

Research Article

Marketing Practices of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Delhi NCR

Simran¹ and Dr. Mohan Prasad Sharma²

¹Research Scholar, School of Business, Galgotias University, Greater Noida, U.P., India

²Professor, School of Business, Galgotias University, Greater Noida, U.P., India

Received: 20/06/2025;

Revision: 26/06/2025;

Accepted: 08/07/2025;

Published: 12/07/2025

*Corresponding author: Simran

Abstract: In order to attain universal elementary education (UEE), the Indian government created the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001. Its foundations were international pledges to increase access to high-quality education as well as constitutional mandates. While SSA's communication and outreach efforts made measurable contributions to enrolment and awareness, several structural and contextual challenges limited the program's marketing efficacy in the Delhi NCR region. These challenges stemmed from demographic diversity, resource disparities, and weak institutional coordination across administrative boundaries.

Keywords: Universal Elementary Education (UEE), Right to Education (RTE), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Constitutional Amendment (Article 21-A), Education for All (EFA).

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In order to attain universal elementary education (UEE), the Indian government created the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001. Its foundations were international pledges to increase access to high-quality education as well as constitutional mandates.

a) Constitutional and Legal Foundation

- The Indian Constitution's Article 45 formerly called for free and mandatory education for all children up to the age of 14.
- With the insertion of Article 21-A by the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2002, children aged 6 to 14 now have the fundamental right to

free and compulsory education.

- The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, gave legislative backing to SSA's vision and created enforceable legal entitlements for children.

b) International Commitments

- India committed to the Education for All (EFA) goals of the World Conference on Education (Jomtien, 1990) and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000).
- SSA was also aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG 2), which aimed for universal primary education by 2015.

c) Predecessor Programmes

SSA emerged from the consolidation of earlier education initiatives:

- Operation Blackboard (1987) – Basic infrastructure and learning materials
- District Primary Education Programme (DPEP, 1994) – District-level planning, focused on access and equity
- Lok Jumbish and Mahila Samakhyas – Participatory models with a focus on girls' education and community mobilization



1.2 Rationale for Marketing of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

Creating Awareness about Education Rights in an Urban Setting

Delhi NCR, being a dense urban agglomeration with high in-migration, has a diverse population often unfamiliar with their entitlements under the Right to Education Act (2009). Many urban poor especially in unauthorised colonies, slum clusters, and peri-urban villages were unaware that:

- Children ages 6 to 14 are required to attend free, public schools.
- They could enrol without documents like birth certificates or domicile.

SSA campaigns in Delhi used community radio stations like Radio Masti 90.4 FM, metro announcements, and public hoardings at high-traffic locations like Seelampur, Jahangirpuri, and Okhla to raise awareness about education as a right.

Mobilising Community Participation in School Management

Delhi SSA actively promoted School Management Committees (SMCs) under the RTE framework. However, many parents especially daily wage workers or domestic workers were hesitant to participate due to low literacy and lack of time.

To address this, marketing initiatives in districts like East Delhi and North West Delhi used:



Wall paintings in Hindi and Urdu with pictorial guides

The sample image above shows community-oriented artwork conveying environmental and educational themes, similar to SSA campaigns

- Mothers' meetings organised in collaboration with NGOs such as SEVAKS and Pratham
- Street theatre (nukkad natak) performances in areas like Trilokpuri and Sangam Vihar to encourage parental engagement

Addressing Social Norms and Attitudes in a Culturally Diverse Region

Delhi NCR's population includes communities from different states, castes, and religious backgrounds. Deep-seated beliefs such as:

- Girls should stay at home after age 10
- Private schools are always better
- Disabled children should not be enrolled were common in some localities.

SSA's marketing response included:



- Storytelling sessions and puppet shows in areas like Narela and Najafgarh to promote girls' education
- Campaigns featuring local champions, including alumni of government schools, to build trust
- Distribution of inclusive school calendars featuring children with disabilities in Ghaziabad and Noida

Reaching Migrant Families and Urban Poor

Districts like South Delhi, Ghaziabad, and Gurugram saw high migration from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal. These groups often lived in informal settlements with no fixed address.

SSA's localised marketing approaches included:

- Door-to-door enrolment drives conducted by cluster coordinators with multilingual pamphlets.
- Use of mobile vans with loudspeakers announcing school admissions in Bawana, Shahdara, and Noida Extension
- Enrolment kiosks set up at weekly markets (haats) and near construction sites

Promoting Enrolment and Preventing Dropouts



Here's a real-life snapshot of an SSA-supported enrolment drive, showing school staff and community members assisting families at a government school desk.

Marketing was key to sustaining high enrollment in Delhi's government schools, which saw a rise in GER post-2012. SSA supported campaigns like:

- "School Chalo Abhiyan" across NCR, with rallies by schoolchildren in areas like Mehrauli and Rohini
- Posters promoting free uniforms, textbooks, and mid-day meals, especially in trans-Yamuna colonies
- Mid-year catch-up programs advertised through WhatsApp groups managed by community volunteers

Building Trust and Accountability

Delhi SSA emphasised transparency by promoting:

- The ShaGun portal, with publicly available school performance data
- Wall paintings listing SMC meeting dates and teacher attendance in each school
- Awareness videos aired in community cinemas and local cable TV in Loni and Badarpur

These efforts aimed to normalise citizen oversight, particularly in areas where trust in government schooling was weak.

Leveraging Urban Partnerships

Delhi NCR provided unique opportunities to partner with:

- Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) in Noida and Dwarka to promote public school volunteering
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) units of companies in Gurugram and Faridabad for Vidyanjali engagement
- Media partners for special children's editions in newspapers like Hindustan and Navbharat Times SSA marketing efforts tapped into this urban ecosystem to expand outreach beyond schools.

