

An Evaluative Study on Assessment of Learning Level of Children through Gunotsav-*An Initiative of Celebration of Quality by State of Assam*

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Abstract—On 1st April 2010, the Government of India enacted the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 for ensuring free and compulsory education of each child up to the age of 14 years. It was a momentous step of the country for Universalizing Elementary Education and to enforcement of Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution. The Act mandates that every child in India aged 6 to 14 years has the constitutional right to receive quality, inclusive and child friendly education. Drawing from the mandate of the Act, increased focus is being laid on quality education at elementary level which is the foundation of learning among children. Considering this, state of Assam has implemented a programme viz Gunotsav- '**Celebrating Quality**'. This is a census based assessment survey for identifying learning gaps of children and making strategic planning for improving learning outcomes as well as co-scholastic activities, Availability and Utilization of School Infrastructure and other facilities and community participation. Academic assessment covers two parts-Skills (Reading, Writing and Numeracy) and Subject Areas (Languages, Maths, Science and Social Science) assessment and assessment is OMR based. Assessment is done by officers (Ministers, IAS, IPS, IFS officers, Class-I & II officers) covering 3 day visit;1 school 1 day. Views and comments of External Evaluators have been taken care of policy framing of the educational area.

Keyword: Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, Quality, Inclusive and Child Friendly Education, Gunotsav, Learning Outcomes, Learning Gaps of Children.

Introduction:

Grade wise Learning Outcomes have already been defined by NCERT, New Delhi. It is to be ensured that every child achieves learning outcome as per his/her grade/class. There is an urgent need to focus on assessing the learning outcomes which would help in identifying the learning gaps objectively and for providing necessary remedial measures.

In view of the importance of achieving grade specific learning outcome by each child, Government of Assam has implemented 'Gunotsav-a quality initiative' in the academic year, 2017 & 2018. The Goal of the Gunotsav programme was to ensure quality elementary education with improved learning outcome.

The whole exercise was conducted with a robust mechanism with use of technology including OMR and involving Grade I & II officers including Hon'ble CM, Hon'ble Ministers and MLAs, senior officers like IAS, IPS, IFS etc. as External Evaluators; 100% schools were evaluated by the External Evaluators. Comprehensive assessment was conducted covering 4 broad areas viz. Scholastic, Co-scholastic, Community Participation and Availability & Use of available Resources. Schools have been graded on the basis of performance as A+, A, B, C and D.

Policy Perspective of Assessment of Learning Level:

The National Policy on Education, 1986 has also stated that Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation should incorporate both scholastic and non-scholastic aspects of evaluation spread over the total span of instructional time. The present evaluation system is being done in the line of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE). CCE is a system of keeping continuous track of the growth and development of a child in respect of curricular and co curricular areas. **The National Curriculum Framework, 2005 (NCF-2005)** proposed examination reforms to reduce stress on children and make evaluation comprehensive and regular. As per the mandate of the **Right to Education Act, 2009**, more focus has been laid on quality education at elementary level which is the foundation of learning among children.

The Goal –IV of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), 2030 has also emphasized on ensuring equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes by 2030.

Considering all facts, state has implemented Gunotsav, a mass scale census based assessment survey for identifying learning gaps and improves learning outcomes thereby. In the present study, the investigator tried to evaluate the academic performance of the children identified through Gunotsav (1st round) and highlighting improvement made in Gunotsav (2nd round) along state post Gunotsav initiative for quality improvement.

Coverage of Gunotsav (1st Round):

1st round Gunotsav was conducted in 3 phases. In 1st phase 08 districts, in 2nd phase 12 districts and in 3rd phase 13 districts were covered under it.

Rationale:

Quality of education in the state of Assam is a matter of serious concern. Over the years, various initiatives have been taken for improved Learning Outcomes. State has taken various initiatives for improving quality of elementary education over the years. The state's standing in the Education Development Index(EDI) in the country was 33 as per flash data, 2014-15. Drop Out rate was 15.4% at Lower Primary & 10.5% at Upper Primary level as per U-DISE data 2015-16. The % of Out of School Children was 1.91%. Performance of children as per State Level Achievement Survey , 2015-16 conducted by SCERT in 14 districts was (Mean score):

Class	Language-1	Maths	Environmental Studies(EVS)	Science	Social Science
III	55%	57%	52%		
V	61%	53%	51%		
VIII	58%	38%		45%	44%

Source: Guidelines of Gunotsav-Assam

All these indicators revealed the need of taking special care for improving quality of education and enhancing learning level of students. In order to achieve the same the state Government has planned to implement 'Gunotsav-celebrating quality' in the academic year, 2017.

