

## **CHAPTER- 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is a power of transformation and development of the society. It is a process of acquisition of knowledge, facilitating learning, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Education is a key area for any sustainable development agenda. Further, education is the key which allows many other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved in near future. Education, therefore, helps to reduce inequalities and to achieve gender equality. Education is a powerful weapon of social change. It also empowers the people of the country for smooth & healthy lives.

Elementary education is the foundation of formal education of the children. We all know that the future of the society is shaped on the standard of Elementary education. The cycle of Elementary education in India comprises from class 1 to class 8. The age group of children of elementary level is 6-14 years. Government of India enacted Right to Education as a fundamental right of the child of elementary level by implementing Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009. The Act also aims to bring every Out-of-School Children of the age group of 6 to 14 years under the fold of mainstream formal education system so that they can be at par with other children of the formal school.

Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) is one of the Directive Principles of State Policy and Constitution of India. The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 emphasizes the following main aspects of elementary education<sup>1</sup>.

- Universal access
- Universal enrolment
- Universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and

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<sup>1</sup> Mathur S.S(1992), A Sociological Approach to Indian Education, Vinod Pustak Mandir, Agra , page-464.

- A substantial improvement in the quality of education

Sarba Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a flagship programme of Govt. of India at Elementary level with a major focus of providing quality elementary education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. The core goal of SSA is to achieve UEE as envisaged by NEP (1986) and PoA (1992).

### **1.1 ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

In an underdeveloped and educationally backward country like India, primary education on a mass and universal scale provides the fundamental basis on which could be erected the future edifice of entire national development<sup>2</sup>.

Education for every child is a constitutional obligation. But the fulfilment of these ideal is possible only in case all types of schools are established- Primary, Secondary, Technical & higher and in all of these institutions admissions are made freely and justly<sup>3</sup>. The National Policy of Education (1968 & 1986) and its revised formulation (1992) envisaged a uniform pattern of school education (10+2 pattern, 12 years of schooling) across the states. In the country, the school education system is divided into three parts/sections viz Elementary, Secondary and Higher Secondary levels. The Elementary level is further divided into two parts viz Primary & Upper Primary sections. The elementary level is eight years cycle covering two stages: primary stage for a period of five years and upper primary stage for a period of 3 years. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is the apex body for the development of school education in India.

The Right to Education Act, 2009 mandates Elementary Education is a fundamental right of every child. According to the Section 3(1), Chapter 2 of the RTE Act, 2009 “Every

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<sup>2</sup> Rawat P.L(1991),History of Indian Education, Ram Prasad & Sons, Agra, P.273.

<sup>3</sup> Mathur S.S.(1992), A Sociological Approach to Indian Education, Vinod Pustak Mandir,Agra, page-183.

child of the age of 6 to 14 years shall have a right to free and compulsory education in a neighborhood school till completion of elementary education”.

## **1.2 UNIVERSALISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) is a major concern of the policy makers and the administrators of the country. The word Universalisation of Elementary Education means making elementary education available, accessible and affordable for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years of the country. The Article 45 of the Indian constitution states “The state shall endeavor to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years”. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was introduced during the Ninth Plan (1997- 2002) to universalize Elementary Education<sup>4</sup>. Accordingly, the constitution of India was amended by “The Constitution (Eighty Sixth Amendment) Act 2002”. The 86th constitutional amendment Act, 2002 led to insertion of a new article 21-A in part III of the constitution that made free and compulsory education to all children of 6 to 14 years of age a fundamental right<sup>5</sup>.

Universalisation of Elementary Education comprises following three parts<sup>6</sup>.

- **Universalisation of provision:** Universalisation of provision refers that all children in the age group of 6-14 years irrespective of any caste, creed, gender etc. of the country should have elementary schooling facility for their education within the walking distance from their home. It enables the parents to send their children to school.

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<sup>4</sup> Taj, Haseen (2008), Current Challenges in Education, New Delhi: Neelkamal Publications Pvt. Ltd page no.35.

<sup>5</sup> Aggarwal, J.C (2010), Landmark of the History of Modern Indian Education, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd ,New Delhi, page no. 660.

<sup>6</sup> Malakar Dipankar [2016], Sarva Shiksha Abhijan Mission among the Tea-Tribes of Sivasagar District-an Evaluative Study, Ph.D, Edu, Gauhati University, Assam, page-4.

- **Universalisation of enrolment:** All children in the age group of 6 -14 years should be enrolled at elementary schools irrespective of any caste, creed, gender etc.
- **Universalisation of retention:** It refers that once a child joins elementary school he/she should remain there till he/she completes the eight years of elementary cycle. It means that care should be taken for retention of children till the completion of elementary stage.

The role of Universal Elementary Education (UEE) for strengthening the democracy through provision of equal opportunities to all has been accepted since the inception of our Republic<sup>7</sup>. The Government of India has undertaken different programmes and formulated policies for making elementary education free and compulsory for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years.

After formulation of National Policy of Education, Govt. of India started various schematic programmes/interventions such as Operation Black Board (OBB), Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP), Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP), Bihar Education Project (BEP), U.P Basic Education Project (UPBEP), Mahila Samakhya (MS), Lok Jumbish Project, Teacher Education Scheme (TES), District Primary Education Programme etc. for achieving the goal of UEE. National Policy of Education, 1986 has also special emphasised on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity. For achieving UEE, NPE states following:

- Universal enrolment, retention and substantial improvement of quality.
- Receive of free and compulsory education by all children up to 14 years.
- Implementation of area specific and population specific planning.

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<sup>7</sup> Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Framework for implementation (2011), MHRD, GoI, page-1.

- Children of all families in the country will be provided access to elementary education of good quality.
- Common school structure i.e. 10+2+3 structure and primary stage should be of 5 years followed by 3 years upper primary stage
- Taking up of a large and systematic programme of non formal education for OoSC and for children of habitations without school.

### **1.3 SARVA SIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA) - A FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME OF GOVT. OF INDIA**

Sarba Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched throughout the country in the year, 2000-2001 to fulfill the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) and constitutional obligation of providing education to the children of 6-14 years age group. In the State Education Ministers' Conference held in the month of October 1998, the scheme Sarba Siksha Abhiyan was recommended to pursue universal elementary education in a mission mode. The scheme was approved by the Cabinet in its meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2000. The programme seeks to open new schools in those habitations which do not have schooling facilities and also to strengthen the existing school infrastructure through provision of additional classrooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance grant and school improvement grant<sup>8</sup>.

#### **1.3 1. Aim of Sarba Siksha Abhiyan (SSA):**

The main aim of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to provide useful and relevant elementary education to all children in the age group of 6 – 14 by 2010. Bridging of social, regional and gender gaps and active participation of the community in the management of schools is also another goal of SSA.

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<sup>8</sup> Dash, B.N, Development of Educational system in India (2009-10), New Delhi: Dominant Publishers and Distributors, page no.387.

### 1.3.2 Objectives of the Sarba Siksha Abhiyan<sup>9</sup>:

1. Enrolment of all children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternative School, “Back-to-School” camp by 2005;
2. Universal retention of all children till the upper primary stage by 2010;
3. Bridging of gender and social category gaps in enrolment, retention and learning;
4. Ensuring that there is significant enhancement in the learning achievement levels of children at the primary and upper primary stage.
5. Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.

As universalisation of access is one of the major goals of Sarba Siksha Abhiyan Mission, various interventions viz opening of new schools in the habitations where no schooling facilities have available, opening of alternate schooling centres for providing education to Out of School Children, strengthen the school infrastructure, improving quality of education, ensure retention of children etc. have been implemented by the state of Assam for achieving the goal. The following indicators give an overall picture of Elementary education of the state of Assam:

**Table: 1.1**

#### **BASIC EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS OF LAST 4 YEARS OF THE STATE**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
Enrolment (Elementary)	5806184	5853278	5432053	5543842
Out of school(6-14)	88516	97501	106646	78365
% of Drop out LP	6.3%	7.4%	15.4%	5.7%
% of Drop out UP	7.3%	7.1%	10.5%	3.1%

<sup>9</sup> Sarba Siksha Abhiyan, Framework for Implementation, Chapter-I, page no.2.

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
% of Retention LP	75.3%	72.55%	68.75%	70.30%
% of Retention UP	91.5%	94.67%	87.74%	89.28%
% of Retention Elementary	-	54.4%	49.1%	53.60%
Gender Parity Index-LP	0.986	0.984	0.983	0.980
Gender Parity Index-UP	1.067	1.073	1.067	1.065
Gender Parity Index-Elementary	1.011	1.011	1.009	1.007
Transition Rate (LP to UP)	93.6%	91.8%	85.6%	93.3%
Gross Enrolment Ratio(GER)-LP		114.7%	107.4%	107.3%
Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)-UP		84.0%	80.8%	96.7%
Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)- Elementary level		103.1%	97.3%	103.7%
NER Enrolment Ratio(NER)-LP	-	-	95.3%	98.6%
NER Enrolment Ratio(NER)- UP	-	-	79.4%	88.8%
NER Enrolment Ratio(NER)- Elementary	-	-	89.9%	95.3%
PTR-LP	28	28	26	26
PTR-UP	17	17	16	18

*Source: U-DISE, 2013-14 to 2016-17, SSA, Assam*

#### **1.4 RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT (RTE), 2009**

The Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009, is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted on 4th August 2009, which describes the modality of the importance of free and compulsory education for children in the age group of 6 to 14 years of India. It was a momentous step of the country for Universalising Elementary Education and to enforcement of Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution. The Act commenced in the country from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2010. The various provisions of this RTE Act, 2009 provide guarantee of equality, social justice and democracy and formation of humane society for inclusive elementary education to all

and this act provides a justifiable legal framework that entitles all children between the ages of 6-14 years receive free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education<sup>10</sup>.

