

Executive Summary

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About the Report

Article 21-A of the Constitution of India guarantees the Right to Education as a fundamental right. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, was enacted by the Parliament and is effective from April 2010. The Act entitles all children between the age of 6-14 years to free and compulsory admission and completion of elementary education. The Global Education Development Agenda, reflected in Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015, seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education (CSSTE) were the three major school education development programmes launched by the Government of India (GoI). In April 2018, the GoI introduced the ‘Samagra Shiksha Scheme’ subsuming all three schemes viz., SSA, RMSA and CSSTE. The Scheme envisions inclusive and equitable quality education from pre-school to Senior Secondary stages. It also aims at bridging social and gender gaps in school education by ensuring equity and inclusion at all levels of school education.

Why did we take up this Audit?

In the above background, a Performance Audit on School Education was conducted in the State. The Performance Audit was carried out between April 2023 and December 2023. The coverage of the audit was from 2018-19 to 2022-23 to assess whether universal access to school education was made available to all children, quality of education was ensured at all learning levels and monitoring and evaluation of varied aspects of implementation were effective in bringing timely corrective measures.

Major Audit Findings

Audit noticed that the objective of the universal access to school education was not achieved in the State due to dropout of students at different levels of education. There was improvement in infrastructure facilities in Government schools, but large number of schools were still functioning without the prescribed infrastructure. Teachers, who play a pivotal role in the schooling system, were not available in schools according to norms, hampering the quality of education in Government and Government aided schools. The broad findings of the Performance Audit are summarised below:

- Planning was not participatory and bottoms-up. The district level planning team had not been constituted in any of the sampled districts and none of the sampled blocks had constituted block level planning team.
- The budget provisions and expenditure made by the School and Mass Education (SME) Department showed persistent savings and surrender of funds, ranging from 5 per cent (2022-23) to 18 per cent (2021-22) with overall savings/ surrender of 12 per cent during 2018-23. The utilisation of funds ranged between 44 and 50 per cent under Samagra Shiksha Scheme.

- Gross Enrolment Ratio in Secondary and Higher Secondary levels declined in the State compared to rise at the National level, so did the Net Enrolment Rate compared to the National level. The Transition rate from Secondary to Higher Secondary level declined compared to rise at National level during 2018-19 to 2022-23.
- From the data furnished by the District Project Coordinators (DPCs) of six test-checked districts, Audit noticed that 16,410 Children with Special Needs (CwSN) were eligible for Transport and Escort allowances during 2018-23. However, 380 (2.3 *per cent*) eligible CwSNs in three sampled districts were deprived of this benefit, as the DPCs had transferred the allowances to dormant/ wrong bank accounts of CwSN/ parents.
- 10 sampled Block Education Officers (BEOs) had identified 1,458 CwSN through medical assessment camps during 2018-23, who required assistive aids and appliances. However, 311 (21 *per cent*) identified CwSNs were not provided with such devices during 2018-23.
- In 13 to 26 *per cent* schools, ramp facilities did not exist while 31 to 44 *per cent* schools lacked CwSN friendly toilet facilities during 2018-23.
- The State had made provision for imparting self-defence trainings to girls of 22,237 to 21,956 schools, during 2018-23. However, only 3,363 to 21,943 schools were actually provided with funds for conducting these self-defence classes, resulting in shortfall in provision of funds in 13 to 19,260 schools.
- The Department could not ensure availability of prescribed infrastructure in Government and Government aided schools. Large number of schools were functioning without conforming to the infrastructure norms, as on March 2023.
- Adverse Student-Classroom Ratio (SCR) was noticed in 5,443 (12 *per cent*), 5,603 (24 *per cent*), 3,725 (42 *per cent*) and 681 (57 *per cent*) schools for Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary classes respectively in the State. In 44 (46 *per cent*) test-checked schools, adverse SCR was noticed during 2022-23. In 18 (23 *per cent*) test-checked schools, single classroom was used for multiple classes. In 41 (43 *per cent*) test-checked schools, the students were found sitting on the floor due to absence of furniture.
- Audit noticed 21,958 (48 *per cent*), 10,022 (43 *per cent*), 896 (10 *per cent*) and 527 (89 *per cent*) schools of the State had adverse Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) in Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary classes, respectively.
- Vocational Education (VE) was introduced in a limited manner. Against the target to cover 877 Secondary and Higher Secondary schools for VE during 2018-23, the Department introduced VE in 646 schools. Besides, 113 Secondary and Higher Secondary schools running vocational education did not have functional laboratory facilities.
- 3.51 lakh eligible students were deprived of the benefit of free uniforms in the State during 2018-23. In 71 test-checked schools, uniforms were

distributed to students with delays ranging between one and 520 days during 2018-23.