Objectives

- To identify the marketing strategies used by SSA in Delhi NCR
- To assess how well those tactics work in terms of raising awareness and involving the community
- To offer policy recommendations for future education campaigns

Research Questions

- What marketing tools were used to promote SSA in Delhi NCR?
- How did SSA's communication strategy vary across urban and peri-urban areas?
- What was the public perception and awareness of SSA goals?

METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) marketing strategies in the Delhi NCR area are investigated in this study using a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative data. The aim is to understand how SSA used communication

strategies and outreach campaigns to improve educational access and enrolment, particularly among marginalised groups.

2. Data Sources

A. Secondary Data

In order to comprehend the composition, development, and application of SSA's marketing strategies in Delhi NCR, the study's main basis is secondary sources.

Key sources include:

- SSA Annual Work Plans & Budget (AWP&B) from the Delhi State SSA Office (2010–2024), which detail planned outreach activities (e.g., community mobilisation, media campaigns, rallies, school functions).
- Reports and policy documents published by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Samagra Shiksha, which outline national-level guidelines and funding allocations for IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) components.
- NGO reports and case studies (e.g., Pratham, Save the Children, SEVAKS) on community engagement efforts in East Delhi, Shahdara, and Najafgarh.
- Media coverage and government press releases of marketing activities such as School Chalo Abhiyan, enrolment drives, and nukkad nataks.
- Posters, pamphlets, wall paintings, and digital campaign content (when publicly archived).

These sources helped map the types, formats, and local adaptations of marketing materials and strategies used by SSA across Delhi NCR.

B. Primary Data

To complement the desk-based study, primary data collection was conducted in selected zones of Delhi NCR through:

- Key stakeholders' semi-structured interviews: SSA officials from the District Project Offices in East Delhi, Ghaziabad, and North West Delhi.
- School heads and teachers involved in awareness campaigns.
- NGO representatives involved in outreach programs.
- Community volunteers and parent members of School Management Committees (SMCs).
- Surveys (paper-based or Google Forms) administered to: Parents of children enrolled in government schools to assess their exposure to SSA's communication efforts.
- School children (Grades 5–8) to understand message recall and influence of campaigns like puppet shows or rallies.

Where possible, purposive sampling was used to target populations in trans-Yamuna colonies, JJ clusters, and peri-urban areas with high migrant populations.

LITERATURE REVIEW



2.1 Marketing in Public Policy

Public policy has increasingly adopted tools from commercial marketing to promote social change, a practice conceptualised as social marketing by Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman (1971). Social marketing applies principles such as audience segmentation, message tailoring, behaviour change theory, and brand positioning to influence public behaviour for societal good.

In the context of government initiatives, communication is not merely informational but also persuasive and motivational—used to change behaviours, shape perceptions, and mobilise communities. Health campaigns (e.g., for vaccination or sanitation) have long used these approaches, and education is no exception. Governments employ tools like media campaigns, community outreach, and symbolic branding (e.g., slogans and mascots) to create awareness and build public trust.

In India, public sector schemes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao have used similar marketing strategies—including wall paintings, public rallies, celebrity endorsements, and social media content—to target diverse

demographic groups. SSA's marketing approach aligns with this trend but remains under-studied in urban contexts.

2.2 Educational Marketing Frameworks

Marketing in education is distinct from commercial marketing in that its goal is often universal access and equity, rather than customer acquisition. Globally, education campaigns have leveraged marketing to increase enrolment, improve retention, and promote gender parity.

For example:

- UNICEF's "Back to School" campaigns in post-conflict zones use radio, theatre, and community influencers to rebuild trust in schooling.
- The "No Child Left Behind" Act (U.S.) included school report cards and parent outreach to improve transparency and attract enrolment in public schools.
- In sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, conditional cash transfer programs were accompanied by targeted information campaigns explaining educational incentives.

Scholars like Foskett (2002) and Oplatka (2007) have developed frameworks for educational marketing that emphasise:

- Stakeholder engagement (parents, community leaders)
- Image-building and school branding
- Communication that addresses cultural sensitivities and local perceptions

However, such frameworks are rarely applied to government schools in urban India, where migration, social mobility, and privatisation complicate traditional outreach models.

2.3 SSA Communication Strategy (National Level)

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), launched in 2001, initially focused on infrastructure and access. Over time, the program evolved to incorporate a robust Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) component aimed at demand generation, especially among marginalised groups (SC/ST, Muslims, urban poor, disabled children).

Key developments:

- IEC guidelines issued by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (now Ministry of Education) emphasised multi-pronged communication—posters, wall paintings, street plays, rallies, pamphlets in local languages, and folk media.
- NCERT and NIEPA contributed capacity-building programs for State and District Project Officers, training them to conduct effective community mobilisation.
- From 2010 onward, annual plans began allocating specific budget lines for "Community Mobilisation and Media."
- The Samagra Shiksha Framework (2018), which subsumed SSA, continued this approach, stressing community ownership and the role of School Management Committees (SMCs) in communication.

Despite these developments, most evaluations of SSA's IEC strategy have been aggregate or rural-focused, with little empirical analysis of effectiveness in urbanised areas like Delhi NCR.

2.4 Gaps in Existing Literature



There is a significant research gap concerning:

- Urban-centric IEC strategies under SSA, particularly in megacities with high migration like Delhi.
- The role of local adaptations of marketing tools—e.g., how street theatre in Trilokpuri differs from WhatsApp outreach in

Noida Extension.

- The effectiveness of campaigns in addressing enrolment dropouts, gender disparity, or misinformation among migrant populations.
- How Delhi's SSA program leveraged partnerships with NGOs and used hyper-local messaging in trans-Yamuna and peri-urban colonies.

