

Study of Four Main Pillars of Quality Education in Mobile Learning Centres (Delhi)

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Abstract

Mobile Learning Centres (MLCs) or Chalta Phirta School are being run by Non-Government Organisations in Delhi. This is an initiative conceived and supported by Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi and the UEE (Universalisation of Elementary Education) Mission. It focuses on children who are out of school and ensures that they receive non-formal education and subsequently attend a regular school. This study was conducted to study the four main pillars i.e. (Instructors, professional qualifications and their teaching competencies, Teaching Learning Material (TLM) & Teaching Learning Process (TLP) of quality education in Mobile Learning Centers. What extent the quality education is provided by the Mobile Learning Centres in accordance with their prescribed duties under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)? How far have they been successful? The sample comprised six Mobile Learning Centres, 12 Instructors and 180 children. Survey Method was adopted for the collection of data. The tools used for the study include interview schedule, observation schedule and check list. A qualitative approach was adopted to analyse and interpret the data using some quantification in form of percentage.

Introduction

Education is a process of drawing out innate powers. According to Gandhiji that true education mean the all round drawing out of the best in child and man – body, mind and soul. Quality refers to high degree of goodness,

worth or excellence in an ‘object’ or system. Quality education helps the children to develop their skills and abilities in a way that translates becoming a productive member of society. A quality education allows and helps the children to realise their

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potential and their personal goals. Quality determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translate into the range of personal, social and developmental benefits. Quality education must ensure the child's all-round development i.e. physical, mental, social emotional and spiritual aspects of her/his potential.

The Dakar framework (2000) for action declared that access to quality education was the right of every child. It affirmed that quality was, "at the heart of education"- a fundamental determinant of enrolment, retention and achievement. UNESCO 2003 promotes access to good quality education as a human right and supports a right based approach to all educational activities and personal social development. According to the International Commission on Education, concepts of quality education revolve around four fundamental pillars of learning i.e. learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.

Providing quality education has always been a prominent agenda of several of committees and commissions in education. Consistent efforts have been made in the past to improve the quality of elementary education. The NPE 1986/92 had recommended a number of measures for improvement in the quality of education through reforms in content and process of classroom teaching, improvement in school facilities, provision of additional

teachers, standardising levels of learning at primary stage and so on. A large number of national and state programmes were launched in this direction. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Right to Education) Act, 2009 also focused on quality education. Elementary education in India received a new thrust with the National Policy on Education, 1986 as modified in 1992, which emphasis the following three aspects: (1) Universal access and enrolment, (2) Universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and (3) A substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential level of learning.

Delhi

Delhi being one of the metropolitan cities and the capital of India has shown good progress in the field of education. The literacy rate in Delhi rose from 25.01 per cent in 1941 to 86.2 per cent in 2011.

Table 1. Progress of Literacy in Delhi

Sl. No	Year	Total	Male (%)	Female (%)
1	1941	25.01	31.99	15.25
2	1951	38.36	42.99	32.34
3	1961	52.75	60.75	42.55
4	1971	56.61	63.71	47.75
5	1981	61.54	68.40	53.07

6	1991	75.29	82.01	66.99
7	2001	81.67	87.33	74.71
8	2011	86.20	90.09	80.80

Source: Directorate of Census Operations, Delhi excluding population of 0-6 age group

Table 2. Standard Classification of School Education System in Delhi

Sl. No.	Level	Class/Classes
1	Primary	I-V
2	Upper Primary	VI-VIII
3*	Elementary	I-VIII
4	Secondary	IX-X
5	Higher Secondary	XI-XII

*The focus of SSA is on universalisation of elementary education

Table 4. Organisations Providing Elementary Education in Delhi (as on 31-3-2014)

Sl. No	Organisations	No. of Schools
1	Delhi Cantonment Board (DCB)	08
2	Kendriya Vidyalayas	42
3	Public Schools recognised by MCD	759
4	Public Schools recognised by Directorate of Education	1187
5	Aided Schools	221
6	New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC)	82
7	Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Schools	1750
8	Government Schools	924

Source: Directorate of Education, Delhi

Table 3. Types of Schools in Delhi (as on 30-09-2013)

Institutions	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Sr. Secondary Schools	1350	1392	1427	1504	1627
Secondary Schools	474	480	463	458	389
Middle Schools	583	588	600	564	728
Primary Schools	2586	2563	2581	2580	2657
Pre-primary Schools	50	50	51	49	52
Total	5043	5073	5122	5155	5453

Source: Delhi Statistical handbook 2014

The elementary education in Delhi is being provided by different organisations, Non-Government Organisations and local bodies, including Directorate of Education, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, New Delhi Municipal Council, Delhi Cantonment Board and privately managed educational societies.

