INTRODUCTION
P R E A M B L E

The prime purpose of introduction in the present undertaking, as I feel, is to set the problem and other connected issues in a normal form with regularisation so as to keep it free from an unsystematic abrupt approach. The work under consideration follows the above structure. To make this introduction relatively specific and in order, the structural components have been placed with appropriate sense of uniformity, of course as far as possible and practicable. This initial chapter primarily deals with the logic in selecting the topic. Along with the same other issues which are coherent with regard to necessity and scope for this research have also been taken into account. It is supposed that all the above mentioned points will not only justify the real 'introduction' but also point out the usefulness of this chapter.

WHY THIS UNDERTAKING

It may be mentioned that the phrase 'why this undertaking' is a self emergent enquiry. To begin with, it cropped up from the understanding of the worker herself. Later it was thought of that the same was equally important to others, specially to the readers who are interested on this issue. Without making proper clarity on this point, the problem or the topic cannot be focussed properly. From readers' point of view both for enquiring on the problem and in finding out the answer proper, this part is no less appropriate.
For the purpose of research, specially for the Doctoral dissertation, there are large number of problems relevant to the area of education. In such spectrum of topical problems, the selection of the present topic must be provided with rational justification. The reasons herein are not decisively final. In addition to the criteria mentioned here, there may be many more reasons of alliance, depending on the situation, related to the process of understanding and the broad working potentiality. Without extending further in details, the preference points have been brought out here.

Formal education is concerned with specific and specialised areas. In structural sense it begins with Primary Education. Naturally, the initial spectrum pattern of education must be on a solid and sound foundation. Otherwise continuity of the same may be restricted. Primary Education is not the recognition or identification of alphabets and numerals. It is not merely an exercise which deals with combination of letters to form words leading to structuralization of the sentence. In the same way it is not only a training to have mastery for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of numbers. These exercises are never underestimated nor any proposal is advocated to exclude these contents from Primary Education. It is only to be stated that the already spelt out exercises are the basic methodology for making the students literate. Albeit this does not always mean education. Any education of any form can never be complete and fruitful without exposition. In case of Primary Education, the exposition part is perhaps most essential.
In any formal education, and the Primary level is no exception, all forms of necessary formalities are to be maintained. Minimum deviation from basic formality may give rise to lapses in formal education. For the purpose of apprehending the basic formality, the best way is to study and to understand the structural and functional corporates. Both are equally of vital importance. Without structure proper function can hardly be thought of. On the other hand, if the function is not taken care of the structure becomes defunct and does not convey any sense. Keeping both these prime issues in mind, the total work has been formulated in such a way so that both the structural and functional components may be taken care of for the purpose of achieving full-proof result. Leading components, like teachers, students and guardians have also been included. In the same way other accessories of materialistic nature, as schools and curriculum, have been given due importance. Keeping in view of the total frame, the structure of this work has been formulated accordingly. All the components stated earlier, related to Primary Education, have been studied in great depth and necessary details.

Turning back to the reason for selection of the topic, a few more points are to be properly dealt with. Justification of Primary Education has already been touched upon in the structural part and in particular the curriculum appears to play a vital role. About a decade back, more specifically in 1981, a new curriculum for Primary Education had been drawn under the auspices, care and guidance of the Government of West Bengal. This led to the emergence of a 'new' curriculum for Primary Education in West Bengal. This
does not mean that the preceding curriculum, although replaced by a 'new' one, need be deemed obsolete and irrelevant. The word 'new' can hardly be used if it is not a modified version of the pre-existing curriculum. It needs to be deciphered whether in formulating the 'new' curriculum any threadbare pedagogical analysis and proper assessment had been undertaken in comparative assessment with the earlier curriculum.

The question comes up why this 'new' curriculum? An attempt may be made for creating something new when the existing one appears to be useless. To justify this point the useless curriculum may be made useful with the inclusion of new ideas. There is another aspect. The best curriculum may be made on the basis of a new context with need-based generating forces on the one hand and the existing potentials on the other. To understand both the sectors, collection of relevant information is essential. This dimension is to be explored for formulation of strategies of the 'new' curriculum. In this case one cannot lose sight of the varied constraints and problems, when both 'old' and 'new' curricula for Primary Education are in operational existence in West Bengal. At present, i.e. after about a decade, the situation may be considered mature to test and examine the quality of the running curriculum and the positive and negative effects which have come out of it. About (so called) 'old' curriculum of Primary Education the materials are still available along with course contents, books, methods of teaching etc. It is not too late to get the impression of the guardians of the 'old' vis-a-vis 'new' curriculum. Finally students are the net products of curriculum-oriented education. Many of them are
still in their studenthood. All these possibilities have created a favourable circumstance for the purpose of collecting information and data, both for 'old' and 'new' curriculum.

