

Chapter-VI

Findings, Summery and Conclusion.

6.1. Findings.

The findings of the present research study are based on secondary data, primary data collected through questionnaires, interview schedule, information blank and researcher's personal discussions and observation during the field study. The findings are as follows-

6.1.1. Access and Enrolment.

One of the most important goals of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) is universal access and retention of all children including specifically the girl children. To fulfil this goal, SSA has adopted large scale implementation strategies with specific interventions. One of such intervention is opening up of new schools with a view to cover the unserved location within 1 kilometre (primary) and 3 kilometres (upper primary) of the habitation.

1. Access to education is no longer a problem in Darrang district with the establishment of more elementary schools under the Department of Education. In this district, the number of government elementary schools is 1065, running under SSA which are more than the number of schools before the implementation of SSA.
2. Reaching the out of school and drop out children has become easier with the establishment of Alternative schools. In Darrang district, total number of 292 EGS centres are opened in different unserved locations to mainstream the out of school and drop out children which have been upgraded to government primary schools in 2013.
3. Total enrolment in government primary schools of Darrang district is 131628 and in government upper primary schools enrolment is 50040. However, enrolment in government primary schools of Darrang district is decreasing in last few years specifically due to the division of the district.
4. Enrolment in the Dalgaon block of Darrang district is lesser against the total child population of the concerned block in comparison to the Sipajhar and Kalaigaon block.
5. Total number of out of school children in Darrang district is 4878. The figure of out of school children is higher (6.96 percent) in upper primary level than the primary level (2.89 percent). Most of the out of school children belongs to the Dalgaon block of the district, representing the Muslim community.
6. In Darrang district, the dropout rate at primary level is higher i.e. 15.3 percent than the upper primary level i.e. 10.1 percent. Moreover, dropout rate in primary level in Darrang district is higher than the state average.

6.1.2. Quality of Education.

SSA has formulated strategies for improving the Quality of education mainly by providing adequate infrastructural facilities in the schools. Its main thrust is enabling the learning environment for the children. SSA also lays emphasis on recruitment of teacher for ensuring the norms of PTR under the RTE Act, 2009 for improving school indicators specifically teaching-learning materials and for learning improvement of students.

1. DISE statistics of Darrang, 2012-13 shows that number of schools having single classroom is 39.3 percent in primary and 3.7 in upper primary level. These single classroom schools create many problems in the learning atmosphere of the schools as teachers take all the classes from class I to class V in the same room. Similarly, the existence of single teacher schools which is 8.7 percent creates many problems in getting quality education for the students of those concerned areas of Darrang district. The single teacher alone has to manage the classes altogether beside taking the burden of administration, finance, construction and maintenance, supervise the preparation of the meal etc.
2. Most of the selected primary schools of Darrang district have pucca buildings i.e. 90 percent, 100 percent, and 93.8 percent representing Sipajhar, Kalaigaon and Dalgaon block respectively. Schools having the compound wall in Sipajhar, Kalaigaon and Dalgaon block are only 10 percent, 33.3 percent and 12.5 percent respectively. While selected schools having drinking water facilities in Sipajhar and Dalgaon block is 70 percent and 81.2 percent, 100 percent schools of

kalaigaon block is providing drinking water facilities to the students. Selected schools having toilet facilities are 100 percent, 88.8 percent and 87.5percent in Sipajhar, Kalaigaon and Dalgaon block respectively. Only 33.3 percent and 25 percent selected schools of Kalaigaon and Dalgaon block have electricity facility while none of the selected schools of Sipajhar block have this facility. None of the selected schools of Sipajhar and kalaigaon block have the library facility for students against 6.25 percent schools of Dalgaon block having this facility. The schools having playground facility in Sipajhar, Kalaigaon and Dalgaon block are 40 percent, 33.3 percent and 62.5 percent respectively. Again 20 percent schools of Sipajhar and 88 percent of Kalaigaon and 43.8 percent schools of Dalgaon block have play materials for their students.

3. All the selected upper primary schools (100 percent) of each Sipajhar, Kalaigaon and Dalgaon blocks have pucca buildings. Only 16.7 percent schools of Sipajhar block and 40 percent schools of Kalaigaon block have the compound wall but none of the selected schools of Dalgaon block have compound wall. Similarly, the percentage of schools having drinking water facility in Sipajhar, Kalaigaon and Dalgaon block are 50 percent, 80 percent and 75 percent respectively. The selected schools of Kalaigaon and Dalgaon block have 100 percent toilet facility except the selected schools of Sipajhar block which is 83.3 percent. Percentage of schools having separate toilet for girls in Sipajhar, Kalaigaon and Dalgaon block are 50 percent, 80 percent and 75 percent respectively. Only 16.7 percent selected schools of Sipajhar block have electricity which is much lower than the selected schools of Kalaigaon block and Dalgaon block i.e. 60 percent and 100 percent respectively. All the selected schools of Sipajhar, kalaigaon and Dalgaon

block each have (100 percent) Teaching Learning Materials. None of the schools of Sipajhar, Kalaigaon and Dalgaon block have (0 percent) library facility for the students. Schools having playground facility in Sipajhar block is 16.7 percent and in Kalaigaon and Dalgaon block percentage of schools having playground facility is 40 percent and 50 percent. Percentage of schools having play materials in Sipajhar and Kalaigaon block are higher i.e. 50 percent and 60 percent than the percentage of schools in Dalgaon block which is 25 percent.

4. Pupil- Teacher Ratio (PTR) of selected schools of Dalgaon block which is 48:1 in primary and 38:1 in upper primary does not fall under the RTE Act, 2009 norms.
5. In the selected schools of Darrang, 65 percent teachers are engaged in other activities except teaching. Other 35 percent teachers who are not engaged in other activities except teaching are mostly the female teachers.
6. Most of the teachers in the selected schools of Darrang i.e. 59 percent do not support the 'policy of not holding back in any classes' because of its negative impact on the quality of education of the students.
7. Most of the teachers i.e. 95 percent in the selected schools take the remedial classes for the educationally weak students.
8. Teaching learning materials are used by all the teachers of the selected schools. SSA provides Rs/- 500 for each teacher for the preparation of Teaching Learning Materials (TLM) for the students.
9. In the selected schools of Darrang, most of the students participate in different activities/ competitions in the school which are essential for their all round development.