Education is the fundamental right of every child and Delhi Government is determined to provide quality elementary education to all the children of Delhi. Universal enrolment and retention of children up to the age of 14 and providing quality education to the children are major goals that Delhi Government is focusing on. It

has launched various schemes to ensure that the benefits of education reach every household of Delhi.

- **Delhi Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Samiti (DSSAS):** In 1993, the Department of Education, Delhi launched the 'Education For All' programme through school students and teachers. The programme was conducted under Delhi. The target was to cover about 12 lakh illiterates of Delhi in the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Samiti* (DSSAS) under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor of Delhi and Secretary (Edu.) in the age group of 6-35.
- **Universalisation of Elementary Education Mission (UEEM-2002):** *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) was started in Delhi in the year 2003 i.e. two years after its launching in 2001 in other states. A society was formed and got registered in the name of "Universalisation of Elementary Education Mission" (UEEM 2002) under the Department of Education, NCT of Delhi for implementation of SSA programme. UEE Mission in Delhi envisages two kinds of integration of the formal school systems (MCD, NDMC, and DCB) as well as of the formal and alternative education system. The SSA in Delhi is being implemented in partnership with Directorate of Education of the Government of National Capital Territory (GNCT) of Delhi, Municipal Corporation Delhi (MCD), New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), Delhi Cantonment Board,

State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT), nine District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET), Community, NGOs

- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):**
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan includes:
 1. National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and
 2. District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)
 3. National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) commonly known as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme.
 4. Teacher Education
 5. *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya* (KGBV)
 6. *Mahila Samakhya*
 7. Education Guarantee Scheme and Innovative Education (EGS and AIE)
- **Teaching through CALTOONZ:** UEE Mission has developed the course material for upper primary classes to help the learners in overcoming their weaknesses by learning through CALTOONZ, a programme based on computer animation. The aim of the programme is to check the dropout rate of children by making the learning process more interesting and attractive in the Government schools.
- **YUVA:** An Innovative Programme: UEE Mission has launched a new

innovative programme for making learning a joyful experience. The aim is to take life skill education and other related issues to the classrooms.

- **BaLA:** Every child needs a harmonious environment for personality development. However, the buildings of the schools of the Delhi Government are neither child-centric nor child-friendly. Realising this, it has been decided by Education Department that all the school buildings will be suitably developed with architectural designs in such a way that building itself acts as a learning aid.
- **Enrolment Drive (*Dakhila Abhiyan*):** The concept of *Dakhila Abhiyan* took shape in the year 2001. Delhi Government in its initiative passed an order that no school would insist on showing a birth certificate or an affidavit for admission up to Class V.
- **Automatic Admission from Class V to VI (Twinning of Schools):** To save the students drop-out at Class V stage, a system (Twinning of Schools) has been evolved in which every primary school is attached to one Directorate of Education school and the admission of students from primary school to the Directorate of Education school is Automatic. (Note: all the primary schools do not come under the Directorate of Education school. Primary schools come under the MCD, NDMC, DCB and Directorate of Education in Delhi).
- **Online Student Management System, including Online Admission:** The online student management system has been developed to administer all the work processes related to the students right from registration for admission in Delhi Government schools till the student leaves the school by obtaining School Leaving Certificate . Tracking each and every child to check dropout at any stage and maximise efforts to ensure retention in the educational system, including schools and/or learning centres run by NGOs under *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA).
- **Mid Day Meal Programme:** It aims at giving a boost to universalisation of primary education by increasing enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving the nutritional status of students in primary schools.
- **No Retention Policy:** In order to achieve the target of UEE and bring the dropout rate down to zero, Government has launched the policy of “No Retention” till Class VIII from the year 2009.
- **Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative Innovative Education Centres (Delhi):** *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* provides support to out-of-school children in the form of Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and many other strategies under Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) Programme.