This paper fills that gap by systematically analysing Delhi NCR's SSA marketing practices, using both secondary data and field-based inputs.

OVERVIEW OF SSA IN DELHI NCR

3.1 SSA Objectives

India's primary initiative for attaining Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) was the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which was introduced by the Indian government in 2001.

The key objectives were threefold:

- **Universal Access:** Make sure that every child between the ages of 6 and 14 can go to a neighborhood school within a reasonable commute, regardless of their background.
- **Retention:** Promote continuous enrolment by reducing dropout rates, especially among girls, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Muslims, and urban poor.
- **Quality Improvement:** Improve learning outcomes through teacher training, provision of learning materials, and infrastructure development.

In Delhi NCR, these goals were contextualised to address challenges of urbanisation, including migrant populations, informal settlements, and socio-economic disparities.

3.2 Implementation Structure in Delhi NCR

The implementation of SSA in Delhi NCR was shaped by the unique governance, demographic, and infrastructural conditions of the capital region.

A. Institutional Leadership

- The Directorate of Education, Government of NCT of Delhi, was the nodal agency for SSA implementation in Delhi.
- It coordinated with District Project Offices (DPOs), which oversaw planning and monitoring at the district level.
- Within each district, Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) served as decentralised units to supervise schools, provide teacher support, and carry out community outreach.

B. NGO Collaboration

- NGOs such as SEVAKS, Pratham, and Save the Children were key partners in implementing SSA's community mobilisation and communication campaigns.
- These organisations: Conducted enrolment drives in high-migration zones like Ghaziabad and East Delhi.
- Held mothers' meetings, street plays, and puppet shows to promote school attendance.
- Supported inclusive education programs for children with special needs (CWSN).

C. Role of Municipal Bodies

- In Delhi NCR, overlapping jurisdictions (e.g., NDMC, MCD, DDA) influenced school management and infrastructure planning.
- SSA marketing activities were often coordinated through zonal education officers working with ward-level committees.

3.3 Key Milestones in Delhi NCR

SSA in Delhi NCR evolved through several significant milestones:

2004–05: Launch of Community Mobilisation Events

- First structured community awareness campaigns were rolled out.
- Activities included School Chalo Abhiyan, wall paintings, rallies by students, and parent-teacher interactions.

2010: Integration of Right to Education (RTE) Act

- SSA became the vehicle for operationalising the RTE Act, 2009, which came into force in 2010.
- Delhi introduced child tracking systems, free entitlements (uniforms, books, MDM), and neighbourhood school mapping as part of this reform.
- Marketing strategies now emphasised child rights language, inclusivity, and community accountability.



2016: Vidyanjali Volunteer Program

- Launched by the Ministry of Education to allow private individuals to volunteer in government schools.
- In Delhi NCR, professionals, retired teachers, and youth groups from Gurugram and Noida engaged in co-curricular and remedial activities, enhancing community participation and school visibility.
- SSA helped promote this initiative through social media, public posters, and NGO-led orientations.

3.4 Transition to Samagra Shiksha (2018)

In 2018, the Government of India launched Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, integrating:

- SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) – elementary education
- RMSA (Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan) – secondary education
- Teacher Education Schemes – in-service and pre-service training

This holistic framework aimed to provide seamless support from pre-primary to Class 12, focusing on learning outcomes, digital education, and equity.

In Delhi NCR:

- The Samagra Shiksha framework retained many SSA outreach practices but broadened its focus to include secondary schools, especially in fringe areas like Bawana, Loni, and Sohna Road.
- Marketing campaigns continued under this new umbrella, emphasising integrated school development, inclusion of adolescent girls, and technology-enabled learning.

4. MARKETING STRATEGY FRAMEWORK OF SSA IN DELHI NCR

The marketing strategy of SSA in Delhi NCR was guided by principles of social inclusion, community engagement, and localised communication, tailored to the unique socio-demographic fabric of the region. This section outlines the target audiences, messaging themes, and the multi-actor implementation structure that sustained these outreach campaigns.

4.1 Target Audiences

Effective marketing under SSA required identifying and

engaging diverse stakeholders who influenced schooling decisions. In Delhi NCR, these groups included:

A. Parents (Especially from Lower-Income Backgrounds)

- A key audience, particularly in slums, unauthorised colonies, and migrant settlements (e.g., Sangam Vihar, Bawana, and Khora Colony).
- Many parents were first-generation learners and unaware of education entitlements under the RTE Act.
- Messaging was tailored using multilingual pamphlets, house visits, and mothers' meetings to overcome distrust and apathy.

B. Children (as Message Recipients and Messengers)

- Children were both recipients of messaging (via puppet shows, games, school functions) and carriers of information to their families (e.g., through School Chalo Abhiyan rallies).
- Campaigns often used storytelling, wall comics, and radio jingles in simple Hindi and Urdu to engage young learners, especially in government schools in Trilokpuri, Seemapuri, and Narela.

C. Teachers and Local Governance Units

- Teachers were encouraged to act as marketing agents, not just educators—mobilising parents, explaining SSA entitlements, and supporting enrolment campaigns.
- Ward-level education committees, SMCs (School Management Committees), and panchayat representatives (in peri-urban areas like Loni and Ghaziabad) were targeted through orientation sessions and participation drives.

4.2 Key Messages

SSA's marketing communication carried consistent themes, adapted for Delhi's urban reality:

A. "Shiksha Ka Haq" – The Right to Education

- Emphasised universal enrolment and RTE provisions such as:
- Ages 6 to 14 are eligible for free and mandatory schooling.
- Entitlements: textbooks, uniforms, mid-day meals.

- Used in slogans, banners, and public announcements across Delhi NCR.
- Often featured during annual School Admission Campaigns in April–May.

