Chapter I
CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing emphasis on the decentralised governance of all sectors of human development in recent times. As part of the strategy to decentralise, the community participation is visualised as a means of social transformation of culturally and economically diverse and hierarchical groups of people into a more democratic and egalitarian framework. In India, the advent of Panchayati Raj has been envisaged as a facilitator of the people’s participation and thereby advancing the role of communities in their own social and economic advancement. In this context, people’s direct participation in the management of primary education is felt indispensable and inevitable for materialising long cherished goal of universalisation of primary education. Specific efforts in various forms are launched to revitalise the school - community relationships that can be gainfully channelised for quantitative as well as qualitative improvement of primary education in the country.

The present study is an attempt to develop an understanding of the role communities play in securing universalisation of primary education. It tries to focus on the role assigned to community at the policy level and its articulation in actual practice at the village level. The attempt is mainly to study the processes of functioning of structures of community participation generated by the state of Orissa in the form of School Management Committee (SMC), which is intended to build a healthy symbiotic relationship between the school and the community in the rural set up.

The rural school context is sought to be studied as it may throw light on the urge and initiative of largely the non-literate communities in achieving the universalisation of primary education among the children above the age of five years. The effort in this thesis would be to understand the perceptions of the parents and the functionaries of the School Management Committee and examine whether there are any differences in the way the mechanism for facilitating community participation. It also tries to understand the interplay of caste, class and gender dynamics in the functioning of the SMC. Eight villages spread across four blocks in two districts of Orissa are taken as sample for the study.

This chapter sets the conceptual and theoretical background for the study. It attempts to examine the multiple interpretations of the concept of ‘community’ in
the sociological literature and specifically attempts to understand the way 'community' has been conceptualised in the Indian context. An attempt has been made to examine the notion of 'community participation' and more specifically 'community participation in primary education'. Finally, the chapter reviews studies conducted on community participation in primary education in India, outlines the need for the present study, its objectives, sample, and methodology.

DEFINING THE ‘COMMUNITY’

The term ‘community’ is one of the most important concepts that has occupied a central place in the sociological literature. It is commonly used, and given different interpretations. Due to the abstract nature of the term and the nostalgic attachment to the idealised notion of community, the term has been defined in a number of ways. For instance, the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences defined ‘community’ as a “territorially bonded social system or set of integrated functional sub systems (economic, political, educational, religious, etc.) serving a resident population plus the material culture through which the sub-system operate” (p.163). Further, the concept of community includes a minimum of consensus and a normative structure which is either inherited from the past or self-consciously inherited in each sub-system.

Many a times, there is confusion as to which term should be used—community or society—within the sociological literature. Ferdinand Tonnies (1887) was the first one to provide sociological distinction between both the terms. In his contribution titled, ‘Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft’, Tonnies opined that the transition from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft roughly corresponds to community and society. In other words, Tonnies identified Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft as contrasting qualities of human association, the fundamental focus of debate within the sociology of community has concerned the hypotheses emphasising the decline of community.

The other classical perspective on community was provided by Zimmerman (1938) emphasised the four basic characteristics of community such as social fact, specification, association and limited geographical area. Hillary (1955) indicated that of three unifying elements of community such as social interaction, common bonds and territory. According to her, community is a geographic area having common centre of interests and activities. Community is also understood essentially
as an area of social living which is marked by some degree of social coherence. It includes in itself all the social relationships, a variety of associations and institutions. Within the range of community, the members carry on their economic, religious, political, educational and other activities. For example, global community, urban community, rural community, caste community, religious community may be some of the common references in the sociological literature.

Besides, many other sociologists have attempted to define the term community. Mac Iver defines it as an area of social living marked by some degree of social coherence. According to him, ‘whenever the members of any group, small or large live together in such a way that they share, not this or that particular interest, but the basic conditions of a common life, we call that group a community’ (1945: 9). Further, MacIver (1970) pointed out that society is a web of social relationships, but community consists of a group of individuals living in particular areas with some degree of ‘we’-feeling. What he points out is that “to understand the whole reality of community, we must keep in mind the endless unformulated relations into which men enter, relations of infinite variety and of every degree of complexity, by whose means every man is brought into nearer contact with each other, joined in a solidarity and in interdependence which none can ever fully estimate” (1970: 128-129). In other words, MacIver opined that the community is an area of social living marked by some degree of social coherence.

Further, Kingsley Davis defined community as the “smallest territorial group that can embrace all aspects of social life” (1949: 312). Lundberg pointed out that the community is a human population living within a limited geographic area and carrying on a common interdependent life (1958:128). Mannheim defined community as any circle of people who live together and belong together in such a way that they do not share this or that particular interest only, but a whole set of interests (1959:37). Ogburn and Nimkoff defined community as the total organisation of social life within a limited area (1950:260). Sutherland defined community as a local area over which people are using the same languages, conforming to the same mores, feeling more or less the same sentiments and acting upon the same attitudes (1961: 209). Talcott Parsons pointed out that community is that collectivity the members of which share a common territorial area as their base of operation for daily activities (1951:91).
Jonassen pointed out that a community includes six elements like (1) a grouping of people, (2) within a geographic area, (3) with a division of labour into specialised and interdependent functions, (4) with a common culture and a social system which organises their activities, (5) whose members are conscious of their unity and of belonging to the community, and (6) whose members can act collectively in an organised manner (1959:20).

Thus, an examination of all the foregoing definitions reveals that there are three main approaches to the meaning of community. While some scholars have given emphasis to the geographical aspects, others have adopted socio-psychological emphasis in their thinking about the community, whereas some others have given emphasis to both.

Besides, various aspects of the community have been a dominant source of sociological enquiry since the earliest days of the discipline. Each of the three most influential nineteenth century sociologists (Marx, Durkheim, and Weber), though they did not specifically discuss the concept of community, have provided constructs for analysing facets of community and its transformation. Due to the disruption of traditional social order and traditional patterns of social life associated with industrialisation, urbanisation and the rise of capitalism in nineteenth century, significant attention was focused on the social transformation of community. Therefore, many nineteenth century sociologists used the concept of community explicitly or implicitly in dichotomies between pre-industrial and industrial or rural and urban societies.

For instance, Marx in his ‘The German Ideology’ (1845) has analysed the materialist conception of history through various concepts like means of production, relations of production and mode of production. The concept of mode of production allowed Marx to identify the primary economic elements of a historical period by showing how its economic base directly shaped its system of social relations. Marx identified four stages of modes of production like tribal, ancient, feudal and capitalist. Further, he analysed the theory of ideology and pointed out that ideas have their origin in the material base of society and that the production of ideas is directly interwoven with material activity.

