

An Assessment of Convergence of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan with Selected Central and State Government Schemes

A collaborative Research Study

by



Institute of Rural Research and Development
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National Resource Centre for Women

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FOREWORD

The idea of commissioning a research study in Mewat district of Haryana arose as the Institute of Rural Research and Development (IRRAD) sought to better understand and assess the community needs, aspirations and development level to evolve strategies for our program initiatives and to share learnings with the wider audience of policy makers, planners, academia, researchers and the public. The Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI, sought a report in implementation of various education related schemes and their convergence. Though, the government and a few other NGOs and aid agencies have worked in this district, Mewat remains under developed in terms of key social indicators such as literacy - particularly female literacy – and health. Haryana revels in its successful industrialization and development of the National Capital Region, but Mewat district enjoys development only in select urban pockets.

Field visits reveal the unique ethnicity of the *Mewati* people and their living conditions that have hardly changed over the centuries. A majority of the population in the region are Meo Muslims, the largest concentration of Muslims in any district in North India. Many Mewat villages lack access to water for drinking, household purposes and agriculture. Girls often carry water to their homes, wash laundry and take up other daily chores. The overall effect of drudgery, traditional culture and poor school conditions is that girl child education suffers.

To bring about educational development in Mewat district, key stakeholders must collaborate. The Mewat Development Agency (MDA) was created by the state government in 1980 for creating basic infrastructure in the region. Though MDA has taken steps to make drinking water available and improve water distribution for irrigation of the fields, potable drinking water is still not available in a number of villages and schools. The role of local institutions - Panchayats, School Management Committees, and Village Health and Sanitation Committees - needs to be strengthened to ensure proper delivery of government schemes to the intended beneficiaries. Training and capacity building of community members for undertaking the new development challenges must also be well planned and provided.

This Collaborative Action Research Study, “An Assessment of Convergence of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* with Selected Central and State Government Schemes” (2012), reports on the status of the education system in all blocks of Mewat district with special focus on the implementation of select government schemes. IRRAD looked for evidence of convergence among the selected schemes to advance educational goals. This study presents a package of suggestions to accelerate development of education through better convergence of schemes so that Mewat district can progress into India’s mainstream. We hope that this report will provide insights useful to the stakeholders to shape a brighter future for the district.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education is an essential component to facilitate the holistic development of an individual. Recognizing the importance of education, the Government of India has taken several initiatives to ensure that each individual is able to access educational facilities thereby contributing to economic growth of India. The 'Education for All' Campaign is one such step which ensures free elementary education for all. Launched in 2001 by the Government of India, the initiative has been a pedestal for many to access the basic right to education. Furthering the objective of the 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan', schemes such as ICDS, MDM, SHP have been launched to ensure that children are able to enjoy improved nutritive and health status, acquire pre literacy skills such that education comes at the right age and is regular. Working towards the overarching goal of providing right education at the right age, these schemes share commonalities which, if brought together can help achieve the desired objective. In this regard, the present study aims to assess the implementation of the SSA campaign in Mewat district of Haryana and its convergence with select central and state government schemes.

Mewat district of Haryana is found to have one of the lowest literacy rates in the country. Even though, all the government schemes are under implementation in the region, the literacy figures are dwindling. While the average literacy rate is 56%, female literacy levels are found to be 38% (Census, 2011). While attempting to unleash the gaps in implementation, special emphasis has been placed on the girl child as these are found to be under represented at all levels as is evident from the literacy figures. The study has been carried out in all five blocks in the district. Ten villages have been selected randomly from each block. A total of 50 villages have been included in the study. Qualitative and quantitative data has been triangulated to attain a comprehensive understanding of the issue under investigation. To ensure that all perspectives are taken into account, information has been obtained from schools, district administration officials, parents and girls enrolled in schools.

The study results have been explicated as per the provisions under various schemes under investigation. The physical infrastructure of schools requires attention as basic facilities like toilets are found to be in a dilapidated condition. These result in drop out or absenteeism especially among girls. With respect to resource infrastructure such as teachers, dearth of female teachers emerges to be widespread. While there are sanctioned positions, the under representation is due to absence of qualified teachers. This has resulted in many parents pulling their girl children out of school which is sharply evident after they attain puberty. To make education a lucrative proposition for those who do not have education as a priority, the central and state governments have issued incentive schemes of varied types. These are found to be existing in the region but their provision to the targeted beneficiaries appears to be erratic. While textbooks under the SSA campaign are being provided to all children yearly, the time at which they reach the children makes them largely redundant. With respect to cash award and stipend schemes, the provision is not regular and there is no definite trend for the same. This is usually found to bring in discontentment among the parents of students enrolled in schools. With respect to support mechanisms such as the school management committees, disparate

opinions emerge. While the school authorities mention that these committees are functioning effectively towards improving the educational situation, majority of the beneficiaries including parents and students indicate that these committees are largely dysfunctional.

