
REPORT

The 'Gunotsav' Initiative of the Government of Assam

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The Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009, of the Government of India guarantees the Constitutional Right to Education and provides each child in India aged between 6 to 14 years the Right to Elementary Education. Every child in India under Section 29 of the RTE thus has the constitutional right to receive quality, inclusive and child friendly education. Goal IV of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which pertains to quality education, seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable education also with the necessary corollary of ensuring that all children complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective outcomes by 2030. With a view to accomplishing these goals and improving Learning Outcomes, several initiatives have been undertaken by the central and state governments which include development of textbooks on the lines of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), engaging qualified teachers, providing teacher training, etc. Since 2017, the Government of Assam has initiated the 'Gunotsav—A Quality Initiative' with the declared goal of 'Ensuring quality elementary education with improved learning outcome.' The programme was initially launched in 8 districts of Assam viz. Barpeta, Chirang, Dibrugarh, Hailakandi, Kamrup (M), Lakhimpur, Morigaon and West Karbi Anglong in Phase I of 2017 with 20 more districts covered in Phase II; in 2022 Gunotsav was conducted in three phases between the months of May and June (Biswanath, Bongaigaon, Charaideo, Darrang, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Karimganj, Karbi Anglong and Nagaon in Phase I; Barpeta, Golaghat, Kamrup, Kokrajhar, Majuli, Morigaon, Sivasagar, Tinsukia and Udalguri in Phase II and, finally, Baksa, Cachar, Chirang, Dhubri, Dima Hasao, Jorhat, Kamrup, Lakhimpur, Nalbari, Sonitpur and West Karbi Anglong in Phase III).

The 2023 edition of Gunotsav extended to 34 administrative districts and

was conducted between January and February, again in three phases. It was held in a total of 44,530 schools (Government/Provincialised, Tea Garden Management schools, Adarsha Vidyalaya, Tea Garden Model schools, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Avasiya Vidyalaya) and a total of 41,27,907 students from classes I to IX were evaluated during this edition by 18,097 external evaluators engaged to ensure impartial and correct assessment of each student and school. The evaluation in Gunotsav is done in respect of four areas viz: i) *Scholastic* (Both Skill, Reading, Writing and Numeracy/Basic Mathematical Operations) ii) *Co-Scholastic* iii) *Community Participation* and iv) *Infrastructure* with grading done on the first three (weightage being 90 per cent, 5 per cent, and 5 per cent, respectively). Each student and school has to undergo a self-evaluation which is followed by external evaluation with assessment, being OMR based, conducted on skills in primary classes and skills as well as subject areas in higher classes and based on medium of instruction (Assamese, English, Bodo, Manipuri, Hindi, Garo, Bengali and Hmar). Having been nominated and engaged as an external evaluator for this novel initiative in 3 schools of rural Kamrup district last year, I was overwhelmed to see the kind of enthusiasm that this exercise evoked in school administrators, teachers and students. While any exercise of this scale involving government functionaries and agencies (such as SSA, SCERT, DIET, etc.), thousands of schools, teachers, master trainer, external evaluators and lakhs of students would have its set of challenges and ample scope for improvement, the attempt by the state government at quality improvement of each child and school through self and external evaluation as well as attaining grade specific learning outcomes as defined by NCERT is a major step in the right direction.

References

(Online resources last accessed for this report: 24.4.2023)

RTE: <https://righttoeducation.in/>

Gunotsav: <https://elementary.assam.gov.in/frontimpotentdata/gunotsav>

Gunotsav 2022: <https://gunotsavassam.in/>

Gunotsav 2023: <https://ssa.assam.gov.in/resource/gunotsav-2023>

UN SDG: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

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