

## Assessment of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Jammu City

Shashi Kaul and Shradha Sahni

*P.G Department of Community Resource Management and Extension,  
GCW Parade Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India  
Email: shashi\_kaul2002@yao.com, sahni.shradha@gmail.com*

**KEYWORDS** Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Education

**ABSTRACT** Education provides people with the tools and knowledge they need to understand and participate in today's world. It helps to sustain the human values that contribute to individual and collective well being. It is the basis for life long learning. It inspires confidence and provides the skills needed to participate in public debate. It makes people more self-reliant and aware of opportunities and rights. The purpose of the present study was to survey regarding the implementation and achievement of the SSA Scheme. The survey equally aims at getting concrete knowledge and information about the degree of infrastructure on its plus and minus sides. Quality of education in India is the most problematic aspect of its Education system today. Under the SSA programme, physical access to schools has greatly increased when compared before implementation of the SSA but quality of education has not improved because still most of the students have difficulty in reading and writing, though infrastructural gaps have reduced but use of conventional teaching methods lack the interest of the students in the curriculum.

### INTRODUCTION

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948) recognizes education along with necessities such as food, shelter and water as a fundamental human right.

In accordance with the constitutional commitment is to ensure free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years. Provision of universal elementary education has been a salient feature of national policy since independence. This resolve has been spelt out emphatically in the National Policy of Education (NPE), Indian Women Center (IWC) and the programme of Action (POA) 1992. A number of schemes and programmes were launched in pursuance of the emphasis embodied in Nation Policy of Education (NPE) and programme of Action (POA).

Social justice and equity are by themselves a strong argument for providing basic education for all. It is an established fact that the basic education improves the level of human well-being with regard to life expectancy, infant mortality, nutritional status of children etc. Studies have shown that universal basic education significantly contributes to economic growth.

Consequent to several efforts, India has made enormous progress in terms of increases in institutions, teachers and students in elementary education. The number of schools in the country increased four-fold from 2,3100 in 1950-51 to 9,30,000 in 1989-99, while the increase of enrolment

in primary cycle jumped by about six times from 19.9 million to 110 million. At the upper primary stage, the increase of enrolment during the period was 13 times, while enrolment of girls recorded a huge rise of 32 times. The Grass Enrolment Ratio (GER) at primary stage has exceeded 100 percent. The country has made impressive achievement in the elementary education sector. But the flip side is that out of the 200 million children in the age group of 6-14 years, 59 million children are not attending school. Of this, 35 million are girls and 24 million are boys. There are problems related to drop out rate, low level of learning achievement and low participation of girls, tribals and other disadvantaged groups. There are still at least one lakh habitations in the country without schooling facility within a kilometer. Coupled with it are various systemic issues like inadequate school infrastructure, poorly functioning schools, large teacher absenteeism, large number of teacher vacancies, poor quality of education and inadequate funds (Govt. of India, Human Resource Development 2000). But the truth is that the country is yet to achieve the elusive goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), which means 100 percent enrolment and retention of children with schooling facilities in all habitations. To fill this gap, the Government has launched the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Programme.

The scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was started in the year 2001-02 with the objective of universalisation of elementary education through a time bound integrated approach, in

partnership with states. SSA, which promises to change the face of the elementary education sector of the country, aims at providing useful and quality elementary education to all children in the 6-14 years age group by 2010.

The SSA is an effort to recognize the need for improving the performance of the school system and to provide community-owned quality elementary education in "mission mode". It also envisages bridging of gender and social gaps. The overall literacy rate in the country was 64.84% while it was 55.5% in Jammu and Kashmir. The data shows that the literacy rate of females in the rural areas of the state is much lower than that of urban areas. Whereas the percentage of female literacy in the urban areas of Jammu and Kashmir was 62%, it goes down to 36.7% in the rural areas, due to this alarming figure the need for SSA Scheme was felt (Census 2001)

The SSA has covered the entire expanse of the country before March 2002 and the duration of the programme in every district will depend upon the District Elementary Education Plan (DEEP) prepared by it as per its specific needs. However, the upper limit for the programme period has been fixed as ten years that is, up to 2010.