The restructured Non-Formal Education scheme called EGS and AIE.

- **Alternative Innovative Education (AIE) Centres:** Alternative Schools are an alternative approach for the education of out-of-school children under the Education Guarantee Scheme.

(a) Learning Centres (2002-03): The UEE Mission involved NGOs on annual contract basis to run learning centres (LCs) which were established as an alternative approach.

(b) *Khulja Sim Sim Project (2008-09):* In order to provide education to Out-of-school children and adult learners through an interactive, interesting and enjoyable manner, the department has initiated an innovative project to establish ICT based learning stations on the boundary wall of the Govt. schools all over Delhi.

(c) *Chalta Firta Schools / Mobile Schools (2008):* The two Chalta-Firta Schools / Mobile Learning Centres (MLCs) are being run by the organisations namely Butterflies and *Salaam Baalak Trust*.

(d) Residential Bridge Course Centres (2006)-The Government of Delhi has launched a campaign for the education of all children and adolescents who live and work on the streets

under SSA. The Department has operationalised three Residential Bridge Course Centres (RBCCs) for street and working children, with the involvement of 'Samya Centre for Equity Studies'-an NGO.

(E) Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV): In view of the low female literacy rate, in the Mustafabad area of North East Delhi, MHRD Government of India has directed the Department of Education to set up one Hostel-cum-School under the *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*.

(g) Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE): In order to provide quality pre-primary education, 300 Model Early Childhood Care and Education Centres have been operationlaised in various schools.

The National Capital Territory of Delhi, in spite of being one of the main metropolitan cities, is not in a position to enroll all children of the age group 6-14 and 11-14. The goal of achieving universalisation of elementary education is therefore still a distant dream to achieve.

Save the children, in collaboration with the Institute for Human Development, conducted a census of street children in all nine districts of Delhi in 2010, to find out how many children are living and working on the

streets in the city and to gain a deeper insight into their lives. The study identified 50,923 children below 18 years of age as street children in Delhi from 12 July to 28 August 2010. Street children in Delhi constitute nearly 0.4 per cent of the total population. Street children below 18 years constitute nearly one per cent of the total number of children in Delhi. North Delhi district had the highest concentration of street children at 10,091 and South West Delhi the least at 2936 children. Only 20.5 per cent of the street children in Delhi were girls.

Table 5. Street Children in Delhi 2010

<i>District</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Central Delhi	4770	1092	5862
East Delhi	5966	1359	7325
New Delhi	4512	1117	5629
North Delhi	8031	2060	10091
North East Delhi	4167	1249	5416
North West Delhi	2814	767	3581
South Delhi	3382	932	4314
South West Delhi	2427	509	2936
West Delhi	4392	1377	5769
Total	40,461	10,462	50,923

According to the Project Approval Board Meeting (held on May 2011), 25,536 children are out of school in Delhi. All these out-of-school children

shall be covered during the year 2011-12.

Table 6. District-wise Out-of-School Children (2011-12)

<i>District</i>	<i>No. of Out-of-School Children (OoSC)</i>
East Delhi	2380
North East	3860
North	960
North West	3200
West	3665
South West	2520
South	5751
New Delhi	160
Central Delhi	1140
Total	23,536

The main goal of Education Guarantee Scheme is to achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education in Delhi. It implies that all children in the age group 6 to below 14 year get enrolled in a regular school or an alternative school system and they do not dropout from school before completing the full cycle of elementary education established under Education Guarantee Scheme. In order to take the education to more children living in difficult circumstances such as at Traffic Signals, Construction Sites, Red Light Areas etc in Delhi, the two *Chalta-Firta* Schools /mobile learning centres were being run by the Non Government Organisations (NGOs).

Objectives of the Study

The present study was attempted to find out the Quality of Mobile Learning Centres working under EGS for UEE for the age group of 6-14 years in Delhi. The main objectives of the study were to study the four main pillars of quality education in Mobile Learning Centres:

- Instructors' qualifications and their teaching competencies.
- Basic facilities available at MLCs.
- Teaching Learning Process and Teaching Learning Methodology (MLCs).
- What extent the activities undertaken by Mobile Learning Centres in accordance with their prescribed duties under *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* and Right to Education Act.