Section 3 (1) of the Act which says that ‘every child in the age of 6-14 years shall have a Right to Free and Compulsory Education in a neighbourhood school till completion of elementary education’, explanation (ii) of section 8(a) which says “compulsory education means obligation of the appropriate government and local authority to ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by every child in the age group of 6-14 years and second provision of the Act which lays down that “a child so admitted into elementary education shall be entitled to free education till completion of elementary education even after 14 years”.

In the country, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, which indicates that every child has a right to receive equitable quality elementary education in a formal school. The Act stresses the words ‘Free and Compulsory’. ‘Free education’ means that no child (other than a child admitted by parents in a non government school) will be liable to pay any kind of fees or charges or expenses for pursuing his/her education up-to elementary level. ‘Compulsory Education’ means to make elementary education compulsory (with regards to compulsory admission, attendance and completion of education by each child) for all children of the age group of 6-14 years<sup>11</sup>. The appropriate Government and local authorities are responsible for ensuring free and compulsory education by each child. In view of this, Government of India has formulated a rights based framework viz. RTE Act, 2009 with legal obligation to fulfil the fundamental right

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<sup>10</sup> Draft framework for implementation Samagra Shiksha Abhiyanan- an integrated scheme for school education, page-7, MHRD, Deptt. of School Education & Literacy, EE-TT, dtd. 5<sup>th</sup> April/2018.

<sup>11</sup> Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan, Framework for Implementation, Based on the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, Deptt. of School Education, MHRD, GoI, 2011, page-2.



of children as envisages in the Article 21-A of the Constitution. The Act has also provisioned for Special Training to bring back to the Out of School Children (both never enrolled & drop out) in the formal schooling system.

In precisely, RTE Act assures:

- Right to free and compulsory education to every child in the age group of 6 to 14 years until completion of elementary education in a neighborhood school.
- Availability of a neighborhood school within the area or limits of neighborhood.
- Availability of teacher & classroom as per Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTRs) & Student classroom ratio as prescribed by RTE Act, 2009.
- Working days of school and working hours of teacher etc.
- Special training facility for Out of School children directly admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age.
- Timely prescribing of curriculum and courses of study for elementary education
- No discrimination of child belonging to weaker section and the child belonging to disadvantaged groups.
- No Child held back in any class or expelled from school till the completion of elementary education.
- No physical punishment or mental harassment of children.
- No Board examination until completion of elementary education
- Quality education through engaging qualified teacher i.e. academic and professional qualifications.

The Act, 2009<sup>12</sup> has further emphasised the following with regard to ensure free & compulsory education:

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<sup>12</sup> Upadhyaya Amar, Senapati Niakhi (2016), Implementation of RTE Act, 2009 in the Elementary Schools of Assam, EDUTRACK, Vol.15-No.8., page 38-39.

- a. Right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school.
- b. It clarifies that ‘compulsory education’ means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by each child in the age group of 6 to 14 years.
- c. It makes provisions for a non-admitted child to be admitted to an age appropriate class.
- d. It specifies the duties and responsibilities of appropriate Governments, local authority and parents for providing free and compulsory education and sharing of financial and other responsibilities between the Central and State Governments.

#### **1.4.1 STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF “THE RIGHT OF CHILDREN TO FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION ACT (RTE), 2009 IN ASSAM**

RTE Act, 2009 came into force in the state of Assam from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2010 and subsequently, “The Assam Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules” had been notified on 11th July, 2011. A glimpse of the status of implementation of the RTE Act, 2009 is given below:

**Table: 1.2**

#### **STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RTE ACT, 2009 IN ASSAM**

<b>SN</b>	<b>Provisions</b>	<b>Status of Implementation</b>
1	Commencement of the RTE Act in the state of Assam.	The Act is in force in the State of Assam from 1st April, 2010.
2	Definitions detailed	All definitions are defined in the State Rules and subsequent notifications for implementation
3	Right of child to free and compulsory education for the children of 6-14	Notified in State Rules and implemented

SN	Provisions	Status of Implementation
	Years, till completion of elementary school.	
	No child will be liable to pay any kind of fee or charge which may prevent him/ her from pursuing & completing Elementary Education	Notification issued and implemented
4	Right of a child to seek transfer to any other school	Notification issued and implemented
5	Local Authority	Notification issued
6	Definition of neighbourhood norms	Notification issued and implemented
7	Children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group should be admitted against at least 25% of the total seat strength in class-I in the neighborhood school and be provided free and compulsory elementary education till its completion.	1) The children of weaker section and disadvantaged groups are specifically notified by State Government. 2) Provision for admission of 25% of total strength on class-I /Ka-Sreni is notified by State Government and being implemented from the academic year, 2015.
8	No capitation fee and screening procedure for admission	State notification is already issued for the provision and implemented accordingly.
9	No child shall be denied admission for lack of age proof.	Already defined in the State Rules.
10	Provision for admission of children throughout the academic year.	Already defined in the State Rules.
11	No child admitted in a school shall be held back in any class or expelled from school till the completion of elementary school	(a) State is following no detention policy as prescribed. (b) Notification issued by State Government for the provision and implemented.
12	No child shall be subjected to physical or mental harassment.	Notification issued by State Govt. for the provision and strictly implemented.

SN	Provisions	Status of Implementation
13	No school to be established without obtaining certificate of recognition.	Notification issued by State Government for the Provision.
14	No school to be established or recognized under Section 18 unless its fulfills the norms and standard as specified in the schedule	Notification issued by State Government for the provision
15	The constitution of School Management Committee consisting the elected representative of local authority, parents and guardians	All School Management Committees were Reconstituted as per provision of the RTE Act and functions defined accordingly.
16	Qualification for appointment and terms & conditions of service of teachers	Defined by State Government by modifying existing provisions and following the norms laid down by NCTE.
17	Provision for Grievance redressal	a) Notification has been issued on Grievance redressal mechanism b) For redressal of grievance, a Toll Free Number is installed in SSA, Assam c) State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) is constituted and functioning actively.
18	Prohibition of deployment of teachers for non educational purposes.	State Government has already notified that no teachers will be deployed for any non-educational purpose other than: <input type="checkbox"/> Decennial Population Census <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Relief Duties. <input type="checkbox"/> Duties relating to Election to the Local Authority/State Legislature /Parliament.
19	Prohibition of private tuition by teachers	Notification issued by State Government and implemented.
20	Constitution of Academic Authority &	▪ SCERT, Assam is notified as

SN	Provisions	Status of Implementation
	Curriculum and Evaluation Procedure.	Academic Authority. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Curriculum revised as per procedure, by Academic Authority.</li> </ul>
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No Child shall be required to pass any Board. Examination till completion of Elementary Education</li> <li>▪ All children completing elementary education shall be awarded certificate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Notified for prohibition of Board Examination, as laid down in the Act and implemented.</li> <li>▪ Compiled</li> </ul>
22	Constitution of State Commission for Protection of Child Rights	Constituted and functioning actively.
23	Constitution of State Advisory Council	Already constituted
24	Integration of class-V under lower primary and class-VIII under upper primary with eight years of elementary cycle.	Notified and complied
25	Prescribing working days for schools and instructional hours for teachers.	Notification issued
26	The expenditure of per child cost shall be reimbursed by the State Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) State Rules defines for the provision.</li> <li>b) The State Government has already notified the norms of per child cost @ Rs.13,249/- for the academic year 2015</li> </ul>

Source: Annual Report, 2016-17, SSA, Assam, page- 4 -5.

### **1.5 OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (OoSC) - DEFINATION, TYPES, PROCESS OF IDENTIFICATION AND STATUS:**

The Government of India is trying to ensure receive of free and compulsory elementary education by each child, yet the country is facing a huge problem of students failing to complete the cycle of schooling. While a large number of children of India are still out of school, equally large is the number of children who dropout or leave school before completion of a given stage of education or leave at some intermediate or non-terminal

point in a cycle of schooling<sup>13</sup>. At the National level, out of an estimated 20.41 crore children in the age group of 6-13 years, an estimated 60.64 lakh children are out of school. This accounts for 2.97% of the total children in the said age group across all states and UTs in India<sup>14</sup>.

### **1.5.1 Who are Out-of-school children?**

“A child of 6-14 years of age group will be considered as out of school if he / she has never been enrolled in an elementary school or if after enrolment has been absent from school without prior intimation for reasons of absence for a period of 45 days or more<sup>15</sup>.”

### **1.5.2 Types Out of School Children (OoSC):**

Out of School Children (OoSC) are mainly two types- Never Enrolled and Drop Out children. Never enrolled category includes children who have never been enrolled in the school at the age of 6 years. Drop Out children are those children who have been enrolled but left the school before completing elementary cycle. These categories of children may be dropped out at any class or any period of the academic year. Basically, out of school children are heterogeneous in nature. These children are mainly domestic worker, child labourer, rag pickers, worker as dhabas/hotel/ shop, migratory children etc. and these children are also found in urban slum, streets, railway plat forms, construction sites etc.

