CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, conclusions and recommendations

5.0 Introduction

Summary of the present study, conclusions drawn on the basis of the results of this study and recommendations are presented in this chapter.

5.1 Summary of the study

After independence, universalization of primary education is a constitutional mandate. But in view of immense difficulties the constitutional directive has remained unfulfilled. It is a matter of serious concern in India that we have yet to achieve universalization of primary education. In India the problems of primary education are mainly nonenrollment, non-attendance, stagnation, dropout, etc. The causes are due to social, economic, educational, political, administrative, language, etc. The review of contemporary research has revealed that many studies were conducted on wastage (stagnation) and dropout. No direct study on non-detention policy in West Bengal is available. There is no study to show if wastage and dropout have shown any remarkable change in current years. So the study is especially relevant and significant in the context of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) presently running in various districts of West Bengal for achieving the universalization of primary education. In this study the following variables – stagnation, dropout, socio-economic background, non-detention policy, and attainment level of students at the end of class IV are taken.
Objectives of the study were as follows:

• To find out the rate of stagnation at primary stage (class I to IV) before and after declaration of non-detention policy (NDP)
• To find out the time taken by the students to complete primary education before and after declaration of NDP
• To find out the rate of dropout at primary stage of education (before arriving at classes II, III and IV) before and after declaration of NDP
• To find out whether there is any difference between male and female students as regards the rate of dropout and stagnation at primary stage of education
• To study the socio-economic background of dropout, stagnant and promoted students at primary stage of education
• To find out the implementation of non-detention policy at primary school
• To find out the various constraints for the effective implementation of non-detention policy
• To find out the causes of dropout at primary stage
• To find out the attainment level at the end of class IV of primary stage of education.

Multi-phasic stratified random sampling technique was adopted. Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas and Midnapore districts of West Bengal were selected on the basis of literacy level (low, medium and advanced) for this study. Eighteen primary schools were selected from where the records of attendance are available during 1974 to 1981 and 1990-91 to 1997-98 from these districts. Sample of the study was, all
students who were admitted to class I in the academic year 1974 as the period before declaration of non-detention policy and 1990-91 as period after declaration of non-detention policy. 200 students of class IV in the session 1997-98 and another seventy two dropouts, seventy two promoted and seventy two stagnant students totaling 216 in classes I, II, III and IV in the academic year 1997-98 were selected from the eighteen schools of the three districts. 51 teachers (available) out of 60 and 18 headmasters were taken from the eighteen schools.

Various tools used for data collection were as follows:

- Questionnaire on general information of the school.
- Student attendance registers (class I to IV from 1974 to 1981 and 1990-91 to 1997-98)
- Interview schedule on the opinion of teachers regarding non-detention policy at primary education
- Schedule on socio-economic background (income, education and occupation)
- Checklist regarding causes of dropout
- Attainment level test.

All the tools were prepared by the researcher under the guidance of Dr. S. Chakrabarti, Department of Education, University of Calcutta and finalized on the basis of the result of pilot study and opinion of experts.

Information regarding dropout and stagnation was collected from students’ attendance registers of primary schools. Headmasters and teachers were interviewed regarding non-detention policy and general
information of the schools. Parents were interviewed to assess socio-economic background of the students and also information was collected to know the causes of dropouts. The attainment level test was administered on 200 students of class IV of 18 schools.

The data was analyzed by different statistical techniques. For quantitative analysis of data, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, z-test, $\chi^2$-test and ANOVA were applied and qualitative analysis was done on the basis of observations obtained during visit to schools and houses of students. Conclusions of this study are drawn on the basis of the analysis and are given below.

5.2 Conclusions

1. It may be concluded on the basis of the findings of present study that in both the phases the rate of stagnation was high in class I (ref. tables 5A and 5B). The rate of stagnation at the primary stage of education significantly decreased after the declaration of non-detention policy (ref. table 61). Whereas the rates of stagnation in classes I, II and III in 1st phase were 51.58%, 24.20% and 20.45% respectively, during the 2nd phase it came down to 26.99%, 7.54% and 5.65% (ref tables 5A and 5B). In both the phases the rate of stagnation in class IV was negligible (ref. fig. 2). There were also differences in the rate of stagnation in three districts (ref table 67). The rate of stagnation in class I was higher in Murshidabad (low literate district) than that of South 24-Parganas (medium literate district) and in comparison with South 24-Parganas the rate was lower in Midnapore (advanced literate district). Literacy campaign in West Bengal was first started in the
year 1990 in Midnapore district. Its influence might have reflected in the result of this present study.

