

ABSTRACT

The Right to Education Act, 2009 is the milestone for ensuring receipt of free and compulsory elementary education by each child of the age group of 6 to 14 years of the country. Special Training is a critical and important component under this Act. The RTE Act, 2009 mandates that the children who have not attended the school or drop out before completion of elementary education should also have right to receive free and compulsory education and such children should be provided special training as per age and need to meet up the learning gap so that they may be at par with other children of the regular school after mainstreaming.

The present study was an attempt to know the effectiveness of special training intervention of out of school children in Kamrup (Metro) district as this study would be the first of its kind to be undertaken for the state.

Objectives of the study:

1. To assess the status of implementation of Special Training Intervention of 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.

The present study was “Descriptive” in nature where sample was selected by adopting “Simple Random Sampling” technique. The sample size for the present study was- 60 Education Volunteers (46.51% of total Education Volunteers), 60 Head Teachers of neighborhood Schools (61.86% of total neighbourhood schools), 60 Presidents of School Management Committees of neighbourhood schools (61.86% of total School Management Committees of neighbourhood schools) and 220 learners (representing 26.64 % sample of class-III standard, 31.53% of class-VI standard and 28.05% sample of overall total population of class-III & VI special training centres of the district).

The investigator used self structured Interview Schedule for collection of information from the respondents viz Education Volunteers, Head Teacher of neighbourhood school, SMC President and self structured Question Paper for Achievement Test of children. To know the smooth implementation of special training, self structured Observation Schedule was also used by the researcher.

The analysis of data was done as per objectives of the study and divided methodically into four sections (Objective 1, Objective 2, Objective 3 and Objective 4) in order to know the effectiveness of Special Training Intervention of Out of School Children with special reference to the provision of RTE, Act, 2009 in Kamrup (M) district.

The analysis of objective 1 included the detailed analysis of status of implementation of Special Training Intervention for Out of School Children under four sections 1.1 Identification of Out of School Children (OoSC) 1.2 RTE Act, 2009 & age appropriate enrolment 1.3 Mechanism and process of special training 1.4 Evaluation strategy of special training learners. The analysis of objective 2 included the status of special training learners especially with reference to attendance, performance & mainstreaming. The third objective mainly focused on academic package used for special training learners. The analysis of this objective included four sections viz Academic Package of Special Training learners, Effectiveness of Academic Package, Training /orientation and Process

of assessment of learning gaps of an OoSC for providing special training. The analysis of fourth objective of the study was on retention of mainstreamed children in formal school which included major sections viz Attendance, Continuation and retention since the period mainstreamed, Reasons of non continuation and Performance of mainstreamed learners.

Based on analysis of the data, findings on present study were presented by investigator. The findings of the 1st objective study revealed that all respondents (SMC Presidents)(100%) heard about OoSC and more than 50% respondents were found to be aware of availability of OoSC in their jurisdiction. But most of the respondents (51.67%) were not aware of their responsibility of identification of OoSC. The share of respondents(SMC Presidents) having proper understanding on the term of OoSC as never enrolled or not completing school was below 50%. It was found that more than 50% respondents(SMC Presidents) were not involved in identification process of OoSC). About 43% respondents stated the reason of Out of School Children (OoSC) was economic problem. All respondents (100%) were aware of implementation of RTE Act, 2009 in the state. But below 60% EVs and 30% HTs were able to define educational provision for OoSC under the RTE, Act. 3.33% had not conducted age appropriate enrolment still. Again, only 35% SMC presidents were found to be aware about age appropriate enrolment of OoSC in neighbourhood school. Most of the respondents (about 35%) faced challenge of irregular attendance of students with regard to multilingual and diverse situation of the classroom of special training.