The implementation status of the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme has been investigated to understand whether children are able to attain a better health status and acquire pre literacy skills as well as map the age of transition into formal school. While the *anganwaris* are providing meals to children in some cases, parents are largely found to be reluctant to send their children to these centers as in most cases, either they are largely dysfunctional or the workers' attitude is not very cordial. The transition percentage of children to formal school is not very encouraging. To promote the enrolment and retention of children in school, the Mid Day Meal scheme is implemented which works on the principle of providing one nutritious meal to every child every day such that children enjoy better health resulting in reduced absenteeism and greater enthusiasm to come to school. While mid-day meals are being provided in all schools under study, the quality and regularity aspects require attention. The School Health Program also works towards furthering the health status of children through regular health check-ups, referral services, nutritional supplements and health education. While provision of health services with respect to check-ups and supplements is prevalent across blocks, attitudinal change needs to be strengthened through regular and interactive health education sessions.

The findings make way for recommendations as to how these schemes can come together to further the overall objective of education for all. Keeping the SSA campaign as a nodal point, these schemes can establish backward and forward linkages. The paradigm of convergence proposed through this study harnesses the key features of various schemes and institutions to converge together to improve the educational scenario of Mewat district and the country at large. It proposes that adequate capacity building of teachers, provision of guest teachers and fixing a cadre for female teachers can ensure provision of good quality education. Incentives such as cash awards, scholarships, cycles, uniforms and textbooks, if provided regularly can ensure improved enrolment, retention and attendance of children. Strengthening of school management committees through various incentives can help improve infrastructure in schools through mobilization of grants. The committees can play an instrumental role in creating awareness regarding education and mobilizing the community to participate actively in the education process. Similarly, other institutions such as mahila mandals, self-help groups can participate in cooking of meals under the MDM and ICDS program which will not only ensure quality food being provided but will also improve the nutritive status of children. Greater accountability and improve convergence will facilitate the realization of goal of 'Education for All'.

Rationale for the Study

Improving the quality of education in schools with a special focus on capacity building of teachers, infrastructural improvement and greater ownership of community are some of the domains where the various educational schemes aim to bring about a change. For furthering holistic development of children with special focus on girls, there are schemes run by the center and state governments which aim to provide non-formal pre-school education, improve the nutritional intake in school going children, and provide regular health check-ups and health education. Believing that a healthy child is able to learn better, these schemes aim to promote education as well as improve the overall well-being of the student. Effective implementation of all these schemes will ensure that all the children between the age of 6 to 14 years are enrolled in schools and that the learning outcomes are at par with the cognitive abilities of children at each grade.

The commonalities in various central and state government schemes form the backdrop of the study which aims to assess the status of implementation of select government schemes as well as study the various avenues where these schemes converge to ensure an effective educational system. The proposed study is an assessment of the current status of the educational system and infrastructure under SSA in Mewat district. The study will facilitate surfacing of any gaps which are present or absent in terms of the stipulations proposed in the selected schemes and their related influence on enrolment of girls and the overall educational system with specific focus on convergence. The major areas of intervention spelled out in the program/scheme briefs will serve as the indicators against which the situation will be mapped.

The data generated through the study will help understand the existing differentials in the educational system with respect to enrolment of children, availability of infrastructure and resource power, capacities of teachers and extent of participation of the community in the education process. These differentials will be compared with the stipulations to understand the ground situation. Thereafter, it will also make recommendations on the gaps which need to be filled so as to ensure achievement of the objective of the campaign which will further have implications on the policy making process for regions similar to Mewat.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the implementation of SSA with special focus on girls education in the Mewat district of Haryana to identify the gaps of the program.
2. To assess the implementation of other relevant schemes of Central and State promoting girl's education.
3. To study the modalities of the convergence of SSA with the programs and schemes of the Central and the State Government.
4. To assess the gaps arising out of the assessment and suggest appropriate recommendations for reformations at policy level



