

OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (OOSC) & THEIR AGE APPROPRIATE ENROLMENT FOR PROVIDING SPECIAL TRAINING UNDER SECTION-IV OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION (RTE) ACT, 2009.

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Abstract : This study has been undertaken to investigate the determinates of out of school children (OoSC) & their age appropriate enrolment in neighbourhood school for providing special training under RTE, Act, 2009. Act is a momentous step of the country for Universalizing Elementary Education and to enforcement of Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution. The RTE Act 2009 stipulates age appropriate enrolment of out of school children and provisioning of Special Training for such children so that they can be at par with other children. Section -IV of RTE, Act articulates the provision of special training for the children who are above age six and have never been attended the school or attended but dropped out before completing the cycle of elementary education, then such children shall be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age. Such children would be provided special training either non residential or residential mode for accelerated learning to be able to be admitted in the class appropriate to their age. The Act also provides for additional support to such students even after they have been admitted to regular classes till they are fully integrated to the school. The Act spells out the maximum time period for the child to receive such special training: two years and minimum period is 3 months. In short, it subsumes all the measures required to be taken to enable an out-of-school-child to join a formal school in a class appropriate to his/her age and pursue education up to class-VIII.

Key words: RTE, out of school children, Special Training, Age Appropriate Enrolment

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the key areas for any sustainable development agenda. It is the key which help to achieve many other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The RTE Act provides a significance right legal framework for the children of the ages of 6-14 years for ensuring free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education. It gives the opportunity to the children to receive equitable quality elementary education which is free from fear, trauma and anxiety. The RTE Act specifically refers to the enrolment of out-of school children into age appropriate classes and the requirement to provide special trainings as per their need. However, in Chapter II, Section IV of the RTE, Act, 2009 states that “Where a child above 6 years of age has not been admitted in any school or though admitted could not complete his or her Elementary Education, then, he or she shall be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age”. “Provided that where a child is directly admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age, then, he or she shall, in order to be at par with others, have a right to receive special training, in such manner and within such time limits as may be prescribed”. “Provided further that a child so admitted to Elementary Education shall be entitled to free education till completion of Elementary Education even after fourteen years”.

This particular provision also has important implications pertaining to other sections of the Act, notably those related issues of quality, curriculum and classroom practices, teachers and teacher training, responsibilities of state government and local authorities and school management committees and the role of civil society. Implementing this provision is challenging, in terms of scale, time frame and complexity of the task.

The present study has been undertaken to examine the status of age appropriate enrolment of Out of School Children (OoSC) for providing Special Training under section-IV of the Act which is one of the core mandate of RTE for imparting special training to enable the child to be at par with other children after mainstreaming into the formal school. In this present study, the investigator describes about **OoSC and provision of education for OoSC as per RTE, need & status of age appropriate enrolment in neighbourhood school.**

2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

After enactment of RTE, Act, 2009, the Alternative schooling programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhayan has been reconceptualised as Special Training as per provision of the RTE Act. Like other states, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Assam has arranged special training both residential and non residential mode to meet up the learning gap with the stipulated time period for mainstreaming into the formal school as per mandate of RTE. Special training intervention for Out of school children is considered as one of the major interventions of RTE and state has taken various initiatives for mainstreaming of out of school children after providing special training to the children. For providing special training to the learners, the first step is to enroll the children at age appropriate class in neighbourhood school and arrange special training thereafter as per their need. So it is essential to know about age appropriate enrolment of Special Training learners in neighbourhood school for arranging special training and mainstreaming to formal school.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the present study is to examine the status of age appropriate enrolment of out of school children in neighborhood school for providing special training under RTE. The objectives of the study are as given below:

- ✓ To study on awareness, understanding, mechanism and reason of Out of school children in Guwahati Urban Block of Kamrup (Metro) district of Assam.
- ✓ To study the awareness on provision of education for OoSC as per RTE, need as well as status of age appropriate enrolment of Special training learners in Guwahati Urban Block of Kamrup (Metro) district of Assam

4. DELIMITATION OF STUDY

This study is confined to the Guwahati Urban block of Kamrup (Metro) district, Assam. Care has been taken to ensure that there is equal representation of the segments consisting of East, West, North and South part of the block. The present study is limited in terms of sample, geographical situation and content. The specification of such delimitation measures are given below:

- The samples is selected from special training centres (non residential) of Guwahati Urban block of Kamrup (M) district of Assam.
- The population of the study comprises the Education Volunteers (EV) of Special Training Centres, Head Teacher of neighbourhood school and School Management Committee (SMC) president of the school.

5. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

5.1 METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey method is being followed to study the problem, as this study is attempting to explain and interpret “what exists at present”. This study focuses on the age appropriate enrolment of *special training learners under RTE, Act, 2009*. The main principle of this study is that to assess the awareness and status of age appropriate enrolment of special training learners through conducting and collecting data by direct field investigation, observation and interview.

This study is designed to capture the relevant data from the core stakeholders viz Education Volunteers of Special Training Centres, Head Teachers of neighbourhood school, President of School Management Committee whose responses are vital for assessing the effectiveness of the study.

The Investigator has gather information from Education Volunteers, Head Teachers of neighborhood school & concerned School Management Committee (SMC) through interviews, and observation.

5.2 SAMPLING

Population: The investigator has used simple random sampling method for the study. The proposed sample for the study was as follows:

No. of Special Training Centre/School/SMC			No. of Respondents		
Centre	School	SMC	Education Volunteer	Head Teacher	SMC President
35	35	35	35	35	35

1.1 THE PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION

Data collected directly through Interview and Observation Methods.

1.2 THE TOOLS

For the study, data have been collected from core stakeholder viz Education Volunteers, Head Teachers of the neighborhood school, concerned SMC president of the schools. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques have used to collect data.

1.3 QUANTITATIVE TOOLS

<i>Tool</i>	<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Broad nature of data</i>
Interview schedule/ Interview schedule	Education Volunteers	Intervention of Special Training
Interview schedule	Head Teacher of neighbourhood school	Support to the intervention, monitoring the implementation etc .
Interview schedule	President, SMC	Identification and enrolment of OoSC, monitoring of Special Training Centre etc.

- A. Interview schedule meant for the Education Volunteers
- B. Interview schedule meant for the Head Teacher of neighbourhood school;
- C. Interview schedule meant for the concerned SMC president;

1.4 QUALITATIVE TOOLS

<i>Tool</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Broad nature of data</i>
<i>Observation schedule</i>	Records	Age appropriate enrolment.

2. DATA ANALYSIS:

Both qualitative and quantitative analysis was done.

Quantitative analysis was done using simple proper statistical technique. Quantitative interpretation was done through Bar Diagram.

3. RESULT & DISCUSSION

The investigator conducted the study in Guwahati Urban block for collection of information from the field. The investigator visited special training centres, neighbourhood school and met SMC president for the purpose and information were collected from the respective respondents (Education Volunteers, Head Teachers of the neighborhood school & concerned SMC president of the schools) through interview schedule. The objective wise major findings of the study are given as below:

Objective: 1: To study on awareness ,understanding, mechanism and reason of Out of school children in Guwahati Urban Block of Kamrup (Metro) district of Assam

The investigator tried to collect information on four areas on OoSC under this objective. The information were collected on awareness on Out of school children, understanding about the term of Out of school children (OoSC), Mechanism followed for identification of Out of school children (OoSC) and reason of Out of school children (OoSC). Since School Management Committee is responsible for identification of Out of School children for providing special training to the children in their jurisdiction, the information were collected from Presidents of School Management Committee on said areas . The finding of the objective are given below tables:

Table -1.1: Awareness on Out of school children (OoSC)

