

## **Democratizing Higher Education For Nation Building: Access Elementary Education For All**

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### **Introduction:-**

In 21<sup>st</sup> century exploring education is interesting in International forum. Education has been recognized as an essentiality for human being. Implicit in this recognition is an increasing concern for a just and humane society, generating awareness of the importance, regarding education for all.

India is the largest democracy. There are several factors which are affecting democracy; education is one amongst the many. Nation building in the society at large is based upon education, from elementary to higher.

Democracy is considered the finest form of Government in which every individual participate consciously, remaining the sovereign power determining their destiny. Thereby, in democracy people are the ultimate source of power. Its success or failure depends on the wisdom, consciousness and vigilant nature of its people.

Learning is the most effective phenomenon of educational process where moral education plays a vital role to strengthen pupil and establish them from learners to educated and most important to be a good citizen. Therefore, innovations impel to modify pupil from grass root level to higher educational progress through transition of effective moral education from elementary stage.

Sishu Shikha Karmasuchi in West Bengal influence access to elementary education for all in rural areas, for the children who are not imparted with proper education in their childhood.

Propagating moral education since childhood is an encouraging step in a democratic secular society to build up the Nation.

Emile Durkheim, the classical French Sociologist in his book *Education and Sociology* (1922), *Moral Education* (1925) and the *Evolution of Educational Thought* (1938) considered education as an eminent social approach in its origin. S.C.Shukla & Krishna Kumar pointed out higher educational perspective in their *Sociological Perspective in Education* (1985). Dr.Suparna Sanyal Mukherjee mentioned education culminates “climate for growth” in her published article *Effect of Socio-Economic Parameters on The Secondary Stage of Education*, in *GIIRJ*, Vol.4(8),Aug 2016, pp. 46-54.

The present sequel emphasized on the Sishu Shikha Karmasuchi in all the districts of West Bengal as an example to assert elementary education for all since 2006- 07 to 2015-16, on the parameters of SSK over academic years. The quantum of SSKs and learners thereof along with Sahayikas in support, at grass root level in Panchayati Raj system, where introduction of moral education have encouraged its value, towards Nation building in the Democratic Secular State, India.

### **Moral Education:-**

The formal curriculum consists of the units of credits that are offered, the courses that are made available to students, the syllabi for those courses, the bibliographies and materials used, and the evaluative devices that are selected. The informal aspect of the curriculum includes the unplanned things that happen in classes, in the hallways, on the play-grounds, in cafeteria, and on the way to and from school, as per Wiles Kimball.

The word “Philosopher” derived from the Greek word means “A lover of wisdom”. Moral philosophy represents a branch of philosophy which may, without undue contortion, be regarded as distinctive. It is concerned with questions about the right and wrong behavior, good or bad conduct or actions.

The moral philosophy of education is therefore of relevance to anyone who ever asks himself a question – “What ought I to do?” Or “would this be right?”; it too is of relevance, to anyone who ever makes moral judgments about others, who ever praises or condemns other people’s actions. In other words, it is of relevance to virtually everybody.

### **Indian Democracy & Education -**

India became independent in 1947 after decades of colonial rule. In the following years India had her Constitution that declared India as a Democratic Federal Socialist Republic. The people of India mostly were rural with scanty scope of education, sustenance of livelihood claimed the major portion of time, as such in the yesteryears education was not placed among the top rung. Thereby, accesses of elementary education for all too, democratizing higher education for Nation building and moral education is a gateway system to reach the goal.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century education is facing challenges globally. Competitiveness In the context of developmental needfulness, elementary to higher education, demanding concerns about access, equity, privatization and internationalization. Calls for redesigning its social functions in terms of building moral and elementary educational linkage, creating and disseminating core values along with skills, necessary for coping with the demands of the current era and preparing graduates for a multi-cultural and multi-linguistic workplace settings from the grass root levels.

### **Panchayati Raj System & Rural Development -**

Panchayats or village assemblies existed in ancient India as self-governing institutions which had distinct and well-defined functions. The institution of Panchayat represented not only the collective will, but also the collective wisdom of the entire rural community.

Rural development is a complex, continuous and long drawn process to usher in a new social order and dimension for socio-economic transformation of the rural community. Unless, otherwise attention is given to synchronize the development of all aspects of rural life, the desired goal of rural advancement cannot be attained or achieved. Therefore, leadership is a very important factor in rural development. In West Bengal, the Panchayats were envisaged as dynamic rural institutions to look after all compartments of rural life. Thus elementary education

is needed as the most important ingredient, through which democratic decentralization can be achieved.

### **Sishu Shiksha Karmasuchi (Panchayati Raj & Rural Development)**

The rural children who could not attend to their school at proper age and time for various reasons. Poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness of the parents, need based child labor, large family size and school dropouts, hindered the rural children to avail of the opportunity of going to the primary school, to rectify the situation in order to achieve the elementary education for all. The ultimate goal is of imparting basic elementary education universally for Nation building, the State has taken a bold step by way of Sishu Siksha Karmasuchi (SSK). The Total Literacy Campaign in early nineties was successful but still demand of education could not be fully and effectively coincided with formal primary education system. It is impossible to open primary schools in every nook and corner to explore elementary education to almost all the children who are not having access to education.