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CONCLUSION

Education is an important dimension in the development process of an individual. Over decades, stress has been laid by the government and other institutions on providing educational facilities to all. Identifying that the deprived and the marginalized sections of the society do not have equitable access to education, the government has implemented various schemes to further its mandate of education for all. One of the pioneering efforts in this regard has been the launch of the 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' (SSA) which means education for all. This scheme attempts to provide exhaustive measures to improve the status of education in the country through not only infrastructural and resource improvements in the system but also creating awareness among the community and encouraging their participation in the education process. To supplement this campaign, other schemes such as the Mid-Day Meal program, Integrated Child Development Services Scheme, School Health Program and many more have been launched. Furthermore, the center has also entrusted the state governments with the responsibility of designing and implementing educational interventions relevant to their region's context. All these initiatives brought together are expected to improve the state of education in the country. However, the countrywide literacy figures continue to raise a concern on the effective implementation of these initiatives and their access to the designated beneficiaries. There arises a need to understand the gaps in implementation of these schemes so as to make reformations and provide fillers such that the desired implementation outcomes can be achieved.

This study is an attempt to understand the status of implementation of SSA and other selected state and central government schemes in Mewat district of Haryana. Capturing the various dimensions of the educational system, the study investigates the avenues where the schemes converge to improve educational status and also identifies the gaps in implementation so as to propose recommendations for policy level reformations. The methodology adopted for the study tries to build reciprocal linkages between the supply and demand sides of the education process. The supply side consists of the resource and physical infrastructure provided by the government for facilitating education. The demand side comprises of the children, parents and the community at large. To understand the status of facilities and corresponding access, structured questionnaires have been designed to gather quantitative information on various indicators. Focus group discussions and unstructured discussions with children and parents respectively supplement the quantitative findings. The educational situation of the entire district is studied. To gather a holistic perspective, discussions with select district level government officials have also been undertaken to verify the findings and also obtain a perspective on the fall outs existing at the administrative level. Mewat district is divided into five blocks. 10 villages from each block have been randomly picked making it a total of 50 villages from where data has been collected. Quantitative data through questionnaires has been collected from 1440 households and 50 schools. Focus group discussions have been conducted with girl students in 50 schools with an average of eight girls participating in each discussion (total 400 girls). One group discussion was conducted with the district officials. The data has been analyzed and collated to understand the status of education in the district.



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Physical Infrastructure:

Major findings from the study suggest that the status of education in the district is evidently progressing over the years. Most of the nationwide schemes related to education such as SSA, MDM, ICDS and SHP are being implemented in the district. Alongside, the Haryana government has also implemented specially designed schemes to improve the status of education. The parameters on which the situation has been assessed include infrastructural facilities, resource related facilities, incentives to students, and support mechanisms. The education for all campaign provides grants to improve and maintain school buildings and carry out civil works, if required. Despite such a provision, the school infrastructure in the district is not found to be adequate and maintained. Around half the school buildings require repairs. Essential facilities such as ramps, electricity, boundary walls are usually not in proper working condition or provided on a regular basis. For instance, even though, many schools have electricity connection, the electricity supply is mostly cut off during school hours resulting in children studying with only natural light flowing inside the rooms. This eventually results in lack of concentration among children and can potentially affect their eyesight. The number of rooms is largely adequate for classrooms. However, there are several schools which do not have rooms for other purposes like reading, playing etc. A major area of concern in the physical infrastructural set up is the provision of adequate number of toilets and water facility, both for drinking and sanitation purposes. The absence of toilets in general, is found to result in absenteeism and drop out among children, especially girls. In schools where there are toilet structures present, the condition and facility inside the toilets is so pathetic that children tend to go out and opt to relieve themselves in the open. This can potentially result in children contracting infection from open defecation and also has direct implications on the sanitation condition in and around the school. Absence of drinking water facility in majority of the schools is also found to be a reason for absenteeism as children tend to miss school or some classes with the excuse of going home to have water. Availability of play grounds for children is found in a few schools. Swings, slides etc. are found to exist in some schools. However, in many cases, these are only structures placed on the ground and are not in working condition resulting in children not making use of them. Thus, not many opportunities exist to further the gross and fine motor development among children. Overall, the physical set up of schools in Mewat requires a lot of modifications and improvements. The civil works and maintenance grants available under the SSA scheme can be effectively used to make these infrastructural enhancements.

