CHAPTER - VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
6.1 Introduction:

Education is a key strategy for bringing about the changes necessary to ensure economic, cultural and social development as well as environmental protection and food security (Gasperini, L, 2000). Education is essential to reduce poverty and to increase human capital and can be considered as the most basic building block of development. A literate, well-educated labor-force is essential if a country is to lay the foundations for sustainable economic development and to compete effectively in today’s global market (Gardner, Robert, 1998). Recognizing the role of education in development, strategies particularly in developing world including India are now placing more emphasis on provision of quality education for the many target groups like children, youth and adults.

Education being broad term refers to basic education including primary and upper primary levels of education collectively called as elementary education, early childhood care and pre-school education, literacy programmes for youth and adult, vocational education, non-formal education etc. Primary education which is the first cycle in the elementary education is defined internationally as “providing children with basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills along with basic understanding of such subjects as history, geography, natural science, social science, art, and music”.

Achieving Universal Primary Education is a common target set out in the Education for All goals and in Millennium Development Goals. India is also committed to achieve the aim of universal education. Due to various interventions like for example operation blackboard (1986), non-formal education scheme (1986), the shikshakarmi project (1987), mahila samakya (1989), lok jubmish (1992), district primary education programme (DPEP) (1994), mid-day meal scheme (1995), etc. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 2002, in the recent years, much progress towards universal education has been made.

In the past few years, the country has witnessed a rise in enrolment at all the stages of education, a decline in dropout rates, a move towards gender parity, a substantial increase in the number of teachers in all types of institutions and a considerable expansion in the number and spread of educational institutions. Though the recent gains are positive and encouraging but they are still falling short of the set goals. Despite the government’s attempt to achieve the goal through the SSA still millions of students remain out of school for various reasons and do not take the advantage of education.

The studies, particularly in Indian context, on various aspects of schooling such as access, participation, equity, pedagogic renewal and quality and other important aspects have provided much of the basic knowledge. Scholars in the field, however, are of the opinion that, still there is a paucity of studies that could provide contextual information regarding why India lags behind in UEE. This becomes more important in the context of UEE for states
in the NER. One very important point that was noted during literature review was that much of the studies conducted in India had their focus on the major states like Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Few studies have been conducted in NE India with major focus being on the state of Assam. These studies have pinpointed the causes of low enrolment, high drop out and wastage and stagnation.

Many have identified the causes of various hindrances to school enrolment and retention and proposed appropriate remedial measures to reduce/remove them. Researchers have identified factors such as poverty and economic backwardness of parents, backwardness of society as a whole, non-stimulating social environment, illiteracy of and negligence by parents, lack of trained teachers, absence of ancillary services like mid-day meal, uniforms, books, science and game equipments located in urban areas only. However, no special effort has been made to find out the problems related to schooling of primary school children in rural areas in the NER in general and West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya, in particular. Hence there is a pertinent need to take up the present study as per the stated objectives.

### 6.2 Significance of the Study:

It is evident that studies have been conducted by Indian researchers to probe into factors that influence the academic performance of the children in the school. The Surveys of Research in Education (Buch 1974, 1979, 1984 and 1991) and Fifth and Sixth Survey of Research in Education refer to a fairly
good number of studies which attempt to correlate various school factors with academic achievement of students. However, researches correlating academic achievement with factors outside the school system are few. Studies relating to school facilities with classroom performance are quite few in number. While it is widely recognized that the primary education may have lasting influence on the further education and life of a child, there is a growing concern that the achievement of students in the different school subjects has yet to reach the desired level. It has also been known that there are disparities in the achievement levels of different groups of students. Rural students seem to fall far behind their counterparts and there exists gender differences among them too. Under these circumstances, it is pertinent to identify the magnitude of the problem, the factors that contribute to the problem and what causes the disparity among the students in terms of their achievements. It is only by understanding the nature of the problems it would be feasible to take appropriate steps.

Hence, the present study seeks to address the research questions as to what achievement levels have been attained by students in different school subjects at primary stage? What is the condition of the available physical facilities and amenities in the rural areas? What is the scenario related to children’s school attendance and what are the factors of non-school attendance at household level? Against this backdrop, the present study will attempt to find answers to the questions raised above. Moreover, the outcomes of the
study will provide deeper insights into the problem taken up in the study. Further, it would also help educational planners in framing policies and programmes in a more meaningful way in the field of primary education in West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya.

6.3 Statement of the Problem:

The problem of study undertaken by the investigator can formally be stated as follows:

“PRIMARY EDUCATION IN RURAL MEGHALAYA: A STUDY IN WEST GARO HILLS DISTRICT”.

6.4 Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the proposed study are as follows:

1. To appraise the existing infrastructural facilities in primary schools
2. To study the scenario of school attendance
3. To study the factors of non-school attendance of the children at household level
4. To study the levels of learning achievements in Mathematics and Garo (Language)
6.5 Delimitations of the Study:

Study delimits itself to all the infrastructural facilities in the schools, class wise (I-IV) student’s attendance and learning achievements in the subjects of mathematics and language i.e., Garo for only class IV.

6.6 Method:

Keeping in mind the nature of work it is decided to follow a survey method the present study aims to appraise the existing infrastructural facilities in primary schools, to study the situation related to school attendance and the factors related to children’s non-attendance of the school and also aims to study the levels of learning achievements in rural areas of the West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya. Therefore a survey is designed to explore the various aspects of the situation of primary schooling in rural areas with special reference to the above mentioned issues.

6.7 Population and Sample:

The present study seeks to understand the situation with regards to primary education in rural areas of the West Garo Hills district in the state of Meghalaya. Therefore, the population or the universe of the study is the rural areas of the district. As per the records of Office of Inspector of Schools, West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya, there are 1469 primary schools in the District. Out of this total number of schools, 1393 are located in rural areas.
The study purposefully selected the Dadengre block taking into account the lowest literacy of the block in entire district as well the state. The study has selected ten villages at random. As per the need of the study and to fulfill the objectives set in the study, it is required to select the schools in the identified villages and the household. For this purpose, the primary schools in each of the villages amounting to a total of ten are selected as the identified villages had only one school each at village level. For the purpose for identifying the households a detailed household list is prepared and survey is conducted in all the households in each of the identified villages. As the villages identified are small in terms of number of households, full enumeration method is followed in case of identifying the households as well in selecting the schools as only one school was available in each of the sample villages.

6.8 Tools Used:

As per the need of the study following tools are used for the purpose of data collection. They are as follows:

1. School Questionnaire

2. Household Questionnaire

3. Teacher Made Achievement Test in Mathematics

4. Teacher Made Achievement Test in Garo
6.9 Data Collection and Analysis:

The present study is using the questionnaires as mentioned above. For the purpose of the field study, identified villages are at first stage done with household listing and then with the help of household available in the family the household questionnaire is filled up. Next with the help of teacher the information required as per the school questionnaire is collected. Further, achievement tests in Mathematics and Garo are administered to children currently studying in class IV. All the children belonging to class IV present on the day of school visit are considered for the administration of these tests. The data collected is tabulated and analysed as per the requirements of the study. Taking into account the type of data that has been collected and as per the requirement of the analysis, the statistical technique mostly applied in this study is of the content analysis and percentage analysis.

6.10 Findings:

Following set of findings have been concluded after careful observations of analysis and interpretation.

1. The surveyed villages in the rural areas of the region have impoverished provision of access to schools in terms basic infrastructural facilities and amenities.

2. Small schools with low enrollment and Multi-grade classrooms being handled by single teacher in majority of the schools.
3. Economically poor households engaged in labour intensive agricultural patterns for their livelihood.

4. Very less effective instructional time available for teaching learning processes.

5. Reasons for children’s non-school participation as reported by parents relate to teacher and school related factors.

6. Reasons for children’s non-school participation as reported by parents also relate to child’s need to work at household level.

7. Non-availability of upper-primary schools near to villages and lack of transport facility also encourages disengagement of children from school participation.

8. No gender bias in terms school participation is observed.

9. Late enrollment to the school and as a result age-grade inappropriateness is observed.

10. Low academic achievement levels in the mathematics and Garo (Language). Majority of children face problem in reading and writing also have problems in dealing with basic mathematical operations. However, no gender gap in learning levels both in mathematics and Garo (Language) has been found out.

11. Majority of the children are first generation learners.

12. Taking care of younger siblings is found to be one important reason for non-school participation.
13. Lack of basic infrastructural facilities like electricity, safe drinking water facility and health care system also negatively effect the children’s school participation.

6.11 Educational Implications:

In the light of present analysis after careful observation of the major findings keeping in mind the available related literature few educational implications and policy recommendations emerge. They can be listed as below:

1. The surveyed villages in the rural areas of the region have impoverished provision of access to schools in terms basic infrastructural facilities and amenities. Therefore improving physical infrastructure and basic amenities is to be taken care on an urgent basis.

2. Teacher are required to go through in-service training so that they can be well equipped to handle the small schools and multi-grade classrooms as one of the important finding relates to the problems of small schools with low enrollment and Multi-grade teaching being handled by single teacher in majority of the schools.

3. Broader policy and programmes have to be put in place in order to deal with opportunity costs or indirect costs of households so that parents can afford to send their children to school.
4. It has been pointed out that very less effective instructional time is available for teaching learning processes. Therefore, serious measures have to be taken in order to increase the effective instructional time.

5. Reasons for children’s non-school participation as reported by parents relate to teacher and school related factors. Hence school and teacher factor is becoming one of the impeding factors of children’s non-school participation. Therefore, innovative and practically viable school improvement programmes have to be implemented.

6. It has been observed that the non-availability of upper-primary schools near to villages and lack of transport facility also encourages disengagement of children from school participation. Therefore general educational planning should take into account the needs of small schools and scattered villages while expanding the educational access at upper-primary stage at district level.

7. Awareness programmes at village level with an aim to sensitise the community are required as it has been noticed that children are enrollment is delayed to the school eventually resulting in age-grade inappropriateness.

8. Low academic achievement levels in the mathematics and Garo (Language). Majority of children face problem in reading and writing also have problems in dealing with basic mathematical operations. Though, no gender gap in learning levels both in mathematics and Garo
(Language) has been found out. It has been established by research and practices that if children are taught properly, their academic abilities can substantially improve (Sathe, D, 2005). For instance, the programmes like Read India of Pratham may be initiated either by the education department or in collaboration with such NGO’s working in the field of education with motivation of improving learning levels of children at primary stage.

9. The educational status of both parents is known to have a positive impact on the Many studies substantiate that schooling of children both boys as well as girls has got the linkages with parental education. Therefore schools in general and teacher in particular should take into account the fact that majority of the children are first generation learners.

10. Taking care of younger siblings is found to be one important reason for non-school participation. In spite of the very effective Anganwadi programme available in the village level, still there is a huge demand for child care services as in most of the villages in the study region both parents work hard both at household and farm level. In order to deal with children’s non-school participation therefore schools should take into account the child’s need to take care of younger siblings.

11. Lack of basic infrastructural facilities like electricity, safe drinking water facility and health care system also negatively effect the
children’s school participation. Therefore in order to attract children to school and to improve the general school participation it is not important to focus upon only the school factors. Non-school factors have to be taken into account while dealing with such problem.

6.12 Suggestions for further Study:

The present study tried to address the research questions as to what achievement levels have been attained by students in different school subjects at primary stage? What is the condition of the available physical facilities and amenities in the rural areas? What is the scenario related to children’s school attendance and what are the factors of non-school attendance at household level? While doing so the study is confined to the rural areas of the West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya. The present Study had delimitation in terms of certain variables or factors like the infrastructural facilities in the schools, class wise (I-IV) student’s attendance and learning achievements in the subjects of mathematics and language i.e., Garo for only class IV. Therefore taking into account the overall process of efforts of universalisation of primary education, study has many suggestions to offer for further studies. Few important are listed below.

1. Further research may be conducted how to improve the conditions of the schooling scenario rural areas taking into account the impoverished provision of access to schools.
2. In Indian context very less research has been conducted on small schools and Multi-grade classrooms. Present study has not dealt in detailed manner the challenges children and teachers face in such situations. Therefore further research may be conducted in the area of small schools and Multi-grade classrooms.

3. There is a scope to conduct in depth analysis of the nexus between poverty and schooling and also to probe the impact of various positive interventions of Government that have been introduced to deal with economically disadvantaged households.

4. Further research may be conducted in the area of instructional time available for teaching learning processes and school effectiveness in terms of measurable outcomes.

5. The present study has come out with a finding that one of the reasons for children’s non-school participation relates to child’s need to work at household level. Further research may be conducted to examine few pertinent questions in this regard like to what extent there is a household demand for work from children studying in primary schools? To what extent there is actual labour contribution of children studying in primary schools in terms of their work input in household and productive activities in the farm? To what extent the labour contribution of children will affect the student’s attendance and learning achievements?
6. The present study focused children’s learning levels only in mathematics and Garo (Language) and that too confining to children studying class IV. Further studies may be conducted to probe in to detailed learning styles of children in rural areas in different curricular subjects covering all the grades in the primary education.

7. Further research may also be conducted in details the problems of the first generation learners.
**Picture 1**
Primary school

**Picture 2**
Primary school
Children

**Picture 3**
Education Guarantee
School
Children going to school

The Village Nokma with His Family at one of the selected villages.

The sister has to look after her younger brother while parents go work in Jhum field.
Picture 7
The Family clearing the Jungle for Jhum Field

Picture 8
Jhum field

Picture 9
A House in Jhum Field where Family Stay during the Jhum season
Picture 10
Elder brother Looking after younger brothers while parents are busy clearing the jungle for jhum Field

Picture 11
Children has to look after brothers and sister while parents went to work in Jhum

Picture 12
Midday meal scheme