CHAPTER 1
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Issues

"O Lord takes us from darkness to light, from untruth to truth" (Asatoma Sadgomaya Tamosoma Joytirgomoya)

This was an ancient uttering captured in Brhadaranyaka Upanishad (I, iii, 28)-our earliest serving literary document. The yearning for education comes bright in these ancient words. The need for education is thus a perceive wisdom in the Indian culture.

In the sixth century B.C. popular religious movements enlivened the length and breath of India. Among them, the most popular were Buddhism and Jainism. The Buddhist tried to appeal to the common masses in their own common languages. In fact they were the first proponents of mass education. It was in the Buddhist Monasteries’ that the first Universities in the world have taken birth. In fact Needham (1985) noted an interesting incident linked with this urge for mass education. The Indian Buddhists’ were the first to print Buddhist images on silk and paper. This was noted by Yi Jing, a Chinese scholar who visited India in the seventh century A.D.

The importance of education was felt every where in the world. In classical Greece, the ideal of human being is a healthy mind in a healthy body. Ancient Greeks emphasized on the physical and mental development of human being. The ancient Romans’, on the other hand, stressed on the practical side of education.

In Mesopotamia and Egypt archeologists’ found ruins of schools, text books and even question papers. In the medieval Europe, Church was the main place of education. The education in this era was shrouded with mystical believe. The early Arabs emphasized on science and rationality.
The idea however, percolated to Europe only after the Renaissance. The Renaisssances’ people first separated theology from science, belief from rationality.

The father of French Revolution was the first to speak of mass education. Previously education was restricted to the Elites. It was the advent of democracy that right to education became a fundamental right of each and every child.

In the recent decades, the importance of education was first pointed out by the human capital theorists.

The idea of human capital has its empirical origin in the Maize era of Japan. In case of ordinary capital investment means, capital accumulation and enhancement of productivity through technical change. Similarly, human capital means enriching the skilled and dexterity of the human being, so that he becomes more productive.

Schultz (1961) showed that the idea has its origin in Adam Smith. The emphasize of human capital and its embodiment in to the growth theory has been achieved by the new growth theorists such as achievement help to understand the puzzles that the traditional growth theory of Solow(1957) Swan(1957) variety failed to explain. The end result is that education became a primary source of increasing income and raising productivity.

Simultaneously, there is a development of the human entitlement literature in the hand of Haq and Sen(1997). This literature stressed on the welfare aspect of education. Education deprivation is a major form of deprivation that impairs the individuals yearning for a fully satisfied life. Following the suggestion, UNDP included two indicators of primary education- literacy rate and enrolment rate as a major component of human development index. Thus a study of education has two fold objectives. First, it measures the mount of deprivation and its severity in human being. Simultaneously it measures the loss in productivity and growth potential of an economy. This makes the study of education so interesting and so crucial for development economics.

In this thesis, my objective is to unravel the frailties and gaps in the Indian education system. The publication of DISE (District Information System of Education) data giving an all India Picture on various parameters is very helpful here. First, we study certain trends in the education indicators of our country. Second, we undertake an efficiency analysis of the India states, with
regard to the delivery and outcomes in primary education. Next we go to understand these features at a more micro level. Lastly, we select two districts (Budwan and Paschim Medinipur) of the Indian state of West Bengal. To focus on the school level features and the efficacy exercise at the school level. Our analyses indicate a wide variation in the achievement parameters across different cross section units. More over, there are several factors that are constraining the efficiency of the primary education system.

1.2: Plan of the study

The thesis is divided in to eight chapters.

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter. Here we focus only importance of economics of education and the resources of our study. The chapter opens up the arena of research.

Chapter 2 discusses briefly the main literature in this area. Since such studies are numerous we focus only on a few. Our study is being the efficacy. We focus on this aspect of education. We also discuss some other studies relevant for our analysis.

Chapter 3 gives a brief description the data used. We use DISE studies at the state and district level. For our selected districts we get the un-published school level data so relevant for our analysis.

Chapter 4, is the first chapter of efficiency analysis. In this chapter we discuss the state level analysis in efficiency achievement. We proposed to develop certain indicators of the systematic failure, the social realities and the public policies that are important for education. Finally we try to relate them.

Chapter 5 does the efficiency analysis using district level data. Some data are unfortunately missing at the district level. Hence we have no other option but to redefine our parameters and carry on the analysis.

Chapter 6 does the school level analysis. Measuring efficiency and potential parameters at the school is not an easy matter. We had to redefine and reformalise the entire exercise. Finally we relate these indicators.
In chapter 7 we propose to deal with the relationship between educational efficiency and broad socio-economic features. In particular we focus with the relationship that emanates between educational efficiency and the variables reflecting fertility choice decisions. We hope that this will fix the importance of the educational efficiency from a broader perspective.

In chapter 8 we hope to provide a conclusion of our study. It will discuss the merits of our study, its relevance and also its limitation due to data non-availability.

With this chapterization we hope to capture the educational performance in India with possible insight.