Resource Infrastructure:

The resource infrastructure in schools comprises of teachers, and other school staff. According to stipulations under SSA, the pupil teacher ratio should not exceed 40:1. A higher proportion of children to teachers can affect the learning environment and can potentially harm the achievement levels among students. The scheme also proposes that in incidence of shortage of teachers, guest teachers can be appointed to meet the requirement immediately. Furthermore, to provide an enabling environment, both, male and female teachers should be present in

adequate numbers. The resource infrastructure in Mewat district is found to be dwindling as per the stipulated standards. The average pupil teacher ratio is 58:1 across all blocks. Furthermore, the number of female teachers in schools is very low resulting in an average of 573 girls per female teacher. The only favorable aspect is the ratio of male students per male teacher which averages out to be 32:1 for the district. The absence of female teachers is largely reported to be the reason behind drop out of girls as well as their non-enrolment. This gender disparity is also reflected in the enrolment trends with less number of girls being enrolled in the first place. The caste segregation however reflects that the tendency of gender bias in enrolment is largely evident among backward castes which in Mewat, largely comprise of Meo-Muslims.

Integrated Child Development Services:

Another governmental initiative has been the launching of the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) which is being implemented through setting up of *Anganwari* centers. These centers are running with the objective of improving the nutritional status of children in the age group of 0 to 6 years, reducing the incidence of morbidity, mortality and school dropout and laying the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child (MWCD, 2011). They serve as a bridge between the community and the school such that a child's transition into formal education can be hand held smoothly and at the right age. They also help in pre orienting the mothers towards importance of timely education. The trends emerging from the district provide a grim picture as not many people are found to be keen to send their children to these centers. This is either because of apathetic attitude of the center worker or because these centers are largely dysfunctional in nature. Thus, these centers are found to be playing no or minimal role in helping children transit to formal school at the right age.

The opportunities and facilities made available in school are driven with the perspective of providing a conducive educational environment to children. These include incentives to students, provision of meals, conduction of health camps, provision of aids and appliances to children with special needs and capacity building of teachers to improve the quality of education being imparted in schools. While certain incentives are provided under SSA, there are several others which the state government of Haryana provides to encourage enrolment and bring down the cost of education for families. All these facilities brought together aim at improving enrolment and retention rate of children in schools. To improve the quality of education, teacher trainings are organized to build their capacities on teaching methods and update them on new facets of teaching learning processes. These trainings are found to be conducted in majority of schools by block level education officials indicating the attempts at the administrative levels are being made to bring about improvements.

Incentives:

Regarding provision of incentives to children, majority of cases reported declare that several incentives are in place. However, in certain cases, the temporal aspect needs to be considered.

For instance, under SSA, girls and children under SC/ST category are supposed to receive free textbooks. Even though, these textbooks are provided, they tend to come during mid session due to which children have to borrow books either from their seniors or buy them. Thus, there is a need that such incentives are provided timely such that children can benefit maximally. Other cash incentives schemes for girls and children from deprived sections are found to be in place. However, these are not found to be given on a regular basis. Other incentive schemes such as providing warm clothes to girls, providing aids and appliances to disabled children launched by the Haryana government also face irregularities. Provision of aids, appliances and other services to children with special needs are also found to be dwindling. The district representatives indicate this fall out to be due to the delay in response of the third party to whom the provision of aids and appliances is outsourced. However, the trend is indicative of being one of the causes behind non enrolment of disabled children in school.

Mid-Day Meal:

To promote enrolment and retention of children in school, the mid-day meal scheme is also implemented which works on the principle of providing one nutritious meal to every child every day such that children enjoy better health resulting in reduced absenteeism and greater motivation for children to attend school. In very few places, the scheme has been able to achieve the desired outcome to an extent whereby children are enthusiastic about going to school and parents are encouraged to send them. However, in several other cases within the district, there is a dire need to look into the status of services being provided. Qualitative discussions and quantitative data together highlight the grim status of MDM services in schools of almost every block. Even though, mid-day meal is being provided in all the schools included in the study, there are several issues highlighted by all stakeholders indicating fall outs in the implementation of the scheme. The issues include the cleanliness and hygiene standards followed during the cooking process, regularity of meal provision, attitude of cook and helper and display of menu and food grains stock for reference. During days of non-availability of ration, children tend to go back home for having meals and never return back. This is especially reported in case of children of primary standards. There are also instances wherein children tend to miss schools on days when meals are not provided due to shortage of grains. When the matter was discussed with the district authorities, they mentioned their cognizance about shortage of ration and blamed it on the contractor which has recently been changed given the irregularities noticed in the past.