In the present study, investigator tried to know the learning level of students in various skills and subject areas through analyzing the data of Gunotsav(1st round).

Statement of the Problem:

Gunotsav is an initiative for assessing learning gaps and ensuring learning improvement through providing remedial support. The state of Assam has 33 districts. Gunotsav programme was conducted in all Govt./Provincial elementary schools and Tea garden management schools of the 33 districts of the state to know the learning achievement of the children. Thus the research problem is entitled as- **An Evaluative Study on Assessment of Learning level of Children through Gunotsav-an initiative of celebration of quality by state of Assam.**

Operational Definition:

The term learning level of children in the present study refers to academic achievement level of students of class-II to VIII of Government/ Provincialised and Tea Garden Management schools Elementary schools of the state.

Government schools mean the schools that are established directly by State Government. Provincialised school means schools that were originally established by community and later on provincialised by Government as per norm and rule of the Government. Tea Garden Management schools are under the control of Tea Garden Management which are established as per norm and rule of Plantation Labour Act. Infrastructure, teachers and their salary etc. are provided by Tea Garden Management itself.

The word Gunotsav refers to an initiative of the state Government to know the academic level of students of the state and improve learning outcomes through remedial teaching as per gaps of children come out through Gunotsav.

Objectives of the Gunotsav:

- To assess each child to identify learning gaps.
- To ensure learning enhancement and achievement of learning outcomes by all children at elementary level.
- To assess the performance of schools on areas viz. curricular, co-curricular, availability and utilization of infrastructure, community participation etc.
- To indicate learning gaps and to design effective strategies to meet up these gaps.

- To ensure greater participation of all stakeholder starting from teachers, students, administrators, communities and enhance accountability among them for quality education.
- To support the school and education system to improve the quality of education and ensure better functioning of schools.

Delimitations of the study:

State had conducted two round of Gunotsav. 1st Round Gunotsav was conducted in all Government/provincialised and Tea garden Management schools in 3 phases to know the learning level of students of class-II to VIII. 2nd round of Gunotsav conducted in all Govt./Provincialised and Tea Garden Management Schools from Class-II to IX. The present study is limited to 1st round of Gunotsav. The investigator tried to know the learning level of students in various skills and subjects as per existing data of 1st round Gunotsav.

The investigator used the existing data of Gunotsav for analysis of skill and subject wise performance of children and their learning gaps in skill and subject areas. Hence, present study is confined to the existing data of 3 phases Gunotsav of all 33 districts.

Methodology of the Gunotsav:

To know the academic performance of children, in Gunotsav state had followed two types of assessment process:

- 1) **Self Assessment:** Viva voce test by all schools on the 1st day of Gunotsav for all children from class-II to VIII for assessing the reading skills was conducted. This was done in the presence of SMC. Moreover, assessment of other areas i.e availability of infrastructure, Co Scholastic areas and Community participation was done by school in presence of SMC and Community members. Records of assessment have been kept in prescribed format for verification of external evaluator on the day of External Evaluation.
- 2) **External Assessment:** External assessment is done by External evaluators. Schools were distributed for external assessment over the three dates. Based on the - viva voce conducted by schools, students were selected randomly by external evaluator for assessment. If marks given by teacher in the performance of reading assessment conducted by teachers are found satisfactory by external evaluator during random evaluation conducted by the external evaluator, then marks are entered in the OMR sheet from prescribed format by teachers in front of External Evaluator. Otherwise, teacher has to re-evaluate in presence of external evaluator.

Assessment of other subject/skills (writing & numeracy) is done in the presence and under the supervision of external evaluators. Assessment/verification of other areas have also conducted by External evaluator in consultation with teachers, SMC, Community etc..