Sample for the Study

Only six MLCs were selected randomly. Instructor is a person who teaches the children in MLCs. Twelve instructors and 180 children who were studying in MLCs were chosen for the interview. Survey Method was adopted for the collection of data. The data for the present study were collected with the help of interview schedule, observation schedule & check list.

Table 7. Tools & Sample

S. No.	Tools	Sample
1	Interview Schedule	Children (180)
2	Interview Schedule	Instructors (12)
3	Observation Schedule	Mobile Learning Centres (6)
4	Checklist	Mobile Learning Centres (6)

For the analysis of the data simple statistical techniques percentage was used. On the basis of data analysis and interpretation, the following main findings have emerged out of the present investigation

Instructors' Professional Qualifications and Competencies

SSA visualises instructors as a capable facilitator who motivates the child to construct her/his own knowledge. The instructors should be aware of the progressive pedagogy and willing to understand the child's world. She/He must know the nature and experience of children from various social and cultural backgrounds. She/He should appreciate the pedagogical value involved in the process of 'knowing the children & childhood' and instructors should be sensitive towards community knowledge / resources. The most important category of this study was instructors.

Table 8. Instructors by Professional Qualifications and Teaching Competencies

Professional Qualifications and Competencies of Instructors	N=12
Educational qualification (Sr. Secondary pass outs)	12 (100%)

Professional qualification / experience	2 (16%)
Conceptual: Clarity & deep understanding of educational theories.	-
Content : Full mastery over the content of the subject	8 (66%)
Curriculum: Complete entire curriculum within specified time	12 (100%)
Transactional: Meaningful interaction between teachers and pupils, pupils and pupils, pupils and the learning materials and pupils and the environment	12 (100%)
Educational: Systematic planning and effective implementation of curricular and co-curricular activities	10 (83%)
To develop teaching-learning material : Ability to develop interesting teaching aids for making teaching learning process easy	6 (50%)
Evaluation : continuous and comprehensive evaluation	6 (50%)
Management : to achieve high quality educational objectives in minimum time, energy and money	5 (42%)
Related to working with parents: Hold regular meetings with parents and guardians and apprise them regularity in attendance, ability to learn, progress made in learning and any other relevant information about the child	12 (100%)
Related to working with community	12 (100%)

Above table clearly indicates the professional qualifications and competencies of the instructors of the MLCs. From the table it is understood that all the instructors of MLCs were only Sr. Secondary pass outs and 84 per cent of them had no professional qualification and had less than one year teaching experience. At the time of selection, the directors of the NGOs are not keeping in mind the qualifications of instructors which were required under the Section 23 of the RTE Act 2009 (any person possessing such minimum qualifications as laid down by an academic authority, authorised by the Central Government, by notification, shall be eligible for appointment as a teacher).

Only 50 per cent instructors have the ability of developing interesting teaching-learning aids for making teaching-learning effective and 66 per cent instructors have full mastery over the content of the subject. Only 42 per cent instructors are using the better management skills. The relationship & interaction among the instructors and pupils, pupils and pupils, pupils the learning materials and pupils the environment were cordial. All instructors tried to establish good relationship with parents to convince them about the importance of the education in the lives of their children and apprised them regularity in attendance, ability to learn, progress made in learning and any other relevant information about the child.

Instructors visit the community. They called eminent personalities on various occasions for motivating the

children of MLCs. Parent-teacher meetings were also conducted in the entire MLCs.