School Health Program:

To ensure better health of children, the school health program has also been implemented by the central government which involves regular health check-ups of children, referral services, provision of nutritional supplements, and health education sessions. The findings indicate that even though, health services such as provision of supplements and health check-ups are largely prevalent in all blocks excepting Nagina and Nuh, not much effort is being put into changing the health and hygiene practices through health education sessions. Lack of such sessions eliminates

the prospect of making these health interventions sustainable. Lack of qualified doctors in the district is highlighted to be one of the reasons due to which the program is not being implemented effectively.

School Management Committees:

The support mechanisms such as constitution of school management committees and participation of community in school activities ensure that the school authorities are accountable as service providers and are deemed to improve the educational system through greater beneficiary ownership. Differing perspectives emerge with respect to the functioning of the committees. While the school authorities mention that the committees are working effectively towards improving the educational system in the villages, majority of the villagers are unaware of such committees. According to most of the community respondents, the committees are not actively functioning and contributing towards any improvement in the educational scenario. One of the major activities is enrolment campaigns which the committees are supposed to conduct regularly. However, these campaigns are largely being found to be conducted under the *dastak- e- talim* program by the school authorities. The committees are largely found to be playing no role in these campaigns according to community members. The participation of community in general is also found to be very low in school activities. The trends are indicative of the fact that the community members wish to play a role as external agents in improving the scenario and not participate in activities conducted in schools.

The overarching trends surfaced through the study indicate that even though, several nationwide and state specific schemes pertaining to education are present in the district, they tend to be disconnected resulting in numerous pitfalls in the education system. These pitfalls decelerate the progress which is sought to be made in the educational scenario. For instance, if adequate physical and resource infrastructure is provided and maintained in the schools through the provisions under the education for all campaign, parents will be encouraged and will feel secure to send their children, especially girls to school. Proper facilities like lighting in the room, toilet blocks, water in toilets, and provision of drinking water will ensure that basic needs of children are met and they don't have to go back to their homes during school hours. If hygienically cooked meals are provided to children regularly under the MDM program, they will enjoy better health, will learn the principle of sitting together and eating and will not have to go back to have lunch. Adequate and regular health check-ups and health education sessions under the SHP program will ensure that not only the children fall less sick reducing absenteeism, they also practice cleanliness measures in school and at home. In longer term, this will also impact the households in general with less money being spent on child related illnesses. Furthermore, if children are provided with incentives timely, the cost of education reduces for the families and adequate facilities are provided to children reducing evident disparities which may be discouraging for some children. Improved community participation and awareness created through school management committees will help create greater accountability of service delivery institutions. As all these schemes tend to be inter-connected and work towards the

same objective of improving the state of education, it is necessary that they are implemented effectively and in conjunction with each other. The status in Mewat district indicates that lack of effective implementation of these schemes has led to creation of a vicious cycle which can only be broken if reciprocal linkages are established among them and greater accountability is created.

The next section discusses recommendations and action points which can be adopted at various levels to improve the overall educational scenario in the district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings are indicative of some recommendations which can be adopted to improve the overall educational scenario in the district. These have been categorized according to the domain and have been explicated as follows:

- a. **Strengthening Support Institutions like SMCs:** The study indicates that only 4% household respondents are aware about the school management committees. Even though, from the supply side, the school authorities indicate that largely, the committees are functional, it is not found to be the case when demand side perspectives are analyzed. People are not aware of SMC meetings and the activities conducted by the committees. The district administration also indicates that such committees are not conducting regular meetings and are not performing their key roles and responsibilities. Effective functioning of such committees can help improve enrolment and the school infrastructure. This is largely evident in Jhamuwas, a village in Tauru where the SMC members are proactive in liaising between the community, school and block authorities to ensure that the school has adequate facilities and students are coming regularly. In case of villages in Nuh such as Palla, the community is completely unaware of the existence of such a committee. Palla has high dropout rate after primary and parents are also reluctant to send their children to school. Thus, it becomes evident that the SMCs can play an important role in making education system effective in a village.