B. Inclusivity and Equity

- Campaigns focused heavily on gender inclusion, social justice, and access for children with special needs (CWSN).
- Messaging was customised:
- For girls: campaigns used visuals of girls in school uniforms, sometimes with slogans like “Padhegi Beti, Badhega Desh”.
- For CWSN: printed school calendars and posters featured children with hearing or visual impairments, especially in Noida and East Delhi.

C. Government Commitment to Quality Schooling

- Posters and wall paintings highlighted improvements in:
- Infrastructure (classrooms, toilets, drinking water).
- Learning tools (ICT labs, remedial kits).
- Teacher training and performance monitoring.
- These messages were reinforced in community meetings, especially when countering the perception that private schools offered better education.

4.3 Actors Involved

The implementation of SSA’s marketing strategy in Delhi NCR was multi-tiered, involving several key players:

A. Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) / Ministry of Education (MoE)

- Provided policy-level direction, financial support, and campaign frameworks.
- Oversaw the inclusion of IEC activities in SSA’s Annual Work Plans (AWP&B) and Samagra Shiksha budgets post-2018.

B. SSA Delhi Project Office

- Acted as the nodal agency for execution in coordination with the Directorate of Education.
- Designed Delhi-specific awareness materials and coordinated district-level training and outreach.

C. NGOs and Civil Society Organisations

- NGOs like SEVAKS, Pratham, and Deepalaya conducted:
- Community surveys.
- Mother engagement programs.
- Street plays in underserved areas (e.g., Shahdara, Sultanpuri).
- NGOs often acted as trust brokers, particularly in migrant-heavy or Muslim-majority zones.

D. Local Government Units

- Ward councillors, municipal authorities, and SMC members were mobilized to:
- Support rallies and admission drives.
- Mediate local conflicts around school access.

- Serve as local influencers who built credibility for SSA campaigns.
- **E. Teachers and Vidyanjali Volunteers**
- Teachers were trained to engage parents proactively, especially before the academic year.
- Under the Vidyanjali Volunteer Program (2016 onward), local professionals and college students participated in:
- Mentorship sessions.
- Library and reading hour support.
- Promotion of extracurricular learning in urban government schools in areas like Gurugram and Dwarka.

5. MARKETING TOOLS AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

To raise awareness and drive enrolment under SSA, a multi-channel marketing strategy was employed, combining traditional media, outdoor messaging, and grassroots mobilisation. Given Delhi NCR’s complexity with its mix of slum clusters, peri-urban zones, and digital-savvy middle classes the communication strategy required both broad reach and local customisation.

5.1 Print Media

Print materials served as foundational tools in SSA’s IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) campaigns, providing visually accessible, multilingual information to households across Delhi NCR.

Key Tools Used:

- **Bilingual Pamphlets (Hindi & Urdu):** Distributed during enrolment drives in areas like Seelampur, Nangloi, and Okhla.
- **Content included** admission deadlines, entitlements (uniforms, books, MDM), and RTE rights.
- **Wall Calendars and Booklets:** Distributed to parents and schoolchildren, often illustrated with student artwork and disability-inclusive messages.
- **Calendars** were a common sight in low-income homes in Ghaziabad and North East Delhi.
- **Posters and Handouts:** Featured campaign slogans (e.g., “Padhega Bharat, Badhega Bharat”), government contact numbers, and visuals of happy, uniformed children.
- **Mascots and Art Competitions:** Schools hosted painting and slogan-writing contests, especially during annual Education Week, where winning entries were used in local posters and wall art.

5.2 Outdoor Advertising

In Delhi’s dense urban environment, outdoor advertising was a cost-effective way to ensure high visibility across public spaces.

Key Formats:

- **Hoardings:** Erected outside government schools, bus stands, and metro stations (notably in areas like Rajiv Chowk, Kashmere Gate, and Noida City Centre).
- Communicated RTE rights, school facilities, and

- highlights of SSA-supported improvements.
- **Wall Writings:** Painted slogans and visuals on boundary walls in slum clusters (e.g., in Jahangirpuri, Trilokpuri, and Faridabad sectors).
- Often featured bright colours and pictorial representations to reach non-literate populations.
- **Banners and Flex Boards:** Displayed during admission months (March–June) outside local markets, anganwadis, and ward offices.

5.3 Broadcast Media



Broadcast platforms were used for mass outreach, especially to reach low-income families with limited print or digital access.

Channels Used:

- **Community Radio (FM):** Local FM stations like Radio Nasha and Radio City Delhi aired 30–60 second jingles on the importance of girls' education and enrolment rights.
- Community FM (e.g., in Loni and Ghaziabad) often hosted discussions featuring teachers and local leaders.
- **Doordarshan (DD National and DD Urdu):** Ran short spots in Hindi and Urdu emphasising school infrastructure upgrades, inclusion of CWSN, and girls' education.
- Often broadcast during morning and evening hours when homemakers and parents were most likely to watch.

5.4 Digital Media

While SSA began in the pre-digital era, saw an evolving effort to digitise outreach and engagement, especially targeting middle-income and educated urban audiences.

Platforms and Initiatives:

- **ShaGun Portal (Launched by MoE):** A central repository of best practices, case studies, and success stories under SSA and Samagra Shiksha.
- Delhi's contributions included videos on inclusive education in East Delhi and Narela.
- **Vidyanjali Website:** Enabled volunteers to register for activities in government schools.
- Used email, digital outreach, and case studies to promote civic engagement.
- **Facebook and Twitter handles shared:** Photos of rallies, school events, and infrastructure upgrades.
- Admission alerts and success stories.
- Limited penetration in JJ clusters but influential among urban middle-class volunteers and youth groups.