Durkheim in his ‘The Division of Labour in Society’ (1894) distinguishes between two general types of society which roughly correspond to the pre-industrial society and modern society. The earlier form of society was bound together by what
Durkheim calls 'mechanical solidarity' and the latter form of society is bound together by 'organic solidarity'. He uses the term 'solidarity' to describe the degree of social integration which he thought linked individuals to social groups outside themselves. In this context, Durkheim's idea of 'collective conscience' can be linked with what may be termed as 'community sentiment'. By 'collective conscience', he meant the common conscience of the individuals. Essentially, Durkheim used the term to refer to a body of beliefs, practices and collective sentiments which are held in common by all members of the society. These beliefs are diffused throughout the society, define social purposes, give meaning to action and generally structure the pattern of social life. Durkheim believed that the common conscience evolves according to its own laws and is not an expression of individual consciousness which is analytically separable from it (Durkheim, 1963: 183).

In addition to providing a broad definition of the collective conscience, Durkheim went on to elaborate a number of elements related to the substance of the collective conscience itself. He distinguished four interrelated characteristics of the collective conscience: volume, intensity, determinateness and content. The volume of the collective conscience refers to the degree of intrusiveness of beliefs and practices into the lives and attitudes of the individuals in society. Intensity of the collective conscience refers to the degree of leverage exerted by the collective beliefs and social practices. Consequently, the more intense the collective conscience, the greater the social cohesion and the more developed is the social uniformity. Determinateness refers to the amount of resistance offered by collective beliefs and how willingly they give way to change, transgression or violation. When collective sentiments lack determinateness, they are less resistant to change and to individual transgression. Essentially, the content of the collective conscience refers to the dominant characteristic of the society and its collective disposition. The collective conscience had a religious character and great moral authority. Durkheim thinks that, this sort of society was in the process of evolution to a new form. The development of large cities, better means of communication and growth of population had increased 'moral density'. Most people were in more frequent relationships and the way society was integrated had to change. The new developing form of order Durkheim calls 'organic solidarity'.

Later Weberian perspectives emerged as a response to Marxism which focused on the interpretative sociology and emphasised on both the micro and macro
social processes. It seeks to ‘interpret’ the behaviour of individual human beings to understand the subjective meaning of their actions. It also attempts to locate individual conduct in its social context. All action takes place within a social and economic structure which to some extent limits what the individual can do. The structure is of course the result of past action. It has been constructed by innumerable men and women throughout the history. Nevertheless, for each individual it forms an ‘objective reality’ that has to be reckoned with. Furthermore, the social system of which we are a part shapes our ideas, beliefs and values as well as controlling our actions (Morrison, 1971). Our conception of the world and of ourselves is influenced by it. In turn, we may as an individual, come to modify society’s institutions, certainly, large numbers of individuals acting together in co-operation, competition and conflict will have such an effect.

A Weberian perspective, then attends to the individual’s action: to his intentions, purposes, goals and ‘definition of the situation’. It also considers the ‘interaction’ of individuals. But in addition, it examines the way that action and interactions are influenced by, and influence the existing social system. In doing this, it pays attention to the following features of social life: power, authority and domination: the conflict over economic resources and rewards, the competition for status and prestige, the struggle for political control, and the role of bargaining, negotiation and compromise. Weberian sociology concentrates on the processes of conflict and domination in society. It sees social life as an arena in which various groups struggle and tries to dominate each other in an attempt to obtain wealth, status and power. Such groups derive from a number of sources: (1) from differences in property ownership or economic position; (2) from differences in cultural position such as ethnic group, religion or education, and (3) from differences in power deriving from positions held in the state or in other organisations and bureaucracies. However, it does not prejudge the nature and outcome of conflict and struggle rather it is an open approach like pluralism, recognises that class domination may be crucial at certain points of history. It therefore, provides a framework for analysis which combines the strengths of both micro and macro sociology.

Further, Talcott Parsons’s concept of “pattern variables” may also be used to conceptualise community. In Parsonian analysis (1951), the pattern variables figure as dichotomous and each expresses a dilemma of choice between the alternatives
that are faced by the actors in every social situation. Parsons used a combination of two of these dichotomies, universalism - particularism and ascription – achievement, to define two principal types of social order such as particularistic - ascriptive and universalistic - achievement. Parsons also admits that these are only conceptual categories but in actual societies show mixtures of the two sets of characteristics. As Parsons argues, “these two clusters of pattern variables very closely characterise what in much sociological literature have been thought of as polar types of institutional structures, the best known version of which has been the Gemeinschaft - Gesellschaft dichotomy of Tonnies” (1953: 207-208).

Thus, various theoretical models of community emerged in sociological literature in different phases of history. Each theoretical perspective has its uniqueness in analysing the community and any single approach may not be sufficient enough to conceptualise the term.

‘COMMUNITY’ IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT:
In the Indian context, many sociologists have extensively analysed community in general and rural community in particular. For instance, according to Majumdar, the community comprises of ‘the entire group sympathetically entering into a common life within a given area, regardless of the extent of area or state boundaries’ (1966:136). The village community in the Indian context has also been defined as ‘a body of people living in a restricted area, at some distance from other similar groups, with extremely poor roads between them, the majority of people being engaged in agricultural activities, all closely dependent upon each other economically and other wise, and having a vast body of common experience, must have some sense of unity’ (Srinivas 1969: 6). Further, there are various caste groups, which live in the same village, each caste has a culture of its own and to some extent different from the culture of other castes. The structure of the village community becomes more complex as the number of castes increases.

Srinivas identified both solidarity as well as differences in between various caste groups within a village. The solidarity of the caste is so great that it nullifies the unity of the village community in those villages in which more than one caste live. The castes living in a village or other local area are interdependent economically and otherwise. Ideally, each caste enjoys a monopoly of an occupation and this monopoly both unites as well as divides the people. Srinivas pointed out that a caste
is dominant when it is numerically the strongest in the village or local area, and economically and politically exercises a preponderating influence. It need not be the highest caste in terms of traditional and conventional ranking system (1969:7). However, Srinivas identified two common characteristics of the village community irrespective of regional variations (1969:23-24).

1. The council of elders which decides disputes between villagers and discusses matters of common interest such as holding a festival or building a temple or road.

2. The role of village headman and the accountant. Although both of them belong to the village and their offices are hereditary but the headman is usually a Brahmin whereas the accountant is invariably a Brahmin. The headman represents the village to the government and vice versa and his dual position of agent of the government and representative of the village gives him the respect of all.

S.C. Dube defined village community as a territorial, social, economic and ritual unit, which has a composite population comprising a number of groups belonging to different Hindu castes and, in some cases, tribes as well as other religious groups, the members of the local group are bound together by ties of mutual and reciprocal obligations, interpersonal and inter-group relations in several spheres of village affairs are governed by an established usage and social ethics (1954:7-8). He identified six characteristics of the Indian village community (1954:3).