Action Points: To streamline the work done by SMCs and to make them more active, the block level officials can conduct regular capacity building and trainings such that their roles are constantly reiterated. Ignorance can thereafter be ruled out for not performing any role. Also, to ensure that the committees are working effectively in the village, community can come forward to depute a representative or two who can monitor the work and update the community on a regular basis. Accountability of the committees can also be ensured through improved coordination with self-help groups existing in the villages who can also assume an active role in the education domain.

institution or awards for the best SMC on the basis of their regular meetings, contribution to their instruction by way of improvement of infrastructure, maintenance, promotion of governmental concerns like greenery, security, any innovation etc., and creation of awareness for regular attendance for both pupils and teachers etc. will improve the quality of functioning of SMCs.

- b. Facilitating Community Participation:** If the community members assume ownership to improve the educational scenario in their respective villages, a lot can be done. For instance, in Madapur village of Jhirka block, the community and Panchayat has come together to improve the school infrastructure. The Panchayat and villagers have together taken up the task with teachers to leverage funds for construction of a boundary wall, provision of drinking water facility etc. Thus, there is a scope that the condition will improve as against Palla in Nuh where parents express their inability to do anything and are largely unaware of such provisions resulting in a grim educational scenario. This will supplement the efforts of the government. Organizing of 'awareness melas' will also contribute to the change of attitude.

Action Points: To improve community participation, the School Management Committees and other institutions such as self-help groups need to make the community aware of the importance of education. Exploration of the potential of religious organizations, religious & community leaders, opinion leaders, CSOs, corporates, influential people from the community (preferably women) etc. would improve the change of attitude/mindset of the community towards the promotion of education especially for girls. Greater community involvement will not only bring about an attitudinal change but will also ensure higher accountability of the school authorities.

- c. Improving Infrastructural Facilities in Schools:** The educational status, especially among girls requires attention. One of the avenues identified to achieve this is providing a more conducive environment with better infrastructural facilities in schools such as toilets. Enhancement of physical infrastructure emerges as a top priority. Among the infrastructural facilities that need to be provided in schools are sufficient rooms, toilets, separate toilet blocks for girls, drinking water facility, proper lightening facility appear to be the major ones. Regarding construction of rooms, two conditions emerge-on one hand, there are schools where construction of rooms has been left mid-way, especially in Punhana and on the other hand, there are schools where there is lack of space.

Action Points: To address the inadequacy of rooms, villages where new rooms cannot be constructed due to lack of space, the Panchayat can play a key role in allocating village space to the school authorities such that new construction can begin. In case the space cannot be provided, exploration of multi-storey classrooms wherever it is feasible will solve the problem to greater extent.

Explorations at the field level indicate that provision of a watchman in every school is essential to ensure that the already existing infrastructure is not damaged by the community inhabitants or external miscreants. For ensuring this, role of the Panchayat becomes essential as it can depute any reliable community member to assume this role on a part time basis. Funds for hiring such a person can be obtained from the Panchayat or from the SMC.

At the administrative level, it is recommended that teachers should not be entrusted with the construction process. The roles should be reserved wherein the JEs are responsible for construction. Alternatively, if the current procedures continue, the teachers should be technically trained for the purpose.

Regarding construction of toilets, funds can be mobilized through the total sanitation campaign. For maintenance of hygiene in the toilets, the Panchayat and SMC members can jointly hire a part time sweeper from the village itself. For facilitating construction of new toilets, the recommendation is to include the demand for toilets in the DISE form as it has been reported to be removed resulting in the inability of school authorities to indicate the need for new toilets.

Regarding the provision of drinking water in schools, the community can play an instrumental role. In the villages included in the study, there have been success stories wherein the Panchayat facilitated provision of a water source in the school such as in Buraka and Marora. Other schools can emulate such examples. Funds from the National Drinking Water Mission can also be leveraged to provide a drinking water source in the schools. Regions which have a pre dominance of saline ground water, innovations such as roof water harvesting structures can be built to harness rain water, process the same and use it for drinking purposes. One such successful example exists in Pathkhori government school where the water needs have been easily met ever since the RWH system was installed. ***Such best practices should be replicated. Convergence with the related department like TSC, NDWM, Panchayats, District authorities is essential for ensuring basic amenities.***

- d. **Appointing Female Teachers:** Apart from physical infrastructure, resource infrastructure enhancement is also a felt need from all ends. Dearth of female teachers is reported to be one of the major reasons prompting girl drop out across all blocks.