Evaluation National Council of Educational Research (2000) conducted a survey as a NCERT approved project in order to study the influence of school and its environment on student's achievements of class 5<sup>th</sup>. Multistage stratified random sampling design was used for the selection of districts. In each selected district, four rural blocks and three urban areas were selected. 50 schools were selected both from rural blocks and urban areas on proportional basis. The major findings of the study are:-

- Ø School bell, blackboard, chalk and duster and chairs for teachers were available in more than 90% schools.
- Ø Safe drinking water facility was available in approximately 73% schools.
- Ø Separate toilets for girls were available in less than 50% schools.
- Ø Competency based textbooks, workbooks, teachers and books and teaching aids were available in less than 25% schools.
- Ø More students were getting the benefit of mid day meal scheme as compared to rest of the scheme implemented in the states.
- Ø Average number of working days in schools in states, Union territories was approximately 213 with seven periods of 40 minutes each.

Ø Average number of teachers per school in urban schools was higher than in rural schools.

Approximately 90% students were attending schools for more than 70% of working days and less than 4% students were attending schools for less than 60% of the total working days.

Dreze (2003) conducted a study in three states – Chattisgarh, Rajasthan and Karnataka, and found a positive relationship between enrolments attendance and provision for free meals. In 81 schools that were studied in which the scheme SSA was introduced in July, 2001, enrolment in grade I increased by 15% in one year. This was especially true for female enrolments in Chattisgarh which increased by 17% and in Rajasthan by nearly 29%. The number of literate children in the age group 6 – 14 increased in 2001 – 2003 according to India's latest economic survey. But more children dropped out of school at the upper primary level within the same period. Between 2001–2002, nearly 82.2% of an estimated 193 million in the 6 – 14 age groups was enrolled in schools as compared with 81.6% in 2000 – 2001. At the upper primary level, however, the drop out percentage increased from 53.7% in 2000 – 2001 to 54.6%, in 2001 – 2002. The survey points out that "the drop out is still relatively high, especially among girls, though it has declined over the years at the elementary education stage." Economic Survey of India (2004).

Undoubtedly, India has taken large steps forward in the spread of primary education, as is evidenced by increasing enrolment rates of both boys and girls, as well as increasing literacy rates. These achievements have been the result both of greater funds allocated to education and also due to programs and schemes that focus on specific lacunae in the educational infrastructure and the educational system. These programs and schemes seek to align supply side incentives with demand side incentives and generate positive synergy between the two. However, it has become a cliché to say that a lot remains to be done.

In short, the country is yet to achieve the elusive goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), which means 100 percent enrolment and retention of children with schooling facilities in all habitations. This gap has been filled by the government by launching the "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Scheme (Ministry of Human Resource Development 2000).

Hence, the present study was taken with the following objectives.

## Objectives

1. To know the opinion of students regarding the facilities provided under SSA scheme in terms of
  - Education
    - (a) Access of students to education.
    - (b) Access of drop out students to SSA
  - Infrastructure
    - (a) Improvement in infrastructure (renovation/new construction)
  - Facilities provided to students
    - (a) Textbook for students
    - (b) Computer facilities
    - (c) Separate toilet facilities for boys and girls.
    - (d) Safe drinking water.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted to assess the level of achievement of schools under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme. A pilot survey was conducted to find out the schools where SSA programme has been introduced. The study was conducted in District Jammu. As per the information given by SSA District Education Officer, district Jammu has been divided into 18 blocks. Out of eighteen blocks four were selected randomly (two urban and two rural). From Jammu city, two schools were selected, Govt. Middle School Bhagwati Nagar and Girl Middle School Panjpeer. From Gandhi Nagar, two schools were selected, Govt. Middle School Pull Tawi, Govt. Middle School Kassim Nagar. From Bishnah block, Govt. Middle School Dindhey Khurd and Govt. Middle School Mehmood Pur. From Arnia block, Govt. Middle School Pindi Charkan, Govt. Middle School Pandorian Brahmana were selected for the study. In all, 128 students were selected from eight schools (16 respondents from each school) four students from each class (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>std) were selected randomly. Interview schedule was framed to collect the required information from students.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Profile of the Schools