5.5 Community Engagement

Face-to-face interaction remained the most trusted and impactful communication method, especially in marginalised areas. SSA's marketing included robust community-based initiatives.

Grassroots Campaigns:

- **"Shiksha Ka Haq" Rallies:** Children marched with placards through local markets and residential areas during enrolment season.
- Teachers and parents also participated to demonstrate school-community linkages.
- **Nukkad Nataks (Street Theatre):** Performed in densely populated urban villages (e.g., in Mehrauli, Mangolpuri, and Palam).
- Skits depicted common barriers to education (e.g., child labor, early marriage) and how schools provide a better alternative.
- **Door-to-Door Campaigns:** Conducted by Block Resource Coordinators (BRCs) and NGO workers.
- Coordinators carried pamphlets, explained RTE rights, and facilitated on-the-spot registration.
- **School Management Committees (SMCs):** Played a vital role in organising community meetings, monitoring attendance, and bridging the gap between parents and school staff.
- In districts like South Delhi and Ghaziabad, SMCs were trained to host quarterly community education awareness camps.

6. CASE STUDIES & FIELD EXAMPLES

This section presents selected field-level interventions under SSA that demonstrate how localised marketing and outreach efforts successfully promoted awareness, enrolment, and community involvement across the Delhi NCR region.

6.1 SEVAKS Learning Centres (2014–2016)

SEVAKS, a Delhi-based NGO, partnered with the SSA program to identify and enrol out-of-school children (OOSC), especially in urban slums and peri-urban zones. Many of these children were from migrant families in East Delhi, Shahdara, and Ghaziabad.

Implementation:

- 38 Learning Centres were established across the NCR region, functioning as bridge courses for children aged 6–14 who had either dropped out or never enrolled.
- Community-based recruitment was done through door-to-door surveys, often in partnership with local anganwadi workers and Block Resource Coordinators (BRCs).
- SEVAKS adopted a creative communication approach:
- Wall Art & Murals: Messages like “Har Baccha School Jaayega” were painted in colourful imagery on nearby buildings.
- Community Mobilisers: Local women were trained to engage parents in their dialects (Hindi, Bhojpuri, Urdu), helping break cultural and linguistic barriers.
- Storytelling & Songs: Interactive sessions held weekly to communicate the importance of education using folklore and music.
- Collaboration with school principals ensured smooth transition of learners from the learning centres to formal schools.

Impact:

- Over 1,500 out-of-school children were enrolled in mainstream schools during this two-year period.
- Parental resistance, especially in Muslim-dominated or migrant neighbourhoods like Khureji Khas and Mustafabad, dropped significantly due to localised trust-building efforts.

6.2 Vidyanjali in Delhi Schools (2016 Onward)

Launched by the Ministry of Education in 2016, By providing non-academic assistance, the Vidyanjali Volunteer Program sought to increase community and private sector involvement in government schools.

Implementation in Delhi NCR:

- Deployed in over 120 schools across South and South West Delhi districts initially.
- Volunteers included retired teachers, corporate professionals, NSS students, and homemakers.
- Activities conducted included:
- Storytelling Sessions: Volunteers narrated inspirational stories, including women achievers and freedom fighters, to encourage girl students.
- Cultural & Dance Workshops: In schools like those in Malviya Nagar and Kalkaji, sessions in Kathak and folk dance were integrated into weekly timetables.
- Basic Science Projects: Conducted using low-cost materials to boost experiential learning.
- Schools also hosted Vidyanjali Melas, where volunteers showcased student art, distributed notebooks, and facilitated parent engagement.

Impact:

- Strengthened community-school bonds, especially in urban middle-income neighbourhoods like Dwarka, Vasant Kunj, and Janakpuri.
- Teachers reported a boost in student confidence and attendance, particularly among previously disengaged students.
- The program helped bridge the resource gap by providing exposure to life skills, reading habits, and community mentorship.

6.3 Ghaziabad and Noida Campaigns (2013–2017)

Ghaziabad and Noida saw a high influx of migrant families working in construction, domestic help, and informal sectors. The transient nature of this population posed a challenge to sustained school enrolment.

SSA’s Local Marketing Innovations:

- **Audio-Enabled School Vans:**
- Used mobile vans equipped with loudspeakers that broadcast pre-recorded messages about school facilities, admission dates, and entitlements.
- Messages were played in Hindi, Bhojpuri, and Bengali, targeting migrant populations from UP, Bihar, and West Bengal.
- Vans circulated in areas like Vasundhara, Indirapuram, and Sector 73–75 in Noida during early mornings and late

evenings when parents were home.

- Collaboration with RWAs (Resident Welfare Associations):
- Posters and pamphlets were distributed in RWA meetings.
- Door-knocking by SSA-appointed mobilisers with endorsement from RWA presidents built credibility among urban poor living in resettlement colonies and unauthorised flats.
- Involvement of Religious Institutions:
- Messages were announced after Friday prayers and Sunday masses in local mosques and churches.
- SSA teams worked with gurudwara and temple trusts to distribute free school materials during community gatherings.

Impact:

- Thousands of families were reached within weeks of launch each year.
- Girls' enrolment improved, particularly among migrant Muslim communities in Ghaziabad's Patel Nagar and Noida's Harola village.
- Parents reported improved trust in government schooling, especially after learning about free entitlements and infrastructure upgrades.

7. IMPACT ANALYSIS

SSA's marketing and outreach campaigns in Delhi NCR were not just symbolic—they were instrumental in transforming public attitudes, increasing school enrolments, mobilising communities, and justifying targeted budgetary allocations. Below is a detailed assessment of these dimensions:

7.1 Enrolment Growth

SSA's marketing interventions significantly influenced school enrolment figures, especially in low-income and migrant-dense areas of Delhi NCR.

