Right to Education and Children with Special Needs: Role of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Barpeta District of Assam

Hiramani Patgiri
PGT (Political Science), Kendriya Vidyalaya, ONGC, Sivasagar
PhD Research Scholar, Department Of Political Science

Abstract

The issue of Right to Education is one of the most commonly discussed concepts of Political Science discourse. As a human being, every individual is entitled to the basic right of life i.e. the right to education. This right helps to bring out the inner potentialities of human beings and makes them capable for a life worth living. It promotes individual freedom and empowerment and yields important development benefits. Education is a powerful tool by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and participate fully as citizens. In case of the Children With Special Needs (CWSN), education is a powerful tool to bring the qualities latent under them and to bring them to mainstream like the other children. Different measures have been adopted at the global and national level by government to give effect to the right to education of Children With Special Needs. Under the study, an attempt is made to assess the role of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in ensuring the right to education of the CWS. The study area selected is Barpeta District of Assam.

Keywords: Right to Education, Children With Special Needs (CWSN), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Barpeta district
INTRODUCTION:

“Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development.”

Kofi Annan

The Right to Education is one of the essential rights in the contemporary time. Education is a fundamental human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights. This right is essentially important to bring out the inner potentialities of human beings and makes them capable for a life worth living. It promotes capabilities of individuals and yields important development benefits by empowering them. The word ‘education’ can be defined both in narrow and broad sense as well. In narrow sense, it refers to the formal institutional instructions that are received under formal environment, with fixed curriculum, at a fixed period of time under the guidance of specially trained teachers. In a wider sense education may be described as all such activities by which a human group transmits to its descendants a body of knowledge and skills and a moral code which enable the group to subsist. It is a lifelong process associated with an individual through which he/she acquires knowledge, wisdom and experiences at various stages of life. The process of education brings a formative and additive effect on the personality of the individual which is instrumental in bringing about social change and development. In the discussion of human rights, education has now been considered as the basic right of human beings. Being recognised as a right, it puts legal obligation on the state should make adequate provision for educating its people who do not have education. In addition to this access to education provisions, the right to education also encompasses the obligation on the state to rule out discrimination at all levels of the educational system, to set minimum standards and to improve the quality of education. The states are now obliged to make provisions so that every child should have equal access to both primary and secondary education as well.

The Children With Special Needs (CWSN) being the most neglected community of society entitle right to development through education. Education of CWSN is an important component of the whole structure of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), an education programme launched by the Government of India to ensure education for all. A new programme, “inclusive education” has been adopted to include CWSN in the normal school education with the other children. SSA has adopted different strategies and schemes to enrol CWSN under education programme. Identification, functional and formal assessment, educational placement, aids and appliances, support services, like special educators, speech therapist, physiologist, counsellor, vocational
education; teacher training, special teaching-learning materials, resource support, individualised educational plan, parental training and community mobilization, removal of architectural barriers, research, monitoring and evaluation, home-based education are some of the strategies adopted by SSA to ensure education of the CWSN. The paper is a study of the role of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in ensuring educational rights along with the other necessary facilities for the CWSN in Barpeta district of Assam.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:
The objectives behind the study are:

- To study the role of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in guaranteeing right to education to CWSN in Barpeta district.
- To study the CWSN friendly infrastructural and environmental facility, co-curricular and recreational facility availed by CWSN in the schools under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan of Barpeta District.
- To study the availability of other academic facilities for CWSN, like medical and awareness camps, provision of teachers and parents training for CWSN, Parent-Teacher Association, midday meal and transportation and community awareness programmes availed by CWSN in the schools of Barpeta District under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- To evaluate the role of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in ensuring educational assistance, like special educator, curriculum facility, availability of Teaching Techniques, availability of Teaching-Learning Materials, facility of Vocational Education and facility of Scholarship for CWSN to help them in their educational development.
- To study the academic performance of CWSN under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Barpeta district.

RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY:
The study is basically a CWSN centric study. For the study, four blocks are selected from urban and rural areas of the district which are divided on the basis of less and more concentrated CWSN from the seven education blocks of Barpeta district. A total number of 3033 CWSN are enrolled in government schools of these four blocks during the academic year of 2015. Taking 30% of the total CWSN, a total number of 909 Samples are selected for the study. Interview schedule is used to collect data in the study. To analyse the data, simple percentage is used.
Table 1: sample plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Educational Blocks</th>
<th>Rural / Urban blocks with more / less concentrated CWSN</th>
<th>Total in School CWSN</th>
<th>(30% CWSN)</th>
<th>Girl</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barpeta</td>
<td>Bajali</td>
<td>Urban (less concentrated CWSN)</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barpeta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Urban (more concentrated CWSN)</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mondia</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Rural (more concentrated CWSN)</td>
<td>1068</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rupsi</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rural (less concentrated CWSN)</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,033</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

