CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 The Problem
A Study of Sarva Shiksha Abhijan Programme in Relation to Internal Efficiency of School and Scholastic Achievement of Students at Primary Level in Rural West Bengal

1.2 Background of the problem
Education is a critical input in human resource development and is essential for economic growth of the country. Being an integral part of country’s development process education has been given first priority. It is an established fact that primary education improves the level of human well-being especially with regard to life expectancy, infant mortality and nutritional status of children/etc. Studies have shown that universal primary education significantly contributes to economic growth. Unfortunately our country is unable to achieve the long cherish goal of Universal Primary Education, till today.

1.2.1 Global context
The World Conference on Education for All (EFA) was held in 1990 at Jomtien, Thailand. At the Conference, India, along with 155 other countries, committed itself to universalize primary education and targeted to halve the adult illiteracy rate by 2000. The new vision for education was to ensure a better life to all people by providing the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve it.

In April 2000, the World Education Forum was convened in Dakar, Senegal, to review the achievements of the last decade (Frontline, May 26, 2000). To evaluate EFA, 18 key indicators, were developed by the EFA Forum Secretariat, located at the premises of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris. Based on these guidelines, national governments prepared their own reports. The reports were then synthesized into sub-regional, regional and finally the global report.

In setting the context, the Report identified the following goals the country set for itself in 1990, when it signed the Jomtien Declaration: a holistic view of basic
education with greater linkages between pre-school, primary, non-formal and adult education; improved access for the deprived sections; quality improvement; community participation and involvement of Non Government Organisations; decentralization in education management and increasing financial support.

Global Monitoring report spelt out where the world stands on the following six EFA goals.

1. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

Although child mortality rates have been dropped, a majority of countries are not taking the necessary policy measures to provide care and education to children below age 3. The provision of pre-primary education for children aged 3 and above has improved but remains scarce across sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States. Early childhood care and education programmes generally do not reach the poorest and most disadvantaged children, who stand to gain the most from them in terms of health, nutrition and cognitive development.

2. Universal Primary Education (UPE)

Twenty-three countries that lacked legal provisions for compulsory education in 2000 have since established them. Compulsory education laws now exist in 95% of 203 countries and territories. The global net enrolment ratio rose from 83% to 87% between 1999 and 2005, faster than from 1991 to 1999. Participation levels increased most rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa (23%) and South and West Asia (11%). The number of out-of-school children dropped from 24 million to 72 million between 1999 and 2005. Thirty-five fragile states account for 37% of total out-of-school children. Despite overall enrolment increases, sub national disparities in school participation persist between regions, provinces or states and between urban and rural areas. Children from poor, indigenous and disabled populations are also at a systematic disadvantage, as are those living in slums. On recent trends, fifty-eight out of eighty-six countries that have not yet reached universal primary enrolment will not be able to achieve it by 2015.

3. Learning Needs of Young People and Adults

Non-formal education programmes remain neglected in terms of public funding, although some governments have recently developed national frameworks for
sustained provision. Household surveys show that non-formal education is nonetheless the main route to learning for many disadvantaged youth and adults in some of the world’s poorest countries.

4. Adult Literacy
Worldwide, 774 million adults lack basic literacy skills, as measured by conventional methods. Some 64% of them are women, a share virtually unchanged since the early 1990s. Direct measurement of literacy skills would significantly increase the global estimate of the number of adults denied the right to literacy. Most countries have made little progress during the past decade in reducing the absolute number of adult illiterates, with the notable exception of China. The adult literacy rate in developing countries increased from 68% to 77% between the periods 1985–1994 and 1995–2004. Of the 101 countries still far from achieving ‘universal literacy’, 72 will not succeed in even halving their adult illiteracy rates by 2015.

5. Gender
Only 59 countries had achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005. 75% of countries are at parity or close to it at primary level, while 47% are close to reaching the goal in secondary education. Boys’ under participation and underachievement are of growing concern in secondary education. Only 18 out of 113 countries that missed the gender parity goal at primary and secondary level in 2005 stand a chance of achieving it by 2015. Gender equality remains elusive: sexual violence, insecure school environments and inadequate sanitation disproportionately affect girls’ self-esteem, participation and retention. Textbooks, curricula and teacher attitudes continue to reinforce stereotypes on gender roles in society.

6. Quality
Survival rates to the last grade of primary school improved between 1999 and 2004 in most countries with data but remained low in sub-Saharan Africa (median rate of 63%) and in South and West Asia (79%). Relatively low and unequal learning achievement in language and mathematics characterize many countries worldwide. Crowded and dilapidated classrooms, too few textbooks and insufficient instructional time are widespread in many developing countries and fragile states. Pupil/teacher ratios have increased in sub-Saharan Africa and in South and West Asia since 1999.
Eighteen million new primary school teachers are needed worldwide to reach universal primary education by 2015. Many governments are hiring contract teachers to save costs and rapidly increase the teaching force, but where such teachers lack adequate training and service conditions, this practice could have a negative impact on quality in the future.

Out of 129 countries, 51 have achieved or are close to achieving the four most quantifiable EFA goals, 53 are in an intermediate position and 25 are far from achieving EFA as a whole. (EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, UNESCO. 2014)

1.2.2 The Scenario so far in India

Education in India has a history stretching back to the ancient urban centres of learning at Taxila and Nalanda. The Nalanda University was the oldest university-system of education in the world. Western education became ingrained into Indian society with the establishment of the British Raj. Education in India falls under the control of both the Union Government and the states, with some responsibilities lying with the Union and the states having autonomy for others.

Universalsation of elementary education are the commitment of our country since independence. Part -IV of the Constitution of India lays down the Directive principles of State policy. Article 41 under this part says that “the state shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to Education”. Article 45 under the same Part, which deals with “provision for free and compulsory education for children.” “The state shall endeavour to provide, within a period of 10 years from the commencement of this constitution, for all children until they complete the age of 14 years.”

After the Unnikrishnan Judgement, 1993 - "Every children/citizen of this country has a right to free education until he completes the age of fourteen years." The 86th amendment in December 2002 which inserted the following articles in the Constitution: Insertion of new article 21A- After article 21 of the Constitution, the following article shall be inserted, namely:-Right to education.-"21A. Article 45 states that the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine." For article
45 of the Constitution, the following article shall be substituted, namely: - "Provision for early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years. "The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years."

_Education Commission (1964-66)_

The Education Commission under the Chairmanship of Dr. D.S. Kothari, the then Chairman, University Grants Commission, began its task on October 2, 1964. It consisted of sixteen members, eleven being Indians and five foreign experts. In addition, the Commission had the benefit of discussion with a number of internationally known consultants in the educational as well as scientific field. The main task of the Commission was to advise the Government on the national pattern of education and on the general policies for the development of education at all stages ranging from the primary to post-graduate stage and in all its aspects besides examining a host of educational problems in their social and economic context. The Commission identified that problems of stagnation and drop-out are the two great problems of primary education in India. The commission classified the causes behind those problems in three major areas: Economic, Social and Educational. The commission recommended universal provision, ‘universal enrolment’ and ‘universal retention’. The commission observed that the wastage among the girls and in grade I is the highest and it diminishes in upper grades. According to the commission, wrong examination system and unsuitable curriculum are main reason behind the stagnation and wastage in class I. The Commission suggested some remedial measures—“the examination at the end of class I should be abolished and the first two classes (and wherever possible, even the first three or four) should be regarded as one teaching unit, within which each child can progress according to his own pace.”

