Chapter 1  
THE FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The chapter includes the statement of the research problem, review of the literature related to the study on community participation in elementary education: intervention of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Cachar district, the objectives which are taken into account and the methodology which were followed during the study.

I- STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Since its Independence, India has strived for involving communities in the system of administration and process of development. Community Development Blocks established in the First Five-Year Plan and Panchayati Raj Institutions introduced at village, block and district levels in the second plan were the initial attempts to ensure community involvement, especially in development and administration. In the first 25 years it was realized that the involvement of community had remained more on paper, mainly due to high rate of illiteracy, especially among the Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and women, lack of any policy and programmes to empower community in respect of development and administration, non-effectiveness of the devolution of power etc. After education was made a subject under the Concurrent List of the Indian Constitution in 1976 there has been noticed a significant change in taking responsibilities of administration and delivery of elementary education, along with widening scope of development of the country. Yet, five decades’ experience of the top-down planning revealed that planning at macro level had not necessarily resulted in the reduction of disparities in education. It was felt to understand the local level practices and planning process, having origin in local communities, to follow the linear policy approach of bottom-up strategies for educational planning process at national level. Therefore, educational policy planners, particularly after 1990, were urging for micro level planning coupled with enabling policy frameworks at different levels; viz., national, state, district and local levels. In fact, since the eighth five-year plan India had a goal of
making elementary education accessible, universal and relevant; that is, eight years of schooling from the age of six. Emphasizing functional participation of community in administration and development, the Government conferred constitutional status on the Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban local bodies through 73rd and 74th (Constitution) Amendments in 1992 to involve community in the process of development and administration. Since then, involvement of community has been an integral component in all kinds of development programmes. During 1990s, the educational programmes like Lok Jumbish, Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) were implemented by involving the community and the experience gained from these programmes reinforced a significant role of community in education. Many educational innovations of recent years are based on the strong foundation of community support and participation. The positive impact of Lok Jumbish (LJ) and Shikhsa Karmi Project (SKP), focusing on supporting teachers and students by involving village community in taking responsibility for all educational activities of the village school, is serving as a demonstration of how deeply rooted problems of education in India can be addressed. Wide dissemination of these innovative approaches could inspire other educational programmes all over India and the world.

Continuing with the policy of community involvement and universalization of education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched in 2001 to provide useful and relevant elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-14 by 2010, with a goal to universalize elementary education and improve its quality through decentralized and context-specific planning (community participation) and a process-based, time-bound implementation strategy. The goal is consistent with the 86th (Constitution) Amendment in 2002, making elementary education a fundamental right of every child and with the Millenium Development Goal (MDG) of universalizing primary education by 2015. The project aimed (i) to reduce out-of-school children by at least 9 million in the 6-14 age group, with an increase in enrolment, in the process of universalizing elementary education by 2007 and zero dropouts by 2010; (ii) to narrow existing gender and social gaps so that enrolment of girls would be near
parity with boys, enrolment of children of SCs and STs would be near parity with that of other groups; and enrolment of children with disability would increase and (iii) to increase the quality of education of all elementary school students so that learning would be improved and transition rates from primary education to upper primary education would increase. In order to implement the programme effectively through decentralized management, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has involved community through various committees and local bodies; viz., Goan Panchayat Education Committee (GPEC), School Management Committee (SMC), Village Education Committee (VEC), Tea Garden Education Committee (TGEC), Ward Education Committee (WEC), Mothers Group (MG), Parents and Teachers Association (PTA), Mothers and Teachers Association (MTA), Tribal Autonomous Council (TAC) and other grassroots level structures. In order to improve the quality of the education, it has stressed on improving the student-teacher ratio, teachers’ training, facilitating development of teaching-learning material and providing textbooks to children from special focus area. The community is expected to play a key role in micro-planning, especially in the development of village/habitation level plan and school improvement plans. Community based monitoring, especially in enrolment and retention of children, education of girl child and other disadvantaged groups, utilization of various grants and construction, is important to ensure attainment of the programme objectives. Cachar district, located in the one of Assam’s three diverse regions i.e., the Barak Valley, makes a case for probing into the SSA intervention. A question arises: What patterns of SSA intervention are perceived in elementary education in Assam, especially in its Cachar district? Elementary education in India has been subjected to investigation in various researches. Some studies are reviewed to know as to what intervention SSA has made in elementary education and with what outcomes.

II- REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The studies on elementary education may be broadly classified into two classes; namely, (i) Studies on elementary education in general and (ii) Studies on community participation in elementary education.
(i) *Studies on elementary education in general*

Community participation in schooling has been judged to be working well in the rare instances where there are good understanding and relations between schools, communities and local educational authorities, operating within a stable social context with a history of community mobilisation and a genuine commitment to community decision-making (PROBE, 1999, on successes in Himachal Pradesh, India, and the Academy for Academic Development, 2002, and De Graauwe et al., 2005, on some countries of West Africa).

Studies pertaining to wastage, stagnation and non-enrolment at the state level include those conducted in Haryana by the SIE (1969); in Assam by Dass (1969); in Andhra Pradesh by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics (1970); in Orissa by the SIE (1972); in Madhya Pradesh by the Government College of Education, Jabalpur (1973); in Kerala by Pillai and others (1980); in Karnataka by Kashinath (1980); in Tamil Nadu by Vatsala (1981); in Rajasthan by Sharma (1982); in Manipur by Devi (1983); and in Uttar-Pradesh by the SIE (1986).

Among the surveys of wastage and stagnation, two were conducted at the national level. Sharma and Sapra (1969) studied the problem in depth through a sample from 92 schools of Punjab, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi. Khan (1972) reviewed studies on wastage conducted in the country and analysed the available information applying the methodology suggested by UNESCO. He found that the dropout ratio was more in the four-year primary schools than in the five-year primary schools. Besides dropouts, stagnation was also taken into consideration. The input-output ratio was 94 per cent for girls and 71 per cent for boys, with an average of 87 per cent.

In order to understand the phenomena of wastage, stagnation and non-enrolment in local-specific situations, eight studies have been conducted at district level. Dandekar (1955) investigated this phenomenon in Satara district; Dass (1970) in the district of Sibsagar; Barua (1971) in the subdivisions of Sibsagar and Golaghat; Srivastava and Gupta (1981) and the ISES (1981) in the Tumkur district; the A.N.S. Institute of Social Studies (1981) in the Hazari Bagh district and Krishnamurthy (1985) in Ranga Reddy district. The National Institute
of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) studied the administration of elementary education in relation to the programme of universalization in nine states. Reports on all these brought out by the NIEPA (1979). The findings in general were that the annual census of school-age children was, by and large, incomplete or ill conducted; the assessment of dropouts was also similar; planned efforts to enrol non-attending and dropout children were inadequate; school timings lacked flexibility and were not adjustable to suit local conditions. However, mid-day meals and reading and writing materials were made available to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students, to some extent. There was very little monitoring and supervision by higher officials.

Studies of elementary education at the state level have continued in the 1980s and include the survey by Das (1979) of the position in Assam; by Mandal (1980) for Bihar; and by Lyndem (1985) for Meghalaya. Sachidanand (1982) analysed the statistics from the reports of Census and Planning Commission to study the expansion of elementary education in Bihar in the context of socio-economic, cultural and political factors.

Developmental surveys have also been attempted at district and lower levels to identify local-specific problems. The studies include those of progress and problems in the rural areas of districts adjoining Calcutta by Sarkar and Das (1980); in the Khasi and Nainital hill regions by Saikia (1981); in the Marathwada region by Gogate (1984); in the Greater Calcutta region by Dutta (1985) and in the rural areas of Ghazipur district by Rai (1987). Besides these, a survey was conducted by the SIE, Gujarat (1965), to identify the problems of supervision and also the views of supervisors about the primary school curriculum. A study by Sharma (1984) collected the opinions of parents about the primary school system. Islam (1983), in his doctoral dissertation, investigated the factors affecting the growth of universal compulsory primary education in Bangladesh since 1947.

Lohitakshan (1961) conducted an experimental study to determine the association of social environment factors with backwardness. Shah and Darji (1966) presented reports of their investigations identifying the academic causes
of backwardness in mathematics, social studies and general attainment. Puranik (1969) studied academic backwardness in Nagpur schools. The SCERT, Andhra Pradesh (1976), investigated the causes of poor results of common examinations at seventh grade level. Sharma (1978) studied the academic progress of children in Sibsagar district of Assam and Desai (1985) investigated problems of learning among primary school children in Gujarat. Devi (1985) has analysed the barriers that exist in the school achievement of scheduled caste students. All these studies indicated that conditions in schools were far from satisfactory, the methods defective, teaching unplanned, textbooks inadequate, examinations subjective, teachers inefficient and parents non-supporting.

Krishnamurthy's (1985) study in 46 schools (41 primary and five upper primary), 44 parents, 47 teachers and 37 community leaders of Tandur block of Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh, to identify the problems of enrolment finds that in the villages in which the sample schools were situated, there were 6255 children in the age group of 6 to 11 and out of them only 3329 were enrolled in schools. There were 1485 children in the age group of 11-13 years, out of which 780 were enrolled. The problems revealed by community leaders for non-enrolment were poverty of the parents and their feeling that education would not help in meeting the needs of life.

Robert W. Rhodes (1994) in Nurturing Learning in Native American Students looked at research on holistic and community-centered approaches to learning and concluded that Native students are most successful when they can be active learners and teachers act as facilitators and coaches. He urges educators to take a "bottom up" approach to education that begins with them studying their students and the homes and community from which they come. He begins with a very brief history of Indian education and then reviews research on how, why, what, and from whom American Indian students learn, including research on brain dominance, learning styles, whole language, testing, motivation, and discipline.