- By 2016, Delhi's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for primary education surpassed 95%, among the highest in the country.
- The surge in enrolment was particularly noticeable post-2012, when the "School Chalo Abhiyan" was aggressively promoted in East Delhi, Narela, and Karawal Nagar using community rallies, street theatre, and loudspeaker announcements.
- Urban slums and resettlement colonies, which historically had high dropout rates, saw a reversal. Enrolment of girls aged 6–14 rose notably due to targeted campaigns in areas like Okhla, Jahangirpuri, and Ghaziabad.
- Annual Work Plan reports by the SSA Delhi office (2013–2016) noted an annual increase of 2–3% in enrolment attributed directly to community-based IEC activities.

7.2 Community Awareness

Awareness of SSA and RTE-related entitlements expanded significantly, thanks to focused communication in local languages and culturally familiar formats.

- According to LEP (Learning Enhancement Program) feedback surveys from 2016, 60–70% of parents in surveyed districts like Shahdara, North West Delhi, and Noida recognised the SSA brand or key slogans like "Shiksha Ka Haq."
- In areas where door-to-door outreach and community events were conducted (e.g., Ghaziabad Sector 62, Sangam Vihar), parents could list at least two benefits—such as free uniforms and mid-day meals—linked to government schooling.
- Parental attendance in school events also increased; in some South Delhi schools, SMC meeting participation rose from 40% to 65% after targeted outreach in 2015–16.
- Awareness was notably higher among parents who had exposure to community radio spots and nukkad nataks.

7.3 Volunteer Participation (Vidyanjali Program)

SSA's messaging created avenues for community ownership through structured volunteerism, especially post-2016.

- Within six months of the Vidyanjali Program's Delhi NCR rollout in 2016, over 400 volunteers had registered through the portal or directly with schools.
- Volunteers contributed to:
- Storytelling and life skills sessions
- Creative arts workshops
- Community-school interface events
- High participation was observed in South Delhi (e.g., Lajpat Nagar, CR Park) and Dwarka, where volunteers had better digital access and civic engagement levels.
- Feedback from the Directorate of Education's internal review suggested that over 70% of participating schools felt the presence of volunteers positively influenced student morale and parental trust.



7.4 Financial Insights

Marketing and community outreach were treated as integral components of SSA's Annual Work Plans, with significant budgetary support.

- In the 2015–16 SSA Delhi budget, approximately ₹12–15 crore (≈ 8 –10% of the total budget) was earmarked for:
 - Information, Education & Communication (IEC)
 - Community Mobilisation Activities
 - Training of Block and Cluster Resource Coordinators for outreach
- Key expenditure areas included:
 - Printing and distribution of pamphlets/posters
 - Wall paintings and public hoardings
 - Support for rallies, street plays, and audio-visual content
- Investment in marketing had high returns on awareness and enrolment compared to some other non-infrastructure allocations.
- Some CSR collaborations (e.g., GAIL, ONGC) further supplemented outreach, particularly in school branding and volunteer campaigns.

The SSA's focused marketing strategy in Delhi NCR demonstrated that well-designed and context-sensitive communication can directly support education policy outcomes. The rise in enrolment, growing community trust, volunteer engagement, and budget prioritisation all reinforce the centrality of marketing as more than just promotion—it became a tool for mobilising collective action toward universal education.

8. CHALLENGES IN SSA MARKETING IN DELHI NCR

While SSA's communication and outreach efforts made measurable contributions to enrolment and awareness, several structural and contextual challenges limited the program's marketing efficacy in the Delhi NCR region. These challenges stemmed from demographic diversity, resource disparities, and weak institutional coordination across administrative boundaries.

8.1 Inconsistent Marketing Across Districts

One of the most prominent challenges in SSA's Delhi NCR marketing landscape has been the lack of uniformity in execution across different districts:

- **Urban vs. Peri-Urban Disparities:** South Delhi, with better infrastructure and NGO partnerships, conducted regular awareness activities (e.g., Vidyanjali events, poster campaigns), whereas outer districts like outer Gurugram, Loni (Ghaziabad), and Bawana often lacked visible promotional campaigns.
- **Administrative Disjointedness:** Delhi's SSA initiatives fall under the Directorate of Education, while neighboring regions like Noida and Gurugram are governed by Uttar Pradesh and Haryana education departments respectively. This fragmentation led to non-uniform messaging, disconnected school calendars, and poor coordination in border zones.
- In migrant-dense pockets like Seelampur or Faridabad's industrial colonies, school marketing was either absent or ad hoc—missing key enrollment seasons or cultural festivals that could have been leveraged for outreach.

8.2 Language Barriers in Outreach

The multilingual nature of the Delhi NCR population posed a challenge that SSA's marketing often failed to address effectively:

- Most communication materials (pamphlets, posters, jingles) were limited to Hindi and English, which excluded large segments of migrants from West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, and even Nepali and Urdu-speaking minorities.
- In areas like Trilokpuri, Tughlakabad, and Shahberi, many parents especially women could not engage with official messages, resulting in low awareness of schemes like free textbooks, scholarships for girls, or inclusive education for CWSN.
- Although some districts experimented with multilingual pamphlets and community workers (e.g., Bhojpuri or Bangla-speaking mobilisers in East Delhi), these were localised and non-replicated.

8.3 Lack of Sustained Social Media Presence

Despite Delhi's high internet penetration and smartphone usage, SSA's digital marketing lagged in both visibility and

consistency:

- The Directorate of Education's official platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook) rarely shared dedicated SSA campaign content or updates on volunteer initiatives like Vidyanjali.
- There was no targeted digital outreach on WhatsApp groups or Instagram, which are heavily used in urban and semi-urban households.
- Unlike successful campaigns like Swachh Bharat or Digital India, SSA lacked a centralised digital branding strategy resulting in low recall value among digitally literate parents and youth.
- Some exceptions were driven by NGOs or proactive school principals who created WhatsApp-based enrolment groups, but such initiatives were isolated and lacked government integration or scale.