_The Initiatives_

The Union Government initiated a number of projects and programmes under the _Centrally Sponsored Schemes_ most of which have been initiated after the _National Policy of Education_ was adopted in 1986 and _World Conference on Education for All_ held at Jomtien in 1990. Some of these projects in terms of their objectives and major achievements are briefly discussed below.

1. _New Innovations and Alternative Strategies_

Some of the major initiatives and strategies are:
• Disaggregated target setting and decentralized micro planning, which will provide the framework of universal access and community participation.
• Strengthening alternative channels of schooling such as the non-formal education (NFE) system for those who cannot avail of conventional full-time schooling.
• Introduction of Minimum Levels of Learning (MLLs) at primary and upper primary stages to improve learner’s achievement.
• Improvement of school facilities by revamping the scheme of Operation Blackboard (OB) and connecting it to the MLL strategy.
• Establishing linkages between programmes of early childhood care and education (ECCE), primary education, literacy and UEE.
• Addressing the more difficult aspects of access, particularly to girls, disadvantaged groups and out-of-school children.
• Restructuring of teacher training in view of the changed strategies and programmes.
• Availing of external financial support for basic education.
• Launching the National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM).

2. Alternative Channels of Education such as the Non-Formal Education (NFE) System

Non-formal education has become an accepted alternative channel of education for children who cannot attend full-time schools due to various socio-economic constraints. To reach this large segment of marginalized children, Since 1979-80, India have been running a programme of NFE for children in the 6-14 age groups, who have remained outside the formal system. These include drop-outs from formal schools, children from habitations without schools, working children, children who have to remain at home to do domestic chores and girls who are unable to attend formal schools for a variety of reasons.

The enlarged and modified version of the NFE programme now in operation visualizes NFE as a child-centred, environment-oriented and flexible system to meet the diverse educational needs of the geographically and socio-economically deprived sections of society. Non-formal education is designed to overcome the shortcomings of the formal school and make education a joyful activity. Decentralized community
participation through village education committees (VECs) in planning, running and overseeing the programme has been considered crucial for its success. Although the focus of the programme is on the educationally backward states, it also covers urban slums and hilly tribal and desert areas in other states as well.

3. Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL)

The need to lay down minimum levels of learning (MLL) emerged from the basic concern that irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, all children must be given access to education of a comparable standard. The MLL strategy is an attempt to combine quality with equity. It lays down learning outcomes in the form of competencies or levels of learning for each stage of elementary education. The strategy also prescribes adoption of measures that will ensure achievement of these levels by children both in formal schools and in NFE centres.

The focus of the MLL strategy is development of competency-based teaching and learning. Preliminary assessment of the existing levels of learning achievements has revealed that they are quite low across several districts. Minimum levels of learning in respect of three subjects, namely language, mathematics and environmental studies, have already been laid down for the primary stage. It has been stressed that the emphasis should be on concept formation rather than on content. The burdens of non-comprehension and overload of content are forcing children to resort to rote memorization. The issues of content versus concept, understanding versus rote memorization, unachievable content load versus achievable set of competencies, have been integrated into the new MLL approach. Minimum levels of learning have been specified in terms of competencies expected to be mastered by every child by the end of a particular class. The programme has been initiated throughout the country with the help of voluntary agencies, research institutions and others concerned. Minimum levels of learning for the upper primary stage are now being finalized. (Gopalan.K., 1998).

4. Scheme of Operation Blackboard (OB)

The scheme of Operation Blackboard (OB) was launched in 1987 to improve facilities in schools by providing for more teachers, rooms and teaching learning equipments. The OB Scheme seeks to bring both the quantitative and qualitative improvements in primary education. The scheme had three components, namely (i) an
additional teacher to single teacher primary schools; (ii) providing at least two classrooms in each primary school; and (iii) providing teaching-learning equipment to all primary schools. The scheme is implemented through the State Governments with 100 per cent assistance from the Central Government towards the salary of additional teachers and teaching learning equipments. It was proposed to cover all primary schools under the OB scheme that were in existence as on September 30, 1986.

Construction of school buildings is the responsibility of the State Governments but funds were arranged for this purpose from other Ministries like the Rural Development.

Despite all these significant achievements, all is not well in schools. Large number of primary schools still has only one teacher and do not have adequate physical facilities and other teaching-learning material. In addition, a few schools do not have buildings and those who have, may not be in good condition and need repairs. The instructional rooms are also not adequate in a good number of primary schools. Even if the teaching-learning material is available that itself is not a guarantee that teachers are equipped to utilize these aids, which is noticed recently even in a state like Kerala also. The OB support is one time affair and the material provided under the scheme may not even traceable in a good number of schools. Even teachers in schools spread over four states that we visited recently were not aware of such equipments in schools. Teachers in other schools where the OB kits are available are of the view that they are inadequate.

It has also been noticed that teachers appointed under the OB scheme are not efficiently deployed in schools. That is why country still have single-teacher schools. On the other hand, a few schools have got more than adequate number of teachers. This is more so true in case of schools located in urban areas or in rural areas located near to towns and cities. The OB scheme envisaged that one of the two teachers appointed under the scheme would preferably be a female teacher. No doubt, OB interventions have improved number of female teachers but in many locations their share is still poor. On an average there is one female teacher for every two and three male teachers respectively at primary and upper primary level.
Recognizing the unattractive school environment, unsatisfactory condition of school buildings, inadequate physical facilities, and insufficiency of instructional materials in primary schools, which function as demotivating factors for enrolment and retention, a scheme symbolically called Operation Blackboard was introduced in 1987-88 to bring all existing primary schools in the country to a minimum standard of physical facilities. Under this scheme, each school is provided with: (i) at least two reasonably large all-weather rooms along with separate toilet facilities for boys and girls; (ii) at least two teachers (one male and one female); and (iii) essential teaching and learning materials including blackboards, maps, charts, a small library, toys and games, and some equipment for work experience. External evaluation of the scheme indicated (i) the lack of training of teachers in using the teaching materials (ii) specification of a large number of uniform facilities to be provided without modification according to local needs, and (iii) lack of provision for breakage of equipment. Effective steps have since been taken to remove these drawbacks. The scheme of Operation Blackboard has also been modified and expanded to provide a third room and a third teacher to primary schools where enrolment exceeds 100, and it has been extended to upper primary schools. The scheme is concentrating on rural areas and SC/ST areas, and girls’ schools are being given the first priority. (Dyer, C. 1996).

5. Establishing Linkages between Programmes of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Primary Education, Literacy and UEE

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is viewed as a crucial input in the strategy of human resource development, as a feeder and support programme for primary education, and as a support service for working women of the disadvantaged sections of society. Since the age-span covered by ECCE is from conception to 6 years, emphasis has been given to a child-centered approach and play-way and activity-based learning in place of formal methods of teaching including introduction of the 3 Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic). Keeping in mind the role of ECCE as a support service in UEE, it is deliberately directed to the most underprivileged groups, those who are still outside the mainstream of formal education. The aim of ECCE is that every child should be assured access to the fulfillment of all basic needs. It involves the total development of the child in every aspect including the physical, psychomotor, cognitive, language, emotional, social and moral. The present ECCE programmes include:
the integrated child development service (ICDS)
the scheme of assistance to voluntary organizations for running early child education (ECE) centres.
*balwadis* and day-care centres run by voluntary agencies with government assistance
pre-primary schools run by state governments, municipal corporations and other agencies
maternal and child health services through primary health centres, sub-centres and other agencies.