Table 1 envisages the teachers' perception about the improvement in infrastructure after implementation of SSA scheme. Teachers reported that before implementation of the SSA scheme there were only 6 classrooms in rural and 7 in urban school. Upper primary classrooms were in bad conditions, being vulnerable to adverse condition in weather like rains. Most of the schools did not have a compound wall, and there was no toilet facility and accessibility to safe drinking water. But after the SSA scheme, new classrooms, office and toilets for the students were constructed. As per observation, no separate library was available for the students, only the books available with their respective class teacher were available for the reference, as well as, there was no provision of laboratory in any of the schools. No doubt due to SSA scheme, the number of classrooms were increased but even then it was not as per the requirement from rural as well as urban areas. Only two schools had toilet facility.

The study conducted by Fourth Joint Review Mission (2006) shows a similar result that the coming of SSA has reduced the infrastructure gaps by constructing new school buildings and making additions in the existing school buildings.

Table 2 depicts the teacher student ratio. As per the SSA guideline, the ratio of teachers in comparison to students is more. The reason is that the government has engaged the teachers for local area under Rehbar Taleem.

The need of the hour is that if teachers are engaged, they should motivate the children in the adjoining area to join school. To fulfill the objective of SSA, "education for all" is to be achieved. Moreover, if the ratio of teachers is more, all the more reason that quality education would be imparted.

**Table 1: Infrastructure of the school**

	Type of infrastructure provided by SSA											
	Area before SSA						After SSA (2003-07)					
	Room	Verandah	Toilet	Library	Lab.	Office	Room	Verandah	Toilet	Library	Lab.	Office
Rural	6	2	-	-	-	-	14	12	2	-	-	4
Urban	7	3	-	-	-	-	20	11	2	-	-	4
Total	13	5	-	-	-	-	54	23	4	-	-	8

**Table 2: Teacher pupil ratio**

Area	School	Total no. of student in the school	Total no. of teachers permanent /RTT	Ratio
Rural	Dindhey Khund	127	6	1:21
	Mehmood pur	71	8	1:8
	Pindi Charkan	120	5	1:24
	Pandorian Brahmana	50	5	1:10
Urban	Bhagwati Nagar	236	11	1:21
	Panjpeer	110	11	1:20
	Pull Tawi	120	7	1:17
	Kassim Nagar	202	9	1:22

### Profile of the Students

#### Caste-wise Profile of the Students

Table 3 data depicts that in rural areas, students belonging to schedule caste and schedule tribe and OBC's have started enrolling in the schools. The data reveals that percentages of schedule tribe students were more in urban areas that is, 20% boys and 13% girls whereas in rural areas 6% boys and 9% girls were enrolled, reason being that most of the tribes have settled down in the outskirts of urban areas.

According to the Census (2001), the overall literacy rate in the country was 64.84 percent while it was 55.5 percent in Jammu and Kashmir. The data shows that the literacy rate of females in the rural areas of the state is much lower than the literacy rate in urban areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

Due to this alarming figure, the need of SSA scheme was felt hence the present data shows the number of girl students in the schools has increased after implementation of SSA programme.

Table 4 focuses on distance of school from the respondent's residence. In rural areas, 36 percent respondents had school within half a kilometer whereas 33 percent had school within one km and 31 percent had school far from their residence. Whereas in urban areas, approximately 54 percent had school within one km only, 16 percent had school far from the residence. The SSA scheme emphasizes that the school should

**Table 4: Perception of student regarding SSA programme distance from residence (N = 128)**

Area	½ kilo- meter %	With in one kilometer %	Out of reach %	G. Total %
Rural n <sub>1</sub> = 64	36	33	31	100
Urban n <sub>2</sub> = 64	30	54	16	100
Total	33	44	23	100

be within one km. (Govt. of India). Overall percentage shows that in both the areas, majority of the respondents had school within reach. That is also one of the reason that enrollment number is increasing in the schools.