(1) Size, population and land area,
(2) Ethnic composition and caste constitution,
(3) Pattern of land ownership,
(4) Structure of authority and power hierarchy,
(5) Degree of isolation and
(6) Local traditions.

In other words, what Dube pointed out is that each village has several jati segments, which have separate ties in some spheres. But there are also neighbourhood ties, and personal and family friendships and animosities. Three aspects of inter-jati and inter-personal relations within the village merit special
consideration, the inter-dependence of jatis through the exchange of specialised occupational services; the functioning of village panchayats (generally involving representatives of all jatis residing in the village) in addition to jati panchayats; and the functional policies of the village. However the first two of these have undergone significant modification (Dube, 1990:85).

Desai (1984) distinguished village community from the urban community. According to him, the criteria for distinguishing the rural community from the urban community are the social composition of the population, the cultural heritage, the magnitude of material wealth, social stratification of the population, the degree of the complexity of social structure and social life, the intensity and variety of social contact. He identified nine most important criteria for distinguishing the rural community from the urban community (1984:10-11):

1. occupational differences,
2. environmental differences,
3. differences in the sizes of population,
4. differences in the density of population,
5. differences in the homogeneity of the population,
6. differences in the social mobility,
7. differences in the direction of migration,
8. differences in the social differentiation and social stratification, and
9. differences in the system of social interaction.

However, there has been a long tradition of imagining India through the categories that are constructed as the direct opposite of the west. Sometimes, it is often seen as an example of Gemeinschaft (or the community) type of social organization, composed of primordial bonds of blood, territory and culture. ‘Indian social institutions such as jati, village, and religious sects were often seen as examples of traditional communities. On the other hand, the western society was conceptualised as being characterised by individualism and associational institutions, the Gesellschaft’ (Chatterjee, 1998: 277).

In recent times, the notion of community has also been invoked by an increasing number of social scientists who are critical of understanding Indian social processes through the western categories. Many of these scholars sometimes are also called ‘nativists’ or ‘sub-alterns’ or ‘post-modernists’ such as Ashish Nandy (1997), Partha Chatterjee (1994), Sudipto Kaviraj (1992) who have mounted a strong
critique of the serious consequences of trying to understand Indian society through the western individualistic categories. What they argued is that the similarity in conceptualising community in the east and the west lies in the fact that most individuals even in industrially advanced liberal societies lead their lives within an inherited network of social attachments that could be described as a community. It also recognises, to a large extent, that the community fulfills a certain moral condition for an effective and satisfying sense of participation by people in a social collective” (Chatterjee 1998: 278).

Jodhka (1999) identified two approaches to the study of community in the Indian sociology such as substantivist approach and the conjunctivist approach. Substantivist approach emerged from the nativist perspective and identified culturally defined groups (ethnic, religious, and caste) as the authentic units of social organization in India. What this approach argue is that the rural submerged community had supposedly been repressed by a non-authentic and powerful state, itself a product of imposed and alien modernity, had given a new lease of life to a notion of community that had its roots in the older sociological tradition (Jodhka 1999: 2958). On the other hand, according to the conjunctivist approach, most of the communities that we see today are a creation of colonialism. In other words, conjunctivists would argue to understand the formation of any particular community, one must look into its cultural setting and the socio-historical context in which it had arisen and developed.

Moreover, the community has also been defined by the State in India in its own way for the purposes of the developmental programmes. For instance, the study team for Community Development and National Extension Service (1957) pointed out that the term ‘community’ has, for the past decades, denoted religious or caste groups or, in some instances, economic group which may not necessarily be living in one locality. But, with the inauguration of the Community Development Programme; it is intended to apply the concept of village community as a whole, cutting across caste, religious or economic differences” (Report of the Study Team for Community Development and National Extension Service, 1957: 1).

Thus, in the Indian context, the term ‘community’ is not used as a homogeneous notion. It is either various communities unequally and differently placed within a society or various groups in a community usually placed (Saxena, 2003: 35). Further, the idea of community is based on a sense of identity which also
implies a difference. Kantha and Narain (2003) observed that the pre-modern or primary communities have set social forms very intense by which people are classified as similar or different. More importantly, these are communities which are not formed on account of the convergence of interest that underscores the identity of the other form of community. In contemporary discourse, the interest bonded communities are those that are being structured and encouraged to participate in the development process. The earlier communities do not have a territorial identity, for example, religious or caste communities. Large collectivities are being constructed by creating linkages of common interest from health to education. In this, the concept of village as a community is fixed with a territorial identity and at the same time is placed above traditional identities of communities existing in villages that transcend territorial boundaries (for example, linkages with castes or religious groups residing in other villages) (Kantha Narain 2003: 135).

UNDERSTANDING ‘COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION’

The term ‘participation’ is one of the most important concepts that occupy a central place in the development literature. Over the years participation by the people, in particular, has become a buzz word in the development community. Eventhough the terms like ‘participation’, ‘community power’, ‘empowerment’, etc., have become part of the discourse of development, they have remained elusive concepts without any clear cut definitions. Different scholars and organisations have defined the terms in different ways.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives (1993:21). Johnston and Clark pointed out that participation as a free good, desirable in unlimited quantities. According to them, participation has a large cost for the poor and they will invest their participation when they believe it will secure them valuable benefits not otherwise available at comparable cost, time and risk (1982:171-172). Paul identified participation as an active process by which beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self reliance or other values they cherish (1986:2).
There are other scholars who have tried to interpret participation in slightly different ways by placing more emphasis on the processes rather than on the contents and outcome of the participation. In this regard, special reference may be made of Fraser (1993: 190) who makes a distinction between participation that is spontaneous or bottom-up with the participation that is induced, coerced or top-down. Similarly, the United Nations (1981: 8) distinguishes between coerced participation, which condemns induced participation, which it regards as second best and spontaneous or bottom-up participation, which it contends comes closest to the ideal mode of participation, as it reflects voluntary and autonomous action on the part of the people to organise and deal with their problems unaided by governments or other external agencies. Further, Midgley (1986) also makes a similar distinction between authentic participation and pseudo-participation. He pointed out that authentic participation is a process in which local people democratically control project decision-making whereas pseudo-participation, in which projects are carried out according to prior decisions made by outsiders.

In this context, it would be pertinent to make a distinction between participation in development and participatory development. Participation in development is usually said to mean the full involvement of people in the development which affect their lives, regardless of gender, race, age, class, sexual orientation or disability whereas participatory development essentially means conventional project practice in a more participatory and sensitive manner (Prasad 2002: 6). Wignaraja (1991: 202) has observed that participatory development is essentially top-down participation while participation in development is bottom-up participation.

