
INDIA

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA)

Twentieth Joint Review Mission

7th to 17th October 2014

Aide Memoire

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Acronyms

ALIMCO	Artificial Limb Manufacturing Corporation of India
AWP&B	Annual Work Plan and Budget
ATR	Action Taken Report
BRC	Block Resource Centre
CAL	Computer Aided Learning
CCE	Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation
CTET	Common Teacher Eligibility Test
CTS	Child Tracking Survey
CRC	Cluster Resource Centre
CWSN	Children with Special Needs
DFID	Department for International Development
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
DISE	District Information System for Education
DP	Development Partner
DoSEL	Department of School Education & Literacy
Ed.CIL	Educational Consultants India Limited
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
EMIS	Educational Management and Information System
EU	European Union
EVS	Environmental Science
FM&P	Financial Management and Procurement
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GoI	Government of India
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
IDA	International Development Association
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
IPAI	Institute of Public Auditors of India
IRT	Item Response Theory
IT	Information Technology
JRM	Joint Review Mission
KGBV	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
LEP	Learning Enhancement Programme
MCS	Model Cluster School
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MI	Monitoring Institutions
MS	Mahila Samakhya
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research & Training
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NCFTE	National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education
NCTE	National Council for Teacher Education
NE	North East
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
NIAR	National Institute of Administrative Research
NIC	National Informatics Centre
NPE	National Policy of Education
NPEGEL	National Program for Education of Girls' at Elementary Level
NLAS	National Learning Achievement Survey
NUEPA	National University of Educational Planning & Administration
OBC	Other Backward Caste
OOSC	Out of School Children

PAB	Project Approval Board
PMIS	Project Management Information System
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
QMT	Quality Monitoring Tool
RBC	Residential Bridge Course
RCI	Rehabilitation Council of India
REMS	Research, Evaluation, Monitoring and Supervision
RMSA	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
RMG	Repair and Maintenance Grant
RTE	Right to Education
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCERT	State Council for Educational Research and Training
SMC	School Management Committee
SES	Selected Educational Statistics
SFD	Special Focus Districts
SFG	Special Focus Groups
SIEMAT	State Institute for Educational Management and Training
SMC	School Management Committee
SPO	State Project Office
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
SSHE	School Sanitation and Hygiene Education
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
TLE	Teacher Learning Equipment
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
TOR	Terms of Reference
TSC	Total Sanitation Campaign
TSG	Technical Support Group
UAM	Universal Active Mathematics
UC	Utilization Certificate
UEE	Universal Elementary Education
UPS	Upper Primary School
UT	Union Territory
VEC	Village Education Committee
VER	Village Education Register
WSDP	Whole School Development Plan

INDIA
SARVA SIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA)
20th JOINT REVIEW MISSION
(October 7 - 17, 2014)

Aide Memoire

Introduction

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a comprehensive and integrated flagship programme of the Government of India (GoI), implemented in partnership with state governments aimed at providing relevant and meaningful education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years age in the country in a mission mode. SSA aims to provide quality education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. The four SSA Goals are as follows:

- i. All children in school.
- ii. Bridging gender and social gaps.
- iii. All children retained in Elementary Education.
- iv. Education of satisfactory quality.

SSA is a national programme supported by domestic resources, supplemented partially by external funding from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), and the European Union (EU). As per the Agreements, the GoI and Development Partners (DP) carry out a Joint Review Mission (JRM) twice a year. The main objective of the JRM is to review progress in the implementation of the programme with respect to SSA's goals and to discuss follow-up actions in the light of the Terms of Reference (TOR) agreed upon for each JRM.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A has come into force with effect from 1st April 2010. SSA has been designated as the vehicle to realize RTE provisions. Accordingly, SSA norms have been revised to harmonize with RTE provisions. States have come out with their RTE Rules. This review in way reflects the progress in policies, interventions and outcomes on the ground in this context.

This is the Twentieth JRM of SSA and was held from 7th to 17th October 2014. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Mission and details of the Mission composition are attached at Appendix 1. This is a field based review, and seven states (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu) were visited by a team of 2 members each (one MHRD nominee and one Development Partner nominee).

The Mission would like to acknowledge the great work done by the teams in MHRD, TSG, states visited (including the teams at district, block and school levels) and the detailed information made available to the Mission. The Mission has greatly benefited from the field visits and interactions with students, community, teachers, cluster, block, district and state level teams. The Mission would like to put on record the Mission's gratitude to all the above mentioned.

Mission Objectives

The JRMs are conducted with an objective of reviewing the progress in the implementation of SSA with respect to SSA Goals, especially the interventions and its results in terms of agreed indicators, and to discuss follow-up action. The JRMs also reviews the actions taken upon the recommendations made by previous JRMs. The quantitative indicators that show the progress towards the SSA Goals is reported and summarized in the Results Framework (Appendix 3). This mission tried to assess the implementation of SSA programme in the context of RTE provisions.

The Aide Memoire addresses the main topics of this review in seven sections. In section I, an overview is provided. In section 2, progress in results and programmes related to Goal 1 (Access) is taken up. Section 3 reviews the progress in Goal 2 (Bridging gender and social gaps) and section 4, Goal 3 (Retention and Attendance). Section 5 deliberates on progress toward Goal 4 (Quality). Section 6 reviews Programme Management and section 7, Financial Management and Procurement.

Overview and Key Recommendations

The initiatives implemented by SSA has had commendable success in increasing access to education for all children and improving education inputs. There has also been increased awareness of the importance of education by parents, SMCs, and community members as a result of the efforts made under the SSA program. The shift from a focus on just enrollment to attendance is visible at the schools. There is now increasing emphasis on providing quality related inputs through teacher training, provision of materials, the National Achievement Survey, and early grade reading programs from the National level. Attention has been paid to important interventions like KGBVs, residential and non-residential special training centers, initiatives for CWSN and schools for urban deprived children, and critical measures for ensuring access to education for all students. At the same time, programs for ensuring equitable access and learning in mainstream schools that cater to more than 90% of the children need attention. The next priority of the program is naturally on improving quality processes and outcomes.

Key Recommendations:

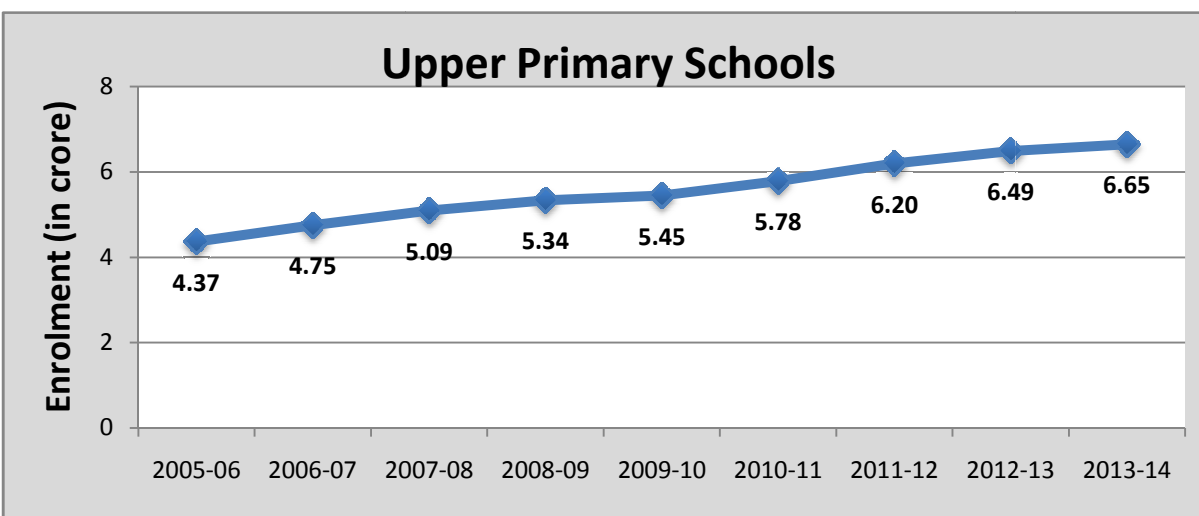
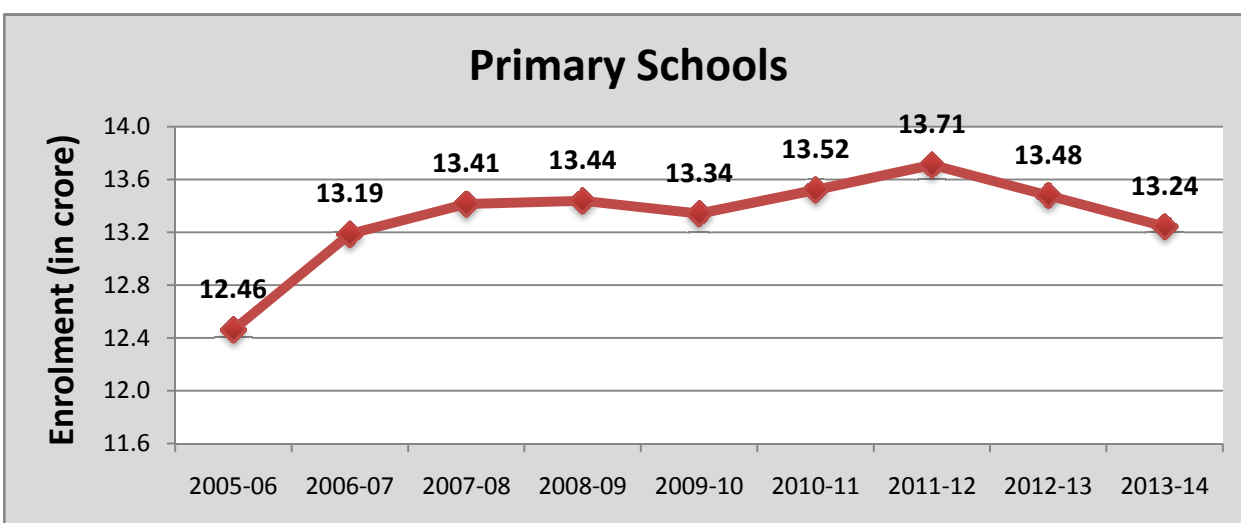
- **Visioning for Quality:** States are encouraged to clarify their vision of classroom and school, in particular the process that would qualify as an appropriate pedagogy or pedagogies. Visioning exercise *have* been undertaken over the last few years across the states – however these need to be utilized and built upon in the design of inputs, development of plans and the implementation of interventions. In addition, the improvements sought may be converted into a set of multi-level outcomes, for students, teachers, and support institutions.
- **Human Resource Development Plan:** A 3-5 year Human Resource Plan would allow for strategic planning to obtain the skills mix required at all levels of the education system. A State and National Human Resource Plan could include an (i) assessment of current capacity in terms of numbers and skill set of BRCs CRCs, DIETs, national academic staff, etc. (ii) projection of HR needs over the next 3-5 years, and (iii) specific strategies for recruitment and professional capacity enhancement based on the realities of the human resource pool in each State.
- **Teacher recruitment:** There are delays in appointment of teachers as a result of which posts remain vacant for many months. The process of appointments is time consuming and litigation in courts also frequently holds up process of appointment. The qualifications required and methodology for selection should be communicated in advance while advertising the positions. Where possible, applications should be obtained on-line at the districts. The process can be made transparent by posting cut off marks for selection, age criteria, or marks obtained in written tests, on the official website, and issuing appointment letters within two weeks of declaration of results.
- **Long Term Planning:** The short term nature of annual planning leads to States focusing on short term interventions potentially at the expense of more effective and strategic actions that require funding commitments over multiple years. The mission is of the view that while approving a state plan every year, each state should make a plan for at least 3 years; operational plans and budgeting could be then be discussed and adjusted annually.