Sample	Aware/ heard about OoSC				
	No. having aware/ heard	Percentage having aware/ heard	No. having not aware/ heard	Percentage having not aware/ heard	Total
	35	100	0	0	35
SMC President	Awareness on responsibility of identification of OoSC by SMC Presidents				
	No. having awareness	Percentage having awareness	No. not having awareness	Percentage not having awareness	Total
	19	54.28	16	45.71	35
	Awareness on availability of OoSC in the jurisdiction				
	No. having awareness	Percentage having awareness	No. not having awareness	Percentage not having awareness	Total
21	60%	14	40%	35	

Source: Interview schedule of the SMC President

The above table 4.1 shows the percentage of SMC Presidents having awareness on Out of school children (OoSC). The information was sought on three aspects viz awareness about OoSC, awareness on their responsibility of identification of OoSC and awareness on availability of OoSC in their jurisdiction. The above table reveals that all respondents (100%) heard about OoSC. So far as awareness on their responsibility of identification of OoSC is concerned, 54.28% were found to be aware, remaining 45.71% were not aware. Again, 94.29 % sampled SMC presidents were found to aware of availability of OoSC in their jurisdiction; whereas 5.71% were not aware. The data shown in the table-4.1 has been diagrammatically represented in figure 4. 1 below:

FIGURE 4.1
Awareness of SMC President on Out of school children (OoSC)

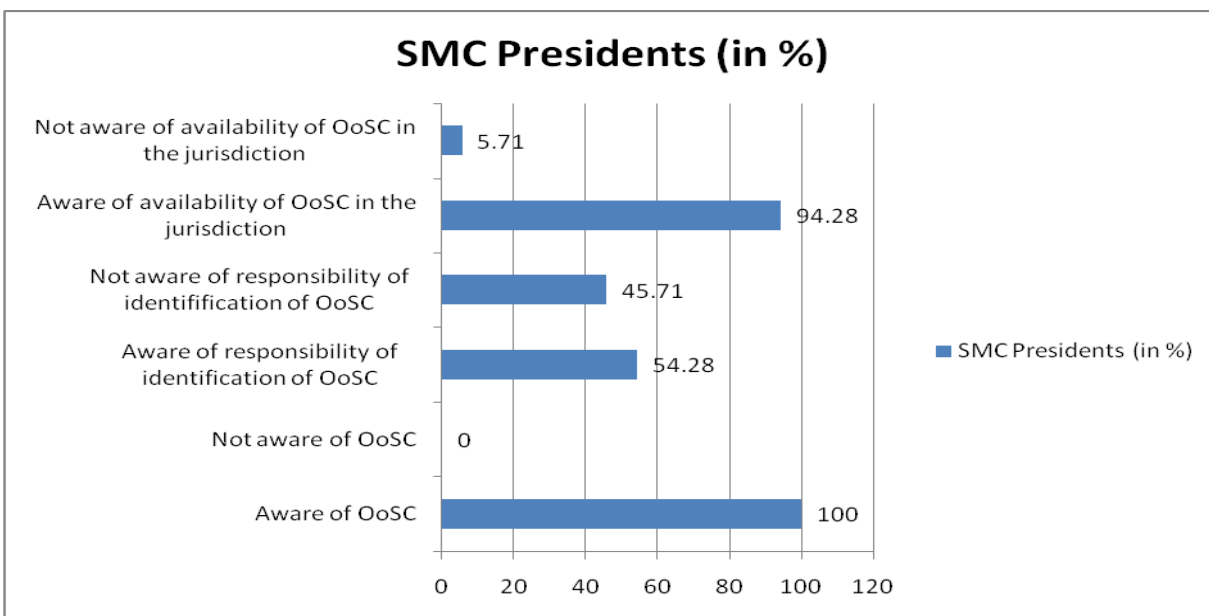


Table -2.2: Understanding about the term of Out of school children (OoSC)

Sample	Understanding of SMC President on term of OoSC								
	Understanding as never enrolled or incomplete schooling		Understanding as sometimes attending school		Understanding as irregular attendance and appearing in examinations/ tests.		Unable to explain the term		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
SMC President	17	48.6	5	14.29	7	20	6	17.14	35

