year up to a maximum duration of 20 days, along with facilities for 30 days training for newly recruited trained teachers and 60 days training for teachers who have not received pre service training. Training covers several pedagogical issues, including content and methodology, to improve teaching learning transactions at classroom level. States have started exploring several innovative means of imparting these trainings, including use of the distance, self-learning mode and use of the educational technology. Teacher training under SSA emphasizes child-centered pedagogy and competency based teaching learning. In 2006-07, about 29.5 lakh teachers underwent the annual in service training. NCERT has prepared guidelines for in-service teacher training under SSA, called 'The Reflective Teacher' that advocates an optimum training duration of about 10 days per year. In service training as suggested by NCERT, should be split up into institutional training training 'on site' (that is, in the school), implementation of recommended strategies by the teachers in their own classroom settings and finally, meetings at BRC/CRC level to facilitate peer interaction amongst teachers. In 2007 – 08 more than 35 lakh teachers are to undergo annual in-service training that varies from 10 to 20 days depending on the need of teachers in different States/ UTs. Up to December end, 2007, 54% of the targeted teachers have been trained.

2. Classroom transactions can be meaningful only with an optimum Pupil Teacher Ratio. Nearly 8.32 lakh teachers out of the sanctioned 11.34 lakh teachers have been appointed under SSA so far.

3. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan also provides for grants to schools and teachers for developing local context specific, teaching learning materials that have the potential to improve pedagogical processes in the classroom. Nearly 35.28 lakh teachers were provided with grants for developing TLM in 2006-07. In 2007 – 08 SSA aims to provide similar grants to about 40 lakh teachers. By December end, 2007 about 70% of the targeted teachers have received TLM grants.

4. The SSA also addresses other systemic issues of physical infrastructure and incentives in the form of free textbooks for all children belonging to the SC and ST categories and

for all girls. Most first general learners belong to three categories and benefit from this provisioning.

In the year 2006-07, free textbooks were distributed to about 6.4 crore children. Emphasis is being laid on timeliness of distribution of textbooks to eligible children. In 2007 – 08 about 6.91 crore children will get free textbooks under SSA. Other than this States including Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Puducherry, UP and MP provided free textbooks to children from own state budget. By December end, 2007 about 94% of the targeted children have received free textbooks in states.

5. Decentralized academic resources institutions in the form of about 6395 Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and about 68352 Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) have been established across the country to enhance teachers' performance by providing them professional support. The issue of capacity building of these institutions is being taken up with States on a regular basis and a national level research study has been commissioned recently, to ascertain the efficacy of these structures for decentralized academic support. Further, the EC of SSA has issued certain clarifications that have facilitated the setting up of resource centers in urban areas as well.

6. NCERT has developed tools for monitoring quality under SSA that aim to sensitize States towards the need to focus the attention of BRCs and CRCs on academic support that includes in-class observation of classroom transactions, ensuring that SSA provisioning for quality (grants for schools and teachers, textbooks, etc.) actually reach the schools, organizing need-based teacher trainings, etc.

7. State, District and Block Level Resource Groups have been set up and participation of teachers in these groups is increasingly becoming evident. This has helped produce better textbooks, teaching learning materials and training modules. State level academic resource groups have been set up in 27 States, for developing a vision and perspective regarding pedagogy, teachers' training, etc. and making classroom transactions more activity based.

8. Several States are undertaking successful quality improvement initiatives like the 3Rs Learning Guarantee Programme in Maharashtra that has enabled more than eight lakh children get remedial support for satisfactory learning, Children's Language Improvement Programme (CLIP) and Children's Learning Acceleration Programme for Sustainability (CLAPS) in Andhra Pradesh, Integrated Learning Improvement Programme (ILIP) in West Bengal, Activity Based Learning (ABL) programme in Tamil Nadu), new institutionalized mechanism for independent testing in Karnataka, etc. Learning outcomes in selected competencies in various subjects are assessed independently through Karnataka State School Quality Assessment Organisation (KSQAO). States have instituted systems for large scale independent assessment of learning achievement levels and are using the result for systemic improvement like focused teachers training, developing remedial teaching programmes, etc.