Basic Facilities at Mobile Learning Centres

Table 9. Responses about the Facilities at MLCs

<i>Facilities</i>	<i>Instructors (12)</i>	<i>Children (180)</i>	<i>Observation Result MLCs (6)</i>
Stationery, teaching aids / learning aids / computers	12 (100%)	180 (100%)	6 (100%)
Library and their use	12 (100%)	180 (100%)	6(100%)
Laboratory	X	X	X
Daris	12 (100%)	180 (100%)	6 (100%)
Toilet facility	X	X	X
Drinking water facility	12 (100%)	75 (42%)	3 (50%)
Hygiene	12 (100%)	122 (67%)	4 (67%)
Adequate instructional material, textbooks	8 (66%)	145 (80%)	4 (67%)
Chairs, benches	X	X	X
Proper light in the class room/sun light	9 (67%)	89 (49%)	4 (67%)
Adequate space in the classroom/bus	X	X	X
Play material (Indoor Games)	X	X	X
Uniform	X	X	X
Medical facility (First Aid Box)	2 (16%)	X	X
Facilities for children with special needs	X	X	X
Supportive, peaceful and safe environment	12 (100%)	129 (71%)	6 (100%)
Effective and constructive discipline and reinforcement of positive behaviour	12 (100%)	180 (100%)	6 (100%)

All the instructors and children of MLCs said that all these facilities which are given in Table 9 are provided at all the MLCs whereas (no toilet for the students, not adequate play material, not adequate space, not adequate drinking water, uniforms, not adequate instructional material, textbooks, proper first aid box & chairs) are those facilities which are not provided by any MLCs. MLCs fulfill the requirement of the SSA partially since one of the major objectives of SSA is to provide basic facilities to children such as drinking water, toilets for students, learning equipments, etc. MLCs have no separate classroom for the different classes of children and no proper space for group activities as they

were facing the space problem. All the MLCs run in a mobile bus. Not even MLCs have chairs and students have to sit on the *daris*. There is no special arrangement for Children with Special Needs (CWSN).

There is no discrepancy between the data provided by instructors of MLCs and children of MLCs and researcher's observation .Thus it can be said that following facilities such as textbooks, uniform, play material, more space, proper light, adequate drinking water, special arrangement for CWSN, toilets for students, chairs for the children and medical facilities, proper first aid box are the facilities which need improvement at these centres.

Teaching Learning Process (TLP) and Teaching Learning Methodology (TLM) used at MLCs

Table 10. Observation Results with respect to TLP ,TLM & Tools

S.No	Teaching Learning Process and Teaching Learning Methodology	MLCs (6)
1	Instructors develop their own teaching plans	3 (50%)
2	Books are used for teaching (Formal school books)	6 (100%)
3	Curriculum development	-
4	They use effective technology and audio-video aids and other teaching aids while teaching	2 (33%)
5	Methodology of teaching are used by the instructors (child centred)	2 (33%)
6	The teacher works as a facilitator in the multi-level-teaching -learning process	4 (66%)
7	Continuous and comprehensive evaluation of learner done by the instructors	4 (66%)
8	Proper monitoring and supervision	5 (83%)
9	Remedial teaching /bridge courses	6 (100%)
10	Instructor and child relationship (cordial)	6 (100%)

11	Punishment is used for classroom management	1 (17%)
12	Medium of instruction (mother tongue)	6 (100%)
13	Development of the physical and mental abilities to the fullest extent through activities, discovery, etc	4 (66%)
14	- Classroom organisation	-
	- Well planned seating arrangement	2 (33%)
	- Display of material in the classroom (Bus)	5 (83%)
	- Grouping of children	-
	- Homogeneous	5 (83%)
	- Heterogeneous	1 (17%)

It was found by the researcher that all the MLCs used formal school books and 50 per cent instructors of the MLCs have developed their own teaching plans before teaching in the classroom to make the teaching learning effective. Only 33 per cent MLCs instructors were using effective technology and audio-video aids and other teaching aids (such as models, charts, maps, specimens, etc) while teaching. In 67 per cent of the classes of MLCs, the concepts were being taught by the instructors by traditional method of teaching (by books) whereas 33 per cent instructors of MLCs used child-centred approach during Teaching Learning Process and involved the students in Teaching Learning Process (TLP). According to the NPE 1986, a child-centred and activity based process of learning should be adopted at the primary stage. It was seen that most of the MLCs were not using the child-centred approach. 66 per cent instructors of MLCs work as a facilitator in

the multi-level-teaching-learning process and the relationship between instructors and students were found cordial. It was seen that 17 per cent MLCs instructors used punishment for classroom management. It shows that almost 83 per cent MLCs were following the RTE Act, 2009 (the act bans physical and mental harassment and recommends the child-centred approach. 33 per cent MLCs have well planned sitting arrangement. It was found that 83 per cent MLCs displayed the material in the classroom and taught the homogeneous group of children during TLP. 83 per cent Instructors of MLCs reported that they maintain all the records and all the records supervised by the supervisors. Researcher herself found that progress report and record of support services like uniforms; midday meals etc were being maintained by nearly 50 per cent of the MLCs whereas follow-up record of mainstreamed children was not being maintained by any MLC. None of the MLCs are developing

their own curriculum and textbooks according to the NCF-2005. Only 66 per cent instructors are using CCE for the evaluation of the children.

