Chapter 9

LIFE SUSTAINABILITY OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Education has always been considered as the key to human development. It is considered as fundamental to all round development of the individual both material and spiritual. It is intrinsically intertwined with the development process. The role of education in economic development has been noted by the researchers (Sodhi 1985; Singh 1974). At the micro level the direct and indirect role of education through value-orientation in economic development has already been established (Bhagat 1989). Education is also vital to sustain competitive markets and viable democracy. Studies have established that increase of average primary schooling by one year can increase output substantially. Even social benefits out of elementary education are immense. So far as the life-sustainability of education is concerned, education is the only tool by which one can understand about the different problems that arise in our day to day life. It also enhances our innate ability to perform various activities with confidence. Education helps to realize the roots of the generation of problems and which also helps how to resolve the problems and to find the way of smooth running of life. In a word, it opens the intelligent quotient of an individual and it helps to develop the wisdom. Therefore, education not only provides an academic certificate but also enhances the capability of an individual to run his life properly or in a good shape. The elementary education gives the foundation of intelligence among the kids and the inquisitiveness for forthcoming learning‘s which ultimately lead them to stand before the society on his own feet. Our national Govt. has understood the fact and thus they took such project so that one child can have to achieve this knowledge. Earlier in our education system, theoretical aspects were highly emphasized, but

modern educationists viewed that such theoretical knowledge only enhances the bookish knowledge and thus in practical social field most of them failed to relate such knowledge to resolve various problems. They, thus, emphasize that education should be a value-oriented and hence they prefer along with the theoretical knowledge a student must achieve the practical application of their knowledge. Though in the study the respondents were asked about utility and sustainability of elementary education in everyday life, yet response was elicited by a few only and that too was not very clear. It means that they are not certain about its practical utility in daily life. Generally they consider it an instrument for getting a job in government or other organizations. A few utilities which emerged from the responses and other researches or experiences are as follows:

Universalization of Elementary Education

After the intervention of SSA in Assam it is observed that there occurred gigantic changes in the academic atmosphere of the state. The rate of percentage of passing after 2007 has outrightly increased. A case study from Cachar district of Udharbond educational block confirms the enhancement of rate of passing in H.S.L.C. examination (Purkayastha 2012) Thus, it reveals the significance of elementary education and the efforts to universalise elementary education. The same is also reflected from the consideration of the Government in its various educational policies and planning as the main objective. Various attempts have been made during the post-Independence period towards its early realisation. Even the member states of the United Nations unanimously adopted universal primary education as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted in September 2000 (UNO 2010: Millennium Development Goals Report). For this goal to be achieved, every child in the age group

6 to 14 must not only go to school, but also stay in school throughout the primary stage of schooling. In each country, the national government has not only initiated a process by which the goals can be realized, but in many cases it has also designed mechanisms to monitor the progress towards these goals.

The Constitution of India adopted in 1950 directed the state to endeavor to provide free and compulsory education to children up to the age of 14 years within 10 years of the adoption of the Constitution. It is known to all that till today the goal remained unfulfilled. Considering the importance of the need of education for survival in 2005 the Government of India declared education as a fundamental right. One of the many initiatives to universalize elementary education SSA is perhaps the most discussed and significant strategy adopted by the Government of Indian Union. It is a framework of programs that clubs all the existing schemes and projects announced by Government. The declared goals of SSA in brief are:

i. all children 6-14 to be enrolled in school by 2003
ii. all children complete 5 years of education by 2007
iii. all children complete 8 years of education by 2010
iv. focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life and
v. bridge all gaps in gender and social category groups in the primary stage by 2007 and elementary stage by 2010.

Vocational Education for Livelihood

The objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are in line with those outlined in Universal Elementary Education (UEE) documents. Education is not directly helpful than vocational education for livelihood of the person. In this reason SSA gives the

vocational education to the learner. It is also true that in India different education commissions (like Kothari, Hunter) recommended for vocational education should be kept with our formal education system. Practically the vocational education is kept by curriculum makers in pen and paper only. The vocational education is given in specific centre. SSA also tries to introduce this type of education with formal education for sustainability and utility in their livelihood. To achieve one of the goals of SSA for universalisation of Elementary Education that is ―Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life. To start this programme at large level SSA, Assam has initiated to proceed the noble task on a pilot basis. It specially given to the learners (6-14) of Hard to Reach (HTR) centre located in Silchar urban area where the deprived children covering of working children, street children , rag – pickers, sibling care and domestic servant are taught and getting their formal education who are mainly drop- out and never enrolled.

