

# **Prospects of Coordinating Sarba Siksha Abhijan and Rural Libraries for Social Development in Assam with special reference to Kamrup District**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Education is the most important element for growth and prosperity of a nation. Of the three basic pillars of rural development i.e. village school, village panchayat and village co-operative, the school is the most vital component of human development and library is the most enduring tool for rural transformation. Education of rural children plays a crucial role in enabling them to meet the complex challenges of the world around them. Sarba Siksha Abhijan has been launched in 2001 throughout the country including Assam. The Government of Assam has created '**Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission**' a society under its Education Department for this purpose.

Education is indeed a fundamental right of every child. Education and library services go hand in hand; one cannot be separated from the other. Since the rural populations are not providing education in grass root level, so the library services are too denied. Today the Sarba Siksha Abhijan is playing a major role for the development of elementary education in Assam. If the rural libraries are clubbed with Sarba Siksha Abhijan, then the masses of rural areas of Assam will be more benefited in the dissemination of knowledge to a great extent.

## **1.2 Sarba Siksha Abhijan and Rural Library**

Sarba Siksha Abhijan means the "Education for All" it is a movement, also referred to as "each one teach one" is a flagship programme of the Government of India for achievement of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time bound manner, as mandated by the 86<sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution of India, thereby making free and compulsory education to children of age group between 6 to 14.

Public libraries come up as institutions for the masses, where the illiterates are educated with the aid of pictures, stories and demonstrations, lectures and reading from the epics and other literature of our country, and where the newly educated are helped to widen their knowledge with the aid of selected books on various subjects and education through literacy classes are to be

imparted to women and children also through epic literature, puppet show and theatre, etc. With a view to extend the library services to the village level a Rural Library Scheme was implemented in 1985-86 in Assam. Rural libraries or Village libraries have been established. A rural library is an integral part of mass education programme and its main aim is rural development. The prime objective is to take forward the backward community, the neglected and the suppressed people of the society through various programmes and to preserve the literary heritage of the local social life.

### 1.3 Scope of the study

The present study is intended to describe the various functions and activities of Sarba Siksha Abhijan, Assam and Rural libraries towards the social development of rural community.

### 1.4 Objective of the Study

The study has been undertaken with the following objectives by determining the role played by rural libraries of Kamrup district for further dissemination of knowledge to the society through of SSA.

- a. To know the extent of use of SSA in implementing its declared activities
- b. To find out the level of literacy achieved by SSA in Kamrup district
- c. To find out the coordination between the SSA and rural library systems
- d. To find out the drop-out students and the reasons in Kamrup District
- e. To study the present state of Rural Libraries in Kamrup District
- f. To suggest measures to be taken by the Rural libraries for social development

### 1.5 Methodology

In order to study the present role played by SSA and also to assess the facilities provided by it through rural libraries, the survey method is adopted on the basis of observations, distributions of questionnaires and personnel interviews.

## 1.6 Area of Study

As the main function of SSA is to make the society a literate one and its slogan is “Education for All”, so synchronizing the main purpose of Sarba Siksha Abhijan with Rural libraries of Assam, the slogan in Assam like “*Pratikhan vidyalaya sundar hubo*” (*Every school will be decent*), *Pratigaraki sishu vidyalaya lai jabo* (*Every child will go to School*)” and “*Saklowe Pahre, Sakalowe Aagbahre*” (*Every one will read, Every one will march forward*) will direct the rural population towards the educational development for 100% literacy in the state of Assam. SSA is not rendering their services through the rural libraries. If the rural libraries are involved in promoting their services then the activities of Sarba Siksha Abhijan will further be improved. So, keeping this area in mind the topic “**Prospects of Coordinating Sarba Siksha Abhijan and Rural Libraries for Social Development in Assam with special reference to Kamrup District**” has been selected for the study. The thrust area of study is the role of rural libraries in disseminating education to masses through SSA. The study is confined to only Kamrup district as demarcated by the Govt. of Assam. So, only those rural libraries which are under Kamrup district are covered. The study is divided into seven chapters:

**Chapter 1** Research Design: Discussion has been made here on the topic in brief with its objectives and other issues on the research like area, methodology, scope and limitation of the study area, etc.

**Chapter 2** Literature Review: Literature on the study area is scanned available in different sources and they are grouped basically into three groups: Printed Books and Printed Journals, E-Books and E-Journals and other Documents. In every group, literatures are arranged chronologically.

**Chapter 3** Sarba Siksha Abhijan: historical perspectives and functioning: Sarba Siksha Abhijan (SSA) is a major project of the Govt. of India with a mission to touch every child for educating in right perspectives. The Govt. of Assam had also implemented the project so that every child irrespective of their living places: town or villages get the access to education. This is also supplementing the Right to Education Act of the Government. The historical perspective and the present state of the project are discussed in this chapter.