ICDS is today the biggest programme of early childhood development, serving about 15 million children and 3 million mothers. Appropriate linkages are being established between ECCE programmes, primary schools, NFE centres and other related schemes of UEE.

6. Promotion of Access to Girls and Disadvantaged Groups

As with all educational indicators, gender disparities are conspicuous in regard to enrolment and retention. Over the past 25 years, enrolment of girls at the primary stage has grown from 5 million to 47 million and at the upper primary stage, from 0.5 million to 16 million. But disparities persist. Today girls account for only 46 per cent of the enrolment at the primary stage and 38 per cent at the upper primary stage. The drop-out rates of girls at the primary and upper primary stages are higher than those of boys. Regional disparities are also conspicuous. The very low female literacy (20 to 29 per cent) in some of the major north Indian states causes grave concern. The rural girls are doubly disadvantaged by non-availability of educational facilities and by their domestic chores.

Concerted efforts are now on to reach out to the girl child in rural and remote areas and urban slums by designing special NFE programmes with a view to getting them back into the formal stream education. The NFE programmes are being dovetailed into the total literacy campaigns (TLC) to reach out to the girls in the 10-20 age groups. Programmes for continuing education are being designed to ensure that neo-literates and school-going girls have access to reading materials.
An important constraining factor for female education is the lack of women teachers in rural areas. Therefore, special efforts are being made to recruit women teachers and to augment teacher training facilities for women so that adequate numbers of qualified women teachers are available. Co-ordinate efforts are also on to provide the necessary support services to enhance their participation and performance.

In India, people are still unambiguous about removal of disparities and achievement of equality of education opportunities for SCs, STs and other backward sections including girls. A number of strategies aimed at accelerating their rate of enrolment and retention have been detailed and are being implemented. Because of the affirmative policies of the government, the enrolment of these categories has increased considerably at the primary stage. The participation of SCs and STs at the primary level is more or less in proportion to their share in the population. Drop-outs, though declining, continue to be significantly large [primary stage (classes I-V), SC 49 per cent, ST 64 per cent; upper primary stage (classes VI-VIII), SC 68 per cent, ST 79 per cent]. Gender disparities are conspicuous among SCs and STs.

To ensure universal access and enrolment of SC children in rural areas, priority is given to the needs of SC habitations and hamlets in opening primary and upper primary schools. For SC children access and enrolment are assured primarily in the formal schools. Where they are not able to attend these, provision is made for non-formal and distance education centres. Every ST habitation is being provided with a primary school or other suitable institution. In tribal areas, the educational plan is being implemented in an integrated manner. Pre-school education, non-formal education, elementary education and adult education are being organically linked and integrated to ensure achievement of total literacy of the entire population.

Adequate incentives are given to the children of SC, ST and other backward sections in the form of scholarships, uniforms, textbooks, stationery and midday meals. All schools, NFE centres, and pre-school centres in SC/ST habitations are being equipped with necessary infrastructural facilities in accordance with the norms laid down for Operation Blackboard and for achieving MLL (minimum level of learning). Operation Blackboard has already covered almost all schools in tribal areas. Indigent SC/ST
families are given incentives to send their children, particularly girls, to school. (Mehta, A. C. 2002).

7. Restructuring of Teacher Training
Teacher performance is the most crucial input in the field of education. In the ultimate analysis, the national policies on education have to be interpreted and implemented by teachers as much through their personal example as through teaching-learning processes. With a view to improving the quality and competence of teachers, a centrally sponsored scheme of Restructuring and Reorganization of Teacher Education (RRTE) was launched in 1987.

During the period 1987-90, nearly 1.8 million teachers were trained under the Programme of Mass Orientation of School Teachers (PMOST). Most of them were primary and upper primary teachers. The main objective of the programme was to orient teachers in the main priorities and directions envisaged in the NPE 1986 and to improve their professional competence.

The main components of the RRTE, as far as elementary education are:

1. Setting up of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) in all districts to provide good quality pre-service and in-service training to elementary school teachers and adult education/non-formal education personnel and to provide resource support to these systems

2. Organizing Special Orientation Programmes for Primary Teachers (SOPT) with a view to providing training to teachers in the use of OB materials and orienting them towards MLL strategy with a focus on teaching of language, mathematics and environmental studies. More than 300 DIETs have already become operational and have started conducting training programmes. The SOPT launched in 1993-94 is now going on in almost all states and more than 115,000 teachers have already been trained. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was set up in 1993 with statutory status for the effective implementation of all teacher education and training programmes and to achieve planned and co-ordinated development of the entire teacher education system throughout the country. The regulation and proper maintenance of
norms and standards in the teacher education system is the responsibility of the NCTE.
(Report of NCERT, 2009).

8. **Availing of External Financial Support for Basic Education**
As a matter of policy and principle, India had not been seeking financial support from external agencies to implement its programmes of basic education. This situation changed in 1991-92, when a conscious and strategic decision was taken to avail of external assistance to achieve the goal of Education for All (EFA).

Today a number of agencies including the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), International Development Association (IDA), and the British Overseas Development Agency (ODA) are sharing our concerns in this area. A new phase has, therefore, emerged — a phase of partnership between the inherent potential of the country and financial and other support from external agencies.

9. **Total Literacy Campaign**
The Total Literacy Campaigns (TLC) mobilize communities and contributed to greater participation of children in schools. So far 450 districts have been covered under the TLC of which 250 campaigns have moved into post-literacy and 65 to continuing education stage. The campaigns cover an estimated 148 million persons. Of 94 million persons enrolled, so far 73 million persons have been completed level III. The uniqueness of the TLC lies in the fact that it is delivered through voluntarism. The programme is being implemented through the Zilla (district) Saksharata Samities created for the purpose. As mentioned, literacy rate has improved from 52 in 1991 to 62 percent in 1998.

10. **National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM)**
With the objective of mobilizing all the resources — human, financial and institutional which are necessary for achieving the goal of UEE by the year 2000, a National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM) was set up in August 1995 with the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) as its core. This Mission will monitor and implement all the meticulously formulated strategies based on micro planning,
and will ensure that free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality is provided to all children up to 14 years of age by the turn of the century. The National Policy on Education states the goals of Universalisation of Elementary Education and of eradication of illiteracy in the following terms: "It shall be ensured that all children who attain the age of about 11 years by 1990 will have had five years of schooling, or its equivalent through the non formal stream. Likewise, by 1995, all children will be provided free and compulsory education up to 14 years of age."

The NPE also envisaged a national system of education, two of those features are:

1. It will be based on a national curricular framework comprising a common core and other components that would be flexible. The common core will aim to promote national identity and other essential values like scientific temper, egalitarianism, democracy, socialism, secularism, protection of environment, small family norms etc.

2. Laying down minimum levels of learning for each stage of education.

The goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education has the aspects namely:

a) universal enrolment of children in the relevant age group in elementary school / alternative institution.

b) Their retention

c) universal achievement by them of at least the specified minimum levels of learning, with due stress on the inculcation of essential values.

(Mehta, A. C. 2002).

