

## **INDIA ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROJECT:SSA-III**

### **(Proposed World Bank support)**

#### **Social Assessment (December 2013) – A Summary**

##### **1. Introduction**

*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*(SSA) is India's main program for universalizing elementary education. Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children. India passed its Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which became effective from April 2010, and gave effect to Article 21-A (Eighty-sixth Amendment Act of the Indian Constitution, 2002) making the provision of free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of 6-14 years one of the Fundamental Rights. The main challenge now is to improve pupil attendance and retention, and to focus on learning outcomes, especially for the disadvantaged groups. To achieve this, special efforts are required to enhance social accountability, institutional reform and governance for improved service delivery. The SSA framework for implementation is well prepared to address the challenges in achieving the goals targeted by RTE.

The World Bank proposes to support the *India Elementary Education Project- SSA III* through an Investment Project Financing loan. As a part of this, a Social Assessment (SA) exercise for SSA has been undertaken for incorporating social analyses and participatory processes into project design and implementation. This study has been carried out to ensure that social implications of the proposed project have been identified, analyzed and clearly communicated to the decision makers. In order to achieve this target, the broad objective was to identify, develop and incorporate social measures into project planning, preparation, implementation and monitoring as a means of identifying and addressing direct and indirect social outcomes through all aspects of project execution. The challenges identified for the proposed World Bank support to SSA-III (based on the social analysis through field visits to Karnataka and Kerala) were reviewed against the provisions of the SSA framework. In the backdrop of the above, the following suggestions are being made for MHRD to carry out during program implementation.

##### **2. Suggestions for improving physical and social access**

- i. Strengthening convergence of SSA with other centrally sponsored schemes that cater to the needs of the deprived sections. This convergence is required at different levels, especially at the district and sub-district levels. This is covered under section 7.3.1 of the SSA Framework and may be implemented at the micro level for greater efficiencies to emerge.
- ii. To achieve the desired level of awareness on rights and entitlements of the disadvantaged / vulnerable communities, a community mobilization plan and a media plan may be prepared by the state implementing agency, as part of the preparation of AWP&B (Annual Work Plan and Budget). This may be undertaken in consultation with district officers especially of backward regions / special focus districts, clearly listing out (i) various

methodologies to be adopted, (ii) target population of each methodology etc. This may be followed by preparation/ improvement and updating of the mobilisation / communication material during implementation. The community mobilization and media plans need to be tailored to suit the needs of the Scheduled Tribes, Schedule Castes, Muslims and urban deprived, for responsiveness towards education.

- iii. Focus needs to be on identifying the vulnerable children so that they can be covered at the earliest for special training. The child tracking systems developed by many states need to be made more responsive to capturing each vulnerable child at school / cluster level using the *Aadhar* system/other modalities identified by the states/MHRD and the child's progress and status may be documented and followed up. This or other methodologies could be utilized as a mechanism to track children of migrant population. Further to this, as envisaged in section no. 3.8.2.24 of SSA Framework, task forces/ mechanisms may be set up in each state to effect regular coordination between states / districts, to meet the above objective of child tracking. The involvement of NGOs in the process of mapping of migration, planning and implementation of interventions, (as envisaged in sec. 3.8.2.23 of SSA framework) may be considered depending on local demand and supply of the same.
- iv. The Scheduled Tribes continue to be a disadvantaged group and focus is needed to improve their enrolment and retention further. Role of the School Management Committee, local authority as notified and local tribal community must be ensured for involving them in ensuring universal enrolment and retention. Innovative practices may be adopted by the States to motivate tribal children and their families towards education and to ensure improved learning outcomes. The School Leadership Programme maybe contextualized to the issues in tribal areas so that the teachers can address the local and specific impediments to education.

### **3. Suggestions for improving equity**

- i. The SMCs need to focus on and address specific issues and concerns relating to students, parents of disadvantaged groups, mothers etc. These issues may be dealt with by the SMC as a whole or sub-groups constituted within that and they should be encouraged to document and record minutes for further consideration and decision making by SMC.
- ii. Efficacy of teacher training programs may be assessed as the study reveals a need for sensitizing teachers to handle children from disadvantaged sections with greater sensitivity and care and to help them to cross the existing cultural divide and integrate with other children.
- iii. Preparation of bridge materials between home language and school language may be undertaken at the state/ district levels to enable teachers to transact in the tribal language and help tribal children adopt the school language in areas with considerable tribal populations.
- iv. Evaluation mechanisms may be evolved and made responsive to build accountability in the teachers and ultimately in the other stake-holders for learning outcomes of SC/ST and minority students. The CCE maybe stressed as tool to assess and improve the learning levels on a continuous basis.
- v. The different grievance redressal mechanisms being put in place in different States must be made operational and effective. The different models like toll free numbers, student counseling units at school level etc will all have strengths which could be shared across States so that the best practices are disseminated. It may be ensured that all States set up

and operationalize these mechanisms for student counselling/ redressal of student grievances.

**4. Suggestions for improving monitoring**

- i. Frequency of monitoring the schools by block and cluster level functionaries through visits may be increased from the current system of once in two months to once in a month for enhancing the efficiency of the program.
- ii. The learning outcome of children, captured in the Quality Monitoring Tool (QMT) format, may be adopted as a major indicator for gauging the performance of school as well as the teachers. While there are other tools like National Achievement Surveys for the same purpose, this micro level quarterly monitoring will help to adopt immediate corrective measures in the school itself to reduce the gap in learning outcome before the end of each academic year.

**5. Suggestions for dissemination of information about entitlements under the RTE Act and Grievance Redressal Mechanism**

Information dissemination campaigns may be undertaken to generate awareness about the SSA program and RTE and the grievance redressal mechanisms available to stake-holders to benefit from the rights based approach under RTE.