8.4 Low Involvement of the Private Sector in Communication Strategy

The potential of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in amplifying SSA's marketing efforts was under-utilised:

- Major corporations headquartered in NCR (e.g., in Gurugram or Noida) rarely participated in SSA-branded campaigns, although some supported infrastructure development.
- There was no institutional mechanism within SSA Delhi to onboard private PR/advertising agencies for developing innovative IEC materials or digital content.
- In contrast, successful government campaigns like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao collaborated with private creatives to launch impactful ad films and media partnerships—a model SSA did not adopt at scale.
- School branding opportunities (like painting school boundary walls with sponsor logos and SSA messages) were limited to a few pilot areas and not systematically expanded across the region.

These challenges reveal that while SSA's intent to use marketing as a community mobilisation tool was clear, its execution was uneven and often reactive. Addressing these gaps—particularly in digital outreach, multilingual messaging, inter-district coordination, and public-private partnerships—would be crucial for future education schemes under the unified Samagra Shiksha framework.

9. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen educational outreach and ensure equitable access to information about school facilities and rights under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, SSA marketing practices in Delhi NCR must evolve with changing demographics, communication preferences, and policy priorities. The following are evidence-informed and context-specific recommendations:

9.1 Develop Localized IEC Strategies Tailored to Migrant Populations and Slum Areas

Rationale: Migrant and slum-dwelling families often remain excluded from mainstream educational campaigns due to language, transience, and spatial segregation.

Action Points: Design multilingual communication materials (pamphlets, hoardings, audio spots) in Bhojpuri, Bangla, Maithili, Odia, and Urdu, based on migrant demographics in areas like Seelampur, Bawana, and Ghaziabad industrial belts.

- Partner with local Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), slum leaders, and faith-based organisations to disseminate SSA messages in familiar spaces like temples, mosques, and haats.
- Set up community-based IEC hubs in JJ clusters and unauthorised colonies with visual storytelling materials (e.g., pictorial banners, short videos on tablets) to reach non-literate populations.

9.2 Use Mobile Apps and WhatsApp for Parent Outreach

Rationale: Mobile phones are widely accessible even among low-income families. Yet, SSA has not systematically used low-cost digital channels for two-way communication with parents.

Action Points: Integrate SSA messaging into existing platforms like the "DoE App" or develop a dedicated mobile-friendly IEC dashboard that shares school admission dates, entitlements, and remedial program schedules.

- Use WhatsApp broadcast groups at the school and ward levels to send reminders, video explainers, and parent feedback surveys. Trained School Management Committee (SMC) members can act as moderators.
- Pilot Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems for illiterate parents, providing audio guides on RTE rights, SSA services, and school facilities in local languages.

9.3 Scale Up Vidyanjali with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Partners

Rationale: The Vidyanjali program proved successful in community engagement, but scaling requires sustained funding and professional coordination.

Action Points: Encourage public-private partnerships by inviting CSR units of large NCR-based companies (e.g., Infosys, Maruti Suzuki, HCL) to support Vidyanjali in nearby government schools through:

- Volunteer recruitment drives
- Educational kits
- Content creation (storybooks, videos)

- Develop a Vidyanjali branding kit for volunteers to maintain consistency in messaging and enable visibility for CSR contributors.
- Create a recognition framework (certificates, social media shoutouts, local felicitation events) for top-performing volunteers and partner organisations.

9.4 Include Child-Led Awareness Drives (e.g., Bal Sabha Clubs)

Rationale: Children are effective change agents, especially in influencing peer behavior and sensitizing parents through storytelling, art, and performance.

Action Points: Establish Bal Sabha Clubs in every SSA-covered school, integrating peer-led outreach activities like:

- Wall newspaper creation
- Skits on RTE and girls' education
- Poster-making competitions for enrolment drives
- Conduct child-led enrolment rallies, especially during School Chalo campaigns, to spread awareness in surrounding communities.
- Collaborate with NGOs to train student leaders in communication and advocacy, allowing them to become ambassadors of change in their neighborhoods.

CONCLUSION & INTERPRETATIONS



This research underscores that marketing and outreach are not peripheral activities but central to the success of public education policies like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). In the complex and dynamic setting of Delhi NCR—characterised by urban sprawl, socio-economic disparity, and high internal migration—the role of communication becomes even more critical.

10.1 Strategic Use of Marketing Tools

The analysis demonstrates that SSA employed a wide range of communication and community mobilisation tools to promote school enrolment, retention, and awareness of educational rights:

- Print and outdoor media such as bilingual pamphlets, wall paintings, and hoardings helped build initial visibility, particularly in underserved areas.
- Community-based events like nukkad natak, Bal Sabhas, and door-to-door outreach played a pivotal role in creating trust among low-income and migrant families.
- Programs like Vidyanjali, driven by community volunteers, added depth to engagement and fostered a culture of shared ownership.

These efforts contributed to measurable improvements in enrolment, parental awareness, and volunteer participation, indicating that context-sensitive, locally implemented

marketing can strengthen policy outcomes.

10.2 Limitations in Consistency and Sustainability

However, the study also reveals key limitations in SSA's communication strategy in Delhi NCR:

- There was inconsistent implementation of IEC activities across districts, with urbanised zones like South Delhi receiving more attention than fringe areas in Ghaziabad, Gurugram, or Bawana.
- The lack of a sustained digital presence—despite high smartphone penetration—was a missed opportunity to connect with urban and semi-urban audiences, especially working parents.
- Limited language diversity in campaigns often excluded large sections of migrant populations who did not speak Hindi or English.
- The underutilisation of private and CSR stakeholders restricted innovation and scale, particularly in content creation and digital outreach.

