Preface of this humble research venture necessarily assumes the form of a self-assessment of the worker in undertaking such a highly critical and challenging issue of education of contemporary West Bengal as the recently introduced 'New' facet of Primary Education. This work does not simply involve a complex historical backdrop covering quite a long time-sequence but more so it contains a jerking breakthrough thrust negating many a thing traditionally sustained. This naturally evoked a world of conflicting reactions and problems of debatable nature generating from them. Since the inception of this 'new' Chapter during the eighties Primary Education in this State succeeded drawing immediate attention not only of the academicians but also of the cross-sections of the populace both directly and indirectly related to this very 'basic' stage of universal education. Such a field quite a-new however, remained virgin and open awaiting careful observation, critical exploration and rational follow-up: a thorough-bred cultivation of it.

As one related to the world of teaching for a pretty long period and at present as a senior Lecturer in the Department of Education, Calcutta University, this humble educator developed a growing curiosity for this field which ultimately emboldened her to undertake this research work as suggested by her erstwhile respected teacher Dr. T. R. Majumdar ultimately shouldering the
great responsibility of supervising the entire exercise. It is simply redundant and sheer formality, this worker thinks, for her to express gratitude to Dr. Majumdar for the obvious reason that the worker, in course of carrying out her work, had not for a moment missed receiving guidance and counselling from her supervisor as an ever compassionate inspiring teacher.

In the practical part of its implementation this work did require to evolve a wide communicative network comprising a multifaceted data-based infrastructure. This certainly had been for the worker the most difficult part to cope with which she could achieve only for the unstinted help forthcoming from quite a good number of 'Samaritans'. They volunteered her assistance in very many ways enabling her thereby to reach the target. How can she name them all the number being so many? Even then few deserves special selective mention. Dr. Asok K. Ghosh a senior University colleague, rendered considerable technical assistance. Dr. G.R. Mitra and Sri Bhabes Moitra, too, helped her a lot. She must not fail to remember the warmth of company received from her husband, father, father-in-law, sister, brother-in-law in seeing through this work. Dr. S.P. Bhattacharyya of her own department also deserves mention for his sympathy shown to her.

The worker further seeks to avail herself of this opportunity in recognising with due deference the help she had
so abundantly received from diverse relevant sources of which institutions like the British Council, U.S.I.S., Directorate of Primary Education, Board of Primary Education, Government of West Bengal, Primary Teachers' Organisations, State Council for Educational Research and Training (S.C.E.R.T.), Primary Teachers' Training Institutes and as individuals Smt. Santu Pal, Teacher-In-Charge, A.J.C. Bose College of Education, as well as a good number of her colleagues and students in the process of data collection.

This work is just a beginning step which this worker is quite aware of, suffers from natural limitations. What this venture has sought to do is to make a very sensitive problem-area of great educational significance somewhat exposed to the academic world and to unfold a 'new' field pregnant with controversial issues for future fellow researchers to traverse. This field is of special significance as it exhibits its deviational nature characterized by tradition-breaking change and innovative experimentation, non-academic influences and stress, conflicting trends and fluidity. All these make it extremely difficult for any single research undertaking such as this to do even minimum proper justice to a topic of this nature, scope and dimension.

Last but not the least, this research worker had to get this work done in the midst of a number of constraints many of which had been beyond her control. This explains the possible omissions and commissions entering into this work for which the worker most humbly begs to be excused.

Mita Mitra