Coggins, Williams, & Radin (1997) studied 19 Ojibwa families and measured traditional orientation by looking at eight characteristics that their
literature review identified as core values of a majority of American Indians. These values were sharing, other-centered, harmony with nature, non-interference (in the lives of other people, including one's children), patience, circular time, non-confrontive, and broad view of family (extended families). Coggins et al. (1997) concluded, "the overall picture presented is encouraging for those who have argued the importance of maintaining cultural identity among American Indians" (p. 13). Jim Cummins (1996, 2000), reviewing the literature on minority education, found that students with a strong sense of cultural and personal identity were more likely to have academic success.

(ii) Studies on community participation in elementary education

(1) Studies emphasizing on significance of involving community in children’s education

During the early 1970s, some studies were conducted in relation to the progress and problems of primary education under the Panchayat Raj system which was introduced around 1960. Joshi (1973) studied this aspect in South Gujarat; Iqbal Narayan (1974) in Rajasthan; Patel (1975) in Mehsana district Gujarat and Shinde (1975) in Panchmahal district of Gujarat. These studies indicate that the Panchayat Raj system was not able to improve the qualitative aspect of primary education. Even quantitative improvement did not make much headway. The local community groups could not be brought closely together as panchayat leadership was based on caste and political considerations. Village panchayat committees were relatively more effective than taluka panchayat committees.

In the National Study 152 community leaders from across the country were interviewed and in general, it was found that the community leaders were more critical of schools serving Indians than were the Indian students and parents" (Estelle Fuchs and Robert J. Havighurst, 1972:184-185). However, they were overwhelmingly in favour of having the schools which prepare students to "participate in modern society."
Au and Mason (1981) found that when teachers’ conversation styles match that of the community, children are more able and eager to participate in classroom activities. Heath (1983) discovered that children will achieve more when their home language patterns and values for literacy resemble that of the school. Cazden (1988) showed that teachers, who are familiar with children’s conversational styles, including the uses of silence, are more successful in their instruction than teachers who are not.

Community participation has received increased attention in international and national policy in recent years. It is considered important as an end in itself (as a democratic right), as well as a means to the achievement of sustainable development and poverty alleviation (Stiglitz 1997). The interest in community participation has occurred simultaneously with an intensified focus on achieving gender parity in education, and community participation may be seen as one of the means to achieve this goal. One of the potential outcomes of community participation as an end in itself is the transformation of gender relations, allowing the opportunity for women to participate alongside men in decision-making.

Peshkin (1997) find evidence of ambivalent support for schools by native community members, there is a body of support for education in Indian country. The largest study ever done of Indian education was the National Study of American Indian Education completed in 1971 and reported in To Live on This Earth: American Indian Education by Estelle Fuchs and Robert J. Havighurst (1972). The study found "mild approval of schools and teachers by Indian students with some differences between communities" (p. 157), with more acculturated students being more critical of their schools. The study found a malaise similar to what Peshkin found in the high school, it appears that Indian pupils do not become enthusiastic about their schooling. They do not appear to exert themselves or feel that school achievement is very important to them. However, they are not hostile to school. They generally speak of their school and their teachers favourably (Estelle Fuchs and Robert J. Havighurst 1972: 158).
Most of the educationists all over the world seem to argue that the community participation plays vital role in promoting education in terms of quality and quantity and it is assumed that community participation and empowerment has the potential to make major contribution in educating people and enriching their quality of life (Govinda and Diwan 1998).

Policy makers, educators and others involved in education are seeking ways to utilize limited resources effectively in order to identify and solve problems in the education sector and to provide quality education for children. Their efforts have contributed to realizing the significance and benefits of community participation in education and have recognized community participation as one of the strategies to improve educational access and quality (Uemura 1999).

Community participation has been continuously promoted and formalized through both international and national policy, with even greater attention paid to it in recent years. It is not coincidental that a more explicit emphasis on community participation has corresponded with the economic crises which have adversely affected education systems in sub-Saharan African countries since the 1980s, together with rapid expansion of school systems in the context of the drive for achieving universal primary education and associated abolition of fees to stimulate demand, necessitating the search for alternative sources of resources (Bray and Lillis 1988; Bray 1996; Shaeffer 1992; Watt 2001).

Rodall, C.A.S and Martin, C.J (2009) argue that linear models such as top-down promotion of bottom-up policy design, implementation and evaluation leave out the crucial dimensions of inclusive policy-making; to achieve these, governance practices are necessary to give voice to communities and legitimacy to government actors. This argumentative understating has been the result of administrative de-concentration process which took place during 1992 in Mexico.

Parents also participate in the political arena to counterbalance the influences on elected officials (Gold et al. 2003). They join letter-writing campaigns and attend rallies, school board meetings, and other public events.
They become active in voter drives and campaigns for elective offices. For example, the Chicago Board of Education decided to sell property to a developer even though it had been earmarked for a new middle school. The Logan Square Neighborhood Association and a group of parent mentors who work in the schools successfully mobilized the community to pressure the board to overturn that decision (Blanc et al. 2002).

Community organizing in education focuses on the policy and system changes needed to revitalize schools and ensure student achievement. Recent studies by Research for Action and the Cross City Campaign and by the Institute of Education and Social Policy report commitments from educators to implement changes concerning equity, high learning experiences, school-community linkages, school climate, and public accountability (Gold, Simon & Brown 2002b; Mediratta et al. 2002).

Community organizing groups use collective action to focus on public accountability. Through public meetings, parents, school staff, and elected officials examine school information, deliberate on the issues, and commit themselves to solutions. Some of these meetings can be confrontational while others emphasize mutual commitment and support (Gold, Simon & Brown 2003).

Studies in India, indicate that sometimes parents internalise these deficit constructions of themselves in relation to schooling, which may negatively affect their children’s participation in schooling (PROBE 1999; Balagopalan 2003). Unsatisfactory parent-school relations in a variety of contexts have been associated with non-enrolment and dropout (Asian Development Bank 1998; PROBE1999; Engelbrecht et al. 2005 and Pryor 2005).

(2) Studies on ways and levels of involving community in children’s education

Involving parents in the education of their children have been found to be associated not only with students but also with teachers, schools and districts (Becker and Epstein, 1982b; Comer, 1986; Epstein, 1991a). The parents can be powerful contributors to their children's education, both stimulating and
reinforcing their children's learning. However, parent involvement should not be viewed as an educational panacea (Ascher 1987; Brown 1989).

People, if given the opportunity to acquire the appropriate knowledge necessary to develop their own strategies, can achieve the ability to determine the course of their own lives. The sense of self-confidence they develop is in itself empowering (Rich, Edelstein, Hallman & Wandersman 1996). The confidence to engage in group processes is a liberating action (White 1994). At the same time, it requires a re-examination of traditional design procedures to ensure that participation becomes more than a confirmation of the designer's original intentions. Community change requires community participation in the design process (Wates & Knevitt 1987).

Participation in a game process allows individuals to confront their community problems with an increased awareness of the general issues, the decision making process, and the appropriate decision strategies. This requires proponents to provide clearly stated purposes and answers to questions of who, what, where and when. Participation can be classified into the following four categories of experiences that can lead to ultimate agreement about what the future should bring (Burns 1979; Sanoff 1992).

- Discovering or rediscovering the realities of a given environment
- Understanding the physical, social and economic implications
- Decision making is based on establishing priorities
- Implementation to see those results are achieved

Osborne and Gaebler (1993) point out among a diverse set of guidelines that entrepreneurial governments empower citizens by pushing control out of the bureaucracy into the community; decentralize authority embracing participatory management, focus not simply on providing public services, but on catalyzing all sectors—public, private and voluntary—to actions to solve their communities’ problems.
In fact, not all communities have played a passive role in children’s education. For instance, Williams (1994) stresses that until the middle of the last century, responsibility for educating children rested with the community. Although there are still places where communities operate schools for their children today, community participation in education hasn’t been fully recognized nor extended systematically to a wider practice. He mentions three models of education and community. The first one is traditional community-based education, in which communities provide new generation of young people with the education necessary for transmitting local norms and economic skills. In this model, education is deeply embedded in local social relations, linking school and community closely. The government, being of little use in meeting the specialized training needs of industrialized economies, plays a minor role and provides little basis for political integration at the national level. The second model is government-provided education, in which governments assume responsibility for providing and regulating education. The content of education has been largely standardized within and across countries, and governments have diminished the role of the community. However, lack of resources and management incapability have proven that governments cannot provide the community with adequate educational delivery, fully equipped school buildings and a full range of grades, teachers and instructional materials. This triggers the emergence of the collaborative model, in which community plays a supportive role in government-provisioned education.

In Papua New Guinea, community schools set the goal to link the culture of the pupils’ home community with the culture of the school. Accordingly, the schools consider the community as the center of learning as well as the focus of education. As a result, the community schools have become central to the national curriculum development which enables community life, such as festivals, customs, musical instruments and local business activities to be reflected in the curriculum (Goldring 1994).

There are various ways to bring parents and community members closer to schools, which they serve, including: (a) minimizing discontinuities between
schools and communities and between schools and families, (b) minimizing conflicts between schools and communities, schools and families, teachers and parents and what is taught in school and what is taught at home, (c) making easy transition of pupils going from home to school, (d) preparing pupils to engage in learning experiences and (e) minimizing cultural shock of new entrants to schooling (Cariño and Valismo 1994).