Gunotsav is a census based mass scale assessment survey. Gunotsav is a state Govt. programme. Investigators used Gunotsav data and evaluation made on the basis of the result of 1st round Gunotsav. It is an evaluative study of 1st round Gunotsav. All Govt/ Provincialised and Tea Garden Management schools were covered under the process. All major subjects were covered under this assessment. Hence, the investigators tried to use existing data of Gunotsav for the present study.

Population and Sample of Present study:

The population of present study refers to the students of class-II to VIII of Govt./ Provincialised and Tea Garden Management Schools of the state. All students of class-II to VIII of Gunotsav have been covered under the present study. Academic performance has been analysed on the basis of the skills and subjects areas covered under Gunotsav exercise.

In the present study, the investigators have taken all students (Class-II-VIII) and all phases of Gunotsav conducted in 33 districts of 1st round Gunotsav for analysis of skill and subject wise performance of the children. For this analysis Secondary Data has been received from Axom Sarba Siksha Abhiyan which is absolutely authentic and a systematic.

Tools:

Gunotsav is Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) based. Individual OMR sheet has been used for assessment of performance of the children. In case of Upper Primary level Individual OMR sheet was provided to each child and students have to darken the correct answer in the OMR sheet. For skill assessment one OMR having name of 30 students against each class was used. For Lower Primary Level, only skill assessment was conducted. Class wise OMR sheet was used. OMR sheet was filled by teachers as per response given by students. In case of Upper Primary level, individual OMR sheet was provided to each child and they have to darkening the circle as per correct response.

For lower primary level a test booklet covering 3 major skills viz reading, writing and numeracy was prepared and teachers has to assess in front of external evaluator. Marks were recorded accordingly in OMR sheet.

For Upper primary level, question paper having 100 items covering all major subjects was designed and provided to each child. Responses of Multiple Choice Question based items have to be filled by each child in OMR sheet.

In the present study the result generated through screening of OMR against each child was used by investigator as base data for the study to know the performance of the children.

Findings & Analysis:

Table 1: Status of coverage:

Target Children	No of Schools Evaluated	Children	No of EE Engaged	% of Children
		Appeared		Appeared
3387959	48966	3011885	16967	89%

Source: State Mission Office, Sarba Siksha Abhiyan, Assam

Above table shows the coverage in Gunotsav. It was observed that out of 3387959 children, 3011885 children were appeared in the exercise. However, 11% children were found absence in the evaluation. These children may be either dropout children or duplicity of enrolment.

Result:

Table 2

GRADE	Phase-I		Phase-II		Phase-III		All 3 Phases	
	Number of Schools	% of Schools	Number of Schools	% of Schools	Number of Schools	% of Schools	Total School (All III Phases)	Overall %
A+	777	6%	1,672	9%	3,575	20%	6,024	12%
A	2,323	19%	5,480	29%	7,063	40%	14,866	30%
B	3,106	25%	6,047	32%	4,903	27%	14,056	29%
C	3,302	27%	3,638	19%	1,808	10%	8,748	18%
D	2,778	23%	1,974	10%	520	3%	5,272	11%
All Grades	12,286	-	18,811	-	17,869	-	48,966	-
School Covered	25.1%	-	38.4%	-	36.5%	-	-	100%

Source: State Mission Office, Sarba Siksha Abhiyan, Assam

The above figures shows that % of achievement is increased gradually in 2nd and 3rd phases Gunotsav and decreased the number of C & D grade schools in said two phases than the 1st phases districts. It states that learning level of schools has been improving.

Table 3

Grade	Number of Students					Total	% of Students				
	A+ (87% and above)	A (74%-86%)	B (61%-73%)	C (48%-60%)	D (Below 48%)		A+ (87% and above)	A (74%-86%)	B (61%-73%)	C (48%-60%)	D (Below 48%)
LP (class-II to V)	426597	431680	315174	313122	430924	1917497	22.25%	22.51%	16.44%	16.33%	22.47%
UP (class-V to VIII)	317575	275653	170259	154839	175560	1093886	29.03%	25.20%	15.56%	14.15%	16.05%

Source: State Mission Office, Sarba Siksha Abhiyan, Assam

The above table shows that % of achievement in skills is increased both A+ & A grade schools of both stages.