Studies revealed that there are various reasons for dropouts of such categories of children. Dropouts may be due to parents' illiteracy and lack of awareness, child labour, lack of quality of curriculum, non-availability of textbooks, poor physical facilities/ infrastructure. Lack of professional competency and commitment among teachers as well as no proper supervision and monitoring are some of the other reasons for dropout. There

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<sup>13</sup> Omeo Kumarr Das Institute off Social Change & Development (2013), Dropout Students in the Elementary Schools of Assam: A Study of Five Districts, page-1.

<sup>14</sup> SRI-IMRB International (2014), National Sample Survey of Estimation of Out-of-School Children in the Age 6-13 in India, page-10.

<sup>15</sup> Suggested approach and interventional strategy for Special Training for OoSC, MHRD, New Delhi, D.O.No.12-2/2012 EE II dtd. 8<sup>th</sup> Oct/2013

may also be parents who feel reluctant to send their children to schools due to several reasons, e.g. security concerns or unattractive teaching –learning process etc. Hence, this calls for urgent and strategic intervention, which would motivate such children to come to school again and participate in learning activities. There are other category of OoSC in terms of social groups, urban rural areas, gender, physical and mentally challenged, etc. Percentage of OoSC in the marginalised sections of the society is also a matter of concern, which needs to be addressed holistically<sup>16</sup>.

### **1.5.3 How to identify Out-of School children?**

Authentic identification of the out-of school children is a prime requisite for arrangement of special training. Government of India (GoI) is also emphasising on proper identification of Out of School Children in the States. GoI has already defined the process of identification of OoSC in the guideline of suggested approach and interventional strategy for Special Training for OoSC. State government, local authority and school Management Committee (SMC) are mainly responsible for identification of OoSC and a joint initiative and convergence among various stakeholders is required for identification of OoSC in the respective localities. Micro planning for mapping of school going and non school going children at grass level is an important essence of identification of Out of school Children. For identification and keeping track of children who are absent in school for long time is also important as such children are at the risk of becoming school dropouts sooner or later if they are not tracked and sent back them to school again. The process of identification of OoSC is required to be transparent and participatory with the involvement of parents, local authorities and the local community. As part of this process, data from different sources – school records, panchayat records, household survey (undertaken as part of school mapping exercise) should ideally be presented in public

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<sup>16</sup> Special Training of Out-of-School Children Admitted in Age Appropriate classes under RTE Act, 2009, NCERT Guidelines, page-5-6.

forum to be verified and discussed. The data that emerges from the mapping exercises are to be consolidated at school level and then brought together at the panchayat, cluster and then block and district. Proper assessments of numbers, geographical spread; community profiles need to be made by the Local Authority and school authorities<sup>17</sup>.

#### **1.5.4 STATUS OF OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (OoSC) IN ASSAM**

Assam ranks low in education attainments, finishing 30<sup>th</sup> among 35 States and Union Territories in the composite Educational Development Index (EDI) in Upper and Lower Primary levels taken together for the year 2013-14 in the country. There are over 47,000 Primary Schools in Assam with 54, 32,053 children enrolled in 2015-16 and 1,06,646 children who were Out of School – roughly 1.9% of the total population of children in the age group of 6-14 years<sup>18</sup>. During the year 2016-17, number of Out of School children of the State reduces to 78365<sup>19</sup>.

The following table depicts the status of Out of School Children (OoSC) in the State.

**Table: 1.3**

<b>YEAR WISE STATUS OF OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Out of School Children(OoSC)</b>	<b>% of Out of School Children (OoSC)</b>
2002-03	1340185	24.39%
2003-04	866845	16.55%
2004-05	424845	8.11%

<sup>17</sup> Suggested approach and interventional strategy for Special Training for OoSC, MHRD, New Delhi, D.O.No.12-2/2012 EE II dtd. 8<sup>th</sup> Oct/2013.

<sup>18</sup> Assam Agenda: 2030, Strategies and Actions for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, February, 2018, Centre for Sustainable Development Goals, AASC, Transformation and Development Department, GoA , Chapter 3: Promoting inclusive and quality education for all, page-39.

<sup>19</sup> U-DISE, 2016-17, SSA, Assam,



Year	Out of School Children(OoSC)	% of Out of School Children (OoSC)
2005-06	384199	7.38%
2006-07	395161	7.27%
2007-08	339100	6.24%
2008-09	199187	3.56%
2009-10	59446	1.03%
2010-11	124577	2.07%
2011-12	118603	2.02%
2012-13	102518	1.79%
2013-14	88516	1.50%
2014-15	97501	1.64%
2015-16	106646	1.91%
2016-17	78365	1.40%

*Source: Habitation survey & U-DISE, 2003-04 to 2016-17, SSA, Assam*

### **1.6 OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (OOSC) INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTED IN ASSAM PRIOR TO RTE ACT, 2009**

Children's remaining Out of School is one of the major challenges of UEE. To bring such children into the fold of elementary education, Alternative Schooling Programme was implemented under the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the same programme for Out of School Children (OoSC) has been continued under SSA project. Alternative schooling programme under SSA implemented through Education Guarantee Scheme Centres & Alternative Innovative Education (AIE) centres viz Residential Bridge Course Centre (RBCC), Sanjogi Siksha Kendra (SSK), Community Coaching Programme (CCP), Upper Primary Bridge Course Centre (UPBC) and Hard to Reach (HTR) Centre. The Alternative schooling programme focused on the children in the age group of 6 to 14 years, who lack the opportunities to enter the formal school and on mainstreaming the children into the formal school at the same time. These centres were

operationlised before implementation of RTE Act, 2009 for providing schooling facilities to out of school-children.

### **1.7 SPECIAL TRAINING FOR OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN UNDER RTE ACT, 2009**

The term “Special Training” in the RTE Act, 2009 talks of enabling each and every child to complete elementary education up to class-VIII. As regards the implications of the terms ‘Special Training’, it may be mentioned that it subsumes all the measures required to be taken to enable an out-of-school-child to join a formal school in a class appropriate to his/her age and pursue education up to class-VIII and which may take the form of Non residential Special Training Centres (NRSTCs) & Residential Special Training Centres (RSTCs)<sup>20</sup>.

Section -IV of RTE Act, 2009 articulates the provision of special training for the children who are above age six and have never been attended school or attended but dropped out before completing the cycle of elementary education. Such children would be provided special training for accelerated learning to be enabled to admit in the class appropriate to their age. The Act also provides for additional support to such students even after they have been admitted to regular classes till they are fully integrated to the school. The Act spells out the maximum time period of two years for the child to receive special training . It envisages the School Management Committee (SMC) or the Local Authority having the duty of identifying of such children by undertaking household survey & neighbourhood school mapping and ensuring that all children are sent to school. Such bodies shall ensure that no child is subjected to any bias or discrimination based on class, caste, religious or

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<sup>20</sup> Guideline for operationalisation of Special Training Centre, Assam, No.SSA/AS/Spl.Trang/AIE/384/2010, Dated 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2011, page-1.

gender related issues. The Act also lays down, as a duty, the responsibility of every parent or guardian, to admit his or her child or ward to an elementary school.

As defined by the Act, immediately after age appropriate enrolment of an OoSC, learning provision should be made available through Non-Residential Special Training and Residential Special Training mode to meet up the learning gaps within a stipulated time period. The state of Assam notified State RTE Rule on 11th July, 2011. As per provision mentioned in the state RTE Rules, 2011 [Provision in Part-II, Section-03(1)-d of State RTE Rules, 2011], the Special Training may be of the duration of minimum 3 months to maximum 2 years. For implementation of Special Training in the State of Assam, the State Guideline of Special Training has laid down the following three major tasks<sup>21</sup>:

- The first and foremost task is to enroll each and every out of school child in an age-appropriate class in a neighborhood school immediately after identification.
- The second immediate task is to assess if the child was in a position to cope with the academic requirements of that class and figure out the precise nature of the special academic support – Special Training – he/she required to be at par with the regular children in that class.
- The third task is to design the special training intervention in a manner befitting the learning needs of the children and decide the time frame for this intervention.

### **1.8 IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH & STRATEGY OF SPECIAL TRAINING**

Special Training is a critical and important component under the RTE Act, 2009. The Act has provisioned to formulate concrete strategic measures for special training (ST) for out

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<sup>21</sup> Guideline for operationalisation of Special Training Centre, Assam, issued No.SSA/AS/Spl.Trang/AIE/384/2010, Dated 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2011, page-1.

of school children (OoSC) to align the strategies used for alternative or non-formal education in the past.

Special Training should not be only a time bound activity, but it must be a process to help the children of diverse backgrounds to adjust academically and emotionally in the schooling system. Special Training should be provided in the same academic year once the identification of OoSC has taken place. Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Govt. of India, New Delhi (vide D.O. No.12-2/2012 EE 11 dtd. 8<sup>th</sup> Oct/2013) and NCERT, New Delhi (Special Training of Out-of-School Children Admitted in Age Appropriate classes under RTE Act, 2009, NCERT Guidelines, 2015) has already formulated the suggested approaches and interventional strategy for Special Training for OoSC.