In this work a final assessment has been attempted for the purpose of a comparative study of the 'old' and 'new' curriculum of Primary Education. All the relevant factors, such as curriculum, school, students, guardians and the final results in terms of attitudes and achievements still await scientific probe and objective assessment. As a student of Education, the worker feels an obligation on her part to find out the results and to put forward the same before the policy makers and the public.

RELEVANCE AND NECESSITY OF THE WORK

In any academic oriented research work, there are provisions of aims and objectives. The basic or fundamental or theoretical considerations are relevant. The aim is oriented primarily for the purpose of acquiring more information, leading to furtherance of knowledge. On the other hand, there are applied forms which are practically action-oriented. The result of such researches is helpful to make necessary estimation and relevant evaluation. Action-oriented research should be conducted prior to implementation of policy matter and planning. At times, even after the operation, at any point of time, either in midway or finalization, similar researches may be carried out to identify the merits and demerits of methodology and components of the project, both in
qualitative and quantitative terms. Accordingly, necessary suggestions may be prescribed for the purpose of development in the right direction in appropriate manner.

In the background of above explanatory note, the problem undertaken may properly be considered. Course curriculum at any level of education may be compared with architectural planning. Naturally, this should be made in accordance with the need on the one hand and available resources on the other. Secondly, if in such structural framework any error is made, even unintentionally or accidentally, the total structure may collapse, at least, major damages are not unlikely. In the prevailing circumstance, the present undertaking is neither absolutely theoretical nor totally applied. This research project is action-oriented in nature with the coverage of base line in the form of theoretical understanding.

Change and/or modification is useful provided the necessities are there. An existing curriculum may be replaced if it is found to be erroneous, giving rise to malvolent results. Changes are well taken in terms of existing needs of essential criteria. Those are meant for the purpose of development. In drawing up the present curriculum neither demerits of the previous one have been shown nor the included changes appear to be developmental in nature. In such a situation, the obvious question comes in - why this 'new' curriculum?

The present problem is very acute because it is concerned with Primary Education. This is not only the base level but it constitutes the basic substratum of education. Education, specia-
lly formal education, is important not only for the individual or the group or the community but it is essential for nation building. In spite of its long history of culture and civilization, India still stands educationally backward. Even after more than four decades of independence the literacy rates are very poor and it is 57.72% in West Bengal as per Government record (Census, 1991). In case of literates the individuals may or may not be provided with Primary Education. This observation appears to be significant during the present day when adult education and literacy for all within stipulated areas are in full swing. In broad sense literacy means the capability of reading and writing. This does not mean formal education in senso stricto.

Not only within the arena of Indian subcontinent but even in case of West Bengal the overall condition of the students of Primary Education is seldom uniform. There are great diversities in economic condition, occupational status, cultural milieu and other essential characters related to education. Herein a few points may be indicated. In urban situation, like Calcutta, the number of Primary schools are not at par with the prospecting students of the level of Primary Education. The figures are 1,343 and 304,000 (males 150,000 and females 154,000) for number of schools and population within the age group between 6 and 9 years respectively. Taken those figures as the numerical criteria, the average number of respective students is 226.36 per school. On the other hand, such a figure of average is too high. Simultaneously, all the children within the
specified age group are students. Keeping in view of this ambiguity, computation may be made in other way. As noted above there are total number of 1343 Primary schools in Calcutta which include all the types of Primary schools. Again, keeping in view of average roll strength of students as 150 per school, the total number of students comes to 201450. On the other hand, the total population of Calcutta is 43,88,262, pointing to an estimation of 877652 families. The expected number of students of Primary level is same. All the figures show a conspicuous incompatibility between number of schools and expected number of students. Even in case of Primary schools, there are varied forms and types. As a result, in some Primary schools, as Missionary, Private and Government, specially meant for upper-middle class, there is acute dearth of accommodation. On the contrary, in other types of schools, as Government-aided and C.M.C., meant for low income group and working class the number of students is much below the total accommodation and in-take capacity. In rural situations at time concentration of Primary schools is often found to be such as to produce multiple cases where the distance among Primary schools is quite high. There are villages from where the Primary schools are situated at a reasonable distance. All these points show a considerable amount of nonuniformity with regard to Primary education, especially of schools.