11. National Programme for Nutritional Support (Mid-day Meal)

The National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (launched in 1995) provides food grains/cooked meals to children in primary classes. The programme assures 100 grams of grains per day for attending schools for at least 80 per cent of the total school days in a month. The programme had benefited more than 98 million children spread over 0.69 million schools. In the latest year, about 9.90 million children are covered under the scheme and allocated 2.71 million metric tones of grains (Annual Report: MHRD, 1999-2000). Along with teachers, local community is also given responsibility in the distribution of grains. In previous years, a significant gap has been noticed in quantity of food grains sanctioned and actually
lifted. However, only 65 and 42 per cent children of age group 6-11 and 11-14 years were found to be attended primary and upper primary schools in 1995-96 (NSSO, 1998). Since then the same, due to mid-day meal intervention might have improved to a significant effect. This is also reflected in the absolute enrolment during the period 1995-98. A few states are not keen to implement the scheme because of the administrative problems.

12. District Institutes of Education and Training
The scheme to strengthen teacher education by establishing quality training institutions, such as, the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) was initiated in 1987. The scheme proposed to create viable institutional, academic and technical resource base for orientations, training and continuous up-gradation of knowledge, competence and pedagogical skills of school teachers’ in the country. The guidelines provided seven academic units with 22 faculty positions that cover different areas such as planning and management, education technology, material development etc. Since then 433 DIETs have been sanctioned of which 401 are functional. Below the district level, under DPEP, Block Resource and Circle Resource Centres have been established that ensure capacity building at the grassroots level. In non-DPEP districts, such institutions are not in existence. However, the Sarva Shiksha Abhijan envisages creating BRC and CRC in non-DPEP districts. The DIETs are now twelve years old but still many of them do not function as was envisaged in its guidelines.

13. Lok Jumbish Projects (LJP) and Shiksha Karmi Projects (SKP)
Apart from DPEP, Lok Jumbish (Peoples' Movement) and Shiksha Karmi Projects are the other two important programmes, which are, received attention at the international level. Both these projects are under implementation in Rajasthan since 1992, which is one of the most educationally backward states of India. The main objective of LJP is to achieve EFA through people's mobilization and participation. SKP focuses it attention on universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote, area and socio-economically backward villages with primary attention given to girls. The project identifies teacher absenteeism as a major obstacle in achieving the goal of UEE. The LJ Parishad, an autonomous society, implements the LJP. First two phases of LJP were during 1992 to 1994 and 1994 to 1998 and the third phase
(1999-2004) with the assistance of Department of International Development (UK) have been implemented. For the first two phases, about Rs. 1,110 million were invested and for the third phase, an amount to the tune of Rs. 2,250 million is allocated. It has undertaken environment-building activities in 8,675 villages and has completed school mapping exercise in 6,974 villages. 529 new schools have been opened and another 268 were upgraded. LJP has been able to set-up innovative management structures incorporating the principles of decentralization and delegation of authority as well as building partnership with local communities and the voluntary sector. It has also set-up vibrant block and cluster resource groups for providing academic supervision and regular training of primary school teachers.

However, it may be noted that the LJP has covered only 75 blocks, which is just one quarter of the total blocks in Rajasthan. The management cost of LJP is high compared to other programmes of similar nature. It is also not known whether the success it has achieved, will it able to replicate elsewhere in Rajasthan and outside Rajasthan. The school mapping exercises, which are conducted under the LJP, though termed as school mapping but in fact, is a micro planning exercise. The disappointing aspect is closing down of LJP in about 10 blocks and another 9 may also meet the same fate. This is because of the DPEP, which is presently under implementation in 10 districts of Rajasthan, and another 9 are in pipeline. The Government of Rajasthan decided to close down LJP in blocks, which falls under DPEP districts. (Ramchandran, V., 2003).

14. District Primary Education Programme
District Primary Education Programme has been launched in this District since November 1997. The main criterion for selecting this district is the lower level of the Female literacy rate than the national literacy at the time of introduction of District Primary Education Programme.

Aims and Objectives of DPEP are as follows -
1. Enrolment of all the school going age i.e. children in the age group of 6 to 11.
2. Retention of all the enrolled children in schools without any dropout.
3. Completing five year of Primary Education with quality.
4. Promoting of Girls Education.
6. Involving the community for the better functioning of schools.

The specific objectives of the programme are:

- to reduce differences in enrolment, drop-out and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than 5 per cent
- to reduce the overall primary drop-out rate to less than 10 per cent
- to raise average achievement levels by at least 25 per cent over measured baseline levels and ensure achievements of basic literacy and numeracy competencies and a minimum of 40 per cent achievement levels in other competencies by all primary school children
- to provide, according to national norms, access for all children to primary education classes (I-V), i.e., primary schooling wherever possible or its equivalent non-formal education. (Jha, J. and Jhingran, D, 2002).

15. Sarva Shiksha Abhijan

In addition to the Centrally Sponsored Schemes, states have initiated schemes to give momentum to their efforts towards the goal of Education for All. More recently, the Government of India has also initiated an ambitious programme called Sarva Shiksha Abhijan (SSA): An Initiative for Universal Elementary Education to achieve the goal of UEE. The programme is initially planned to initiate in about 50 districts with low female literacy spread over fifteen states. It is envisaged that all the districts of the country will come under the programme before the end of the Ninth Plan (MHRD, 2000b). Unlike the District Primary Education Programme, the SSA envisages to develop district-specific elementary education plans within the framework of decentralized management of education with a focus on Panchayati Raj Institutions. In the DPEP, the focus was only on the primary level. In these districts, it would be the first attempt to develop plans with the active involvement of local people in a participatory planning mode. District planning teams in these districts have already been formed and training in planning methodology is being imparted.
The Sarva Shiksha Abhijan is a historic stride towards achieving the long cherished goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) through a time bound integrated approach, in partnership with State. SSA, which promises to change the face of the elementary education sector of the country, aims to provide useful and quality elementary education to all children in the 6-14 years age group by 2010.

The SSA is an effort to recognize the need for improving the performance of the school system and to provide community owned quality elementary education in mission mode. It also envisages bridging of gender and social gaps.

(i) *Objectives of SSA*

- All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, 'Back to School' camp by 2003;
- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007;
- All children complete eight years of schooling by 2010;
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life;
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010; and
- Universal retention by 2010.

(ii) *Structure for Implementation*

The Central and State governments will together implement the SA in partnership with the local governments and the community. To signify the national priority for elementary education, a National Sarva Shiksha Abhijan Mission is being established with the Prime Minister as the Chairperson and the Union Minister of Human Resource Development as the Vice Chairperson. States have been requested to establish State level Implementation Society for DEE under the Chairmanship of Chief Minister Education Minister. This has already been done in many States.

It was decided that the Sarva Shiksha Abhijan will not disturb existing structures in States and districts but would only try to bring convergence in all these efforts. Efforts will be made to ensure that there is functional decentralization down to the school level in order to improve community participation. Besides recognizing PRIs/ Tribal Councils in Scheduled Areas/ including the Gram Sabha, the States would be
encouraged to enlarge the accountability framework by involving NGOs, teachers, activists, women's organizations etc.

(iii) **Coverage and Period**
It was targeted that the SSA would cover the entire expanse of the country before March 2002 and the duration of the programme in every district would depend upon the District Elementary Education Plan (DEEP) prepared by it as per its specific needs. However, the upper limit for the programme period has been fixed as ten-years i.e. up to 2010.