10. Some students (33 percent) in the selected schools of Darrang district are unable to understand the subjects at the very first time and they inform the teachers about their inability. Teachers are conscious about this learning difficulty of students and teach them again.
11. Mid Day Meal scheme has both positive and negative impact on the quality of school education. Positively the scheme has helped in motivating the students to attend the school and thus has helped in increasing enrolment and retention in the schools. Negatively learning atmosphere becomes chaotic due to distribution of food during school hours and small students are more interested in eating food rather than attentive in the classes causing the degradation of the quality of learning.

6.1.3. Community Involvement.

One of the most important features of SSA is emphasising on its implementation in a decentralized way. SSA calls for community ownership of the school based on interventions by involvement of women's groups, Village Education Committee/School Management Committee members, Parent Teacher Associations etc. Community participation is vital for effective functioning of the school.

1. In Darrang district, the School Management Committees are playing essential role in the field of primary education. The members of these committees are active in monitoring and supervision of schools, monitoring teacher's

absenteeism, generating awareness for improving the enrolment in the schools. The committees are also actively involved in repair and management of the school. Thus, the members of the School Management Committees are involved in improving the infrastructure of the school and management of the funds. The role of SMCs is satisfactory in Darrang. However corruption and non co-operation with the teachers are the problems with the SMC members as identified by some teachers in Darrang.

2. Under SSA in Darrang district the Block Resource Centres (BRC) at the block level and Cluster Resource Centres (CRC) at the sub- block level have been set up. The main functions of these BRCs and CRCs are organizing seminars and teacher's training, distribution of textbooks, monitoring the performance of schools, receiving the funds from district authorities and distribution of funds among schools etc.
3. In Darrang district Parent- Teacher- Students meetings are not regularly organized and there is no uniformity in holding such meetings. Parent's attendance in PTS meetings is not very satisfactory. Numbers of schools where all the parents attend PTS meetings are very less.
4. In most of the schools of Darrang, '*Matrigot*'s are formed with the mothers of the students. They are actively involved in functioning of the school by assisting the school authorities in the preparation of the meal and its distribution to students.
5. Some student's organizations and branches of the '*Asom Sahitya Sabha*' are also involved in the schools of Darrang by organizing some competitions among the

students. Local people also participate in different occasions like ‘Saraswati Puja’, Republic Day, Independence Day etc.

6.1.4. RTE related other indicators.

In order to promote the right to education, SSA is trying to provide the basic facilities to the students. SSA has focused on the implementation of the strategies which brings overall development for the students by making the learning environment of the school suitable for the children. In addition to its effort for increasing enrolment, bringing good quality education, bridging gender and social category gaps and community involvement SSA is providing free textbooks, free uniforms, emphasizing on curriculum development, physical development of children and other incentives for promoting right to education.

1. The students of large number of schools in Darrang are deprived of the facilities needed for their physical and mental development as physical education and facilities of health check- up camps are not provided in these schools.
2. The schemes adopted by the government for the development of primary education are not properly implemented in view of large number of teachers (54 percent).

3. The funds distributed to the students for their development by the government are not sufficient in the opinion of most of the teachers (65 percent)
4. Large numbers of teachers (69 percent) think that RTE Act, 2009 is succeeded in protecting the rights of the child.
5. Most of the teachers (55 percent) are in favour of successful implementation of SSA scheme.
6. Parents of Darrang district are conscious about the education of their children.
7. Students of Darrang district are interested in continuing their education after completion of their elementary education.
8. All the students of Darrang district have got free textbooks and uniforms from the schools. Textbooks are supplied within the proper time for the students. These provisions of distribution of free textbooks and uniforms in school have been quite helpful in increasing school enrolment.
9. Most of the Students (96 percent) in Darrang district do not have received scholarship due to negligence of parents and Head Master.

6.1.5. Miscellaneous.

1. It is found in the semi-urban schools of Kalaigaon block that enrolment of student is very poor against the recruitment of overloaded teacher. In some

of the schools enrolment of children is less than or equal to the number of teachers.

2. It is observed that there are not enough classrooms to accommodate all of the school age children. Most of the primary schools in the visited area do not have more than the single classroom from class I to class IV (except the room for class V newly constructed under SSA). Some of the schools have given two or three partitions to divide the classes while in some other schools classes are held altogether from class I to class IV in the same room (hall). It is very difficult for the teachers to motivate the students for learning as the small children are not attentive in such a big hall where all of them from different classes sit together.
3. It is also observed that many schools specifically in rural areas without having compound wall are established near small or big ponds creating the problem of safety for the small children.

6.2. SSA, RTE and Girl's Education.

For promoting right to education for girl children, SSA has launched specific intervention programmes in Darrang district. To bring improvement in gender parity SSA gives special emphasis on equity issues in education. SSA has adopted specific strategies to enhance access and retention of girls in the school by making the education system responsive to the needs of the girl child. Under this girl's specific schemes, Alternative schools are being established as a component part of SSA since its

implementation. Following are the findings of the present research study which highlight on the role of SSA in promoting the right to education for girl students in Assam and Darrang district-

1. There has been a significant increase in the number of girl's enrolment in Darrang district in 2012-13. Percentage of girl's enrolment in primary level is 97.4 percent and in upper primary level it is 94.4 percent out of the total girl child population. Bridging the social category gaps S.C. girls' enrolment is 50.2 percent, S.T. girls enrolment is 47.3 percent, O.B.C. girls enrolment is 49.0 percent and Muslim girls enrolment is 49.4 percent out of total S.C., S.T., O.B.C. and Muslim children at the primary level. Similarly in the upper primary level, S.C. girl's enrolment is 50.5 percent, S.T. girl's enrolment is 47.1 percent, O.B.C. girl's enrolment is 49.7 percent and Muslim girl's enrolment is 55.1 percent out of total S.C., S.T., O.B.C. and Muslim child population in Darrang district. Thus improvements in enrolment have eliminated the social, regional and sex differences as girl children are got admitted from different villages, clusters and blocks within the region of Darrang district from different communities.
2. Large number of girl children is still out of school and are deprived of getting the right to education. In the upper primary level, 5.51 percent are not attending the school which is higher than the lower primary level, i.e. 2.55 percent out of total child population of the respective age group. The Dalgaon block of Darrang district bears highest percentage of out of school girls both in primary and upper primary level i.e. 3.64 percent and 8.91 percent respectively than Sipajhar and Kalaigaon block.