Several large-scale innovative interventions have been initiated by State SSA programs (**Annexure I**). Such initiatives are being documented and are shared with other States/UTs to propagate similar innovative quality interventions across the country. Ministry has facilitated the documentation and dissemination of the following case studies, to facilitate cross state sharing of good practices under SSA:

- i) Quality Improvement Programme (QIP), Andhra Pradesh
- ii) 3 Rs Guarantee Programme, Maharashtra
- iii) Integrated Learning Improvement Programme (ILIP), West Bengal.
- iv) School Performance Monitoring, Uttarakhand
- v) Learning Achievement Tracking System (LATS), Orissa
- vi) Home based Education Practices for Children with Special Needs in SSA
- vii) NGO initiatives in inclusion: SSA experience
- viii) Shiksha Sangam – Documentation of innovative interventions under SSA by IIM, Ahmedabad

Other than these, NCERT has also documented the following state initiatives for quality improvement:

- i) School Improvement Initiatives in Kolhapur, Maharashtra.
- ii) Learning Guarantee Programme, Karnataka.
- iii) Activity Based Learning (ABL) Programme, Tamil Nadu

9. SSA also supports remedial teaching of children and nearly 34 lakh children were covered under this in 2006-07. In 2007 – 08, about 51 lakh children will receive remedial learning support under SSA.

10. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005, developed by NCERT, endeavors to reduce the curriculum load and make learning more enjoyable for children. NCERT has prepared a three-phased programme for the development of textbooks from 2006-07 till 2008-09. The NCERT textbooks have attempted to incorporate the concerns articulated in the NCF regarding gender sensitivity and a child centered, constructivist approach to learning. NCERT is assisting States in setting up core groups for reviewing their syllabi in the light of NCF, 2005.

NCERT is providing technical resource support to the Core Groups set up by States/UTs through the involvement of resource persons who were associated in the formulation of NCF, 2005 and other related activities including syllabus and textbooks preparation. NCERT has also made available a sum of Rs.10 lakhs per State/UT in order to trigger off these processes. The NCF 2005 has been shared with the States.

11. Several research studies under SSA are also underway to gather data and trends in teacher absence, students' attendance, 'time on task' by students and teachers, professional competence and deployment of para teachers, etc. Periodic pupil achievement surveys by NCERT are also conducted. The NCERT's Base line learning Achievement Surveys (BAS) reveal low achievement levels as indicated below.

<b>Classes</b>	<b>Maths</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>EVS</b>
Class III (BAS)	<b>58.25</b> (SD 24.89)	<b>63.12</b> (SD 22.05)	--
Class V (BAS)	<b>46.51</b> (SD 21.30)	<b>58.57</b> (SD 18.30)	<b>50.30</b> (SD 20.67)

<b>Classes</b>	<b>Maths</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>Soc. Science</b>
Class VII (A)*	<b>29.78</b>	<b>52.69</b>	<b>35.98</b>	<b>32.96</b>
Class VIII (B)**	<b>38.47</b>	<b>52.45</b>	<b>40.54</b>	<b>45</b>

Note: (A)\* – 10 States; (B)\*\* – 17 States & 3 UTs

Similar Mid-term learning Achievement Surveys (MAS) have also been conducted by NCERT. Findings of the learning achievement survey for class V are available now. A comparison of the mean learning achievement of students along with the standard deviations in each subject in BAS and MAS is provided below.

<b>Classes</b>	<b>Maths</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>EVS</b>
Class V (BAS)	<b>46.51</b> (SD 21.30)	<b>58.57</b> (SD 18.30)	<b>50.30</b> (SD 20.67)
Class V (MAS)	<b>48.46</b> (SD 19.97)	<b>60.31</b> (SD 17.57)	<b>52.19</b> (SD 19.99)

The results of these studies are expected to be factored in by States, to address systemic issues in elementary education, for quality improvement under SSA.

12. Capacity building of states, to address quality issues in EE, is also a regular feature under SSA. Technical and academic support is available to States through NCERT and the Technical Support Group (TSG) for SSA. The NCERT has designed a sourcebook on learning assessment and guidelines for annual in-service teacher training under SSA. NCERT is also undertaking monitoring of quality aspects of SSA. TSG for SSA has facilitated workshops on Multilingual Education for States with substantial tribal population, on the teaching of Science and Mathematics, on Reading Enhancement Programmes under SSA, on Multi Grade Multi Level Pedagogy and also on Resource Enhancement of Teachers. It has also promoted documentation and cross-state sharing of good practices under SSA.

Besides, it has also promoted awareness and understanding of non-government efforts for quality education, like the reading campaign and ASER by Pratham, Learning Guarantee Program by Azim Premji Foundation, reading programme by KATHA, Active Learning Methodology by The School, Science & Mathematics Education promotion activities by resource groups such as Homi Bhabha Center for Science Education (Mumbai), Eklavya

(MP), Agasthya Foundation (Bangalore), Jodo Gyan (Delhi), Ramanujam Museum (Chennai), Navnirmiti (Mumbai), BGVS (Delhi), etc.

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