Some major interventional strategies for Special Training defined by MHRD and NCERT, New Delhi are as follows:

### **1.8.1 Age Appropriate Enrolment through Special Training**

The RTE Act, 2009 specifically refers to the enrolment of out-of school children into age appropriate classes and the requirement to provide special trainings as per their need. However, in Chapter II, Section IV of the Act states that “Where a child above 6 years of age has not been admitted in any school or though admitted could not complete his or her Elementary Education, then, he or she shall be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age”. “Provided that where a child is directly admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age, then, he or she shall, in order to be at par with others, has a right to receive special training, in such manner and within such time limits as may be prescribed”. “Provided further that a child so admitted to Elementary Education shall be entitled to free education till completion of Elementary Education even after fourteen years”.

### **1.8.2 Strategies for age-appropriate enrolment**

The following steps and processes are required for age-appropriate enrolment:

- A formal enrolment process to ensure that the child's name is entered in the neighborhood school records.
- Imparting special training after age appropriate enrolment at neighborhood school to enable the child to be at par with other children of formal school.
- Actual admission of the child in age appropriate class and his /her participation in all class activities as per his/her need. After special training the actual admission should be done in the class in which he /she would be able to be at par with other children.
- Provision requires to be made for special support to the child once inducted, so that the child can integrate with the class academically, socially and emotionally.
- At the end of the duration of special training for a particular child, the suitability of placing the child in a class may be reviewed. For example, if a 10 year old child was admitted to class IV, and received 2 years of Special Training till age 12, an assessment may be made as to whether the child will be able to cope up in class V or VI in the formal school as per his/her level of learning.

### **1.8.3 The Nature of Special Training**

Special Training may be residential or non-residential in nature:

- **Residential** – where out-of-school children are scattered, and who need residential facility such as in hilly areas.

- **Non Residential** – where out-of-school children are very much concentrated in an area and school is located within walking distance.

#### **1.8.4 Entry Level Assessment**

As soon as a child is enrolled in a school in age-appropriate class, it becomes necessary to identify his/her competency level so as to decide the duration of his/her special training. Any special training programme has to be based on previous knowledge and experience of the child at the entry level. The teachers and other school level functionaries involved in administering entry level assessment test shall refer to the learning indicators to identify the knowledge and skills of children.

#### **1.8.5 Duration of special training**

Duration of special training shall be for a minimum period of three months extendable up to two years. There should be periodic assessment of learning progress made by such children on continuous basis in special training. The entry level assessment will determine the duration of special training in each case and placement in age appropriate class thereafter. The Head teacher/ teacher must ensure that a consolidated record of all children is maintained in the training centres for better traceability of learning outcomes for necessary interventions. The assessment of the children shall be done by the concerned teachers. Preferably, it should be validated by the Head teacher or the CRCC. The school shall maintain performance record of children, clearly indicating the progress made during the period of special training at regular intervals, stating the milestones accomplished for further action with regard to children's admission in age appropriate classes.

#### **1.8.6 Location:**

In case Special Training (ST) is organized within the school then the School Headmaster needs to decide the learning hours of the same. This is important especially if children in

the ST are also attending regular classes at school. The Headmaster will also have to plan for other management issues like attendance, providing textbooks and study material, maintaining a record of their academic progress, mid-day meal distribution, etc.

#### **1.8.7 Special Learning Support Materials (SLSM)**

As per sec 29, (I), RTE Act, the special training shall be based on specially designed, age appropriate learning material, approved by the Academic Authority, these may be referred as **Special Learning Support Materials (SLSM)**. During training programme the teachers should be familiarized with the special training support material in the context of pedagogy, as given below:

The SLSM should be developed in such manner which enables learners to develop their knowledge and competency levels as per their age, by adopting a condensed curriculum. This will help the learners to bridge the learning gaps to be at par with their peers in short duration.

Special Learning Support Materials should be developed and designed in a manner, which will help in preparing out-of-school children to join formal schools and adjust with the school environment. Suitable teaching learning strategies should be adopted accordingly to enable the learners to achieve the competencies appropriate for their age in short period, during which the children are allowed to learn at their own pace. This prepares the children to cope with the demands of the formal school system. The curriculum transacted to the learners should be in a condensed form so that the learners achieve equivalence with their peers in the formal school and get admitted in the appropriate class.

The SLSM should be based on specific requirements of multi-level teaching of children of different age-groups and abilities. It should be so designed that it is free from all biases.

There should be flexibility for accommodating contextual and local specific requirements and learning contents. SLSM should be easy for teachers and enjoyable for children.

#### **Core Components of Special Learning Support Materials (SLSM)**

- The Curriculum/Syllabus prepared, should facilitate inculcating values enshrined in the Constitution such as equality, liberty, fraternity, socio-economic justice, democracy, secularism and scientific temper and human rights amongst the children.
- SLSM shall be in consonance with NCF 2005. However, enough flexibility should be maintained within the overall Frame Work of NCF-2005. .The curriculum may be shortened and adapted version of school curriculum per local requirements of the state.
- The core subjects of elementary stage should be a necessary part of SLSM. Other curricular areas viz. work experiences, arts and heritage, craft, music, theatre, health & physical education, peace education, gender, culture and extracurricular activities and other social issues should be integrated holistically in the SLSM.
- Effort should be made to develop bridging materials enabling the creation of intensive teaching-learning environments, which may accelerate learning.
- Development of special learning material should be in a manner which provides opportunity for children to enter and exit special training programme at levels that are age/class appropriate for them.
- While developing SLSM, focus should be on the initiatives such as, relevant and contextualized content and pedagogy. Focus of interventions should not only be on



teaching of the 3Rs, but on process of building confidence, self-esteem, communication abilities, etc.

- Contents should be simple, related to real life situations, including such activities so as to encourage participatory learning, providing opportunity for creative expression as well.
- Since the duration of special training may vary as per the requirements of children hence, adhering to class specific competency levels is important and should be prepared keeping in view the needs of the children.
- Training timings should be flexible, planned and executed as per local specific requirements.
- NGOs and civil societies may be involved to broaden the perspectives of the SLSMs and organizing special training.
- SLSM should also include worksheets and be made available for all children in the Special Training Centers.

Since OoSC and drop outs also constantly interact with various circumstances in their life for their living, they are much more exposed with outer world as compared to other school children. When such children attend special training they would bring with them varied knowledge and experiences though they are not enrolled in any school. The biggest challenge will be to incorporate such experiences and knowledge in special training material. At the same time during teaching, teachers will be required to integrate such knowledge and skills and their previous vast and varied experiences during classroom transactions. This will facilitate accelerated and enhanced learning of these children,

making learning relevant, more interesting to make the children motivating and growing confident gradually.

#### **1.8.8 Teachers:**

Based on the number of children enrolled and the location of the ST, decision should be taken on using existing teachers or additional teachers for the ST. In case ST is organized in the school and the numbers are not large then the classes for ST can be the responsibility of regular teachers. Additional teachers/ educational volunteers will be needed if the number of children enrolled in ST is large or if the ST is located at a place other than the school or is residential in nature. If a particular village/hamlet has a large number of OoSC then ST should be established in the school premises. An additional classroom could be allocated, while the other existing resources would be shared.

If a particular hamlet (serviced by a particular school) does not have a large number of OoSC but the Panchayat as a whole has a significant number of OoSC, then one of the schools in the panchayat be the nodal school and a Special Training centre be set up there. Transport (if children coming from beyond 1 km) should be provided or arrangement to assign a volunteer to accompany the children be made.

#### **1.8.9 Capacity building/Training :**

As the special training is for a limited period, it is very essential to equip the education facilitators of ST to perform his/her responsibility in systematic and scientific way. For this, proper training programme would have to be developed. It is the responsibility of the State for developing the framework for this training programme with the inclusion of persons and institutions that have experience of delivering such programmes. As such, capacity building on age and grade appropriate teaching is very essential for special training. This will enabled the facilitators to deal with children of multilingual and diverse situation and also with different abilities and learning at different pace. Special

thrust should be given on classroom processes – pedagogy, keeping in view the heterogeneous groups and children with special needs in particular. Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation for assessing the progress of children - what, when and how is to be evolved. Training on how to complete time bound competencies for mainstreaming of children is essential for them.

#### **1.8.10 Mobilization:**

Mobilisation of OoSC requires a social atmosphere in favour of the Right of every child to elementary education. Some suggestive activities are:

- Visits by teachers/ SMC members/ Local Authority members to the homes of OoSC (breaking barriers and improving communication) and regular meetings especially of teachers with the parents to enroll them in schools/ST or while the child is at the Special Training or once the child has been mainstreamed.
- Mobilisation events in the community like gram sabha meetings, parent- teacher meets, SMC meetings with the parents etc. in the hamlets or villages.
- Community volunteers/ SMC members/ older children/ panchayat members/ local religious leaders etc. can be co-opted to bring the children to the school and provide support to STs where operational.
- Special Campaigns before opening of the new academic session, with the involvement of community, especially local youth groups, CBOs, religious leaders etc. on the Right to and importance of education for all 6-14 years old.

#### **1.8.11 Organizing/ Conduct of special training:**

Learning time during ST should focus on building both academic and social skills. Age and grade appropriate entry means recognition of the experience and knowledge of a

child, regardless of its 'non-formal' nature and in the process locating his or her entry into the system at an appropriate level. Learning may be approached as a social process where children can learn in mix-aged groups by interacting with and learning from their more able peers.