3. Recruitment of the female teacher is very less in Darrang district. Gender difference is seen in recruitment of teacher. Percentage of the male teacher is much higher (60.4 percent in primary and 78.6 percent in upper primary than the percentage of the female teacher (39.6 in primary and 23.3 in upper primary).
4. Gender difference is seen with regard to out of school children. Percentage of out of school boys is higher (i.e. 3.24 percent in primary and 6.48 percent in upper primary) than the percentage of out of school girls (i.e. 2.55 in primary and 5.51 in upper primary) in Darrang district.
5. Most of the parents of Darrang district equally treat girls and boys as their children. But the majority of parents favour free higher education for girls because of the cost embedded in it.
6. There is gender difference in performance of activities of girls and boys at home. Most of the boys than girls usually read and pay at home. On the other hand most of the girls than the boys do household activities assist their mothers in cleaning, sweeping, washing, sibling care etc.
7. There is equal representation of both male and female in the SMC and they are given equal opportunities to express their view in the school management committee meetings.
8. The members of the SMC are not given training on gender sensitivity by the authority.
9. Teachers are not trained to deal with gender sensitive issues in the classroom.
10. However, teachers are aware of the gender sensitive issues in the classroom.
11. Teachers are gender responsive in preparation and using of Teaching Learning Materials.

12. The textbooks prepared for school education are not free from gender bias character. Gender inequality is found in the textbooks in including the writings of male and female writers.
13. In most cases girls and boys are equally attentive and conscious in the class.
14. Gender difference is seen in choosing favourite subjects by the girls and boys. More boys select Mathematics while more girls select Environmental Studies or Social Science as favourite subjects.
15. The class wise ranking of students reveals that in the primary classes more girls are ranked from 1st to 5th position than boys but in upper primary level more boys are ranked from 1st to 5th position.
16. The subject wise ranking of students reveals that in class V more girls are ranked in Assamese and Environmental Studies than boys from 1st to 5th position. On the other hand, more boys are ranked in Mathematics and English subject than girls from 1st to 5th position. In class VIII in all the selected subjects, boys outperform girls. Thus, gender difference is seen in the learning achievement of students.
17. There is the gender difference in participation of games and sports by the students. While most of the girls play ludo, kabaddi etc. most of the boys play cricket, football etc in the school.
18. Gender difference is seen in choosing class captain by the teachers and students. More boys get preference than girls to take the leadership of the class and girls are provided little scope to take this opportunity.

19. The school authorities of Darrang do not spend money for the betterment of the girl students as separate funds are not utilized for girls in the schools and girls are not provided specific scholarship for their betterment.
20. Almost all the girls in the RBC and the KGBV are the victims of gender discrimination and this has resulted in the deprivation of their educational rights.
21. Some of the girls of both the RBC and KGBV are orphans and no one from their relatives is willing to take responsibility for their future study. As after class viii, education is not free and compulsory most of the girls will be deprived of further education due to poor economic conditions.
22. The KGBV has its newly constructed school building but it has no kitchen facility and is running its kitchen in a temporary arrangement. On the other hand, the RBC does not have its own building and the school is running in the nurse's hostel of Dalgaon hospital.
23. As the RBC is within the hospital campus and closest to the Dots Centre, so it is not hygienic and there is the possibility of infection for the girls.
24. Both the schools have their required classroom facility. The KGBV has its girl's hostel also. But in case of the RBC the same rooms are used for two purposes- as a classroom and as a boarding room. As the RBC has five rooms, twenty girls sleep together on a wooden platform (one and half fit height) in a small room. During the class hour the girl students sit on the same platform.
25. The teachers of the RBC are recruited on a contractual basis and are not trained teacher. On the other hand, teachers of the KGBV are permanently recruited and are trained teachers.

26. Physical education classes and health check- up camps are regularly organized in both the schools.
27. Moreover since 2003, more than 600 girls from the RBC are being admitted to the regular government schools. But it is unfortunate that till 2013 only a few students have passed the matriculate examination. Most of them are either got married or send as child labour.

6.3. Constrains in School Education.

The researcher finds the following constrains in implementation of SSA in the schools of Darrang district-

1. There are still a number of students who are out of school and most of them are from marginalized communities of Dalgaon block.
2. Drop out rate is still higher in Darrang district in comparison to the state level.
3. Existence of the single teacher schools and single classroom schools has created many problems in getting quality education by the students.
4. Mere presence of a school building does not mean that the school is well equipped to provide quality education. The basic facilities like separate toilet for girls, safe drinking water, playground, play materials libraries, electricity etc in many schools of Darrang district are largely absent.
5. Lack of adequate number of teachers in primary schools and lack of sufficient teacher per classroom/ subject effects the quality of teaching to a large extent.

6. Teacher's engagement in non- teaching activities except teaching is another problem in the learning condition for the students in the school.
7. Although teachers take remedial classes for the educationally weak students yet they find it difficult to manage time within the school hour to take such classes. Lack of motivation on the part of students is a problem for the teachers to take remedial classes after completion of school hours. In the schools having single teacher, remedial classes are not taken.
8. In some of the selected schools of Darrang district functioning of SMC is not satisfactory. The negligence of SMC members, failure to use grants in time, non-cooperation with the teachers, misuse of funds and the interest of SMC members on money rather than on the education of the children are creating problems in the smooth functioning of the SMC in those schools.
9. Irregularity in holding Parent- Teacher- Students meetings and lack of uniformity in holding PTS meetings results in lack of communication between school authority and parents in Darrang district. Parent's absenteeism in PTS meetings is also a problem in the schools.
10. In the absence of separate libraries, school authorities are unable to provide reading materials for the students except the free textbooks provided by the government.
11. Absence of boundary wall in most of the schools creates the security problem for the students both in rural and urban areas.
12. Lack of electricity in the schools has made the computer education scheme of the government meaningless to implement.