(iv) **Institutional reforms**
As part of the SSA, institutional reforms in the States would be carried out. The states would have to make an objective assessment of their prevalent education system including educational administration, achievement levels in schools, financial issues, decentralization and community ownership, review of State Education Act, rationalization of teacher deployment and recruitment of teachers, monitoring and evaluation, education of girls, SC/ST and disadvantaged groups, policy regarding private schools and ECCE. Many States have already made institutional reforms to improve the delivery system for elementary education.

(vi) **Sustainable Financing**
The Sarva Shiksha Abhijan is based on the premise that financing of elementary education interventions has to be sustainable. This calls for a long-term perspective on financial partnership between the Central and the State governments.

(vii) **Community ownership**
The programme calls for community ownership of school based interventions through effective decentralization. This will be augmented by involvement of women's groups, VEC members and members of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

(viii) **Institutional capacity building**
The SSA conceives a major capacity building role for national and state level-institutions like NUEPA/NCERT/NCTE/SCERT/SIEMAT. Improvement in quality requires a sustainable support system of resource persons.
(ix) **Improving mainstream educational administration**

It calls for improvement of mainstream educational administration by institutional development, infusion of new approaches, and by adoption of cost effective and efficient methods.

(x) **Community based monitoring**

The Programme will have a community based monitoring system. The Educational Management Information System (EMIS) will correlate school level data with community based information from micro planning and surveys. Besides this, every school will have a notice board showing all the grants received by the school and other details.

(xi) **Habitation as a unit of planning**

The SSA works on a community based approach to planning with habitation as a unit of planning. Habitation plans are to be the basis for formulating district plans.

(xii) **Accountability to community**

SSA envisages cooperation between teachers, parents and Panchayati Raj Institutions, as well as accountability and transparency.

(xiii) **Education of girls**

Education of girls, especially those belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, will be one of the principal concerns in Sarva Shiksha Abhijan.

(xiv) **Focus on special groups**

Focus would be on the educational participation of children from SC/ST, religious and linguistic minorities’ disadvantaged groups and the disabled children.

(xv) **Pre Project phase**

SSA would commence throughout the country with a well planned pre project phase that provides for a large number of interventions for capacity development to improve the delivery and monitoring system.
(xvi) **Thrust on quality**

SSA would give special thrust on making education at elementary level useful and relevant for children by improving the curriculum, class centered activities mid effective teaching methods.

(xvii) **Role of teachers**

SSA recognizes the critical role of teachers and advocates a focus on their development needs. Setting up of BRC/CRC, recruitment of qualified teachers, opportunities for teacher development through participation in curriculum related material development, focus on classroom process and exposure visits for incidences designed to develop the human resource among teachers.

(xviii) **District Elementary Education Plans**

As per the SSA framework, District will prepare a District Elementary Education Plan reflecting all the investments being made in the elementary education sector.

(xix) **Components of SSA**

The components of Sarva Sluksha Abhijan includes appointment of teachers, teacher training, qualitative improvement of elementary education, provision of teaching learning materials, establishment of Block and Cluster Resource Centres for academic support, construction of Classrooms and school buildings, establishment of education guarantee centres, integrated education of the disabled and distance education.

(xx) **Requirement of Financial Resources For UEE**

According to broad assessments made by the Department of Elementary Education & Literacy, nearly Rs. 60,000 crores additional resources are required from the budget of the Central and the State level Departments over the next ten years. Since SSA is a programme for universalisation of elementary education, the actual requirement of funds can only be worked out after the District Elementary Education Plans are finalized. Sarva Shiksha Abhijan (SSA) has two aspects - 1) it provides a wide
convergent framework for implementation of Elementary Education schemes; II) It is also a programme with budget provision for strengthening vital areas to achieve universalisation of elementary education. While all investments in the elementary education sector from the State and the Central Plans would reflect as part of the SSA framework, they would all merge into the SSA programme within the next few years. As a programme, it reflects the additional resource provision for UEE.

(xxi) Financial Norms
The assistance under the programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhijan could be on a 85:15 sharing arrangement during the IX Plan, 75:25 sharing arrangement during the X Plan, and 50:50 thereafter between the Central government and State governments. Commitments regarding sharing of costs would be taken from State governments in writing.

States would be required to maintain their level of allocation for elementary education in real terms on the base year 1999-2000. The share of states under SSA programme would be over and above the base year allocation.

The Government of India would release funds to the State Governments/Union Territories only and installments (except first) would only be released after the previous installments of Central government and State share has been transferred to the State Implementation Society.

The support for teacher salary appointed under the SSA programme have been shared between the central government and the State government in a ratio 0/8 5:15 during the IX Plan, 75:25 during the X Plan and 50:50 thereafter. But till 2013-14, 65:35 is continuing.

All legal agreements regarding externally assisted projects would continue to apply unless specific modifications have been agreed to in consultation with foreign funding agencies.

Existing schemes of elementary education of the Department (except National Bal Bhawan and NCTE) will converge after the IX Plan. The National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid Day Meal) would remain a distinct intervention with food grains and specified transportation
costs being met by the Centre and the cost of cooked meals being met by the State government. District Education Plans would inter-alia, clearly show the funds/resource available for various components under various schemes like Jawar Rojgar Yojana, Prime Minister Rojgar Yojona, Sunishchit Rozgar Yojana, Area fund of MPs/MLAs. State Plan, foreign funding and resources generated in the NGO sector.

All funds to be used for up gradation, maintenance, repair of schools and ‘Teaching Learning Equipment’ and local management to be transferred to VECs/School Management Committees.

Other incentive schemes like distribution of scholarships and uniforms will continue to be funded under the State Plan. They will not be funded under the SSA programme. (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India 2000. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – Framework for Implementation)

It came as a shocking revelation in 2001, when UNESCO declared that India was placed at 105th position out of 128 countries according to its Educational Development Index! From 1990 to the year 2000, the government had been experimenting with educational programmes like DPEP and DIET and spent over 2 lakh crores in that decade. Yet at the end of that period the result was actually miserable. The next 10 years – 2001 to 2010 - the government launched another ambitious programme called Sarva Siksha Abhijan and spent over 3 lakh crores The result: UNESCO.s EDI Report for 2010 released in February this year places India at exactly the same position -105 out of 128 countries! The report states that while the enrolment is 94%, the dropout rate at the primary level is a shocking 34%. The rate of dropout at the high school level probably be twice of this. The report states: “In all probability they drop out without acquiring any level of progress with respect to the basic three R’s, contributing to the numbers of out-of-school children, to child labour and to the mass of illiterate population”. Obviously, this is a major problem on hand and it definitely needs to find a clear and workable solution. Unfortunately, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act has been flaunted as the panacea for all the ills of our education system.(Ramdas, B. 2013)

The Eighty-sixth Amendment of Constitution of India, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education for all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which came into effect on 1st April 2010, clearly states that all children in the 6-14 age groups have right to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school. The RTE Act, 2009 further clarifies that compulsory education means obligation of appropriate government to ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education. Free education implies that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him/her from pursuing and completing elementary education. The RTE provides a legally enforceable rights framework that Government must adhere to. As per that framework every state must establish necessary number of neighbourhood schools by 31st March 2013 in order to ensure the goal of access and universalisation of elementary education (Section 6).