Thus, participation is a qualitative process leading to quantitative change in the form of empowerment. As regards the rationale for participatory development, many scholars mostly agree that it can be both utilitarian (instrumental) and moral. This dual rationale for participatory development means that participation is both a means and an end in itself.

Many a times, there is confusion as to which term should be used: participation or empowerment. At times, they are used co-terminus but there exists some differences between the two. Like participation, empowerment is also widely used but not properly defined. For instance, Karl (1995) opined empowerment as a process which is both individual and collective, since it is through involvement in
groups that people most often begin to develop their awareness and the ability to organise to take action and bring about change. Further, empowerment is a multifaceted process, involving the pooling of resources to achieve collective strength and countervailing power and entailing the improvement of manual and technical skills; administrative, managerial and planning capacities, and analytical reflective abilities of local people.

Uphoff (1980) has observed that empowerment is a key aspect of participation, but it is not the whole of participation. For Freire (1973), the supreme touchstone of development is whether people who were previously treated as mere objects, known and acted upon, can now actively know and act upon, thereby becoming subjects of their own social destiny. When people are oppressed or reduced to the culture of silence, they do not participate in their own humanisation, conversely, when they participate, thereby, becoming active subjects of knowledge and action, they begin to construct their properly human history and engage in progress of authentic development. Thus, empowerment is a process geared towards participation, greater decision making and transformative action through awareness and capacity building. Participation is a qualitative process leading to qualitative change in the form of empowerment.

Successful participation is primarily concerned with achieving power; power to influence the decisions that affect one’s livelihood (Prasad 2002: 8). Therefore, there is a need to devise a typology of participation for assessing the outcome of participation in terms of the levels and types of participation. For instance, Oakley and Marsden (1984: 86) have identified three levels of participation leading to empowerment. The first level they call a ‘manipulatory’ or ‘therapeutic’, and place mass mobilisation campaigns (for example literacy campaign in India) in this category. At the second level, they identified only ‘token’ forms of participation with the extension of information, consultation and collaboration of one sort or another (like beneficiary oriented rural development projects). At the upper levels are partnerships, delegated power and citizen control (like women’s empowerment being carried out in India by various NGOs) which are regarded as ‘real’ forms of participation.

In the past few years an explanation of participation as a process of empowering has begun to emerge. There are many social activists and NGOs who argue that participation and empowerment are two sides of the same coin. The
academics have always tried to equate participation with achieving power: that is power in terms of access to, and control of, the resources necessary to protect livelihood. However, Prasad identified three propositions for the conceptual understanding of participation.

(a) The promotion of popular participation implies a redistribution of power (basically a conflictual process) and this calls for a scientific analysis which gives due recognition to political factors, social forces and the role of class in historical processes of social change.

(b) Participation is concerned with the distribution of power in society, for it is power which enables groups to determine which needs, and whole needs will be met through the distribution of resources.

(c) Power is the central theme of participation and participatory social action entails widely shared, collective power by those who are considered beneficiaries.

Further, the people become agents of social action and the power differentials between those who control and need resources is reduced through participation (Oakley and Marsden, 1984: 25-26). Thus the concept of ‘participation’ has been given multiple meanings and multiple methods of implementation.

Social scientists have often used another analytical concept called ‘community power’ to designate the relevance of the group in the decision making process, which may be akin to the usages like ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’. Contemporary research on community power is distinguished by a concern with characterising as a whole the political order of an entire community, radical disagreement on methods of going about the task, both agreement and disagreement on specific findings and conflict over the proper interpretations of findings. At points of disagreement there has been a tendency for the literature to break roughly into two schools of thought – one based on the theory of social stratification, the other less systematically derived from theories of pluralist democracy. While contention between advocates of these two schools has occupied much space in the literature, the problems, possibilities and accomplishments of community power research neither begin nor end there.

A number of studies in stratification theory – some reputational and some not –have set forth several of the following conclusions, which for several decades were
widely accepted as scientifically established and accurate descriptions of American community politics:

- that the upper class rules;
- that the political and civic leaders are subordinate to this class;
- that there is a single power elite dealing with a wide variety of community issues;
- that this upper class power elite rules in its own interests; and
- that the social conflict takes place between the upper and lower classes.

A common thread running through these propositions is the dependency of political power on the class and status structure of the community (Hunter, 1953: 82). Polsby (1963) pointed out that in many instances the evidence supporting them has been weak, ambiguous, vague or even contradictory. In some cases, these propositions have not been tested directly or properly, and in others findings contrary to the propositions have been explained unsuccessfully. Although each of these findings have been questioned but still it provided some insight into the community power structure.

Pluralism emerged as a response to the stratification theory to explain the nature and distribution of power in western democratic societies. Whereas elite theory and Marxism argue that power is concentrated in the hands of a dominant minority, the pluralist perspective maintains that the power is dispersed among a variety of groups in the society. They include the apparent fact that participation in the making of most community decisions is concentrated in the hands of a few but that different small groups normally make decisions on different community problems.

A number of studies have provided support for the pluralist position. One of the most famous is Robert Dahl’s work (1972) entitled ‘Who governs: Democracy and Power in American City’ is an investigation of local politics in New Haven, Connecticut. Dahl uses the ‘decision making’ method arguing that the only way to discover the distribution of power is to examine the actual decisions. He investigated a series of decisions in three main ‘issue areas’: urban renewal which involved the redevelopment of city centre; political nominations with particular emphasis on the post of Mayor; and education which concerned questions such as the setting of
schools and teachers' salaries. By selecting a range of different issues, Dahl claims that it would be possible to discover whether a single group monopolises decision making in community affairs.

However, the pluralist perspective emphasises on the diversity of decision making processes and focus less on the social backgrounds and identities of participants and more on their actual roles and activities in local decision making. On the other hand, the stratification theory of community life, by definition, involves everyone in a hierarchical power relationship which can be ascertained by reference to his class and status position, the pluralist theory speaks more on groups whose size, cohesiveness, style of mobilisation, range of interests and durability are all subject to empirical examination.

Thus, various theoretical models of community participation emerged in sociological as well as developmental literature in different phases of history. Each theoretical perspective has its uniqueness in analysing the roles the community play in enhancing the participatory democracies at various levels. Therefore, any one theoretical model is not sufficient enough to conceptualise community participation, the nature of social system and the process of community development.

In the Indian context, a study undertaken by the Government of India, defined “community participation as an organized process of empowerment by enabling the local community to actively participate in the decision making process in implementation, monitoring and sharing of the resources” (1999:8). Raina (2003) conceptualised community participation as an experience felt differently by different people in different circumstances even in similar circumstances. This is due to the fact that the deep-rooted socio-economic stratification that characterise our society. Therefore, “community participation would go hand in hand with safeguards for the poor and marginalised, which most often is a political task requiring active and sustained intervention of the state” (Raina, 2003: 37).