13. Negligence on the part of the teachers and parents results in deprivation from getting scholarship by the students.
14. Management of Mid Day Meal scheme, maintenance of official records and funds and taking the classes altogether become an overburden for the teachers in the single teacher schools.
15. As the RTE Act, 2009 rule, only one teacher is to be appointed against 30 students in primary and 35 students at upper primary level. But the schools having less than 30/ 35 do not get a separate teacher for every class. This makes difficult for the single teacher to complete the course.

6.4. Constrains in Girl's Education.

The region of Assam including Darrang district has shown the progress of female literacy and increase in the enrolment of girl children over the past few years. Still there are some consistent problems in getting education for the girls in this region creating barriers in bringing development of the girl children. The constrains of girl's education in Darrang district are the following-

1. It is found that the gender issues are very complex for most of the teachers. As the teachers do not have proper training on gender sensitivity they had complexity on the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender'.
2. Contradiction is found in the response of the teachers on gender neutrality. On one hand, they reply positively about their awareness on gender sensitive

issues, on the other hand they perpetuate gender inequality in choosing class captains.

3. Practice of gender stereo- typing roles in different activities performed by girls and boys in participation of games, decision-making, etc are depriving the girls of getting equality of opportunity in the schools.
4. The members of the SMC are also not provided gender-sensitive training and ignorance on these issues are responsible for the practice of gender difference in school affairs.
5. The curriculum and textbooks are not gender responsive in character. Practice of gender inequality in textbooks put challenge to the qualitative learning achievement of the girls.
6. Adolescent girls are more at the risk of depriving of getting education as number of out of school girls is higher in 12-14 age group than the 6-11 age group.
7. Girls from the Dalgaon block are more victims of gender discrimination as out of school girl is higher in number than the Sipajhar and Kalaigaon block.
8. Lack of separate toilets for girls in many schools creates problems for girl students.
9. Lack of adequate female teacher is a discouraging factor in girl's access to education.
10. Early marriage, child labour, sibling care, burden of household activities, parents economic backwardness are the problems of girl's education in Darrang district, specifically for the girls belonging to the Muslim communities of the Dalgaon block.

11. Lack of other infrastructural facilities like classroom, drinking water, libraries, playground, play materials etc are the challenges in providing quality education for the girl children.
12. Lack of initiative on the part of the school authority to organize health check- up camps and to provide physical education is the problems associated with girl's children. Girls suffer from different diseases like anaemia, weakness, lack of nutrition which is generally neglected by the parents specifically in remote areas. In the absence of free health check- up camps the problems of the girl child can not be detected and cured.
13. Non- utilization of the separate fund specifically for the girl child by the school authority put constrains in girl's education.
14. Another problem related to girl's education is their deprivation in getting scholarship due to the negligence of parents and school authority.
15. Access to education is to some extent more difficult for girls at the secondary or higher level than the elementary level as it is not free and compulsory after elementary level.

6.5. Gender Inequality in Education.

In order to increase equality in access to education and to develop quality in the teaching-learning process, girls and boys should get the chance to participate as equals in this process. The whole school curriculum and the ways of teaching are the central points where equality or inequality is experienced. To

explore gender equality in schools, the researcher has tried to examine the key issues like- whether right to education is being availed by the girls equally with that of the boys, whether girls are equally capable to take decision with the boys and whether the school authorities, teachers and all other persons treat girls in a gender responsive manner or not. The researcher has equally stressed the role of political will and its commitment to mainstream the girl children who are out of the educational process emphasizing more in gender-sensitive policies and strategies. The gender sensitive perspective enables us to highlight the existing gender difference and inequalities. In a gender sensitive atmosphere girls and boys equally can flourish their full potentials as gender sensitive attitude and learning materials promote non stereo-typed images for them in a fair learning environment. On the other hand gender bias environment always put obstacles in girls and boys equal learning.

The issue of gender equality has been one of the central issues in the framework of SSA. It is seen that SSA has been successful in providing free textbooks to girls up to class VIII, mainstreaming a large number of girls through Alternative Innovative Centres and Bridge courses through allocation of innovation funds in these schools and mobilizing the community in school affairs to some extent. But evidences also show that the culture of the school environment and the classrooms inside or outside, directly or indirectly practise gender inequality. Practice of gender discrimination is visible in textbooks, playgrounds, classroom activities and lacking the facilities needed for girl child in schools. In most cases (for e.g. in providing gender sensitive training to the SMC members and teachers, in choosing class captains, teacher's attitudes,

encouraging the girls to play non stereo-typing games, in performing non traditional activities etc.) school environment reinforces the gender difference instead of promoting equality of opportunity among the children. Apart from these experiences girl children are facing the problem of lack of adequate classrooms, separate toilets, libraries, playgrounds, drinking water which are the challenges for the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) itself. In recruitment of teachers, utilisation of funds, distribution of scholarships issues of girl children are not given priority. Thus it is realized that for reaching out the goal of bringing gender equality in an equitable learning condition SSA remain weak in proper implementation of strategies like recruitment of 50 percent female teachers, teacher sensitization to gender issues, developing gender sensitive textbooks, and creating a gender responsive learning atmosphere in the schools. It is observed that gender parity in enrolment alone does not mean gender equality in other areas of education. Persistence of gender inequality not only in the school environment but also within the society itself put constrains in getting good quality education by the girls. Further, it imposes barriers in the outcome of learning achievement of the girl children affecting the social and economic opportunities for them.

6.6. Suggestions.

1. Ensuring the sustainability of children from primary to upper primary level and its completion will help in reducing drop out and out of school children.