RTE requires every State Government to notify neighbourhood norms for opening new schools under SSA. Sam Carlson, the World Bank education specialist for India, has made following observation:

"The RTE Act is the first legislation in the world that puts the responsibility of ensuring enrollment, attendance and completion on the Government. It is the parents’ responsibility to send the children to schools in the U.S. and other countries.

The Right to Education of persons with disabilities until 18 years of age has also been made a fundamental right. A number of other provisions regarding improvement of school infrastructure, teacher-student ratio and faculty are made in the Act.

The Act provides for a special organization, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, an autonomous body which was set up in 2007, to monitor the implementation of the act, together with Commissions to be set up by the states.

SSA has been operational since 2000-2001 to provide for a variety of interventions for universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in
elementary education and improving the quality of learning. SSA interventions include inter alia, opening of new schools and alternate schooling facilities, construction of schools and additional classrooms, toilets and drinking water, provisioning for teachers, periodic teacher training and academic resource support, textbooks and support for learning achievement. With the provision of the RTE Act, changes have been incorporated into the SSA approach, strategies and norms. The changes encompass the vision and approach to elementary education, guided by the following principles:

i. Holistic view of education, as interpreted in the National Curriculum Framework 2005, with implications for a systemic revamp of the entire content and process of education with significant implications for curriculum, teacher education, educational planning and management.

ii. Equity, to mean not only equal opportunity, but also creation of conditions in which the disadvantaged sections of the society – children of SC, ST, Muslim minority, landless agricultural workers and children with special needs, etc. – can avail of the opportunities.

iii. Access, not to be confined to ensuring that a school becomes accessible to all children within specified distance but implies an understanding of the educational needs and predicament of the traditionally excluded categories – the SC, ST and others sections of the most disadvantaged groups, the Muslim minority, girls in general, and children with special needs.

iv. Gender concern, implying not only an effort to enable girls to keep pace with boys but to view education in the perspective spelt out in the National Policy on Education 1986 /92; i.e. a decisive intervention to bring about a basic change in the status of women.

v. Centrality of teacher, to motivate them to innovate and create a culture in the classroom, and beyond the classroom, that might produce an inclusive environment for children, especially for girls from oppressed and marginalized backgrounds.

vi. Moral compulsion is imposed through the RTE Act on parents, teachers, educational administrators and other stakeholders, rather than shifting emphasis on punitive processes.
vii. Convergent and integrated system of educational management is pre-requisite for implementation of the RTE law. All states must move in that direction as speedily as feasible.

RTE Act, 2009, represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, which means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards.

Article 21-A and the RTE Act came into effect on 1st April 2010. The title of the RTE Act incorporates the words ‘free and compulsory’. ‘Free education’ means that no child, other than a child who has been admitted by his or her parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate Government, shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. ‘Compulsory education’ casts an obligation on the appropriate Government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the 6-14 age group. With this, India has moved forward to a right based framework that casts a legal obligation on the Central and State Governments to implement this fundamental child right as enshrined in the Article 21A of the Constitution, in accordance with the provisions of the RTE Act.

The RTE Act provides for the:

i. Right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school.

ii. It clarifies that ‘compulsory education’ means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group. ‘Free’ means that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education.

iii. It makes provisions for a non-admitted child to be admitted to an age appropriate class.
iv. It specifies the duties and responsibilities of appropriate Governments, local authority and parents in providing free and compulsory education, and sharing of financial and other responsibilities between the Central and State Governments.

v. It lays down the norms and standards relating inter alia to Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTRs), buildings and infrastructure, school-working days, teacher-working hours.

vi. It provides for rational deployment of teachers by ensuring that the specified pupil teacher ratio is maintained for each school, rather than just as an average for the State or District or Block, thus ensuring that there is no urban-rural imbalance in teacher postings. It also provides for prohibition of deployment of teachers for non-educational work, other than decennial census, elections to local authority, state legislatures and parliament, and disaster relief.

vii. It provides for appointment of appropriately trained teachers, i.e. teachers with the requisite entry and academic qualifications.

viii. It prohibits (a) physical punishment and mental harassment; (b) screening procedures for admission of children; (c) capitation fee; (d) private tuition by teachers and (e) running of schools without recognition.

ix. It provides for development of curriculum in consonance with the values enshrined in the Constitution, and which would ensure the all-round development of the child, building on the child’s knowledge, potentiality and talent and making the child free from fear, trauma and anxiety through a system of child friendly and child centred learning.

1.2.3 Educational Scenario of West Bengal

West Bengal is a state in the eastern region of India and is the nation's fourth-most populous state. It is also the seventh-most populous sub-national entity in the world, with over 91 million inhabitants. Spread over 34,267 sq mi (88,750 km), it is bordered by the countries of Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, and the Indian states of Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Sikkim, and Assam. The state capital is Kolkata. West Bengal encompasses two broad natural regions: the Gangetic Plain in the south and the sub-Himalayan and Himalayan area in the north.
The early and prolonged exposure to British administration resulted in expansion of Western education, culminating in development in science, institutional education, and social reforms of the region, including what became known as the Bengal Renaissance. A hotbed of the Indian independence movement through the early 20th century, Bengal was divided during India's independence in 1947 along religious lines into two separate entities: West Bengal—a state of India—and East Bengal—a part of the newly created Pakistan—later becoming Bangladesh in 1971.

A major agricultural producer, West Bengal is the sixth-largest contributor to India's net domestic product. West Bengal is noted for its cultural activities and presence of cultural and educational institutions; the state capital Kolkata is known as the "cultural capital of India". The state's cultural heritage, besides varied folk traditions, ranges from stalwarts in literature including Nobel-laureate Rabindranath Tagore to scores of musicians, film-makers and artists. West Bengal is also distinct from most other Indian states in its appreciation and practice of playing soccer besides the national favourite sport cricket.

In West Bengal, schools are run by the state government or by private organizations, including religious institutions. Instruction is mainly in English or Bengali, though Urdu is also used, especially in Central Kolkata. The secondary schools are affiliated with the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE), the National Institute of Open School (NIOS) or the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education. Under the 10+2+3 plan, after completing secondary school, students typically enroll for 2 years in schools with a higher secondary facility affiliated with the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education or any central board. Students choose from one of three streams, namely arts, commerce or science. Upon completing the required coursework, students may enroll in general or professional degree programs.