- In 23 to 37 test-checked schools, books were distributed to students with delays ranging between four and 417 days during 2018-23. In 46 test-checked schools, 4,249 students had not been provided with books.
- 1.73 lakh (*six per cent*) students were deprived of bicycle incentives in the State. Audit also noticed this issue during test-check of 42 schools wherein 1,671 students (*11 per cent*) were deprived of the benefit during 2018-23.
- There was shortfall in review of the progress of the implementation of Samagra Shiksha Scheme by the Executive Committee, during 2018-23.
- In 14 out of 77 sampled schools, the School Management Committees were functioning with members ranging from 10 to 18, against the requirement of 19 members.
- The State had not constituted the Research Approval Committee for approving research and evaluation studies for assessment of the impact of the Scheme.

What do we recommend?

It is recommended that:

- 1. The perspective and annual plans should be formulated with active participation of the local communities and stakeholders for proper assessment and fulfilment of local educational needs.*
- 2. In view of large scale shortages in teaching staff and deficiencies in physical infrastructure in schools, the budgetary outlay for school education may be increased appropriately for the all-round development of school education.*
- 3. Efficient utilisation of allocated funds may be ensured to deliver the educational needs of the students to the best extent.*
- 4. GER and NER, being the critical indicators of percentage of population enrolled in a particular level of education, should be assessed based on actual age-wise population, through household survey.*
- 5. The reasons for decline in GER and NER should be clearly identified and corrective measures should be taken not only to arrest the decline, but also to improve GER and NER in order to ensure access to education for all.*
- 6. The reasons for drop in transition of students from secondary to higher secondary level should be identified, the higher secondary schooling facilities should be improved for smooth transition and the socio-economic issues should be addressed by introducing suitable interventions.*
- 7. Intervention programmes like awareness campaigns and counselling should be undertaken extensively to address high percentage of drop*

out of children. Also, measures for improvement in quality of education need to be taken.

- 8. The fall in the enrolment numbers across different grades of school education should be analysed and corrective measures be taken.*
- 9. The habitation-wise school mapping should be done in a periodical manner and schooling facilities should be improved to meet the neighbourhood schooling norms.*
- 10. The Department should ensure accurate data collection through surveys mandated under the RTE Act and Samagra Shiksha Scheme for effective policy formulation, so that Out of School Children can be identified and mainstreamed to fulfil the objective of Universal Education.*
- 11. The Department should create widespread awareness and frame effective monitoring mechanism to ensure timely transfer of allowances to the eligible CwSN.*
- 12. Steps should be taken by the State Government to ensure CwSN friendly infrastructure in schools to enable them to have equal access to quality education.*
- 13. Adequate monitoring and need-based intervention towards larger retention of CwSN in school education needs to be properly addressed at different levels of implementation.*
- 14. Infrastructure facilities in schools, being an essential requirement for effective teaching-learning, should be properly assessed and construction constraints resolved effectively for completion of infrastructure works in time.*
- 15. The ICT needs of schools in terms of infrastructure and human resources should be ensured to enhance the students' learning outcomes and enable them to gain from benefits of digital technology.*
- 16. Progress of infrastructure projects should be monitored effectively to ensure timely completion of projects and delivery of benefit to the students.*
- 17. The Department may take steps to maintain the normative Pupil-Teacher Ratio by engaging additional teachers in the schools experiencing shortfalls.*
- 18. The Department may rationalise deployment of teachers based on the enrolment of students, by withdrawing teachers from schools having excess teachers and posting them in schools experiencing shortages.*
- 19. The Department may strengthen capacity of the teacher training institutes along with creating awareness regarding relevance of training by providing adequate resources and monitoring their functions.*
- 20. Immediate steps need to be taken for formulation of State Curriculum Framework in line with the pronouncements made in the National Education Policy, 2020.*

- 21. Vocational education in the State may be revamped by providing adequate resources in terms of instructors, tools and equipment in the laboratories, as well as introducing new subjects and establishing linkages to enhance student employability.*
- 22. Specific timelines should be set for placement of indents by the Department as well as for supply of books by the supplying agencies, and penalty should be levied in case of non-adherence.*
- 23. The communication and awareness measures should be carried out effectively to sensitise the Weaker Sections and Disadvantaged Groups about the provisions of the RTE Act to enable their children to avail the right to free education in the neighbourhood schools.*
- 24. The State and district level monitoring bodies should actively review the programme implementation and carry out corrective measures for improvement in school education.*
- 25. The Department may ensure that inspections by district and block level authorities are increased to the level as stipulated. Representatives of all the stakeholders should be included in the School Management Committees and the Committees should remain engaged with the issues relevant to the development of schools.*