2. Involvement of programme workers is needed for promoting awareness among the parents of drop out and out of school children in the concerned areas. Identification of such children with the help of the members of SMC will be supportive measures in this regard.
3. Regular visit and inspection of the schools by the authority will help the programme operators to identify the problems of schools and to take measures accordingly.
4. Efficiency on the part of the school authority in utilization of funds with proper planning in the needy areas of the school is required.
5. Government should recruit more teachers to fill the vacancies and to reduce the gap required for the PTR norms.
6. Qualitative evaluation of the students learning by the teachers is regularly needed to remove the weaknesses of the 'policy of not holding back in any classes'.
7. Teachers should be exempted from the burden of non-teaching duties by the government.
8. Creating a friendly learning atmosphere for the children in school will increase the sustainability of children in school for long time.
9. Specific child-centred strategies should be adopted by the teachers to motivate the students for remedial classes.
10. Co-operation among SMC members, head masters and teachers is needed for proper implementation of policies.
11. Awareness campaign on child rights and the need of education should be organized at the local level.

12. Proper implementation of the provisions of Article 51 A of the Constitution is necessary so that the parents who do not send their children to school should be punished or taken some actions against them.
13. Proper check on the practice of child labour by the district administration and punishing those who engage the children as labours are of utmost importance.
14. For developing gender-responsive educational environment in every stage of teaching learning process i.e. in preparing curriculum, teaching-learning materials, promotion of gender sensitive attitude should be encouraged.
15. It is very important to provide gender-sensitive training to all SMC members, teachers, administrators and all those who are engaged in developing school education.
16. Promotion of gender responsive educational environment depends on the political authority as well as on the school authority. Therefore, policies and strategies upholding gender equality should be formulated and implemented strictly.
17. Making the classroom atmosphere gender sensitive will encourage girl's active participation in the learning process.
18. Recruitment of more female teacher will encourage the participation of girls in the school education.

19. Organizing free health check- up camps for girl students will help the school authority to take preventive measures against some diseases of the girl children.
20. Providing physical education for the girl child will be helpful for girls to develop strength and self-confidence among the girls which would bring mental and physical development of them.
21. Elimination of gender bias from the textbooks will enhance the quality of education for girls.
22. More strategic action is needed for reaching the out of school girls. Moreover reaching out those girls who are mainstreamed through the bridge courses in the formal schools and drop out again from the formal schools must be given preference in the strategies adopted.
23. The discussions and consultations in the PTS meetings should involve girls and women so that the needs and demands of girls in the school can be better understand.
24. Since social norms are linked with the practice of gender inequality in education, changing the mindset of parents, teachers and community will be helpful in eliminating the gender discrimination.
25. Authorities must be concerned about providing quality basic education in the alternative schools equally with the formal primary schools.
26. Separate scholarship for girls should be provided by the government in the elementary level.

6.7. Summary:

In this research work an attempt is made by the researcher to study on the 'Right to Education' as a constitutional right and the role of the centrally sponsored scheme Sarva Siksha Abhiyan in promoting this right to education for girl students in Darrang district of Assam. Although there has been a significant progress in the literacy rate since last few decades in Assam including Darrang district, yet this region remains backward in comparison to other parts of the state. The educational scenario of Darrang district shows that it is one of the educationally backward districts of Assam. The girl children of this region are facing different problems in getting right to education. In this study the researcher tries to highlight on the problems of education in Darrang district in general and problems of girl's education in particular with a view to make concern for the policy makers, administrators to promote gender equality by removing the obstacles in getting quality education for the children. The whole study has been divided into six chapters including summary and conclusion. The first chapter includes statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypothesis, methodology, study area and review of related literature. The role of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan as a Central Government scheme in the field of primary education is very significant. Specifically Sarva Siksha Abhiyan's initiative in promoting the right to education for girl students in Assam is considered as one of the most important strategies adopted under this scheme. In this study the researcher focuses mainly on the efforts made by SSA in providing access and enrolment, quality education, equity issues and participation of the community in school education.

The study area covers basically the Darrang district region of Assam. The main objectives of the study covers the implementation strategies adopted by SSA for realization of RTE in Darrang district, a conceptual understanding of the issue of women's rights and girl's education from the perspective of feminism, achievement of quality education by the girl students, effectiveness of community participation in school education and search for remedial measures for addressing the problems of girl students in getting quality education.

Keeping in view of the objectives of this research work the field study covers from the year 2010 to 2014. The primary data has been collected through field survey and researchers personal observation. To collect the secondary data the researcher deals with different books, journals, articles, news papers, official statistical records, and websites and so on. The significance of the study has been established in Darrang district for its potentialities in the development of education in the region. The study also contains a lot of significance in the context of the recent emphasis of the Government of India in the field of primary education.

Chapter-2 of this thesis deals with the issue of gender in the mainstream debate on right and education. At the beginning of this chapter a discussion is given on the concept of gender. At present, sociological studies have assigned a specific meaning to the concept of 'Gender' where it is understood as a product of socio-cultural roles played by men and women in the society. Thus gender is a socio-cultural definition of men and women, the way societies distinguish men and women and assign them different roles. The differences in their roles generally confine women into the domestic or private sphere allowing men to enter into the public sphere. The discrimination against women that they are capable of performing only economically less significant

work manifests itself into gender inequality in the society resulting in the denial of recognition of rights for women. Thus, the deprivation from the benefits of human right by the women resulted in the beginning of the claim for women's right as the human right. Education played a significant role in popularizing the demand for equality among women. The women writers and scholars through their writings and discussions urged for equality between men and women. Their central argument was in favour for women ability to live beyond child bearing, home making and caring for families. The chief and early exponents of women rights were Christine de Pizan and Marry Wollstonecraft who started the long struggle for women rights in the 17th century. Thus the continuous efforts of the feminist scholars, women movement and the role of NGOs all over the world in the 18th and 19th century received ultimately an international legal status in the midst of the 20th century with the declaration of the UN Charter to be recognized women's right as human right. The rights of women and girl child are now included in the important international documents like International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and more specifically in the Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC).