The Figure 1.1 shows the management system under school education Department.
SCERT—State Council of Educational Research and Training
PBSSM-- Paschimbanga Sarva Shiksha Mission
DI/S(PE)- District Inspector Schools(primary Education) . DI/S(SE)- District Inspector Schools(Secondary Education). ADI/S(SE)- Additional District Inspector Schools(Secondary Education). SI/S-- Sub-Inspector Schools. DPO(SSA)-District Project Officer (Sarva Shiksha Abhijan). DIET- District Institute of Education and Training. PTTI – Primary Teachers’ Training Institute
WBBPE- West Bengal Board of Primary Education
WBBSE- West Bengal Board of Secondary Education.
WBCHSE- West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education.
WBCROS- West Bengal Council of Rabindra Open Schooling.
Demographic Information

The following table (table 1.1) gives an comparative overview of demographic characteristics of West Bengal and India at a glance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>West Bengal</th>
<th>India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Area (in sq. km.)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>88,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>88,752 (P)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Number of villages</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>40,782</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Number of towns</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Census population</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8,01,76,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1347736(P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sex ratio (females per 1000 males)</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>947 (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Decennial population growth (percentage)</td>
<td>2001 - 2011</td>
<td>13.93 (P)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1991 - 2001</td>
<td>17.77</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Density of population (per sq. km.)</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1029 (P)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>903</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Crude birth rate (SRS)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>16.8</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Crude death rate (SRS)</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Infant mortality rate (SRS)</td>
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<td>Expectation of life at birth (projected)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Total Fertility Rate</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mean age at effective marriage for females</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>19.9</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Percentage of urban population to total population</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>31.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>27.97</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Literacy Rate &lt;&lt;</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>77.98 (P)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>Percentage of population by religion (2001)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Muslim</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Percentage of Scheduled Caste population to total population</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1991</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Percentage of Scheduled Tribe population to total population</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>5.59</td>
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<< The literacy rates refer to the percentage of Literate to estimated population aged 7 (seven) years and above
* Excluding the population of Mao-Maram, Paomata and Purul Sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur.
P : Provisional
### Table 1.2: Basic Administrative Indicators of West Bengal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>No. of Sub Divisions</th>
<th>No. of CD Blocks</th>
<th>No. of Municipalities</th>
<th>No. of Gram Panchayats</th>
<th>No. of Cain</th>
<th>No. of CRCs</th>
<th>No. of ULR Cs</th>
<th>No. of Villages/Wards</th>
<th>No. of Habitations</th>
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<td>197</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1610</td>
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<td>Burdwan</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>CoochBehar</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2683</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Siliguri</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>South 24 Pgrns</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3979</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Uttar Dinajpur</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>341</strong></td>
<td><strong>127</strong></td>
<td><strong>3354</strong></td>
<td><strong>726</strong></td>
<td><strong>4217</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>38392</strong></td>
<td><strong>2768</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B:- In West Bengal educational circle is the administrative unit at the sub district level.

In 1950, after the independence, Junior Basic Scheme was adopted in West Bengal. After a long spell of 31 years (1981) from independence, as per recommendation of Himanshu Bimal Mazumdar Committee, in the changed socio-political context the curriculum was re-structured and one of the significant features of the new system was the adoption of modern evaluation technique. The Government of West Bengal has taken up a vital task of UEE for all eligible learners like other states of India. In 1992, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) came into being in 5 districts viz. Bankura, Birbhum, Coochbehar, Murshidabad and South 24 Parganas. The Programme has entered into second phase incorporating another 5 districts namely Dakshin Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Malda, Purulia and Uttar Dinajpur in 2001-02.
Sarva Shiksha Abhijan (SSA) started its journey in 2002 in 10 educational districts along with 10 DPEP districts with the commitment for both the sectors – primary and upper primary education in all the 20 educational districts of West Bengal. On the way to UEE, the twin projects viz. DPEP and SSA are being implemented under the rubrics of ‘Paschim Banga Rajya Prarambhik Shiksha Unnayan Sanstha (PBRPSUS) in West Bengal, subsequently, it was renamed as ‘Paschimbanga Sarva Shiksha Mission’ (PBSSM). The ultimate goal of SSA is to complete the elementary schooling with satisfactory quality with the emphasis on education for life for all children in the span of eight years. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 has also emphasized the completion of elementary education with scholastic achievement of students though it depends on various organisms, extraneous and intervening variables.

The primary education system at the all India level, and in most of the provinces, has five classes - class I to class V. Thus a child is expected to join formal education at the age five at class I and complete the primary education in five years time, i.e., by the time the child completes nine years of age, she/he should be able to join the post primary level. Thus the target population age group for the primary level in West Bengal is five years and above but less than ten years. However, most of the primary schools in West Bengal have only four classes - Class I to Class IV. According to provisional DISE Data (2010-11), there are 51016 schools offering Primary Education and 10574 schools offering Upper Primary Education in West Bengal. Total 8901 and 8822 schools are offering Secondary and Higher Secondary Education in West Bengal respectively. Thus, most of the children who desire to continue to study beyond class IV have to change schools. This very fact affects all the variables related to enrolment and drop-out of the primary school goers.

**Scenario in Rural West Bengal**

Many new primary schools have been established in the state. According to need, attention is equally being given on areas with the predominance of marginalized section of the community. In West Bengal a special programme was designed in 1997-98 to meet the challenge and a sort of small schools were established in the areas to cater to the disadvantaged children which are called Sishu Siksha Kendra(SSK). The main objective of this project is to ensure success and 100 percent
enrolment and retention of children for quality education. The Teachers, mostly women in rural areas, employed on a contractual basis are the resource persons. It aims to meet the Millennium Development Goal for achieving Education for All by 2015 in terms of spread and quality of education for children. SSKs are functioning properly from 2003-04. The growth of primary schools can be visualized from the following table.

*Table 1.3: Number of primary schools and SSKs and enrolment in West Bengal*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of pry. schools</th>
<th>No. of SSK</th>
<th>Total (pry sch +SSK)</th>
<th>Enrolment in primary schools</th>
<th>Enrolment in SSKs</th>
<th>Total Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>39132</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39132</td>
<td>54,61,939</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54,61,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>42659</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42659</td>
<td>57,77,591</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>57,77,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>48456</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48456</td>
<td>68,83,911</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68,83,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1993</td>
<td>51021</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51021</td>
<td>101,17,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>101,17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>51021</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51021</td>
<td>90,06,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>90,06,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-1998</td>
<td>51021</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51021</td>
<td>88,07,732</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>88,07,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>50447</td>
<td>16005</td>
<td>66452</td>
<td>6190156</td>
<td>1434633</td>
<td>7624789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>51143</td>
<td>16110</td>
<td>67253</td>
<td>6050119</td>
<td>1424680</td>
<td>7474799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>51191</td>
<td>16112</td>
<td>67303</td>
<td>5582627</td>
<td>1369913</td>
<td>6952540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source : Directorate of School Education, Govt. of West Bengal (for number of schools) ; Economic Review of Govt. of West Bengal (for enrolment) and DISE Data (for the year 2009-10 to 2011-12 ).*