Survey conducted by Seventh All India Education Survey (2002) shows similar result. SSA programme emphasized on reducing the distance of school and having school of upper primary level with in one km and grant of Rs. 1.7 lakh has been sanctioned for the same.

Table 5 reveals that most of respondents were enrolled from the class 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>. Few students started their education from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> class in urban areas. The data show that the enrollment of girls in rural areas has increased. The data reveals that in rural areas even the parents have started enrolling their children from class 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> whereas urban areas data shows that the students were enrolled from the class 1<sup>st</sup>. In Govt. schools of urban areas, it was observed that the children who are helpers in some household, have been admitted in the schools, many of the dropouts from rural areas have again taken admission in

**Table 3: Profile of the students' caste wise (N = 128)**

Area	Brahimn			Schedule caste			Schedule tribe			OBC			G. Total %
	Boys %	Girls %	Total %	Boys %	Girls %	Total %	Boys %	Girls %	Total %	Boys %	Girls %	Total %	
Rural n <sub>1</sub> = 64	14	11	25	21	19	40	6	9	15	9	11	20	100
Urban n <sub>2</sub> = 64	15	19	34	11	17	28	20	13	33	2	3	5	100
Total	15	15	30	16	18	34	13	11	24	5	7	12	100

OBC: Other Backward Class

**Table 5: Respondents enrollment in the school (N = 128)**

Area	1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> class			3 <sup>rd</sup> to 4 <sup>th</sup> class			5 <sup>th</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> class			7 <sup>th</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> class			G. Total %
	Boys %	Girls %	Total %	Boys %	Girls %	Total %	Boys %	Girls %	Total %	Boys %	Girls %	Total %	
Rural n <sub>1</sub> = 64	30	25	55	9	-	9	14	17	31	2	3	5	100
Urban n <sub>2</sub> = 64	20	33	53	17	9	26	13	6	19	2	-	2	100
Total	25	29	54	13	5	18	13	12	25	1	2	3	100

urban areas, reason being they had passed out of some class in their native village and after dropout they had been again admitted in the school by their caretakers.

Table 6 reveals that 64 percent respondents from rural area mentioned that they have fixed school hours. The school starts and closes at fixed hours but 36 percent students from rural area and 25 percent from urban area revealed that there are no fixed school hours. The teachers allow the students to leave the school before the fixed departure time. As per observation, the school departure time was 4pm in winter season but it was closed at 2:55pm in rural areas. Mostly schools would close in time but it was observed that students were coming half an hour late to the school.

**Table 6: Perception of students about school timings (N = 128)**

Area	Fixed school hours		G. Total %
	Yes %	No %	
Rural n <sub>1</sub> = 64	64	36	100
Urban n <sub>2</sub> = 64	75	25	100
Total	70	30	100

The study by Singh and Grover (2002) shows similar results that the schools closed before the departure time. In rural areas, opening and closing times of school may deviate (they usually do) from the administratively fixed time.

Table 7 shows that the main source of liveli-

hood in rural area is agriculture and 95 percent of the families earn their livelihood from agriculture. At the time of seasonal cultivation or harvesting, students remain absent from the school to help their parents. Ratio of girls absenteeism remains for any of the given reason, whether it is household chores, illness, looking after the siblings or the social gathering, female child remains the soft target. In rural areas, students were least aware about their personal hygiene hence this results into illness. 28 percent boy and 39 percent of girl students remained absent from the school due to illness. Some students play truant just because of lack of motivation from the teachers as well as parents. Marriage ceremony of not only the near and dear one's but also of the far off relation is reason for not attending the school. Students from the labour class and farmers reported that their parents insisted that they remain absent from the school because they want that the children should help them in their agricultural activities, which is more important than attending school. Girls, mostly during seasonal farm activities, take off from the school to look after the siblings and for cooking food at home whereas boys are engaged in farm activities. Under SSA scheme, many facilities are given to educate the children up to the age of 14 years. Nevertheless, till our country remains poverty ridden, how can we avoid such lapses?