Education is one of the most important factors that play the most crucial role in claiming women's rights. Recognizing the importance of education for girls and women the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) explains the link between education and women's life as follows-

- The more educated a mother is, the more infant and child mortality is reduced.
- Children of more educated mothers tend to be better nourished and suffer from less illness.

- Children (and particularly daughters) of more educated mothers are more likely to be educated themselves and become literate
- The more years of education women have, the later they tend to marry and the fewer children they tend to have.
- Educated women are less likely to die in child birth.
- The more educated a women is, the more likely she is to have opportunities and life choices and to avoid being oppressed and exploited by her family or social situation.
- Educated women are more likely to be receptive to participate in and influence development initiatives and send their own daughters to school.
- Educated women are more likely to play a role in political and economic decision making, at community, regional and national levels.

In order to remove the obstacles in getting education by the girl child the international community in 2000 met at the World Conference on Education in Dakar (Senegal) set some gender specific goals to provide quality education for all.

The gender specific goals are as follows—

Goal-2 is to ensure that by 2015, all children particularly girls children in difficult circumstance and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality”.

Goal-4 is to “achieve a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults”.

Goal-5 is to “eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality”.

Besides highlighting on the rights of the girl child the researcher also gives a detail discussion on the gender debate on education as forwarded by different scholars. Most of these writers argue that the discrimination against the girls and women inhibits in the social structure itself. This discrimination which starts in the childhood automatically leads to life long experience of inequality by the girls. The practice of such gender inequality is reflected in the field of education. The existing patriarchal structure gives preference for the son than daughters to participate in the school. Apart from this son preference poverty, child labour, child marriage, girl’s safety issues, armed conflict are the main obstacles of girl’s education as identified by these scholars. Moreover, girls experience gender inequality in schooling as school itself reinforce gender inequality in many aspects starting from the textbooks, classroom teachings, school-related costs, games and sports, the curriculum and the whole school environment. The schools colleges and universities are the institutions where the gender stereotype roles are practised in the curriculum, syllabus, textbook and classroom experiences. Different feminist theories that deal with gender and education mainly conceptualize education in accordance with their theoretical ideologies. By forwarding a detailed discussion on the existing inequalities in society that perpetuate gender inequality in education; these theories suggest some ways like reforming and enforcing

laws and policies, changing the existing unequal social structure, redistribution of power to bring equity and to achieve equality in education.

Chapter-3 provides a reflection on right to education as a human right and Sarva Siksha Abhiyan as an initiative to realize the objectives of the right to education in India. The international legal framework for the right to education has earned its significance as one of the most important human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948 accords legal status to right to education as a human right. Article 26 of the UDHR stipulates that ‘Everybody has the right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory...’ Other international legal settings ensuring free and compulsory education for all children are international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the most important is the Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC ‘reaffirms the rights of every child with out discrimination of any kind to free and compulsory primary education.’ Moreover the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) held in March 5-9, 1990 in Jomtien has set the goal for all countries of the world to be made accessible the universal primary education by all the children up to the 14 years of age. Similarly 164 countries of the world met in Dakar (Senegal), in 2000 to adopt six ambitious goals on education. These six goals are mainly-

- Expand early childhood care and education
- Provide free and compulsory primary education for all
- Promote learning life skill for young people and adults

- Increase adult literacy by 50 percent
- Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015
- Improve the quality of education.

Along with these international efforts, the Government of India has also set out its commitment to provide free and compulsory education to all children. At the time of framing the Constitution of India the constitution makers included Article 45 in the Directive Principles of State Policy which stated the provision for the state to provide free and compulsory education. Later on the National Policy on Education (1986, 1992) gave special priority to the Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). Right to Education in India has got the legal protection with its inclusion as Article 21 (A) in the Chapter on fundamental Rights with the 86th amendment of the Constitution in 2002. This Article states that ‘the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children between six to fourteen age groups.

In order to realize the objectives of UEE, the Government of India has adopted new innovative schemes and programmes. Chief among them are Total Literacy Campaigns (TLC), Mahila Samakhya (MS), Operation Blackboard (OBB), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Non-Formal Education (NFE), Siksha Karmi Project (SKP), Lok Jumbish Project (LJP), National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Popularly known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme) etc. Despite launching a number of schemes and projects in the field of primary education it became a hard task to fulfil the goal of UEE due to many constrains. As a result to provide a justifiable legal enforcement Government of India passed the Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. The RTE Act provides for the rights of children

between the ages of 6-14 years to free and compulsory education till the completion of education in the neighbourhood school. The main provisions of the RTE Act include obligation of the appropriate authority to provide free and compulsory education and ensure compulsory admission, admission of child in age appropriate classes, share of financial responsibilities between the central and state governments in providing free and compulsory education, norms and standards relating to pupil-teacher ratio, appointment of trained and qualified teachers, prohibits physical punishment and mental harassment to the pupils, norms for recognition of schools, protection of child rights etc. All the seven chapters that has been included in the RTE Act are very much significant in order to implement the right to education as provided by the constitution. However this Act is not free from criticism by a number of scholars, academicians, educationists and students organizations all over India. Some of them criticise the Act on the basis of its improper definition of right to education while some others have pointed out its silence about the steps to be taken if the parents do not send their children to school, deployment of teachers in census duties, disaster relief duties, and education of children below six years and so on.

This chapter also gives a detail account on the centrally sponsored scheme- Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. It is an initiative by the Central Government addressing the objectives of right to education in India. This programme aims to provide useful, quality education through decentralized planning. It is a time bound implementation strategy to provide free and compulsory education to all children between 6-14 age groups. The most important aspects of SSA are its effort to involve the local community in the management of schools. The main objectives of SSA are-

1. All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, “back-to-School camp by 2003;
2. All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
3. All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010
4. Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
5. Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
6. Universal retention by 2010.