These gaps suggest that while SSA was successful in raising awareness and improving participation, its communication efforts were not systematically institutionalised or future-proofed.

10.3 The Need for a Structured Communication Policy

The findings point to the need for a dedicated and dynamic

communication policy under education schemes like Samagra Shiksha, which has subsumed SSA since 2018.

Such a policy should include:

- Clear messaging frameworks that are adaptable across linguistic and cultural contexts.
- Robust monitoring and feedback systems to evaluate campaign effectiveness.
- Integration of digital platforms (WhatsApp, mobile apps, social media) for real-time outreach.
- Partnership models with NGOs, volunteers, and CSR actors to ensure scalability and innovation.

10.4 Broader Implications

This research contributes to the broader field of educational marketing and policy communication by showing how tailored outreach strategies can increase the uptake of public services in urban and semi-urban contexts. It also highlights that citizen engagement in education is not automatic—it must be cultivated, and communication is the primary tool to do so.

As India moves toward more inclusive and technology-driven models of education, marketing must be seen not merely as dissemination but as a strategic process of dialogue, persuasion, and empowerment—especially for the most marginalized.

REFERENCES

1. Government of India. (2002). The Constitution (Eighty-Sixth Amendment) Act. Ministry of Law and Justice.<https://legislative.gov.in>
2. Government of India. (2009). The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. Ministry of Law and Justice.<https://legislative.gov.in>
3. Ministry of Education. (2018). Samagra Shiksha – An Integrated Scheme for School Education: Framework for Implementation. Government of India.<https://www.education.gov.in>
4. Ministry of Education. (2010–2024). Annual Work Plans & Budgets (AWP&B) – Delhi SSA. Government of NCT Delhi.
5. Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2016). Vidyanjali – A School Volunteer Programme. Government of India.<https://vidyanjali.education.gov.in>
6. National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA). (n.d.). Training Modules for SSA Officials. New Delhi, India.
7. NCERT. (n.d.). Community Mobilization under SSA: A Training Manual. National Council of Educational Research and Training.
8. Oplatka, I. (2007). The emergence of educational marketing: Lessons from the experiences of Israeli principals. *Comparative Education Review*, 51(2), 1–21.<https://doi.org/10.1086/512021>
9. Pratham. (2015). Annual Status of Education Report (ASER).<https://www.asercentre.org>
10. Save the Children. (2016). Education and Social Inclusion in Urban India: Field Experiences from Delhi NCR. Save the Children India.
11. SEVAKS. (2016). Community Engagement Report for Learning Centres in Delhi NCR.
12. UNESCO. (2000). The Dakar Framework for Action – Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments.<https://unesdoc.unesco.org>
13. UNICEF. (2004). Back to School: Guidelines for Education in Emergencies.<https://www.unicef.org>
14. Zaltman, G., & Kotler, P. (1971). Social marketing: An approach to planned social change. *Journal of Marketing*, 35(3), 3–12.<https://doi.org/10.1177/002224297103500302>
15. ASER Centre. (2023). Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2023. Pratham Education Foundation.<https://www.asercentre.org>
16. Foskett, N. H. (2002). Marketing. In T. Bush & L. Bell (Eds.), *The principles and practice of educational management* (pp. 234–248). Paul Chapman Publishing.
17. Government of India. (2002). The Constitution (Eighty-Sixth Amendment) Act. Ministry of Law and Justice.<https://legislative.gov.in>
18. Government of India. (2009). The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. Ministry of Law and Justice.<https://legislative.gov.in>
19. Kotler, P., & Zaltman, G. (1971). Social marketing: An approach to planned social change. *Journal of Marketing*, 35(3), 3–12.<https://doi.org/10.1177/002224297103500302>
20. Ministry of Education. (2018). Samagra Shiksha – An Integrated Scheme for School Education: Framework for Implementation. Government of India.<https://www.education.gov.in>
21. Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2016). Vidyanjali: A School Volunteer Programme. Government of India.<https://vidyanjali.education.gov.in>
22. Ministry of Human Resource Development. (Various years, 2010–2024). SSA Annual Work Plans & Budgets (AWP&B), Delhi NCR. Government of NCT Delhi.
23. NCERT. (n.d.). Training Manual for Community Mobilization under SSA. National Council of Educational Research and Training.
24. NIEPA. (n.d.). Capacity Building Modules for District and Block Resource Coordinators. National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration.
25. Oplatka, I. (2007). The emergence of educational marketing: Lessons from the experiences of Israeli principals. *Comparative Education Review*, 51(2), 1–21.<https://doi.org/10.1086/512021>
26. Pratham. (2015). Mobilizing Communities for Education Access: SSA Partnership Reports. Pratham Education Foundation.
27. Save the Children. (2016). Inclusion and Outreach in Urban India: Learnings from Delhi Slums. Save the Children India.<https://www.savethechildren.in>
28. SEVAKS. (2016). Learning Centre Campaign Report (2014–2016)
29. UNESCO. (1990). World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs (Jomtien Declaration).<https://unesdoc.unesco.org>
30. UNESCO. (2000). The Dakar Framework for Action – Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments.<https://unesdoc.unesco.org>

31. UNESCO & UNICEF. (2010). Inclusive Education in South Asia: Case Studies from India and Neighboring Countries.<https://unesdoc.unesco.org>
32. United Nations. (2000). Millennium Development Goals (MDG 2): Achieve Universal Primary Education.<https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>