Further disuniformity is found in case of schools with regard to accommodation, other facilities, teaching aids, etc. In fact incompatibilities are more in the total spectrum of Primary Education in West Bengal, compared to the amount of uniformity. It is necessary to know and understand - why the previous curriculum has been set aside and the replacement was made with a so called 'new'
curriculum. In terms of stagewise context, the relevance of it with secondary education was nowhere pointed out, although a continuous uniformity from Primary to higher level, as of University, had been in existence. This topic has been selected with specific intention. It may be assumed that there are reasons on the basis of which the 'new' curriculum for Primary Education has been formulated. The topic undertaken is an action-oriented one with the conjunction of basic research methodology and techniques.

GLANCING THE EARLIER WORKS

In any research, customarily a review of previous works is included. This is important because on the basis of such review an idea may be formulated about the present condition concerned with the topic. This also points to the ideas connected with the works either in support or against. A broad outline of review of earlier works may be helpful for vindication of selecting the topic. Despite the fact that the review of earlier works is of immense utility value it is felt that proper justice on this area can hardly be made for obvious practical constraints.

This research work with its orientation on education in a changing scenario of social transformation calls for a synoptic review of some relevant works conducted at different parts of India in the contemporary time period. The works which have been scanned for necessary help are to be incorporated here in the form of review.

Primary Education being the basic substratum of formal education is intensely important for the progress and development of the country. Despite this the area has remained virtually untouched
and hence appeals for exploration of information to the present worker. No significant works had been carried out in this direction, at least within the limited knowledge of the worker. Two more points emerged which should have drawn attention of the interested scholars. One of these includes the initial phase of the new syllabus. It was expected that in one way or other either the policy maker or the people responsible for 'new' curriculum would jointly undertake investigation work towards evaluation of this 'new' curriculum. Practically no such venture had been attempted even in minimum form. Secondly, when the 'new' syllabus came into effect, the appropriate utility of the same should have been recorded. If not, there should have been made a comparative study of the 'old' and 'new' syllabus. Here too scarcely any endeavour was made. As a result this part of dealing with the review of works is hard to carry out.

What was actually done by the syllabus makers at the time of introducing the 'new' one had been an exercise of deleneating the so-called objectives and expected achievements coming out of it in a blanket form. The single criticism levelled against the previous syllabus was simply its traditionality and hence its further conti­nuation was deemed unacceptable. It was declared outdated and rejected lock stockbarrel being replaced by the 'new' one.

Centering round this issue of change over we come across two separate distinct groups - one may be called traditionalist and the other reformist. The former group has always been against this new syllabus, highlighting a number of points. First, the 'old'
curriculum had been in use for a very long period of time which
amply justifies the utility of the same. Secondly, nowhere the
basic logic in support of better utility of the 'new' curriculum
has been stated. The second group, on the other hand, subscribed
to the view that the whole syllabus should be reformed in the light
of the present requirement. But nowhere the specific illustrations
were set forth. From an overview it appears that the first group
puts forward rational statements with proper logic. The same seem
to be lacking in case of the second group.

In the context of the 'new' curriculum of Primary Education
the exclusion of English from Primary Education had a big role to
play. It was argued that in the beginning there should be one
language at the Primary stage of education so that the teaching
process will be easy as the additional load of the second language
will no more be there. The traditional group points to the quality
of the outgoing generations of adults who had the Primary Education
with old curriculum in which English was a compulsory second
language. Secondly, after the completion of Primary Education,
better educational exposure was expanded by English. It acted as
right supplementary medium of instruction for better identification.
Earlier English was taught for more than 10 years starting from
Primary level and if the same course and contents are to be taught
within 5 years, the time difference between the two will be the
significant factor to work as detrimental at the subsequent stage.
In response to the same there was no proper answer. It is learnt
that in majority of the Primary schools despite the exclusion of
English from the 'new' curriculum the teaching of the same was not
discontinued. This led both to a firm connection and confrontation between the teachers and the Government. This is pointed out in one of the recent Commission report on education (Report of the Education Commission, 1992, Government of West Bengal, Asoke Mitra Commission).