Table 4

Overall Class Wise Performance in Subjects areas of Upper Primary (All III Phases) stage

CLASS	Number of Students					Total	% of Students				
	A+ (87% and above)	A(74%-86%)	B(61%-73%)	C(48%-60%)	D(Below 48%)		A+ (87% and above)	A(74%-86%)	B(61%-73%)	C(48%-60%)	D(Below 48%)
VI	9098	65106	78544	71656	152751	377155	2.41%	17.26%	20.83%	19.00%	40.50%
VII	13437	68233	83462	73826	122430	361388	3.72%	18.88%	23.09%	20.43%	33.88%
VIII	12265	77683	86021	69194	96251	341414	3.59%	22.75%	25.20%	20.27%	28.19%
UP TOTAL	34800	211022	248027	214677	371432	1079958	3.22%	19.54%	22.97%	19.88%	34.39%

Source: State Mission Office, Sarba Siksha Abhiyan, Assam

The table reveals that in all classes A+ and A grade performance in subjects areas of Upper Primary is poor. D grade classes are found to be more as per the data shown.

Table 5: OVER ALL SUBJECTS WISE GRADING FOR UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOLS (CLASS VIII) (All III Phases)

SUBJECT	Number of Students					TOTAL STUDENT	% of Students				
	A+	A	B	C	D		A+	A	B	C	D
L1,L2,Maths, Science & S.Science	28812	70065	49511	66375	162392	377155	7.64%	18.58%	13.13%	17.60%	43.06%
L1,L2,L3 Maths,Science&S.Science	40758	67164	51712	71016	130737	361388	11.28%	18.59%	14.31%	19.65%	36.18%
L1,L2,L3 Maths,Science&S.Science	15939	63660	57545	79658	124612	341414	4.67%	18.65%	16.85%	23.33%	36.50%

Source: State Mission Office, Sarba Siksha Abhiyan, Assam

The above table shows that overall performance in all subjects' areas in all classes of Upper Primary level is found to be poor. Maximum children obtained below 48% in all subjects and in all classes which fall in D grade as per the data.

Conclusion:

Gunotsav''- *an initiative of celebrating quality*' was initiated by the State Govt. in the year, 2017 for comprehensive evaluation of children & school. It has been witnessed that the exercise has positively affected elementary education of the state and result was shown in 2nd Round Gunotsav and National Assessment Survey (NAS) of NCERT, New Delhi. The following table and graphs shows its impact in the state.

Gunotsav result of 2017 and 2018:

% of Schools		
Grade	Gunotsav, 2017	Gunotsav, 2018
A+	12.35	23.01
A	26.45	46.98
B	27.90	23.56
C	18.75	4.95
D	14.54	1.49

Source: State Mission Office, Sarba Siksha Abhiyan, Assam

It is seen from the comparative picture that there is marked improvement in the performance. The % of schools in A+, A and B Grades has increased whereas % of schools in C and D Grades has decreased from 1st round in 2017 to 2nd round in Gunotsav 2018.

State's performance National Assessment Survey (NAS) 2017 result:

National Achievement Survey was conducted in 2017 by NCERT, New Delhi under the supervision of MHRD in all States and UTs. SCERT, Assam was the implementing agency of the survey in the state. It was a sample based survey and it has been observed that the average performance of the state is higher than the national average except class 8 language.

Apart from these it has been witnessed that Gunotsav has positive impact in elementary education of the state in various ways- increase of attendance of both teachers and students, development of innovative teaching-learning materials, strengthening of community participation, increase convergence with different departments, improve database of children, teachers, create positive feeling amongst community and parents towards Govt. school system and shifting of children from private schools to Govt. schools etc.

State has taken various initiatives after Gunotsav for improving quality of the school. This includes: enhancement of learning of children through remedial teaching programme, gaps-performance of children, PTR, infrastructure etc have been identified; open Educational Resources (OERs) has also been developed for quality improvement, recruitment of teachers etc.

Reference:

- [1] Guidelines of Gunotsav, Assam
- [2] Data and Report of Analysis of Gunotsav, Assam
- [3] Right to Education Act, 2009