It is to be noted that there is a rapid growth of private schools in rural areas also in last 10-12 years. It is fact that in recent times common people are interested to send their children in Private Schools for their good perception about the private schools. From DISE data it appears that number of students in private schools in primary level is 2060820 in the year 2010-11. The actual number is even more because many private schools are not covered by DISE. This is an important factor for the decrement in enrolment in Government Aided primary schools.
Table 1.4: Some Important Educational Indicators of West Bengal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>Enrolled Girls</th>
<th>Enrolled Boys</th>
<th>Enrolled Total</th>
<th>Enrolled per Primary School</th>
<th>GER Boys</th>
<th>GER Girls</th>
<th>GER Total</th>
<th>Number of Teacher</th>
<th>Pupil Teacher Ratio</th>
<th>Drinking Water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>42624</td>
<td>276259</td>
<td>2820078</td>
<td>558267</td>
<td>131.0</td>
<td>107.0</td>
<td>108.9</td>
<td>107.9</td>
<td>136999</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>40763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
<td>2925</td>
<td>286226</td>
<td>293929</td>
<td>580155</td>
<td>198.3</td>
<td>107.0</td>
<td>108.9</td>
<td>107.9</td>
<td>12309</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>2925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MURSHIDABAD-JIAGANJ (M.J)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>9297</td>
<td>9715</td>
<td>19012</td>
<td>176.0</td>
<td>103.8</td>
<td>102.2</td>
<td>103.0</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NABAGRAM</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>10499</td>
<td>10806</td>
<td>21305</td>
<td>142.0</td>
<td>110.0</td>
<td>110.7</td>
<td>110.3</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paschim Medinipur</td>
<td>4363</td>
<td>178997</td>
<td>185488</td>
<td>364485</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>11934</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>4084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DASPUR-I</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>6677</td>
<td>6742</td>
<td>13419</td>
<td>104.0</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>100.9</td>
<td>99.4</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KESHPUR</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>12147</td>
<td>12839</td>
<td>24986</td>
<td>101.2</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Twenty Four Parganas</td>
<td>3408</td>
<td>269937</td>
<td>268146</td>
<td>538083</td>
<td>157.9</td>
<td>99.1</td>
<td>103.3</td>
<td>101.2</td>
<td>11110</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>3267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALTA</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>8546</td>
<td>8357</td>
<td>16903</td>
<td>114.2</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAKDWIP</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>8546</td>
<td>8357</td>
<td>16903</td>
<td>114.2</td>
<td>100.7</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>102.6</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>44.614</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source- DISE 2013, PBSSM

1.3 Emergence of the Problem
In the name of planning, the country is engaged in a continuous exercise which sometimes verges on ludicrousness. In the 4th Plan in a particular sector in education an ambitious plan was prepared for 20 crores. By the time the Plan went through the Task Force, the Planning Commission, the Administrative Ministry, their internal finance and external finance, the final allocation came to 98 lakhs. As a lot of time had elapsed in the process and the cumbersome administrative mechanism exercised further checks and controls, 32 lakhs out of the 5th Plan for education which had started with 3,200 crores and ended almost in a pittance is still green in the minds of those who were associated with this exercise. Everybody in the Government is worried whether money is spent according to rules, nobody is bothered whether the money is spent for the purpose for which it was earmarked or whether it has yielded any results. Primary education has been put in the core sector. Yet state governments constantly keep on transferring funds from this core sector to other core sectors and come times even to non-core sectors. If one looks at the fund allocation to primary education from the 1st Plan to the 5th, one will find that in spite of the overall increase in allocation, the increase in allocation is not commensurate with the increase in growth in this sector. Even the rate of increase itself in comparison to other sectors
of education shows a disquieting trend. During the 30 years from 1947 to 1977, primary education has increased threefold, whereas higher education has increased six fold. Allocation of funds for primary education has dropped from 56 per cent in the 1st Plan to 28 per cent in the 5th Plan of the total outlay in Education. Under these circumstances the universalisation of Primary education is bound to remain a slogan.

However, in India the process of reviewing the educational achievements went much beyond the global framework. The India Report was not only viewed as a stocktaking exercise, but also as a base for future planning. Hence, it attempted to present a relatively honest view of the educational situation as it exists and the problems and challenges that the country faces in making 'Education for All' a reality. Perhaps that is why it was not achieved in India. Apart from the main country report, 25 thematic and sub-sectoral studies were commissioned and these were largely prepared by experts and practitioners from the academia and non-governmental agencies.

Even before Jomtien conference, India had formulated a National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986, with the goal of providing education to all. Conceptually, the NPE, a sound and forward-looking document, recognized quality as a major factor, the need to make education relevant to the life contexts of both children and adults. It redefined learning in an empowering context, changing curricula and texts to address the life concerns of the disadvantaged.

India's literacy rate increased from 18.33 per cent at the time of Independence to 52.21 per cent in 1991. According to the National Sample Survey Organization’s 53rd Round figures for 1997, the literacy rate is 62 per cent. This is no mean achievement, despite both definitional problems and problems of measuring literacy. It is to be noted, however, that in absolute numbers India still accounts for one-third of the world's illiterate people. More than 290 million adults continue to be illiterate and 38 million children remain out of school. While the world is talking of a minimum of 10 to 12 years of education for all, India continues to struggle with five years of primary schooling. (Nitya Rao, 2009).

According to ASER report 2012 School facilities show improvement over time. Based on RTE norms, the pupil teacher ratio shows improvement. In 2010, the proportion of
schools meeting these norms was 38.9%. This number has risen to 42.8% in 2012. 73% of all schools visited had drinking water available. However, just fewer than 17% did not have drinking water facility at all. A water facility was available, though not usable in the remaining schools. The proportion of schools without toilets has reduced from 12.2% in 2011 to 8.4% in 2012 and the proportion of schools with useable toilets has increased from 47.2% in 2010 to 56.5% in 2012. Approximately 80% of schools visited by them had separate provision for girls’ toilets. Of schools which had this separate provision, close to half had useable girls’ toilets, as compared to a third in 2010. The mid-day meal was observed being served in 87.1% schools that were visited by ASER.

But still today primary education in West Bengal, as all over the country, suffers from many deficiencies including problems of infrastructure, shortage of schools, shortage of teachers, the financial stringencies of the parents, and so on. These deficiencies have long been recognized and formed part of the popular discourse on the shortcomings of primary education in the state. Our study, however, has focused on the qualitative aspect of the delivery of primary education and it is clear that here too, there is a long way to go. Improving infrastructure and the student-teacher ratio while important, do not in themselves provide a guarantee of improvement in either the quality or the spread of primary education. There are several important factors that need, in addition, to be addressed with some urgency. Some issues are discussed below. Parents’ participation in monitoring and governance is the key to improving the delivery of primary education. A representative parent-teacher committee with members from all sections of society having legal powers to make the renewal of school appropriations conditional on their approval should be constituted in every primary educational institution (schools as well as SSKs). The governance of primary schools and SSKs should be devolved as far as possible to the hands of local communities and they must be freed from bureaucratic and political interference. The success of the government of West Bengal’s SSK experiment in providing cost effective primary education, particularly to the most underprivileged sections of society must be recognized. However, the administration of and support to the SSKs need further improvement. To begin with, SSK sahayikas must be recognized as educators in their own right. The term sahayika, which means ‘helper’, and has connotations of inferiority when contrasted to ‘sikshak’ (‘teacher’), should be
rethought and SSK teachers should not be confused with ‘para-teachers’ (Rana, K., Samantak Das, S., Sengupta, A. and Rafique, A.). Prof. Amartya Sen said rightly “There is in fact, basic complementarily between the different components of the kind of multipronged approach for which we are arguing. The complementarily gives us further reason to believe that multipronged action based on clear diagnoses will bring results … There is indeed need for some urgency here, since the problems are serious and involved long-standing injustice to millions of young children that call for rectification. Patience can be, alas, another name for continuing injustice.”

However, universalisation of elementary education (UEE) in its totality is still an elusive goal and much ground is yet to be covered but it has been noted that a lot of changes have been taken place in West Bengal as well as in India in primary education between 2001-02 to 2012-13 i.e during pre SSA and post SSA period. This study has also tried to explore contribution of various other resources in improvement of the quality of education and efficiency in the school system and methods of resource planning and utilization. This study attempts to measure the changes those have been taken place in the areas of- internal efficiency of school, stagnation or repetition, dropout, Achievement level of students at the end of the class IV of primary stage of education, socio-economic background and various constraints for effective implementation of SSA programme..