After independence, more specifically after 60's, the growth of English medium Primary schools has turned to be one of conspicuous features. Very recently the Government of West Bengal has decided to render approval to English medium schools provided no funds are asked from the State Government for teachers' salary and provident fund. In the beginning such English medium Primary schools were concentrated in urban areas. But later the same made their presence felt in the rurban context with almost equal intensity and magnitude. It appears that there is a direct correlation between the fast growth of Primary English medium schools vis-a-vis the expulsion or exclusion of English from the 'new' curriculum. This may also be the view of the general mass with the opinion of not to approve the 'new' syllabus. Those Primary schools where English is retained are accepted with greater interest and enthusiasm.

Besides the content of the 'new' syllabus, in functional aspect, the examination system was changed with the concept of 'no examination'. This kind of automatic promotion in Primary Education without examination also did not receive popular acceptance, as expected. The system itself is found to have been affecting the seriousness both of students and teachers. Again, in this case relevant pedagogical explanations were hardly put forward.
In a way it may be stated that the present work is without any specific background in terms of previous work. This work is perhaps the first of its kind and for this the selection of the topic may be considered as both significant and relevant. In its broader lay out the worker, however, deems it necessary to refer to a number of research works undertaken, bringing in various aspects of Primary Education to the focus, deserving special mention in the context of this work.

Research in Primary Education reveals a trend of manifold interesting aspects. The earliest study on curriculum in Primary Education in India was conducted by Chaudhury (1968) followed by a study by Shukla (1975). Special mention need be made of the UNICEF-sponsored CAPE Project to improve curriculum so as to provide to children access to Primary Education through the use of local specific learning materials.

Chokshi (1977) investigated the effects of psychological inputs in the form of achievement motivation and other psychological traits on the academic performance of children. At the national level a UNICEF project titled 'Primary Education Curriculum Renewal' (PECR) was undertaken by the NCERT in collaboration with different State Education Departments. Singh (1987) worked on the innovative methods of teaching effective in developing active learning style and character building. The MSBTPCR (1974) conducted a survey on the use of textbooks in classes I to VII.

Bose, Banerjee and Mukherjee (1972) have studied the teaching competence, intelligence level, academic qualification, liking for teaching profession and the average time which a teacher devotes
daily to teaching. Roy (1975) who conducted a sociological survey of Primary teachers, found that more women were attracted to teaching which elevates their social prestige. Gupta (1981) studied job involvement and need pattern of Primary school teachers. Gogate (1983) in his study has analysed training of Primary teachers in the context of universalisation.

Certain other research studies related to Primary Education deserve to be included. Shah (1967) analyses the school teachers' role with reference to the role expectations of the different members of the teachers' role-set such as students, parents, administrators and other teachers. Goswami (1969) has studied the role of the school teacher from a different angle. He examines the manner in which the role performance of the teacher affects the performance of students.

Research into the social backgrounds, attitudes, values, aspirations and patterns of behaviour of students and of teachers seems to have been the most popular theme for empirical research. The problem from varied dimensions has been studied by Desai (1953), Ahmed (1968), Chitra (1970), Desai (1967), Jaiswal and Kale (1957), Ruhela (1969), Sinha (1965), Shah (1964).

Mukherjee (1967) conducted a research programme as a part of a set of 8 studies under the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Gore (1965), spells out the needs to communicate the goals of modernization within the education system and Shah (1969) discusses some of the practical problems in adapting education to modernization.

Mullick's (1962) study on refugee students indicates the manner in which financial circumstances may stifle a students education. So does Damle's (1966) study on the elite in the making. Tirtha (1967) works out the issue from a broader perspective also finds that accessibility to 'apex' institutions is correlated to the education, occupation and income of parents. The relationship between education and the family has been discussed by Kapadia (1959). Dev's (1962) study indicates a correlationship between students' home backgrounds and their aspirations and Krishna Kumari Katoch (1962) has found that family background determined the schools chosen by children. Thus the fact that the family background determines "accessibility" to education in more sense than one; seems to be fairly well established by the research already done.