- **Outcome Based Planning: The mission recommends** a mechanism which allows for a dialogue to focus less on inputs and more on achieving agreed upon outcomes and measurement of those outcomes could be considered. The approval of plans could then be based on a mix of appropriate outcome and process indicators agreed upon as part of the long term planning exercise, within the SSA norms.
- **Capacity Building for Learning Assessments:** At the institutional level individuals with specialized knowledge of learning and measurement may need to be developed both within the government and in the larger educational ecosystem. This would be through building content, course work, certification and hands-on experimentation that focus on how learning can be improved and measured.
- **Evidenced Based planning:** Similarly the mission notes that many innovative programs have been introduced and removed and labeled as unsuccessful without a comprehensive review of the effectiveness or identifying lessons learned that can be built on in future programs. It is recommended that states phase out on-going programs only after an adequate assessment of their non-effectiveness is made
- **Equity and participation:** A more open classroom that addresses the experiences, strengths and needs of girls may be conceptualized and implemented through the various quality related inputs, specially teacher training. There has to be an effort to sensitize the boys on gender and social issues that have serious implications in attaining equity. There should be constant interaction between children with special needs and other children.
- **Pre-service education:** While there is strong emphasis on in-service training for teacher training to improve their content knowledge and pedagogical skills, SSA does not address itself to the underlying causes for the need for such training. It is imperative for SSA, as user of these teachers, work with NCTE to improve the quality of teacher education. The mission recommends that Institutions for Teacher Education revamp their curriculum to align with NCFTE 2009. The Mission was informed by the MHRD that NCTE is revising teacher education norms.
- **Financial and Procurement:** Financial and Procurement practices need to be further strengthened, with special focus at the sub-district level. This would include, inter alia, the timely release and expenditures of funds, settlement of advances, filling of staff vacancies, and timely compliance of audit observations.
- **School Management Committees:** The mission recommends that more training be provided to SMCs to ensure equitable and effective engagement in school planning. The mission also recommends School Development Plan focus on qualitative improvement rather than just data and infrastructure, and a system be developed so that the plans feed into the cluster/block/district plans.

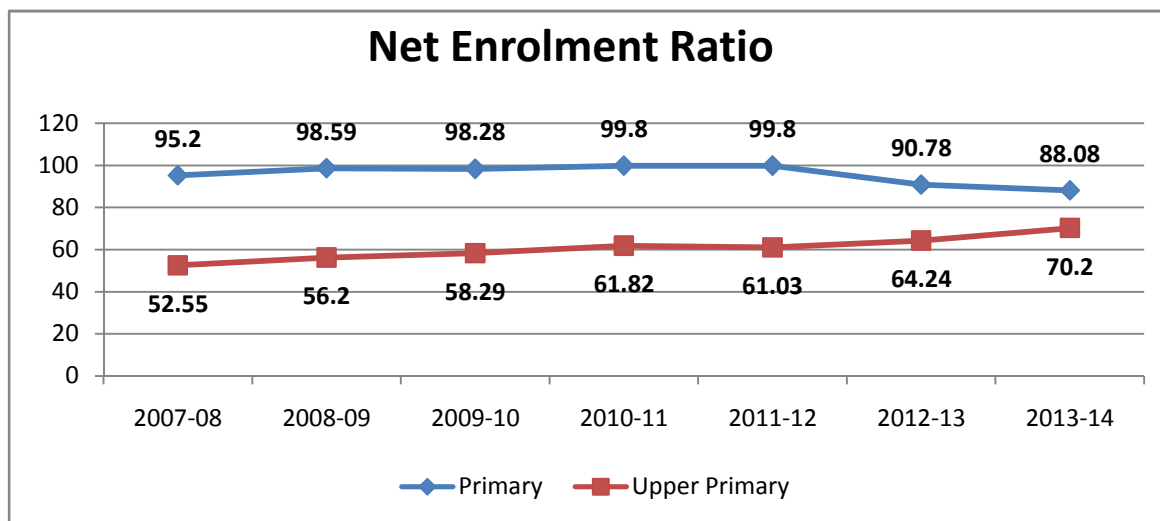
Goal 1 – All children in school

Access and enrolment

Access to primary schools in India is provided to 98% of the habitations and upper primary schools have achieved a coverage to 92% of the habitations. 24 states have reported universal access for PS and UPS. In 2013-14 the number of PS has increased to 8.6 lakh and UPS to 5.9 lakh. The enrolment figures include all students from government schools, recognized and unrecognized private schools and Madarasas, so far as they have been covered under DISE. Whereas the primary schools showed a downward trend in student enrolment since 2011-12 the upper primary enrolment is continuously growing indicating that more students are interested to complete the full elementary education cycle. The slight downward trend for enrolment in primary schools has also been observed by the JRM teams in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu.



Source: UDISE



Source: UDISE

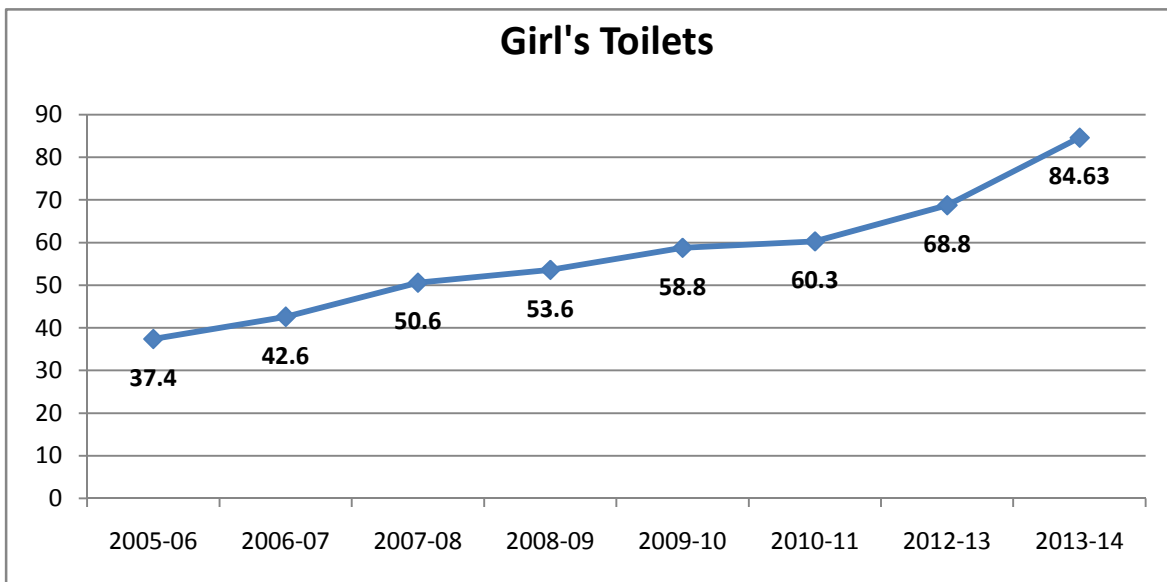
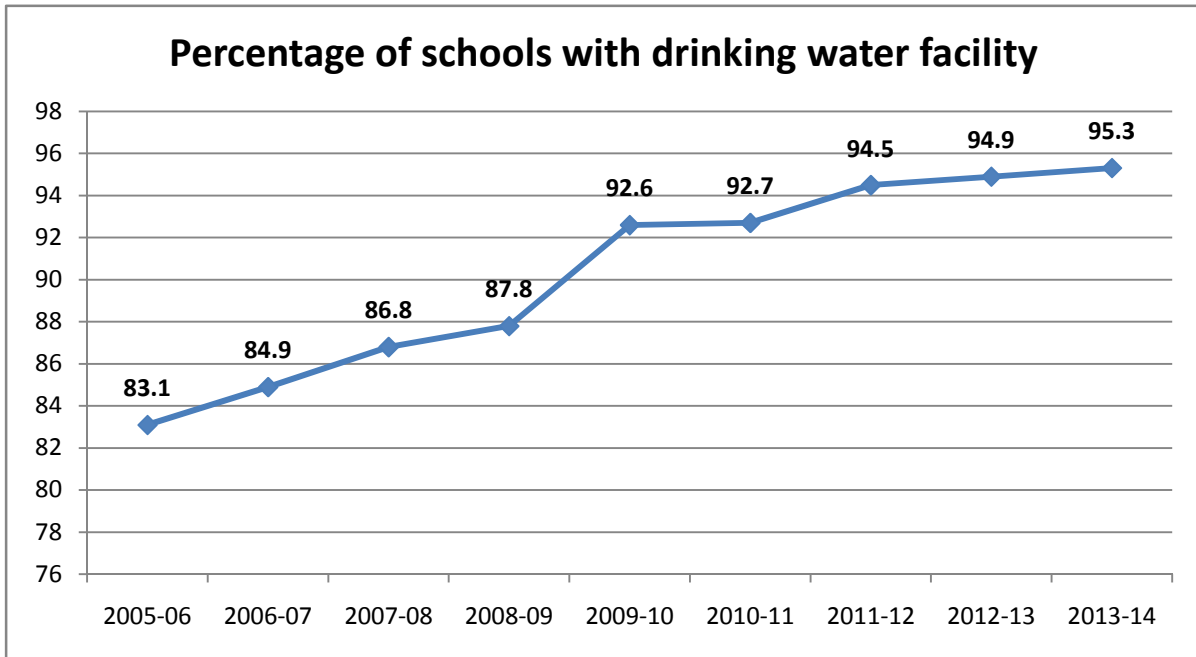
The downward trend for primary school enrolment becomes even more evident with the development of the net enrolment ratio, which grew from 95.2% in 2007-08 to over 98% in 2008-10 and reached during the following two years nearly 100%. The ideal figure indicating that the full age cohort of students was enrolled at the right age in the right class/grade. From 2011-12 to 2012-13 the NER dropped dramatically to 90.78% and continued to fall to 88.08% for the following year. If the figures are reliable it would indicate a serious reverse of the net enrolment trend. Gains which are usually made over a period of 5 to 10 years would have been lost within a year. This requires serious concern and investigation.