2. The students of the 2nd phase have taken significantly less time ($t_{obs} = 9.20 > t_{0.05,789} = 1.97$) to complete their primary education as compared to the students of the 1st phase. The students of the 2nd phase have taken 8 months and 7 days less time in average than the students of the 1st phase to complete the primary education. For the 2nd phase, an identical result was seen in the three districts under study (ref. table 69). It was also noticed that learners of Midnapore (advanced literate district) have taken less time to complete primary education in both the phases than the learners of South 24 Parganas (medium literate district) and Murshidabad (low literate district).

3. The rates of dropout in primary education (class I-IV) and in its different classes (classes I, II and III) were significantly lower in 2nd phase (ref. table 70). Whereas the rates of dropout in classes I, II and III were 41.74%, 15.92% and 14.02% respectively in the 1st phase, in 2nd phase the rates decreased to 20.12%, 9.20% and 6.31% respectively (ref. tables 15A and 15B). The dropout in primary education (class I-IV) in the 2nd phase reduced significantly ($Z_{obs} = 9.52 > Z_{0.05} = 1.64$) in comparison with the 1st phase (ref. table-70). It may be concluded that stagnation (1st phase - 51.58%, 2nd phase -26.99%) and dropout (1st phase - 41.74%, 2nd phase - 20.12%) was highest in class I. The rate of dropout in primary education (Class I-IV) in both the phases in Midnapore, an advanced literate district, was lowest in comparison with the South 24-Parganas
(medium literate district) and Murshidabad (low literate district) districts (ref. table 20).

4. There was no significant difference between boys and girls in the rate of stagnation at primary stage of education in both the phases (ref. table 79). In the 1st phase the rate of dropout in primary stage of education (Class I-IV) among girls (64.29%) was significantly higher ($Z_{obs}=3.37 > Z_{0.05}=1.64$) than that among boys (54.10%) but in the 2nd phase there was no significant difference ($Z_{obs}=0.67 < Z_{0.05}=1.64$) between boys and girls (ref. table 80).

5. It may be concluded from data taken for the present study that the main causes of dropout were found to be economic (41.67%), health problem (4.17%), migration (2.77%), strict admission test for entering class V (2.77%) and other problems (5.56%) (ref. table 40B).

6. It may be concluded that among the 3 groups of 72 promoted, 72 stagnant and 72 dropout, the promoted students had better socio-economic background in terms of income, education and occupation than those of the stagnant and dropout students. Number of families with stagnant students (80.56%) living below the poverty line was greater than those with promoted students (58.33%). On the other hand number of families with dropped out students (93.06%) were greater than those with stagnant students (ref. table 34). One of the interesting findings was that the educational level of the parents, specially of the mother was higher for the promoted students in comparison to the parents, specially mothers of the dropout students. The investigator
feels that education of the parents is influential factor. Again most of the family members of the dropouts are illiterate (58.33%) fall below the poverty line or engaged in low paid works such as daily wage earning, agricultural or non-agricultural labour or petty businesses such as peddling or tending of cows and livestocks of others (ref. table 37).

7. In the present study it was found from the performance of 200 students of class IV of 1997 academic session in attainment level test that 15% of the students got ‘A-grade’ i.e. more than 80% marks, 54% students scored between 51% to 80% marks, roughly one-third i.e. near about 31% scored below 50% (ref. table 55). It was also noticed that in each subject of Bengali, Mathematics and Environmental Studies the mean score of student performance was more than 50%. The combined mean score was 58%. The attainment level of boys and girls for class IV had no significant difference ($t_{obs}=1.20 < t_{0.05,198}=1.97$). The performance of students of class IV was better in schools where non-detention policy was partially followed than in schools where non-detention policy not followed (ref. table 88).

8. Though the non-detention policy was officially declared in West Bengal in 1981, in the present study it was found that out of 18 schools taken for the study, none of the schools could fully implement non-detention policy in practice. It may be concluded for the study that only 39% schools implemented it partially and only 28% rarely followed it (ref. table 47). It may also be concluded from the findings that all the schools, gave stress only on text book based subjects and
terminal evaluation were carried on these subjects. But no importance is given to productive and creative works, direct experience activities, sports and games etc.. In majority of schools progress report and cumulative record cards were kept only for maintaining official records and it was not properly used for academic improvement of the students.

9. On the basis of findings following constraints were found to implement non-detention policy effectively:

- Lack of inservice teachers’ training for conducting continuous evaluation and imparting remedial teaching
- Over-crowded classes
- Irregular attendance of some students
- Teacher’s engagement in non-teaching activities like different types of panchayat works, preparation of voter list, census, etc.
- Non-availability of study materials like exercise books, slate, pencil, khata, etc.
- Non-availability of text books and printed proforma of cumulative record card and progress report at the beginning of the academic session.