In these hard to reach centers along with the formal education the vocational training is also given to them. The vocational trainings on garland making, jute work, macron works, pot painting, tailoring, embroidering, soft doll making and door mat making were given.

Table 9.1
Indicators of Vocational Training

Sl. No.	Item	Achievement	
		2009	2010
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Garland making Jute work Macron works Pot painting Tailoring Embroidering Soft doll making Door mat making	Out of 1064 learners, 775 learners were trained up. From these trained persons earning income 245 learners.	Out of 863 learners, 800 learners were trained up. From these trained persons earning income 320 learners.

Source: Ram, G. and Choudhury, B. 2012. Universalizing the Elementary Education: Sustainability Experiences in the Cachar District of Assam Cited From Paul D. ― Higher Education for Sustainable Livelihood. New Delhi: Excel India Publishers.

The table reveals that in the year 2009, 72.83% learners were trained up. And from these, 31.61% trained personnel are helping their parents by earning income, especially through tailoring and doll making. Besides, in the year 2010, 92.7% learners were trained up. And from these, 40 % trained personnel helping their parents by earning income, especially through tailoring and doll making. In the year 2010, more learners were trained and more trained learners helped their parents than the year 2009.The vocational training was given only to the learners of HTR centre.

During the SSA period (2003 onwards) the implementation of CCE (Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation) system adopted by the schools provides a qualitative education among children. In the curriculum of elementary level —environmental study is one of the subjects but this subject is not treated as core subject. For day-to-day transaction this education is helpful because SSA provides practical activity based education rather than theoretical education.

Used for Improving Social Life

In the present study in response to a question asked to head masters of schools as to—Is elementary education helpful in improving the child‘s social life? 86% of headmasters opined that it helps in improving the child‘s social life. According to them, the intervention of SSA, text book quality has improved. This text has prepared attractive and gives examples related to real life where they are necessary. They also mentioned that students follow the discipline when they go to prayer. About mid-day meal they express that it improved the skill of practical work like they wash their own dish. Students have become more attentive towards their studies and other sides also. Further, for education purpose this vocational education is helpful for the students. SSA provides full encouragement to the child by the way of cultural programme,

exhibition, entertainment tour, free text book and supplying for the Total Literacy Mission etc. But 7% of headmasters opined that it does not help them in social life, it may help in their day to day life activities while the remaining 7% were silent on this issue.

The important findings are as follows:

1) The implementation of CCE (Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation) system adopted by the schools provides a qualitative education among children.
2) In the curriculum of elementary level ―environmental study‖ is one of the subjects but this subject is not treated as core subject.
3) For day to day transaction this education is helpful because SSA provides practical activity based education rather than theoretical education.
4) Vocational training has given to the hard to reach centre for their students' future life.
5) Majority of the headmasters opine that the intervention of SSA text books quality is improved. This text has prepared attractive and give example related to real life where necessary. SSA provides full encouragement to the child by the way of cultural programme, exhibition, entertainment tour, free text book, supplying for the TLM etc.

In sum, it clearly appears that education plays a vital role in our day to day life. A man without Education is like a rudderless ship because one cannot understand about how to run his life in a proper track. Without proper education one cannot boost up his knowledge for a minimum level of subsistence. A person may not have institutional degree but he should have enough knowledge regarding smooth running of his life. It is also clear that modern educationist, henceforth, not only emphasized bookish knowledge

rather they suggested value oriented vocational training which may give an alternative vista for maintaining minimum levels of careing of their life. Besides vocational training, in course curriculum SSA has already initiated many of the examples from our day to day life activities. This phenomenon on the one hand helps understand the ground reality of the learners. On the other hand, it helps to acquire knowledge and its immediate application to the society. Vocational training has given to hard to reach centre it should be important for all the formal institution. Thus, it brings a momentum or a driving force in the mind set of the young learners.