There is discrepancy between the instructors' responses and researchers observations.

Activities under taken by MLCs in accordance with their prescribed duties under SSA & RTE

Table 11. Activities undertaken by the Mobile Learning Centres

<i>SSA Norms</i>	<i>MLCs (6)</i>
All the EGS & AIE provide free education to 6-14 age-group of children	6 (100%)
Provision for the education of children with special needs	6 (100%)
Bridge the gender and social gap	6 (100%)
EGS & AIE centre function for at least four hours during the day time	6 (100%)
Regularity and punctuality of the centres and instructors	6 (100%)
Preference were given to women in selection of EVs/ instructors	4 (67%)
Teacher qualification laid down by the NCTE under Section 23 of the RTE Act	-
30 days' induction training of EVs for primary level centres and 40 days for upper primary centres were completed prior to the starting to the centre	2 (33%)
If the Number of children exceed 40, additional EVs can be provided at the centres. Pupil : Teacher ratio should be 40:1	6 (100%)
The involvement of the Community operationalised through parents' group SC/PTA's/MTA's	3 (50%)
Door-to-door survey of OoSC done	6 (100%)
For age appropriate admission of OoSC, and continued support to enable them to cope with regular school	
Bridge courses	4 (67%)
Remedial teaching	6 (100%)
Residential camps	-
Curriculum development, particularly of bridge courses	-
Mainstreaming of children in to formal schools.	6 (100%)
Close monitoring of the learner admitted in the MLCs in regard to their regular attendance, dropout, child profile, promotion to next class.	4 (67%)
HMs were involved in regular supervision of MLCs from which children are likely to be mainstreamed	4 (67%)
Regular evaluation of the functioning of MLCs	4 (67%)

Out of these 15 norms prescribed by SSA, following are being observed in all MLCs:

- All the MLCs were providing education to 6-14 age-groups of children. All the students of Class I-V studied in a mobile bus.
- SSA prescribed definite hours (minimum) for MLCs is 4 hours/day. All the MLCs are working according to the prescribed norms of SSA.
- All the MLCs have a provision for the education of children with special needs but they do not have adequate resources for CWSN. They are trying to bridge the gender and social gap.
- According to the norm of SSA /RTE, 50 per cent women instructors should be recruited under SSA. 67 per cent MLCs have female instructors.
- As per the norm under SSA, teacher : pupil ratio in a class should be 1:40. All the functionaries reported that the teacher : pupil ratio at their MLCs was 1:40 which was as per norms under SSA.
- The RTE Act stipulates age appropriate admission for out-of-school and dropout children. The RTE Act also provides that such children shall be entitled to free and compulsory education even after attaining the age of 14 years till they complete elementary education. All the MLCs were providing remedial education and

bridge courses to slow learners or children who had been absent for a considerable period of time.

- All the MLCs are conducting household surveys for locating Out-of-School-Children as well as dropout children which was in line with SSA and helping in mainstreaming the children in formal schools like MCD, NDMC and Sarvodaya Vidyalayas, etc.
- Close monitoring of the learner admitted in the MLCs in regard to their regular attendance, dropout, child profile, and promotion to next class was conducted in 67 per cent MLCs.

However the norms which are not being followed by all the sample MLCs are:

- With reference to the teacher qualifications laid down by the NCTE under Section 23 of the RTE Act, out of 12 instructors of MLCs, only 16 per cent have required qualifications. Instructors qualifications laid down by the NCTE under Section 23 of the RTE Act are not being fulfilled.
- Only 33 per cent MLCs instructors got the induction training of 30 days.
- Only 50 per cent MLCs received the support provided by the community like suitable space, drinking water facilities etc. and trying to involve the community through parents' group PTM/ SC, etc.