Therefore, the Government of West Bengal decided to introduce an alternative elementary education system in West Bengal, which could reach any corner of the state, cater to the special needs of the children, cost effectively, but qualitatively comparable with the formal education system. In 1997-98 the Education department, Government of West Bengal, took up such a programme and planned to set up about 1000 Child Education Centres, with the help of Panchayati Raj bodies. Subsequently the programme was transferred to the Department of Panchayats and Rural Development, Government of West Bengal.

The Panchayat and Rural Development Department took up the programme as Shisu Shiksha Karmasuchi, and decided to set up the Shishu Shiksha Kendras (SSK), wherever there were at least twenty children, not having access to any existing primary school or require some special dispensation, which are not available in the formal primary schools.

Other essential features of the Karmasuchi are:

1. Shisu Shiksha Kendras are opened at the initiative of the community and are owned and managed by them.

2. Funds are provided by the State Government and Panchayats act as facilitators only.
3. It is a demand driven programme; Kendras can be opened in school-less villages / village with schools which have inadequate infrastructure [in terms of space and / or teachers etc.]
4. Curriculum and syllabus as prescribed by the West Bengal Board of Primary Education Textbooks as prescribed for the formal primary schools. Classroom transaction on the principles of Joyful Learning.
5. Encouraging Moral Education for better understanding and democratizing elementary education for all, fostering societal benefit.

### **The Key features of the Sishu Shiksha Karmasuchi-**

The Sishu Shiksha Karmasuchi depends upon few extraordinary key features which are-

- To establish community initiative for establishing Sishu Shiksha Kendra, initiate Sishu Shiksha Karmasuchi in the rural areas of West Bengal.
- Under the Shishu Shiksha Karmasuchi, to organize various activities of the Shishu Shiksha Kendra (SSK), the Primary Educational Institutions (from Pre-Primary to Std-IV) for the learners of age group 5+ to 9+ years.
- All the SSKs are affiliated School Education Department under the administrative control of Panchayat and Rural Development Department.
- The functional areas may be within the radius of 1km of existing rural school, all SSKs are monitored by the three tiers Panchayati Raj system.
- A Panchayat Samiti to have maximum 20 SSKs. One Academic Supervisor, who would not only monitor the SSKs but also provide hand holding support to Sahayak/Sahayikas. \*\*\*
- Local people specially women (99%) selected by the School Managing Committee and approved by the concerned Panchyat Samiti providing service for learners of SSKs, they are termed as Sahayak/Sahayikas.

- The learners of SSKs receive all the facilities as provided in the Formal Primary Schools, run by the School Education Department & guideline of the RTE Act 2009.

### **Paschim Banga Rajya Sishu Shiksha Mission –**

Paschim Banga Rajya Sishu Shiksha Mission (PBRSSM) introduces few activities for implementation of Sishu Shilsha Karmasuchi under the heading of Academic activity, General activity and Special activity, ensures quality education to all learners.

- Academic activity- PBRSSM undertakes various academic activities to deliver qualities education to all the students of SSKs, through capacity building of the Sahayak/Sahayikas. Develop teaching capability among the teachers. The different subjects they should teach in cascade mode.
- The Mission look into the matter of capacity building among the Academic Supervisor for a better monitoring at grass root levels.
- Capacity building through newsletters Sahayikas provides continuous academic supports and latest news on various policy decisions relating to SSKs.
- Capacity building through the All India Radio program, “Sahayikar Asar”.
- The “**Sahayikar Asar**”, the AIR Programme was first aired on the 3rd April 2003 through Akashbani, Kolkata – ‘**Kwa**’ & **Siliguri Kendra**. Since then the program is being transmitted by the AIR on every Thursday from 8.00 pm to 8.30 pm.
- The “**Sahayikar Asar**” has been found to be a very effective method of regular capacity building, The “**Sahayikar**” changing needs of the Sahayks / Sahayiks on academic issues & for communication of various important information. Other than the aforesaid, cultural performances of the learners of SSKs of various districts are also been transmitted regularly. Resource persons like academicians, doctors, child psychologists, administrators, educational planners etc. have enriched this program from time to time by giving their voice in this program.
- General activities for implementing Sishu Shiksha Karmasuchi the mission forming rules and guidelines for policy making to organize program in proper way as per approval of Panchayat and Rural Development Department.
- Management of staffs at different levels.
- Supply of Nationalized Text Books.

- Handling of financial management, payment of staff honorarium infructural development also looks after intricately.
- Special activities like cultural program, vocational training program encourages Karmasuchi at optimam level.

In India, it is important to peer into the kind of policy framework which is appropriate for analysis of access, equity and quality in higher education. Development in higher education is largely dependent on the output of secondary education as the secondary school sub-sector contributes substantially to access and equity concerns. Access and equity in secondary education largely determines the level of differentiation in higher education. Increased investment in secondary stage of education is a necessary condition to expand equitable quality of higher education, with the implementation of Right of children To free and compulsory Education ( R T E ) Act, 2009, emphasized on the need for equitable expansion of quality secondary education.

Therefore, education impel to modify pupil from the grass root to higher educational level, making education available and accessible to all for building up democratic values, fostering University-Society linkage, strengthen higher education to nurture and prepare powerful citizens in global competitiveness.