A study conducted by Reddy (2008) shows a similar result, that children find it difficult to cope with school as they have little or no family

**Table 7: Reasons for not attending school regularly (N = 128)**

Area	Reasons											
	House hold chores			Illness			Looking after sibling			Social gathering		
	Boys %	Girls %	Total %	Boys %	Girls %	Total %	Boys %	Girls %	Total %	Boys %	Girls %	Total %
Rural n <sub>1</sub> = 64	31	34	65	28	39	67	13	19	32	8	9	17
Urban n <sub>2</sub> = 64	28	22	50	23	38	61	28	28	56	19	14	33
Total	30	28	58	26	38	64	20	23	43	13	12	25

\*Multiple responses

atmosphere and support for learning and find it difficult to catch up with their peers.

A study conducted by Mukherjee (2006) also shows similar results that a large proportion of girls also leave because of lack of interest and poverty.

The study conducted by Singh and Grover (2002) shows similar result that during the agricultural peak period, families may use every available pair of hands in farm / wage labour and for cultural reason as the onset of wedding season. This translates into low and irregular attendance by students who are enrolled.

Table 8(a) depicts that the dropout is a serious phenomenon in our educational system. The data reveals that in rural areas, the predominant reason for dropout is children not being interested in studying. The number of rural dropout, 57 percent was higher than urban dropout, 42 percent. The main reason being that a category of agriculture labour seasonally migrate. Their parents migrate to other places in search of employment, which comes in the way of children education at primary level. It is only when parents settle at a place then they look out for children education. In the beginning, they help their parents in making of "Jhuggi", looking after siblings and others household chores till both the parents finalize about their livelihood. Children education is still not on the priority list of the downtrodden. Some of them revealed that parents believe even after this basic education, one has to go for labour

work, why not to start now and be a helping hand to the family. Some of the students, that is, 24 percent boys and 18 percent girls revealed that poverty is also one of the main cause of dropout. Few students also made it clear that because of their poor economic position, parents preferred sending their children for work in agriculture as a daily wager. Poverty thus, does not let children from continuing their school education, as most of the students are from labour class and are engaged in household chores and looking after the siblings and leave their studies in between. Poverty is also one of the major reasons for dropouts among respondents of both the areas.

A study conducted by 61 NSS (National Service Scheme) data by Govt. of India 2006, 4% children were not attending school, 41% girls in the 6 – 11 year age group and 10 % of boys gave the reasons for not attending the school as household constraints.

The study conducted by Mukherjee (2006) shows a similar result. The data indicates that boys aged 10 – 14 years were more likely to dropout than the girls. In order to contribute to household income, girls mostly dropout to perform domestic chores. The finding shows lack of interest, poverty, child labour and the absence of secure employment after schooling being the reasons for large number of dropouts.

According to Census (2001), while the reasons for dropout from school are similar to the present study, most dropouts are from rural areas and

**Table 8a: Reasons for dropout from the school (N = 128)**

Area	Yes %	No %	Reasons for dropout							
			Poverty		No interest in studies		Migration		Household chores	
			Boys %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %
Rural n <sub>1</sub> = 64	57	43	14	29	43	10	-	29	14	19
Urban n <sub>2</sub> = 64	54	46	24	18	18	12	24	28	20	16
Total	55	45	23	23	28	12.5	18	31.25	20	18

\*Multiple responses

**Table 8b: Readmission after dropout (N = 128)**

Area	Yes %	No %	If yes reason			
			Migration	Family awareness	Motivation by teacher	School within reach
			%	%	%	%
Rural n <sub>1</sub> = 64	23.5	9.4	19	43	10	10
Urban n <sub>2</sub> = 64	59.5	18.8	34	22	20	20
Total	64	22.0	41.4	50.8	23.4	23.4

\* Multiple responses

belong to the Muslim community. Parents remain hesitant to send their girls to school as the schools have only male teachers.

The Economic Survey of India (2004) show a similar result, pointing out that “the dropout rate is still relatively high, especially among girls though it was declined over the years at the elementary stage”.