Therefore, the foregoing discussion reveals that the term ‘community participation’ has been used very loosely in the literature. However, for the purposes of practical relevance of the term in the context of the development jargon, the definition by the United Nations appears appropriate. For instance, the United Nations Report on Human Development defined ‘community participation’ as ‘sharing by people in the benefits of development and active contribution by people to development and involvement in decision – making at all levels of society’ (1993:
225). For the purposes of the present study the researcher uses the term community participation in this context.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

In recent times, people's participation has been felt necessary in all sectors of social development including education. This section deals with the notion of community participation in education and why it is given so much importance in recent times?

Some social scientists have analysed different levels of community participation in education. According to Shaeffer (1991), community participation in primary education may take various forms such as (a) the mere use of service (such as primary health care facility); (b) participation through the contribution or extraction of resources (such as materials and labour); (c) participation through attendance (such as parent's meeting at school); (d) participation through consultation on particular issues; (e) involvement in the delivery of service; (f) involvement as implementers of delegated powers; (g) participation in real decision making at every stage – identification of problems, the study of feasibility, planning, implementation and evaluation (1991: 38).

Often, the term community participation in education is also understood in terms of parental participation or involvement as well. For instance, Epstein (1992) provided a typology of parental involvement. It includes basic parental roles like keeping children safe, as well as higher level involvement activities, such as collaborating with community organisations- researchers on parental involvement have considered a variety of activities as examples of parental involvement. By contrast, analysis of the implications of involvement has been narrowly focused on children’s cognitive and academic achievement. For instance, McNeal (1999) argued that the conceptual ties between most forms of parental involvement and children’s learning are weak compared to the ties between involvement and children’s behaviour.

Dominia (2005) pointed out that the involvement of parents may be expected to influence children’s outcomes via three mechanisms: (1) parental involvement socialises, when, for example, parents supervise their children’s homework, they convey the importance of schooling. (2) parental involvement generates social control. Parents who attend PTA meetings and volunteer in school develop relationships with their children’s teachers and the parents of their children’s
classmates. These relationships make it easier for parents to monitor children's behaviour and teachers' practices. (3) Parental involvement gives parents access to inside information. When children have problems at school, involved parents learn about available solutions (2005:236).

McNeal (1999) argued that, since the mechanisms vary, different types of parental involvement will have different effects on children's cognitive and behavioural outcomes. Socialisation primarily affects children's behaviour and engagement. Similarly, the control aspects of parental involvement tend to curb children's problem behaviours, but do relatively little to influence children's learning. McNeal contended only the insider-information element of parental involvement directly influences both children's cognitive and behavioral outcomes (1999:141).

Further, there is a general trend of decentralised planning, management and administration of educational institutions in the developed as well as developing countries in recent times. The traditional concept of "decentralised management" refers to variety of management phenomena all under the rubric of decentralisation (Weiler, 1989; Laugio, 1990). These consist of three considerable trends. The first is the process of moving the administrative set up nearer to action-setting by increasing emphasis of the bureaucracy. It expresses the view on the role of the state in decision-making through locally placed government servants by taking more account of local views. The second trend focuses on "delegation" which emphasises the shift of the powers of decision making bodies outside the government bureaucracy by involving non-governmental organisations and voluntary efforts. Such process enabled for the creation of para-statal bodies to handle special problems of public concerned. The third trend refers to 'devolution' in which powers are transferred to sub-national units through appropriate legal reform process (Laugio, 1990: 81). In other words, decentralisation can be viewed either as a fundamental value to be internalised into the system or as a management strategy for solutions of the problems that are encountered by the educational system (Joshi, 2000: 68). However, decentralisation of educational management could be seen at policy making level, programme formulation level and programme implementation level.

Moreover, many scholars have seriously questioned the value of decentralisation as a means of increasing efficiency of the educational system. For
instance, Levacu (1995) pointed out that the decentralised management in education may result in improved service delivery by enabling local authorities to perform tasks; it improves responsiveness to the particular needs and situations of different regions and groups. Further, it also generates more responsiveness and equity in educational decision making by involving community, a private sector in local schooling (1995: 31). Choudhary (2000) viewed that, due to the process of decentralisation, the state is retreating from the public space to make room for the market forces in education and there is gradually emergence of a quasi-market in education at the primary level which has serious implications for equity in education.

Govinda (2003) provided the conceptual framework for the analysis of dynamics of decentralised management in primary education in India. What he pointed out is that central control or local self-governance is never an 'all-or-none' phenomenon. It is essentially a matter of sharing of power and authority between stakeholders at various levels. In fact, the contestation is not merely between the political representatives at the centre and the periphery. Rather, in the modern state, it is inevitably a three concerned contest. The three parties belong (a) the political power groups operating from the centre, (b) the representatives in the peripheral units of governance who are closer to the local community they represent, and (c) the bureaucracy which has become an integral part of the modern administrative set-up (2003:206-207). According to Govinda, decentralisation moves in India are basically transformational and not evolutionary.

In the realm of universalisation of primary education, Govinda (2003) analysed the context-specific notion of community participation. What he observed is that the community participation is a context-specific expression based on the degree of involvement of people, to bring certain systematic changes with a basic objective of ushering development and improvement in the quality of life of the participants, be it in the realm of health, education, social security etc (2003: 14). Further, he identified two categories of community participation in the context of primary education such as (a) exhorting community members to make active interest in the education of their children; (b) liberalising the administrative framework to make way for participation of community members in educational management.

Thus, community participation in primary education implies the involvement of parents and community members as partners in supporting educational activities
that contribute to improvement in their own lives. It may be mentioned that due to the process of decentralisation, there has been a growing realisation that for achieving the goal of universalisation of primary education, there is a shift from non-participative administrative dominated educational planning to participative community based procedure. This is not only important for the realization of national goal but also for empowerment and inclusion of backward sections of our society such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women, etc. In this direction, ‘Village Education Committees’ are expected to develop into a participative system in which the mistrust between various stakeholders, namely, teachers and parents is removed and they are expected to work together with a common understanding for the achievement of the goal (Sharan 2000: 65). Such participation is also expected to ensure maintenance of infrastructure like school building, equipment as well as developing a conducive environment to participation in teaching and learning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
The study of community participation is relatively new in the field of sociology of education in India. Though the role of the community in the educational process has been recognised by the policy makers as far back as 1953, it did not generate enough enthusiasm among the sociologists to study the processes of community involvement and participation in education. Only a very few studies were conducted on the community participation in primary education that to, mostly by non-sociologists, in recent times. For instance, a study was conducted by Shukla and Srivastava (1999) on the “community mobilisation and empowerment for universalisation of primary education” in Gujarat. In their study, it was found that the conception of increasing community mobilisation and participation through VEC and PTA/MTA is exceptional. The VEC meetings facilitated the school and community interaction in which the majority of the people actively participate in the smooth functioning of the School (1999: 13-14). Another study conducted by Educational Consultants India Limited (EdCIL) for the Government of India on ‘Community Mobilisation and Empowerment for Universalisation of Primary Education’ synthesises findings and trends for six states, namely, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. The study team found that there is an evidence of expanded sphere of participation beyond school construction and facilities. For the first time, issues of teacher accountability and monitoring their
attendance are being handled by the community. However, as a result of the mobilisation, the community had started showing far more interest in primary education of the village and helping in increasing enrolment and retention. The study concluded that there exists a fair degree of interaction and extended participation between the school and the community.