A planned process of induction of all OoSC into the school system must be an integral part of the curriculum and pedagogic processes. OoSC when brought into the system must feel wanted and a relationship of trust developed among them and between children and teaching staff. The first 15-20 days are crucial for any child entering school and may be devoted to 'non academic' work and the following activities may be undertaken, irrespective of the mode in which the ST is delivered, residential or non- residential, duration etc.

- **Understanding the child:** The teacher should collect information about each child- his/her background, family support, previous working conditions etc. in a non-threatening manner through talking and discussion.
  
- **Building a trusting relationship and the ST Centre as a 'safe' space:** To reduce fear (of authority and punishment, fear of academics etc.) and to introduce children to an unfamiliar routine, the days should not be too regimented and discipline should not be demanded. Time needs to be spent just talking and mingling, between teachers and children and with other school children. Organization of cultural activities, games and sports, shared MDM etc may be emphasized.
  
- **Creating the desire to learn:** Often first time learners or dropouts are full of apprehensions, yet they have a desire to study. During the initial phase, the children should see the classroom activities and get drawn into the learning environment. It is common that within two weeks' time, children begin to demand that they are taught to read and write as they grow in

confidence and develop a sense of security. All children will not start to read and write on the same time and no attempt should be made to force or compel them to read and write.

- **Readiness for school:** A child who comes to school for the first time feels that every aspect of the school is new and alien. A child has to 'make herself over' in order to succeed in school or even 'unlearn' aspects her own cultural and social world. Sensitivity to their context will reduce the alienating impact of schooling.
- **Integration:** In order to guard against isolation and 'labeling', conscious efforts must be made to integrate them into the school environment through participation in sports, extra curriculum activities, meals etc.
- **Involvement of parents and community:** Parents and community members who have been responsible for motivating the children to come to the ST should be allowed to access to the centre until such time as they feel secure and comfortable. ST centres should have a culture of openness, where adults/community is welcome to participate in the activities.

#### **1.8.12 Monitoring/ tracking and support activities:**

The roles assigned to the School Head Master/Teacher, SMC and Local Authority should be clearly defined. For example, the Head Teacher may be assigned academic supervision specifically, the SMC to ensure regular attendance of the child and the Local Authority an overarching review at regular intervals. The roles will have to be defined as per local issues and challenges. Support services where there are overlapping problems of drug addiction, child labour, disability etc. will need specific planning.

### **1.8.13 Special Training – School Linkages/ Special Support Activities**

A strong connect with the local regular school is absolutely essential for a successful mainstreaming and integration of children from ST. The school Headmaster must regularly visit the ST in case the location is outside the school and especially when the Special training is residential. Management related decisions including payment of salaries to additional teachers should ideally be made by the supervising Headmaster who should monitor the learning progress recorded by the teachers. Any child not making regular progress should be individually discussed with the teachers and the academic support team. The Headmaster should also make an assessment of the academic support required by the teachers.

The Headmaster can make focused efforts for integrating children from ST into the regular school by organizing joint events like sports meets, summer melas, school level melas, children competitions, cultural activities etc. Similarly teachers from regular school could provide academic support to teachers implementing ST. Teachers of the regular school could also be involved in conducting learning assessment of children in ST, they could also recommend which of the students could be ready for mainstreaming given that they would be aware of the learning standards of students in their regular classes.

Even after a child is in age appropriate class, she would need continuous support during holidays, summer vacations to catch up with peers. She has to be prevented from slipping into the labour force when schools are closed. Till such time school going becomes a habit and part of her everyday routine she has to be followed up to strengthen integration into the formal school. Thus induction process is a continuous process for poor children. While children learn to become students and get inducted into the world of classroom, teachers, friends, books, sports and so on, parents too get simultaneously oriented to support the new regimen of their children.

#### **1.8.14 Post mainstreaming support**

The children mainstreamed issue should continuously to be reviewed by the Local Authority, ST teachers and SMC, as they continue to be vulnerable to becoming drop outs for the same reasons they were OoSC earlier. Support for ancillary problems/ issues which may have been provided during ST, may still be required like counselling, aids and appliances for disability, therapy for substance abuse etc.

### **1.9 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VARIOUS FUNCTIONARIES**

In view of the importance of the task and complexities associated with Special Training, the entire elementary education set-up of States/UTs needs to play a role in achieving the goal of educating never enrolled or drop-out children. There is need to make necessary convergence with other departments and agencies as far as possible for special training programme, such as, Women & Child Welfare, NCLP, Labour Department, SCPCR, Urban & Rural Department, and child care organizations and other concerned functionaries.

#### **1.9.1 Role of School Management Committees (SMCs)**

Functioning of special training centres largely depends on the performance of the members of the School Management Committee/ local authority. SMC members shall identify out-of-school children (non-enrolled or drop-outs) requiring special training. The SMCs needs to mobilize parents to admit such children in schools. It is imperative that the members of concerned SMCs shall make special efforts to motivate parents of children with special needs to enrol them in the neighbouring schools. They will provide all possible support to parents for enrolling Out-of school children and make provision for Special training of such children. Other functions of SMCs are:

- Taking decision regarding Residential or Non-residential centre as the case may be.
- Making arrangement for space, lighting, drinking water, etc. for the special training centre.
- Day-to-day running of the centre will be over seen by SMC members.
- The SMC members shall maintain Child Profile to maintain record of all such children and monitor their regularity in schools. They will also identify the children with special needs of their level of disabilities.
- The record of such children shall be updated once in every 3 months.
- The information of such children may be put on the notice boards of the Village Panchayat and schools in its jurisdiction. The record shall include name of child, date of birth, sex, parent's name(s), and the class in which he /she left the school and the class in which he/she has been admitted in the school. The SMC members will provide necessary infrastructure and support for the special training.

### **1.9.2 Role of Local Authority**

Section 9 of the RTE Act, 2009 gives the Local Authority (basically PRIs and ULBs) the responsibility of identifying OoSC and organizing ST. This will necessitate a close interaction of Local Authority with School headmasters/teachers on a sustained basis. Specific guidelines need to be issued as to how and in what ways the Local Authority and schools will organize identification, organizing and monitoring of OoSC in the State/UT RTE Rules.

The Local Authority has also been vested with the function of listing the names of every child in the village/ habitation register. The register should be standardized to have age and gender wise details which will be reviewed in the meetings of Gram Panchayat or its education Sub-Committee, at regular intervals. If a child is found to be out of school for



any reason, it should be discussed and followed up by the Local Authority to enable the child to join school. The Local Authority can involve parents, other village community members and motivate them to send the child to school. The Local Authority can also be a pressure group on employers, in case of child labour situations, to release the child and send his/her to school.

The Local Authority has to ensure coverage of all OoSC in ST in the neighbourhood or if circumstances so demand in a residential Special Training facility. They must also monitor the attendance of OoSC in these centres and their subsequent age appropriate mainstreaming in schools. The Local Authority and neighbourhood school must ensure that children taken up in ST are first registered in the regular school and records must clearly show the details of ST.

### **1.9.3 Head Teacher / Principal**

The Head Teacher / Principal along with school authorities shall grant admission to such children in age appropriate classes. They will assess the 'Entry level competence' of such children in Languages, Mathematics, and EVS with the help of teachers preferably oral. The teachers/ HM may like to take help of Assessment Tools, which may involve oral/ written questions as the case may be. This information shall be utilized to plan and organise special training of the out-of-school children. The Head Teacher/Principal shall provide necessary resources to create a conducive atmosphere and provide necessary support to these children. The Head teacher should ensure that school time table reflects the organization of special training classes. Other roles and responsibilities are as follows:

- Head Teacher/Principal will shoulder the responsibilities to conduct survey of out-of-school children in the neighborhood once in every 6 months.

- She\he will ensure suitable location for the Special Training in consultation with local authority/ NGO. It may be organized in the school premises, at cluster resource centre, Panchayat Bhawan, community centre and other suitable place.
- She\he will make suitable arrangements to conduct entry level test, quarterly tests and final achievement tests to assess the children's learning levels at regular intervals.
- She\he will arrange Special Learning Support Materials and provided to children.
- She\he will ensure that the children have achieved the desired competencies suitable for a particular class during the period of special training.
- Monitor ST and ensure integration of children with regular school processes.
- She\he will ensure that no child shall be subjected to physical punishment or mental trauma.
- Ensuring that no such child shall be denied admission in school for lack of age proof.

#### **1.9.4 Teacher**

Teacher's role is crucial in the whole exercise of organizing special training with regard to conducting training as well as planning, development and execution of test items for each level. These test items will be administered by teachers. Proper coordination with CRCCs/BRCCs and District Level Functionaries shall be ensured in the whole operation. It is also likely that some children are unable to cope with the new situation after entry to the school. In such situation, children need special assistance of teachers to achieve knowledge/ competencies and develop adjustment ability with other children in the class.

### **1.9.5 Role of Parents**

Parents also need honest and open communication with the teacher in meeting the special requirements of such child. It may so happen that the parents may be required certain medication to be given at a specific time to the child. It is essential that the tasks are completed on the part of the teacher as well. Parents need to coordinate with the teacher in such regards.

With a concerted efforts and coordination from the teachers and parents, such children can overcome many problems enabling them to integrate in the main stream of education and develop zest for knowledge and learning, moving ahead and become a socially useful citizen.