LAYOUT OF THE CONTENTS

This work has been structured within a specific framework. To the worker it appears that the said pattern has been made in logical and meaningful ways for its proper presentation. The result is understandable and useful because the total sequence had been set in such a way so that the interphase between the chapters may be connected with a kind of linkage.
The first chapter deals with introduction. This part constitutes a brief preamble and the reason for the selection of this problem. In furtherance the necessity of this research has been attempted to indicate with the inclusion of its rational. In any study earlier materials need to be included, so that the overall coverage of the problem can be estimated.

The second chapter is a backdrop of Primary Education in West Bengal. In this chapter the initial genesis has been discussed. Later this particular issue has been explored and elaborated in the form of historical continuity. In course of this research it is observed that at a particular point of time a fullfledged form of Primary Education came into being. This has been necessarily discussed. In course of development of Primary Education the fullfledged form is found to be attended with a number of landmarks related with Primary Education and other social, economic and political phenomena.

Problem and methodology form the content of the third chapter. Primarily the problem proper has been focussed and later the sub-problems have been scanned and described. In this case both limitation and specification of the problem have been given due weightage. With regard to methodology the generalised form has been described, and later the specific methods have been developed in accordance with the emerging need.

The topic 'Primary Schools' has been included in the fourth chapter. Within the same there are discrete parts. Concept of Primary Education is a theoretical exercise. With the aid of
available information, endeavour has been made to treat the same in the background of the society along with economic, educational and cultural milieu. There are various categories of Primary schools and on the basis of the fundamental attributes, a typology has been developed for the purpose of classification. For running the school the structure is the basic premise and within the same there are specific functions. In view of the same both structure and functions have been discussed. In accordance with the typology of Primary schools it may be mentioned that through time a steady numerical growth of Primary schools so markedly found on the basis of the data connected with school foundations and such information is indicative of its quantitative growth. Besides structure and curriculum, the school environment is very relevant. All these features and factors have been collected in the form of data. On analysis of the same the exact result has been reached.

Chapter five is on teachers. In a way they constitute a specific class working in Primary schools. In the selection procedure the qualification part is important and a good deal of variation is observed in the same sector. Teachers are employed on the basis of a service rule. It is proposed to find out the practicability of service rule and to what extent it is followed. For any employee the wage is an important aspect. The Primary teachers have a scale for their salary. This is not a single scale as variations are found to occur on the basis of school type, the management and even the decision making bodies, like State Government. Like other factors of educational institutions, estimable in numbers, for every matter, teachers are no exception. This is also true with
the students. These two heads bring out the ratio between the two. The hypothetical ratio is not the same for all kinds and forms of Primary schools. As the main issue of the present work is concerned with 'new' Primary Education, it is thought of as to what extent the Primary teachers are acting or reacting with compatibility in this changed situation.

The content of chapter six is curriculum - the basic problem. For the purpose of estimation and evaluation, the content of curriculum, both of 'old' and 'new' primary systems of education, have been deciphered and compared. The result of such comparison helps in bringing out the exact result and the direction of the change.

For students of Primary level of education a separate chapter, chapter seven, has been specially included. This chapter covers different aspects of Primary students which include student strength, age, sex, family background etc. In accordance to the same the students have been placed in terms of the facilities they are enjoying. The relationship between the students and teachers, specially at the Primary level, is of great concern. The distance between the two sets may be estimated.

There is another group of individual in the arena of Primary Education. This refers to the guardians who are vitally related to and concerned with the family out of which the students are generated. In this background of families there are noticeable variations with regard to caste, family, economy and culture. For the 'new' syllabus and its introduction in the Primary level some works have been carried out on the attitudes of the guardians towards their children, the school where they read, the teachers of the concerned school and the curriculum which they follow.
Chapter nine is on evaluation. In this part a comparison has been made between the 'new' and 'old' curriculum of Primary Education. In view of the same a number of assessments have been made pointing out the results thereof.

The final chapter, chapter ten, has been labelled as summary and conclusion. The first part of the chapter is devoted to summarization of the whole work with special reference to the hallmark of the total work. The other part is concerned with the present situation. On the basis of the same a few suggestions have been given.

The above foreground description is of great use for the purpose of understanding the contents, both in macro and micro forms. It is quite obvious that the preamble can neither put forward the total details nor can represent the formulation. In fact, this part is indicative of the major dimensions of the work with broad limit and generalized configuration.