Source: Interview schedule of the SMC President

Table 4.2 shows that 48.57% of the respondents had understanding of OoSC as never enrolled or not completing school; whereas, 14.29% had understanding that children sometimes attending school are OoSC. Again, 20% respondents expressed that OoSC are those children who do not attend school regularly but appear in the examinations/tests; while 17.14% respondents did not have any understanding at all. The data shown in the Table-4.2 has been diagrammatically represented in figure 4. 2 below:

FIGURE 4.2
Understanding about the Out of school children (OoSC)

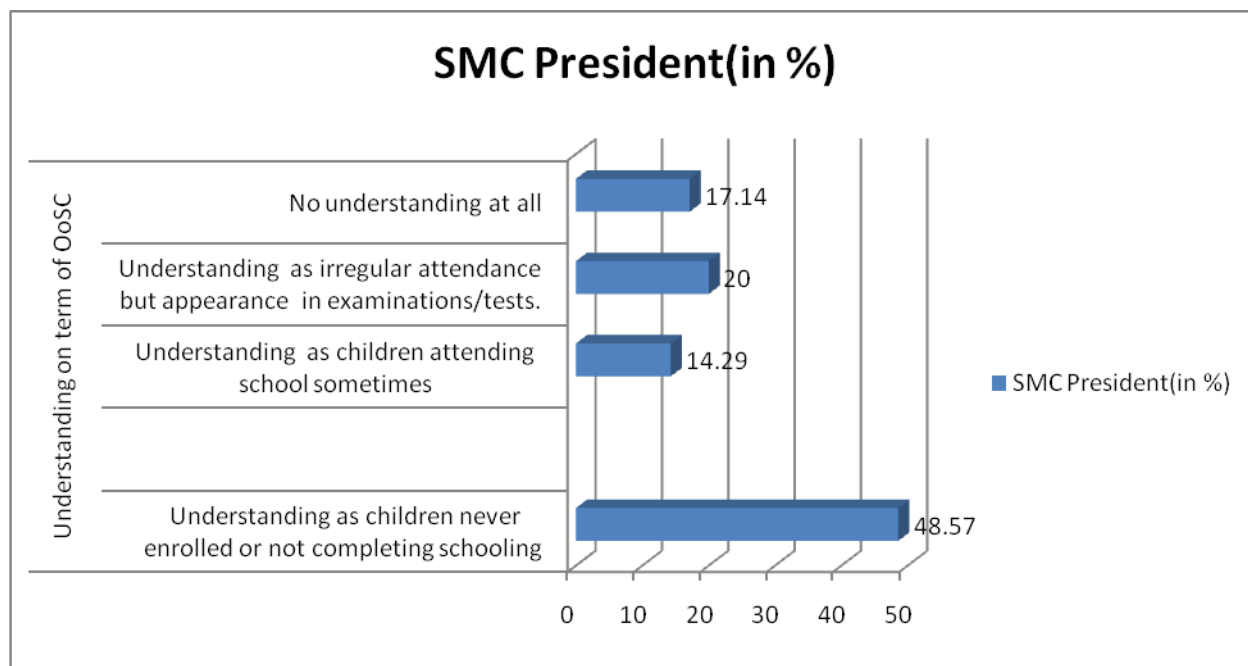


Table -2.3: Mechanism followed for identification of Out of school children (OoSC)

Sample	Mechanism followed for identification of OoSC by SMC Presidents								Total
	Using school records		Conducting household survey		Using report of Education Volunteers		Not responding at all		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
SMC presidents	8	22.85	16	28.57	6	17.1	5	8.57	35

Source: Interview schedule of the SMC President

From the above table, it is observed that 22.85% of the respondents used school records, 28.57% conducted household survey and 17.14% used report of education volunteers for identification of OoSC. The remaining 8.57% respondents were not able to respond on the mechanism followed for identification of OoSC. The data shown in the Table-4.3 has been diagrammatically represented in figure 4. 3 below:

FIGURE 4.3
Mechanism followed for identification of Out of school children (OoSC)