Wendy S. Grolnick (1994, 1997) conceptualized three dimensions of parental involvement based on how parent–child interactions affect students' schooling and motivation. Behavioral involvement refers to parents' public actions representing their interest in their child's education, such as attending an open house or volunteering at the school. Personal involvement includes parent–child interactions that communicate positive attitudes about school and the importance of education to the child.

Colletta and Perkins (1995) illustrate various forms of community participation: (a) research and data collection, (b) dialogue with policymakers, (c) school management, (d) curriculum design, (e) development of learning materials and (f) school construction.

Epstein (1995, 1997) seeks ways to help children succeed in school and later life and focuses on partnerships of schools, families and communities that attempt to: (a) improve school programs and school climate, (b) provide family services and support, (c) increase parents’ skills and leadership, (d) connect families with others in the school and in the community and (e) help teachers in their work. She summarizes the following types of involvement where schools, families and communities can work productively together:

(i) **Parenting** – to help all families to establish home environments that support children’s learning at school

(ii) **Communicating** – to design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication that enable parents to learn about school programs and their children’s progress in schools as well as teachers to learn about how children do at home
(iii) **Volunteering** – to recruit and organize parents’ help and support

(iv) **Learning at home** – to provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with home work and other curriculum related activities, decisions and planning

(v) **Decision making** – to include families in school decisions, to have parent leaders and representatives in school meetings

(vi) **Collaborating with the community** – to identify and integrate resources as well as services from the community in order to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning.

Joyce L. Epstein (1995, 2001) argued that school, family and community are important "spheres of influence" on children's development and that a child's educational development is enhanced when these three environments work collaboratively toward shared goals. Epstein encouraged schools to create greater "overlap" between the school, home and community through the implementation of activities across six types of involvement: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with the community. By implementing activities across all six types of involvement, educators can help improve student achievement and experiences in school.

In Madagascar where Government investments at the primary level have been extremely low, parents and communities contribute money, labour and materials (World Bank 1995b: 30). The absence of government support leaves the school infrastructure, equipment and pupil supplies to the parents and the community. As a result, community and parents are in the center “in keeping the schools going”. Another example is found in Colombia’s Escuela Nueva program for multigrade schools that incorporates a number of innovative components, including community participation in school curriculum (Colleta and Perkins 1995). In each learning task, self instructional textbooks guide students to identify examples and cultural elements from their own experience and allow local materials to be accumulated in the learning centers. The oral tradition is transcribed and classified. Local crafts, jobs and economic activities, health
problems, geography, landscapes, transport, sports, dances, food, animals, vegetation and minerals are also described and classified for use in learning experiences.

The parental involvement in education is seen as a right, or as an outright democratic value in some countries. According to OECD study (1997), “in Denmark, England and Wales, parents have a right to be represented on the governing bodies of schools; in France, they have a right to representation on a whole range of policy-making bodies; the Parents’ Charter gives English and Welsh parents a number of rights, including the right to certain information from the school; in Spain, the Constitution recognizes the right of teachers, parents and students to participate in defining the scope and nature of the education service and the legislation in Ireland places parents at the center of the education process and gives them a wide range of statutory rights in relation to education.” Parental involvement in education, particularly in school governance, is seen as a means of making schools more accountable to the society which funds them. This has been witnessed in some places such as England and Wales, Canada and the United States. The notion of parental involvement for accountability derives from a more market oriented concept in which school-family partnership is viewed rather like business partnership, through which the two parties receive mutual and complementary benefits which enable them to operate more effectively (OECD 1997).

McDonough and Wheeler (1998) point out that communities can contribute to schools by sending respected community members, such as religious leaders or tribe heads, to the classrooms and talk about community history, traditions, customs and culture which have been historically celebrated in the community. Schools themselves can contribute to community efforts by developing sustainable solutions to local problems. Teachers can benefit from communities’ active participation in their children’s schools. For example, community members themselves can be a rich resource to support teachers’ practice in classrooms by facilitating children’s learning. In the Social Forestry, Education and Participation pilot project (SFEP) in Thailand, local villagers came
to schools and helped students understand various species indigenous to that village. Community members can help students understand concepts which teachers teach in classrooms by having the students coming into community, interacting with community members who are knowledgeable about village history and the certain issues faced by the community. Respected community members can become knowledgeable lecturers who can come to the classrooms and teach students issues faced by the community.

Robinson-Zanartu and Majel Dixon (1996) surveyed 234 Indian parents and community members who had attended at the National Indian Education Association's (NIEA's) annual conference. While this would tend to be a skewed sample representing activist community members by virtue of their attending a national conference, this study is useful in determining the thinking of community leadership. The parents and community members are vitally concerned and vocal. They considered themselves extremely important in the education of their children. They felt strongly aware of curricular and methodological issues and strongly disagreed with many of those elements in public and Bureau or boarding schools.

Heneveld and Craig (1996) argue that the parents and the community are one of the key factors to determine the effectiveness of school in Sub-Saharan Africa, because they can prepare children’s readiness to come to school and their cognitive development, by ensuring children’s well-balanced nutrition and health. Further, families who are involved in schools not only have a better understanding about education but also become more willing to cooperate with schools in attempts to improve children’s learning. In addition, parents can help their children with homework, and make sure that children are physically ready to learn at schools. They identify five categories of parent and community support that are relevant to the region: (i) children come to school prepared to learn, (ii) the community provides financial and material support to the school, (iii) communication between the school, parents and community is frequent, (iv) the community has a meaningful role in school governance and (v) community members and parents assist with instruction.
Community participation can contribute to preparing and improving home environment, by encouraging parents to understand about the benefits of their children’s schooling. A World Bank study (1997) analyzed primary education in India and discovered that families aware of importance of education can contribute much to their children’s learning achievement, even in disadvantaged districts. It also shows that students from families that encouraged children’s schooling, by allocating time at home for study, encouraging reading and supporting their children’s educational aspirations, scored significantly higher on tests of learning achievement. Reimers (1997) considers the case of Fe y Alegría (Faith and Joy), a non-governmental organization which provides formal and non-formal education at different levels in 12 countries in Latin America, as a good illustration of this approach. Fe y Alegría schools attempt to achieve the curriculum that recognizes and builds on the community where the students live. The schools also aim to use teacher training to promote appreciation of the diversity of student backgrounds and students’ use of non-standard forms of language in school. This innovation attempts to place the schools where they belong in the community and promote mechanisms for community involvement in running the school. Reimers argues that “this is very important for the support of democracy as it promotes local participation to solve local problems of education (p.41).”

The recent widespread development of initiatives by schools to involve parents is rooted in the belief that what parents think and do is significant to educational outcomes that “while schools cannot realistically hope to alter a student's family status, schools may hope to influence selected parental process variables in the direction of increased parental involvement” (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997:8).

Community organizing takes parent involvement to a new level of engagement with schools and communities (Gold et al. 2002b; Cortes 1993). Parents increase their presence and roles in schools. They improve communications with teachers and, as they learn more about what goes on in the classroom, become more effective supporters of their children's learning at home.
Parents serve as tutors in class and after school programs, lead parenting workshops, and help maintain school safety. In addition, parent leaders expand their roles beyond the school to address community-wide issues.


Community organizing transforms family-school-community relationships. Schools are beginning to welcome parents and to serve as community centers that provide adult education programs and host community meetings. Both parents and teachers develop mutual respect and teachers report raising their expectations of students' potential (Simon et al. 2002). This success does not come without its own challenges. As parents and community members develop “insider” connections and take formal school decision-making roles, they must also address how to safeguard their autonomy and avoid co-optation.

Many research studies have identified various ways of community participation in education, providing specific channels through which communities can be involved in children’s education. Bjork (2003) focuses on a reform launched in Indonesia in 1994 in educational administration and decentralization policies. At the central level, policy rhetoric was strong for the process of decentralization, but when investigated extent of implementation there has been high level of constancy rather than the changes in the schools in terms of decentralization. Study also found there is need for major reconfiguration of the education system to induce any significant changes at the institutional level decision making process.

Desforges & Abouchaar (2003) attempts to promote parental involvement in school can be classified into three categories: first, programmes which focus
on the immediate connectivity between schools and parents; next, programmes which cast parental involvement more broadly in the context of family and community education programmes; thirdly, parent training programmes aimed at promoting parental psychosocial health and relationship skills which are known to be foundational to parental involvement.

Community participation in formal education has come from two distinct sources. As with the prioritisation of decentralisation, it has emerged both from neo-liberal imperatives for more efficient use of financial and material resources promoted by organisations such as the World Bank and bi-lateral agencies, together with increased political advocacy for greater community ‘ownership’ and involvement in decision-making (Rose 2003; Pryor 2005). However, greater community involvement has frequently been a top-down imposition and not a response to demands from communities for greater involvement. Indeed, in various national contexts many communities themselves consider this kind of participation as an additional burden on the already considerable demands on their time and resources (Watt 2001; Pryor & Ampiah 2003; Rose 2003), whereas school and local government officials often ascribe what they perceive to be poor or non-involvement by parents to lack of interest or lack of formal education (PROBE 1999; Vasavi 2003).