Table 8(b) reveals about the students who were dropouts and have again joined the schools. 64 percent of respondents from both the areas mentioned that they had migration dropout cases in their class. Reason could be that the families moved from one place to another and could not join the same school and have taken admission at the new place of residence and at times have to miss a year or so. 23% of respondents from both the areas revealed that because of SSA programme, the school is within reach and parents and teachers motivated them to join the school. Overall position depicts that in maximum number of schools, there were quite good number of readmissions after the dropout.

Table 9 depicts that approximately 60% of the respondents from both the areas revealed that teachers take the roll call daily but 40% of teachers assign this duty to class representatives whenever they do not come to the class. Further, the data reveals that homework is assigned to the student regularly but it is never checked by the teachers, if checked the teacher signed it without correcting mistakes. Majority of respondents

from both areas informed that teachers were not interested in giving extra time to the weaker students and clearing their doubts. As per the observation, most of students were not able to read the words properly and they did not know the meaning of simple words when asked. Only 38% of respondents revealed that teachers helped them out in their work. Interestingly, a few children without any fear referred to the problem of the irregularity of teachers, the tough curriculum offered, and the teaching methods.

Implementation of SSA scheme has helped on certain issues, though the quality education we expect is still far from reaching the target.

Table 10 depicts that 14 percent boys and 25 percent girls from both areas responded that the teachers don't react when the students were late for school. In rural as well as in urban areas, boys were very often beaten by sticks as compared to girls for punctuality, whereas girls were more often scolded.

The Economic Survey of India (2004), shows one teacher for every 43 pupils in 2001 – 2002. The poor pupil- teacher ratio continues to be a drawback in the country's education. A major reason that the pupils – teachers ratio is not improving in several state government schools is that the schools have chosen not to be recruit teachers despite reminders from the central government.

Table 11 envisages that 88% of schools had basic academic facilities like blackboards, chalk,

**Table 9: Perception of students about teachers' performance (N = 128)**

Area	Take roll everyday		Assigning regularly of homework		Checking of homework		Help in time of difficulty		Teacher spend quality time with the students	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
Rural n <sub>1</sub> = 64	58	42	75	25	30	70	39	61	19	81
Urban n <sub>2</sub> = 64	56	44	78	22	42	58	38	62	39	61
Total	57	43	77	23	36	64	38	62	29	71

**Table 10: Reaction of teacher regarding punctuality (N = 128)**

Area	When not attended							
	Don't react		Harsh language		Beaten by stick		Scolding	
	Boys %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %
Rural n <sub>1</sub> = 64	16	31	20	23	20	8	13	19
Urban n <sub>2</sub> = 64	13	19	19	28	11	5	11	28
Total	14	25	20	26	16	6	20	15

\* Multiple responses

**Table 11: Academic facilities provided to the students (N = 128)**

Area	Academic facilities provided						G. Total %
	Blackboard, chalk, chair for teachers		MDM, free text book, scholarship		Laboratory, library, computer		
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	
Rural n <sub>1</sub> = 64	86	14	58	42	-	100	100
Urban n <sub>2</sub> = 64	90.6	9.37	72	28	-	100	100
Total	88	12	64	35	-	100	100

chairs for teachers and facilities like text books, mid-day meal and scholarships were available in the school of both areas and encouraged the students for enrollment. But facilities like computers, library and laboratory were neither available in schools of rural areas nor in the urban areas. Some of the respondents revealed that scholarships were provided only to students belonging to schedule castes, schedule tribes and OBC (Other Backward Castes). Free text books were provided to all students but at times, text books of all subjects were not available. Mid-day meals were provided to all but respondents were not satisfied with its quality. Some of the students from both the areas revealed that separate meals were prepared for the teaching faculty and also revealed some percentage of students who were from downtrodden class, join school because of midday meals.

The study conducted by Kingdom (2001) revealed that the provision of mid-day meal is associated with the 50 percent reduction in the percentage of girls who left school.

Similar results were found by NCERT (National Council of Education Research) (2000) that 90% schools had bells, blackboards, chalk and dusters and chairs for teachers.