Action Points: To resolve the situation, one of the policy level transformations required is creation of a special cadre of female teachers for the district. This will help tap the local talent as well. Furthermore, incentivizing teachers who stay longer in the district can be another action point to ensure that female teaching positions remain filled at all the times. Quality of teaching is another parameter which requires improvement. This can be done through regular capacity building trainings of teachers and inclusion of creative

teaching methods. ***Special recruitment drives and special attention on training aspects of the female teachers is the immediate requirement of the district.***

- e. **Effective implementation of incentives/schemes:** The dropout rate, especially among girls is found to be remarkably high during progression from primary to middle school. Several reasons have been attributed to this trend such as lack of separate toilets for girls, lack of female teachers etc. Furthermore, illiteracy among parents is rampant. Resultantly, incentives for education become necessary as a precursor to motivate parents to send their children, especially girls to school. To cater to this felt need, several incentive schemes for children have been implemented by the government. However, the study reveals that these schemes are not being implemented effectively resulting in incentives not reaching adequately to the target beneficiaries at the appropriate time.

Action Points: The recommendations provide the steps which can be taken to ensure that the accountability of provision of these schemes increases thereby resulting in effective distribution. Regularity in provision of health services and meals in school will ensure that children don't miss school due to illness or any other factor.

Under the school health program, the provision of health services in schools needs to be strengthened. This can be done through integration with National Rural Health Mission wherein the camps meant for the communities can be integrated with ones conducted in schools. Also, close coordination between the village health committee and the school management committee can result in adequate and effective training sessions on health for children, teachers and the community at large.

Inclusion of the demand for aids and appliances can be made in the DISE form which will ensure that the demand is informed well in advance to the state level for timely supply. For timely distribution of disability aids and appliances by the agency, a penalty clause may be incorporated which can ensure that the party delivers goods on time.

- f. **Prioritizing Girls' Education:** The concern for effecting education of girls in the district emerges as a prime concern. While several initiatives by the central and state governments have resulted in improvement over the years, a lot needs to be done still. Keeping in view the current schemes under implementation, the status of education among girls can be improved through adopting a bottom up approach. With majority of the adult population being illiterate and Mewat being a Muslim dominated region, sensitization about education is essential. Widespread poverty further adds to the reasons for not sending girls to school where older ones are usually responsible for taking care of younger siblings and performing household chores while the mother is away for work in the field.