### **1.10 SPECIAL TRAINING IN ASSAM:**

In school education, the Government of Assam is vigorously implementing the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 which mandates that every child in the age group of 6 to 14 years in India has the right to receive quality, inclusive and child friendly education. Nevertheless, there are still 106,646 out of school children (OOSC) as of 2015-16 of which 69,862 are at lower primary level and 36,784 at upper primary level<sup>22</sup>. Assam envisions a total elimination of out of school children by 2030 (Assam Agenda: 2030).

Extensive effort is being made from the end of SSA, Assam to access, to cover, to provide academic support and mainstream/back to school of out of school children and to ensure

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<sup>22</sup> Assam Agenda: 2030, Strategies and Actions for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, February, 2018, Centre for Sustainable Development Goals, AASC, Transformation and Development Department, GoA , Chapter 3: Promoting inclusive and quality education for all, page-39.

the regular participation of children and completion of elementary cycle with satisfactory levels of learning as a part of Universal Elementary Education and as mandate of RTE Act, 2009. After enforcement of RTE Act, 2009, AIE centres have been reconceptualised as Special Training centres viz Residential Bridge Course centre as Residential Special Training centre and SSK, CCP,UPBC & HTR centres as Non Residential Special Training centre as per Section – IV of the Act . Siksa Karmis (who facilitate education to the children) of AIE centres were also designated as Education Volunteers. In view of the RTE Act, 2009, State has carried out the following activities for implementation of Special Training intervention.

- Enrolment of out of school children in Age appropriate Classes and providing Special training through NRSTC and RSTC as per their age & requirement.
- Formulation of Guideline for implementation of Special Training Programme as per Section IV of RTE- Act 2009.
- Issue of notification through Deputy Commissioner concerned for age appropriate enrolment & providing special training through regular school teachers at school in rural areas.
- Conduct massive exercise for attachment of habitation in nearby School & fixing the responsibility of Head Teacher to cover OoSC under his/her jurisdiction.
- Development of special learning materials (Readiness Package, Condensed materials etc).
- Development of Individualised Educational Plan (IEP).
- Training of Head Teacher, Educational Volunteers and SMC Members on Special Training.
- Evaluation of scholastic & Co-scholastic areas and development of model assessment tools.

- Sensitization of Head Teacher and SMC Presidents for Management Special Training Intervention. (Annual report,2011-12, page-14)

*The state has been operationalising the following Special Training centres for imparting education to the OoSC as per provision of RTE Act, 2009*

#### **1.10.1 RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL TRAINING CENTRES (RSTCs):**

**The Residential Special Training** is an intervention to bring out of school children of the age group of 11-14 years into the fold of Elementary Education and to retain them till completion of eight years cycle of elementary education. The Residential Bridge Course Centre under SSA was reconceptualised as Residential Special Training Centre (RSTC) after enforcement of RTE Act, 2009. The RSTC is basically meant for the child labourers of 11 to 14 years age group. As per the guideline of RSTC, first preference is to be given to the child labourers for enrolling in the RSTC. In addition to the out of school children working elsewhere (11 to 14 years) children without adult protection, homeless & street children will also be given preference in RSTC. Special provision for BPL ST/SC Children of 11 to 14 years age group is also kept for enrolling at RSTC.(Source: Guidelines for opening & running of RST Centre, 2011 dtd.1st November,2011, page-2).

For providing support to the out of school children in RSTC, after identification of their names are to be enrolled in the neighbourhood school as per their age appropriate class. Accordingly, as per strategy of special training & their requirement special training support is to be provided in the RSTC. On completion of special training, children will be accommodated in the neighbourhood school where he/she has already been admitted for pursuing further education for completion of elementary cycle. In RSTC, Education support is provided in residential mode by Education Volunteers engaged by SSA through proper procedure. All learners are served with free food and also free lodging, stationery materials, academic materials, uniforms, school bags, TLM, sports materials etc. are provided. Besides, other programmes like health and hygiene programme, self defence,

prevocational training programme, preparation of wall magazines etc. are conducted. Total 95 RSTCs have been operationalised covering 8,679 learners. (Source: Annual Report, 2016-17, page-32).

**Table:1. 4**

**YEAR WISE NO. OF CHILDREN COVERED UNDER RSTCS AND MAINSTREAMED IN FORMAL SCHOOL (2011-12 TO 2016-17)**

Year	Residential Special Training Intervention		
	Centre	No. of children covered	No. of children Mainstreamed
2011-12	79	8527	3849
2012-13	111	10820	4424
2013-14	124	11439	7313
2014-15	124	12233	4199
2015-16	108	12177	-
2016-17	95	8679	-

Source: Annual Report, SSA, Assam, 2011-12(page-15,17), 2012-13(page-18), 2013-14(page-25, 26), 2014-15(page-26), 2015-16(pag-31.), 2016-17(page-32).

**1.10.2 NON RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL TRAINING CENTRES (NRSTC):**

The main objective of this intervention is to bring out of school children into the fold of Elementary Education and to retain them till completion of eight years cycle of elementary education. After enforcement of RTE Act, 2009, AIE centres viz SSK, HTR centre etc. were converted as Non-Residential Special Training Centre (NRSTC) as per guideline of Special Training, SSA, Assam dtd. 25th January, 2011. State has already instructed the districts to attach the special training centres in the campus of neighbourhood school (source: SSA, Assam).

Under this intervention, 7 to 14 years of out of school children were covered. This intervention has three sub divisions viz. NRSTC-Rural, NRSTC-Urban, NRSTC-Religious Madrassa. The cited all three interventions have been implemented under

Special Training unit. Learning materials, uniforms, MDM etc. have been provided to the children of these centres. Education Volunteers have provided academic support mainly in NRSTC-Urban & NRSTC-Religious Madrassas. Total 1156 centres in which 59,790 learners were covered under NRST intervention during the financial year 2016-17. (*Annual Report, SSA, Assam, 2016-17, page-32*).

**Table: 1.5**

**YEAR WISE NO. OF CHILDREN COVERED UNDER NRSTCS AND MAINSTREAMED IN FORMAL SCHOOL (2011-12 TO 2014-15)**

Year	Non-Residential Special Training Intervention	
	No. of children covered	No. of children Mainstreamed
2011-12	101281	60723
2012-13	268365	101011
2013-14	184771	101871
2014-15	167304	81018

*Source: Annual Report, SSA, Assam, 2011-12(page-14,17), 2012-13 (page-18), 2013-14 (page-25,26), 2014-15(page-26)*

**1.10.3 ACADEMIC MATERIALS USED FOR SPECIAL TRAINING LEARNERS**

Sikhan Puthi (Condensed Books- approved by SCERT) are used as academic materials and provided to both Lower and Upper level learners of Special Training. These books are provided to the learners in Assamese, Bengali, English and Bodo medium. The type of academic materials used for them are given below:

- Sikhan Puthi 01: for Class I & Class II. **Language and English.**
- Sikhan Puthi-02: for Class I & Class II. **Mathematics.**
- Sikhan Puthi-03: for Class III, Class IV & Class V. **Language and English.**
- Sikhan Puthi-04: for Class III, Class IV & Class V. **Mathematics.**
- Sikhan Puthi-05: for Class III, Class IV & Class V. **EVS.**

- Sikhan Puthi-06: for Class VI, Class VII & Class VIII. **Language, English and Hindi.**
- Sikhan Puthi-07: for Class VI, Class VII & Class VIII. **Mathematics.**
- Sikhan Puthi-08: for Class VI, Class VII & Class VIII. **General Science.**
- Sikhan Puthi-09: for Class VI, Class VII & Class VIII. **Social Science**
- Readiness Package (One month readiness package prior to imparting of Special Training).
- Continuous and Comprehensive Assessment tools.
- Evaluation Workbook.
- Individual Education Plan(IEP) for each child for tracking continuous academic progress and planing for mainstreaming.

*(Source: State Mission Office, SSA, Assam)*

#### **1.10.4 OTHER SUPPORT PROGRAMMES FOR OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (OOSC)**

- Provides dress materials and school bags for the learners
- Mid-Day-Meals.
- Stationery and Teaching Learning materials.
- Co-curricular activities conducted with the help of Local NGO's and retired persons. Viz. Ex-Army, personnel etc.
- For girls self defence programmes have been arranged
- Pre-Vocational skills like Cutting, Knitting and Embroidery were also imparted in Girls RSTCs.

*(Source: State Mission Office, SSA, Assam).*

#### **1.11 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:**

SSA is implemented as one of India's flagship programmes for universalizing elementary education with the objectives of achieving universal access & retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in elementary education and enhancement in learning



levels of children. The RTE Act, 2009 is the milestone for overall implementation of approaches and strategies of SSA, and this Act has great significance to synchronize the SSA vision, strategies and norms.

Since the beginning of SSA, the state has taken multifarious initiatives to bring out of school children into the mainstreamed education system by bridging of the learning gaps through different modes of alternative interventions. Immediately after enactment of RTE Act, 2009, the Alternative schooling programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhayan has been reconceptualised as Special Training as per provision of the Act. Like other states, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Assam has arranged special training both residential and non residential mode to meet up the learning gaps of the children within the stipulated time period as specified by RTE Act, 2009.