Subrahmanian (2003) conducted an empirical investigation titled, 'Community at the Centre of Universal Primary Education Strategies' in Karnataka. Her research provides an evidence of the complex linkages between supply and demand in two villages of drought prone district of Karnataka, characterised by low social and economic development where quality of supply is not necessarily correlated with higher school enrolment and attendance and vice-versa. In her study, what she found is that a village that had a well-maintained, well functioning school and a motivated group of villagers who had systematically built up the school had relatively poor community level interest in the school, reflecting an apathetic and often absent teachers and poor infrastructure (2003: 224).

Noronha (2003) in her work, 'The Community in Charge: Shades of Experience', in Madhya Pradesh pointed out that even after the devolution of powers of primary education to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Madhya Pradesh, panchayat involvement in most formal schools across the state remains limited to primarily the recruitment and control over Shiksha Karmis, and some involvement in the disbursement of funds for construction and mid-day meals. Most panchayats even after five years do not have much sense of ownership of the formal schools. VEC meetings are usually very irregular and ineffective. The village education register which was to be maintained in every primary school to monitor attendance of children is conspicuous by its absence in almost every school. However, in both formal primary schools and EGS centres, it is found that the involvement of PRIs in education is lending certain vibrancy to the system. More than anything else, a positive ambience towards education is being created and villagers have begun showing an interest in their village school. What she pointed out is that direct participation of parents/guardians and concerned citizens have shown more positive results as in the case of EGS committees (2003: 117).

Kantha and Narain (2003) studied the dynamics of community mobilisation in the state of Bihar. The study noted that despite the restructuring problems, village level dynamics play their role, influential persons of the village secure a place for
themselves or their favourites, VECs are not reconstituted according to the provision after two years, the frequency of the meetings decline after the initial period. Further, they pointed out that the training to the VEC members is quite insufficient as most of them are unaware why they have been given representation. There are also administrative lapses i.e. even on the request of the VEC, irregular teachers are not transferred and there is a problem of teacher inadequacy. However, the main difficulties are financial and administrative. They conclude in their study that as nothing can be changed in areas where half of the population is living below the poverty line for which the prospect of mobilisation of donations is very weak (2003: 135-136).

Vimala Ramachandran (2001) conducted a study on the 'Community Participation in Primary Education in Rajasthan'. In her study, she pointed out that, in Rajasthan, there are several innovative programmes in primary education and women's development such as Shiksha Karmi Project, Lok Jumbish, Mahila Shiksha Vihar, etc. She focused on the women's participation in the school and community interaction and found that women's participation is very low. The reasons behind the low participation are that women can not participate effectively in the VEC or even in the panchayat unless they gain the confidence to speak and have access to information beyond the immediate present (2001: 2249).

Mohan, Dutt and Antony (2003) studied the community participation in the state of Karnataka. In their study, they tried to examine the policy initiatives undertaken by the centre as well the state governments to promote community participation in primary education and its implications for the grass root level. They pointed out that caste and financial status have clear, direct links with low participation in education. What emerges is that community participation experience has become crucial to all initiatives aiming to improve primary education. The community participation is one of the positive factors contributing to the increasing demand for primary education. Consequently, various innovative models are being practised to facilitate community participation and novel methods evolved employing techniques of management, communication, group dynamics etc. (2003: 180).

Govinda (2003) studied the dynamics of decentralised management in primary education in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. He tried to explore the dynamics involved in operationalising the two contrasting approaches for
decentralisation of primary education management. He pointed out that the models of decentralisation adopted by the two states are quite different. Madhya Pradesh has followed a top-down approach of changing the legal provisions and transferring responsibilities to locally elected bodies for primary education management whereas, in Rajasthan, under its major project of primary education known as Lok Jumbish, has apparently followed the principle of building from below. He identified both positive signals as well as areas of critical concern. The positive signals include, in both states, the involvement of the village level community takes the decision making process nearer to the field of action, public accountability is comparatively more, paradigm of school provision undergoes radical change. On the negative side, decentralisation has led to the problem of entrenched hierarchy (2003: 225-228).

Wankhede and Sengupta (2005) studied the village education committees in West Bengal. They attempted to focus on the education committees formed with the community members at the village level for looking after the management of primary schools in a few localities. They collected data from four village education committees in terms of their structure and functioning in West Bengal. One of their major findings was that those who become VEC members are virtually dissociated from the underprivileged people. At the same time, a person can spend time for public works only when he/she is economically stable which restricts the entry of poor people into the VEC. However, the findings of their study contradict the ideology on the basis of which these VECs are formed (2005:569).

If one looks at the review of literature, it may be found that most of the studies are restricted to the states such as Karnataka, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh or West Bengal. There are hardly any attempts to study the role communities play in facilitating universalisation of primary education in the educationally backward state of Orissa, with the exception of a small study by Acharya and Girija Shankar (2006), which is also not directly related to the structures like SMCs. They studied community participation component of a programme called Janashala. They tried to analyse the efficacy of the Janashala Programme which provides due importance on the sensitisation of community to participate in the management and development of primary schools and ensuring universal participation of children in primary education in an institutionalised way. They conducted the study in three blocks of Mahanga in Cuttack district, Brahmagiri
in Puri district and Nilgiri in Balasore district and one urban area of Bhubaneswar city of Orissa. Their study confirmed yet another story of success in the community participation in primary education. For instance, 62.5 per cent of the sample schools had taken the responsibility of increasing enrollment and the regular attendance of students in the schools and 26.8 per cent of the sample schools had taken some measures to reduce the dropouts. Apart from this, 69.6 per cent of the sample schools had participated in the celebration of school functions whereas only 12.5 per cent of the sample schools had taken the responsibility of providing clean drinking water at school and health check up facilities in the school (2006: 251-52).