Recommendation:

- The JRM would recommends that the dipping enrolment figures be investigated and reconciled.

School Infrastructure

Under SSA huge investments in the infrastructure of primary schools and upper primary schools were carried out. New schools and additional classrooms were constructed, drinking water supplied, toilets, particularly separate toilets for girls were built, and to a certain extent ramps and CWSN toilets etc. Some states have reached now near completion of RtE mandated requirements of school infrastructure. The tables below display the expansion of drinking water facilities and provision of separate toilets for girls. The latter was obviously a neglected area but substantial improvement seems to have been achieved during 2013-14.



Out- of-School Children

The need to address the education of out-of-school children (OOSC) played a significant role at the commencement of SSA. The number of OOSC was estimated at 30 million children in 2001. It has been a great success of SSA to bring the number of OOSC significantly down from 134 lakhs in 2005 to 81 lakhs in 2009 and 61 lakhs in 2013. According to the latest figures (Table below from the National Sample Survey of Estimation of Out- of- School Children in the age of 6-13 in India, IMRB study, 2014, available on the MHRD website) four states account for the majority of OOSC: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. It would require a diversified effort of many

organizations, non-governmental and governmental, to reach out to this hard to reach children with their very diverse background and to develop solutions with them.

State wise details of children in the age group 6-13 years and out of school children aged 6-13 years - 2014

S.no.	STATES	Total Children 6-13 years	Out of school Children 6-13 years
1	A&N Islands	47966	1015
2	Andhra Pradesh	11859304	107829
3	Arunachal Pradesh	223410	6517
4	Assam	5471761	157813
5	Bihar	23641078	1169722
6	Chandigarh	248277	1090
7	Chhattisgarh	4459796	167072
8	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	50014	745
9	Daman & Diu	32810	421
10	Goa	185391	0
11	Gujarat	8232692	159308
12	Haryana	4171364	43879
13	Himachal Pradesh	1045338	2176
14	Jammu & Kashmir	2227225	45468
15	Jharkhand	6956163	140426
16	Karnataka	8201744	122139
17	Kerala	4046473	33161
18	Lakshadweep	7371	267
19	Madhya Pradesh	11940966	450952
20	Maharashtra	17883335	145326
21	Manipur	408781	7037
22	Meghalaya	593960	17237
23	Mizoram	161787	972
24	Nagaland	320020	2896
25	NCT of Delhi	2703848	85084
26	Odisha	6573304	401052
27	Puducherry	155983	285
28	Punjab	4015976	91578
29	Rajasthan	11986308	601863
30	Sikkim	92508	535
31	Tamil Nadu	8685914	57529
32	Tripura	573199	4518
33	Uttar Pradesh	41328812	1612285
34	Uttarakhand	1713001	86794
35	West Bengal	13841396	339239
ALL INDIA		204087274	6064229

Goal 2: Bridging Gender and Social Gaps

The SSA framework based on the Right to Education Act also spells out equity not only as the creation of opportunities but also favourable environment for children from deprived background to avail of the opportunity.

Targets for access and enrolment have been achieved to a large degree for girls, children from SC, ST and the minority communities and the transition rates have improved. However, there is a slight decline in the enrolment of the girls and children with special needs in 2013-14. The unfavourably skewed sex ratio could be one of the reasons. The gender parity index is high for some states. The retention of the child seems to have been affected because of economic vulnerabilities in some parts of the country.

Gender

The enrolment of girls shows considerable improvement over the years and it has enhanced to 48.20% in 2013-14 at the primary level but when compared to the enrolment in 2012-2013 which was 48.36% it shows a slight decline. The gender parity which is high in some states but is not so favourable at the upper primary level in some states. The gender gap at upper primary level needs attention. Infrastructure provisioning such as that of separate toilets for girls would impact on enrolment and retention of girls.

The number of female teachers shows a steady increase from 46.27% in 2011-12 to 47.16% in 2013-14 and is close to achieving the SSA policy of 50% female teachers. The increasing presence of female teachers is likely to have positive implications for the enhancement in the girls' enrolment.

In many of the schools visited, it was felt that the teachers were not entirely free from stereotyping children along gender, which affected girls' participation in the classrooms.

KGBVs have been set up to promote enrolment of school girls, never enrolled girls and girls from vulnerable sections of society are now being perceived as centres of excellence in which the girl children grow into individuals with high level of self-esteem, confidence and a critical sense of enquiry and knowledge about social issues. Out of the 3609 KGBVs sanctioned, 3593 were operational. 3.45 lakh girls were enrolled out of which there were 30.22% SC girls, 24.99% ST girls, 31.68% OBC girls, 6.38% minority girls and 6.74% BPL girls.

Upgrading the KGBVs or forging effective linkages with hostels / residential schools provided by RMSA and other departments would help students of KGBVs to graduate the next level of education. As an example, Jharkhand has upgraded KGBVs to class 12 thus ensuring retention to the secondary level. In some of the states visited overcrowding and shortage of beds could be seen.

Social Gaps

Data reveals that access for children from all disadvantaged communities has enhanced but the challenge of retention was high. With increasing diversity, the classroom has to cater to the varying needs and multi-lingual contexts of children. The syllabi, curriculum and classroom transactions has to build on the life experiences of the children and be responsive to the multi-level and multi-lingual groups of children. It is heartening to note that 11 states have developed/are developing

materials for bridging tribal children to the medium of instruction. Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Telengana have a systematic programme targeting tribal children in classes 1 to 4.

Children from the most economic vulnerable backgrounds who are out of school are enrolled in special training centres or residential centres to prepare them for the mainstream schools. While this has helped enrolment in some states, challenges remain in several other states which need to be addressed.

Children with special needs

The inclusion of children with special needs has assumed priority and there is an emphasis on teachers' training to be equipped to meet the requirements of the children. The resource teachers role in integrating the children is also receiving due importance. The learning space is informal and there is ample room for children with various abilities to interact and learn at their own pace.

The endeavour to work with CWSN children is commendable with increase in the number of resource teachers, provision of aids and appliances and increase in the number of teachers training. There is an increase in the enrolment of children with special needs from 18,50,401 in 2005-2006 to 25,89,251 in 2013-2014, but there has been a decline in the last year(15%) which is much higher than the decline in the enrolment of general children(1.8%) at the primary level. There is also a strong need to enhance the reach of specialized services like physiotherapy and speech therapy, which could be done through training of parents or other means that are contextually feasible.

Recommendations

- A more open classroom that addresses the experiences, strengths and needs of girls may be conceptualized and implemented through the various quality related inputs, specially teacher training. There has to be an effort to sensitize the boys on gender and social issues that have serious implications in attaining equity. There should be constant interaction between children with special needs and other children.
- More provisions should be made to bring in and retain the still unreached groups to schools. Residential centres need to be increased in states where the drop-out rates of girls and other marginalized children are high.
- A methodology has to be devised to take forward the lessons from KGBV into the schools and enhance the capacities, articulation skills and confidence of the girl children in the classroom.
- Indicators for measuring equity outcomes in the classrooms need to be developed.
- States wanting to enable effective education in multi-lingual contexts(for early primary grades) need to ensure availability of material in children's home languages

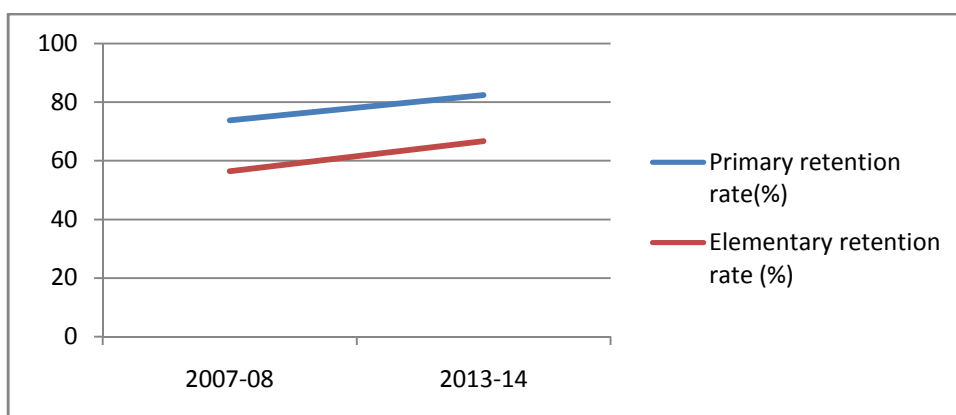
Goal 3: All Children Retained in education system

With the goal of access to schools and student enrolment almost universally achieved in SSA, serious attention is being paid to achieve the goal of retaining students in school. In most of the states visited by the JRM, the efforts to increase student attendance was notably visible. Some states are monitoring student attendance more systematically (for e.g. in Jharkhand the JRM team observed a special effort being deployed through a partnership of teachers, students and the community and this has resulted in a jump in attendance over the last 5-6 months-'Prayas' initiative).