**Chapter 4 Rural Libraries for Social Development:** a study with reference to Assam: Importance of rural libraries in educating especially the rural people is found to be very much in discussion. The basic goal of SSA and the Rural Libraries are almost identical, to educate and its continuity. Once a child is learning; his/ her learning is to be continued in future which is possible through the libraries. It is obvious that Rural Libraries are able to reach the rural masses even at the remote place because of the location of the libraries. In this chapter discussion has been made highlighting all related issues of rural libraries and its social impact.

**Chapter 5 Rural Libraries in Kamrup District:** the present status: While conducting the survey a large number of Rural Libraries and Youth Club having library facility have been visited by the scholar and the status of the libraries are looked into. In this chapter libraries visited have been discussed with illustration (pictorial views of the libraries). A total number of 32 libraries included in the chapter for having the state of the art of those libraries.

**Chapter 6 Survey and Analysis:** Data collected from each library through a prescribed questionnaire and also collecting by visiting each library have been analyzed in the chapter by using mainly Microsoft Excel.

**Chapter 7 Findings, Conclusion and Suggestions:** Following are the Summary and findings along with specific recommendations:

### **Summary and Findings**

SSA is an effort to universalize elementary education by community-ownership of the school system. During survey it is noticed that the existing conditions of rural libraries in Kamrup district are not satisfactory. Most of libraries are facing financial crisis. Due to lack of library legislation Act the Assam government is not giving proper interest for development of these libraries. During survey it has come to notice that rural libraries are not getting any financial assistance from RRRLF directly because of non-submission of audited accounts and utilization certificate. To provide better service by the rural libraries in Assam, the great obstacle for it is the non-enactment of library legislation for the state of Assam. It is a high time that the Govt. of Assam should take special initiative to pass the library bill at the earliest for the up gradation of the public libraries in general and rural libraries in particular.

The findings based on objectives are given below:

**Objective-1:** *To know the extent of use of SSA in implementing its declared activities.*

**Findings:**

To providing education to all children, the State Government has started “Sarba Siksha Abhijan” in 2001. Under this programme schools were started in the remote areas where school or educational facilities did not exist. The importance of education is recognized worldwide and it is a matter of great pleasure to mention that the community has also recognized its importance. The necessity of education has also been considered essential by the rural community. Education may not be a panacea for all our ills, but is definitely a means of change, and a change for the betterment of the society. In present day society education has been considered as a sound economic investment and that is the reason that in all the developed and the developing societies, greater attention is being paid to the education. The education has occupied an important place and certainly demand due attention for the development of the society. In all walks of life, education has become a must. In our national perception, education is essential for all. For this SSA is doing right work by implementing its declared activities.

Chapter 3 of the present work has dealt in details of the issues pertaining to the objective as stated.

**Objective-2:** *To find out the level of literacy achieved by SSA in Kamrup district.*

**Findings:**

Those students do not go to the school before Sarba Siksha Abhijan is implanted, but this trend is changed. The actual level of literacy cannot be properly measured, but after close observation and having dialogues with the parents of the students it is perceived that Sarba Siksha Abhijan has got very possible responses in the Society. Moreover the facilities provided by SSA have inspired and encouraged the parents to send their children for education.

Survey has been conducted for the study of the literacy achieved along with other related issues through a prescribed questionnaire responded by the rural librarians and the rural library organizers. Moreover, literature available in the area is also taken for meeting the objectives. In

the chapter 3 and chapter 6 and the table 6.1(a) and table 6.1(b) presented in respective figures has indicated the fulfillment of the objective 2 of the work.

**Objective-3:** *To find out the coordination between the SSA and rural library systems.*

**Findings:**

Library is an agency for universal and perceptual self-education. It is universal in the sense that it is not confined to a group or a class of people. It is open to all without any distinction of class, creed, color and sex, not limited like a few years' education in the school or a college. It is an agency of perpetual existence giving useful education. Thus a library has a greater role in spreading of education and learning than a formal educational institution. It is, therefore, suggested that the rural libraries of Kamrup district should be attached to all SSA to play their supportive role in the village life. There is need to coordinate activities among the various agencies of the state and central government engaged in literacy programme through SSA. Rural libraries are an important agency for the education of the people. Unless rural libraries are involved into literacy programme of SSA, there cannot be worthwhile progress in literacy.

In the present study, chapter 3 and chapter 6 in the table 6.5 and table 6.6 presented in the respective figures have been discussed and presented for the study.