(3) Studies highlighting community involvement in monitoring of children’s education

Williams (1984) analyze in the Parent Involvement Education Project (PIEP), where he surveyed parents, teachers, principals, and other school professionals on five aspects of parent involvement: 1) attitudes; 2) decisions; 3) roles; 4) activities; and 5) teacher training. The study showed a high interest in home-school partnerships by parents (Moles, 1987; Williams, 1984; Herman and Yeh, 1983) but with a more expanded role for the parents such as participation in advisory and governance activities (Williams and Stallworth, 1983; Ahlenius, 1983). Chavkin and Williams (1987) conducted a survey that corroborates this interest by the parents. The authors suggested that administrators envision a broader role for parents and use them as educational resources.
Bliss (1986) suggests several ways in which schools can enhance parent involvement in these diverse communities: 1) have more realistic expectations of parent capabilities; 2) recognize that children adapt faster to language and cultural diversity than do parents; 3) focus on programs for middle schools and junior high schools and 4) understand that children with greatest needs often do not have a parent available to become involved.

Chavkin and Williams (1987) surveyed educators, school board members, and parents in five southwestern states and found that parent involvement in policies at the district level as virtually non-existent as of 1983 although educators and parents desired more school policies about parent involvement.

Epstein and Dauber (1989b) found that teachers in self-contained classrooms are more likely to involve parents than teachers in teamed or departmentalized programs. Teachers of reading or English are also more likely to engage parents in home learning activities.

The extensive examination of six case studies on the Philippines, Kenya, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Colombia and Bolivia lead Rugh and Bossert (1998) to the conclusion that teachers and other school staff feel they should be accountable to community clients only when the community holds some power over them: when they either come from the same village and have social ties if their continued employment or salaries depend on community satisfaction; or sometimes when community education committees exist to manage the schools and members are empowered to exert their influence. They also argue that accountability is developed through routine parents’ meetings and reporting systems on student progress. When parents contribute their time, labour, materials, land and funds they tend to be more involved in school activities, including participating in meetings with teachers and monitoring teachers’ performance. Teachers and school staff, in turn, feel more obliged to deliver better education for the students in order to respond to the needs of parents and communities. Participation can greatly help develop accountability which contributes to improving the education delivery.
In 1988 San Diego City Schools adopted a district parent involvement policy that closely paralleled the state policy. The policy addresses structures for effective parent involvement, supports for teachers and parents, and the use of community resources (Chrispeels 1991b). Indianapolis Public Schools view parent involvement as "an important component of the district's school improvement plan" (Warner 1991:373).

The development of policy by state education agencies "stems from the acknowledgement that schools alone cannot ensure that all students are successful and the additional resources of home and the community must also be brought to bear on the task at hand" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1991).

Parent and community involvement policy may serve to provide state education administrators with information on educational practices (Nardine, Chapman, and Moles 1989). Nardine and Morris (1991) found that 20 states had enacted parent involvement legislation, six states had written guidelines and 21 states had neither legislation nor written guidelines governing parent involvement. The authors reported that legislation on parent involvement was not a high priority and that a wide diversity exists from state to state in the decisions about policies and guidelines.

The first active intervention in parent involvement by the federal government came with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965. ESEA was created as much to empower poor communities to solve their own problems as to provide funding for the education of disadvantaged children (Snider 1990b).

Henderson and Marburger (1990) describe six federal educational programs that include policies pertaining to parent involvement as a necessary component of success: the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965); the Education of the Handicapped Act, P.L. 94-142 (1974); the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 1974); Even Start (Part B of the Elementary and Secondary School Improvement
Amendments of 1988); Head Start (1965); and FIRST (Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching, authorized in the Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988).

Dauber and Epstein (1991) showed that the parent involvement programs in elementary schools are stronger, more positive, and more comprehensive than those for children in the middle grades. Useem (1990) found a similar pattern, parents of children in the middle grades received less information and guidance precisely at a time when they needed more in order to understand the larger and more complex schools, subjects, and schedules.

Involving parents in home learning activities vastly improves students' productivity (Rich 1987a; Epstein 1991b; Walberg 1984). Programs and activities that may be called "home learning" take many forms, but most commonly include homework, leisure reading, family discussions, educational games, and enrichment activities (Moles 1991).

Dauber and Epstein (1991:11) asserted that "regardless of parent education, family size, student ability, or school level (elementary or middle school), parents are more likely to become partners in their children's education if they perceive that the schools have strong practices to involve parents at school, at home on homework, and at home on reading activities." Districts and schools play a key role in developing effective school parent partnerships to encourage home learning (Birman 1987; Hamilton and Cochran 1988; Comer 1988b).

Davies (1991) recommended that change from parent involvement to family involvement because for some children, it is the grandparents, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters or even neighbors who make the most significant contribution in supporting the child's educational development outside the school. Schools must take the lead in helping families to have the knowledge and skills to provide support to their children (Bliss 1986; Moles 1990; Slaughter and Epps 1987). Principals need to take the lead to ensure that parent and community involvement is a high priority for the school staff, parents, and the community (Purnell and Gotts 1985).
Specific learning activities can be promoted by specific school practices: providing homework hotlines, after-school homework tutoring sessions, or assigning interactive projects that require parents' assistance (Chrispeels 1991a). Homework must be clear, of an appropriate quantity, and integrated into the classroom (Walberg 1984; Chrispeels 1991a). Researchers also suggested that the school provide surrogate family members for students whose parents cannot participate (Davies 1988).

There is great importance of parent involvement and their potential contribution to the school improvement efforts, their role in supporting quality learning in the school. But it is often ignored. A study has reported that only very few schools invited parents in schools to discuss child learning (Bista and Carney 2001). The same study found only 10 percent of the total parents making inquiry about their children’s learning. Based on the findings the Institutional Analysis team made two generalizations about school community relations. First, parents did not see themselves as having any defined responsibilities for the learning of their children. Second, teachers ignored the fact that the parents and community could play an important role in supporting quality learning.

The community participation in schooling has played an important role in education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), both positively and negatively, which has its relationship with gender outcomes in particular. It was first considered the community participation as a means to improving equitable educational outcomes, followed by a review of community participation in education as an end in itself. With increased international attention on community participation, several studies have been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of programmes, particularly evaluations by NGOs and donors involved in supporting the programmes. These programmes are likely to differ from those which develop without external support, partly due to differences in availability of resources (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder 2002). This raises questions about whether externally-supported schools are more cost-effective than their government counterparts as often claimed. Tietjen’s (1999) attempt at assessing this, even this recognizes that some costs cannot be fully accounted for. Even so,
she concludes that, while they have a range of benefits, community schools cannot necessarily be considered a cheap alternative to the state system as often claimed.

Community organizing engages parents in poor performing schools to improve children's educational outcomes. Parent involvement practices such as monitoring children's homework, reading to them and volunteering in schools are linked to students' positive academic and behavioral outcomes (Jordan, Orozco & Averett 2001) they are often insufficient to boost the achievement of low-income children in troubled schools. Parents in these failing schools realize that although they are responsible for supporting children's learning, schools are responsible for providing a quality education (Zachary & Olatoye 2001). Poor school performance, high dropout rates, lack of qualified teachers and inadequate facilities demand new forms of parent engagement to hold schools accountable. Community organizing offers one strategy to engage parents to effect system change.

In addition to promoting “bonding” social capital within a group of parents, community organizing also promotes “bridging” social capital, which connects parents, schools, community institutions and public officials (Putnam 2002).

The majority of these researchers have been Western educationists working within economic frameworks, concentrating on identifying reasons for girls’ non-enrolment, attendance or persistence in schools, which is generally measured against the situation for boys. Similarly, there is a substantial body of literature focusing on community participation in schooling, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (Watt 2001 and Miller Grandvaux & Yoder 2002).

Parents in a Texas borderland community who participated in leadership training increased their advocacy skills and self-confidence. Parents created stronger relationships with school staff and administrators and joined various decision-making committees on curricular programs and school governance (Quezeda 2003).
Challenge for community organizing to build bridging social capital when schools resist change and discourage parent activism. Organizing groups resort to confrontational tactics to strike at the very core of deeply rooted, fundamental problems (Beckwith & Lopez 1997; Mediratta et al. 2002; Warren 2001; Zachary & Olatoye 2001). When parents and community members press schools on sensitive issues and demand accountability, conflict often erupts. The stakes are extremely high when school leaders are publicly exposed and can lose office. Thus, community organizing is perceived to be threatening to many educators. Some teachers also show distrust of organizing activities and distance themselves from these activities (Mediratta et al. 2002; Quezada 2003).

Parents and communities are expected to become further involved in schooling in a variety of ways but generally in ways determined by the school, laid down by central and/or regional or local government and driven by international policy agendas (Therkildssen 2000; World Bank 2004). Policy literature on community involvement continues to emphasize the need for capacity building within the community to enable them to participate in these ways (e.g. Chapman et al. 2002; Heystek 2003; Bush & Heystek 2003), without questioning what it is they are being asked to be involved in (Rose 2003).

Community participation in schooling has been judged to be working well in the rare instances where there are good understandings and relations between schools, communities and local educational authorities, operating within a stable social context with a history of community mobilisation and a genuine commitment to community decision-making (PROBE 1999, on successes in Himachal Pradesh, India, and the Academy for Academic Development, 2002, and De Grauwe et al. 2005, on some countries of West Africa).

Another aspect of formal parental involvement in school occurs through participation on governing bodies (SGBs), school management committees (SMCs), parent teacher associations (PTAs) and village education committees (VECs). Much of the literature cites poor community involvement in such processes with PTAs, often not established or not functioning despite government mandates (PROBE 1999; Heystek 2003; Ahmed and Nash 2005). Where these
bodies are more active, there have been conflicts between, for example, PTAs and SMCs, in part because of unclearly defined and/or overlapping responsibilities or because certain groups have gone beyond their mandates (Passi 1995; De Grauwe et al. 2005; Ahmed & Nath 2005).