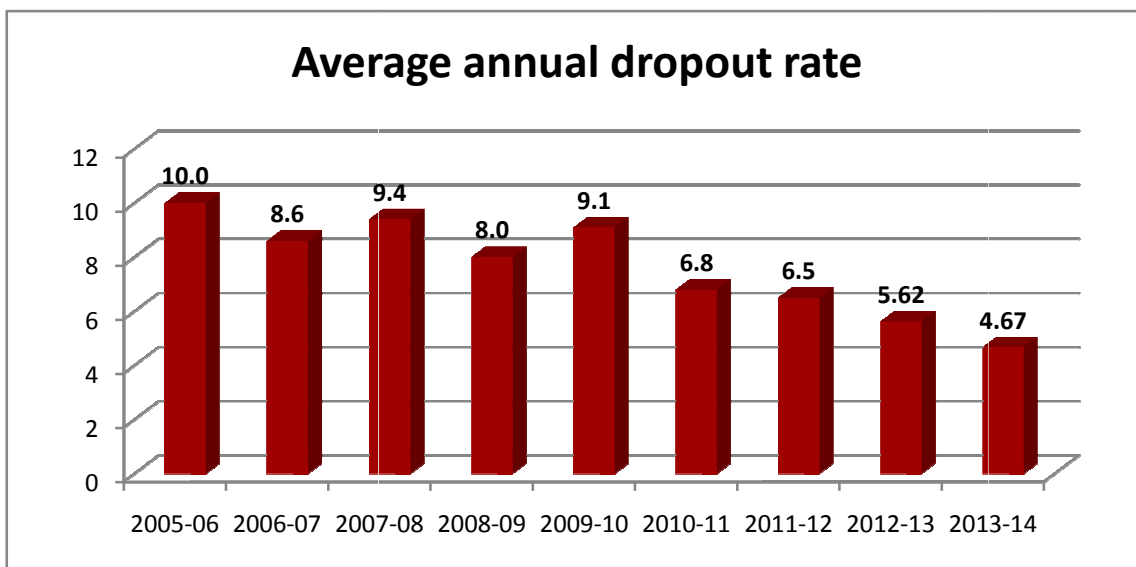
Student attendance and retention in school is likely to increase with enhancement of the quality of the teaching-learning process. Also, retention of children at the primary level can be enhanced with a strong foundation of early childhood education. Very few states have pre-primary sections in the primary schools. The Mission noted the huge opportunity for convergence between the ICDS and SSA program for transition from pre-school to school and to establish a learning continuum between pre-school education at Anganwadis and early grade learning in schools.

The DISE data shows a positive trend in retention and transition over the last seven years (from 2007-08 to 2013-14). The over-all drop-out rate has also seen a decline which is an indication of improved retention.

- The incline in the retention rate at primary level is 8.7 percentage points and at the elementary it is 10.3 percentage points as seen in the graph below:



- The intentions of a growing number of primary school students to continue their education at the upper primary level becomes evident in the increasing transition rates over time. The transition rate from primary to upper primary level has also gone up from 81% in 2008-09 to 90% in 2013-14. A similar increase is seen in the transition rate of girls (from 80% to 89.6%) during this time period.
- Student attendance rate has been reported as 76% at the primary level and 78% at the upper primary level according to a recent study (commissioned by Ed. CIL and conducted by Development and Research Services (P) Ltd (DRS) in 2013) across 26 states and UTs.



- The annual national average drop-out rate is 4.7%. However, the drop out of SC children at primary is 6.1% and of ST children it is 8.4%. The highest drop-out rate of girls has been reported in Mizoram (23.9% at primary level and 19% at upper primary).
- The gross completion ratio at the primary level is 101.3%

Concerns:

- While the national average rates of primary to upper primary transition have steadily gone up in the last few years, there is a disparity between states and some states have lower than national average transition rates like Bihar, Jharkhand, Manipur and Uttar Pradesh.
- Retention of children from marginalized communities remains a challenge – there are residual gaps in meeting the goal of universal retention especially for girls, and children from SC, ST and minority communities in some pockets
- The 2013 study on student attendance shows that the attendance rate in class 1 has been found to be the lowest (at 79%) and then gradually picks up at higher grades

Recommendations:

- An analysis of the drop-out rates and reasons for drop-outs at each class will be helpful to design specific interventions for classes where the drop-out rate is relatively higher.
- Similarly, an analysis of the trend in student attendance during the academic year will be useful for curriculum planning for the year. For the periods of low attendance (during the harvesting season or temporary migration phenomenon) schools may consider adjusting the school hours.
- As the attendance is lowest in class 1, specific school readiness packages delivered during the first three months of the year may be helpful to creatively engage and thus retain children.

- Similarly, the first month of every academic session in every class may be spent to refresh the previous year's curriculum in each subject for students- this will prepare them better for the current year's curriculum.
- Concerted efforts are required to improve the attendance, retention and transition rates especially of girls and children from SC, ST and minority categories in some districts of a few states. Involvement of the SMCs to improve attendance and retention is recommended.

Goal 4: Quality of Education

The focus of this JRM is on issues related to quality improvement, and includes access to unreached, inclusive education and capacity building. Clearly, the last few JRMs and the proactive efforts of the MHRD on quality of education show that the system is largely recognizing that while we have made tremendous progress in more or less bringing all children to school, we are yet to ensure that they learn well.

Improving an education system to achieve quality in education is a multi-pronged effort. Valid measures of student learning outcomes often are the starting point in an educational reform process. However, the reform process itself usually has to pass through several stages before transformation for better learning is achieved. The JRM recognizes the enormity and the complexity of the challenge before MHRD and the states in providing meaningful and relevant education in a context where resources are limited, to more students than any nation in history. It also commends the initiatives being taken through the second generation reforms of SSA to ensure that all children learn well.

Classroom Practices

A range of interventions linked to Goal 4 Education of Quality have been developed and implemented over the years. The primary focus of SSA has shifted to these elements as the goals of access and enrollment have been met to a comfortable degree. Some of these interventions serve to create the proximal *enabling conditions* for wholesome curriculum transaction mainly but not limited to to the classroom setting, e.g., improvement in teacher availability, PTR, SCR, competence of teachers via training, textbooks to all children, provision of facilities such as library, laboratory, computers. Others are designed to modify and enhance the nature and pedagogical value of the curricular process more directly. Examples of these are specially designed curricular packages ranging from special training courses to math and science modules for the upper primary stage. Both types of intervention are quite rightly given high priority in the current phase of SSA. The level of achievement of essentially quantifiable targets for these specific components has on the whole been fairly satisfactory though major shortfalls are found in the case of some items.

A significant feature of the way these components are conceived of and developed is that their soundness of basic design is taken for granted. Based on the JRM's state visits, the primary criterion for assessment of progress is the achievement of physical targets. Shortfalls, where found, lead logically to the injunction to do more of the same. Following the field visits of the current mission, the team has yielded one clear message (among others). The quality of the classroom process – THE target of Goal 4-- observed at several sites is below expected levels. The varied 'quality focused' inputs need to come together synergistically to make the classroom a happier, productively busier and welcoming learning space for all children. The teams observed the vast diversity at the grassroots level : of socio economic and cultural backgrounds including especially home languages other than the school language, varied levels of children's sense of being

accepted/welcomed at school, levels of prior learning (varied opportunity as much as success), school characteristics, teacher competence and workload, and more.

The lesson for the mission is that the standard curricular package and the pre-set learning levels demand of all current achievement testing need to take into account the diversity of learners as persons and of the settings providing learning experiences. The education system also has to contend with the societal perception of QUALITY, which seems to be 'whatever is found in the good schools serving culturally privileged children.' SSA along with the pedagogic philosophy (flowing in part from NCF2005 informing it) indicates a new definition of quality: A pedagogic process that is attuned to the needs of the child and gives her/him the status of a co-constructor (not mere absorber) of school knowledge. The long standing axiom grounding formal instruction namely, that the curriculum is fixed (and by definition good) and the child must adjust to its demands' is no longer tenable. The notion is that each child must get an individualized curriculum is not feasible. A more manageable and pedagogically sound option is to make adaptation a regular feature of the classroom. The analysis of progress towards Equity which is based on the recognition of diversity and of needs/rights flowing from it, especially for CWSN, and the discussion on teacher resources elsewhere in this report also point to the same basic principle. The standard packages for learning for students and for teachers undergoing training need to adapt to local conditions: individuals' needs and local contexts. The comprehensive revamping of curricular packages can be set as a long term goal; the knowledge gained from adaptations in various settings should be a major input into such re-designing. The experience from working with curricular adaptations, earlier bridge courses and current special training programs especially those that have won learner acceptance and participation (even if scores on conventional tests are not high) would be a useful starting point.

Given the emphasis on Quality, there is a need for all functionaries to realize that all inputs are ultimately related to increasing teaching learning time, and improving in-class and in-school process towards enabling them to be participatory, with a greater degree of engagement and reflection on children's part, leading to construction of knowledge. This will help improve learning levels, and in higher order and overarching objectives of the curriculum.

Thus, provision of toilets and infrastructure make it possible for children to attend school and provide a supportive physical environment, while recruitment and rationalization of teacher deployment ensure that the required teaching learning time is available. Better management, involvement of the community) and the incorporation of local knowledge in the classroom, is mandated by NCF) or the several other inputs of SSA do not exist in and for themselves, but in their relation to enabling optimal participation and learning of each child. Such a perspective would enable implementers to understand the expectations and qualities required for their components as well as assess their contribution to the larger goal for which they are being implemented. Such a 'learning focus' / 'learning outcomes focus' would enable enhancing the focus on quality.

The tendency to implement various activities without necessarily focusing on outcomes perhaps explains the relatively low prominence to quality interventions observed during state visits. Though early literacy has been advocated as a major thrust, its implementation was not strongly evident in some states. The implementation was evident in Tamil Nadu. The Mission suggests that state teams lay adequate emphasis on improving quality across all schools and go beyond their demonstrated success in specific projects such as KGBVs.

Recognizing this tendency, the MHRD has appraised and approved states annual work plan in the current year based on all components of SSA integrated to enhance learning outcomes. This needs to be strengthened.

Finally, it needs to be recognized that learning outcomes alone do not serve as a sufficient means to guide action and implementation. The specific actions required on part of the teachers to generate targeted learning outcomes need to be identified. In keeping with this, supportive actions of the CRCs-BRCs and DIETs need to be identified in turn. Thus, generating early literacy requires teacher practices to change, which in turn requires specific action on part of support agencies from cluster to state level – all of which need to be articulated and included in planning for implementation. The state level (SCERT, SPO, SRG) need to be capacitated in a focused manner to ensure the desired teacher performance required to generate the improvement sought in learning outcomes. Thus it is a set of multi-level outcomes that need to be generated, and implementation, monitoring and corrective action built on this.

