CHAPTER VI

MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS
In this chapter, attempt has been made to consolidate the findings of the study, squeeze out the nectar in the name of conclusions and focus the attention to educational implications for necessary consideration and implementation.

6.1 Summary of the findings

The major findings related to the different objectives of the study are given below:

6.1.1 Existing enrolment trend in primary schools across urban and rural areas and gender disparity thereof

1. The enrolment in lower primary stage in Kamrup and Marigaon districts was gradually increasing up to 2004-05 since inception of SSA in 2002, but in 2005-06 it shows a slight decrease over the previous year.

2. Enrolment at grade I and II was declining since 2004-05.

3. Increase in retention capacity and decrease in wastage at higher classes as compared to lower classes were found.
4. In 2005, a decrease in enrolment of girls in both urban and rural areas and among urban boys was found over the enrolment in 2004. However, boys enrolment shows an increasing trend since 1998 in rural area.

5. Total enrolment in urban and total areas in 2005 was found to be less than that of previous year.

6. Rate of increase on enrolment in 2005 over the base year (1996) was higher in case of girls in both urban and rural areas.

7. Since 2001 Gender disparity was declining in urban as well as rural areas till 2004.

8. In 2005, GPI was found to be lower in both urban and rural areas over that of previous year.

9. The share of girls to total enrolment in 2005 was found to be slightly higher in urban area than that of rural area.

10. In 2005, there was slight decrease in share of girls to total enrolment in both urban and rural areas over the previous years.

6.1.2 Internal Efficiency of primary schools across urban and rural areas

1. Schools situated in the urban area were functioning more efficiently as compared to the schools of its rural counterpart.
However, co-efficient of efficiency in both urban and rural areas was satisfactory.

2. Urban primary schools were operating 89 percent efficiently level and wasting 11 percent of its resources on repeaters and dropouts.

3. Rural primary schools were working at 83 percent efficiency level, wasting 17 percent of its resources.

4. The survival rate to Grade IV was found to be 88.35 and 86.01 percent for urban and rural schools respectively.

5. Only 70.36 and 60.39 percent students in urban and rural schools respectively were found to have reached Grade IV without repetition.

6. Rural schools consumed 4.83 pupils years against 4.51 in urban schools to produce a graduate on an average.

7. It is evident that wastage of resources in both urban and rural schools was occurred mainly due to high repetition rates.

6.1.3 Cost effectiveness of primary schools across urban and rural areas

1. Unit cost and achievement index for urban schools were higher than that of rural schools.

2. In urban schools, the average number of teacher was 11.07 per school against 4.28 for its rural counterpart.
3. Due to high recurring cost on account of teacher's salary, the urban schools show a higher unit cost than that of rural schools although the average enrolment in urban schools was 1.55 times higher than that of rural schools.

4. It appears that rural schools were comparatively more cost-effective than its urban counterpart. The schools having higher number of teachers with low enrolment recorded higher unit cost and vice-versa.

5. No sampled school could record high achievement index with low cost. Whereas 7.69 percent schools spent the least i.e. below Rs.2,000/- and they have emerged with medium performance rate i.e. achievement index (60-79). Conversely 7.69 percent schools incurred high cost i.e. Rs.4,000/- and above with low performance rates i.e. achievement index below 60.

6. Only 5.13 percent sampled schools were found to be most cost effective as they show high promotion rates (above 90 percent) and incur least unit cost below Rs.2,000/-.

6.1.4 Factors responsible for the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of primary schools

1. High dropout and repetition rates were found to be responsible for inefficiency of most of the sampled schools. Because higher dropout and repetition rates contribute a lot towards wastage in
terms of pupil years which affect the internal efficiency of the school system.

2. Promotion rates were higher in urban areas than that of rural areas. However, cases of dropout and repetition were found to be higher in rural schools for which rural schools were found to be inefficient as compared to its urban counterpart.

3. The major reason for dropout at primary stage in both urban and rural areas was poverty. In case of urban area 'need to earn' was recorded as second notable reason for leaving school without completing primary education cycle whereas in rural areas, 'need to do household work' was the second major cause of dropout. The third major reason for dropout in both urban and rural areas was the lack of interest in education.

4. The size of most of the schools in urban area was found to be higher than that of schools of rural areas. 4 percent schools in rural area could survive with less than or equal to 50 students. Size of 28.57 and 34.00 percent of urban and rural schools respectively was below 100 students only.

5. Urban schools had 4 to 17 teachers per school as compared to 2 to 7 per school in rural area. 64.30 percent of urban schools had ten or more teachers whereas 40.00 percent of rural schools had below four numbers of teachers depicting existence of a multigrade teaching situation in those schools.
6. PTR in rural schools was higher than its urban counterpart. Due to low PTR, teachers in urban schools could provide individual attention to pupils as compared to rural schools which influences the achievement level of the people.