The state had 78365 OoSC in the age group of 6-14 years as per habitation survey, 2016-17 and dropout rate was 5.7% at LP & 3.1% at UP level as per DISE, 2016-17. State has 80175 OoSC in the age group of 6 to 14 years and dropout rate is 10.08% at LP & 5.36% at UP level(Source: U-DISE,2017-18). In spite of implementation of various provisions of RTE , still the State has OoSC.

Special Training for Out of school children is considered as one of the major interventions of RTE Act, 2009. A total of 15 years tenure (8 years of SSA and 7 years of RTE-SSA), has already been completed by the State and during that tenure various measures have been taken for providing education of these children. So, it is essential to know the effectiveness of Special Training Intervention under RTE Act, 2009 for bringing the out of school children into the fold of elementary education.

It is observed that there is a lack of fundamental study and books on the area of out of school children. Though, there are some literature reviews which cover the subject of drop

outs (also known as one kind of out of children) but few have concerned in dropout as a prime area.

Of course, some evaluation studies have been conducted by UNICEF, other organization and individuals on initiative of out-of-school children, causes of school dropout, child labour etc. Under SSA, states had conducted some evaluation studies on the programme. The evaluation studies were mainly on factors that cause school non attendance and contribute to dropping out by children. However, these cannot be stated as sufficient to give a complete scenario of out of school children & effectiveness of various relevant programmes implemented so far.

Porteus et al. (2000) studied on causes of marginalized urban Out of school children in South Africa. Kanamugire & Rutakamize (2008) studied on remedial programme to bring OoSC back into the formal education system. Rumberger (2001) studied on why students drop out of school and what can be done based on two different conceptual frameworks viz individual perspective and institutional perspective. IMRB (2014) conducted All India Sample Survey to estimate the number of Out of school children. From the analysis of the previous studies, it has been observed that there is further need of study on the area of out of school children. It is important to mention here that to integrate the out of school children academically and emotionally, with the rest of the children in the class after mainstreaming is a big challenge even after providing support in Special Training Classes for 1/2 years.

In the state, studies on special training intervention for out of school children under RTE, Act is in a nascent stage. The understanding on the provision of special training under RTE, Act by community, parents including teachers is still lacking. The need of such study has been justifiable and long been felt. The present investigation is an attempt to study the effectiveness of special training intervention of out of school children in

Kamrup (Metro) district of Assam as this study would be the first of its kind to be undertaken for the state.

### **1.12 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

RTE Act, 2009 assures – Right to free and compulsory education to every child in the age group of 6 to 14 years until completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school. The Act also provides a ripe platform to reach the unreached, with specific provisions for disadvantaged groups, such as child labourers, migrant children, children with special needs, or those who have a “disadvantage owing to social, cultural, economic, geographical, linguistic, gender or such other factor.” Sec 4 of the RTE Act, 2009 states that if a child could not complete his or her elementary education between 6 to 14 years of age, then he or she shall be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age and special training is to be arranged for them for minimum 3 months to 2 years to meet up their learning gaps and to mainstreamed them to the formal school. Hence, considering the importance of the Special Training intervention for Out of School Children under RTE Act, 2009, the present study has been conducted in Kamrup (Metro) district of Assam. The study has been titled as Effectiveness of Special Training Intervention of Out of School Children with special reference to the provision of RTE Act, 2009.

### **1.13 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main purpose of the present study is to examine the effectiveness of special training intervention of out of school children under RTE Act, 2009 and continuation of education of OoSC after mainstreaming into the age appropriate classes in the neighbourhood school. The study has been conducted on elementary age group children with regard to certain variables like identification of children, age appropriate enrolment, entry level assessment and identification of learning gaps, age-grade appropriate teaching,

time/period of support, use of academic package, attendance, performance, mainstreaming, retention, school environment, teachers student interaction etc.

*The objectives of the study are given below:*

1. To assess the status of implementation of Special Training Intervention for Out of School Children under RTE Act, 2009 in Kamrup (Metro) district in terms of
  - 1.1 Identification of children
  - 1.2 RTE Act, 2009 & Age Appropriate Enrolment
  - 1.3 Mechanism & process of Special Training
  - 1.4 Evaluation of special training learners.
2. To analyse the status of special training learners especially with reference to attendance, performance & mainstreaming in Kamrup(Metro) district.
3. To study the effective transaction of academic package of special training as per academic level and duration of special training learner in Kamrup(Metro) district.
4. To find out the status of retention of mainstreamed children in formal school in Kamrup (Metro) district.

#### **1.14 RESEARCH QUESTION**

1. Is the special training intervention effective in respect of awareness on OoSC & RTE Act, 2009, age appropriate enrolment, age-grade appropriate teaching learning process, attendance, performance and mainstreaming?
2. Is the adequate academic package provided for special training learners to bridge the learning gap and meet the duration of special training?
3. Are the mainstreamed children retained in formal school?

### 1.15 OPERATIONAL TERM OF KEY WORD USED IN THE STUDY

Different terms used in the study have been operationalised in the following ways:

- a) **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):** Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is India's flagship programme for universalizing elementary education. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is implemented in India in the year of 2001-02. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is also an attempt to provide quality education to all children within the age group of 6-14.
- b) **Right To Education Act, 2009:** The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, is a legal document to ensure Free and Compulsory elementary education of the children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. The Act assures – Right to Free and Compulsory education to every child in the age group of 6 to 14 years until completion of elementary education in a neighborhood school. This Act makes provision of free and compulsory education for both the group of children i.e. children in school and children not in school.
- c) **Free and Compulsory Education:** As per RTE, Act “Free education” means that no child (other than a child admitted by parents in a non government school) will be liable to pay any kind of fees or charges or expenses for pursuing his/her education up to elementary level. ‘Compulsory education’ means to make elementary education compulsory (in regards to compulsory admission, attendance and completion of education by each child) for all children of the age group of 6-14 years. In the present study, the word “Free and Compulsory Education” means to provide free and compulsory education to the children (both school going and not school going) of the age of 6-14 years without financial liability.
- d) **Out-of-school children:** Global Partnership for Education (2013) defines out-of-school children as those who do not have access to a school in their community, do

not enroll despite the availability of a school, are enrolled but do not attend school or have dropped out of the education system. Street children and child labourers also fall under the category of out-of-school children (Porteus et al, 2000; UNICEF, 2012a; UNICEF, 2012b). In the present study, the word Out of School Children (OoSC) means a child who has not been enrolled in school at the age of 6 years or drop out from the school before completion of elementary cycle.

- e) **Alternative schooling programme:** Alternative schooling programme is a kind of informal school for out of school children (Never enrolled and school dropout students) at their own convenient time in the morning, daytime or in the evening. In the present study, the word Alternative schooling programme means bridging of learning gaps of Out of School Children(OoSC) through Alternative Innovative Education centres viz Education Guarantee Scheme Centres & Residential Bridge Course Centres, SSK centre, Hard to Reach Centre, Community Coaching Programme (CCP) and Upper Primary Bridge Course (UPBC) Centre which were operationalised before RTE.
- f) **Neighbourhood school:** Neighbourhood indicates areas or limits of school. As per RTE, the areas or limits of neighbourhood school is one km. for Lower Primary School(LPS) and Upper Primary School is 3 km. In the present study, the word neighbourhood is used with regard to nearby school where age appropriate enrolment is done for providing special training to the children.
- g) **Never enrolled:** Never enrolled indicates, the children who never been enrolled or did not attend the school. In the present study, the word never enrolled means a child above 6 years who has not been enrolled in the schools for providing elementary education.

- h) **Drop Out:** Drop Out indicate the children who leave school before completion of elementary cycle. In the present study, the word dropout means leaving of schools by the students at elementary level from class I to VIII.
- i) **Special Training:** The Right to Education Act, 2009 mandates that children in the age group of 6-14 years who have never been enrolled or dropped out of school before completion of Elementary Education should be enrolled in their age appropriate classes and such children should be provided required learning competencies through special training programmes soon after enrolment for a period from minimum 3 months to maximum 2 years. This learning provision should be made available to children through Non Residential Special Training and Residential Special Training intervention so that they may be at par with other children after mainstreaming.
- j) **Effectiveness:** The Dictionary meaning of word “Effectiveness” means the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result; success. The word effectiveness further refers to efficiency & efficacy of the task. In the present study, the word “effectiveness” is used to know the effectiveness of Special Training Intervention of OoSC in respect of identification of children, age appropriate enrolment, mechanism & process of special training, appropriateness of academic package and its transaction as per academic level of children and duration of special training, evaluation of learners, attendance, performance & mainstreaming of learners as well as retention of mainstreamed learners in formal school.
- k) **Mainstreaming:** Mainstreaming is a term used to describe the integration of mainstreamed children of special training into regular school classrooms where they can learn alongside their regular school peers. In the study, it means to back the children to the school after meeting up the learning gap through specially designed special training package within the stipulated time frame of RTE.