Recommendations

- States are encouraged to clarify their vision of classroom and school, in particular the process that would qualify as an appropriate pedagogy or pedagogies. Visioning exercise *have* been undertaken over the last few years across the states – however these need to be utilized and built upon in the design of inputs, development of plans and the implementation of interventions. In addition, the improvements sought may be converted into a set of multi-level outcomes, for students, teachers, and support institutions.
- Analysis of curricular adaptations undertaken in earlier implementation of bridge and remedial courses, innovative state curricula and special training programmes known to be successful may be taken up and the findings incorporated in training inputs, curriculum and material development.
- Apart from increasing diversity of student population, data indicates that even after attainment of RtE mandated PTR, a large number of teachers would be handling more than one class (e.g. in a school with 80 students where there would not be more than three teachers). Therefore, teacher training programmes need to empower teachers to address multi-grade situations and a high degree of diversity. . Participatory methods of training should be adopted as the norm, and teachers with experience in handling multi-grade contexts should be encouraged to contribute

Quality of Learning

Several studies point out that the learning levels of students is low. Some of these studies also show that the learning being achieved is more rote than based on understanding. The JRM team also interacted extensively with the students in the schools visited and also carried out simple tests in Maths and Language in classes 2-4 to get a first-hand experience of the learning levels. In some states visited like Tamil

Nadu, students were seen to have achieved basic competencies well but students had difficulties when they moved to progressively higher order competencies. Some of the other states showed that while the most rudimentary learning (e.g. knowing some vocabulary) is evident, students were seen to have difficulty in literacy/basic reading itself. In Maths, the learning is very rote and students are not understanding basic concepts of number sense, operations of whole numbers, etc). States of Bihar and Rajasthan have completed their SLAS after analyzing student achievement item-wise – their findings have been similar too.

National Achievement Surveys

The national curriculum framework and the introduction of continuous comprehensive evaluation (CCE) by RTE are with the intention of tightly integrating assessments with the process of teaching and learning. The greater the integration the better the outcomes of learning. Large scale assessment surveys that provide granular information across the education system and insights into:

- ‘whether children are really learning and understanding what is taught to them:
- how much are they retaining?
- is learning happening at a superficial level in our classrooms?
- what do children at different levels of the ability know and are able to do?
- what misconceptions and common errors do children demonstrate?
- Are some children doing better than others, if so, how?’

They also have the potential to guide decisions on curriculum, pedagogy, training and teaching learning materials. *The JRM felt that a shift in school culture as envisaged in our curricular documents is yet to be achieved.* In practice, both in achievement surveys and CCE, assessments still continue to be external to the teaching learning process and need tighter integration and looping back to pedagogy, curriculum, textbooks and TLMs.

The Mission recognizes that the quality of National Achievement Survey and its reporting has made great strides in the last few years and congratulates NAS’s move to a robust IRT based design. The NAS reports also provide overall information on what children know and are able to do. The Mission felt that the use of IRT could be furthered through advance analysis like scale anchoring for development of knowledge and ability benchmarks at all levels of student ability.

NAS has moved to a system of reporting IRT scaled scores and their standard errors for each round. However, as the scales are currently discrete, one does not get the real picture on improvements or shifts that are happening at the level of the overall distribution of student scores. The Mission recommends that these scales be made comparable across grades and over cycles in order to provide information on learning improvements.

For NAS to be truly diagnostic and have actionable implications for the classroom teaching-learning processes, it is recommended that NAS releases the test papers along with the

item-wise and distractor-wise performance data. Availability of such granular data will enable researchers, pedagogy and curriculum experts, teacher educators and teachers to leverage the information in multiple ways to aid the quality reform process.

Varying levels of data literacy among stakeholders and availability of user friendly data reports are usually experienced as initial constraints in large scale system reforms. The JRM found that information about performance in NAS and its findings often remains largely with the policy makers, and various stakeholders at SCERTs, DIETs, BRCs, CRCs, teachers' are often not aware of their states' performance in NAS and the findings from the reports.

Recommendations:

- Steps be taken to integrate the design of the tools, its analysis and the reports to be diagnostic, granular and actionable for intervention and remediation in the classroom. This information may be provided for individual states as well and also at different ability levels in the state for the report to be more meaningful and actionable.
- Provide and disseminate different levels of report (modular, test instruments, targeted and action specific) for different stakeholders – teachers, teacher educators, education administrators, and policy makers.

State Learning Achievement Surveys:

The Mission notes that 12 states have reported completing the SLAs and 15 states are in the process of completing SLAs while 6 states could not carry out SLAs. 2 states also reported that SLAs was not carried out as per norms provided. 11 states reported using Item Response Theory (IRT) for their assessments while 17 states followed the classical test theory (CTT). The Mission appreciates the appreciable first steps taken by the state teams in diagnosing learning issues through the state learning achievement surveys.

The Mission based on the field visits felt that in many cases, the approach seemed to be one of collecting data for higher ups. Many of the states also have reported doing IRT based assessments and some are planning for the same. A review of some of the available SLAs reports show that the state teams probably require technical support in high end psychometrics for test design and advanced data analysis of the collected data. The understanding of IRT within the state teams also is currently limited. Their capacity may be built through technical assistance from NCERT as well as various other resources. This will enable the state to leverage SLAs as a diagnostic and data based evidence to lead the reform for quality in classrooms. Gunotsav, Pratibha Parv, Sambalan and other such SLAs studies from the different states may be documented and shared.

Once SLAs performance data is available, the process of systematically disseminating it itself is an art and science. Unless findings from the achievement studies are disseminated

well, it is unlikely to lead to a dialogue and action among teachers, teacher trainers, resource coordinators, education administrative officers and other stakeholders. Most states may not have adequate dissemination plans for their findings from SLAs and also may tend to hold back the information at the policy level.

Recommendations

- The purpose of SLAs and its integration with the quality improvement plans be made more visible to the different stakeholders so that they do not approach the SLAs in a mechanical manner as something to be done with.
- The Mission also recommends that states share their learning experiences and insights from SLAs with each other to promote cross-learning opportunities.
- It is recommended that each state builds a strategic plan for dissemination along with approaches to handling varied positive and negative responses that arise from the stakeholders based on the level of performance, understand and explain contradictions if any from the state's performance in SLAs, NAS and other independent studies. The dissemination plan may address the different stakeholders through a variety of targeted reports, workshops, focus group discussions, etc to encourage dialogue and individual action. The states may also have a website with searchable information available on overall performance of different districts in SLAs as well as performance on different test items.

Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation

CCE is being implemented in various states following their particular models. From the visits to the states, the JRM got the impression that it is not being properly integrated into the teaching learning process. It tends to remain a series of discrete tests, not from the conventional monthly tests and term exams. Teachers report that it has added higher load to their paper work.

Recommendation

- Teachers and the trainers who are guiding them need to be oriented in the spirit and mechanics of CCE for it to achieve the intended role as a pedagogical tool for enhancing the quality of learning.

Learning Indicators

The Mission appreciates the Learning indicators developed by NCERT and its mapping to the pedagogical processes, curricular and content areas. These indicators are well balanced in terms of addressing higher end as well lower order competencies. The Mission observes that some states have also developed their own learning indicators. A review of the state learning indicators show that some of these are extremely knowledge/procedure based

and bound to emphasize rote learning. If quality of learning has to be achieved, all efforts must move the system away from rote learning towards a 'learning with understanding'.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that states revise learning indicators, wherever required, with a focus on learning with understanding, after taking feedback from stakeholders.

Learning Data Management Systems

As SLAs are being institutionalized across the country, there is a rich and large amount of learning data that is available in each state. The Mission recommends that the states' may look at having comprehensive Learning data management systems that are also integrated with MIS. These systems will be a comprehensive database of students, teachers and schools that will provide progress tracking of student learning across years or possible for schools or regions initially. Such a system will be useful and lead to informed decision making at each level – be it in classrooms, teacher training, curriculum and pedagogy research, and policy decisions.

Capacity Building on the Science of Learning

As we move from a traditional input based approach to a focus on outcomes, at the systemic level, research and training institutions need to align their priorities and practices to the shift in national goals from schooling to learning. Given that the focus on quality of learning is fairly new, the lack of capacity for assessments and research into the science of learning at various resource and support institution is a matter that needs to be looked into. Capacity building remains key to improve the situation.. This would be through building content, course work, certification and hands-on experimentation that focus on how learning can be improved and measured. At the people's level – continuous professional development plans for educational functionaries, education administrators and other partners may need to evolve to provide them with an understanding of issues related to quality of learning.

Recommendation:

- At the systemic level – there is a need to generate a research based body of knowledge into the science of learning itself on how children learn. In this regard, the capacity needs at the systemic, institutional and people's levels need to be identified.

Teacher Recruitment and availability:

Special efforts to recruit teachers in the states over the last few years to meet RtE mandated PTR at primary and upper primary have resulted in 75% of SSA supported teacher posts being filled against sanctioned posts (15 lakhs filled out of 19.8 lakhs

sanctioned) as a national average. Approximately 83% of teachers have professional qualifications. And about 6.3 lakh teachers are unqualified (do not have professional qualifications) – a substantive number of these teachers are undergoing two-year certification programs through regular or Open and Distance Learning programs conducted by the states. The teacher cadre comprises of a mix of regular pay scale teachers and a wide variety of contractual teachers. Some notable examples are that of Bihar which has a decentralized recruitment process and 72% teachers posts are filled. The majority of the teachers are on fixed salaries with full service tenure till retirement. Jharkhand has a large number of vacancies (upto 50%) for regular and contract teacher posts. Also, there is a significantly larger number of contract teachers than regular pay scale teachers (in the ratio of 2:1). The Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) is now mandatory for all types of teacher applicants (regular and contract positions) - the screening of applicants through this eligibility test is expected to bring in more skilled teachers in the system.

The national PTR average at elementary has gone down significantly from 36:1 in 2005-06 to 26:1 in 2013-14. Some states continue to have relatively high PTRs (Bihar: 51, Uttar Pradesh: 38 and Jharkhand: 39). In these states teacher recruitment process is underway and once completed should bring down the high PTR.

In-service training for teachers:

In 2012-13, the national average of teachers in government schools who received in service training was 31.5% (source: UDISE 2013-14). The JRM team was informed during state visits that the annual number of training days has been reduced to 3-5 days, though data from MHRD shows higher levels of provisioning for in-service training

In-service training for academic support staff (BRC and CRCs):

Most states visited reported that they had not conducted any training for the BRCs and CRCs. As observed by the JRM during the state visits, this cadre of staff conducts monitoring visits to schools, collects the data and submits them to their offices. There were large number of files at the BRCs with filled out school monitoring checklists, but the Mission was unable to see any compilation done at the BRC level on block or cluster profiles from the analysis of the school data.