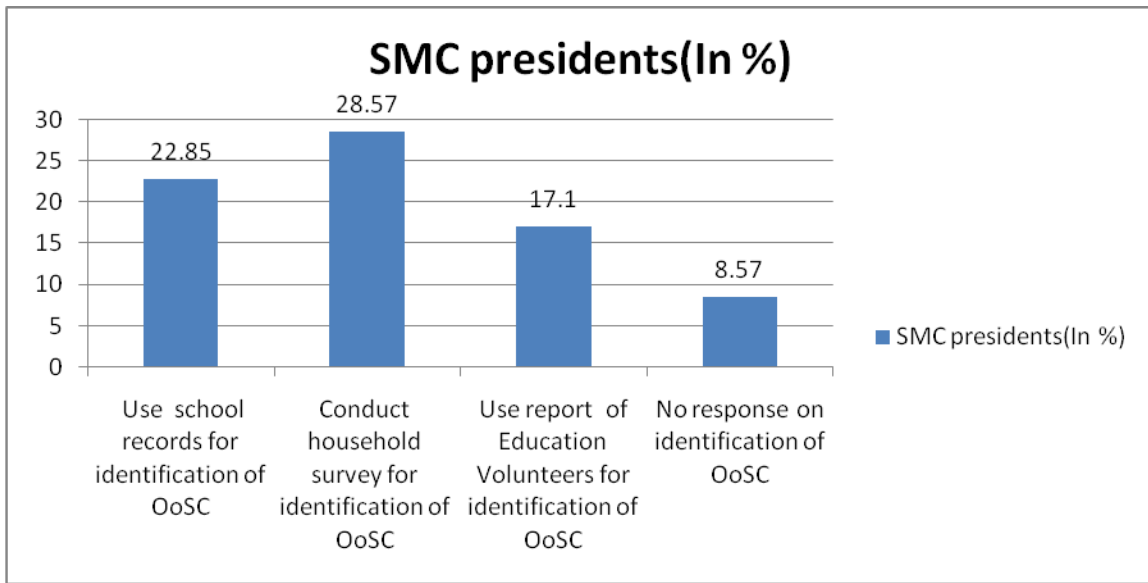


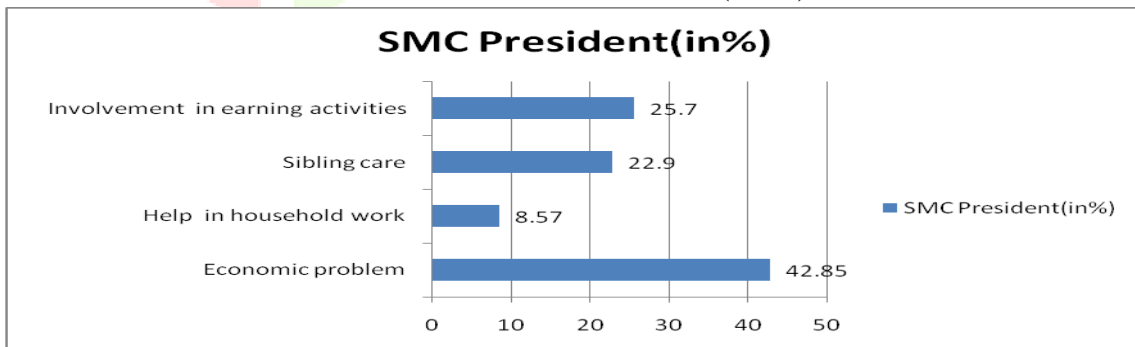
Table -2.4: Reason of Out of school children (OoSC)

Sample	Reason of OoSC								
	Economic problem		Help household work		Sibling care		Involvement in earning		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
SMC President	15	42.85	3	8.57	8	22.9	9	25.7	35

Source: Interview schedule of the SMC President

The above table no. 4.5 indicates the reasons of Out of school Children. Out of the sample, 42.85% stated economic problem, 8.57% stated household work, 22.85 stated sibling care and 25.7% stated involvement in earning activities are reason of Out of School Children(OoSC). The data shown in the table-4.5 has been diagrammatically represented in figure 4. 5 below:

FIGURE 4.5
Reason of Out of school children (OoSC)



Objective: 2: To study the awareness on provision of education for OoSC as per RTE, need as well as status of age appropriate enrolment of Special training learners in Guwahati Urban Block of Kamrup (Metro) district of Assam

The investigators collected information on three sub areas viz information on education provision for OoSC as per RTE, need of age appropriate enrolment as per RTE & status of age appropriate enrolment in neighbourhood school in connection with this objective. The responses of the respondents of these areas have been given below tables:

Table -2.1: Information on provision of education for OoSC as per RTE

Provision of Education for OoSC as per RTE							
Sample	Provision of arrangement of Special Training		Provision of arrangement of special training after enrolment in neighbourhood school		Not aware		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
EV	10	28.57	20	57.14	5	14.3	35
HT	9	25.71	9	25.71	17	48.6	35
SMC President	11	31.42	0	0	24	68.6	35

Source: Interview schedule of the EV, HT & SMC President

Table no. 4.7 shows the responses of EVs, HTs & SMC Presidents on provision of education for OoSC under RTE. Out of the sample, 28.57% EVs, 25.7% HTs & 31.42% SMC President mentioned the provision of arrangement of Special Training as per RTE; whereas 57.14% EVs & 25.71% HTs mentioned about the provision of arrangement of special training after enrolment in neighbourhood school at age appropriate class.

Table also shows that 14.3% EVs, 48.6% HTs & 68.6% SMC President were not aware about the provision of education for OoSC under RTE. The data shown in the Table-4.7 has been diagrammatically represented in Figure 4. 7 below:

FIGURE 1.1
Provision of Education of OoSC

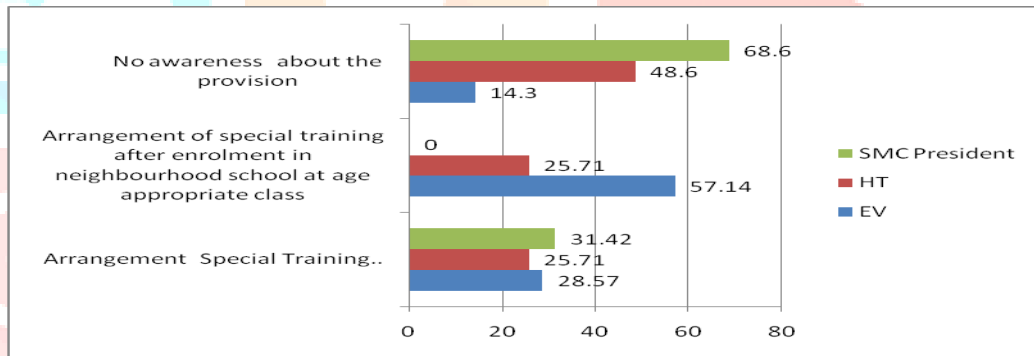


Table -2.2: Need of Age appropriate enrolment as per RTE

Need of Age appropriate enrolment as per RTE							
Sample	To maintain the age cycle of elementary education so that they may be at par with others and could be integrated into the neighbourhood school after mainstreaming.		To learn easily as per age		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
EV	25	71.43	10	28.57	0	0	35

HT	18	51.43	12	34.29	5	14.286	35
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Source: Interview schedule of the EV & HT

The above shows the responses of EV & HT on need of Age appropriate enrolment as per RTE. Out of the sample, 71.43% EVs & 51.43% HTs mentioned that age appropriate enrolment is required to maintain the age cycle of elementary education so that they may be at par with others and could be integrated into the neighbourhood school after mainstreaming ; whereas 28.57% EVs & 34.29% HTs mentioned that age appropriate enrolment is required to learn easily as per age. But 14.286%HTs did not response at all.