Table 12 depicts that 75 percent respondents in rural areas and 72 percent in urban areas responded that activities were being organized in the schools and they participate in these programmes. The cultural programmes were held mostly on eve of Independence and Republic

days. 31 percent students in rural areas and 23 percent students in urban areas informed that sports activities were held in the schools. Sports kits were available in the schools but teachers did not provide these to the students. Painting competitions were not held in rural areas but in urban areas 18.75 percent students responded that painting competitions were held in the school. In rural and urban areas, majority of students revealed that debate competition was not organized in the schools. In rural areas, only 23 percent students responded that debate competitions were held in the school, as compared to 39 percent students in urban areas. In rural areas, 47 per cent students informed that picnics were organized for the students whereas in urban areas, 55 percent students answered in 'No'.

Table 13 shows that 72 percent respondents from rural and urban area revealed that there is improvement in infrastructure in the last two years. The respondents expressed that new classrooms have been constructed. The old classrooms have been renovated. The SSA has met the need of safe drinking water, toilets and

**Table 13: Students perception regarding improvement in infrastructure (N = 128)**

Area	Improvement in infrastructure		G. Total
	Yes %	No %	
Rural n <sub>1</sub> =64	59	41	100
Urban n <sub>2</sub> =64	84	16	100
Total	72	28	100

**Table 12: Extra-curricular activities in the school (N = 128)**

Area	Activities		Types of activities			
	Yes %	No %	Sports %	Painting %	Debates %	Picnic %
Rural n <sub>1</sub> = 64	75	25	31	-	23	47
Urban n <sub>2</sub> = 64	72	28	23	18.75	39	55
Total	73	27	27	21	31.25	51

\* Multiple responses



furniture. 28 percent respondents from both the areas mentioned that toilets are not in usable condition and have no access to safe drinking water in the school premises. As per the observation, due to less number of classrooms, teachers had to combine classes together, and in most of the classrooms there were no provision of desk, mats and fans.

Similar results were found by Singh and Grover (2002). Schools under the SSA scheme in the districts of Tamil Nadu had only two schools which had toilets, one of which was not in usable condition and only two schools had running water on their premises.

Nichenameta (2008) shows a similar result that SSA fails on the basics according to statistics from all schools imparting elementary education. The minimum requirement for upper primary school is around eight classrooms but the number is 4.0 for all schools.

### CONCLUSION

Education is one of the most powerful instruments in shaping the human race. Education is the only answer to all our socio-economic problems. Several global organizations and nations have been emphasizing the need for universalisation of primary education. In the world education conference held at Jometin, access to education was declared as a human right. The economics Nobel laureate Prof. Amartya Kumar Sen has also pointed out that for sustainable development, even the poorest of poor should be provided proper education. Accordingly, steps have to be taken to bring primary education to the doorstep of the rural people since more than 75 percent of Indians live in rural areas. There is an imperative need to change the education pattern to achieve universal primary education in India. Even after 60 years of independence India is facing obstacles in providing education for all. Thus, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is premier program of the Govt. of India launched in 2001 to achieve the cherished goal of universalisation of elementary education, a Fundamental Right.

As per the goal of education for all, the present study entitled "Assessment of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Jammu" is a study to know the level of achievement of SSA in Jammu in terms of education infrastructure, a facility provided to students and teachers, to know the opinion of

students and teachers regarding the achievements of the scheme.

The study was conducted in four blocks of District Jammu, two urban (that is, Jammu city and Gandhi Nagar) and two rural (Bishnah and Arnia). From each block, two schools were selected. The sample comprised of 128 students, sixteen teachers and 40 locals. The interview schedule were framed as a tool to elicit the required information. Data was subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis while keeping in mind the objectives set forth for the study.

The result of the study revealed that the percentages of Muslim students in urban area were more when it was compared to rural. The data show that in rural area the number of boys and girls from each community was same whereas the respondents for the Muslim community were less. In urban areas, there were more girls and less number of boys from both the communities. The distance of the school from the students residence has reduced and majority of respondents had school at 1 km. distance (as per SSA norms). Students informed that there were no fixed school hours. Mostly, school would close before school timing. But, it was observed that students were coming half an hour late to the school.