The information shared during the JRM visits to the selected states, on teacher recruitment status and process, teacher availability and PTRs, showed a wide range in the status across states. The teacher recruitment process in some states is stretching over a very long period of time and sometimes ending up in court cases (as in the case of Jharkhand). Also during the state visits, the Mission noted that while the state level average % of filled posts against sanctioned posts appears satisfactory (as in the case of Uttarakhand), the teams observed some very crowded classrooms. Overall, the data suggests that while some schools have more teachers than they need, many have too few to be effective. Importantly, schools in urban areas tend to have surplus teachers, while schools in rural areas have a deficit. This reflects that teacher deployment is not commensurate with school size and student enrolment.

Teacher Performance Indicators - PINDICS

Performance Indicators (PINDICS) are used to assess the performance and progress of teachers. It consists of performance standards (PS), specific standards and performance indicators. Performance standards are the areas in which teachers perform their tasks and responsibilities. Under performance standards there are some specific tasks which are expected to be performed by the teachers. These are termed as specific standards. From specific standards performance indicators have been derived. Each performance indicator is rated on four point scale ranging from 1 to 4 indicating the levels of performance. The rating points are: 1. Not meeting the expected standard 2. Approaching the expected standard 3. Approached the expected standard 4. Beyond the expected standard.

The JRM felt that these indicators need to be supported with the development of suitable performance descriptors for each level of rating, along with example cases, else it is likely to be subject to the ability and interpretation of the assessor – be it the self or a supervisor. The notion that self-assessment and assessment by the CRC can give a correct picture of teacher performance may need to be reviewed as in its current form PINDICS is great for reflection and self-awareness but may need other tools and mechanisms for measuring teacher gaps.

Teachers in many cases are in need of specific feedback - which will provide them insights on where, what and how to improve their own abilities in order to function with effectiveness. Teacher Assessments offer tremendous scope and direction to enhance teacher quality. These may be designed to assess the teacher's content knowledge, pedagogical competence and general ability. These may be needed because teachers have a number of misconceptions that they pass on to students. *It is recommended that PINDICS be revisited and wider consultations held before finalizing these.*

Recommendations

- **Timely recruitment of teachers:** Several States have undertaken the difficult task of rationalizing the deployment of teachers in order to reduce adverse PTRs. However some State mission observed that there are delays in appointment of teachers as a result of which posts remain vacant for many months. The process of appointments is time consuming and litigation in courts also frequently holds up process of appointment. The qualifications required and methodology for selection should be communicated in advance while advertising the positions. Where possible, applications should be obtained on-line at the districts. The process can be made transparent by posting cut off marks for selection, age criteria, or marks obtained in written tests, on the official website, and issuing appointment letters within two weeks of declaration of results.
- **Rationalization of teacher deployment:** While the number of teachers has been increasing continuously, there continue to exist a large number of schools where the

PTR is considerably above or below these norms. This makes it important to understand the issues of deployment and rationalization in the states and how this exercise can be made effective. Some states have undertaken initiatives for teacher rationalization successfully (e.g. the redeployment of surplus teachers from urban to rural schools in Dhanbad district of Jharkhand shared with the JRM team) and can be shared across states as good practices for replication.

- **Increase effectiveness of in-service training through needs assessment:** It is imperative that states enhance effectiveness of in-service,, by first assessing real needs of teachers (of their subject knowledge and pedagogical competence) and then designing the training appropriately to meet their needs. The delivery may be done for smaller groups of teachers specific to their needs. In the current year, MHRD has laid special emphasis on focused training for foundational learning in classes 1 and 2, and maths and science for upper primary classes. The Mission urges states to utilize this opportunity to undertake focused intervention towards these crucial needs.
- **Opportunities for continuous professional development of teachers:** Given that currently, in-service training is the only input for teacher development, the mission recommends to both strengthen this component and explore other opportunities for continuous professional development (for e.g. online courses, peer networks and forums for sharing good practices).
- **Training to academic support staff on use of data:** Specific training may be provided to the BRCCs and CRCCs on basic analysis of school data that is collected that will be useful for school development plans and to strengthen academic support to teachers.
- **Teacher Performance Indicators:** The JRM felt that these indicators need to be supported with the development of suitable performance descriptors for each level of rating, along with example cases, else it is likely to be subject to the ability and interpretation of the assessor – be it the self or a supervisor. *It is recommended that PINDICS be revisited and wider consultations held before finalizing these.*

Computer Aided Learning

CAL is an excellent opportunity to provide self-paced, adaptive and responsive learning where the learner is in control of his/her learning as envisaged by NCF 2005. However, much of the CAL programs are providing the same print textbooks on a digital screen and does not leverage the technology for a more responsive and interactive learning environment for the student

Recommendation:

- The Mission recommends that the approach to the content provided through computer aided learning be looked into. More specifically, it could be through a research study that looks into what is being offered under CAL, the approach to self-paced learning, the extent of CAL coverage, impact of CAL programs on improving student learning and implications for policy.

Programme Management

Human Resource Development Plan: The RTE has successfully increased the quantity and quality of essential education inputs including classrooms, teachers, and teaching and learning material. Interventions focused on providing access to education opportunities for all children have also met tremendous success in a number of States. This has resulted in a rapidly expanding education system that is comprising children with diverse learning levels and socioeconomic characteristics. Well trained staff at all levels is critical to meeting the RTE goals in this changing and complex environment. Some state reports note that there are a number of vacancies at the school, block, district, State and National level. A 3-5 year Human Resource Plan would allow for strategic planning to obtain the skills mix required at all levels of the education system. A State and National Human Resource Plan could include an (i) assessment of current capacity in terms of numbers and skill set of BRCs, CRCs, DIETs, national academic staff, etc. (ii) projection of HR needs over the next 3-5 years, and (iii) specific strategies for recruitment and professional capacity enhancement based on the realities of the human resource pool in each State.

Continuity of State Project Teams: Mission members observed that in many States SPDs are frequently transferred adversely affecting implementation of the programs. Earlier missions have also recommended that key project officials should be continued for at least 3 years. We strongly recommend that there should be stability in the tenure of SPDs. MHRD should share with the next JRM progress in this regard particularly.

Long Term Planning: The comprehensive appraisal of proposed Annual Work Plans & Budgets have required States to develop data/evidence based education plans. However the short term nature of annual planning leads to States focusing on short term interventions potentially at the expense of more effective and strategic actions that require funding commitments over multiple years. The mission is of the view that while approving a state plan every year, each state should make a plan for at least 3 years; operational plans and budgeting could then be discussed and adjusted annually. This has been in practice in different ways with regard to some of the components. As elaborated in the section on Quality, outcomes at various levels need to be incorporated in these long term plans. It is also important that states do not deviate from their long-term plans without sufficient reason or programme evaluation.

Outcome Based Approach: Outcome based planning has been introduced in the SSA framework. Now, a robust and flexible system of education service delivery is required to ensure these education inputs translate into improved education outcomes. As several states are satisfying many of the most critical input based norms such as pupil teacher ratios, the mission recommends that a review be conducted on the mechanism for funding State plans. A mechanism which allows for a dialogue to focus less on inputs and more on achieving agreed upon outcomes and measurement of those outcomes could be considered. The approval of plans could then be based on a mix of appropriate outcome and process indicators agreed upon as part of the long term planning exercise, within the SSA norms

Sharing and Encouraging Innovation and Best Practice: During the State visits mission members noted many examples of innovative and effective interventions being implemented to improve the access to education and the quality of instruction by CRCs, BRCs, DIETs, and SCERT.

MHRD could enhance State to State learning on innovative practices through (i) supporting technical capacity in the States to implement innovative pilots, (ii) building State specific evidence on the effectiveness of intervention through rigorous evaluation methodologies, and (iii) developing venues for knowledge sharing forums including websites, short policy briefs, and other platforms where information about best practice and innovative academic and administrative practices can be disseminated. The mission would like to draw the attention of MHRD to the Peer Action and Reflective Learning (PEARL) e platform created by the National Institute of Urban Affairs on which best practices and innovative initiatives are uploaded by urban local bodies and other stakeholders for knowledge sharing. The mission recommends the creation of a similar portal for SSA. Similarly the mission notes that many innovative programs have been introduced and labeled as unsuccessful without a comprehensive review of the effectiveness or identifying lessons learned that can be built on in future programs.

Monitoring and Data: Monitoring of quality interventions can be improved by designing well defined (rather than general) indicators that would be observable and measurable. This would also enable people at different levels to be able to use them. The mission also recommends consistency between DISE and the State data (such as household survey) in the estimation of key performance indicators such as NER and dropouts that greatly impact monitoring for accountability. In addition many States has developed a comprehensive strategy for monitoring both process and learning outcomes. The State may consider a data rationalization exercise in order to identify which information is required.

School Management committees: The mission notes SMCs are functioning at various level within and across States. In some cases SMC were actively engaged in the school development process and composed of a diverse set of community members with strong representation from women. In others the knowledge of the school development plan was limited and SMCs were mainly composed of men with little participation from women. In addition it was noted that SMCs focus tended to be around improving infrastructure. The mission recommends that more training be provided to SMCs to ensure equitable and effective engagement in school planning. The mission also recommends School Development Plan focus on qualitative improvement rather than just data and infrastructure, and a system be developed so that the plans feed into the cluster/block/district plans.

Civil Works: Government of India has undertaken the construction of toilets in primary schools at a massive scale. Experience from similar programs in the past shows that many of these toilets can quickly become dysfunctional if proper arrangements for water and their repairs and maintenance are not made. Where schools are not protected by boundary walls these toilets are used by local people and often vandalized by anti-social elements. The mission therefore urges MHRD that along with new toilets, arrangement must be made for adequate supply of water for their cleanliness, and funds for their repairs and maintenance. Mission also recommends students and teachers be trained in the use and proper maintenance of toilets by involving community organizations.