7. Academic qualification of primary school teacher is very poor. Not a single teacher of urban and rural school had qualified any of public examination in their life securing first division or first class. Largest portion i.e. 47.62 and 54.67 percent of urban and rural teachers respectively were third divisioner in HSLC examination.

8. 16.67 and 5.33 percent of total teachers of urban and rural schools respectively were found to be untrained. Teachers were recruited without PSTE diploma.

9. Maximum numbers of short-term training programme attended by the teachers were of 2 or 3 days duration. Most of the teachers did not get opportunity to undergo 20-day training programme in a year.

10. 7.14 and 41.33 percent of urban and rural teachers respectively had to teach all school subjects. Only 14.28 percent of urban teachers dealt with one subject.

11. Teachers of rural schools had to perform multigrade teaching without any training on the techniques of such teaching.
12. The sampled schools were poorly equipped with basic facilities. 21.43 and 8.00 percent of schools of urban and rural areas respectively did not have separate blackboard for each class.

13. Average number of classroom in urban and rural schools was 4.62 and 2.56 respectively.

14. Only 53.60 and 55.56 percent of urban and rural students of Grade IV respectively secured above 60 percent of marks in last periodical evaluation.

15. 14.29 percent of urban schools reported that there was a problem of sound pollution due to adjacent busy road which hampered teaching-learning processes.

16. Not a single teacher was found to have used Audio Visual Aids during classroom transaction though all the sampled teachers had received Rs.500/- as TLM grant from SSA in the academic year.

17. No innovation and experimentation of any kind was recorded in any sampled school.

18. 97.62 and 84.00 percent of urban and rural sampled teachers respectively were not aware of utility of action research for educational practitioner.
6.1.5 Government Interventions for Increasing Internal Efficiency of primary schools

1. All total 13,279 numbers of post of primary school teachers were created upto 9th plan period under Operation Blackboard Scheme in Assam with 100 percent central assistance.

2. Under Operation Blackboard Scheme various items of Teaching-Learning Equipment were supplied to 25970 primary schools with central assistance amounting Rs.2406.42 lakh.

3. During first phase, 2645 school buildings were constructed spending Rs.1139.25 lakh @Rs.45,000/- per school.

4. Under Mid-day Meal Scheme 38,30,622 students of 51,061 primary schools, EGS centre and AIE centre were provided cooked meal.

5. 81.19 percent teachers stated that due to engagement of teachers in different activities related to Mid-day Meal programme, classroom transaction was hampered. It became a burning problem for the schools where number of teacher was very less.

6. 15.38 percent of headmaster could not find sufficient time to pay attention in Teaching-Learning Process due to additional works such as village survey, enrolment drive, management of Mid-day Meal Scheme etc.
7. Due to non-understanding of the new trend as well as affection towards traditionality, the transaction of new textbooks became a confusion among some teachers.

8. Community participation under SSA was not satisfactory.

9. Total 5119 EGS centres were opened by SSA in the State to enhance the access to schooling, out of which 158 and 228 were in Kamrup and Marigaon districts respectively.

10. Altogether 4223 Sanjogi Siksha Kendras (SSK) as Alternative Innovative Education (AIE) for out of school children have been operationalised in the State with 1,12,625 learners, out of which 207 and 119 SSKs are in Kamrup and Marigaon districts with 5390 and 4611 learners respectively.

11. Kamrup district had highest number of Hard to Reach children centre in the State i.e. 155 centres with 4969 enrolment whereas Marigaon district had only 5 centres with 224 HTRC.

12. Mother Groups were found to be so active in 24.00 percent of rural and 7.14 percent of urban schools that they manage all the activities related to Mid-day Meals.

13. In 12.00 percent rural schools, community constructed the boundary wall and undertook school campus improvement activities.
14. Involvement of community member in scholastic as well as co-scholastic activities was not recorded in any of the sampled schools.

15. Professional training is not a pre-requisite for entering the job of primary school teacher in Assam. As a result of which persons without having any pre-service training directly deal with small children who need some special care at school.

16. In Assam, untrained stipendary in-service primary school teacher are to qualify the JBT course conducted by SCERT, Assam to become eligible to draw the regular scale of pay and allowances.

17. No PSTE course has been conducted by TTIs of Assam since 2002.

18. 24.00 and 14.29 percent of rural and urban headmasters respectively criticized the percent non-detention policy. According to them due to lack of pass fail system, student's interest in teaching-learning process had been decreasing and were promoted automatically to the next higher classes without attaining desired level of learning achievement which deteriorated the total quality of school system.