The study shows that in rural areas students were least aware about their personal hygiene, hence that led to illnesses. Students remained absent from the school due to illness. Some students play truant just because of lack of motivation. Marriage ceremonies of nears and dears is also a reason for not attending the school regularly. Students from the labour class or farmers reported that parents insisted that they miss school because they want that children should help them in agricultural activities and take care of siblings at home. Further, in rural areas, the predominant reason for dropout among children was not being interested in studies. A few students also made it clear that because of their poor economic position, parents preferred sending their children for work in agriculture as daily wage earners. Poverty also unables children from continuing their school education. It is surprising to note that there is considerable decline in the percentage of out of school children in rural as compared to urban. The reasons for readmission of dropouts in schools were migration, family awareness and motivation by teachers. The students belonging to the category of agriculture

labour reveal the problem of seasonal migration. Their parents migrate for shorter periods to other places in search of employment, which comes in the way of children education at primary level. Interestingly, a few children without fear referred to the problems of the irregularity of teachers, the tough curriculum offered and the teaching methods. Mostly, a representative took the roll call when teachers were late in class or absent and did not take class. Majority of respondents in rural as well as in urban areas informed that teacher were not interested in giving extra time to the weaker students or clearing their doubts.

On the basis of the study, it may be concluded that while the quantity of education has increased substantially in India, average statistics hide unevenness of achievements. Moreover achievements qualitatively by no means imply adequacy of quality. In fact, quality of education in India is the most problematic aspect of its education system today. Under the SSA programme, physical access to the school has greatly increased when it is compared before implementation of SSA. Quality of education has not improved, because most of the students have difficulties in reading and writing though infrastructure gaps has reduced but use of conventional teaching methods lacks the interest of students in the curriculum.

### SUGGESTIONS

- Ø The illiterate parents, especially women, should be educated so that they can realize the importance of enrollment and retention of their children at school.
- Ø Allocation of grants should be increased so as to create necessary infrastructure.
- Ø School committees need to be strengthened and they have to play an active and important role in enrolment and retention of students.

- Ø The officers in-charge should periodically convene meetings of parents and to identify the practical problems in the way of enrollment and retention of students.

More teachers should be recruited so that teacher pupil ratio improves.

### REFERENCES

- Census 2001. From <<http://www.earth.columbia.edu/education/>> (Retrieved April 19, 2008).
- Dreze Jean, Goyal Aprajita 2007. Future of Mid-Day Meals. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 8(2): 5-9.
- Economic Survey of India 2004. From <<http://www.nic.in/>> (Retrieved Nov, 2007).
- Human Resource Development 2000. *A Report by Govt of Human Resource Development on Assessment of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in India*. New Delhi: Human Resource Development.
- Fourth joint Review Mission on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan 2006. From <<http://www.nic.in/>> (Retrieved Jan 18, 2008)
- Kingdom Jane 2001. Education Policy Reforms and the Quality of the School System. A Field Study of Primary Schools in Madhya Pradesh in India. *Working Paper*. Paris: University of Paris.
- Mukherjee Rukhmaini 2006. Education Policy Reforms and the Quality of the School System: A Field Study of Primary Schools in Madhya Pradesh, India. *Working Paper*. Paris: University of Paris.
- Nichenameta Pradsad 2008. Community participation in primary education: Innovations in Rajasthan, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 22(4): 6-10.
- National Council of Education Research 2000. *A Report by NCERT on the Evaluation of Students Achievement in 5th Class In India*. New Delhi: NCERT
- National Service Scheme 2006. From <<http://www.census.gov/>> (Retrieved on 28 Feb. 2006)
- Reddy Subrimanyam 2008. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. *Daily Excelsior*, Aug 26, 2008, P.5.
- Singh Harpreet, Grover Shuchi 2002. *A Case Study of Maduria and Villupuram Districts in Tamil Nadu*. The Quality of Primary Education: Center for International Development, Harvard University.
- Seventh all India Education Survey 2003. Elementary education for all in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 5(6): 56-59.