Recommendations

- Efforts to be made to ensure consistency between DISE and the State data (like the household survey) in the estimation of key performance indicators such as NER and dropouts that greatly impact monitoring for accountability
- More broad funding categories thus enabling States to define programs that are suitable to their State requirements

- A Human Resource Development Plan be developed to allow for strategic planning to obtain the skills mix required at all levels of the education system
- School Development Plan focus on qualitative improvement rather than just data and infrastructure, and a system be developed so that the plans feed into the cluster/block/district plans

Financial Management

➤ Progress of Expenditure

For the year 2013-14, PAB approved an amount of Rs. 49,319 crore as AWP&B for SSA. Against the above PAB approval, total funds to the extent of Rs.47,113 crore was available. The states reported an expenditure of Rs. 39,947 crore leaving an unspent balance of Rs. 7,165 crore carried forward for utilization during 2014-15. This indicates that on an overall basis there was an expenditure of 81% with reference to the approved outlay and 84.79% with reference to total funds available. In regard to release of state shares it is noted that large number of states have released in excess of the state shares while there is some shortfall to the extent of Rs. 404.78 crore in respect of 12 states. Details of state-wise funds availability, expenditure incurred etc. is given in the table below:

Financial Statements for SSA, NPEGEL & KGBV for the year 2013-2014 (As on March 2014)

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sl. No.	Name of State/UT	AWP&B 2013-14	Total funds available	Total Expenditure (Reported)	Unspent balance as per calculation	Ratio of Exp w.r.t. outlay
1	A & N Islands	1385.28	1314.66	733.46	581.20	0.53
2	Andhra Pradesh	308847.6206	300605.91	281301.522	19304.388	0.91
3	Arunachal Pradesh	30348.81014	28636.43	27951.0106	685.41935	0.92
4	Assam	160590.302	158138.61	111710.54	46428.07	0.70
5	Bihar	693581.774	598995.556	464515.232	134480.32	0.67
6	Chandigarh	5803.19055	6617.74	5179.6	1438.14	0.89
7	Chhattisgarh	162588.2438	157159.28	140262.599	16896.681	0.86
8	D & N Haveli	1426.4515	2007.7	1200.734	806.966	0.84
9	Daman & Diu	433.80051	620.33132	365.42753	254.90379	0.84
10	Delhi	20600.30501	13101.21	10211.77	2889.44	0.50
11	Goa	2451.2287	2156.14	2122.6	33.54	0.87
12	Gujarat	137400.942	142923.314	110874.101	32049.213	0.81
13	Haryana	82109.47	68062.07	62677.23	5384.84	0.76
14	Himachal Pradesh	21505.38587	21713.94	19799.95	1913.99	0.92
15	J&K	167731.5915	123960.293	111710.531	12249.761	0.67
16	Jharkhand	130241.5	83765.38	81742.3304	2023.0496	0.63
17	Karnataka	118216.0817	159416.558	91639.046	67777.512	0.78
18	Kerala	40294.21171	45341.89	40560	4781.89	1.01
19	Lakshadweep	290.689	308.83	183.84	124.99	0.63
20	Madhya Pradesh	369535.462	389897.273	342673.13	47224.143	0.93

Sl. No.	Name of State/UT	AWP&B 2013-14	Total funds available	Total Expenditure (Reported)	Unspent balance as per calculation	Ratio of Exp w.r.t. outlay
21	Maharashtra	141693.553	143080.707	103800.012	39280.695	0.73
22	Manipur	29552.95842	24890.64	21941.8	2948.84	0.74
23	Meghalaya	40028.61746	39014.432	32342.288	6672.144	0.81
24	Mizoram	19302.5955	12939.8828	12842.0462	97.83655	0.67
25	Nagaland	22171.49668	17398.37	17151.36	247.01	0.77
26	Odisha	159217.2789	134724.38	108390.202	26334.178	0.68
27	Puducherry	806.3465	989.10854	428.12676	560.98178	0.53
28	Punjab	73953.65183	88190.5427	64292.0555	23898.487	0.87
29	Rajasthan	421548.027	414158.664	354100.451	60058.213	0.84
30	Sikkim	6057.08266	5185.15	4551.71	633.44	0.75
31	Tamil Nadu	220992.29	186890.211	178541.418	8348.7928	0.81
32	Tripura	20128.42001	19292.09	19083.48	208.61	0.95
33	Uttar Pradesh	917830.565	908713.69	848713.69	60000	0.92
34	Uttarakhand	40428.974	39723.69	36494.51	3229.18	0.90
35	West Bengal	362860.2773	371404.528	284664.485	86740.043	0.78
Total		4931954.475	4711339.2	3994752.29	716586.91	0.81

For the year 2014-15, PAB has approved an outlay of Rs. 54,924.61 crore. As on 31st July 2014, funds to the extent of Rs. 20,647.46 crore was available against which expenditure to the extent of Rs. 11,023.29 crore has been reported leaving an unspent balance of Rs. 9,624 crore lying with the various state implementation societies. In this connection, it may be mentioned that as part of Finance Commission awards only two states namely Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have received the grant from the Ministry of Finance. Details of state-wise funds availability and expenditure reported upto 31st July 2014 is given in the table below:

Financial Statements for SSA, NPEGEL & KGBV for the year 2014-2015 (upto July 2014)

(Rs. In lakh)

Sl. No.	Name of State/UT	AWP&B 2014-15	Total fund available	Expenditure till July 2014 (Reported)	Ratio of Exp w.r.t. funds available	Ratio of Exp w.r.t. outlay
1	A & N Islands	1031.98	656.093	99.25	0.15	0.10
2	Andhra Pradesh	264498.2131	64790.1	40555.76	0.63	0.15
3	Arunachal Pradesh	39934.255	7652.2594	22.63644	0.00	0.00
4	Assam	162029.133	75416.89	26295.18	0.35	0.16
5	Bihar	792535.6302	260187.49	198348.6642	0.76	0.25
6	Chandigarh	6909.78	2710.649	1789.77	0.66	0.26
7	Chhattisgarh	146266.7097	74212.9	46206.158	0.62	0.32
8	D & N Haveli	1795.04	1204.801	273.58	0.23	0.15

Sl. No.	Name of State/UT	AWP&B 2014-15	Total fund available	Expenditure till July 2014 (Reported)	Ratio of Exp w.r.t. funds available	Ratio of Exp w.r.t. outlay
9	Daman & Diu	633.697	339.28	75.818	0.22	0.12
10	Delhi	20290.532	6352.648	2128.11	0.33	0.10
11	Goa	2504.6	1184.8	198.53	0.17	0.08
12	Gujarat	139611.79	107829.013	48032.30192	0.45	0.34
13	Haryana	91921.67	32426.21	38493.8	1.19	0.42
14	Himachal Pradesh	25012.75	7315.023	4099.33	0.56	0.16
15	J&K	169548.4707	43915.3576	93.214	0.00	0.00
16	Jharkhand	193794.4956	34501.315	19183.676	0.56	0.10
17	Karnataka	133696.4636	97852.4813	37029.52354	0.38	0.28
18	Kerala	42981.37	15347.515	3327.18	0.22	0.08
19	Lakshadweep	291.0525	367.659	183.84	0.50	0.63
20	Madhya Pradesh	444083.5212	179272.383	134278.7083	0.75	0.30
21	Maharashtra	141914.3741	44821.0936	11776.35325	0.26	0.08

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sl. No.	Name of State/UT	AWP&B 2014-15	Total fund available	Expenditure till July 2014 (Reported)	Ratio of Exp w.r.t. funds available	Ratio of Exp w.r.t. outlay
22	Manipur	31325.86992	7482.348	1826.19	0.24	0.06
23	Meghalaya	35942.81154	13432.239	4061.579	0.30	0.11
24	Mizoram	19237.25357	4168.2738	1412.45098	0.34	0.07
25	Nagaland	29259.35	247.01	55.85	0.23	0.00
26	Odisha	192326.5376	71593.34	30101.51634	0.42	0.16
27	Puducherry	814.13	493.07037	393.68	0.80	0.48
28	Punjab	84603.89	30618.26	18819.21192	0.61	0.22
29	Rajasthan	480733.762	216779.402	133575.105	0.62	0.28
30	Sikkim	6057.89	1633.91	587.74	0.36	0.10
31	Tamil Nadu	199007.043	99231.467	63137.488	0.64	0.32
32	Telagana	182168.79	43330.66	17173.43	0.40	0.09
33	Tripura	22985.36507	4932.705	207.04	0.04	0.01
34	Uttar Pradesh	874298.3824	358410.19	159120.25	0.44	0.18
35	Uttarakhand	51885.585	18612.57	12035.23774	0.65	0.23
36	West Bengal	460529.251	135424.343	47331.28807	0.35	0.10
Total		5492461.439	2064745.75	1102329.441	0.53	0.20

➤ **FLOW OF FUNDS**

From the current year onwards (2014-15) system for flow of funds from the Central Government to the State implementation Societies has been revised and the funds are being routed through State Governments. As per the new procedure the State Governments are required to make counter

Budget provision and on receipt of Central Assistance the State Government, after following due procedure, would transfer the funds to the State Implementation Societies (SIS). The above system is such that there are certain procedural bottlenecks which would lead to a delay of 45 to 60 days for the SIS to receive the grants. During interactions with the State Authorities the JRM observed that the State Governments have made required Budget provision in respect of Central assistance. However, it was noted that the time lag of 45 to 60 days for funds to reach the society cannot be avoided in the circumstances.

Recommendation: the JRM feels that MHRD should have a relook at the revised fund release system, and consider reverting to the earlier system of direct release of funds to SIS. In the mean while, the first installment or adhoc grant may be released in the month of April itself without adjustment of unspent balance so that the State Societies have sufficient funds at their disposal for disbursement of salary and conducting various programmes.

➤ **UNIFORMITY OF PERIODICITY OF EXPENDITURE**

The tendency at the state level towards bunching of expenditure towards the end of this financial year needs to be avoided as it not only affects the implementation of the programmes but also leads to parking of funds by way of advances. To ensure that expenditure is evenly spread and there is no bunching of expenditure at the end of the year nor any activity neglected, the State Implementation Society in Uttarakhand has prepared a district-wise and activity-wise “Annual Expenditure Plan” indicating physical targets along with monthly requirement of funds in respect of each activity. *The JRM recommends for adoption of a similar action plan by other societies.*

➤ **SETTLEMENT OF ADVANCES**

The JRM reviewed the status of settlements of outstanding advances. The quantum of long pending advances is a matter of concern. The State Societies have taken up on priority the settlement of advances. It may be mentioned that in the state of Bihar against an outstanding advance of Rs. 13,053.23 crore advances to the extent of Rs. 9,268.16 crore could be settled by 10.09.2014 leaving unsettled advance of Rs. 3,785.07 crore which was yet to be settled. Uttarakhand has been able to settle advance of Rs. 168.70 crore could be settled by 2013-14 thus leaving a balance of only Rs. 3.76 crore yet to be settled. In this connection, it may be mentioned that as observed from various audit reports, till a few years back some of the societies used to show advance as expenditure. This practice is not in conformity with the provisions of General Financial Rules 2005. This deviation is reported to have been rectified and advances are not any more being shown as expenditure; they are being reflected as advance in the annual account. This practice helps in proper monitoring of pending advances for settlement of which a sustained campaign needs to be maintained by the societies on a regular basis. Further, refund of unspent balance at sub-district treated as income/receipts in certain cases, still remains an area of concern.