In order to fulfil its objectives, the Government has determined special financial arrangements to be utilized under SSA. According to the norms the assistance under SSA is on an 85:15 sharing arrangement during the IX Plan, 75:25 sharing arrangement during X Plan, 65:35 sharing arrangement during XI Plan for first two years, 60:40 for the third year, 55:45 for fourth year and 50:50 there after. For the eight North-Eastern States the fund sharing pattern between Central and states is 90:10. Accordingly the ongoing Twelve Five Year Plan (2012-17) allocates Rs. 9569.52 crores as total outlay for elementary education which includes 7419.62 crores as State Monitoring share for SSA. In terms of utilization of funds against the budgeted outlays the maximum shares of funds are spend on ‘civil works’ and ‘Repair and Maintenance’.

The initiatives taken by the Government of India in the field of primary education has brought decadal rise in literacy rates in India. The literacy rate which was

only 18.33 percent in 1951 has increased to 74.04 percent in 2011. The progress in literacy rate has been marked by launching of a number of programmes and schemes including the recent initiatives under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan in India.

Chapter-4 of this research work basically deals with the right to education under SSA in Assam with special reference to Darrang district. This chapter covers a detailed account on the development of primary education in Assam, the initiatives of the government to expand elementary education in this region. The history of the development of primary education in Assam goes back to the efforts of the colonial rulers in implementing different acts in order to develop primary education in Assam. School education in Assam expanded slowly but steadily as a result of combined efforts on the part of the government, Christian Missionaries, and the people of the concerned areas. Prior to independence the only act implemented by the Britishers was the Assam Primary Education Act, 1926 to provide compulsory and universal primary education in Assam. After independence different Acts mostly Assam Primary Education Act, 1947, Assam Basic Education Act, 1954, Assam Elementary Education Act, 1962, Assam Elementary Education Act, 1968 and Assam Elementary Education (Provincialization) Act, 1974, include provisions relating to free and compulsory education, its supervision, administration and management, teacher training, curriculum development etc. The recent initiative of the Government of Assam in the field of primary education is the declaration of the Assam Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2011 which has been published in accordance with the Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. These rules include the provision for special training for out of school children to be admitted in age appropriate classes, norms for establishment of primary schools, admission procedure, training for disabled children,

functioning of School Management Committee and procedure for supervision, control and inspection of schools in Assam.

At present in Assam the SSA is functioning by the State Implementation Society named as 'Asom Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Mission'. The implementation society has decentralized its management structure to state level, district level, block level and cluster level working groups. With a view to achieve the goal of UEE, SSA has been focusing on the following aspects-

- Provision of schooling facilities in the habitations hitherto unserved by any schooling facility in a clear time frame.
- Enrolling all children of the age group of 6-14 years in schools/ alternative schools/ back to school camp etc.
- Retaining the children within the schooling system for the whole period of elementary education.
- Improving quality in education through teachers training, provision of teaching learning materials, textbooks etc.
- Promoting social justice amongst socially backward communities, caste tribes etc. and gender sensitivity amongst all.
- Effective involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions and people's committees in management of schools.

Despite taking a number of initiatives under SSA the educational scenario in Assam is not very satisfactory. Increase in large number of schools in Assam has not resulted in bringing all the out of school children to the mainstream. The Annual status

of Education Report (ASER), 2012, states that in 2012, 4.4 percent children between the age groups of 6-14 years are still out of the educational process. The report also states that the quality of education provided in the government primary schools of Assam is still very poor and this has resulted in increasing the number of children going to the private schools. The drop out rate has been recorded at 9.7 percent and 10.4 percent in primary and upper primary level. Literacy rate along with girl's enrolment has also been increased. According to 2011 Census Report, female literacy rate in Assam is 67.2 percent and enrolment in primary and upper primary schools has crossed 19 lakhs and 9 lakhs respectively. Focus on girl's education in different programmes has succeeded in enrolling large number of girls belonging to S.C., S.T., O.B.C. and Muslim communities.

The new strategies adopted under SSA in Darrang district has helped in improving the educational scenario in Darrang district. These strategies include reforms in educational administration, financial issues, decentralization, recruitment and deployment of teachers, early childhood care etc. Under SSA to provide easy access to educational facilities for the children new primary schools have been established along with some alternative schools known as '*Amar Parhashali*' (Education Guarantee Scheme). At present in Darrang district total numbers of 1065 government primary schools are running under the Department of Elementary Education. In these government elementary schools total number of enrolment of children is more than 13 lakhs in primary level and more than 50 thousand in the upper primary level. However, total number of 4878 out of school children has been recorded in Darrang district out of which 3925 children belongs to the Dalgaon block. In the primary level drop out rate is 15.3 percent in 2012-13 session. Besides these large number of schools in Darrang lack

some basic facilities like adequate number of classrooms, separate girl's toilet, boundary wall, drinking water, play ground, electricity etc. In the absence of such basic facilities many schools in Darrang district are unable to provide a congenial atmosphere for the students to learn the courses. A part from these problems in Darrang district out of total 4113 government school teachers only 45.9 percent regular teachers and 5.3 contractual teachers have professional training. Gender difference in literacy rate is seen as 7.96 percent gender gap is recorded in 2011 Census Report. Recruitment of female teachers in elementary school is significantly less in comparison to recruitment of male teachers.

Chapter-5 deals with data representation, analysis and interpretation. In this chapter, the researcher makes a discussion on the collected data through field study from the study area. The information collected through using questionnaires, schedules and information blanks are represented with the help of tabulation and interpretation. The results of the discussion are analysed here under four broad categories like analysis on RTE and enrolment indicator to asses the implementation strategies, analysis on equity indicator, to asses gender equality in education, analysis on quality indicators to assess the quality of school education and lastly analysis on effectiveness of community participation in the school education process.

The enrolment indicator of the selected schools helps us to assess the performance of SSA in motivating the children to the school and providing accessibility to get the right to education for them. In Darrang district accessibility to get education become easier with the establishment of more new elementary schools especially in the unserved areas. Enrolment in the elementary schools of Darrang district has been decreased mainly due to the division of the district in last few years. In the Dalgaon

block enrolment of children is lesser against the child population of the concerned age groups in the block in comparison to Sipajhar and Kalaigaon block. SSA is trying to provide access to enrol children belonging to different communities from different dominating areas by dismantling the social and regional barriers.