19. It was observed that headmaster and teachers were not conceptually clear about Continuous and Comprehensive Education (CCE) and very purpose of introducing periodical evaluation as well as remedial teaching.
20. No school was found to have provided remedial teaching regularly immediately after evaluation of answer scripts of periodical evaluation.

21. Working days were gradually increasing during 2001 to 2005.

22. School support mechanism developed under SSA by constituting academic core groups was functioning poorly.

23. Intensity of school visit by SSA workers had been increasing since 2003.

24. Involvement of CRCC and ABRCC in teaching-learning process was not significant.

25. Number and intensity of school visit by government officials was found to be insignificant.

26. Government officials gave least importance on arrangement of remedial teaching, class demonstration and discussion on co-scholastic activities during school visit.

27. In rural area, all the headmasters had to take regular classes on account of insufficient teaching staff.

28. Interventions under inclusive education were found to be executed in the mainstream of the school as a flexible and individual support system for children with special needs.

29. Target under civil work could not be achieved in time by the SMO, SSA.
6.1.6 Strategies for making the primary school system internally efficient and cost-effective

1. Grant of some concessions in kind such as school uniform or clothing, stationery goods like copy, pencil, pen, scale, eraser etc. to the children whose parents are living below poverty line will certainly help to a great extent to enhance willingness of parents to educate their children. However, the supply of such materials should be made timely. In addition to this, a scheme of monthly attendance scholarship to the children, who are working as child labour due to abject poverty may also be started to compensate their foregone income.

2. Every school must be provided with a Science kit, Mathematics kit and some TLMs relevant to difficult concepts in the textbooks. Teachers should be trained so as to use various items of kit boxes and also to enable them to prepare low cost and no cost teaching aids with the help of locally available resources. It must be ensured that the TLM grant @Rs.500/- per annum given to each teacher is purposively and efficiently utilized. A strict discipline should be maintained in respect of working days and punctuality in teaching as per academic calendar.

3. PSTE course should immediately be reintroduced in Assam and be incorporated as pre-requisite qualification for entry into the service of a primary school teacher as early as
possible. Similarly, in compliance with NCTE guidelines, the recruitment qualification should also be enhanced to Higher Secondary passed with minimum 50 percent marks in case of general caste and 45 percent marks in case of disadvantaged groups like SC/ST/OBC (NCTE website, 19-06-2008).

4. No teacher should be allowed to handle curricular as well as co-curricular activities without having sufficient training. Backlog of untrained primary school teachers should be cleared by activating JBT course in all TTIs. Refresher course of at least one month duration should be introduced for the teachers who have qualified JBT course more than ten years ago.

5. Provision of short-term in-service training should be arranged to equip teachers with recent development in education and for building professionalism among them. The entire responsibility of conducting such training programme should be transferred to SCERT, Assam from the teacher training component of SSA, Assam.

6. In view of transmission loss in Mass Teacher Training (MTT) programme through cascade model, an alternative, economic and innovative model may be developed so that entire teaching community may be covered with minimum transmission loss and without hampering routine academic
activities of schools. One such alternative may be Distance Learning Programme together with school based support by faculty members of TTIs and retired academicians. This approach may be strengthened by incorporating contact classes at local TTIs during summer vacation. Such an action would reduce the backlog of untrained teachers much sooner than the regular year long JBT course. If needed, the primary schools may be treated as non-vacation department so far services of teacher is concerned, so that training of teachers could be done during summer vacation without hampering teaching learning processes in the schools with less number of teachers.

7. State government should take steps for operationalisation of EDUSAT project in the State by establishing SIT (Satellite Interactive Terminal) in all TTIs, ROT (Receive Only Terminal) in all primary schools and Hub (Server and Studio) at State Head Quarter for broadcasting programmes in regional languages.

8. In order to keep parity with the national perspective, the textbooks of primary stage should be revised in the light of National Curriculum Framework-2005.

9. Wide discrepancies in Pupil Teacher Ratio at primary level should be minimized by adopting a policy of rationalization in teacher placement with the help of school mapping. The
existing practice of transferring teachers 'with posts' and attachment of teachers to other institution for his/her own convenience should immediately be stopped.

10. Parents must be made realise the need of education of their children through adult education programmes. The non-government organisations such as Youth Club, Mahila Samity and Student’s Associations etc. may also be strengthened to undertake gender sensitisation programmes in backward areas.

11. Provision of separate room for different classes should be made. Drinking water and toilet facilities should be provided to all the schools. An annual office contingency for purchasing essential commodities such as chalk, pencil, paper etc. should be sanctioned by the government to each school. Optimal utilisation of all available facilities should be ensured through regular supervision by education officers, faculty members of DIETs, BTCs, Normal Schools as well as community members.

