

Performance audit report on ‘Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan’(SSA)

Highlights

- **The objective of SSA was to enroll all out of school children in school, education guarantee centres, alternate schools and back to school camps by 2003. The date was revised to 2005 only in March 2005. However, out of 3.40 crore children (as on 1 April 2001), 1.36 crore (40 per cent) children in the age group of 6-14 years remained out of school as on March 2005 four years after the implementation of the scheme and after having incurred an expenditure of Rs. 11133.57 crore.**

(Paragraph 7.3.2)

- **The budget calendar for financial management and procurement has not been implemented by the Ministry which resulted in delay in finalisation of the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B) of the states and release of grants.**

(Paragraph 7.1.3)

- **The budget allocation and release of grants to the State Implementing Societies were below the amounts required as per their AWP&B. The budget estimates/revised estimates were far less than the outlay approved by the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy.**

(Paragraphs 7.2.1.5)

- **Funds were irregularly diverted to activities/schemes, which were beyond the scope of SSA. In the districts test checked by audit in 11 states (Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal), Rs. 99.88 crore was spent on items not permitted under SSA. Besides, in 14 states/union territories, financial irregularities of Rs. 472.51 crore were also noticed.**

(Paragraph 7.2.4.1 and 7.2.4.2)

- **Five States/UTs failed to maintain the SSA norm of 1:40 for teacher-student ratio. The ratio in primary schools and upper primary schools ranged between 1:60 and 1:130 in test checked districts of Bihar. Cases of uneven distribution of teachers amongst schools were noticed. Rural schools were suffering for want of teachers. 75884 of primary schools in fifteen states/UT were operating with one teacher only. 6647 schools in seven states were without any teacher. The position was alarming in the states of Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.**

(Paragraph 7.4.2)

- **SSA envisaged establishment of at least one primary school/Education Guarantee Scheme/Alternative Innovative Education centre within one kilometre of each habitation throughout the country. Audit revealed that such facility did not exist in 31648 habitations in 14 states/UT.**
(Paragraph 7.4.3.1)
- **SSA guidelines provided for one upper primary school/section for every two primary schools. In nineteen states/UTs, out of 204850 primary schools there was a shortfall of 46622 (23 per cent) upper primary schools in meeting this ratio.**
(Paragraph 7.4.4.1)
- **In three states of Assam, Bihar, and Gujarat, there were some schools with one classroom only against the prescribed norm of two rooms with verandah. There was no separate room for the Headmaster in 4427 schools in Assam and Bihar.**
(Paragraph 7.4.5.2)
- **There were delays ranging between one and nine months in supplying free textbooks in seven States/UTs. This could have adversely affected the pass percentage of the students. While free text books were not supplied to 7.46 lakh children, such books were supplied to ineligible students in 47.69 lakh children.**
(Paragraph 7.4.6.1)
- **A large number of schools in most of the States/UTs were functioning without buildings. Other infrastructural facilities like drinking water, toilets and separate toilets for girls, electricity, compound walls etc. were mostly not available. Repairs and maintenance grants were released without specific proposals and also even to schools without their own buildings.**
(Paragraphs 7.4.7 and 7.4.8)
- **Teaching-learning equipment were procured either without assessing the requirement or ensuring availability of infrastructure for their utilisation. 7531 CTVs in Andhra Pradesh purchased under SSA could not be utilised for want of supporting facilities. Some schools where these sets were supplied did not even have electricity.**
(Paragraph 7.4.10.1)
- **In two districts of Jharkhand, school grant of Rs. 47.88 lakh was released to 2369 schools, which were non-existent.**
(Paragraph 7.4.11.3)
- **Scheme guidelines with reference to disabled children were not strictly followed. In 14 states/UTs, only 5.55 lakh out of 8.87 lakh identified**

children with special needs were enrolled in schools. Assistive devices were provided to only 21440 out of 83185 children in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur and Orissa.

(Paragraph 7.5.2.2)

- Supervision and monitoring of the scheme was ineffective both at the National and State levels. The first meeting of Governing Council under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister was held in February 2005 and that of the Executive Committee under the chairmanship of the HRD Minister in March 2005. In cases where some monitoring was undertaken, monitoring reports were either not submitted or not analysed and follow-up action was not initiated.

(Paragraph 7.4.16.5)

- The scheme of SSA proposed to integrate with itself the National programme for nutritional support for primary education (mid-day meal scheme) with suitable modifications, in consultation with states as the evaluation of the programme indicated that supply of food grains led to improvement in student attendance while raising their nutritional standard. However, the survey by SRI of selected beneficiaries of SSA conducted at the instance of audit indicated that there were large differences between the figures as reported by the schools serving mid-day meals and those reported by the households indicating possible leakages.

(Paragraph 7.4.19)

Summary of important recommendations

Ministry may

- ensure the release of funding for SSA through special efforts. Unless the assessed funding requirements are met substantially and implementation is monitored more effectively, the targets are not likely to be achieved even with the extension of the deadline.
- like to examine principal reasons for non-enrolment in coordination with State governments/SIS so that enrolment could be made more attractive by devising specific/more focused sub interventions.
- ensure release of the first instalment to the state in April on the basis of their performance in the previous year. Suitable adjustments could be made after PAB's approval. It should avoid release of funds at the fag end of the financial year.
- carefully assess the exact requirement of funds before releasing these to SIS to avoid large amounts lying unspent by preferably introducing a specific check list for the purpose.

- **insist on refund of unutilised balances retained by SIS for over a year. This would help avoid blocking of resources. Cases of non-refund may be monitored at least quarterly, by the Ministry.**
- **undertake vigorous community mobilisation campaign highlighting the benefits of the scheme and urging the poor households to send their children to schools.**
- **like to reassess requirement of teachers in the schools and deployment of teachers made rationally with a view to minimising the possibility of shortage/excess of teachers, as the provision of relevant and useful education to children depended on the availability of teachers.**
- **introduce a quarterly review of the status of supply and distribution of free text books especially to the focus group children.**
- **like to develop a mechanism where proposals for grants are examined scrupulously and excess release of grants/misutilisation of funds are avoided.**
- **like to prepare a comprehensive and time-bound infrastructure development plan with targets/milestones for converting all the temporary structures and buildingless schools into permanent structures and providing basic amenities like electricity, water and toilet facilities in these and in the existing school buildings. The plan should indicate records to be maintained right upto the Ministry level.**
- **ensure community contribution/participation so that a vigil is kept on the activities by seeking periodical reports directly or by appointing a coordinator.**