- None of the MLCs are developing their own curriculum and textbooks according to the NCF 2005.
- None of the MLCs are developing curriculum for bridge courses.
- None of the MLCs have adequate resources for children with special needs.

Some of the advantages of the MLCs established under SSA as evident from the study were:

- MLCs are providing education to those children who are not in a position to reach out to formal schools like children of parents working at construction sites or railway stations, children of sex workers, Out-of-School-Children, migrated children/off the state children, street children, orphan children or children of dysfunctional families, etc. 75% MLC are working in slums and unauthorised areas whereas 25 per cent of MLCs are providing education in rehabilitation colonies. All the MLCs are providing education to the 6-14 age groups of children. Almost all the MLCs are open for 5 days in a week and work for 2 hours/ day (at each habitation). 35-45 children enrolled at one centre at present. Teacher : pupil ratio is 1:40. Instructors make special efforts to encourage and enroll students. There is no doubt that MLCs are the best alternative system of providing education.
- There is less rigidity in terms of age of the child to seek admission, timings

of classes, date of admission, attendance, and leave rules, etc. unlike in the formal schools. It was observed in the study that though the class timings of MLCs are flexible, this cannot happen either in government schools or in private schools. Most of these children work either in their homes or in someone else's house/shops.

- Those children who have been out of school or dropped out from schools get a chance to study in MLCs. The parents, who are mainly labourers, feel that instead of the child loitering around here and there it is better that she/he stays in the MLCs and learn something in the process.
- Children after studying for a few years in the MLCs can be admitted to a formal school, thus achieving one of the purposes of opening SSA i.e. of preparing the child to enter formal school. This is in consonance with an important objective of SSA that- all children in such schools should be 'back to school' by a prescribed time. In this sense, these MLCs work as preparatory mechanisms to groom a child to enter the formal school.
- Some of the MLCs are providing vocational training to their children and trying to develop various skills.

Recommendations

- Instructors' qualifications as laid down by the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) under section 23 of the Right To Education

(RTE) Act, 2009 should be followed in future recruitments (Instructors must have the diploma or degree of Teacher Training Institution).

- Drinking water, toilets for students, chairs, adequate space, health check-up facility (proper first aid box), textbooks and special arrangement must be made mandatory by all MLCs.
- Around 65 per cent of the surveyed MLCs have 35-45 students enrolled at the centre, at different grades or levels. Many of the enrolled students are first generation learners or out-of-school-children with no support at their homes. It is important to understand that this target group needs special efforts in the early formative years, for which instructors need to be provided special orientation not only to provide bridge courses but also remedial classes to make schooling feasible for the overage new entrants and to curb dropouts.
- An orderly atmosphere and an attractive working environment will make children happy and comfortable. Therefore, adequate space and better infrastructure must be provided.
- Separate MLCs for boys and girls have to be established so that orthodox parents send their girls to MLCs as they are not interested in sending their daughters to co-education school and MLCs.
- An individual educational plan should be prepared for child with special needs in consultation with parents and experts. Its implementation should be monitored from time to time.
- In MLCs where there are children of different age-groups and of different abilities (EGS & AIE) generally with a single teacher and a likelihood of 3-4 groups of learners, supply of adequate and appropriate need based TLM becomes a major concern. It becomes important that children should have a variety of TLMs that are relevant to their age and ability so that they are actively engaged in the teaching-learning process.
- The SSA Framework states “children should be encouraged to think and observe independently and the classroom should be the forum for interaction”. The ground reality, however, seen in most of the MLCs is different than that advocated in SSA. Instructors generally use the traditional ‘**chalk, talk, and text**’ method. Therefore, the instructors should use child-centred activity based approach.
- The vision of SSA is to enable each child to understand skill & dignity involved in manual work. Work education and art & craft education will enable children to consolidate their experiences through manual work and realize its significance. So, work education and art & craft education should be provided to the learners.

In short, we can say that SSA will encourage participation of NGOs by way of participatory need assessment, implementation and monitoring. In

addition, these agencies are expected to play a proactive role in advocacy for children' rights with emphasis on the Right to Education.

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