10. It may be concluded that if all the components of non-detention policy like immediate evaluation, terminal evaluation, remedial teaching, cumulative record card and progress report had been implemented successfully in primary schools it could have been reduced dropout rate and attainment level of students could have been improved.
5.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the result of present study it may be said that to reduce wastage due to stagnation and the problem of dropouts fully implementation of non-detention policy (NDP) is essential. Through effective implementation of continuous evaluation throughout the year in primary school non-detention policy will be successful and performance of students will be improved. Only official declaration of the policy does not ensure the success of NDP. On the basis of this study the following recommendations are made:

1. Each school should have separate class room for each class. Rooms will be well ventilated with proper sitting accommodation. This part of the recommendation arises because of inconvenience pointed out by the teachers that immediate and continuous evaluation becomes difficult with learners of different primary classes (I-IV) sitting in the same room. In this connection Operation Blackboard Scheme incorporated into National Education Policy (1986) can be mentioned. The policy recommended “Provision will be made of essential facilities in primary schools, including at least two reasonably large rooms that are usable in all weather, and the necessary toys, blackboards, maps, charts, and other learning materials. At least two teachers, one of whom is a woman, should work in every school, the number increasing as early as possible to one teacher per class. A phased drive, symbolically called Operation Blackboard, will be undertaken with immediate effect to improve primary schools all over the country”. The revised draft of National Policy on Education and its Programme of
Action (1992) suggested further improvement of physical facilities in primary schools in terms of more number of class rooms, teachers, separate toilet for girls etc. So it may be recommended that physical facilities supplied under operation blackboard scheme should be implemented effectively in all primary schools. It was revealed while visiting primary schools that teachers can not use science kits while teaching supplied under operation blackboard scheme in primary schools as these are written in English language which caused difficulty to understand by the students. So it may be recommended that the science kits should be written in regional language and then it can be used effectively in the class room.

2. The field study has revealed that though the prescribed text books and printed proforma of cumulative record card and progress report are supplied free of cost yet the distributing authorities miserably fail to supply them in adequate number and in the beginning of the academic session. In this regard the recommendation of Mitra commission (1992) is very relevant and significant. The Commission said “The District Primary Education Council may be entrusted with the responsibility for supervising this task; they must however co-ordinate effectively with the District Inspectors of schools and the panchayat samiti”. The researcher feels that the supply of text books in the beginning of the academic session will promote teaching-learning process and also motivate children to great extent. So it may be recommended that the government should provide text books, printed proforma of cumulative record card and progress report and other
study materials in the beginning of academic session for smooth running of primary classes.

3. It is also observed that supply of free text books alone can not guarantee regular attendance of students and some auxiliary materials like pens, pencils, exercise books and other study materials are beyond the purchasing capacity of many guardians. Public Report on Basic Education (Probe, 1999) survey found that on average, the expenditure on fees, books, slates, and uniforms for a child was Rs. 318 a year. This is a high level of expenditure relative to income for many households such as that of an agricultural labourer. The present investigator feels that providing study materials, exercise books for each subject and other study materials will facilitate day to day class room activities, conducting continuous evaluation and schools will be attractive and pleasant to the children. These may reduce dropout considerably.

4. It is observed in the study that apart from text book based subjects there are other areas in the curriculum like creative activities, physical education, games and sports which are rarely practised and evaluated in some schools. Lack of infrastructural facilities, proper training, absence of adequately qualified teachers are some of the major constraints. So District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) may develop materials for productive and creative works through innovative research and these materials should be updated from time to time. So it is recommended that DIET should provide training to
teachers in above mentioned areas time to time and update their knowledge and skill.

5. The present study has noted that schools (though fewer in number) which have scope for creative activities, music, dance, etc. have better attendance. Chakrabarti, S. (1998) in her research study of impact of music and sports in primary education has shown that the quality of learning and attendance of children could be improved through the introduction of music and sports. She has also found that this programme will lead to better retention of children in primary schools. In the academic year 1996-97 the scheme of joyful learning (Anandapath) was introduced in West Bengal. The investigator strongly recommend that the introduction of music and sports in primary school curriculum will definitely enhance teaching learning process and increase attendance and retention of students in primary schools.

6. The present study revealed that irregular attendance of students was one of the important constraints for implementation of immediate evaluation in primary schools. In the Ninth Plan it is said that “National Nutrition Programme Scheme will be operated on the concept of a local area specific approach for the targeted population and its decentralized governance with the help of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). This will ensure increased attendance in school”. Recently, Noble Laureate Professor Amartya Sen (2002) through the trust ‘Pratchi’ surveyed rural areas of West Bengal and strongly recommended for the supply of mid-day
meal (cooked) everyday instead of supplying of free rice at the end of the month with the help of the workers of ‘Anganwadi’. It was found in this study that 3 kgs. of rice was supplied to each student per month. Teachers opined that students are present in the school on the day of supply of rice but their attendance are very irregular otherwise and for this incentive children did not dropout from schools. It may be recommended that instead of supply of raw rice once in a month cooked food should be given to children every day and it will enhance the regular attendance of the children.