The findings of the study are mentioned here objective wise:

Objective 1: Identification, Enrolment and Home-Based Education of CWSN

The findings can be shown under the following table:

Table 2: Number of CWSN under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Barpeta district, 2011-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>IDENTIFIED</th>
<th>ENROLLED</th>
<th>HOME-BASED EDUCATION</th>
<th>CWSN LEFT WITHOUT EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COUNT</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>COUNT</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>3729</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3596</td>
<td>96.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>3282</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3258</td>
<td>99.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>3614</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3577</td>
<td>98.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>4077</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4025</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>3104</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3033</td>
<td>97.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Right to Education and Children with Special Needs: Role of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Analysing the data collected during the study, it is found that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is not successful in bringing and enrolling the entire identified CWSN of Barpeta district under the basic education system. In the academic year 2011-12, total 22 CWSN are left without enrolling in the school education system which count almost 0.5 % of the total identified CWSN in the district. However, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has successfully enrolled the entire identified CWSN in the academic year of 2012-13, 2014-15 and 2015-16. Again, in the academic year of 2013-14, 01 CWSN is left without enrolling in the basic education system under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Objective 2: Infrastructural and Environmental Facility of School for CWSN

It is found during the study that 100 % of the sampled CWSN in Barpeta district have agreed that their schools are located at accessible places for them. The entire sample of CWSN (909 CWSN) of Barpeta district also responded during the study that the school buildings in which they are enrolled are permanently housed. 83.4 % CWSN that includes 759 out of the sampled 909 CWSN of Barpeta district responded that their school is located in a noise-free environment. A total of 64% of CWSN of Barpeta district are found during the study availing enough gaps in-between the desks of their classroom. The percentage of CWSN in Barpeta district who avail the facility of railing within the classroom is only 5%, which also means that a huge number of students CWSN i.e. 95% children do not have railing in their classrooms of Barpeta district. It is found during the study that, 85% of CWSN avail good quality big blackboard. Only 43% CWSN of Barpeta district avail the facility of almirah in their schools to keep their book, bags etc.

A total of 76% CWSN of Barpeta district responded positively during the study that there are adequate numbers of doors and windows in their classrooms for cross ventilation. The study proves that 79 % CWSN in Barpeta District avail natural light in their classrooms during the school hours. Remaining 21% CWSN of Barpeta District has expressed their view that their classrooms are damp and dirty. Among the total sample CWSN in Barpeta district, 64% have the facility of electric connection in forms of artificial light and fans etc. Only 43 % CWSN in Barpeta district during the study are found to avail special sitting arrangements in their classrooms. A total of 506 out of 909 (56%) CWSN of Barpeta district responded that their classrooms are clean and tidy, while 403 (44%) CWSN in the district reported that their classrooms are not clean and tidy. While asking about playground facility available for CWSN in school under Barpeta district, it is found that 543 out of 909 CWSN which counts 59.7 % responded that they have playground in their schools. Total 696 out of 909 CWSN counting 76.5 % in Barpeta district have open space in their schools. Again, 16.2 % CWSN responded that they have water sources which are germs free. While asking about the sanitation facility available for CWSN in Barpeta district, only 10.5
50

Hiramani Patgiri

% CWSN counting 96 out of 909 CWSN responded that they avail sanitation facility in the form of special toilet for CWSN. Only 11.9 % of CWSN (109 out of 909) in Barpeta district agreed during the study that their library is well maintained and they face no problem in searching the necessary materials. The entire sample of CWSN in Barpeta district does not have auditorium facility in their schools. There is no rest room facility for CWSN in their schools in Barpeta district. A total of 92 sample CWSN counting 10.1 % in Barpeta district responded in favour of availability of resource room in their schools. The entire sample CWSN of Barpeta district enjoys ramp facility in their schools. The percentage of CWSN who avail day care facility in their schools is 7.0 %, which means that only 64 CWSN out of 909 in Barpeta district avails the facility of Day Care facility. Among the sample CWSN of Barpeta district, play material is available only to 289 counting 31.7 % of the total sample CWSN in Barpeta district. Only 449 CWSN of Barpeta district counting 49.3 % avail the music facility in their schools.