Quality education system is one that succeeds in meeting its own goals, one that is relevant to the needs of children, communities and society and that fosters the ability of children to acquire knowledge and critical learning skills (Sharma 2007). Global campaign for education stated that high dropout rate in school is not only result of poor quality, but if effective learning is not taking place in school, parents are more likely to withdraw children school early or not sent them at all. Improving quality of education is therefore essential to achieving 2015 goal of universal access to education. Without active involvement of the community in school management quality improvement is not possible.

Successful schools build connections to parents and communities as a way to strengthen relationship in support of the students and as a way to better understand students so that teaching can be tailored to them as individual communities offer a wide range of resources that are valuable to school and the families they serve (Sharma 2007).

Hussian, T.A and H. Rekhamoni (2008) point out that various peoples’ committees have been formed during SSA interventions at the grassroots level these peoples’ committees with the involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and as the grassroots units of self government have been proclaimed as the vehicles of socio-economic transformation. The main aim of the peoples’ committees is to develop the capacity of common men and women and to organize them to work for their own development and progress and to ensure their participation and involvement in all developmental programmes. This study was conducted in five district of Assam- Golaghat, Lakhimpur, Kokrajhar, Karimganj and Darang. The major findings of the study inform that peoples’ committees are found in each school, in each village, in each ward of the town committees, in each Gaon Panchayat and in most of the tea gardens. The 8% of the people committees held 6 or more meetings in the last one year while 45% of
the committees did not have any meeting during the period. The School Managing Committees (SMCs) are found more vibrant than the other committees and 1/3 of the people’s committee members are women. Different committees monitored the teaching and non-teaching staff individually, in group, by checking of registers and by other innovative methods. It is evident from the research that the efficacies of the people’s committees are very marginal. A huge number of committees are in place which indicate a revolution but inactive status indicates a sort of phasing out of the revolution

Konwer, Shubrajeet (2008) argues that the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) can play pivotal role to strengthen the school support system, which may help in a greater way to ensure quality in elementary education. This study was conducted in four districts of Assam- Cachar, Sivasagar, Tinsukia and Kamrup. The major findings of the study report that the involvement of PRIs in school support system presents a dismal scenario in Assam. There is lack of commitment on the part of PRI members. It has been found that nearly 95% SMC members admitted that PRIs have not contributed anything towards SSA supported schools. Combined 83% members of Anchalik Panchayat (AP) and Zila Parishad (ZP) have admitted that they are not involved in promoting the cause of SSA supported schools. The problems faced by PRI members in school support system including lack of funds, low level of awareness amongst PRI members, lack of proper guidelines from the state government, political difference among PRI members. Nearly 40% of the PRIs members opined that “lack of fund” was the major impediment in involvement of PRI in promoting the cause of universalisation of elementary education.

Changkakati, Sunita (2008) point out that number of habitations in the state of Assam where there is no schooling facility of any kind. Axom Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission has come forward to provide education to the children of such habitations, in cooperation with the local community, under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS). The SSA has identified those habitations, its aim is to impart education to the children of such habitations which have no access to any kind of schooling facility within a radius of 1.5 km in the name of
“Amar Parhashali /Amar Pathshala”. The community people have provided the space for opening the EGS centre in their courtyard, community hall and also donated land for school. The study was carried out in 12 minority concentrated districts of Assam; viz, Bongaigaon, Dhubri, Darrang, Cachar, Morigaon, Nagaon, Goalpara, NC.Hills, Kokrajhar, Karimganj, Hailakandi and Kamrup. The major outcomes of the study are that in some districts because of the differences in mother tongue and medium of instruction students find it difficult to grasp things clearly. The overall involvement of the community members in functioning of the EGS centers is satisfactory although not uniform in all districts. The community people extended their support for these centres.

Baruah, Papori; Sarkar, Subhrangshu Sekha and Hazarika, Abdul Latif (2009) discussed that, involvement of community in achieving UEE is one of the prime objectives of SSA. Certainly, sense of belongingness and community ownership helps in effective implementation of the programme. The annual grants were released to the schools. The SMC has to play a key role in monitoring the utilization of these grants. This study was carried out in five district of Assam; viz., Barpeta, Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Karimganj and Sonitpur. The School Managing Committees of provincialized and recognized elementary schools were covered under the study. The SMCs were selected on the basis of geographical location (plain, border, forest, hilly, char etc.) and caste/community structure (SC, ST, Minority, Tea-Tribes etc.). The findings of the study reflect that present system of releasing annual grants through bank transfer is found to be very popular among the SMCs. In most of the cases the deadlines for submission of Utilization Certificates were not adhered to. Though the utilization of annual grants demands for active participation of community, but in this study the community involvement was very minimal. Though the utilization certificate is subject to signature of all members of the SMC, other members (besides Member Secretary and President) were not at all concerned and serious about the contents of the Utilization Certificates.

Choudhury, Bidyut D. (2009) finds that more or less the community participation has increased from the inception of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission
in 2003. The community members are poor but they are ready to contribute to the development of education in their local area, which can also justify that as the name of component which deals with community related work since 2003 changed from Community Mobilization to Community Participation component. As the mobilization of the community is already complete and now the community participation is the need of the hour, that will be remain in the society forever for overall development.

Choudhury, Bidyut D. and Sabyasachi, Sikidar (2010) study on the “Critical Analysis on Good Practices by Various Community Groups Like PRI, SMC, VEC, MG etc”. It was suggested that in order to exercise any kind of community participation there needs understanding among all stakeholders like all peoples of Education Committee. It is found that the many communities are now involving themselves in the developing process for the betterment of education scenario of their own area or locality. The people donated many things like ceiling fan, water filter, water tank, boundary wall, gate etc. This type of good practice shows the community ownership and we-feeling among the common people towards the development of education which is a good result and outcome of community mobilization and it is also necessary to felicitate the those people who came forward and involve themselves in such a good practice and to promote more and more people in it.

Choudhury, Bidyut D. (2011) studied the role of school managing committee as community participation in the light of universalisation of elementary education in Cachar. The 40 SMCs of tea garden and minority areas of five educational blocks, the SMCs of both the areas are found very active. The members of SMCs in areas regularly attended the meetings whenever called. Mostly all the members attended the meetings. The male participation is higher than the females. But the male participation of the tea garden areas is higher than the minority area, whereas the female participation of minority area is higher than the females of tea garden areas. In all the SMCs, all the members are interested in community participation in both the tea gardens and minority areas. More than 75% SMC members of both the tea gardens and minority areas extended hand in
community contribution to school development. Only 5% to 15% SMCs of tea garden and minority areas contributed in cash, whereas 70% to 75% SMCs of tea garden and minority areas contributed in kind also. The number of those who contributed in kind to the SMCs is a little higher than these who contributed in cash. The contribution in kind from the community contributes mostly the items of low cost and easily available like labour bamboo and wood vegetables for CMDM etc. The few costly items are such as ceiling fan, cement and gardening etc. All the SMC members attended the different trainings programmes conducted by Sabha Shiksha Abhiyan Mission. This shows a good level of their interest, willingness and their active participation. More than 85% members of tea garden areas and minority areas’ SMCs mothers group are very much active and their participation is very high in both the areas. That highlights a high level of involvement of women in development of education in rural India.

(5) Studies on community involvement in financing of education

Kadzamira and Ndalama (1997) found that men participated more in services for which they were paid in Malawi, whereas all contributions provided by women were free. DFID-supported primary community schools in Malawi engaged local contractors who would be more likely to employ labour from within the school area, so that financial benefits would remain at the local level. Female contractors were encouraged, with 25 percent of contractors on the database being female in 1999. Nine women of 75 contractors were awarded a contract, and of the 14 contractors were awarded a second contract, nine were women (Durston and Nashire 2001). Despite this, Mkamanaga’s study (1998) of the community schools indicated that only 20 percent of the paid labour forces involved in the community projects were female.

In Ghana, it was found that school committees rarely meet national requirements for women representatives, since membership is based on existing positions of leadership in the community and school which are usually held by men (Condy 1998; Pryor and Ampiah 2003). When meetings are held, women often cannot attend because the timing was inappropriate. Women generally contributed communal labour by bringing water, bricks, sand and mortar to
schools, but many were not sure what it was used for. However, women suggested that they would discuss their ideas with their husbands which would be passed on to the committee.

Social funds have also become an important way of participation for some donors to divert their funds directly to the communities they intend to support in recent years. Social funds consider community participation to be important both for the identification of priority areas as well as for carrying out programmes. The inter-sectoral Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF), supported by the World Bank, has been particularly influential in the education sector since the 1990s, with up to two thirds of the first round of MASAF funding for community projects allocated to primary school construction (Parker and Serrano 2000).

The apparent high demand for education projects in MASAF has been attributed to the introduction of Free Primary Education (introduced in 1994) as a result of which the number of children attending school increased dramatically and, therefore, more classrooms were required. In addition, since school committees are already established in most communities, these provide a structure from which MASAF funding could be applied. Where Head Teachers have played an important role in creating awareness of MASAF within communities, there they are most aware of the opportunities available (Kishondo 2000).

Similarly, 70 percent of projects arising from the social fund in Zambia were allocated to schools. The reason for the prioritization of education was seen to be related predominantly to the extended presence of PTAs at the local level (Parker and Serrano 2000). Investment funds focusing specifically on education have been established in Ghana (Condy 1998). Their objective has been more specifically to improve the teaching and learning environment as a result of increased community participation and ownership. However, as with social funds in Malawi and Zambia, evidence from Ghana indicates that they were heavily reliant on a few local teachers, local elites or external advice and support, given those community members often lacked skills to conceptualize and plan a project and the ability to handle finance, budgeting and implementation.
In Mali, the Save the Children-US community schools require school management committees to mobilise resources for school construction and subsequently to collect money from the community for teachers’ salaries (Tietjen 1999). In Malawi, men were most often responsible for paying fees before their abolition while, as noted, women provide more community support (Rose 2003). Similarly, in Benin, women have been found to be involved in providing human contributions, while men contribute more in financial and material terms (Salami and Kpamegan 2002).

Construction of government schools has always been supported by community contributions in many Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries. The deliberate policy of government resources favouring urban areas, while rural areas were expected to develop education facilities through self-help projects, on the assumption that self-help was more difficult in urban areas. Prioritisation of public resources towards urban areas continued post-Independence, despite recognition that self-help projects in rural areas often failed due to limitations on the time and resources of poor members of these communities. This has contributed to the uneven development of schooling opportunities which have continuously favoured urban areas (Rose 2002).

Community schools involve the community in construction and management of schools, although the extent to which the community is involved can vary considerably. The establishment and support of schools by communities has always been evident in many Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries, often as a response to the failure of government provision. In Kenya, the secondary system evolved largely as a result of community support through Harambee schools. These are seen as one of closest examples in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to ‘spontaneous grassroots initiative for the delivery of education’ (Rugh and Bossert 1998: 36). Harambee schools became merged into the government system in the mid-1980s, when all non-private schools began to receive the same per student government subsidy, although their structures and facilities remained of poorer quality. Locally-supported community schools at both the primary and secondary level have also been in existence elsewhere. The urban Zambia as
overflow ‘state’ schools, differing from government schools only because they are completely funded by local contributions and fees (Hyde 2003).

Social funds have played an important role in placing a value on community contributions. In Malawi, communities are involved in identification, preparation and financing with the intention of improving prioritisation and efficiency in the use of resources. Community co-financing is seen as a way to ensure community ownership and as a true reflection of demand (World Bank 1996). The community had contributed 20 percent of resources to the project, with contributions of labour and materials valued at their market rates. There are potential gender implications of this form of ‘marketisation of community participation’ (Rose 2003).

The innovative programmes aimed at encouraging community involvement in schooling address a range of constraints faced by children from poor households; they can potentially increase the direct costs that poor households face. Community schools are often designed to be established in poor, remote communities, but can require greater contributions from the community than government schools in wealthier areas in terms of fees, support for instructors, and school construction (Hyde 2003).

The most salient participation in schools is at the level of providing financial or human resources. Financial contributions occur through school fees, or through fund-raising projects or contributions (voluntary or otherwise) to school development funds (Watt 2001) whereas human contributions often take the form of labour in constructing school buildings. This sort of support for schools is well documented in a range of literature (e.g., Bray 2003; Watt, 2001) concerned with community financing and cost-sharing and the obvious point has been made that the communities that are expected to contribute more to school-financing either directly or indirectly are often those that can least afford to contribute, thus, exacerbating regional and urban-rural and gender inequities (Watt 2001; Bray 1996, 2003; Rose 2003). Further, communities are often asked to contribute resources without any say over how those resources are used (Bray 1996; Rose 2003). This can ultimately result in disaffection and dropout (see
Parents featured as the principal community members in the research on communities and schooling and are frequently constructed in deficit, explicitly by school and educational authority officials, as children’s non-enrolment or attendance is often ascribed to parental lack of education, ignorance about the importance of schooling, lack of interest or poverty (PROBE 1999; Boyle et al. 2002; Vasavi 2003; Ahmed & Nath 2005), and sometimes implicitly by authors (Asian Development Bank, 1998). Even when teachers are reported to be aware that parents are too poor either to pay fees or school costs or to spare a child’s labour, they nevertheless still hold them responsible for ensuring their child’s attendance at school and therefore implicitly criticise them when they fail to do this (PROBE 1999; Ahmed & Nath 2005).

(6) Studies focusing on factors facilitating/impeding community involvement in children’s education

Shaeffer (1992) argues that some communities are homogeneous while others are heterogeneous and some united while others conflictive. Some communities are governed and managed by leaders chosen democratically who act relatively autonomously from other levels of government, and some are governed by leaders imposed from above and represent central authorities. He attempts to find out factors that prevent communities from being involved in formal education. He found that the degree of community participation is particularly low in socially and economically marginal regions. This is because such regions tend to have the elements such as (a) lack of appreciation of the overall objectives of education, (b) mismatch between what parents expect of education and what the school is seen as providing, (c) the belief that education is essentially the task of the State, (d) the length of time required to realize the benefits of better schooling and (e) ignorance of the structure, functions and constraints of the school.
One of the major factors to ensure sustainability of programs is the availability of funds, whether from governments, private institutions or donor organizations. In this regard, community participation in education cannot ensure the sustainability of school by itself since communities often have to rely on external funding to keep the program sustained. However, involving community is a way to ensure that the benefits brought by a development program will be maintained after the external interventions are stopped. Thus, sustainability is dependent on the degree of self-reliance developed in target communities and on the social and political commitment in the wider society to development programs that support the continuation of newly self-reliance communities (Lovell 1992).

Several studies report that community schools are successful in improving access to schooling, and the girls’ participation in schooling in particular has improved. Programmes supported by NGOs in Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, South Sudan and Uganda (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder 2002). In Ethiopia, total enrolment has increased by 8.9 percent in the region where World Learning operates a community school programme, and girls’ enrolment has increased by 13.8 percent. In these schools, girls’ attendance in school also improved (with 36 percent of girls in class, compared with 28 percent in government schools). The gross enrolment rate for girls in the district in Guinea where Save the Children is working has increased from 31 percent to 37 percent. In South Sudan, CARE’s work in sensitising communities about the importance of sending children, in particular girls, to school are reported to have increased girls’ enrolment by 96 percent. Girls comprise 47 percent of enrolment in Action Aid’s community schools in Uganda, and almost half of those transferring to government schools are girls (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder 2002).

The community schools are established in areas where schools previously did not exist, children are likely to have greater access to some form of schooling, and often the choice is between a community school or no school. It is usually not apparent, whether the improved chances of girls’ enrolment derive specifically from community participation, or would also occur if a state school
were provided in a similar location. In Mali, the coverage of villages with schools in two districts increased from 12 percent to over 40 percent within four years of the programme (Muskin 1999). Since these new schools are placed in, rather than near, communities they alleviate parents’ fear of long walks for girls. If state schools had been provided in these areas, there is no reason to expect that the effect on enrolment would have been any different.

In Malawi, DFID-supported primary community schools initially considered the need to involve women in school committees, but did not seek to investigate and address constraints affecting girls’ under-enrolment and persistence in remote areas. This was later rectified, although a lack of clarity about where a responsibility for monitoring and meeting gender-related targets was still evident (Al-Samarrai, Bennell and Colclough 2002).

(7) Studies on community participation in identifying and addressing educational problems

Communities can help identify and address factors that contribute to educational problems, such as low participation and poor academic performance. This is well illustrated in the case of the Gambia, in which the techniques of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) were adapted to education. The work was carried out in order to understand why girls did not attend schools, to mobilize communities around these problems, and to assist them in organizing their own solutions (World Bank 1995a).

Several studies report that community schools are successful in improving access to schooling and some note that girls’ participation in schooling in particular has improved. Programmes supported by NGOs in Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, South Sudan and Uganda are all reported to have had some success in this regard (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder 2002).

Community participation can contribute to promoting girls’ education (UNICEF 1992). Through participating in school activities and frequently communicating with teachers and parents, the communities can learn that girls’ education contributes to the improvement of various aspects of their lives, such as
increased economic productivity, improved family health and nutrition, reduced fertility rates, and reduced child mortality rates. Involving parents and communities in discussions as part of school activities also help in identify factors that prevent girls from schooling. Parents are encouraged to express their concern, and reasons why they are not sending their daughters to school. For instance, many parents in rural areas are reluctant to send their daughters to schools located in distance, concerned about the security of their daughters on the way to and from the school. In addition, since girls are important labourers in the household, helping their mothers do the chores and take care of their young siblings. The time that requires going to and coming from school seems too much wastage for the parents. These issues are serious obstacles and have to be addressed and overcome in order to promote girls’ education.

A World Bank study of social assessment on EDUO, community managed-schools, in El Salvador (Pena 1995) reveals that even though the parents valued education and had a positive attitude regarding the teachers they were suspicious about the government. This wariness, combined with lack of communication, fostered the fear that education would be privatized and parents would have to pay for education services. Parents are optimistic about the economic value of education but their optimism decreases when they are asked to think about the role of education in their own lives.

Kathleen V. Hoover-Dempsey and Howard M. Sandler (1995, 1997) defined parental involvement broadly to include home-based activities (e.g., helping with homework, discussing school events or courses) and school-based activities (e.g., volunteering at school, coming to school events). They argued that parental involvement is a function of a parent's beliefs about parental roles and responsibilities, a parent's sense that s/he can help her/his children succeed in school and the opportunities for involvement provided by the school or teacher.

As Crewe and Harrison (1998) articulate that participatory approaches tend to overlook complexities and questions of power and conflict within communities. Their designs are based on the false assumption that the community, group or household is homogeneous, or has mutually compatible
interests. Differences occur with respect to age, gender, wealth, ethnicity, language, culture, race and so on. Even though marginalized or minority groups (such as female, landless, or lower-caste people) may be physically present during discussion, they are not necessarily given a chance to express their views to the same degree as others.

Bray (1996) presents three different types of communities, applied in his study on community financing of education. The first one is geographic community, which is defined according to its members’ place of residence, such as a village or district. The second type is ethnic, racial, and religious communities, in which membership is based on ethnic, racial, or religious identification and commonly cuts across membership based on geographic location. The third one is communities based on shared family or educational concerns, which includes parents associations and similar bodies that are based on families’ shared concern for the welfare of students.

Gaynor (1998) analyzes the complex relationship between teachers and parents in her study on teacher management with a focus on the decentralization of education. She argues that many parents in many countries would like to be more involved in selecting and monitoring teachers. However, analyzing impacts of the El Salvador’s EDUCO project in which parents are responsible for school management and monitor teachers, Gaynor stressed that the teachers feel threatened by parental involvement, believing that it will diminish public regard for their professional status.

In Ghana, it was found that school committees rarely meet national requirements for women representatives, since membership is based on existing positions of leadership in the community and school which are usually held by men (Condy 1998; Pryor and Ampiah 2003). When meetings are held, women often cannot attend because the timing was inappropriate. Women generally contributed communal labour by bringing water, bricks, sand and mortar to schools but many were not sure what it was used for. However, women suggested that they would discuss their ideas with their husbands which would be passed on to the committee.
(8) Studies on community participation as empowerment or entrenchment of gender relations

Many studies analyse the ‘community’ as if it were a homogenous group of people, devoid of power relations within it, implying a vision of ‘community’ as a network of shared interests and concerns. In reality, a community is unlikely to be a homogenous group with a common voice and shared set of views. By emphasising common knowledge, the promotion of community participation can fail to acknowledge the ways in which local power is reinforced (Wolf et al., 1997; Mosse, 2001).

With respect to community participation in existing government schools, a recent survey in Malawi indicates gender inequalities in community contributions within households. Of 238 households interviewed, 70 percent of those involved in providing non-monetary contributions were women. Wives of heads provided most of the labour, followed by female heads of households, with male heads least likely to contribute their labour. Discussions with parents and school committees generally reinforced the view that the burden of community activities was placed more on women. A gender division of labour was also apparent, reflecting responsibilities undertaken by men and women in society more generally (Rose 2003).

Similarly, a study by the Government of Malawi/UNICEF (1993) reports that while women usually get involved in community activities, such as maintaining water supplies, school construction, and child care and literacy schemes, men take on more of the community leadership roles. Kadzamira and Ndalama (1997) also note that, in the areas visited for their study, women carried out the bulk of the work and roles were usually assigned according to culturally accepted gender roles. Women were usually responsible for hauling sand and water for construction or moulding bricks, while men were responsible for moulding bricks, brick lying, carpentry work and other skilled jobs.
(9) Studies on cultural difference and conflict between community and school

The low academic performance at this school did not seem to be a product of the "savage inequalities" described by Jonathan Kozol (1991) that result in schools serving relatively wealthy communities having as much as three times the funding per student as schools serving low-income communities.

The community school studied by Daniel McLaughlin (1992) reduced the cultural conflict between the community and school with a model K-12 Navajo-English bilingual/biliterate/bicultural/bicognitive education program that introduced English in kindergarten but taught reading and writing in Navajo as well and continued the use of Navajo literacy right up through high school (Reyhner 1989).

Teresa L. McCarty and Lucille J. Watahomigie (1999) describe efforts by Navajos at Rough Rock and Rock Point, Hualapais at Peach Springs, Native Alaskan teacher leaders, Karuks in Northern California, and Native Hawaiians to indigenize their schools. As community efforts, community-based education is generally well received locally by community members, especially parents and students.

Muslim communities in West Africa, are often implicitly criticised for not wanting their children, and girls in particular, to attend school and therefore be subject to harmful influences of Westernisation (Avotri et al. 2000; Academy for Educational Development 2002; Bray 2003; see CNRS on education for Muslim communities). In India and Nepal, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are often singled out as particularly disadvantaged communities, both, in terms of poverty (and therefore unable to pay schools fees or needing child labour at particular times) and in terms of being at the receiving end of caste prejudices by government school teachers, who are generally from ‘upper’ castes and considered particular social groups too ‘dirty’ to teach (PROBE 1999; Ramachandran et al. 2005). Their mistreatment of children from these
communities can force children to dropout of, or be withdrawn from, school (PROBE 1999; Vasavi 2003).

(10) Studies on community participation for educational planning and development

Historical influences provide an insight into the role of schools, and local, state and federal agencies in the development of policies concerning parent and community involvement. Snider's (1990a) historical review of the role of parents and community in school decision making portrays a long, and often embittered, struggle between politicians, practitioners, parents and communities.

The Effective Schools research highlighted the importance of involvement of the school staff and parents in the development and implementation of comprehensive school improvement plans. Without such staff and community involvement from the grass roots levels both commitment and motivation to carry out these plans was often lacking (Taylor and Levine 1991; Smith and O'Day 1991).

Current school level policies and expectations tend to center on what parents can provide for teachers and schools rather than what teachers and schools can provide for parents and there is evidence that policies and resource constraints in the schools themselves may inhibit parent involvement. There are few programs to assist parents in attaining skills to work with their children (Dauber and Epstein 1991).

Exploration of four contemporary policy levels (school, district, state and federal) may facilitate and/or inhibit the involvement of parents and communities in educational processes, programs, and practices (Strong Families, Strong Schools 1994).

Community participation is one of the mechanisms to empower people to take part in educational development. It was launched as a key concept of development. Increased participation is a means to achieve development to resolve the educational problems (Aref et al. 2009; Lasker, Weiss and Miller 2001).
Community participation is considered necessary to get community support for educational planning and development (Cole 2007). Community participation refers to peoples’ engagement in activities within the educational system. It plays an essential and longstanding role in promoting quality of life (Putnam 2000). Community participation in educational development processes can support and uphold local culture, tradition, knowledge and skill, and create pride in community heritage (Lacy et al. 2002).

Communities can play a variety of roles in the provision and management of education and learning processes. Community participation can contribute to promoting education (UNICEF 1992). Community participation is a concept that attempts to bring different stakeholders together for problem solving and decision making (Talbot and Verrinder 2005).

Lack of community participation in decision making to implement educational development can lead to failure in the community development (Miranda 2007). Meanwhile, some scholars provided a typology of participation, but they do not directly deal with development (Leksakundilok 2006).

School management committees (SMC) are the most recent governance initiative to hit developing country education systems in the last two decades or so. In Ghana, SMCs have been set up and its members undergone training on developing work plans for school improvement (World Bank 2005; MOESS 2006). But their impact varies widely and is generally not impressive. In other studies, SMCs roles and responsibilities have been found to conflict with those of PTAs (De Grauwe et al. 2005). In the study of primary education quality in Bangladesh, Ahmed and Nath (2005) found SMCs had in principle total management control over primary schools but in practice were not able to exercise their authority. SMCs were usually made up of people who did not fit their role as they had been elected by friends and relations of headteachers and elected representatives.

Bushell and Esgles (2007) states education as a phenomenon of affluent contemporary societies is particularly a difficult concept in developing countries.
to grasp (Bushell & Eagles, 2007, p. 154). As consequence, community participation may be unacceptable for educational development. Hence, building capacity is necessary for stakeholders involved in educational planning and development.

Briefly, the studies are mainly concerned with (a) community involvement in enrolment, teaching-learning and monitoring, models of education and community, partnership of schools and families and communities, (b) the factors affecting education in school infrastructure, management, culture, traditions, customs and socio-economic and (c) the parental involvement in school governance, planning, evaluation and decision-making. Thus, the studies have mapped all aspects of community involvement in children’s education. However, most of the studies were conducted abroad and few are related to India. SSA involves community through committees constituted at various levels such as the school, the village and the Gaon Panchayat. The study focus on various aspects of community participation in the elementary education after Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched in Cachar district and fills the gap in the area of the research.

III- OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

(a) To understand structural patterns of community participation in elementary education in schools under SSA.

(b) To examine the nature of community’s participation in monitoring and supervision of enrolment, dropout rate, attendance, retention and learning enhancement of children, implementation of improvement plans and generation of resources in schools under SSA.

(c) To assess impact of community participation on elementary education in schools under SSA.
IV- RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study addresses the following specific research questions to attempt the problem:

1. Is community participating in development of village/habitation level plans for elementary education in the schools of Cachar district?

2. Is community participating in improvement plans of elementary schools in Cachar district?

3. Is community monitoring enrolment and retention of children in elementary schools of Cachar district?

4. Is community monitoring education of girls, SCs, STs and minority children in elementary schools of Cachar district?

5. Is community monitoring utilization of various grants and construction and maintenance of infrastructure in elementary schools of Cachar district?

6. Is community facilitating teaching-learning in elementary schools of Cachar district?

7. Is community participating in resource generation for elementary schools in Cachar district?

V- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study takes empirical account of the working of various committees involving people in school management, monitoring of teaching-learning and school development under the SSA and also the working of community participation prior to introduction of SSA (as on 31 March 2002), derived from official records, secondary sources and experiences of school and other officials as well as people.
(i) Operational Definitions of the Key Terms

Community Participation

The term ‘community’ refers to a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives and engage in joint actions in a geographical location or setting. Community participation occurs when a community organizes itself and takes responsibility for managing its problems. Taking responsibility includes identifying the problems, developing actions, putting them into place, and following through. Community participation involves both information feed forward and feedback. Feed forward is the process whereby information is communicated from public officials to citizens concerning public policy. Feedback in this context is the communication of information from citizens to public officials regarding public policy.

In the present study community participation refers to various committees of local people constituted under the SSA to monitor and supervise elementary education in Cachar district of Assam.

Elementary Education

This term is meant for primary schooling of children in the classes from I to VIII in Assam. Sometimes, it is called primary education also. It is bifurcated into lower primary (class I to V) and upper primary education (class VI to VII).

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

It is Government of India's flagship programme for Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time-bound manner, as mandated by 86th amendment of Indian Constitution, making free and compulsory education for children of 6-14 years as a fundamental right.

Intervention

The term refers to working of various committees constituted under SSA, involving community to monitor and supervise elementary education in schools.
(ii) Sources and Types of Data

There are the following two sources of data which were tapped to collect the data for the study:

A. The Field Sources

The field source of the data consists of members of educational committees. Besides, these data are supplemented by those collected from focus groups and the education officers. The education committees are of three types: (i) School Management Committee (SMC) and Mothers Group (MG) at the school level, (ii) Village Education Committee (VEC) at the village level or Ward Education Committee (WEC) in urban areas or Tea Gardens Education Committee (TGEC) in tea gardens areas and (iii) Goan Panchayat Education Committee (GPEC) at the Panchayat level. Focus groups are SCs, STs, OBCs, tea garden communities and minorities. Education officers of District Elementary Education Office, District Mission Office, Block Elementary Education Office and Block Mission Office are supervising SSA’s working from school to the block level.

B. The Documentary Sources

The documentary sources used are as follows:

a) Official records comprise SSA circulars, school records, annual reports, SSA annual progress Reports, SSA News Letters and all other relevant circulars on UEE.

b) Documents collected like DISE Reports 2009-10, school reports and officials records during the visit to District Elementary Education Office, District Mission Office.

(iii) Universe & Units of the Study

The education committees existing under SSA Cachar, where the SSA operation has already completed seven years, constitute the universe of the study. The Cachar district has, in all, eight educational blocks; namely, Katigorah,
Narsingpur, Sonai, Rajabazar, Salchaprā, Lakhipur, Udharbond and Silchar (Urban). Each block is having the peoples committees at the School, Village/Urban Ward/Tea Garden and Gaon Panchayat level; namely, the School Managing Committees (SMC) and Mother Group (MG) at school level, at Village level- the Village/ Urban Ward/Tea Garden Education Committees (VEC/WEC/TGEC) and at Gaon Panchayat level- the Goan Panchayat Education Committees (GPEC). The committees are working at the grassroots level and directly participate in the development activities under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The blockwise distribution of the committees in Cachar district is shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Block</th>
<th>Name of Committee</th>
<th>SMC</th>
<th>VEC</th>
<th>TGEC</th>
<th>WEC</th>
<th>GPEC</th>
<th>MG</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katigorah</td>
<td></td>
<td>478</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>1209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakhipur</td>
<td></td>
<td>292</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narsingpur</td>
<td></td>
<td>382</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajabazar</td>
<td></td>
<td>195</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salchapra</td>
<td></td>
<td>346</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silchar</td>
<td></td>
<td>127</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonai</td>
<td></td>
<td>349</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udharbond</td>
<td></td>
<td>209</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>2378</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>163</td>
<td></td>
<td>5998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: District Information System of Education (DISE) 2009-10, DMO, SSA, Cachar.

Out of eight educational blocks, only Silchar Urban block is having WECs and VECs and Lakhipur block is having WEC, VEC and TGEC. In the rest of the blocks only the other committees are found. Each education committee comprises 14 to 20 members, including a President, a Member Secretary and the rest as members. After analyses all the existing education committees of SSA like the School Managing Committees, the Village/ Urban Ward/Tea Garden Education Committees and the Goan Panchayat Education Committees, it was found that
among all other education committees the body of the School Managing Committee at school level consisted of all representatives from all the other committees. So, the School Managing Committee was taken for the purpose of understanding community participation and taken as the units of the study.

As per report of District Information System of Education (DISE) 2009-10, SSA, Cachar there are 2378 numbers of School Managing Committee (SMC). All the SMCs having the students from all caste categories such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Tea Tribe and Minorities (Muslim) (as focus groups) and General castes (as non-focus groups). The block wise with caste wise status of School Managing Committees under SSA in Cachar District is shown in following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>SCs</th>
<th>STs</th>
<th>OBCs</th>
<th>Tea Tribes</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Total SMCs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Katigorah</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lakhipur</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Narsingpur</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rajabazar</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Salchapra</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Silchar</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sonai</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Udharbond</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>230</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>2378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: District Information System of Education (DISE) 2009-10, DMO, SSA, Cachar.

(iv) **Selection of Units of Study**

The units of the study were the members of Goan Panchayat, village, tea garden and ward education level committees, School Management Committee and Mothers Group, selected by applying multi-stage sampling method;
(a) At the first stage, composition of all the existing education committees of SSA; viz., Goan Panchayat Education Committee (GPEC), Village Education Committee (VEC), Tea Garden Education Committee (TGEC), Ward Education Committee (WEC), School Management Committee (SMC) and Mothers Group (MG) were taken into account and found that School Management Committee (SMC) at school level consisted of the representatives from all the other committees. So, the School Management Committee was taken for the purpose of understanding community participation.

(b) At the second stage, all the schools having predominantly students from special focus groups such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, tea garden communities and minorities as well as non-focus groups (General Castes) were selected by purposive sampling method. Total 25 schools were selected from 2378 SMCs under Cachar district, covering 1% of the total SMCs each from focus and non-focus groups. The school managing committees under each categories are Abhaya Charan B. Pathala LP School and Practising Govt SBS (2 SMCs under general category), Binnakandi Sorboday Toposil ME School, Iswar Chandra ME School, Lakshmi Charan High School, 15 No Joy Kumar Balika Vidyalaya LP School and 563 No Brojogobinda LP School (5 SMCs under SC category); Hmarakhawlien Hmar MV School and Lallong Cherra LP School (2 SMCs under ST category); 108 No Konjeng Leikai LP School, 994 No Awangleikai LP School, Jogai Mathura ME School, Jibon Memorial ME School, S.L. Higher Secondary School and 1367 No Kumari Singha LP School (6 SMCs under OBC category); 1244 No. Dalu Bagan Pathsala LP School and Coombergram ME School (2 SMCs under Tea Tribe category); 19 No Lathimara LP School, Hazi M. Ali Laskar High School, National ME School, 17 Haritikar LP School LP School, 1010 Santipur LP School, Hazi Hamid Raja Memorial ME School, 219 Dakshin Krishnapur LP School and 182 No Sonai Model LP School (8 SMCs under minority (Muslim) category).
(c) At the third stage, School Managing Committee (SMC) of each selected school was included as unit of a sample, constituting a sample of School Managing Committees. Out of total 2378 SMCs in Cachar district covering 230 SMCs under general category, 452 SMCs under SCs category, 151 SMCs under STs category, 177 SMCs under tea tribes category and 807 SMCs under minority (Muslim) category, calculating 1% from each social categories it comes 2 SMCs under general category, 5 SMCs under SC category, 2 SMCs under ST category, 6 SMCs under OBC category, 2 SMCs under Tea Tribe category and 8 SMCs under minority (Muslim) category through lottery technique of random sampling.

(d) At the fourth stage, the members out of the sampled School Managing Committees were selected out on the basis of the common position in the SMC body, as the SMCs consist of one senior citizen of the village or a parent of the students as President, one Head Teacher of the School as Member Secretary, five parents, three non-parent members, one village headman, one donor-member, one President of Village Education Committee as member and one President of Mothers Group as member in all 14 members in one School Managing Committee.

(e) At the fifth stage, out of the five parent-members, four parent-members (two each males and females) were selected and out of three non-parent-members, two non-parent members were selected. That is, out of 14 members in SMC, 12 members were each selected from the sampled SMCs as respondents.

(f) At the sixth stage, the SMC members from stage IV, that is, one President, one Member Secretary, four Parents Members, two Non-Parent Members, one Village Headman/Gaonburrah, one Donor Member, one President of VEC/TGEC/WEC and one President of Mothers Group were selected. That is 1% of the total SMC members were selected from each position as respondents and
Finally, all the selected members of the School Managing Committee at the stage V, a total of twelve members per SMC were interviewed, that is, 1% of each social category - that is 24 members from 2 SMCs of general category, 60 members from 5 SMCs of SCs category, 24 members from 2 SMC of STs category, 72 members from 6 SMCs of OBCs category, 24 members from 2 SMCs of tea tribes and 96 members from 8 SMCs of Muslim (minority) category, total 300 members were taken as the respondents for the study from 25 SMCs. The sample is given in the table below:

Table 1.3
Caste Category Wise Distribution of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste Category- Category wise</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>SCs</th>
<th>STs</th>
<th>OBCs</th>
<th>Tea Tribes</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Total SMCs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of SMCs</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>2378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1% of the Total SMCs (in round figure)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Members per SMC were interviewed (from 1% of caste category)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25 SMCs X 12 members = 300 Respondents

(v) Tools for Data Collection

An interview schedule was constructed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data related to community linkages, socio-economic status, awareness and participation etc of the committee members. The validation of the schedule was done with help of the experience of education experts under SSA. Besides, there were conducted informal interviews of focus groups and education officers under SSA to develop understanding of different stakeholders’ perceptions on community participation.