7. It is observed from the present study that the rate of stagnation and dropout in class I was high than that of other higher classes of primary education. National Policy on Education 1986 suggested Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). In this policy it is said “Day care centres will be provided as a support service for universalization of primary education, to enable girls engaged in taking care of siblings to attend school and as a support service for working women belonging to poorer sections. Programmes of ECCE will be child oriented, focussed around play and the individuality of the child. Formal methods and introduction of the 3 R’s will be discouraged at this stage. The local community will be fully involved in these programmes. A full integration of child care and preprimary education will be brought about both as a feeder and a strengthening factor for primary education”. So it may be recommended that ECCE as suggested by National Policy on Education 1986 should be implemented effectively so that schools will be attractive and retention of the children will be increased. It also recommended that members of
panchayat, village education committee, and teachers should visit regularly local households and make the parents aware of importance and significance of continuing education.

8. The present study found that the rate of dropout was low in the district with advanced literacy rate. In the 2nd phase dropout has been reduced to some extent and this may be one of the causes of the impact of total literacy campaign (TLC) running in various districts of West Bengal. It was also found that the impact of TLC makes the parents aware of sending their children to school. So it may be recommended that various schemes for achieving universal elementary education like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, District Primary Education Programme and the literacy campaign in our country should work hand in hand.

9. It is observed from the study that the wastage due to stagnation in primary stage of education can be reduced through remedial teaching given throughout the year in academic session. National Policy on Education 1986 recommended that “A child centred and activity based process of learning should be adopted at the primary stage. First generation learners should be allowed to set their own pace and be given supplementary remedial instruction”. Yash Pal Committee (1992-93) recommended that no home work should be given excepting extension and exploration in the home environment. In view of the above, the present investigator recommends that remedial teaching should be given to those who are first generation learners which will reduce wastage. The investigator further recommends that the teachers
must identify the slow learners and identify the specific areas of weakness and teach accordingly.

10. Findings of the present study show that the high teacher-pupil ratio is one of the constraints for implementation of non-detention policy. In this study 55% teachers opined that for the implementation of non-detention policy, the ratio should be 1:25. 30% teachers opined it should be 1:30 and the rest 15% teachers preferred it for 1:35. Mazumder Committee (1997) and Yash Pal Committee (1992-93) both are in favour of 1:30 for the improvement of primary education. On the basis of these opinions, the present investigator recommends that teacher-pupil ratio is to be brought down. One teacher per class is the best condition, if it is not feasible, multi-grade teaching can be introduced through more action research programme.

11. It was revealed from the present study that lack of inservice training for implementing various components of non-detention policy and adequate knowledge of teachers about the policy itself was one of the major constraints. Teachers must know the rationale behind the non-detention policy. They need to know to identify slow learners and how to give them remedial teaching, conducting immediate evaluation, methodology of maintaining cumulative record card and progress report. Bhattacharyya (2001), a journalist, reported that under District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), the lion's share of the total expenditure went for the training of the teachers but our research findings show that the impact of training did not reach to the classroom due to inadequate and insufficient training. In the light of the above it
is recommended that the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) should conduct intensive training course for implementing various components of non-detention policy, after that the teachers should put it into practice, report the inconvenience from the feedback received therein, corrective measures will be taken. This practice should continue for years together till the desired goal is achieved. Effective supervision is essential for this purpose. Supervising team including experts from Primary Teachers’ Training Institute, District Institute of Education and Training and circle Inspector should visit schools frequently and this work should be monitored by District Primary Education Council.

12. It was found from the study when researcher compare the socio-economic background among promoted, stagnant and dropout students that about 93% of dropout learners come from families below poverty line. Iradication of poverty is directly related to economy of our country. So it may be recommended that the various schemes under Ninth Five Year Plan for poverty alleviation like Kasturba Gandhi Rojgar Yojana, Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana, Swarnajyanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, etc. are to be implemented effectively along with various educational schemes for promotion of primary education.

13. It was observed that the performance of students of class IV was better in schools where non-detention policy was partially followed than in schools where non-detention policy was not followed. It may be recommended that the weaker students should be identified by the
teachers and will be given remedial teaching till they attain competency level of the particular class in primary education and then they will be promoted to next higher class.

14. Parent-teacher Committee is essential for every school to understand students' problems regarding their educational progress, attendance and other problems. In this regard it is worth to mention the study conducted by Amartya Sen (2002) by 'Pratichi' Trust funded by him mentioned that parent-teacher association should be encouraged. The present study endorses this view of Professor Amartya Sen. It may be concluded by saying that the two pillers of scholastic world namely, the home and the school should understand each other better.