Recommendation: In view of the seriousness of the matter, JRM recommends that at the time of release of funds the extent of outstanding advances may be kept in view by the MHRD.

SCHOOL GRANT

MHRD provides School Grant of Rs. 5000/- for primary schools and Rs. 7000/- for upper primary schools. School maintenance grant is sanctioned in the range of Rs. 5000 per school per year (upto 3 classrooms) to Rs. 10,000 per school per year (more than 3 classrooms) subject to the condition that the overall eligibility for the district would be Rs. 7500 per school. During discussions at the State and School levels it was pointed out that the above amounts were inadequate.

Recommendation: The mission recommends suitable increases in School and School Maintenance grant. The mission also recommends a separate 'Toilet Maintenance' Grant, to be dedicatedly used for cleaning and maintenance of toilets.

➤ **STUDENT ADMISSION IN PRIVATE SCHOOL UNDER RTE ACT**

As per the provisions of the RTE Act, all private schools are required to admit at least 25% of the seats at entry level class (pre-primary or class 1) from neighboring areas free of cost. While some of the states have implemented the provision without any financial support to the private schools, some other states have made provisions for reimbursement of tuition fee on per child basis within a stipulated ceiling. The mission commends the MHRD's decision to reimburse the expenditure for such enrolments to state governments –this will satisfy the long standing demand of the state governments.

➤ **PAYMENTS OF TEACHERS' SALARY**

The JRM was happy to note that in many States that the disbursement of salaries of teachers is made directly into the bank accounts of the teachers. However, in some States salaries' are still being disbursed by way of cash payments. This practice may be discontinued and it may be ensured that the salary is directly credited to the bank account of the teachers.

➤ **STAFFING AND CAPACITY BUILDING OF FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS STAFF**

- **Staffing:** Over the years there has been a gradual improvement in the staffing of Finance and Accounting staff. However there still remain substantial vacancies which raises the concern that giving additional charges to the existing staff may have led to technically enabled resources (teaching cadre personnel) being engaged in administrative and accounting functions, thereby leading to in-appropriate utilization of already scarce resources. It is also a matter of concern that in case of some societies e.g. Uttarakhand, there is no full time financial controller and the post is presently being held as an additional charge or Tamil Nadu where there are 66% vacancies against sanctioned posts in the SIS office.

District Level: At district level, there still exist large vacancies as against the sanctioned positions. For instance among large states, the % of vacancies against sanctioned positions is as follows: Bihar (53%), Madhya Pradesh (23%), Maharashtra (25%), Rajasthan (52%), West Bengal (27%).

Block Level: Based on the initiative of MHRD states are now allowed to hire one block level accountant for every 50 schools. While this has improved the deployment of the accounts people at the block level, in many States additional posts have not been sanctioned as per the new norms. It is matter of concern that staffing gap at block level against the sanctioned posts is high in States like Arunachal Pradesh (98%), Delhi (68%) and Rajasthan (68%), Bihar (42%), Chandigarh (50%), Haryana (49%) and Himachal Pradesh (41%).

Recommendation: The JRM suggest that as the next steps (a) urgent attention is required to maintain acceptable level of staffing at State, district and sub-district level; and (b) time-bound plan should be prepared to fill vacancies at all levels, as weak financial management continues to be highlighted in audits and review missions.

- **Capacity Building:** Since development of sound financial management system is contingent on development of professional competence of accounts staff, it is imperative to provide capacity building to finance and accounts staff at all level. The manual on Financial Management and Procurement provides 5 days mandatory capacity building in a year to all finance and accounts staff. Further it may be noted that at sub-district level there is a substantial need for regular training. Specifically, Headmasters and SMC members not only need regular training on record keeping, accounting and SDP preparation but also require regular support by way of visits and discussion with the DPO and BRC personnel's. For 2014-15 capacity building for finance and accounts staff has not yet been provided by 14 States of Arunachal Pradesh, Dadar & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Jammu & Kashmir, Haryana, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Puducherry, Sikkim and Tamil Nadu.

Recommendation: The States should share their training calendar at the start of each year with MHRD which should be subsequently monitored in the quarterly FC meeting. Further, for sub-district level extensive training programs are needed along with constant on-the job hand holding support, especially at the school/ SMC level.

➤ **BOOK KEEPING, ACCOUNTING AND ASSET MANAGEMENT:**

SSA programme, running on a mission mode, has a separate set of accounting and auditing standards encapsulated in the Manual on Financial Management and Procurement (FM&P). Formats for statement of accounts prescribed in the Manual require disclosures to depict the true and fair state of affairs of the Society in the Balance Sheet. Some of the observations in this area are highlighted below:

- Mercantile System of Accounting is not consistently followed across all States.
- Utilization Certificates (UCs) submitted for usage of funds at school level do not report opening and closing balances, specifically for sub-district units.
- Bank Reconciliation Statement: In majority of States, BRS is being prepared periodically. However the mission observed that reconciling entries are not being addressed at the end of each reconciliation period. There are long outstanding entries which may have resulted in overstatement of expenditures and advances or understatement of un-spent balances for the State.

- Pre-Numbered Vouchers not being used at district and sub district units in certain States.
- Fixed Assets Register either not prepared or prepared partially in most States. Further furniture and other non-perishable items procured through SSA funds should be appropriately coded/ marked.
- Ageing of assets: Assets, including fixed assets should be periodically assessed/ surveyed to identify their usability. In addition, existing schools should be surveyed to identify dilapidated classrooms and broken down furniture and accordingly recourse of either re-using or disposing the same should be identified.
- Annual Physical Verification of Stocks and Assets not yet being carried out by most States.

➤ ***ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE***

For effective and efficient maintenance of accounts at district level, the customized Tally ERP-9 package has by and large been implemented in the States upto district level. Remaining States should also procure and apply the software. It also came to notice that (i) in a number of States the software though implemented are not fully integrated, hence still requiring manual interventions and (ii) in most of the States accounting software are yet to be rolled out at sub-district level.

Recommendation: It is recommended that for effective implementation of accounting software there should be application of integrated accounting software to the lowest level of accounting center.

➤ ***AUDITING AND OTHER ASSURANCE MECHANISMS:***

The guidelines in the FM&P manual have laid out procedures to be followed during various audits in great details. The mission suggests that these guidelines should be strictly adhered to.

Internal Audits: Internal audit is the most effective system of internal control particularly for the sound financial management system in a flagship programme like SSA. Internal audit requirements are being partially fulfilled with some States having quarterly, semi-annual or annual internal audits. Vacant positions in internal audits departments need to be filled up on priority.

Recommendations: Internal Audit of SSA accounts should be conducted on a quarterly basis in such a manner that the accounts of DPOs and the below District level units are appropriately covered. MHRD should monitor the status with the state governments on regular basis.

Statutory Audits: Annual accounts are compiled every year within the stipulated time-frame of 30th June. All these State Implementing Societies has been informed by MHRD to engage statutory auditors and get the annual accounts prepared by 30th June. Audit of accounts for the year 2013-14 is in progress. Audit Reports from four States i.e Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka and Lakshadweep has been received in the month of September 2014.

MHRD shared that it is anticipated that all the societies would be able to submit the audited statement of accounts for the year 2013-14 by November 2014.

Compliance of Audit Observations: Audit observations from 2005-06 are reported to be outstanding for settlement. These outstanding audit observations need to be settled on priority to avoid lapse of time.

Recommendation: MHRD and States should closely monitor the progress of settlement of outstanding audit objections and take sustained efforts to settle the outstanding audit observations.

Concurrent Financial Review: Financial review of SSA by IPAI was last conducted to cover FYs 2009-10 to 2011-12. IPAI Phase III Reports on Financial Management & Procurement highlighted weakness such as , irregular holding of the meeting of the Executive Committees, delay in release of funds, treating advances as expenditure, excess expenditure over PAB approved budget, general weakness in the accounting system, etc. Till August 2014, response on the observations was not received by MHRD from 11 States/UTs and there still remain pending observations for settlement for other states.

Recommendations: Mission recommends that MHRD conducts a special drive to settle all outstanding observation within specific timelines.

PROCUREMENT

All states have uploaded the procurement plan for 2013-2014 and 28 states have uploaded the procurement plan for 2014-15. 5 states and 3 UTs are yet to submit their procurement plans for 2014-15. The procurement plans are a useful tool for monitoring progress of activities against the plan and for taking corrective action at an early stage. However, most states are not reviewing the plans on a regular basis to check whether planned timelines are being adhered to.

The Mission recommends that MHRD follow up with these States and UTs to ensure that the plans are received and uploaded on the respective websites within October'14.

The Mission also recommends that MHRD may urge the States to review the procurement plans on a regular basis to ensure that procurements are made in a timely manner.

Audit reports for 2012-13 for most states have not highlighted any major procurement issues. However, auditors have observed that stock registers are not maintained properly and that physical verification of stock is not being conducted in a number of states. In a few states the auditors have also observed that the provisions of the FMP manual have not been followed and that procurement documents were not produced.

The Mission recommends that MHRD reiterate to all States that all procurements should be strictly in adherence with the FMP manual and also follow up with States so that all audit observations are settled at the earliest.

Some States are still not making use of the procurement tracking software.

The Mission recommends that MHRD may encourage the states to make use of this useful tool for monitoring procurements valued at more than Rs 10 Lakhs.

The fourth phase of the Financial and Concurrent Review covering the period 2012-13 and 2013-2014 has been commissioned. M/s S.K. Patodia & Associates have been appointed as the concurrent auditors following a competitive process. The concurrent audit for the year 2011-12 was not commissioned as the procurement process for selection of the auditors took a long time. Observations made in IPAI reports dating back to 2008-09 are yet to be settled by the States. MHRD is persistently following up with the States to get this resolved.

Procurement of Text Books: Most of the states visited have reported timely receipt of text books. The quality of the text books however vary from state to state.

The Mission recommends that states may may develop a set of common specifications for paper and printing which can be used while procuring text books thereby maintaining uniform quality.

SMC Manual: Some of the States visited had printed SMC manuals in the vernacular language with sections on procurement and finance.

This is a good practice and may be adopted by other States.

The SMC members may be provided with training on the applicable procurement procedures to ensure compliance with the FMP manual.