Table -2.3: Status of age appropriate enrolment in neighbourhood school

Sample	Status of age appropriate enrolment in neighbourhood school						
	No. having age appropriate enrolment	Percentage having age appropriate enrolment	No. having no age appropriate enrolment	Percentage having no age appropriate enrolment	No. not aware of age appropriate enrolment	Percentage . not aware of age appropriate enrolment	Total
EV	33	94.286	2	5.714	0	0	35
HT	33	94.286	2	5.714	0	0	35
President SMC	11	31.429	0	0	24	68.6	35

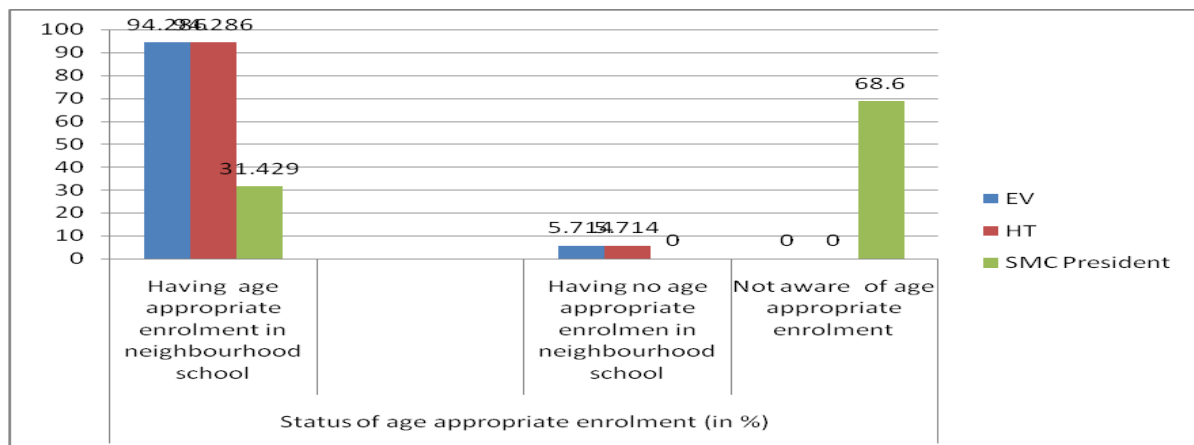
Source: Interview schedule of the EV , HT & SMC President

From the above table 4.8, it is observed that out of sample EVs, 94.28% EVs enrolled their children at age appropriate class in neighbourhood school; whereas 5.71% not enrolled their children at age appropriate in neighbourhood school.

Similarly 94.28% HTs stated that age appropriate enrolment of special training learners has been done in their school ; whereas 5.71% stated that special training learners have not been enrolled at age appropriate class in their school.

Out of sample SMC Presidents, 31.42 % were of view that special training learners have been admitted in the school at age appropriate class; whereas 68.6% were not aware of status of age appropriate enrolment. The data shown in the table-4.8 has been diagrammatically represented in figure 4. 8 below:

FIGURE 2.1
Status of Age Appropriate Enrolment of Out of school children (OoSC)



Conclusion:

RTE, Act, 2009 has mandated that every child of the age group of 6 to 14 years have right to receive free and compulsory education till the period of completion of eight years cycle of elementary education. The act has further mandated that the children who have not attended the school or dropped out before completion of elementary education should also have right to receive free and compulsory education and such children should be provided special training as per age and need to meet up the learning gap so that they may be at par with other children of the regular school after mainstreaming. This study shows that 45.71% SMC Presidents are not awareness on responsibility of identification of OoSC though it is one of the core responsibilities of SMC to identify OoSC and arrange special training for OoSC. Moreover, 40% SMC presidents are not aware on availability of OoSC in their jurisdiction. Still there is 14.3% EVs, 48.6% HTs & 68.6% SMC Presidents are not aware on provision of education for Out of School children as per RTE. 14.286% HTs are not able to response on need of age appropriate enrolment. 5.714% EVs & HTs have mentioned about non availability of age appropriate enrolment in neighbourhood school though the first step of special training is to conduct age appropriate enrolment in neighbourhood school. The study shows that 68.6% SMC Presidents are not aware on age appropriate enrolment special training learners in neighbourhood school. This finding reveals that more emphasis is required for strengthening of the programme.

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