The findings of the 2nd objective revealed that most of the respondents (EVs) (68.33%) stated that children of special training centres were not regular. Less than 45% HTs and only about 28% SMC Presidents stated that they had checked the regularity of special training learners. A good percentage of respondents (EV)(36.59% %) stated the reason of irregularity of children of special training centres as helping of parents in earning. The trend of performance vis-à-vis percentage of learners correctly responding to all items

was found to be in the range of 31 to 90% in both Language & Mathematics whereas for “None”, maximum response falls in the range below 30% in both “Language” & “Mathematics”. In case of Upper Primary level (class-VI), majority of items which were correctly answered by learners fall in the range of below 30% learners which indicates that performance of learners was better in LP level. All EVs (100%) stated that they had mainstreamed children during last academic year. 60% EVs stated that they provide extra support to bridge the learning gaps for mainstreaming of children who are not up to the mark.

The findings of the third objective emerged that majority of EVs (75%) used condensed books for special training learners and remaining used both condensed and text books. More than 30% HTs were found not to be aware of academic package used for special training learners. The present study revealed that condensed books were effective to fill up the learning gaps of special training children. Most of the respondents (EV) (71.67%) were found to be able to explain the difference between condensed and text book. Most of the respondents (EV)(53.33%) stated regarding identification of learning gaps through entry level assessment (maintaining formal procedure), some of them (41.67%) conducted through entry level assessment (informal way like asking question, oral interaction etc.) ; but 5% EVs were not aware of process of assessment. Only few HTs(18.33%) were aware of identification of learning gaps through entry level assessment by EVs and most of them (81.7%) were not aware of assessment of learning gaps by EVs.

Analysis of 4th objective revealed that percentage of EVs monitoring the regularity of attendance of mainstreamed children was quite high i.e 51.67% but monitoring the regularity of attendance of mainstreamed children by SMC Presidents was found quite low (35%). A large number of respondents (HTs)(65%) stated about taking measures by them for absentee children and most of them (43.33%) had informed parents about absenteeism of their children. More than 50 % HTs stated that there was drop out of children after mainstreaming from their school; and most of respondents (40%) stated the

main reason of drop out as migration from one place to other place. Only few respondents (HTs)(26.67%) stated that performance of mainstreamed children was good, 60% stated performance as moderate and 13% as bad. A few respondents (HTs)(38.33%) stated about taking of remedial teaching for low performing learners and majority had stated about not taking any step.

Based on the findings of the study, the investigator has drawn some conclusions. It was observed that some centres & schools had not conducted age appropriate enrolment till now though it is mandatory as per RTE Act, 2009. Moreover, only few SMC Presidents were found aware of age appropriate enrolment. It was observed that there were different views among HTs, EVs & SMC Presidents regarding conduct of evaluation as per IEP, conducting motivation camp, receipt of support from SMC, sharing of evaluation record of evaluation etc. Gap between home language and medium of instruction, transactional challenge for coverage of course, irregular attendance of students affecting smooth delivery of TLP, difficulty in defining period as per special training period, addressing the learning gaps of never enrolled and drop out children of the same class, streamline of regular and irregular children were found to be the major challenges by EVs in respect of multilingual and diverse situation of the classroom. Most of the respondents stated that the duration of minimum 3 months to maximum 2 years of special training is not sufficient for providing special training particularly for older age group and never enrolled children. In case of performance of special training learners, it was found that the academic performance of children was of moderate level and academic achievement of most of the children was good in Mathematics than in Language. The investigators studied the status of mainstreamed children of last three years (2015, 2016 & 2017) and found that out of total 2160 mainstreamed children, 368 children were dropout (17.03%) from the school. This finding revealed that all children were not retained in the school after mainstreaming from the special training centres. The main reason of drop out was migration from one place to other place & involvement in earning work as per opinion of

HTs. Hence, study concluded that though state has taking various initiatives, still there is gap/challenge in smooth implementation of the special training programme.

This study reveals that more effort is required from all concerned for smooth implementation special training intervention of the out of school children and ensuring their right to receive free and compulsory education. EVs, HTs of neighborhood school and SMC needs to take more initiative and should have in depth understanding on educational provision made by RTE for out of school children. Moreover, equal opportunity and emphasis is required for this section of children like other school going children. Policy decision may be required in connection with duration of mainstreaming, strategy of special training, tracking of children after mainstreaming, monitoring etc.