The quality indicator of the selected schools helps us to assess the performance of SSA in providing good quality education to the children of Darrang district. Many selected schools of Sipajhar, Kalaigaon and Dalgaon block of Darrang district lack some infrastructural facilities like compound wall, drinking water separate girl's toilet, electricity, library, play-ground, play materials etc. The pupil-teacher ratio of primary and upper primary schools of Sipajhar and Kalaigaon block is in accordance with the norms provided by the RTE Act, 2009. But the pupil-teacher ratio of primary and upper primary schools of Dalgaon block does not fulfil the norms under RTE Act, 2009. A large number of teachers in Darrang district are engaged in other duties like census, election, socio-economic surveys, disaster relief camps etc. which results in cancellation of regular classes in those days. Moreover, the policy of 'not holding back any children in any classes' have some negative impact in the quality of education. The absence of fear of failure among the students has degraded their quality of learning to some extent. Teaching-learning materials are regularly used by the teachers in the schools. They take care of the children's learning difficulties in the classroom learning process. Students of Darrang district generally take part in different activities/ competitions organized by the school authority for their qualitative development.

The researcher also tries to highlight on the gender indicator to assess the practice of gender inequality in the schools of Darrang district. The enrolment indicator of the selected schools shows gender equality in enrolment. Gender difference persists

in the home environment as girls and boys perform different activities more or less against each other. These activities include reading, playing, household activities and some other activities like singing, dancing, drawing, watching television etc. School authorities in Darrang district are not providing gender sensitive training to the SMC members. However, teachers are aware of gender sensitive issues in the classroom. In some cases, school environment also perpetuates gender inequality as gender difference is observed in textbooks, curriculum, co-curricular activities and in choosing class captains in different classes. Besides these, most of the girls enrolled in the RBCs and KGBVs had dropped out or left their earlier schools due to economic backwardness and overburden of household activities. In the process of school education, the local community in Darrang district is actively involved. The members of the SMC play a significant role in the functioning of the school. Mother's units provide assistance in cooking and distribution of food among the children. Local people and some student's organizations are also involved in different occasions and functions organized in the school premises.

6.8. Conclusion.

The constitutional obligation for Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) is now a matter of concern for all policy makers, administrators and researchers. '*Education for All*' is the central issue to promote Article 21 (A) of the Constitution which declares the right to education for all children until they complete the age of

fourteen years. To ensure this democratic right for all children, the Government of India is doing much progressive steps by formulating different policies and launching several projects, programmes and schemes. Moreover formulation of a historic law like 'The Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act' has created high hopes for all for providing not only free and compulsory education but also raising the standard of education.

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan launched as a major vehicle for achieving UEE since 2001-02 has focused on decentralization, quality education, universalization of education with out any social or gender bias and community participation. Over the years, there has been an expansion in the field of education in terms of increasing educational facilities and enrolment to some extent. At present Government of Assam is running total number of 42370 elementary schools under the department of education covered by SSA. Total enrolment in government primary schools in Assam is 29.5 lakhs and in government upper primary schools it is 16.0 lakhs. It is also to be recognized that implementation of SSA has certainly given a new direction to all children specifically those belonging to the disadvantaged communities. In order to practise the concept of 'Inclusive Education' different interventions like Education Guaranty Schemes (EGS), Alternative and Innovative Education Centres (AIE), Bridge Courses, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) etc have been implemented under SSA. SSA is trying to enhance the role of the school, parents and the community in bringing the disadvantaged children to the mainstream and to fulfil the target of UEE. Thus the impressive achievement of SSA in certain areas can not be overlooked in terms of increasing enrolment, reducing the out of school children, declining the gender and social category gaps in enrolment,

construction of new classrooms, teacher appointments etc. in Assam. SSA has made significant efforts in mobilizing the community and increasing their participation in the school education. Ensuring the role of SMC in effective functioning of the school system is hoped to be fruitful for promoting the right to education for the children.

However, evidences prove that most of the goals of SSA are yet to be achieved. The time bound project has failed to fulfil its objectives within its time limit leading to the extension of its time period for implementation by the government. Despite initiating lots of measures under SSA, the goal of achieving cent percent literacy rate and providing universal education to all is far away in Assam. The literacy rate of Darrang district is lesser than the state average. Adoption of different strategies has failed to mainstream all the out of school children in this region and still many children are at the risk of dropping out of the system of elementary education at different levels. The goal of providing quality basic education to the children has been struck down by the lack of proper infrastructural facilities, shortage of teachers, lack of efficiency and negligence of school authority in upholding qualitative environment in the schools of Assam including Darrang district. As a result number of children rushing to private schools instead of government primary schools is increasing day by day.

To promote girl's education SSA has given stress on bringing change in prevailing gender differences. It has contributed a lot in increasing girl's enrolment in schools by adopting specific measures in Assam and Darrang district. But achieving gender parity in enrolment is in contrast with the existing gender inequality in education. Results of this research prove that quantitative increase in enrolment is not matching with the qualitative improvement of school environment in favour of girls. These are the issues where SSA has failed to eliminate gender differences from day

today learning process in schools. It seems that the goal of bringing change under SSA in societal norms and attitude for promoting gender equality remain far out of the sight.

In such a situation children in Assam and specifically in Darrang district are depriving of the right to education provided by the Constitution and are not getting legal protection under RTE Act, 2009. Girl children are the victims of practising gender inequality and not availing the benefit of good quality education in a gender responsive school environment. Girl's educational access and expansion not only demands increase in enrolment but also removing the barriers of the equality of educational opportunity for girls to a great extent. Along with this the necessity of reaching out the goal of UEE for all children demands proper implementation of laws and policies from the central to the grass root level with right direction and efficiency in making such laws and policies worthy of enjoying them. More research and deeper analysis of root causes of the problems in their implementation are equally significant in this context. The problem of girl's qualitative educational development will persist unless and until the mindsets of parents, teachers, school authorities and administrators are directed towards gender responsive environment.