12. Each school should organise Parent Teacher Association (PTA) so that teachers will have a close touch with the parents.

13. Appropriate legislative and administrative measures need to be adopted to regulate opening and functioning of new primary schools. If there are more than one school in a small
village in proximity, the schools should be rather combined into one model and resourceful school so as to provide better management.

14. Some degree of compulsion should be imposed on DEEO, BEEO, DI and SIs to pay visit to schools as per government norms. The load of administrative works on DEEOs and BEEOs may be minimized by creating posts of DEEO (academic) and BEEO (academic) at district and block level respectively.

15. Faculty members of DIETs, BTCs and Normal Schools should also be engaged for supervision of schools under their jurisdiction.

16. Teachers should be spared from doing extra non-academic works such as population census, voter list correction, survey work during working days.

17. A Mass Teacher Training programme on method and utility of action research in school education may be organized by SCERT, Assam.

18. State government should take urgent steps for operationalisation of two IASEs, one SIEMAT and five DIETs which have already been approved by MHRD, Govt. of India under 100 percent centrally sponsored scheme.
19. For sustainability of SSA interventions in the State after termination of the scheme in 2010, State government should take steps for transferring the responsibility of major components of SSA such as Teacher Training, Research and Evaluation, EGS, AIE, RBCC, HTRCC, DEP etc. to the organisations such as SCERT, DIETs, Normal Schools and BTCs in a phased manner along with infrastructure required to run such programmes.

6.2 Conclusion and policy implication

A significant portion of total resources invested in primary education had gone waste on account of grade repetition and dropout. It is evident that wastage of resources in both urban and rural schools occurred mainly due to high cohort repetition rates. Presumably, this is due to socio-economic backwardness of parents of students studying in government primary schools.

It is found that schools situated in the urban area were functioning more efficiently as compared to the schools of its rural counterpart. On the other hand rural schools were found to be comparatively more cost effective than its urban counterpart. It is due to excess number of teachers against low enrolment in urban schools which contributed towards high unit cost. Size of many urban and rural schools was not economically viable. Due to misguided priority and uneven distribution of teachers, multigrade teaching situation was found have occurred in forty percent of rural schools. Moreover, good performance could not be desired because of poor academic qualification.
together with lack of sufficient professional competence among the teachers. Most of the schools are still poorly equipped with basic facilities. Though a good number of schemes and projects have been operationalised in the State during post-independence period, interventions given under such schemes or projects were not so effective to make the system 100 percent efficient till today and not to speak of UEE, even UPE still remains a distant goal for the State.

Despite almost six decades of planning, constitutional commitment, legislations, programmes, schemes etc. introduced to ameliorate such conditions of inefficiency and ineffectiveness at primary stage during post independence period, traditionality of such circumstances still prevails in our society. Hence, it is urgently necessary to adopt a concerted effort, albeit with programmes of other departments of government and non-government organisations to associate necessary support services to the resource poor families in order to ensure universal enrolment as well as universal retention in primary schools. Dropout children ought to get back into the educational stream, otherwise the very concept of human resource development will be distorted. Equality in distribution of infrastructural facilities and teachers among all the schools and their optimal utilisation should be ensured through proper inspection and supervision. Mobilisation of demand for education especially in backward areas should also be ascertained. Child labour of school going age group should be provided productive and skill oriented education. Educational planning will have to be done at grassroot level and beneficiaries should be involved in the process of planning so as to make it local specific. Quality of teachers is an influencing factor for making school
system effective and efficient. Hence strategy should be adopted to recruit talented and competent teachers to the field of education particularly to primary schools. After all, the quality of primary education must be improved by reviewing curricula, textbooks, teaching methodology and testing procedure. The entire process of education should centre round the child. In no way the age, ability, interest, aptitude and the need of a child should be ignored.

6.3 Scope for future research

Considering the findings of the present study as a frame of reference there is ample scope for further studies in the following areas:

i) To study the causes of large scale decline in enrolment in the year 2005 at grade I and II and remedies thereof.

ii) To study inter linkage among the social, economic, cultural, psychological and academic reasons which are responsible for high rate of dropout among primary school children.

iii) To study the behavioural pattern of low achievers and dropouts.

iv) To study the reasons responsible for highest dropout in class I and its remedies.

v) To study the effectiveness of existing curricula at the primary stage.

vi) To study the school related factors responsible for dropping out of children: Can schools be expected to prevent it?
vii) To study the causes of high repetition rate at grade I & II of primary schools.

viii) To study the professional skills of primary school teachers.

ix) To study the effectiveness of interventions given under SSA.

x) To study the problems and prospects of implementation of Mid-day Meal programme in Assam.