**Objective-4:** *To find out the Drop out students and reasons in Kamrup district.*

**Findings:**

The state of education in India and particularly in Assam is not up to expectations. The government machinery claims to have included all children in the net of education. But till now maximum students are not attached with formal education. There are a number of reasons, such as adverse economic condition, lack of educational facilities and involvement of children in the domestic works that have adversely affected the spirit of education in the village community. Therefore, it is very necessary to take remedial measures to remove the hurdles in education being faced by the villagers. The left out and dropout school children in our society are to be fully covered by making them literate by SSA, which has a declared policy. In the chapter 6 Table 6.14 and 6.15 presents the actual picture of the drop out students of the district.

**Objective-5:** *To study the present state of rural libraries of Kamrup district.*

**Findings:**

The Chapter 5 of the work has dealt in details of the present scenario of the rural libraries of Kamrup district with necessary snapshot and discussion made accordingly. A total number of 32 libraries of all 9 Educational Blocks of Kamrup district have been discussed with their workings. Moreover, data collected are presented in Table 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 which are presented through respective figures. This has given a clear state of activities of the rural libraries of the district.

**Objective 6:** *To fulfill the objective 6, the following suggestion will justify it.*

**1.7 Suggestions:**

Following suggestions are based on the study, (objective 6) and recommended for coordinating SSA and Rural Libraries for social development in Kamrup district:

- a. In fact, there is lack of reading environment in the rural areas. The library services can partially create the reading environment and provide reading literature and this may help in retaining the literacy skill. Kothari Commission had rightly suggested that the existing libraries in the schools should be made as centers of adult education and extension services. The Advisory Committee for Libraries also supported this idea and recommended for developing and assisting school libraries by extending services for education movement in the villages.
- b. Cultivation of reading habits among children should be developed so that even if a child does not complete schooling or further education, still he should be able to form a lifelong habit of reading. The rural community has a clear cut idea that school libraries should be opened for the public with suitable literature beyond school timing to the rural society. The school library under SSA should be kept open during the vacation and long holidays for the benefit of students as well as the local community. The Advisory Committee for Libraries (1958) also recommended that school libraries can serve as

public libraries after school hours to implement the recommendation. This needs to be strictly adhered to in its proper spirit.

- c. The latest information about the various developmental schemes of the government should reach to rural public so that the real benefits of these schemes can be ensured. It is suggested that library should invariably be created as an agency at every village level, where information and literature of all kinds of development schemes can be made available.
- d. The library services in villages through rural libraries and school libraries can be made of functional information centers for the villagers and farmers. The Advisory Committee for Libraries, set up by the Government of India has recommended that rural libraries be set up at the panchayats, blocks, districts etc. with a primary view to cover the whole population of India.
- e. It has been noticed during survey that schools and other institutions of informal education have been opened in the rural areas, but supportive facilities such as libraries have not been established along them. The National Policy on education 1986 recommended that “together with development of books, a nation-wide movement for improvement of existing libraries and the establishment of the new ones will be taken up and provision will be made in all educational institutions for improved library facilities”. It is therefore, very necessary that libraries should be started in all the schools and due provision should be with the establishment of the schools for qualified professional librarian.
- f. Public Information Kiosk (PIK) may be established at every Rural Library. This PIK’s should be equipped with local Newspapers, Magazine / publicity materials of government departments, information of various developmental schemes and programmes, information database, Telephone, FAX, TV, photocopier.
- g. Library legislation must be passed by Govt. of Assam and it must be implemented at the earliest. Proper provision for Rural Libraries developed should be included in the legislation.

- h. Separate Ministry of Public Library system should be created to make them proper functional libraries.
- i. The Rural Library Network in Kamrup district (RLNK): a model is suggested for the development of Rural Library and SSA library.

There is a need to establish, maintain and develop an integrated library system and adequate rural library services in the state.

## 1.8 Conclusion

From the study it can be concluded that rural population destined to be served by the rural library in spite of various problems like lesser number of staff, very limited fund, lack of physical facilities and such other issues must be made attractive and effective. The basic aim for the fulfillment of the dream of India make Shakshar Bharat (Literate India) and thus reaching 100% literacy within 2016 can be achieved. It is found that S.S.A. with its stated objectives and extension of sufficient fund by the Central Govt. it has failed to attract the illiterate masses. Coverage of out of school by the SSA is not up to the expectation, which is found in the study. The new vision of the Central government to achieve cent percent literacy in the country can be effectively shared by rural libraries and SSA. It will save money and be convenient for the libraries only when both SSA and rural libraries should develop the spirit of co-operating each other in its proper realization. Joint ventures are made for making appeal to the masses by the rural libraries and SSA. The enactment of the proposed library legislation is expected to strengthen the rural libraries of Assam. So there should be a provision in the Act that rural libraries should be tagged with the SSA. This should be given a serious thought while preparing the bill for its enactments.

At the end of the work References and Appendices are included. References are cited and arranged according to APA (6<sup>th</sup> edition) style.

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