Objective 3: Extra Academic Facility for CWSN

The entire sample CWSN avail the facility of medical and health care camps in Barpeta district. CWSN counting 88.0 % of the 909 sampled CWSN in Barpeta district reveals that medical health check-up camps are organised not regularly, but usually in their school. 83.4 % of the CWSN in Barpeta district avail the facility of aids and appliances after medical camps. During the study, 83.4 % of the entire sample of CWSN in Barpeta district agreed that their schools have counselling facility; while 16.5 % reported that they do not have counselling facility in their schools. In any of the schools of Barpeta district, there is no provision of trained academic counsellor to assist the CWSN in their study. However, it is found that teachers are trained under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for counselling purpose. It is also surprising that 90.6 % of the entire sample of CWSN in Barpeta district agreed that counselling sessions are held very less in their schools. Facility of Clinical Psychologist is also not available in Barpeta district to treat CWSN and to assist them in their development. While asking about the availability of Physiotherapist, 57.0 % CWSN in Barpeta district agreed that they avail the facility of a physiotherapist in their schools, while 390 CWSN (42.9 %) responded negatively regarding the availability of physiotherapist in their schools. Among the sample, 515 CWSN counting 56.6 % responded that the Physiotherapist visits school usually; while 43.3% CWSN responded that the Physiotherapist visits their school very less. At the same time, 1.6 % of the respondent CWSN avail the facility of Speech Therapist in schools under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Barpeta district. The entire respondents agree during the study that Parents Training programmes are held in Barpeta district to train the parents of CWSN under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The study proves that there is no formal Parents-Teachers Association in Barpeta district to educate CWSN. The
respondents in the study, however, agreed that Parents Teachers Meets are held to discuss the issues related to CWSN. Home-based support to parents, including guidance and counselling, is one of the important features of education of CWSN under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. It is found in the study that 88.8% of CWSN in Barpeta responded that they avail the facility of home-based parental guidance and counselling of their parents. Under the study, the entire sample of CWSN in Barpeta district agreed during the study that they avail the facility of Mid-Day Meal in their schools. In Barpeta district, the respondents CWSN denied that they do not get transportation facility. Among these respondents, 66.7% belongs to the poor section of society who needs transportation facility to come to school.

Objective 4: Academic Assistance for CWSN

It is found during the study that 84.2% of the total respondents CWSN in Barpeta district avail the facility of special educator. Teaching-learning methods are used in Barpeta district to educate the CWSN during the classroom. Individual as well as group teaching methods are used to make the lessons understandable for the CWSN in this district.

Extra Academic facility

![Figure 2: Percentage of CWSN According to Their Response of Extra Academic facility](image)

Here, FSE= Facility of Special Educator  TLM= Teaching-Learning Materials
FVE=Facility of Vocational Education  FS=Facility of Scholarship
Only 10.1% of the sample CWSN in Barpeta district, who responded in the study, avail the facility of vocational education in their school in the form of knitting, gardening, basket making etc. The study also reveals that no CWSN in Barpeta district who are included as the respondents in the study get scholarship.

**Objective 5: Academic performance of CWSN**

Along with the other indicators, the study also tries to find out the academic performance of the CWSN in Barpeta district. Among the respondents of the study, 483 CWSN in Barpeta district counting 53.1% are awarded with A Grade. Again, 28.8% of CWSN got B Grade. At the same time, 164 CWSN of the sample counting 18.0% are awarded with C Grade. If academic performance of CWSN is considered on the basis of gender, 26.7% girl CWSN and 26.4% boy CWSN in Barpeta district are awarded with Grade A respectively. 13.8% of boy CWSN that counts 126 are awarded with Grade B, while 14.9% of girl CWSN (136 CWSN) are awarded with Grade B in this district. Among the CWSN who got Grade C includes 9.7% boy CWSN and 8.2% girl CWSN in Barpeta district. These data indicate that there is no significance difference in the academic performance of CWSN based on their gender.

**CONCLUSION:**

The study regarding the role of SSA in ensuring the right to education of CWSN in Barpeta district have brought into light many significant issues related to CWSN. SSA is not successful in bringing all the CWSN in this district to school. Again, the infrastructural and environmental facilities necessary for the educational development of CWSN are also not sufficient in Barpeta district. Medical facility, parent-teacher association, community awareness programmes, transportation facility, vocational education are not properly managed by SSA. At the same time, academic assistance, like special educator, teaching-learning materials, counsellor, clinical psychologist, speech therapist are also not satisfactory in the district. In terms of academic performance of CWSN enrolled under the district, it is found that there is no significant gender difference in terms of academic performance. Therefore, SSA should strictly monitor all the schemes related to CWSN and bring about changes in the status enjoyed by CWSN.
REFERENCES:


