CHAPTER 3

EDUCATION SYSTEM OF WEST BENGAL

West Bengal is one of the major States in India. At present the State has 18 districts. According to 1991 census 57.72 percent of the population of the State are literate. The literacy rate among males is 67.24 percent and the literacy rate among females is 47.18 percent.

In India education is primarily the responsibility of the State government. But the Union government has the responsibility of co-ordination of educational facilities, determination of the standard of higher education, scientific and technical education and research. In India higher education is meant to serve as a strong unifying link among different regions. So growth of higher education in West Bengal can be studied in the context of the national system.

Prior to the introduction of English education in West Bengal two types of schools were open to people: the "Pathshalas" (primary schools) imparting very little beyond mother tongue and simple arithmetic. Besides "Pathshalas" there were large number of "tols" and "chatushpathis" where Sanskrit grammar and literature,

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1. Graduate employment and higher education in West Bengal - Bose, Sanyal and Mukherjee, Calcutta, 1983.
theology, logic and metaphysics were taught to the Hindus. The "Maktaba" and "Madrashas" were the centres of higher education for Muslims - Persian and Arabic were taught to them.

The advent of British rule initiated a change in socio-economic structure which in turn resulted in a new economic system. The entire education system was reared up on the concept of providing the British ruler with an adequate supply of educated persons having working knowledge of English for manning various administrative departments. But it must be admitted that "Bengal Renaissance" of late 19th and early 20th century was clearly an outcome of our coming close to the West through the new system of education. It also brought western science and technology within our reach. But during the British era mass education suffered much; Bengali educationists and educational institutions, however, set before themselves high standards.

The western education opened a 'window to the west' but it destroyed the possibility of life-centred education. Nor did it offer adequate scope for vocational training.

2. Article by Goon - "Education in West Bengal" in 'West Bengal to-day'.
Education in post-independence West Bengal

The imbalance in educational system that we inherited from the British rulers was that while it catered for high quality education in some seats of higher learning along the banks of river Hooghly, the cause of mass education suffered much due to lack of cooperation from government and non-government agencies. The census report of 1951 showed a literacy rate of 24.0 percent for West Bengal – the literacy rate among males was 34.1 percent and among females it was as low as 12.3 percent.

Following transfer of power in 1947 the national government devoted serious attention to the spread of education. After independence there has been a continuous endeavour to bring about a reorientation in educational programmes in tune with the aptitudes and aspirations of people. In 1948 "Radhakrishnan Commission" was appointed by Union government for examining the case of higher education in India. Secondary education forms the base of higher education. The appointment of "Mudaliar Commission" in 1952 was a landmark in the history of Secondary education in the country.

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3. Aims and objectives of University education in India - Ministry of Education - 1948-49, Govt of India.

India is a vast country - the union government soon felt the need for development of a national pattern of education in the country. With this aim in view "Kothari Commission" was appointed in 1964 to advise the government in that matter. Based largely on the recommendations of "Kothari Commission" the national government formulated a national policy on education in 1968. The key points of the policy were (1) free and compulsory education upto the age of 14, (2) Improved status, emoluments of teachers, (3) Three language formula and development of regional languages, (4) Equalisation of education of science and research, (5) Improvement in quality and production of text-books, (6) Investment of 6% of national income in education.

The recommendations of the Kothari Commission have been implemented in West Bengal. Kothari Commission has suggested three terminal points in the education system: (i) At the end of Class VIII, (ii) At the end of Class X and (iii) At the end of Class XII - students can select type of education of their choice at the end of these terminal points. In West Bengal at the end of Class VIII there is opportunity for vocational education in the

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5. Report of Education Commission (1964-66) - Govt. of India - Ministry of Education. The Commission was appointed with D.S.Kothari as Chairman.
Industrial Training Institutes. At the end of Class X (Madhyamik) there is scope of vocational training in polytechnics and after the end of Class XII (Higher Secondary stage) students can go for degree level technical education in Engineering and Medical Faculty if they get chance of admission in those courses.

At present the non-formal education programme has been taken up to supplement formal education system. The adult education programme as well as total literacy campaign have been taken up in right earnest.

This chapter has been divided into five sub-sections:

3.1 Mass Literacy Programme

The state has put major thrust on mass literacy programme and the work has gathered momentum at the grass-root level. The department of 'Mass Education Extension' has been implementing the total literacy campaign at different districts of the state for the age-group 9-50 years. The implementation of the total literacy campaign for the last five years has brought about a noticeable change in the literacy scenario of the State.
The neo-literate are to be covered under a post-literacy and continuing education scheme so that they may achieve the goal of self-reliance. It may be expected that the State government can reach the goal of "Education for all" by the end of this century.\(^6\)

A remarkable improvement in the literacy rate of the population of West Bengal can be detected from the following table.

**Table 3.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census year</th>
<th>Male Population</th>
<th>(Literacy rate in percent)</th>
<th>Female Population</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>59.93</td>
<td>36.07</td>
<td>48.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>67.24</td>
<td>47.18</td>
<td>57.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of the total literacy campaign launched by the state during 1990s the literacy rate of the state has gone up from 57.72 percent in 1991 to about 70 percent at present (1996).

3.2 Elementary Education

The most effective tool for bringing about economic changes in any society is the elementary education. Elementary education represents the first eight years of study. The primary education brings about vital economic changes needed by a country to raise its productivity and income. The students, who have finished the elementary education, are able to understand problems they face in real life and they can apply their knowledge to increase production and their income.

The transformation of primary education scene in West Bengal is at present impressive. The enrolment figure of primary school students has gone up by 80 percent in the last fifteen years. "English" language has been excluded from the curriculum of primary teaching. The practice of detention in the same class has been abolished and instead a system of continuous evaluation of students has been introduced. The "Mitra Commission" in its report published in 1992 has suggested the introduction of "English" in Class V and introduction of internal assessment of students at the end of primary stage 7. The government has accepted the proposal.

In order to bring qualitative improvement in primary education government is trying to supply equipment such as blackboards, maps, globes to each primary school. Text-books are supplied to the students free of charge and there is arrangement for giving mid-day meal to the students so that the problem of drop-outs can be tackled. In order to keep watch on the over-all scene of primary education in the State "Primary School Education Board" has been established recently. The Board is supposed to exercise jurisdictional authority over 'District Primary Education Councils'. The average number of teachers per primary school has been raised to three and the pay-scale of the teachers has already been raised.

For expanding elementary education provision of funds has been made for establishment of new junior high schools.

Let us now examine the increase in number of primary schools and junior high schools as well as student enrolment in schools during the plan-period.

The following table reveals the picture in the sphere of elementary education of the State.
Primary education prepares the base for education in junior high schools. There is a spectacular increase in enrolment in junior high schools. At the end of the Seventh Plan period some junior high schools have been upgraded to high schools.

In 1981 the government of West Bengal set up an education commission with Professor Bhabotosh Datta as the Chairman for planning of higher education in West Bengal. But the suggestions of the commission have not been implemented. In 1991 an education commission headed by Ashok Mitra was set up by the State government for reviewing the development in the content and quality of education at different stages since 1977. The committee submitted its report in August, 1992. Most of the suggestions of Mitra Commission have been accepted by the government.

Education at the elementary level is the most effective tool for bringing about macro and micro economic changes in any society. It is a major tool for alleviation of poverty. The contribution of elementary education to development is significant. So it can be expected that the spectacular increase in the enrolment figure of elementary education in West Bengal in the last few years will be able to bring a remarkable change in the quality of life and

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8. Commission for planning of higher education in West Bengal, 1981 - Govt. of West Bengal.
the well-being of the people and economic development of the State.

3.3 Growth of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education

The elementary education in West Bengal is followed by a four year high school course - two years for secondary education and two years for higher secondary education.

The new pattern of school education as formulated by the Kothari Commission was introduced in this State in 1976 with one significant deviation. The higher secondary course is being taught over the past two decades in both schools and colleges.

All responsibilities of secondary education are vested on "West Bengal Board of Secondary Education". The Board can take appropriate measures for quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement of secondary education. The left front government, after assuming power in 1977, created a separate department for school education with a minister in charge of it.

The responsibility of higher secondary education is vested in "Higher Secondary Council" created by West Bengal Government. The function of the Council is to frame syllabus, to conduct examination and publish results of H.S. education in the State.
In 1981 Datta Commission¹ advised to hold higher secondary classes in separate institutions like Intermediate Colleges. It favoured revival of intermediate college system for higher secondary teaching. But our experience over decades shows that the prospect of reversion is not bright. In 1992 Mitra Commission¹⁰ recommended the abolition of higher secondary education from colleges and its concentration in schools only. This proposal is under consideration of the State government. At present higher secondary courses are being taught in 375 colleges of West Bengal.

Now let us look at the growth of secondary and higher secondary schools and enrolments therein during the plan period. The following table will present the picture clearly.

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9. Datta Commission gave many proposals to the government but few of them were implemented.

10. Most of the proposals of Mitra Commission are going to be implemented by Govt. of West Bengal.
Table 3.3
High and Higher Secondary Schools in West Bengal and
Enrolments therein during plan period
(1950-51 - 1993-94)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of High/Higher Secondary Schools</th>
<th>Enrolments in High/Higher Secondary Schools (in lakhs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>4199</td>
<td>5.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>5047</td>
<td>11.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>6727</td>
<td>18.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>6857</td>
<td>18.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>6885</td>
<td>19.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>7060</td>
<td>19.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: (1) Directorate of Public Instruction, W.B.
(2) Directorate of Secondary Education, W.B.
(3) Selected Educational Statistics - 1993-94 - Govt. of India.

A glance at the above table reveals that the number of schools and enrolments therein have increased manifold. But mere increase in enrolment in schools will not produce desired result without appropriate support in teaching and teaching materials in schools. During the Eighth five-year
plan attempts have been made to provide infrastructural facilities in shape of building, furniture, equipment and books to secondary and higher secondary education in the State. The quality of teachers is an important ingredient in the education system. So new teachers’ training institutes have been established for the training of new teachers. If teacher-pupil ratio be high it is not possible to keep a close watch on all students.

Let us now examine the teacher-pupil ratio in West Bengal during the last three decades.

Table 3.4
Teacher-Pupil Ratio in West Bengal (1970-71 - 1993-94)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pre-Primary</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: (1) Selected Educational Statistics - 1993-94 - Govt. of India.
(2) A Hand Book of Educational and Allied Statistics - Govt. of India.

At Higher Secondary Schools the teacher-pupil ratio was 39 in 1993-94.
Teachers play a pivotal role in school education. So the teachers' training programme should be designed in such a way as to motivate the teachers for creative teaching.

3.4 Development of Higher Education

The basic aim of higher education is to seek and cultivate new knowledge. It equips society with competent men and women trained in various specialities which contribute to over-all national development.

Radhakrishnan Commission (1948) profoundly influenced the development of higher education in post-independence India. During the four post-independence decades, India has made great strides in the field of education and has incorporated in her system some of the latest developments and trends. In West Bengal also we find the reflection of it. Development of scientific technical and professional branches of education have received the preferred position. Other aspects of education i.e. social science, humanities and languages have also been enriched. Special type of education like physical and health education, teachers' training, education of women in special branches like home-science, nursing etc. and education of physically handicapped have expanded.
Let us now narrate the structure of higher education in West Bengal. The organisation of each university may be split into two parts: One dealing with co-ordination and control of under-graduate education offered by various colleges affiliated to it and the other concerned with post-graduate studies. There are unitary universities which take care of both under-graduate and post-graduate studies. Some government colleges are allowed to offer post-graduate studies in certain subjects. There are some autonomous bodies like Indian Statistical Institute in Calcutta, Bengal Engineering College in Shibpur, Howrah and Sanskrit College in Calcutta which have/declared as deemed Universities. There are few institutions of national importance. Post-graduate studies in West Bengal are mainly concentrated in the universities.

In the year 1992-93 there were 351 colleges in West Bengal including general degree colleges, teachers' training colleges, Engineering and Technological Colleges and law colleges. The degree colleges fall under two broad categories: (1) government colleges, (2) non-government colleges. Teachers in West Bengal receive UGC recommended scale. Pension scheme has been introduced for teaching and non-teaching staff of non-government colleges also.

There are nine State universities and one Central university in West Bengal. The State universities are (1) Calcutta University, (2) Jadavpur University, (3) Rabindra Bharati University, (4) Kalyani University, (5) Burdwan University, (6) Vidyasagar University, (7) North Bengal University, (8) Bidhan Chandra Krishi Vishvavidyalaya 12 (Agricultural University) - it has another centre in North Bengal. (9) Another university for teaching Veterinary Science & Fishery has been established in Belgachia. (10) Vishva Bharati - it is a Central university controlled by Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

Besides these universities there is a regional centre of Indira Gandhi National Open University in this State. This university does not administer class-room teaching like other formal institution. Rather it conducts courses with the help of self-study materials. In West Bengal the centre of this university is situated at Bikash Bhavan, Salt Lake, Calcutta. There are 12 study centres in West Bengal under this regional centre.

There are some institutions of special importance in West Bengal: (1) Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, Dist. Midnapore. This institute conducts courses in

12. This agricultural university in this State is under the jurisdiction of department of agriculture - it conducts all types of courses based on agriculture and veterinary sciences.
engineering leading to B.Tech., M.Tech., etc. (2) Indian Statistical Institute, Baranagore, 24-Parganas. This is a leading institute in the country for study and research in field of statistics and allied subjects. (3) Indian Institute of Management, Joka, 24-Parganas (South). This institute is held in high esteem in the field of management science. It conducts MBA course. (4) Technical Teachers' Training Institute, Salt Lake, Calcutta. The above-mentioned institutions conduct teaching as well as research programme.

There are also some research institutes of repute in West Bengal:

(1) Indian Association for Cultivation of Science.
(2) Bose Institute.
(3) Satyendranath Bose National Centre for Basic Science.
(4) Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics.
(5) Institute of Historical Studies.
(6) Centre for Studies in Social Science.
(7) Netaji Institute for Asian Studies.

In 1977 the West Bengal Government created a separate department for supervising higher education in the State. Recently Higher Education Council has been established - the function of the Council is to look after the problems of higher education in West Bengal.
Now special attention is being paid to improve the level of technical education in the State. There are four technological colleges with different streams:

(1) Colleges of textile technology - there are two such colleges in West Bengal, one at Serampore, Hooghly and the other at Berhampore, Murshidabad - both are government colleges conducting B.Tech. course of 4-year duration.

(2) College of leather technology, Calcutta, conducting B.Tech. course in leather.

(3) College of ceramic technology, Calcutta.

There are seven engineering colleges in the State - one of them (Shibpur Engineering College) has been given the status of deemed university in 1992. For modernisation of the engineering colleges the State government is spending lot of money.

The development of middle level technical personnel is essential for a developing economy. So the government has felt the need to modernise the polytechnical institutions of the State. At present there are 46 polytechnics in the State. From 1991-92 the World Bank project for strengthening the existing technical education system is in process of implementation. New diploma and post-diploma courses, having bearing with the need of the society, are being introduced in polytechnics.
Keeping in view the increasing need of women in the changing scenario, the government has opened two new women's polytechnics - one at Chandannagar and the other at Siliguri. A hostel for women in Calcutta polytechnic has been constructed.

The State directorate of technical education is being strengthened. The reorganisation of "state council for technical education" as an autonomous body is on cards.

At present there are 8 medical colleges in the State. One new medical college is going to be established at Midnapore. An institution like "All India Institute of Medicine" is sought to be established at Kalyani, Nadia.

A list of higher educational institutions of different types of education is presented in Table 3.5.
Table 3.5
Higher Educational Institutions of different types in West Bengal (1950-51 - 1992-93)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Universities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Research Institutes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Institutes of National Importance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Colleges for general Education</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Colleges for Engineering &amp; Technical Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Colleges of medicine</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Teachers' Training College</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Deemed University</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Same as mentioned in 'Sources' for Table 3.4 and Report on Higher Education - West Bengal - 1992-93 - Govt. of West Bengal.

It can be noted that during the period of forty years the population of West Bengal rose from 2.63 crores (in 1951) to 6.79 crores (in 1991), registering a growth rate of 258 percent over four decades. But the number of universities has increased from 2 to 9 during the same
period, the number of colleges for general education rose from 90 to 315 and the number of all other institutions has increased. The proliferation of educational institutions was accompanied by equally spectacular rise in the number of students enrolled in the institutes at various levels of higher education. Table 3.6 shows the student enrolment.

Table 3.6
'Enrolment of students in different types and levels of Higher Education in West Bengal' (1950-51 - 1988-89)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>Total enrolment in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1950-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Universities</td>
<td>2441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Colleges for general education</td>
<td>51330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Colleges for engineering and technology</td>
<td>8348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Colleges for medicine</td>
<td>4103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Teachers' training college</td>
<td>1406</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: (1) Directorate of Public Instruction, W.B.
(2) Education in India - 1984-85 - Govt. of India.
(3) Selected educational statistics - '90-91 - Ministry of Human Resources Development.
(4) A hand book of educational and allied statistics - Govt. of India.
In 1991-92 the enrolment in general colleges for education in West Bengal was approximately 2,62,700 and in State universities the enrolment was 33,600 approximately (According to Mitra Commission Report). Because of expansion of correspondence courses, open university facilities and permissions by many universities for appearance at examination as private candidate the enrolment in general colleges has declined slightly.

The non-formal education programme has been taken up to supplement the formal education system. Two universities of West Bengal - Burdwan and Midnapore - have opened correspondence courses for those who have left the formal track due to some unavoidable reason.

Moreover, there are two academies for spreading Urdu and Hindi in the State. (1) West Bengal Urdu Academy runs several schemes to spread and encourage Urdu language in the State. (2) Panchim Banga Hindi Academy is functioning from February, 1990. The academy has undertaken project of literacy publication in Hindi.

It should be mentioned that during the last decade the educational scenario in West Bengal has been peaceful, unmarked by the type of student unrest seen before. Examinations are held according to schedule. But still the
situation leaves a lot to be desired. There is in recent period, widespread complaint of deteriorating standards in college education. Much of the problem lies with the system of courses and curricula. Such a system makes teaching examination-oriented. In Mitra Commission report it has rightly been observed that "With the enormous growth in the number of students the whole process has been rendered mechanistic, leaving no room for experimentation and offering little opportunity to the students to assimilate what they are taught. Thus higher education too has been reduced to a system of acquisition of certain types of information of limited range". The introduction of a genuinely flexible and imaginative curriculum, responsive to contemporary realities, requires the fulfilment of a number of preconditions which may be possible only in the long-run.

In recent decades, there is an increase in the number of universities. The universities are the highest temples of learning - but they have assumed the form of degree-giving stores with stress on widening the range of products while diluting their quality. They should try to

improve academic standards and raise the quality of teaching and research. Infrastructural facilities in laboratories, workshops and libraries, etc. are necessary for improving the quality of education. But there is grave financial obstacle which impedes the creation of infrastructural facilities. The universities should try to raise funds from different sources. Mitra Commission has stressed the need to raise university charges and fees. Bulk of students in higher education come from upper strata and public subsidisation of higher education in present form should not be continued. A higher scale of fees should be supplemented by a liberalised scheme of scholarships and free-studentships available to the poor and meritorious students.

It does not seem likely that the system of higher education will be mass-based in future. Relaxation of standards of admission in higher education increases wastage, stagnation and drop-outs; thereby increasing the social and private cost of education per successful student. The right to higher education should be a

14. See the OECD report (1970) on the development of higher education. It comes to the conclusion that it is admission requirements which seem to be one of the major variables determining educational efficiency, although they do not constitute the only explanation.
qualified right subject to merit on the part of those who seek higher education.

3.5 Financing of Education in West Bengal

After independence the West Bengal government is trying to ensure both quantitative and qualitative changes in education with the limited resources. The major financing agency in the field of education is the State government. The Central government sanction grants through University Grants Commission. Besides the local bodies private individuals also provide finance for educational development of the State.

The expenditure on education can generally be classified as plan and non-plan expenditure. The plan budget includes the expenditure allotted for implementing various schemes included in the five year plans. The non-plan budget includes the expenditure needed to maintain the level of development reached in previous plans.

After independence we find a steady growth in State expenditure on education. In the first five-year plan the State outlay on education was Rs. 11.08 crores whereas in the 7th plan it rose to Rs. 266.68 crores. The allocated plan outlay on education during the 1990s are presented below:
Plan Outlay on Education, W.B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Annual Plan</th>
<th>Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'90-91</td>
<td>'91-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Actual)</td>
<td>44.91</td>
<td>30.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.5)</td>
<td>(2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Sports,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'92-93</td>
<td>'93-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Revised)</td>
<td>23.22</td>
<td>92.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Rs. in Crores)</td>
<td>(2.09)</td>
<td>(5.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Figure in paranthesis represent percentages of total plan outlay)

**Source**: Economic Review - (1993-94) - Govt. of West Bengal.

During the 7th Five-Year Plan the State government has spent 5.7% of total plan outlay on Education, Sports, Arts and Culture. The influence of recession in Indian economy has its impact on West Bengal. So in order to tackle other problems State-outlay on education has fallen during the annual plans and also in the first year of the 8th five-year plan. But during 1993-94 the State outlay on education, sports, etc. has been raised to 5.2% of budget estimate.

Now let us represent the trend of expenditure on different types and levels of education in West Bengal during the period - 1976-77 to 1992-93.
Table 3.7
Trend of expenditure in different types and levels of education, West Bengal

(Rs. in crores)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Primary Education</td>
<td>53.64 (40.42)</td>
<td>256.16 (37.78)</td>
<td>492.89 (35.41)</td>
<td>496.10 (35.55)</td>
<td>663.22 (36.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Secondary Education</td>
<td>48.81 (36.78)</td>
<td>288.63 (42.58)</td>
<td>628.07 (45.12)</td>
<td>629.41 (45.10)</td>
<td>813.75 (44.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Higher Education</td>
<td>23.01 (17.33)</td>
<td>96.25 (14.19)</td>
<td>206.88 (14.86)</td>
<td>199.80 (14.32)</td>
<td>255.26 (14.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Excluding medical &amp; govt. technical education but including degree level engineering)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Expenditure on medical education</td>
<td>17.33 (4.21)</td>
<td>12.01 (1.77)</td>
<td>30.96 (2.22)</td>
<td>29.91 (2.14)</td>
<td>31.62 (1.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Expenditure on non-formal education including Library Science</td>
<td>0.98 (0.73)</td>
<td>16.64 (2.45)</td>
<td>16.65 (1.19)</td>
<td>23.64 (1.69)</td>
<td>32.03 (1.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Expenditure on Technical Education excluding engineering education upto degree level</td>
<td>2.05 (1.54)</td>
<td>8.17 (1.20)</td>
<td>16.35 (1.17)</td>
<td>16.43 (1.17)</td>
<td>22.63 (1.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>132.70</td>
<td>677.85</td>
<td>1391.89</td>
<td>1395.41</td>
<td>1818.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of plan and non-plan outlay to total outlay)

(2) Finance Department - Govt. of West Bengal.
The table reveals that the plan and non-plan expenditure on different types and levels of education in West Bengal has gradually increased during the years under consideration. The expenditure on Secondary Education in West Bengal is the highest. The next in hierarchy is the primary education. The percentage of expenditure is much less in the field of higher education. Moreover, the expenditure on higher education as a percentage of total expenditure on education is declining.

It is observed that though there has been a rising trend of expenditure on education since the first five year plan the standard of education is not upto expectation. The eighth plan aims at human resource development which is in fact its central theme – the allocation of plan outlay for education in the State has been raised in 1993-94. But it is found that 80% of the educational expenditure is spent for payment of salary to teaching and non-teaching staff in the field of higher education. In 1991-92 the salary component of educational expenditure on primary education and secondary education was as high as 94% and 96% respectively. Hence a meagre amount of money is left for bringing any major change in infrastructural facilities in the field of education.
3.6 Concluding Observations

Let us now conclude by stressing the main points of the education policy of the State government. The basic objective of the State government's education policy is "To reach the common people with facilities of education in as extensive manner as possible in rural and urban areas in order to help them to understand and cope with the socio-economic environment." Great emphasis has been laid on the universalisation of elementary education, expanding facilities for non-formal and adult education and widening the opportunity for higher level of education.

With a view to universalising elementary education the State has made school education free. In order to prevent drop-out of poor students a programme for supplying mid-day meals has been introduced. Non-formal and adult education programme have been taken up to supplement formal education. As a result the educational pyramid has been more broad-based than before. This is sure to bring socio-economic changes in the State.

Second-level education has also expanded enormously after independence. The major issues at secondary level are related to (1) curriculum planning and the examination
system. At the time of curricula planning an attempt should be made for securing a balance between the secondary and higher secondary stages of education. The contents of school education should be such as to expose the students to social and economic realities.

At higher level of education there are problems specific to two forms of higher education — one form is the general higher education and the other is the professional higher education. Many changes have taken place in the field of higher education since independence. At present university education is no longer for attainment of academic excellence. It is now a device for stretching the nominal period of education. The education commission rightly observes, "By doing so, (i.e., by stretching nominal period of education) it helps to keep thousands of young men and women away, for some more while, from the destiny of further crowding an already crowded labour market". But still people believe that the superior the degree the higher is the prospect of landing a job in the labour market. So people rush for higher education.

The other form of higher education is professional/technical higher education covering teaching, law, medicine

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including nursing, pharmacy and dentistry, industry and technology, agriculture including forestry, fishery and animal husbandry. There is a rush for entry in these fields. But only 10-12% of those who seek admission in these courses are qualified to enter into this area. Restriction on entry is essential as the professional courses call for heavy investment in buildings, laboratory, machinery and other equipment. The per capita student cost of general arts and science degree is much less than that of a professional degree. Higher professional education makes available the professionally trained persons needed for economic betterment. In West Bengal the State Government is making an attempt for modernising the technical courses in collaboration with World Bank. Still there is problem of resource deficiency. The resources come from taxation, bank money, public borrowing and so on.

The massive subsidy given to higher education in the shape of tuition and other fees, when prices have risen several times, can be reduced. Clearly the income of the ordinary people has gone up. So they can be persuaded to agree to a phased increase in the tuition fees of their

17. YOJANA, January 26, 1994 - Special number on "Education".
wards. The education commission of West Bengal (1992) has suggested the government to raise the fees of the universities. The proposal is under active consideration of the government. In the meanwhile the universities have raised their examination fees from the 1994-95. The university grants commission has requested the universities to find out means for collecting funds. In order to meet the huge expenditures of higher education the universities should try to raise their funds. We shall have to admit that higher education has its own virtue in a knowledge and technology intensive age. So we should have an adequate infrastructure for higher education - otherwise we may be unable to globalise effectively. The universities should be treated as social sector which has to be built up on the same footing as the general infrastructure of the economy.