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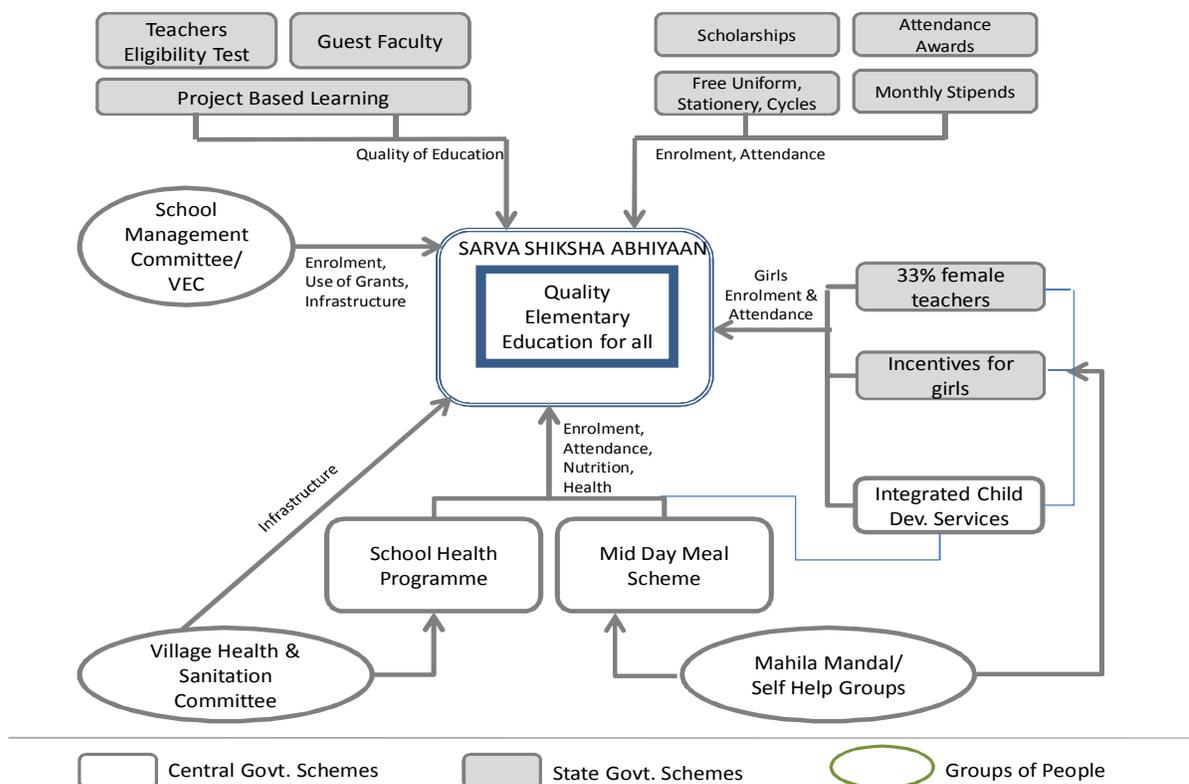
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Action Points: It is usually said that if the mother is educated, the entire family will be able to prosper. Educated women are empowered both, economically and psychologically. To facilitate holistic empowerment, schemes such as Mahila Samakhya can be implemented such that women can come forward and play an important role in improving education system in Mewat. For families where girls are kept away for sibling care, anganwari centers become instrumental in taking care of younger siblings while older ones can pursue formal education through NPEGEL/KGBV schemes which provides an alternative schools and non- formal education. . Furthermore, the school management committees and other self-help groups can come forward to improve awareness in the community regarding the importance of education which will not only increase motivation to educate their children but will also improve community ownership.

Paradigm of Convergence

At the administrative level, the felt need is on how schemes can effectively work together to improve the overall educational scenario in the district. The results indicate that the institutions under every scheme are working as separate independent entities which lead to disconnect with formal schooling. Thus, there is a need that the formal school can be the nodal point which ensures that the institutions such as mid-day meal centre, and anganwari centre work effectively to bridge the gaps. A greater accountability of the anganwaris will ensure that children transit to formal school at the right age and have been pre oriented on pre literacy skills. Similarly, if behavior of the cooks, cleanliness standards is looked into by the school authorities, it will ensure that the children get timely and hygienic meals thereby improving their health status and motivation to come to school. If the school authorities train SMC members and encourage them to attract community participation, the attitudinal change in the community can be brought in along with greater participation. With the formal school being the nodal entity, all the schemes can possibly converge to ensure that all children are in school and quality of education is improved through better infrastructure and greater community participation. Figure 10.1 presents the paradigm of convergence which if realized can facilitate the integration of various schemes to improve the educational scenario in Mewat.

Figure 10.1: Paradigm of Convergence



As evident, all the government schemes can establish forward and backward linkages with SSA which is the main focus for improving the educational scenario in the country. The commonalities are highlighted in figure 10.1 through arrows. All the schemes have key features which can feed into SSA to realize the objective of **education for all**. The paradigm not only harnesses the central and state government schemes but also integrates the village level institutions and community inhabitants to play an active role in the development process.

Thus, the study has revealed the need for forging of convergence process of SSA in the following areas and with the agencies for the promotion of girls' education in Mewat.

- 1) **Sanitation facilities**- with Total Sanitation Campaign, MDA, Panchayats.
- 2) **Drinking Water**- with National Drinking Water Mission, MDA, Panchayats, Community
- 3) **School Health Program**- with District Health Department/ NRHM
- 4) **Nutrition support**- with Mid-day meal and ICDS
- 5) **Infrastructure support**- with Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, District and State level authorities.
- 6) **Schemes /Incentives**- Panchayats, District and State level.
- 7) **Mainstreaming of pre-school children**- with ICDS, parents, school.
- 8) **Community Participation**- with CSOs, Corporates, District Administration, Panchayats, becomes part of enrolment drives/campaigns and in awareness activities.
- 9) **Trainings**- with Training institutes of District, State and National level
- 10) **All related issues**-with Village Level Institutions like VHSC, VEC/SMC, PTA, MTA, Gram Sabha, SHGs etc.