- l) **Age appropriate enrolment:** Section IV of RTE states that “Where a child above 6 years of age has not been admitted in any school or though admitted could not complete his or her Elementary Education, then, he or she shall be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age”. Hence, age appropriate enrolment refers to the enrolment of out-of school children into age appropriate classes in his/her neighbourhood school for providing special trainings to meet up the learning gaps.
- m) **Local authority:** In the study Local authority” means the Municipal Corporation, the Municipal Boards, the Town Committees, the Zila Parishad, the Anchalik Panchayats and the Gaon Panchayats constituted under the relevant Acts within the State of Assam.
- n) **School Management Committee (SMC):** RTE Act, 2009 mandates the every school should have a School Management Committee (SMC)”. SMC is responsible for smooth implementation of special training intervention. In the study, School Management Committee (SMC) means the statutory body of neighbourhood school where Out of School children are enrolled at age appropriate classes for providing special training.
- o) **Achievement Test:** In the present study Achievement Test means academic performance test of learners of class-III & VI standard of special training centres on Language-1(Assamese) & Mathematics subject.

#### **1.16 DELIMITATION OF STUDY**

This study is confined to the district Kamrup (Metro), Assam. Since inception of SSA, OoSC were provided academic support through alternate schooling facilities under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative Innovative Education (AIE) programme. With the coming of the RTE Act, 2009 mandating the children who have not



been admitted at the age of 6 years or admitted but could not complete the elementary cycle should be admitted to a class appropriate to his/her age, and special training will be arranged as per their need so that they may be at par with others. Special Training facilities are now being provided for OoSC through residential & non residential mode.

The present study is limited in terms of sample, geographical situation and content. The specification of such delimitation measures are given below:

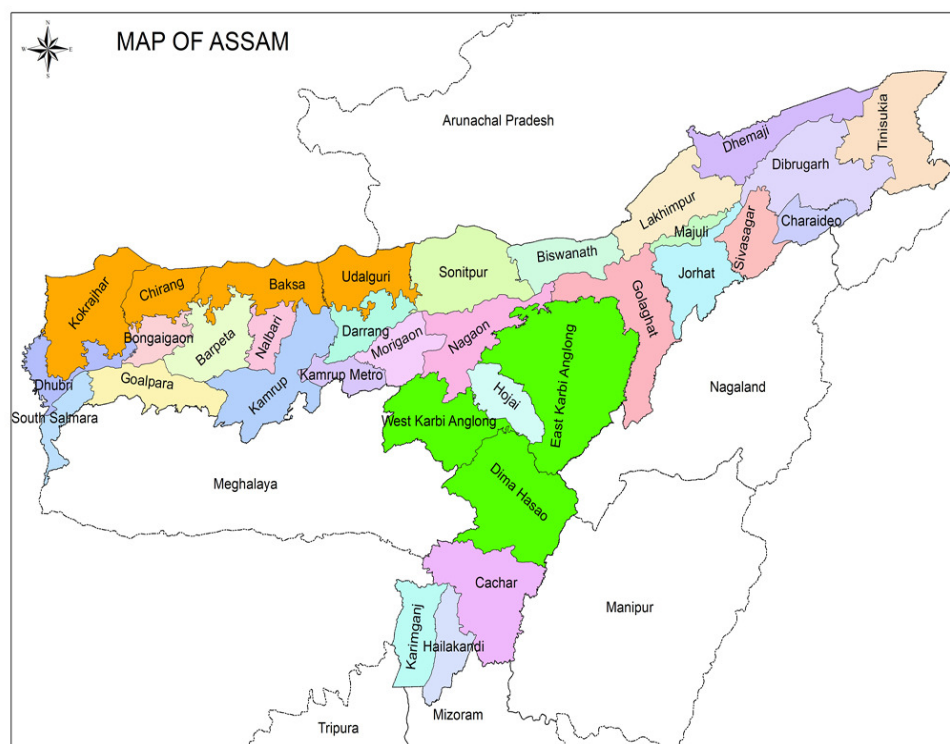
- The population of the study comprises the Education Volunteers of Special Training Centres, Head Teachers of Neighborhood Schools, SMC Presidents of Neighborhood Schools and children of class-III & VI standard of Special Training Centres.
- The samples have been selected from special training centres (both residential & non residential), neighborhood schools & SMCs of neighborhood schools of Kamrup (M) district of Assam.
- The present study is specially designed to know the effectiveness of Special Training Intervention of out of school children through age appropriate mainstreaming of out of school children & their retention in formal school after mainstreaming, which is the main aspect of special training under RTE.

### **1.17 PROFILE OF THE AREA**

Assam the rich, green land of rolling plains and dense forests is the gateway to the north eastern part of India. The mighty Brahmaputra River that has its origins in Tibet charts its majestic course through this state. This mystic land of eternal blue hills and beautiful rivers is renowned for its tea, rich flora and fauna, the world famous one horned rhinoceros and other rare species of wildlife on the verge of extinction. Barring Africa, there is perhaps no part of the world where such a variety of wildlife exists.

The topography of the state is mainly composed of plains and river valleys. The state is on the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas. On the north lies the Kingdom of Bhutan while to the east the state is covered by the states of Arunachal, Nagaland and Manipur. To the west of Assam, lie Meghalaya and Mizoram and to the west is Tripura and Bangladesh. The state is surrounded by a ring of blue hills. The only male river of India, the mighty Brahmaputra flows through the heart of the state. The virgin forests of Assam are yet another source of economic sufficiency of the place. The good quality woods of these dense forests are a common yet vital input for the flourishing furniture industry of Assam.

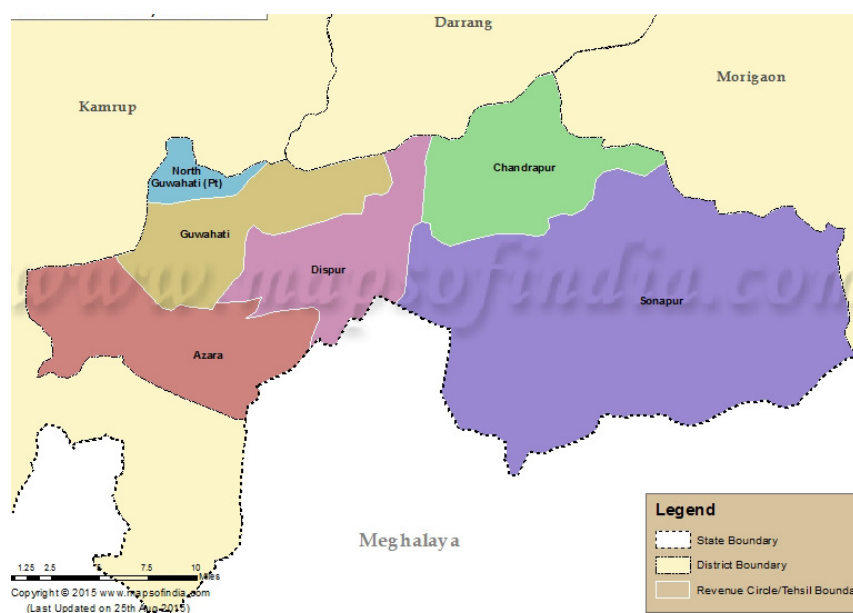
**Figure -1.1**  
**Map of Assam**



Source: <https://assam.gov.in>

The state of Assam is spread over an area of approximately 30,285 square miles. The state has five regional administrative divisions, each comprising a number of districts. The State is distributed with 14 Parliamentary Constituencies, 126 Assembly Constituencies, 33 Districts, 80 Sub-divisions, 219 Community Development Blocks and 145 Educational Blocks. As per 2011 census data, state has an area of 78,438 sq. kilometer with population of 3.12 comprising of 1.59 crores males and 1.52 crore females. The density, per person per sq. km. is 398. The sex ratio (females per one thousand males) is 954. The literacy rate of the State is 72.19% of which the male and female literacy rates are 77.85% and 66.27 % respectively (census 2011).

**Figure – 1.2**  
**Map of Kamrup – Metro District**



Source: <https://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/assam/tehsil/kamrup-metropolitan.html>

The area of the present study has been confined to Kamrup (Metro) district in the state of Assam. Kamrup(Metro) is one of the 33 districts in Assam. It was created on 3<sup>rd</sup> February,

2003 by bifurcating the erstwhile kamrup district. The Present Assam was referred to as Kamrup in many of the ancient Indian literature. It was also known as Pragjyotishpur due to the astrological (Jyotish Shashtra) practices that prevailed in this part of the country during that time. However, "Kamrup" became a more predominant name in the later part of the history. The Kamakhya temple, located at a distance of 7 km from Guwahati, is one of the biggest Shakti shrines in the country.

Kamrup (Metro) district is bounded on the West and North by the Kamrup district and on the East by the Morigaon district. On the South, lies the state of Meghalaya. The head quarter of the district is Guwahati. According to the 2011 census Kamrup (Metro) district has a population of 1,260,419. Average literacy rate in Kamrup (Metro) district is 91.19 % of which males and females are 94.08 % and 88.09 % literates respectively as per census 2011. The district has one Sub-Divisions-Kamrup (Metro) Sadar Sub-Division, 5 (Five) Revenue Circles viz. Sonapur, Guwahati, Azara, Chandrapur, Dispur, 3(three) development Blocks In Kamrup (Metro) district, i.e Chandrapur, Dimoria, Rani, Development Block and 31 Municipal wards in the city Guwahati.

Communication system of the district is very good. The district has both Government and Private institutions for providing education to the children. For providing special training to the Out of School children, the district has good numbers of special training centres. Major portion of the children of the Special Training Centres are of migratory nature. This includes rag pickers, street children, working children; domestic servants etc. and they belong to mainly slum and pocket areas. Considering all these factors, the researcher selected the Kamrup (Metro) district of Assam for this study.