However, none of the studies have addressed the very process of community participation through the institutional structures created for the purpose, namely, the School Management Committees. Mostly what they have done was to study the effects of community participation on enhancing the teaching – learning processes in the school, the enrolment and retention of children in the school, and facilitation and upkeep of the infrastructure like school buildings, toilets, drinking water facilities, etc. The studies have not investigated the hiatus between the roles envisaged for the community in the Rules, roles perceived by the community or the parents and actual roles performed by the SMCs in day to day manner. They have also not studied the social group dynamics that may facilitate or place impediments in the process of universalisation of primary education in India and the states like Orissa. The present study is an attempt to bridge this gap in the sociological studies of the engagement of the community in the primary education.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
As stated earlier, primary education occupies a central place not only in the development paradigm but also holds a strategic role in the educational discourse. It is argued that the primary education ensures necessary skills needed to lead a decent life and will enable the individual to participate effectively in his/her community. Due to the importance of basic education, the Indian Constitution has made free and compulsory elementary education in Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy, which is even today a far cry after sixty years of Independence. On the contrary, in states like Orissa, instead of including more children within the educational system, it is found that in reality the number of children outside the
school is increasing. Therefore, any study on the state of Orissa occupies crucial significance.

Nonetheless, in recent times, there has been a power shift from the central to the local bodies and the community in institution based decision-making management structures. For instance, Programmes such as District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) have envisaged constituting community bodies such as Village Education Committees, School Management Committees, Parent Teacher Associations, Mother-Teacher Associations, etc., to accelerate the pace of universalisation of elementary education and to sustain the overall development of the country.

The review of literature has also suggested that the studies have looked mainly at the working of the larger village education committees, but have not examined working of the recently set up School Management Committees to specifically enhance the participation of the parents within the educational processes in their habitation. Their focus has been largely educational rather than sociological. None of the studies have examined the community dynamics in the day to day functioning of the Village/School Management Committees. Therefore, the study aims to fill in this gap through a field based empirical study of a few villages in the state of Orissa in the eastern part of India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad and specific objectives of the study are as following:

Broad objectives:

(1) To understand the role of community in the educational policy discourse.

(2) To study the nature and processes of community participation in primary education.

(3) To assess the opportunities, constraints and dynamics in facilitating community based efforts to universalise primary education.

Specific Objectives

(1) To study the policies, strategies and programmes for community participation in India in general and Orissa in particular.
To study the structures of community participation within the primary education. Particularly, to study the institutional structure like School Management Committee and its operation within the village level.

To explore the social context of community participation in the rural context. Here, an attempt is made to construct the social and educational mapping of the villages undertaken for the study and also describe the socio-economic composition of the parents as well as the SMC members in terms of caste, gender, education, occupation, family income and the overall socio-economic status (SES).

To critically examine whether there is any discrepancy in the expected role of the SMC, the parents, the community leaders, teachers and the actual scenario in the villages.

To study the inter-group as well as the intra-group dynamics of the community participation i.e., to study the caste, class, and gender dynamics in the decision making process within the SMC functioning.

To study the mechanisms of conflict resolution within School Management Committee to achieve equity in participation.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS USED

'COMMUNITY' and 'COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION'
The term 'community' has been used in the present study to refer to the village community in general and to the School Management Committee in particular. The definition of the community in the legal sense, as per the government rules, is restrictive in the sense that it connotes only the specific group of parents of the school going children as members of the community which is involved in the decision making process at the primary education level. Therefore, the study focuses on the effects and processes of direct participation of community through the School Management Committee (SMC) in the state of Orissa is sought to be studied.

However, the role of the members of the village, other than the parents of the school going children, such as parents of the non-school going children, community leaders such as the Sarpanch, ward-member, VEC members, ascribed leaders, social leaders, was also included in the study for
broadening the understanding of the role of the community in school activities.

**PRIMARY EDUCATION:**
‘Primary Education’ has been referred to the classes 1 to V.

**UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION:**
Though the Constitution of India stipulates achieving universalisation of elementary education, namely, class I to VIII, for the purposes of the present study only the stage of primary education has been considered due to the importance placed in recent times in the national and state level policies. All the efforts in the education sector have been directed to achieve the universalisation of primary education in the first place before moving on to the next level, i.e. the elementary stage by including the upper-primary education.

In this context, universalisation of primary education is not only meant provision of universal facilities, universal enrolment and universal retention but also the availability of universal quality of teaching and learning.

**SAMPLE**
The state of Orissa has been taken for the field investigation. Both the probability and the non-probability sampling procedures are applied to select the districts, blocks, villages and the respondents to be included in the study. The probability sampling procedure includes the multi-stage sampling in terms of the districts, blocks, and villages selected for the study and the non-probability sampling is mainly in terms of the selection of respondents, namely parents and SMC functionaries, for interviewing process, who are mainly selected using the purposive sampling procedure.

**The Demographic Profile of Orissa**
The state of Orissa comprises of 30 revenue districts, 75 educational districts with 314 blocks. With the establishment of Zilla Parishad as a major component of decentralization, powers and responsibility for monitoring school education are
vested with district level local self-government, who is assisted by a Chief Executive Officer. There are 30 Zilla Parishads, 171 Taluk Panchayats and 6234 Gram Panchayats.

The state of Orissa comprises of 4.74 per cent of India’s landmass and nearly 85 per cent of its population live in the rural areas and depend mostly on agriculture for their livelihood. The total cultivable land of the state is nearly 6.5 million hectares of which only 2.6 million hectares have been provided with irrigation facilities which constitutes around 40 per cent of the cultivable land. The state has abundant mineral resources including precious and semi-precious stones.

The population of the state has increased from 31.66 million in 1991 to 36.80 million in 2001, which accounts for 3.58 per cent of the population of the country. The decennial growth rate of population of Orissa during 1991-2001 was 16.25 per cent as against 20.06 in 1981-91. The decline in the growth rate may be attributed to the rise in literacy rate, effective dissemination of the message about benefits of the small family and drive launched by the Government to provide better access to family planning measures (Economic Survey 2005). Population density was 203 number of persons square kilometer in 1991 which was lower than the national average of 267 per square kilometer. It has gone up to 236 in 2001 as against Indian density of 324. The sex ratio in the state i.e. number of females per 1,000 males is higher than the national average. It increased from 971 in 1991 to 972 in 2001 as compared to all India average, which increased from 927 to 933 during the same period. The urban population of 13.38 per cent in 1991 increased to 14.99 per cent in 2001.

**Educational Profile of the State**

The primary education scenario in Orissa occupies a unique position in the literacy map of India for being the seventh most educationally backward state in the country. According to the Census – 2001, the total literacy rate of Orissa is 63.61 per cent which is below the national average of 65.38 per cent. The male literacy rate is 75.95 per cent and the female literacy rate is 50.97 as against the national averages of 75.85 per cent and 54.14 per cent respectively. Thus, the literacy status of Orissa in comparison to other states is discouraging and needs special attention from the social researchers.
Further, it is important to understand the case of Orissa in terms of various educational indicators. The number of educational institutions, especially primary and upper primary schools, has increased over the years, teacher-pupil ratio has gone up, enrolment ratio has increased and the rate of drop-outs has decreased. For instance, the number of primary schools has gone up from 9,801 in 1950-51 to 42,104 in 2000-01. The gross enrolment ratio at the primary level has gone up from 17 in 1950-51 to 108.8 in 1999-2000. The teacher-pupil ratio in primary stage has gone up from 19 in 1950-51 to 41 in 2000-01. The dropout rates in Primary level were 77.5 in 1973 which came down to 34.7 in 2002-03. Further, there are regional variations, gender and caste disparities not only in the literacy rates but also in the enrolments as well.

The Districts, the Blocks and the Villages

The educational situation is better in coastal districts in comparison to non-coastal districts. For instance, according to the Census – 2001, the literacy rates in coastal districts like Khurda (80.19 per cent), Jagatsinghpur (79.61 per cent), Puri (78.40 per cent) and Balasore (70.94 pr cent) are higher than the non-coastal districts like Kalahandi (46.20 per cent), Balangir (54.93 per cent), Koraput (36.20 per cent), Malkangiri (31.26 per cent) and Keonjher (59.75 per cent), etc., which have recorded lower literacy rates, below even the state average literacy rate. Thus, Balasore is selected as it is one of the high literacy districts in the coastal region and Keonjher is selected as it is one of the low literacy districts in the non-coastal region of Orissa.

Further, the caste composition of the districts selected for the study also reveals an interesting picture. For instance, 17.05 per cent of the total population of Balasore district is from the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, out of which 10.86 per cent are Scheduled Castes and 6.19 per cent are Scheduled Tribes. On the other hand, 56 per cent of the total population of Keonjher district constitutes the Scheduled Castes and Tribes population, out of which 45 per cent are from the Scheduled Tribes and 11 per cent are from the Scheduled Castes.

Balasore is a non-DPEP district and Keonjher is a DPEP district. Within the district, blocks are selected on the basis of literacy rates, namely, high and low literacy blocks. For instance, Baliapal and Nilgiri represent high and low literacy
blocks respectively in Balasore district and Anandapur and Banspal represent high and low literacy blocks respectively in Keonjher district.

Two villages from each of the blocks are selected. Bhanupur and Bhelpura in Baliapal block and Chhatrapur and Betakata from Nilgiri block of Balasore district and Purunia and Belabahali from Anandapur block and Anjar and Dangapani from Banspal block of Keonjher district are selected as sample villages for undertaking the study. In the sample villages, Bhanupur, Bhelpura and Belabahali villages predominantly have peasant castes and less predominantly other backward castes and Scheduled Castes in the village. In Chhatrapur and Purunia villages, the Scheduled Tribes are predominant though there are considerable proportion of the Scheduled Castes, other backward castes and peasant castes. Betakata, Anjar and Dangapani are predominantly tribal villages in the sense that there are more Scheduled Tribes in comparison to other social groups. The villages are selected based on the representation of caste/tribe groups within each village SMC and some of the tribal villages are especially taken in order to study the community participation in the villages which are predominantly educationally backward tribal population. Diagrammatically, the sample may be represented as following:

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Selection of the Respondents
The sample of parents and the SMC functionaries have been selected depending on the availability of the respondents at the time of the field work by the researcher. However, care has been taken to take the matching samples of both men and women
from among the SMC functionaries\(^1\) and mothers as well as fathers as parent of the sample of parents.

**METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS:**
The study undertakes both quantitative and qualitative research techniques emphasising more on the description, analysis and interpretation of the relationship between various variables. The data for the study were obtained from primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data sources consists of government reports, the interviews with the parents of the school going children and the SMC functionaries, other village community members, concerned officials of the education department and elected representatives of the village. Interview schedules have been used as the main instruments of data collection from the selected sample.

The interview schedule was pre-tested and revised in the light of field situation. Interview schedule were prepared in English and translated into Oriya language for the interviews with the parents and the SMC members. During the field investigation, the researcher stayed in the villages to understand to capture the social dynamics in the everyday social life in the villages. Besides interviews with the parents and SMC members, informal discussions were held with the other community members for cross validation and substantiation. This is supplemented by observations regarding the attitudes, belief systems of the community members towards primary education.

The official data was collected from the Block and District offices of Sarva Siksha Abhijan (SSA) and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

**ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTERS**
The study is broadly divided into seven chapters. Introduction forms the first chapter. It deals with the conceptual understanding of community and how it has emerged and conceptualised in the sociological literature. It also presents

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\(^1\) The term 'SMC functionary' is used synonymously with the term 'SMC member'. Officially, all the parents of the school going children are the members of the SMC who are expected to elect a few of their group members who will discharge duties on their behalf. In this sense, the official nomenclature of 'SMC Member' generates confusion as it may also mean the general members, i.e. parents of the school going children. Therefore, in order to distinguish we have used the term 'SMC functionaries'. Otherwise, both 'SMC Member' and 'SMC functionaries' mean the same.
contextualisation of community in the Indian context and how it is different from the western perspective. The chapter presents a review of literature on the research on community participation in primary education in India, the significance and broad as well as specific objectives of the study, sampling procedure and methodology of the study.

The second chapter describes the socio-historical and policy context of community participation in the universalisation of primary education in India and Orissa. It deals with the current primary education scenario in India and Orissa and the role of community in the universalisation of primary education. The chapter also outlines the educational profiles of two selected districts i.e. Balasore and Keonjher.

The third chapter describes the socio-demographic and educational profiles of the eight villages selected for the study. It deals with the social mapping of each village also presents the social context of schooling in terms of the location of the school and its access to different caste/tribe groups of the village.

The fourth chapter describes the socio-economic background of the parents of the school going children and the SMC members/functionaries in order to understand the variations, if any, between the parents and the SMC members in terms of their social class background.

Chapter five describes the structure and processes of the community participation in primary education, in general, and the School Management Committee, in particular. The chapter directs attention to the way parents and the SMC members perceive various aspects of its working in their villages. It analyses the envisaged role, structure, and processes underlying the functioning of the school management committee and various problems in its functioning.

Chapter six elaborates the processes of community participation in terms of the group dynamics involved in the Indian rural social setting. It particularly examines the perceptions of the parents and the SMC members on the issues of caste, class and gender dynamics and how they influence the effective functioning or implementation of mechanisms for community participation.

Finally, chapter seven presents the summary and conclusions of the study.